**Communiqué**

**21 August 2020**

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the fourth meeting of the Disability Council NSW (the Council) for 2020 was held virtually.

The meeting began with a discussion of the success of the Council’s first forum with disability peak organisations in NSW on 5 August 2020. Members shared feedback they received from participants and discussed key learnings from the session. The Council also discussed how lessons learned would build upon future forums. Planning also took place for the upcoming forum which will focus on the voice of people with disability.

The Council welcomed Mr. Rhys Morris, Senior Participation Advisor from the Office of the [Advocate for Children and Young People](https://www.acyp.nsw.gov.au/) (ACYP) to the meeting. Mr. Morris spoke with the Council about the findings of the recently released report on ‘*voices of children & young people with disabilities’* and the extensive consultations that informed it. Particular concerns raised by young people covered in the report included those relating to unemployment, mental health and support from the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The Council welcomed Mr. Stephen Moger from the Federal Department of Social Services (DSS) to present on the [second stage of National Disability Strategy (NDS) review](https://engage.dss.gov.au/nds-stage2-consultation/). Mr. Moger explained that the NDS review had experienced delays related to the COVID-19 pandemic but as the DSS has since released its second stage [Position Paper](https://engage.dss.gov.au/nds-stage2-consultation/national-disability-strategy-position-paper/), it was now initiating the public consultations. Mr. Moger provided an overview of how the consultations would work and took input from Council members on how they could be improved and on the particular policy areas that should be focused on.

The Council then discussed its own submission to the second stage of the NDS review. Citing the importance of the NDS in determining disability policy and programs over the next decade and the Council’s priority of influencing the national agenda, members unanimously agreed that it was crucial for the Council to submit the highest quality of advice to the NDS review. Some matters raised by members likely to be covered in the Council’s submission included:

* funding for disability advocacy services;
* the interface between the NDIS and state government provided mainstream services;
* the role of the NDIS in the education system;
* the importance of shaping community attitudes towards people with disability.

At the meeting, the Department of Community and Justice informed the Council of the initial work commenced on the new [NSW Disability Inclusion Plan](https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/inclusion/disability/overview) (NSW DIP). The NSW DIP is the NSW Government’s plan to improve accessibility and inclusion for people with disability. The Council looks forward to advising the NSW Government on the structure and content of the new NSW DIP as its development progresses over the coming months.

The Council will next meet on 16 October 2020.

**Mark Tonga**

**Chair**

**Disability Council NSW**