# Communiqué

### 25 June 2021

The third meeting of the Disability Council NSW (the Council) for 2021 was held virtually on Friday, 25 June 2021. The meeting was convened by the Council Chair, Ms Donna Purcell.

The Council welcomed Mr Michael Coutts-Trotter, Secretary, Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) who provided an update on disability employment and career development within DCJ. Mr Coutts-Trotter advised they had seen an increase in the proportion of DCJ staff identifying as being a person with disability within some divisions of the department and were very close to meeting the Premier’s target. He acknowledged there was still work to be done across the department.

The DCJ Secretary advised work was taking place to identify the disability status of children, their families and caregivers in the child protection and housing systems and that funding had been extended for the Justice Advocacy Service with an extension to include a diversionary model for cognitive disability at DCJ’s busiest courts.

Before leaving the Secretary offered to support and attend any forums on employment that the Council were planning.

Mr Brian Woods, Director, DCJ joined the meeting and updated Council on the upcoming National Disability Ministers Reform meeting, issues regarding independent assessments and data around the NDIS.

* Independent assessments – issues with the direct link to funding when it should be only one of the tools used. Not being appropriate for some groups especially where they have difficulty engaging with services as well as those from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds and those who have been in prison.
* NDIS data – statistics can vary according to how they are presented and interpreted. For example, the actual participant numbers in the NDIS is not greater than expected numbers. Tier 2 which covers those without a NDIS package and includes building community capacity has not become fully operational. Developing Tier 2 helps to reduce reliance on services by people with disability.

Mr Woods also advised of the NSW More Jobs More Care Program which will focus on recruiting, training and mentoring new workers into the disability sector. Phase 1 will be expected to deliver 2,500 jobs. There will also be a key focus on the number of jobs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability to obtain support they need within their local community.

The Council welcomed Ms Cara Nolan, Senior Data and Insights Analyst and Dr Celia Walker, Implementation Lead, NSW Tests Cases, both from National Disability Data Asset (NDDA), NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet to its meeting. Ms Nolan and Dr Walker presented on the national disability data asset including providing an overview of what the asset is, how they plan to share insights gained, outlined a case study of a prototype they are developing in NSW around early childhood and sought feedback from Council around what enduring disability data sets should look like. The NDDA is currently in pilot phase.

Key insights shared by Ms Nolan and Dr Walker include:

* Disability Royal Commission hearings have heard that data collection and quality for people with disability doesn’t exist.
* NDDA are in the pilot phase of developing a disability data set with an aim to improve outcomes for people with disability. The data set will not only be used by the NSW government to make decisions, but also accessible to others including people with disability to assist them to make better decisions around their lives, providers to better assist them to understand the disability community and researchers to drive better research to improve outcomes.
* It is being designed in partnership with disability groups to help inform the design and use.
* NDDA will aim to include data for all people with disability, all government funded services and related outcomes and beyond. It will also cover non NDIS participants. The data will capture data around people's experiences beyond disability. Examples include quality of life around community access, employment, school and higher education, health, early childhood development, exercise of rights, communication and will include comparisons between able bodied and those with disability especially severe disability. It will also capture intersectional differences, for example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
* The project will pull existing data sets together, centre the data around the person rather than services, share insights and work in partnership to decide how this data gets used and how prioritise it. Data will be de-identified and not used to identity individuals.

Council advised completed data sets should be accessible for people with disability, including those using screen readers or other technology, with communication and data delivered in a format that suits everyone and the protection of individuals’ data to ensure privacy was paramount. Council advised data collected should reflect those with and without an NDIS package and detailed employment data reflecting employment, unemployment and underemployment. Council indicated they would like to be included in pilots and consultations.

Ms Trish Ladonga, Relieving Director, Disability Strategy, Ms Anna Yusef, Senior Policy Officer and Mr Kim Singleton, Change and Wellbeing Specialist, NSW Department of Education shared outcomes of the Disability Strategy and the next phase. Key information presented included:

* Outline of key achievements including ensuring inclusive practices in scholarships, 95% uptake of disability standards training by staff employed in schools, launching of an online hub for parents and carers, and an assessment for complex learners is being trialled.
* Current initiatives include:
  + developing new practice resources in relation to students with disability for staff. These include evidence based practice in relation to covering tips and strategies for the classroom, information on various disabilities, and scenario based professional learning around inclusion.
  + engagement to strengthen awareness and understanding of the value of diversity and inclusion, and the resources available to staff, to ensure inclusion.
* Challenges include funding issues around professional development to ensure teachers have the capability to be inclusive.

The Council will next meet on 3 September 2021.

**Ms Donna Purcell**

**Chair - The Disability Council NSW**