# Communiqué

**24 November 2021**

The sixth and final meeting of the Disability Council NSW (the Council) for 2021 was held virtually on Wednesday 24 November 2021. The meeting was chaired by Dr Jill Duncan.

The Council welcomed Ms Cara Nolan, Department of Premier and Cabinet, and Dr Cecilia Walker, Department of Customer Service to the meeting to talk about the [National Disability Data Asset (NDDA)](https://ndda.gov.au/).

The NDDA aims to improve inclusion and opportunity for people with disability in Australia. It will do this by linking data to better understand the life experiences of people with disability.

The Council welcomes this exciting initiative and looks forward to the outcome of the pilot currently underway.

Dr Ben Gauntlett, Disability Discrimination Commissioner, presented to the Council on [IncludeAbility](https://includeability.gov.au/resources-employers/disability-and-employment-australia). IncludeAbility is an initiative of the Australian Human Rights Commission developed to increase meaningful employment opportunities for people with disability, and to close the gap in workforce participation between people with disability and people without disability.

The Council is very supportive of the positive work underway as employment is one of the Council’s focus areas for 2021. On 18 November 2021, the Council hosted an Employment forum with representatives from the Disability Employee Network, peak organisations and disability groups to discuss opportunities for promote employment for people with disability. A recording of this forum will be available on the Council’s website shortly.

A presentation was also given by Ms Simone Walker, Group Deputy Secretary, School Improvement and Education Reform, to talk about the [School Success Model Program](https://education.nsw.gov.au/public-schools/school-success-model). The program started in December 2020 to drive accountability and ensure schools are receiving the right resources. It includes a strong quality assurance and design standards to improve student outcomes.

The Council welcomes initiatives to improve student outcomes, particularly students with disability. The Council looks forward to further updates as the program progresses.

The Council continues to be very active in advocating for change to promote positive outcomes for people with disability. The Council has recently prepared submissions to a number of government inquiries and consultations.

The Council provided submissions to both the Department of Social Services and the Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs about the National Disability Insurance Scheme Amendment (Participant Service Guarantee and Other Measures) Bill 2021.

The Council broadly supports the proposed changes to the legislation to make processes easier and better for National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants. The Council supports changes to the rule that will ensure people with psychosocial disabilities are supported to access and test their eligibility for individually funded supports under the NDIS, by recognising that some psychosocial conditions may be episodic and fluctuating in nature. The Council is concerned, however, that the proposed changes do not go far enough.

The Council also strongly encourages that the legislation be more accessible and easier to read. It is essential that all people with disability have access to key information influencing their lives including those people with complex and profound disability.

Also in relation to the NDIS, the Council prepared a submission to the Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme in response to the Inquiry into the Current Scheme Implementation and Forecasting for the NDIS.

The Council strongly supports an inquiry into how the NDIS is implemented and funded, and what supports are or should be available for people with disability in addition to the NDIS. Ensuring the future sustainability of the NDIS is critical to facilitating access to essential high-quality services and supports for people with disability.

The Council highlighted the importance of seamless service delivery for people with disability and it is essential for all levels of government work collaboratively and for there to be close alignment with the NDIS. This must also extend to the policy context specifically in relation to mental health, employment services and the education system.

This meeting was the final meeting for a number of retiring Council members. I wish to publicly acknowledge their dedication to improving the rights of people with disability.

Recruitment of new members is currently in the progress. The Council will next meet in 2022.

Dr Jill Duncan

Deputy Chair, Disability Council NSW