# Communiqué

**3 September 2021**

The fifth meeting of the Disability Council NSW (the Council) for 2021 was held virtually on Friday, 3 September 2021. The meeting was chaired by Mr Jake Fing.

The Council welcomed Ms Hayley Stone, Policy Manager, Physical Disability Council NSW (PDCNSW). Ms Stone presented on the work of the PDCNSW and reiterated their commitment to supporting the work of the Disability Council NSW.

Ms Stone discussed the Care passport, an initiative by the PDCNSW, to ensure people with disability have their care needs met when admitted to hospital. The app, which is currently under development, will enable the person to fill out their care needs, including their cultural care needs, LGBTQI needs and care support preferences, before admission to hospital.

The Disability Council welcomed this exciting initiative noting the importance of ensuring data privacy and consultation with key stakeholders, particularly in regional communities.

The Council also welcomed Ms Dani Fraillon, National Lead, Ms Nicole Vongdara, NSW Manager and Dr Lisa Chaffey, Principal Consultant from Get Skilled Access (GSA). GSA, a disability inclusion consulting organisation, presented several key initiatives, including two projects aimed at promoting employment for people with disability.

Workable, is a job platform under development that will match people with organisations wanting to employ a person with disability.

The Recruitable program creates a model for people with disability to obtain employment through mainstream processes. With funding from the Department of Social Services, it will be piloted in seven organisations.

The Disability Council is very supportive of initiatives to promote employment opportunities for people with disability. The Council did, however, highlight the importance of managing the expectations of those who register on sites expecting to find work but not necessarily obtaining employment. The importance of supporting people with disability to be appointed to board positions was also discussed

The Council also welcomed Minister Alister Henskens, Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services. Minister Henskens briefed the Council on work the NSW government is doing as part of the Premier’s Priority to increase the number of government sector roles held by people with disability.

In relation to the COVID vaccine rollout, the Minister acknowledged the importance of ensuring people with disability are vaccinated. The Minister also committed to continuing to raise the influence of COVID on increased costs for NDIS participants.

The Council raised their concerns with Minister Henskens about the inclusion of accessibility standards for new housing in the draft 2022 National Construction Code. The Council has also written to Minister Anderson on this issue. Minister Henskens explained that he had met with the Disability Discrimination Commissioner, who also expressed his concern.

Other work of the Council in recent months includes preparing submissions in response to several inquiries and consultations related to people with disability.

In August 2021, the Council wrote to the NSW Legislative Assembly Committee on Community Services in response to their inquiry into options to improve access to existing and alternate accommodation to address the social housing shortage.

Among several recommendations, the Council strongly encouraged a proportion of all new and existing social housing be designated for people with disability. All social housing should meet the minimum standards set out in the Liveable Housing Design Guidelines and include key easy living features that make them easier and safer to use for all occupants, including people with disability.

In September 2021, the Council wrote to the National Disability Insurance Agency in response to their consultation paper: Supporting you to make your own decisions.

The Council stressed the importance of people with disability being encouraged to make decisions for themselves. They also stressed that it is essential that training is available to help service providers and carers develop the knowledge and skills to support decision making effectively as required. Training could be complemented by a series of decision support tools tailored to reflect the different circumstances and capacity of individuals.

Planning is underway for a public sector employment forum hosted by the Council on 8 October 2021. The Council will prepare a report for the Minister on outcomes from the forum. The Council have expressed concern about the number of people with disability employed in the public sector.

The Council will next meet on 24 November 2021.

Dr Jill Duncan

Deputy Chair, Disability Council NSW