

National Disability and Carers Advisory Council

Communiqué 14 December 2016

The National Disability and Carers Advisory Council (NDCAC) held its inaugural meeting on Wednesday 14 December 2016 in Canberra. The Council was announced by the Minister for Social Services, the Hon Christian Porter MP and Assistant Minister for Social Services and Disability Services, the Hon Jane Prentice MP on the 7 November 2016. The Council is an important mechanism to help drive implementation of the National Disability Strategy 2010 – 2020, with the Second Implementation Plan released on 1 December 2016. The Council will also advise Government on reforms in Disability Employment Services (DES) and in carer supports and services. Members will be advising on issues relating to the full roll-out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), and its interface with mainstream services.

Membership of the Council is outlined below and comprises leaders with lived experience from the disability and carers sectors, along with the business sector. As collaboration with States and Territories is pivotal to achieving reform, State and Territory Disability Ministers were asked for nominations, and the Council includes representation from every State and Territory.

Members

Hon. Jane Prentice MP (Co-Chair)
Ms Keran Howe (Co-Chair)
Ms Donna Bain
Ms Nell Brown
Mr Paul Coates
Ms Jennifer Cullen
Mr Wilhelm Harnisch
Ms Christine Kerr
Mr Greg Madson

Ms Jessica May
Ms Teresa Pilbeam
Mr Frank Quinlan
Aunty Gayle Rankine
Ms Sally Sinclair
Mr Martin Stokie
Mr Steve Vitone
Ms Elizabeth Wall

At its first meeting the Council discussed and agreed on the Terms of Reference and the role of Council in a number of key policy areas.

<https://www.dss.gov.au/national-disability-and-carers-advisory-council>

National Disability Strategy (NDS) Reinvigoration

The Council noted the commitment of all levels of Australian Governments to reinvigorate the NDS. The Council discussed the ongoing implementation of the NDS and opportunities for progressing the strategy including improved communication and reporting, and developing frameworks. The ongoing role of disability advocacy was also discussed. The Council considered the importance of an effective interface between the mental health and disability service systems.

National Disability Insurance Scheme – Transition

The Council noted progress on the transition to NDIS full scheme. The Council also noted that at the time of transition there were significant issues with the portal and that these issues are in the process of being resolved.

The Council noted the importance of support for people with disability, their families and carers who will not be eligible for the NDIS, and that this is a major focus of the Council.

Disability Employment Services Reform

The Council noted the work being undertaken to reform Disability Employment Services (DES), the Australian Government's open employment assistance program for people with disability. Specific options for reforming DES include:

- improving participant choice and control;
- driving greater competition and contestability for DES providers;
- aligning financial incentives to support better employment outcomes;
- improving the gateway and assessment process;
- assisting participants in the workplace; and
- enhancing employer support and engagement.

Carer Reform and the Integrated Plan for Carer Support Services

The Council noted the progress on the development of the Integrated Plan for Carer Support Services. The Department has developed a draft Service Delivery Model, which is currently out for discussion. Council members noted the importance of a responsive service system that takes into account the differing needs of carers.

Regulatory Reform

The Council noted that regulatory reform should be a standing item for Ministerial Advisory Councils and that the Government's regulatory reform agenda is focused on reforms that achieve outcomes like innovation, competition, productivity, increased workforce and economic growth. The Council will consider areas of focus for regulatory reform in the disability and carers sectors through the working groups.

Working Groups

The Council also agreed that they would initially form three Working Groups focusing on the key areas of the NDS, DES and carer reform. They considered and agreed on the membership of the groups. Council also considered how to ensure other important policy areas are addressed, either through the Working Groups or by other means, such as:

- the indigenous plan for people with disability;
- justice and child protection;
- the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children;
- advocacy;
- housing access and affordability; and
- mental health.

Working groups	Council members
NDS reinvigoration	Mr Martin Stokie (Chair) Ms Jennifer Cullen Mr Greg Madson Mr Frank Quinlan Ms Gayle Rankine Ms Christine Kerr Ms Keran Howe Ms Nell Brown
Employment Reform	Ms Sally Sinclair (Chair) Ms Donna Bain Mr Wilhelm Harnisch Ms Christine Kerr Ms Jessica May
Carer Reform	Mr Frank Quinlan (Chair) Ms Nell Brown Mr Paul Coates Ms Teresa Pilbeam Mr Steve Vitone Ms Elizabeth Wall

Council members will also identify and nominate proposed experts who could be invited to participate in the Working Groups.