

## **National Disability and Carers Advisory Council Communiqué 30 October 2018**

The National Disability and Carers Advisory Council (the Council) met in Melbourne on Tuesday 30 October 2018. The meeting was co-chaired by Assistant Minister for Social Services, Housing and Disability Services, the Hon Sarah Henderson MP and Council member, Mr Nigel Webb.

The Assistant Minister acknowledged the work of the Council to date and stressed the importance of focusing its work to improve the lives of people with disability and carers.

The Council discussed its ongoing priorities in carer reform, approach to the National Disability Strategy and employment reform, and reflected on progress against work plan objectives for the Council's three working groups. Since the last Council meeting, working groups have:

- Provided advice to the Department of Social Services (DSS) to support implementation of the Integrated Carer Support Service model and optimise outcomes for families and carers;
- Completed a research report identifying impediments and opportunities for small to medium enterprises to employ and retain people with disability;
- Considered the role that Government might play as an exemplar in the provision of accessible technology for employees; and
- Explored options to review and refresh the *Carer Recognition Act 2010*.

Throughout discussions, the Council acknowledged the need for a strong approach to supporting people with disability alongside the National Disability Insurance Scheme, through mechanisms such as the National Disability Strategy and the National Disability Agreement.

In this context, the Council discussed the role of advocacy to support people with disability as part of a national disability framework beyond 2020. The Council noted that all jurisdictions have a role to play in funding individual and systemic advocacy, for both the anticipated 460,000 participants in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and the 3.8 million people with disability not in the NDIS, noting the mainstream services they access are often a state responsibility.

The Disability Discrimination Commissioner, Mr Alastair McEwin, attended the meeting and provided an update on his six priorities: employment, education, the criminal justice system, housing, the NDIS and violence against people with disability.

Mr McEwin spoke about his role as an expert advisor to the National Disability Insurance Agency's Independent Advisory Council, but also reflected on the importance of continuing to support people with disability who are not NDIS participants. He emphasised that all people with disability must be able to exercise their rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and more work remains to be done.

Commissioner Robert Fitzgerald AM provided an update on the review that the Productivity Commission is undertaking of the National Disability Agreement and took questions and comments from Council members. The Council also received an update from Dr Stephen Arnott PSM, First Assistant Secretary, Arts Division at the Department of Communications and the Arts, on the review of the National Arts and Disability Strategy that is currently underway. Both the Commissioner and Dr Arnott emphasised the importance of ensuring that any future arrangements focus on clear and measurable outcomes.

Mr Neil Savery, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Building Codes Board, provided an overview of the Australian Building Codes Board and its relationship with states and territories, and led discussions with Council members around accessible housing in Australia.

The Assistant Minister acknowledged her predecessor, the Hon Jane Prentice MP, for her commitment and enthusiasm in advancing disability and carer policy agendas during her tenure as the Assistant Minister for Social Services and Disability Services.

More information about the Council can be found [here](#).