

National Disability and Carers Advisory Council

Communiqué 14 November 2017

The third meeting of the National Disability and Carers Advisory Council (the Council) was held in Melbourne on Tuesday 14 November 2017. The meeting was co-chaired by the Hon Jane Prentice MP, Assistant Minister for Social Services and Disability Services, and Ms Keran Howe.

Mrs Prentice commended the progress of the Council's activity plan, in its first 12 months of operation. The Council will now look forward to what can be achieved over the next year.

The Disability Discrimination Commissioner, Mr Alastair McEwin, attended the meeting and provided an update on issues currently faced by people with disability. Discussion centred around the Commissioner's six priority areas of: employment; education; the criminal justice system; implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS); violence; and housing - specifically the minimum standards prescribed for accessible buildings and housing in the context of the community's increasing expectations.

The Council discussed both the reinvigoration of the *National Disability Strategy 2010–2020* (the Strategy) and the development of a new National Disability Framework to drive improved outcomes for people with disability beyond 2020. Council members recognised the need to engage people with lived experience, their families and carers, non-government organisations, business and civil society as key partners in the development of any new framework. It was agreed we should build on the lessons learned to date.

The Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) *Principles to Determine the Responsibilities of the NDIS and Other Service Systems* (the Applied Principles) were discussed. The Applied Principles guide the interactions between the NDIS and mainstream service systems, such as health, criminal justice, school education and child protection systems. A number of challenges were discussed including: a limited understanding of the NDIS in other service systems, access to housing and support; access to transport; and access for Indigenous Australians.

The Council's three Working Groups; National Disability Strategy reinvigoration; Employment Reform for people with disability; and Carer Reform reported on progress against work plan objectives including:

- considering strategies to improve the carer role in the NDIS planning process
- looking at options for reinvigorating the National Disability Strategy
- reviewing existing programs to improve the transition from education to work for people with disability
- developing strategies to maximise the positive effect of the NDIS on carers
- providing input and guidance for National Disability Strategy solutions-focused workshops
- providing advice on engaging with employers to encourage employment of people with disability
- identifying regulatory or process barriers to employing a person with a disability identifying regulatory reforms and red tape reductions.

A employment workshop held on Monday 13 November 2017 is a recent example of the Council utilising networks to progress workable solutions. The workshop focused on improving employment outcomes for people with disability by developing new ideas and recommendations for employers and government to drive change.

The day formed part of the Australian Government's commitment, under the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 Second Implementation Plan: Driving Action 2015-2018, to hold a workshop every year to explore solutions to improve employment outcomes for people with disability.

A broad group of attendees from business, the community sector, advocacy groups, Commonwealth, and State governments actively participated. Attendees also looked at ways to create awareness of the value, skills and education of people with disability to build a future where employing people with disability is common practice, and where self-employment and entrepreneurship for people with disability is encouraged and supported. The workshop had a particular focus on small to medium enterprises, who employ approximately 68 per cent of the Australian workforce.

A range of innovative concepts were presented to the Assistant Minister that will help inform future program and policy development. Some key themes included sharing success stories, identifying innovative practices in disability employment, tailored work experience and employment innovation that connects local industry to people with disability for the right job fit. The attendees also workshopped concepts for increasing employer confidence in hiring people with disability, such as local mobile teams assisting employers through customised recruitment solutions.

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