



9 November 2018

Communiqué

The Disability Council NSW met for their final meeting for 2018 at Parliament House on Friday, 9 November 2018.

The Council invited Karen Jones – Manager of Ability Links to the meeting to discuss the reviews and evaluations conducted. It is clear to the Council that the Ability Links program has been both cost effective and has achieved great outcomes for the individuals and communities it has served. The Council is concerned that the Ability Links program may not be continued by the Commonwealth Government through the NDIS when NSW funding ceases in 2019. The Council will write to Minister Fletcher seeking assurance that this important scheme can continue into the future.

Council members discussed the NSW Ombudsman's report, [Abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults in NSW – the need for action \(PDF 1,372KB\)](#). This confronting and comprehensive report outlines numerous cases of abuse of individuals occurring outside of the disability services system. The report stressed the need for action and recommended that NSW develop an independent body with the appropriate powers to collect information on abuse and to investigate and resolve these situations.

Following its discussion on this report, the Council was able to investigate it further with input from Steve Kinmond, Deputy NSW Ombudsman and Kathryn McKenzie, Director – Disability, at the NSW Ombudsman, who both attended the meeting. This discussion went into more detail regarding the basis for the report's recommendations and the highlighted potential ways forward. The Council gives its in principle support to this report's recommendations.

The Council received information from the Secretariat on upcoming events being held to mark the International Day for People with Disability on 3 December 2018. Council's Secretariat also outlined the spectacular success of the *Employable Me* program which, to date, has received two major international television awards and has been nominated for an Australian Human Rights Commission Award. Additionally, the Council received an update on the timing of Disability Inclusion Action Planning reporting and the current status of the Sax Institute's review of the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan.

The Council will next convene on 15 February 2019 for a combined meeting and planning review.

Mark Tonga
Chair, Disability Council NSW