27 April 2018

**Communique**

The first formal meeting of the Disability Council NSW for 2018 was held at Parliament House.

The Council formally endorsed their 2018 Annual Plan and undertook detailed planning for their four key priorities:

* Disability Inclusion Action Planning
* Disability Inclusion Plan and Act Review
* Community awareness in partnership with the private sector
* NDIS safeguards and adequacy

The Council welcomed Anne Gripper, Executive Director, Office of Sport who provided Council with an overview of the process for development of their *Regional* *Sport and Active Recreation Plans*. The Council provided feedback on a number of areas including: the integration of disability within the plans; the need to plan collaboratively with local councils; the importance of capital funding to support improved accessibility; improved collaboration with National Parks on accessible walking trails and the possibility of waiving entrance fees for disability parking permit holders; volunteer recognition and incentives; governance; the expanded use of public school facilities for recreational sport; and the need to engage with Transport for improved access to venues for people with disabilities. The Council commended the Office of Sport for the inclusiveness of the regional plans and the way in which they integrate all community members.

The Minister addressed the meeting and took the opportunity to congratulate the Council on their achievements over the past 12 months, welcome five new Council members and to discuss priorities for 2018.

Deputy Chair Eileen Baldry informed Council of a bequest to Council from the estate of the late Ms Dorothy Hansen. The Minister and Council expressed their appreciation and acknowledged the generosity of Ms Hansen’s bequest.

The Council was briefed on the transition of the NSW Companion Card to the Department of Family and Community Services. Council provided feedback on a number of issues, including the recommendation that training be provided for businesses which support the Companion Card.

The Secretary, Department of Family and Community Services addressed the meeting. He noted the key role of Council as the voice of people with disability for the Minister and the department. The Secretary acknowledged the alignment of Council’s key priorities for 2018 with the outcomes that the Department of Family and Community Services is seeking through its *Strategic Plan 2017 – 2021* and reflected on the implications for the Council and the department of the transition of disability services to the Commonwealth. The Council had discussions with the Secretary about anticipated improvements in the NDIS portal and the development of their processes.

The next meeting will take place in June 2018.

**Mark Tonga**

**Chair, Disability Council NSW**