



NSW Disability Royal Commission Stakeholder Forum Communiqué

20 November 2023

On 23 October 2023 the NSW Government and the Disability Council NSW convened their first stakeholder forum to discuss the final report of the Disability Royal Commission. The final report was released publicly on 29 September 2023 and contains 222 recommendations calling for change to laws, policy and practices.

The forum was co-chaired by Jane Spring, Chair of the Disability Council NSW and Anne Campbell, Deputy Secretary, Department of Communities and Justice.

Over 100 people attended, either online or in person. Stakeholders included people with lived experience of disability and representatives from disability rights and advocacy groups, disability services and government agencies.

The forum was attended by Minister for Disability Inclusion, the Hon Kate Washington MP and Parliamentary Secretary for Disability Inclusion, Liesl Tesch MP.

Uncle Graham Davis King, Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council gave a welcome to country.

The Minister delivered an opening address where she reflected on the importance of this forum following the release of the Disability Royal Commission final report. The Minister emphasised that the NSW Government needs to hear from leaders of the disability sector and to make sure their views are considered in the Government's response to the final report.

Three panel discussions were held on key topics identified through a pre-forum stakeholder survey. We welcomed the following panellists:

- Dr David Roy, University of Newcastle
- Jim Simpson, Council for Intellectual Disability

- Nicole Lee, People with Disability Australia
- Darlene Thornton, Deaf Australia
- Laurie Leigh, National Disability Services
- Marie New, Life Without Barriers
- Brian Woods, NSW Public Guardian
- Robert Fitzgerald AM, Ageing and Disability Commissioner

Topics discussed by panellists and audience members included:

- Inclusive education, addressing segregation and making mainstream education safe and inclusive
- Health, including the need for adaptations so people with disability are not disadvantaged and making health services safe for people with disability
- Access to open employment, employment targets and inclusive physical and social environments
- Accessible information and communications to meet the diverse needs of people with disability
- Disability services, including worker registration, skills, and thin markets
- Supported decision-making which needs to be strengthened and considered separately from guardianship which is a last resort
- Safeguards, including independent oversight and complaint handling

Several other cross-cutting priority issues were identified through the pre-forum survey, panel discussion and online-comments. This includes:

- Addressing segregation across all systems, and taking a whole of system approach to reform
- Strengthening the rights of people with disability
- Reducing the use of restrictive practices where appropriate and eliminating prohibited practices
- Considering recommendations for people with disability in rural, regional and remote communities
- Making sure that the voices of people from different disability communities are considered, including people with intellectual or psychosocial disability, and people from neurodiverse communities.
- Avoiding the need for people with disability/parents/carers to repeat their story
- Considering intersectional experiences, particularly for women and girls with disability, culturally and linguistically diverse communities and First Nations.
- Ensuring that adopted recommendations are adequately funded and that potential unintended consequence are considered.

In closing, the Minister and Parliamentary Secretary committed to continue to advocate for people with disability across government.

A commitment was made to hold further stakeholder forums to discuss the Disability Royal Commission final report. The next forum will include an emphasis on the Royal Commission recommendations focused on First Nations people with disability and other selected topics where more detailed stakeholder feedback is needed to inform the Government response.

Anne Campbell
**Deputy Secretary, Department of
Communities and Justice**

Jane Spring
Chair, Disability Council NSW