The inaugural meeting of the Ministerial Advisory Council for Disability Reform has identified key issues for the Northern Territory Government to focus on, to create opportunities for Territorians with a disability.

"It was great to see the members of the Advisory Council at the very first meeting in Alice Springs on Friday," Minister for Disability Services Robyn Lambley said.

"I told the Council that I am looking for frank and fearless advice, in order to make a real difference and improve the lives of Territorians with a disability, their families and carers.

"One of my main aims is to create more employment opportunities for people with a disability, particularly within the public service, and the ideas and advice from the Council will help me to achieve this.

"I was very pleased to see that through my discussions with Qantas last week, a business contract that employs 20 Alice Springs residents with a disability is continuing at the Bindi Centre.

"I would like to explore ways that we can create more opportunities like this in other parts of the Territory.

"The Advisory Council will also assist services to respond to changes under the National Disability Insurance Scheme trial in the Barkly, as well as implement the recently announced Disability Service Scholarships.

"The Council will also help to develop the Disability Services Strategy, which will provide a five year road map for disability services across the Territory."

The chair of the Advisory Council Vicki O’Halloran said the meeting highlighted the extent of knowledge, life experience and expertise of the group.

"It was a pleasure to work through the diverse agenda including the NDIS trial in the Barkly, the upcoming Disability Services Strategy and numerous other operational matters with a focus upon improving the quality of life of people with disabilities in the Northern Territory," Ms O’Halloran said.

"There are at least 8 key matters to be followed up post the meeting, including gathering more information from NDIS trial sites, alongside researching best practice operations in our nation and overseas.

"Robust observations identified an ongoing agenda that will be informed and allow the Council to provide up to date knowledge and advice to the Minister for Disability Services."
The eleven members of the Advisory Council include Vicki O’Halloran of National Disability Services NT, Greg McMahon of Carpentaria Disability Services, Joe Smith of Step Out, Pat Brahim of Julalikari Aboriginal Corporation, Pat Braun of Catholic Care, Edwina Marks of the Barkly Regional Council, Ian Campbell of Central Australian Supported Accommodation, Bruce Young-Smith, Suzanne Cavanagh, Liz Reid and Karen Stewart.

The next meeting is scheduled for August.

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