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# The PDCN Advocate

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## INSIDE...

Research Initiatives	2
Accessible Public Transport	3
Access to Polling Options	3

## Research Initiatives

As part of our key priority areas, significant networks have been established to further our research agenda including:

Promoting a survey to investigate the choices different people make before acquiring a power wheelchairs or a scooter.

Establishing partnerships with non-government organisations and social policy units based at the different universities;

Developing a survey and seeking your feedback to examine the impact of ageing on the needs of people with a disability, focusing on the following key priority areas:

- Personal Assistance;
- Mobility/ Transportation;
- Housing/ Accommodation;
- Social Networks;
- Health; and
- Disability.

We urgently need members to complete this survey, so that PDCN can provide input into Commonwealth and State Government priorities.

Please complete the survey and send back in the attached pre-paid envelope.

Attending the launch of exciting new research - 'Exploring the Bottom Line: A Study of the Costs and Benefits of Workers with Disabilities'. This research will be repeated shortly using a similar methodology to that used in California, by the University of Western Sydney.



**Are you in NSW with a physical disability?  
Do you have access to email?**

**Join the PDCN Email Discussion group!**

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/pdcndiscussion/>

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# Appointment of new Executive Officer

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The Physical Disability Council of NSW (PDCN) is pleased to announce the recent appointment of Ruth Robinson as Executive Officer.

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Formerly *Manager of Complaints Assessment* for the NSW *Health Care Complaints Commission*, Ruth now brings her knowledge and experience to bear in

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the pursuit of PDCN's policies and objectives, improving equity and access for people with physical disabilities across the New South Wales.

PDCN believes that Ruth's energy, skills and experience will add to the strength and vision of our organisation as we move into an exciting future.

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# Accessible Public Transport

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The Physical Disability Council of NSW forwarded the following concerns to the NSW Ministry of Transport, in response to the 'Review of Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport (March 2008)'

- That thorough accountability is required. There are significant variances between reported data and our constituency;
- That there lacks of an independent audit process to ensure that transport conveyances, infrastructure and premises comply with the DDA Transport Standards;
- The lack of an effective complaints mechanism , when considering the many stakeholders involved in the provision of transport; and
- The impact of defenses such as 'unjustifiable hardship' on the effectiveness of the *Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)*.

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## Inability to access Polling Options

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As part of the review of the State Government elections conducted in March 2007, PDCN attended a public hearing at Parliament House, identifying the following issues:

- That the Electoral Commission of NSW needs to ensure that all electoral procedures and processes are available to all community members, with support if required. These components include: written and electoral information, enrolment, postal voting, access to all venues including the location of the Returning Officer and all polling venues.
- That PDCN believes that the Electoral Commission of NSW needs to comply completely with the following sections in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth):
  - Section 23 – Access to Building and Premises
  - Section 24 – Access to Goods, Services and Facilities

At the public hearing PDCN highlighted the following issues:

- That across rural and urban NSW, 14% of electoral regions did not provide at least one accessible polling place for the 2007 NSW State Government elections,
- That knowing that state government elections fall on a given date every four years, that the Electoral Commission of NSW could easily book accessible polling places well in advance rather than relying on the Returning Officer to locate an accessible venue in the last three months prior to the elections; and



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the Sydney Metropolitan area)

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## PHYSICAL DISABILITY COUNCIL OF NSW

The **Physical Disability Council of NSW Inc (PDCN)** is the peak body in NSW representing people with physical disability across the state.

**Our overall purpose** is to provide a state-wide voice for people with a physical disability living in NSW.

**Our aim is to assist and support** people with physical disability in NSW to achieve equality of citizenship and full participation.

Our activities include

- Producing regular newsletters, electronic bulletins and other information,
- Open meetings and consultations with people living across NSW,
- Participation in coalitions of disability groups on specific actions and issues,
- Representation to government.

Membership is open to anyone with physical disability and other people or organisations with a commitment to the civil and human rights of people with disability.

### Membership Online

<http://www.pdcnsw.org.au/about/membership.html>

### Cont' from— Inability to access Polling Options

- That providing *Special Voting Centres* is discriminatory, and not inclusive. It was essential for PDCN to stress this view, as the Electoral Commission of NSW appears to be in favour of this option.
- Providing this option is seen to cater for people with a vision impairment, and hence an easy option for all people with a disability. An inclusive society is achieved only when people with disability are involved in every

aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life.

- More recently the Electoral Commission of NSW has circulated the *Equal Access to Democracy Plan for the 2008 Local Government Elections*, but unfortunately this plan still does not include tangible performance measures.

