
PDCN News

Volume 3 Number 5...December 1997



AGM

At the Annual General Meeting on 6 December, a new Management Committee was elected for the next twelve months. On page 4 you will find a list of the new committee members, with their contact phone numbers. Can I particularly welcome three new members - Robyn Chapman, Mark Relf and AQA.

After the AGM we heard from John Simpson, who recently produced and directed *Captives of Care*, a play based on the book of the same name written by **John Roarty**.

John Roarty was one of the most effective campaigners for the rights of people with disabilities who ever lived. Those of us who knew him are much richer for the experience.

John Simpson shared with us some of the defining moments of his relationship with John. We learnt that John, who spent most of his life in an institution, had been systematically abused both physically (being left on the toilet for hours) and emotionally (being belittled by staff).

We heard about the denial of personal relationship, the denial of freedom to come and go and the ban on electric wheelchairs.

But mostly we marveled at John's ability to rise above all the pain and to continue to advocate for a better deal - always with an absence of bitterness or personal hate.

If you have the chance to see *Captives of Care*, make sure you don't pass it up.

Strategic Directions

The Management Committee decided at its first meeting after the AGM on 15 December that PDCN should concentrate on the four issues considered to be most critical to people with physical disabilities. More than twenty issues were nominated as important, of which four were chosen as the areas in which the PDCN would be pro-active in trying to set the agenda for change. The other areas were taken up by individuals as "watching briefs". See page 3 for a full report.

New Executive

The new Management Committee at its first meeting also elected the Executive for 1998. The Executive is:

President	John Moxon
Vice President	Mark Relf
Secretary	Diane Campbell
Treasurer	Jack Frisch

Regards
John Moxon

INSIDE this issue: Priorities for the Coming Year

Making a Difference Questionnaire

What do people with a physical disability want? What does participating in society mean? We report on the PDCN questionnaire.

Introduction

From May to July 1997 PDCN ran a number of country consultations and undertook a questionnaire intended to explore the level of support being provided to people with a physical disability, what it means to participate fully in the community, and differences between country and city. A series of open-ended questions asked respondents to tell their stories.

Flexible and More Personal Support/Care

There was a desire for greater flexibility of assistance packages so that people could independently manage their own affairs. A blunt and regular message was the need for **more staff to provide extra flexibility for personal assistance in home, attendant and respite care** and in medical and therapeutic attention.

Extra funding for additional hours would solve 90% of my problems.

Whilst respondents indicated that they received support across the spectrum of needs from a wide range of sources through family to support agencies and individual carers, by far the majority said that the level of support received was not meeting their needs. A large number wanted greater social contact and companionship, particularly if living alone.

Participation in Society

Participating in society meant being treated equally with the same opportunities and rights as other people. It meant wanting to be seen as **hardworking and equal** without fear of discrimination yet with an **understanding of the extra difficulties** faced by people with disabilities.

Participation means providing resources and a willingness by government and business to remove the barriers - physical, communication, social, attitudinal, educational, employment and promotion wise.

The two main barriers to participation were seen as **access to buildings** (particularly shops and toilets) and information and **ignorance** of the issues facing people with disabilities.

Other barriers included difficulties associated with having to rely on **public transport** and **taxis, income support** that provided for survival but not for social activity, inadequate **parking**, disorganised **support groups** and inadequate **medical services**.

Overcoming Barriers

"Getting out and about" and "being visible in the wider community" were seen as the most important ways in which community attitudes would be changed. Greater enforcement and improvement of **access standards** together with greater **certainty of funding and concessions** were in turn seen as the most important way of achieving a greater ability to be able to "get out and about".

Respondents highlighted the **extra costs** of having a disability. There was much criticism of the lack of clear eligibility criteria and the consequent inequity across the many funding programs, subsidies, allowances and concessions that were available. Programs were seen as too often closed and inflexible, and people complained that information about programs was not made known widely enough through the community.

City vs. Country Living

Concern for people in the city were **transport and access** whilst country dwellers reported their major concerns as **generally limited and/or poor service provision** and distance/isolation.

Whilst city life was described by city people as chaotic, noisy, polluted and overcrowded it was nevertheless seen by country respondents as having more options generally across health, personal and recreational services.

PDCN Role

The PDCN as a representative voice was welcomed. It was felt the PDCN's roles included **monitoring** government legislation, policies and programs; seeking greater **reliability, co-ordination and accountability** of nongovernment services; and assisting people with physical disabilities in their own awareness of their rights and in **practicing self-advocacy**.

Priorities '98

Strategic Directions

Comments raised in the questionnaire and consultations in both rural areas and in Sydney over the last twelve months have assisted the Committee of Management in its preparation of policy positions and its strategic planning for future activity.

Following a listing of more than 20 issues which were considered important, it was decided that PDCN should concentrate on the four issues considered to be most critical to people with physical disabilities.

The four areas selected are:

- **Homecare/Attendant Care**
- **Aids and Equipment**
- **Access to Buses**
- **Access to Buildings**

These issues affect almost all people with physical disabilities, no matter where they live - city or country. And these issues involve both the government sector and the nongovernment sector. If PDCN can make a major impact in these areas in 1998, people with physical disabilities will be considerably better off.

The other issues were also recognised as important and will not be ignored. Each of them has been taken up by a committee member who will maintain a **watching brief** by monitoring the issue, reporting to the Management Committee on action PDCN should take, and being ready to respond to public issues governing the "portfolio".

Working Parties have been established to address each of the four priority issues. It was agreed that for these to be effective, each committee member would be part of only one Working Party, and that each Working Party would contain no more than four Committee members.

Each Working Party will be developing a plan to guide it over the next twelve months. The plan will clearly spell out what we want to achieve; the strategies we will use to achieve our aim; and how and when action will occur.

We are hoping that organisational members will play a major role in these plans.

The Working Parties will also be calling for your help and input. We are particularly keen for a more active involvement from members from rural areas.

Working Groups

The nominees to the four main Working Parties are:

Home Care and Attendant Care:

Kevin Byrne, George Ayoub, Bob Duncan, Kim Rowles

Access to Buses:

John Moxon, Alix Rainnie

Access to Buildings:

Mark Relf, Robyn Chapman, Jack Frisch, Wayne Nevinson, Alan Quirk

Aids and Equipment:

Diane Campbell, Fred Kaad

Watching Briefs

Individuals volunteered to maintain watching briefs over the following areas:

Ageing - Disability Interface	Bob Duncan
Children's Social/ Recreation	Diane Campbell, Jack Frisch
Community Options	Tom Ferguson
Cost of Disability (incl. Rural)	Anthony Hayes
DDA Legislation	Robbie Silberstein
DSA Review	Robyn Chapman
Education Integration	Mark Pentacost
Employment	Mark Relf
Entitlement Information	Robbie Silberstein Jack Frisch
Environment and Planning Act	Alan Quirk
Government Planning/Funding	Anthony Hayes
HREOC	Alan Quirk
Housing	Wayne Nevinson Alan Quirk
Taxation and Carers	Wayne Nevinson
Taxis	Kim Rowles
Transport (Other)	Kevin Byrne

"PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES" - DISABILITY CITIZENSHIP, SELF DETERMINATION AND POLITICAL ACTION

Thursday-Friday February 12-13 1998; 9am-5pm
The Conference aims to encourage discussion about the role of people with disabilities in forging a proactive political movement.

Unwaged \$30, Waged individuals \$150; Orgs \$150

Venue: The Roundhouse, University of NSW

Contact: Melissa Cater

Ph: 9385 1007 Fax: 9385 3059

PART-TIME POSITIONS VACANT

PROJECT OFFICER 3 days per week

Responsibilities include:

- Undertake specific projects for the Committee of Management
- Co-ordinate strategies and tasks for Committee, Executive and Subcommittees.
- Liase with government, service organisations, community, and other peak advocacy groups
- Liase with membership
- Attend Executive meetings in evenings
- Edit newsletter
- Office management
- Organise community consultations
- Increase profile and resources of PDCN

Preferred Requirements:

- Strategic planning experience
- Experience in Management of a small office
- Computer literacy
- Knowledge of human rights law
- People-skills
- Disability awareness

Salary:

To be negotiated.

For applications call (02) 9299 2822.

OFFICE MANAGER 20 hours per week

Responsibilities include:

- Office management
- Manage filing, correspondence, mailouts
- Manage mail and information
- Manage phone calls
- Financial record-keeping
- Organise travel and accommodation

Preferred Requirements:

- Experience with wordprocessing, database and publishing software
- Experience with MYOB or similar software
- Ease with E-Mail and Fax broadcasting
- People-skills
- Telephone skills
- Disability awareness

Salary:

To be negotiated

For applications call (02) 9299 2822

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

We need volunteers to help with mailings, to help around the office, to help with campaigns, to call members, to work on the newsletter, Web page, etc. etc. etc.

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

The members of the Committee of Management and their phone numbers are:

John Moxon (President)	9639 9110 (ah)	Anthony Hayes	9661 885 (bh)
Mark Relf (Vice President)	9661 6620 (ah)	Fred Kaad	9969 7217
Diane Campbell (Secretary)	9890 0100 (bh)	Oliver Morton-Evans	9969 9319
Jack Frisch (Treasurer)	9327 6919	Wayne Nevinson	(02) 6021 1663
George Ayoub	9832 4640	Mark Pentacost	(02) 4735 2268 (ah)
Kevin Byrne	9587 9364 (ah)	Alan Quirk	9972 2268 (ah)
Robyn Chapman	9918 6295 (ah)	Alix Rainnie	9533 4083
Bob Duncan	9764 4166 (bh)	Kim Rowles	9560 0192 (ah)
Tom Ferguson	02 4393 1439	Robbie Silberstein	9371 6118

The Physical Disability Council of NSW provides a statewide representative voice by being the communication link between people with a physical disability and service providers, decisions makers in government, the community and the business world. For information on membership telephone 1800 688 831

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Contributions Welcome. NEXT EDITION DEADLINE: February 15th