

**Physical
Disability
Council
of NSW**

**Annual Report
2004 - 2005**

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President's Message

My first year as President has been action-packed. First of all, I want to thank all of the members of the Management Committee for their assistance and support during a challenging year!

In January, we said good-bye to Dougie Herd, as he moved from Executive Officer of PDCN to Executive Officer of the Disability Council of NSW. Dougie's cogent, thoughtful world view and his consistent refusal to allow disability and people who have a disability to be considered to be marginal issues will continue to benefit all of our members, even though Dougie is no longer employed by PDCN.

Our search for a new Executive Officer was long and, at times, frustrating, but Sharon Smith did stalwart work as our Acting Executive Officer, until the end of September, when she commenced work at MDAA(theMulticultural DisabilityAdvocacyAssociation).The

Management Committee and I thank Sharon for her efforts – she kept PDCN running successfully through thick and thin. At the end of September, we welcomed our new Executive Officer, Robyn Chapman. Robyn is well-known to many of us who work for people with disability, through her work at the Spastic Centre and on committees that address various issues relating to disability, such as the PADP Advisory Committee and the DADHC Expert Advisory Group on Personal Assistance. PDCN is extremely lucky to have found someone who has Robyn's broad-ranging expertise.

Our mission continues. Equity is our focus and our goal. People with disability deserve to be accepted as valuable members of society and PDCN continues to work to achieve equity and acceptance for people with disability.



***Ann-Mason Furmage
President***

About PDCN

The Physical Disability Council of New South Wales Incorporated (PDCN) is the peak body representing people with physical disability across the state. Our members live in all parts of New South Wales. They are the foundation of our organisation. It is to further their interests and those of people with physical disability generally that PDCN exists.

This Annual Report provides a summary of the work and activities of PDCN during the 12 months to 30 June 2005. As we have said before, this text can give only a summary of the range of activities that have kept us all very busy.

PDCN's overall purpose is to be an effective systemic advocacy organisation for people with physical disability living in New South Wales. In fulfilling the role of systemic advocate, PDCN actively and enthusiastically seeks to:

- Lobby decision-makers on behalf of people with physical disability;
 - Campaign effectively to challenge injustice against people with physical disability and in support of equality of opportunity for all;
 - Represent the interests of people with physical disability to government, non-government and private sector organisations;
 - Develop policies which promote equality of opportunity based on the experience and aspirations of people with disability;
 - Prepare written submissions which promote the interests of people with physical disability;
 - Present the interests of people with physical disability through media interviews, articles and features in newspapers, magazines, radio, television and the Internet.
- In this Annual Report we have drawn attention to the key activities of PDCN during the last year. There is much, however, that goes on but which one does not find in place in the pages that follow. For example:
- We met with many people and organisations throughout the year, reflecting the status of PDCN as an important peak body.
 - We continued to work-on, develop and maintain links between the disability sector and other community organisations sectors, seeking to create and sustain mutually supportive networks with the potential to enhance the lives of all disadvantaged citizens.
 - We gave information to anyone who asked for it: from school students preparing for the HSC to Ministerial

Advisors and Senior Public Servants. People with physical disability, in particular, value the knowledge, information and insight we have acquired since PDCN was established. Our direct experience and knowledge of the realities of the lives of people with physical disability makes it possible for us to act as a pivotal referral service in the lives of many.

PDCN People & Resources

PDCN relies heavily on the commitment of committee members, volunteers and supporters. Those voluntary contributions combine with and supplement the work of our staff team to promote the interests and aspirations of people with physical disability in NSW. We are enormously grateful for every contribution we have received during the period of this Annual Report.

Committee of Management

The Management Committee has up to 21 members who meet every two months. The committee sets the overall policy for PDCN, oversees the financial, administrative and organisational resources of PDCN and acts as the main engine for debate, discussion and development within PDCN between Annual General Meetings.

In addition to bi-monthly meetings of the full Management Committee, members participate in working parties and policy groups organised around our key priorities. These working groups also

involve participants who are not members of the PDCN Management Committee.

In 2004 - 2005 as in previous years, the contributions of individual members of our committees and working groups have been invaluable.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is elected by and from the members of the Committee of Management.

In the year to 30 June 2005 the members of the PDCN Executive Committee were:

- President **Ann-Mason Furmage**
- Vice-Pres **John Moxon**
- Secretary **Iain Dison**
- Treasurer **Stewart MacLennan**
- EC Members: **Glenn Redmayne**
Kim Rowles
Jack Frisch

The Executive Committee meets regularly. It is responsible for implementing policies agreed by the management committee. In addition it monitors and guides the activities of the office, overseeing administrative tasks.

PDCN Staff

As has already been noted in the President's report, in January 2005 PDCN said farewell to Dougie Herd, who had been Executive Officer since November 1999. Dougie's skills as an advocate and a manager are well known. His pragmatic approach to systemic advocacy consolidated the profile of PDCN, enabling PDCN to "punch above its weight".



Dougie Herd,
who was Executive Officer from
November 1999 until January 2005

Anastassia Chechoukova is our Administrative Assistant. Anastassia manages the accounts and undertakes the administrative support for the office, including the Women's Network. Anastassia graduated this year with a Masters Degree in Commerce from the University of Sydney – Well done, Anastassia!



Sharon Smith Project Officer and
Acting Executive Officer

Sharon Smith as Project Officer and Acting Executive Officer has done a remarkable job keeping the work of the organisation going while continuing to develop the Women's Network following Dougie's departure.

Craig Andrews is employed as PDCN's second Project Officer, focussing on production of materials and publications produced by PDCN for our members and on the development of the PDCN Forum.

Sharon Maher joined us during the year, on a temporary basis providing invaluable back-up for Sharon Smith, and in particular, managing the daily "fax out" as part of the PADP campaign.

PDCN Volunteers

In addition to members of our committees and working parties, PDCN receives very welcome and much valued support from a team of regular volunteers, without whom we would not be as effective as we are.

The value we place on the contribution of volunteers, whether as committee members, activists, supporters or participants in our activities, cannot be over-stated. The people who give their time willingly and enthusiastically to PDCN make possible and worthwhile much of what we strive to achieve.

We are especially grateful to those 'regulars'. They are:

➤ **Bronwyn Moye**

Bronwyn works in coordinating the PADP Campaign, which is

much appreciated. The campaign would not be the coordinated success it is without her hard and valuable assistance.

We are grateful to have the active support of such a well-known and experienced advocate.

➤ **Ed Sutton**

Ed continues to give us invaluable support and assistance with our IT network (and a whole heap of other stuff).

➤ **John Raymond, Maruska Hanak and Jan Cameron Smith**

John, Maruska and Jan assist us with vital administrative tasks such as filing, mailings, updating our databases and maintaining our library records.

Thank you, as ever, to our volunteers.

Linking Across NSW

Consulting with and listening to people with physical disability and their representatives across NSW remain vital elements of our work. We believe it is crucially important for our role as a peak body and systemic advocacy organisation that we meet with people across NSW, in the towns, cities and communities in which they live to learn more about what is important to them.

This will be an area of re-energised commitment over the next financial year. As an organisation we need to ensure that the views we express are the views of the people we represent and our work carries more power with the support of our members.

During 2003-2004 PDCN continued to support our partners, the **Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association (MDAA)** and the **NSW Council for Intellectual Disability (CID)**, in an advocacy skills development project targeting three areas of regional NSW. The project is funded by DADHC. MDAA is the project's lead agency.

The web-based **PDCN FORUM** continues to grow and develop into a vibrant on-line community, providing a core opportunity for debate and information sharing. Again, PDCN will concentrate efforts to further develop this valuable communication tool during 2005-2006.

During the report period, there were 275 messages, averaging 23 per month, with three distinct themes: PADP and access to equipment; Attendant Care funding, and Access to Built Environment including access to tourist facilities. Each message facilitated a range of responses and discussions from forum members.

LOCATION OF MEMBERS OF PDCN ADVOCACY NETWORK



NSW Network of Women With Disability

In March 2004, PDCN received a grant from the then NSW Department for Women through the Large Grants Program. The project funding period concluded in June 2005.

The project was a success with the Network now being self-sustaining and the partner organisations remaining committed to supporting the work of the women in continuing their work.

In our application for funding we said:

The Physical Disability Council of NSW, working with the partner organisation, Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association, will create an innovative partnership to work with and support women with disability. Working together, initially in five areas of the state, we will develop sustainable networks of women with disability that support one another and are supported to effect individual and systemic change intended to break down barriers of discrimination and disadvantage in favour of greater social inclusion.

Network Membership

The membership of the NSW Network of Women with Disability grew and developed rapidly. This confirmed for us the need for such a Network.

By the end of the Project funding period, 154 individual women with disability had joined the Network. This almost doubled the target we had set ourselves.

We continue to work to ensure the participation in the Network of women with disability from CALD backgrounds. We have conducted surveys of members on two occasions throughout the project period. Currently our membership survey indicates that 27% of women from CALD backgrounds.

We are also pleased to note that 35% of women live in rural and regional areas of NSW.

67% are women with physical disability.

Local Meetings

Ten groups of women met throughout the project period in the core activity areas. Women attending meetings expressed the wish to continue to meet on a regular basis. As a result, these groups meet every month and are supported by the Project Team.

Groups of women with disability meet on a monthly basis in;

- **Burwood**
- **Campbelltown**
- **Coffs Harbour**
- **Gordon**
- **Harris Park**
- **Kogarah**
- **Newcastle**
- **Penrith**
- **Sydney City**
- **Wollongong**

Each group meeting was attended regularly by an average of four to six women. A number of other women also attend on a more occasional basis.

The Project Officer (Sharon Smith) supported and participated in every meeting. From time-to-time, the Project Administration Officer (Anastassia Chechoukova) also attended the meetings. At least one woman with disability from the Project Steering Group also attended every meeting.

Womens Involvement in the Running of the Network

Women increasingly involved themselves in different aspects of the Network as well as forming links with other women with disability they meet at the gatherings.

At the first birthday of the Network in March 2005, the women formed the BeeHive. The BeeHive replaced the Steering Group to continue the work of the Network. Members of the BeeHive represent each of the local groups as well as the project areas of the Network.

The BeeHive continues to meet monthly.

The women have also formed the Womens Office Wenches. This team of women volunteer their time each week to carry out the day-to-day administration tasks of the Network.

Rickter Scale

The project trained 13 women to use the Rickter Scale as a tool to interview individual women with disability who are members of the Network. The women are

all now accredited Rickter Scale Practitioners.

The Rickter Scale was used to assess the impact of the Network in the lives of members.

Women were keen to be interviewed since this often represents the only time that anyone has ever asked them about what is important to them and how they feel about various aspects of their lives.

Women were interviewed three times as part of our project. The changes that women implemented in their lives as a result of their connections with other women in the Network ranged through; moving house to overseas travel to starting TAFE and university studies and the decision to pursue parenting options.

The women that have been interviewed were so impressed by their experience that they have expressed an interest in being trained to use the Rickter Scale themselves. As a result of this, PDCN trained another woman in the use of the Scale and has requested that the Network generate a policy on selecting other women to be trained.

One of the accredited women was also contracted by another organisation to complete Rickter interviews as part of a review of one of their projects.

Links and Alliances

Women with disability who are members of the Network assisted with, and participated in projects organised by the following organisations;

- Women with Disability Australia (WWDA)
- Physical Disability Council of Australia (PDCA)
- People with Disability Australia (PwD)
- Women with Disability Victoria (WWDVic)
- Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association (MDAA)
- National Ethnic Disability Alliance
- Mental Health Co-ordinating Council (MHCC)
- WRANA
- Zonta
- Breast Screen NSW
- Womens Electoral Lobby
- Premiers Council for Women
- Women's Health NSW (WHN)
- FPA Health
- HREOC
- Attorney General's Victims of Crime Unit
- NSW Office for Women
- Royal Australian College of GP's (RACGP)

Women also participated in the following events and forums;

- Coffs Harbour Advocacy Summit
- PADP Delegation to NSW State Parliament
- Greens NSW Disability Forum
- Getting It Together
- Our Rights Our Voices
- International Women's Day
- Reclaim the Night
- Women, the Law and Sexual Assault

Building Communication

➤ **Website**

The PDCN Web Development Officer worked with the Project Officer to build the

first edition of the Network's dedicated website.

The website is currently being hosted by PDCN and can be viewed at:

- www.pdcnsw.org.au/network/women/index.htm

In the longer term, it is likely that the fully developed website of the NSW Network of Women with Disability will have it's own web presence.

➤ **Email List**

Working with the Project Staff Team, one of the Network participants took responsibility for developing the email list.

After input from and polling of all women with email connection with the Network, the name '**WOMENLIKEUS**' was selected. In consultation with the Steering Group, the Project Officer developed the 'Rules of Engagement' for participation in list discussions.

The list provides a forum for women with disability to connect with each other and further the goals of the Network. The list is a 'closed' group being only open to women with disability who are members of the Network. The list went 'live' in August. The home page of the list can be found at:

- www.groups.yahoo.com/group/womenlikeus

The emails from this list are printed off once a week and posted to women who are members of the Network who don't have access to email.

The elist has become a central tool facilitating communication between members of the Network.

➤ **Newsletter**

Initially, the newsletter was produced by the Project Officer. A group of Network participants then took responsibility for developing the Newsletter. The group worked with the Project Staff Team on their first issues of the newsletter. Since then, the group has become increasingly independent and now produces the Newsletter on their own. This newsletter has become a regular publication for the NSW Network of Women with Disability. It is produced three times a year.

Strategic Planning

As part of the first birthday and International Womens Day celebrations, members of the Network met to discuss their vision for the future of the Network.

Network members expressed a commitment to carrying forward the objectives of the Network and being actively involved in developing their own skills and those of others in order to achieve this. Members of the Network indicated the importance of the Network to them and took ownership of it.

Women also said that they wanted training in a range of areas from running the Network to public speaking and doing advocacy at individual and systemic levels.

Shortly after this meeting, a group of women sought training from NCOSS around funding and submission writing. Out of this training, the women developed two applications for funding;

- **City of Sydney Council Community Grant** – to develop an pregnancy and parenting information resource for mothers and expectant mothers with disability

- **ANZ Charitable Trust** – a three year project to further develop the capacity of women with disability to manage the Network and Network Projects and to address issues faced by women with disability. This project is a partnership between the Network, PDCN and MDAA.

Both of these applications were successful.

The NSW Network of Women with Disability has become a sustainable Network. This is our most important indicator of the success of the project.

Project Team

- **Project Officer:** Sharon Smith
- **Administration Officer:** Anastassia Chechoukova
- **Womens Office Wenchies:** Bronwyn Moye, Kerri Thorne, Joanne Hutchins, Jole Fenwick and Sonia Markoff-Dolby

Priority Policy Issues

Throughout the period covered by this Annual Report the priority areas of concern for PDCN have been:

- Personal Assistance and Support Services
- Transport & Parking
- Reform of the Program of Appliances for Disabled People (PADP)
- Access to the Built Environment

Due to staffing levels, this has been a difficult year for PDCN. Yet, the work continued and the profile of PDCN has remained intact. This is primarily due to the mammoth effort of Sharon Smith, in her position as Acting Executive Officer.

Personal Assistance And Support Services

PDCN policy states our belief that society must respond to and meet the unmet needs of people with disability:

- ***“Personal dignity in the social relationships we establish in family life, community settings or through work, leisure and our connection to service providing systems.***
- ***Independence in making decisions about our lives in all their aspects.***
- ***Informed choice from a range of options that has not been constrained by systemic failures and/or discriminatory barriers.***
- ***Participation in all aspects of Australian society on the same terms as other Australians.***
- Civil and Human Rights clearly established in Law, based on inclusive principles and supported by institutional mechanisms that are capable of assisting society to meet the legitimate aspirations of people with disabilities.”

DADHC Working Party

Throughout the period of this report PDCN has continued to play a significant and leading role in the work of the DADHC Expert Advisory Group (EAG) on Physical Disability on the reform of personal assistance and support services for adults with physical disability.

The EAG is chaired by the Deputy Director General (Policy) of DADHC and has been meeting regularly and frequently since December 2002. Our aim, at PDCN, was to create a new model of support in NSW that would meet people's needs, making it possible for them to live with dignity as autonomous participants in the community.

As mentioned in the previous Annual Report, DADHC had agreed in principle to all the recommendations of the put forward by the original working party. The primary "blocks" to the implementation of the recommendations remains a lack of funding into the personal assistance schemes: the Attendant Care Program and The Home Care Service of NSW.

Home Care Service of NSW

This year saw the publication and approval of new High Needs Pool to be implemented from July 1, 2005. PDCN through its membership to the EAG was able to provide some feedback into the final guidelines.

Attendant Care Programme

With the filling of the additional 100 places to the Attendant Care Program, this vital program once again has long waiting lists.

There has been some movement towards a pilot of a direct funding model. During December 2004 and January 2005, DADHC called for expressions of interest for inclusion in a Direct Funding Pilot, from people who were already using Attendant Care funding. This pilot will commence as soon as DADHC has clarified particularly the tax implications of such a model.

Additionally, as a result of the work of the EAG and PDCN, DADHC allocated two Attendant Care packages for "developmental" purposes. This has enabled two people to gain funding while still living at home, enabling them to fund their transition into independent living.

OH&S

Early in 2005, ACROD, raised with Workcover and DADHC the need to solve what is viewed as the tension between the NSW Disability Services Act and Occupational Health and Safety legislation. A brief was developed and ACROD have appointed Project Officer. It is PDCN's view, that in spite of vigorous lobbying, at no time has there been any adequate consultation with

people with physical disability, nor any inclusion of people with physical disability at a steering committee level. with disability through its member organisations. It is the view of PDCN that this is a clear conflict of interest. PDCN will closely monitor the progress The view is that ACROD is able to represent the needs and views of people.

MAA community participation project

Younger People With Disability And Residential Aged Care Facilities

Transport & Parking

Working towards the goal of fully accessible transport is a high priority for PDCN. PDCN policy states that:

"All buses, trains, ferries, planes and other forms of transport - government and privately owned - must be made accessible to the whole community."

NSW WAT Taskforce

During the year the WAT Taskforce had a change in leadership. The Fitzgerald Report was released outside the timeframe of this report.

It is extremely disappointing that it is apparent that the recommendations will not include a move to a universally accessible taxi fleet. We are pleased to report that the recommendations will however include incentives for drivers, balanced with performance monitoring around all aspects of service delivery, especially compliance with response times. This will include the development of minimum performance standards.

PDCN will continue to advocate for a universally accessible taxi fleet as the only appropriate option, and as a means of creating some equity.

NCOSS Transport

Advisory Group

PDCN has continued to provide a disability perspective to this wide-ranging NCOSS policy advisory group.

Issues covered in this financial year include the WAT and TTSS Review, IPART Fare recommendations, Bus reform and community transport.

Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme

The review of the TTSS is linked to the WAT Taskforce Review. To date, the Smartcard Trial has been completed with the results due at the end of 2005. The review will continue and address the level of the subsidy, which is inadequate, the level of access especially within CALD communities, the permanent introduction of the Smartcard, to be linked to the GPS and booking systems which will assist in driver performance monitoring.

Events Transport Levy

In May 2005 PDCN wrote to the Ministry of Transport expressing concern over the compulsory levy that is applied to tickets to events held at Telstra Stadium. The levy applies whether or not a person intends to use public transport to the event or not. This discriminates against those who are not able to use public transport in the first place, but there is also not enough accessible public transport (buses, bus stops, trains and stations) to enable access to many people with physical disabilities. To date there has been no response.

Reform Of PADP

PDCN policy in relation to PADP remains unchanged, and is based on the principles set out in the PDCN document, *Position Papers '99*. Our view is straightforward. We believe that

“People with physical disabilities must be provided with the essential aids and equipment they need to achieve a quality standard of living that facilitates maximum participation within their community.”

PDCN has again continued to co-ordinate the disability sector group of representatives on the State-wide NSW Program of Appliances for Disabled people Advisory Committee, known as PADPAC. The group meets in advance of each PADPAC meeting to consider papers and issues that are likely to be raised at meetings. This has been vital in maintaining a cohesive, whole of sector view and approach to PADP

Although there remains frustration at the pace of reform, these frustrations need to be balanced with the successes achieved.

As members of PADPAC, we have continued to urge NSW Health to make progress in the areas identified below.

- During the period covering this report, the Department of Health remained unable to provide any data on unmet need within PADP from the PADP Information System. The

department did however accept that lodgement centres stored their own waiting list data, and further, that the department would make an attempt to collect that information. In September 2005 (outside the time-frame of this report) the department was able to estimate the waiting list to be at least \$5.5 m. We await a more accurate estimate.

- The development and implementation of the Priority Assessment Tool (PAT) has continued to cause concern. Value laden capacity to benefit measures remain and PDCN is concerned about the appropriateness of some questions to be asked of each person, regardless of disability or piece of equipment being prescribed. The “bottom” line is, of course, that if there were enough funding within the system a PAT would not be required. It is projected that the final report on the trial phase will be ready by the end of 2005.
- The review of PADP will finally go ahead in the latter part of 2005. This year has seen the development of a terms of reference for the review, which will investigate three core areas: Management and Administration; Target Population and Demand Issues and Budget Requirements. We are expecting to be consulted.

PADP Budget, Unmet Need and the ongoing Campaign

The key issue for PADP, from the perspective of PDCN remains the amount of money in the PADP Budget. We believe that levels of unmet need for aids and equipment is substantial in NSW and increasing.

- The campaign established in the previous year has continued in this year. In February, a rally was held at Parliament House, coinciding with the first parliamentary question time of the year.
- People with disabilities, coordinated by PDCN, have had a presence at each question time since, maintaining the profile of PADP.
- The fax campaign continues with one fax being sent each day to the Premier, the Treasurer and the Minister for Health.
- Following the February rally, the then Minister for Health, Morris lemma asked a delegation to meet with his staff in order to explain progress on PADP by his office staff. A number of guarantees were made at this meeting: the review would go ahead; the minister was to seek additional funds at the May budget and the Minister had found a "spare" \$1m from unallocated funds as a one-off enhancement to assist in the reduction of the waiting list. For the first time there was a member of the

DADHC Minister's staff present, and both Ministers' offices would be working on PADP together. Additionally both departments would be able to sort out the administrative difficulty of transferring the annual DADHC paediatric enhancement of \$2m so that it is available for equipment at the beginning of the financial year, not at the end.

- The Minister was able to secure an additional \$1m in recurrent funding for PADP effective July 1st 2005. This gave a recurrent increase of \$3m into PADP commencing 1st July 2005.
- The number of supporting organisations has continued to grow, reflecting the concern across the whole sector. This support has been vital to the success achieved. The supporting organisations are:
 1. Ability Incorporated
 2. Ability Options
 3. Aboriginal Disability Network
 4. Action for People with Disability
 5. Active Employment Allowance Inc
 6. Association of Genetic Support of Australasia Inc
 7. ACROD
 8. Australian Foundation for the Disabled (AFFORD)
 9. 'Australian Possibility Consultants (a division of ACCENT PL)
 10. Aged-Care Rights Service
 11. Arthritis NSW
 12. Blue Mountains Women's Health Centre

13. Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association of NSW Inc
14. Care-n-Co. Co-operative Ltd
15. Carers NSW
16. Care Works
17. Council for Intellectual Disability
18. DAISI
19. Deaf Blind Association
20. Disability Advocacy and Information Service, Wodonga
21. Disability Advocacy Network, Wagga Wagga
22. Disability Advocacy Services Hunter
23. Disability Information & Referral Centre, Bondi Junction
24. Families In Partnership
25. Family Advocacy
26. Handicapped Haven
27. IDEAS
28. Independence (Rural Disability Network)
29. Independent Rehabilitation Supplies Association NSW
30. Liverpool Fairfield Disabled Persons Resource Service
31. Local Disability Advisory Committee, Coffs Harbour
32. Macarthur Disability Network
33. Macarthur Disability Services
34. Mental Health Co-ordinating Council
35. Motor Neurone Disease Association of NSW
36. Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association
37. MS Society NSW
38. Muscular Dystrophy Association of NSW
39. NSW Association for Adolescent Health
40. NCOSS
41. NSW Association for Children with Disability
42. NSW Network of Women With Disability
43. Northcott Society
44. Paraquad NSW
45. Penrith Disability Resource Centre
46. People With Disability Australia
47. Physical Disability Council of NSW
48. Post Polio Network
49. Recreation and Peer Support (RAPS)
50. St George Association for People With Physical Disabilities
51. Spinal Cord Injuries Australia
52. Stroke NSW
53. Thalidomide Network
54. The Spastic Centre
55. The Spina Bifida Group of NSW
56. Wesley Mission Disability Support Services
57. Western Sydney Intellectual Disability Support Service
58. Wollongong Womens Centre
59. Women with Disabilities Newcastle
60. Women's Health NSW

Access To The Built Environment

Our policy states that:

“All new buildings, building works and surrounding areas must be fully accessible at least to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's Advisory Notes on Access to Premises 1988. Existing buildings should be continually made to conform to the same Advisory Notes. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) should be amended to allow for the making of a DDA Access Standard. In addition the DDA complaint mechanisms should remain in place.”

Draft DDA Standards on Access to Premises

During 2005, there has been no progress on the Draft DDA Access to Premises Standard. The standard that is likely to be submitted to the Attorney General is one that furthers discrimination.

The issues of concern relate to:

- Lack of lift access in small building (2 and 3 storeys)
- Unjustifiable hardship.

In rural and metropolitan areas people with mobility problems will be denied access to services located on other than

the ground floor of 2 and 3 storey buildings. Additionally this lack of access will reduce employment opportunities for anyone who needs to use a lift.

Unjustifiable hardship is currently a defence for discrimination under the Access to Premises provisions of the DDA. This PDCN understands. However this defence has been placed within the draft Access to Premises Standard, and will apply to new buildings. This is unacceptable.

A letter outlining PDCN's concerns was sent to federal politicians. Further representations were made to federal politicians in April, specifically with regards to the impact inaccessible 2 and 3 storey buildings will have on the Welfare to Work reforms and employment opportunities. We were very pleased to have Senator Jan McLucas (ALP) (QLD) visit the office, outside the time frame of this report to further clarify this issue.

Australian Network for Universal Housing Design

Throughout the year PDCN has been an active participant in ANUHD: the Australian Network for Universal Housing Design. The goal of network is to secure a national agreement that will require all private dwellings to be built to an agreed level of accessibility, similar

to the level required in the UK as part of the Lifetime Homes concept.

We participate in the monthly national teleconference of the ANUHD Steering Group of which our representative is the national Vice-Convenor.

This report is due to be published, and submitted to the ABCB at the end of 2005.

During 2005 Jaguar Consulting was engaged to conduct research into the cost and benefit of accessible private dwellings.

Committee Attendance Records 2004-2005

Management Committee Meetings

	JULY – OCT 2004		NOV 2004–JUN 2005	
	Attended	Possible	Attended	Possible
Justine Acar	0	2	3	4
David Brice	2	2	2	4
Kevin Byrne	0	2	Deceased	
Iain Dison	1	2	2	4
Bruce Donaldson	2	2	4	4
Chris Fallon	0	2	2	4
Jack Frisch	Not a member		2	4
Ann-Mason Furmage	2	2	4	4
Graham Hand	2	2	3	4
Stewart McLennan	Not a member		4	4
John Moxon	2	2	2	4
Alix Rainnie	1	2	Not a member	
John Raymond	2	2	Not a member	
Glenn Redmayne	2	2	3	4
Carmelo Respanti	2	2	Not a member	
Kim Rowles	2	2	2	4
Ed Sutton	1	2	2	4
Ross Turner	2	2	4	4
Mark Relf	2	2	2	4

Executive Meetings

	JULY – OCT 2004		NOV 2004–OCT 2005	
	Attended	Possible	Attended	Possible
David Brice	1	1	Not a member	
Iain Dison	1	1	1	2
Chris Fallon	0	1	Not a member	
Jack Frisch	Not a member		1	2
Ann-Mason Furmage	Not a member		2	2
Stewart McLennan	Not a member		2	2
John Moxon	Not a member		2	2
Mark Relf	0	1	1	2
Glenn Redmayne	1	1	Not a member	
Kim Rowles	0	1	2	2
Ed Sutton	1	1	Not a member	

