

PHYSICAL DISABILITY COUNCIL OF NSW

PDCN ANNUAL REPORT
2007-08



Contributors

- **Ann-Mason Furmage**
Committee of Management
President
- **Jo Ragen**
Committee of Management
Vice-president
- **Stewart McLennan**
Committee of Management
Treasurer (left Nov 07)
- **John Morgan**
Committee of Management
Treasurer (Started Nov 07)
- **Jenny Kapp**
Committee of Management
Secretary
- **Andrew Longhurst**
Committee of Management
Member
- **Patricia Byrne**
Committee of Management
Member
- **Robert Manga**
Committee of Management
Member
- **Sonia Markoff**
Committee of Management
Member
- **Neil von Schill**
Committee of Management
Member
- **Justine Acar**
Committee of Management
Member
- **Chris Fallon**
Committee of Management
Member (left June 08)

“ Thank you to all who have been involved in the work of PDCN during 2007-08 ”

- **Robyn Chapman**
Executive Officer (left Jan 08)
- **Ruth Robinson**
Executive Officer (started June 08)
- **Jordana Goodman**
Policy Officer
- **Craig Andrews**
Resource Development Officer
- **Lachlan Hazelton**
Media Officer
- **Bronwyn Moye**
Volunteer
- **Robyn Farrow**
Financial Support (left May 08)
- **Anna Musicco**
Financial Support
Numbers Business (started May 08)
- **Colin Slattery**
Facilitator, Strategic Planning Process
Semann & Slattery
- **David Fearnley**
Auditor
- **Katrina Spruce**
Administrative Support

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Organisation Profile

Peak Activities

1. Developing policy and advocacy
2. Providing advice and information
3. Consulting broadly in NSW
4. Building NSW sector capacity
5. Promoting partnership & collaboration

Philosophy:

People with physical disabilities: ordinary people; ordinary lives.

Vision:

Effecting change through collaborative leadership.

Mission:

Using a community development approach, representing people in NSW who experience physical disabilities.

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President's Message

In PDCN's annual general meeting this year, we plan to have two exciting presentations

The Launch of PDCN's Strategic Plan for 2008-2011.

The Management Committee, along with our facilitator, Colin Slattery, from Semann & Slattery, gave a great deal of time and consideration to the development of the Purpose, Vision, Mission, Values and Key Performance Areas for PDCN. The results of the Management Committee's efforts were presented at the 2007 Annual General Meeting in the form of a consultation with our members, to inform further development of these vital areas of interest and concern for people with physical disabilities. At the 2008 Annual General Meeting, we will present the Strategic Plan for PDCN which is truly **our** Strategic Plan. My thanks go to everyone who participated and contributed to the development of this plan, particularly Colin Slattery and the Management Committee.



The Results of the Ageing with Disability Consultation.

Neil von Schill and I will present the results of the consultation on *The Impact of Ageing on the Needs of People with Disability*. Neil, a Member of PDCN's Management Committee, and Jordana Goodman, PDCN's Policy Officer, have put a tremendous amount of work into this consultation – planning, formulating the questions, publicising the consultation and encouraging people to complete the questionnaire. We have been extremely successful because of their efforts; more than 500 people have commenced our questionnaire. This means that a previously unacknowledged segment of the population has described their experiences, on a scale which has been previously unknown in Australia. People who are ageing with a disability, whose views have been often ignored and neglected, have had a chance to be heard. My thanks go to Neil and Jordana for their dedication, enthusiasm and plain old-fashioned hard work on this important project. Our mission continues. Equity is our focus and our goal. People with disability deserve to be accepted and respected as valuable members of society and PDCN continues to work to achieve equity, acceptance and respect for people with disability.

Ann-Mason Fumage

Informing the accessible transport agenda

Appreciating the critical need for accessible transport to ensure participation in all areas of life for people who have physical disability, PDCN has again been proactive in the accessible transport agenda.

Accessible public transport standards.

To accurately reflect our members interests PDCN conducted a 'Transport Forum' to identify the effectiveness of the Commonwealth Accessible Public Transport Standards with regard to the following modes of public transport for the Greater Metropolitan Area and rural NSW:

- Public and private bus networks
- CityRail and CountryLink networks
- Ferries, wharves and pontoons
- Aircraft and aerodromes
- Taxi services

PDCN lodged a written submission that included twenty six recommendations providing comment on access to transport modes, infrastructure and interchange connections.

Additionally PDCN participated in a Public Hearing and advocated for greater access and equity to all modes of public transport. PDCN also participated in the Ministry of Transport Accessible Transport Local Government Sub Committee as part of the Review.

Following this initial review, the consultants received over hundred written submissions from a large selection of different stakeholders. Issues arising from these submissions were analysed by the consultants, followed by the preparation of draft report supporting improved governance and compliance of the Transport Standards.

PDCN has again been proactive in the accessible transport agenda

More recently following these reviews, the NSW Ministry of Transport has established the following three sub-committees attended by PDCN:

- Planning and Local Government
- Wheelchair Accessible Taxis
- Access to public transport in rural NSW

Taxi and Train Services

In early 2008 the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) started its annual review into taxi fares and an investigation into the commercial operation of train services. PDCN participated in a Public Hearing, and provided a written submission focusing on the following themes with regard to taxi fares: cost of disability, the lack of availability of accessible public transport, the lack of WATS in many parts of the Greater Metropolitan area and rural NSW. Unfortunately it looks as though IPART will recommend an increase in taxi flag fall of 40 cents to \$2.00, but it is clear that IPART is strongly recommending that the NSW Ministry of Transport review the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme.

Policy Development & Advocacy

Reform of PADP

PDCN takes the position that people with physical disability must be provided with the essential aids and equipment they need to achieve a quality standard of living that facilitate maximum participation within their community.

In NSW a government program, the *Program of Appliances for Disabled People* (PADP) was established to assist people who have a life-long or long-term disability to live and participate in their community by providing equipment, aids and appliances.

PDCN has proactively worked for the reform of PADP since 1999, and each year the PDCN Annual Report has highlighted this organisations work in relation to this.

*facilitate **maximum participation** within their community*

During the last year a review of PADP by Price Coopers Waterhouse (PWC) report investigated the following issues within PADP:

- Management and Administration of PADP
- Access and Equity
- Management of Equipment

PADP will be restructured into one state-wide service. The work on this has begun, with PADP moving to EnableNSW (the state-wide Department of Health service, managing state-wide the department's disability programs). The change will take approximately 18 months to complete. We hope that the change will provide consistency and equity of process for all those seeking equipment form PADP.

Standard prescription guidelines are being developed to ensure that therapists regardless of where they are, use the same tools and prescription guidelines for equipment prescriptions.

The report contained recommendations for an increase in the co-payment and for restrictions in eligibility. It should be noted that these were developed in response to the need to make recommendations for managing the PADP budget as it was in 2005, with no projected increase in funding. More recently, the NSW Department of Health has provided an additional \$11m as one-off funding to help clear the wait list.

PDCN's position is that it is never appropriate to manage waiting lists and unmet need by restricting access. This only creates further unmet need; creates financial hard-ship; and/or reduces an individuals' ability to participate in and make the ordinary choices of life.

Policy Development & Advocacy

Access to the electoral process

There is an obligation for all eligible citizens to vote, yet not all polling venues are accessible. This reduces the opportunity for people who have physical disability to effectively participate in the democratic process.

PDCN has been very active in drawing attention to this issue using various strategies:

- PDCN participated in a Public Hearing at NSW Parliament into the Administration of the NSW 2007 State Elections
- PDCN provided written comment for the State Electoral Office
- PDCN issues a press release titled *Separate Is Not Equal: Polling Places in NSW*

At the State elections in March 2007, 14% of polling places were accessible. A modest increase to 15% for the Federal elections in November 2007 shows that progress is slow.

Providing input to the work of government agencies

PDCN continued to provide input to government in areas additional to transport and PADP, and included:

Input to the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC) by providing informed advice to:

- **Therapy Taskforce** - NSW Steering Committee for the Provision of Therapy Services in the Disability Sector
- **Therapy Taskforce** - Working Group Current Investment in Therapy Services attended 08/04/08
- **Physical Disability Expert Advisory Group (PDEAG)**
- **Supported Accommodation reference group**
- **Provided comment on DADHC** - Feedback and Complaints Handling Principles and Guidelines

PDCN also provided input to:

- Department of Health via the Review of operational Guidelines: NGO Grants program
- Participated in a consultation as part of the design of new trains
- NSW Roads and Traffic briefing regarding a prototype aimed at improving the safety of people with ambulant disabilities when crossing a road
- City of Sydney Council provided input to the Disability Action Plan
- CityRail provided advice on 'Accessing CityRail - Your Guide to Accessible Services' brochure
- Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. Written submission provided as part of a review of educational, rehabilitation, and employment practices

Providing Advice & Information

Promoting awareness of services, structures & programs

One of the objects of PDCN (as identified in its Constitution) is to educate, inform and assist people with physical disabilities in NSW regarding the range of services, structures and programs available that enable their full participation, equality of opportunity and equality of citizenship. PDCN uses a number of strategies and information tools to achieve this objective.

E-mail Discussion Group

The PDCN E-mail Discussion Group provides an opportunity for PDCN to engage with members and interested community members. The Group (including 65 members) is maintained by PDCN, and it provides a linkage between community members, sector leaders, disability advocates and people throughout NSW who have physical disability. During the year, 90 matters were posted on the group.

Newsletters

During the year two newsletters were distributed to members and associated individuals and organisations. Copies of the newsletters were also posted on PDCN's website and are available on www.pdcnsw.org.au

E-bulletins

This is resource and information service through which PDCN provides accurate, up-to-date, and timely information, comment and analysis on disability sector issues. During the last year these have included information about accessing public transport, individual opportunity to vote at polling places, community living, and issues associated with aids and equipment.

Telephone information Service

PDCN operates a telephone Information Service from Monday to Friday. The purpose of the Service is to respond to enquiries received regarding services available for people who have physical disability, information about issues of concern and providing feedback to PDCN. A 'snapshot' of this service indicated that most calls received during the year related to the availability of accessing physical aids for people who have disability.

Website

The Website holds an important function in meeting the organisation's objectives:

- Provides information about services, structure and programs available
- Provides an opportunity for contribution by people into the work of PDCN via electronic surveys
- Provides an education section, and also provides information for students
- Provides copies of submissions prepared by PDCN

Consulting Broadly

The impact of ageing on people with a disability

As part of our new strategic direction PDCN focused on developing networks with universities, research forums and researchers.

Our most significant project has been the preparation and distribution of the 'Impact of Ageing on the needs of people with a Disability' survey which seeks information regarding the following:

- Personal Assistance
- Housing and Accommodation
- Health and Wellbeing
- Transport and Mobility
- Social Networks
- Financial Security

The survey tool was developed by people who live with physical disability, and with input from the University of Sydney.

PDCN used a number of strategies to seek information from people with disability including:

- Consultations in four regional areas of the state
- Three consultations in the Sydney area
- Existing disability networks
- PDCN's membership, discussion group and website

PDCN would like to thank the more than 500 respondents who have either commenced this survey electronically or as a hard copy.

In August 2008 PDCN will have a Research Assistant to assist with the collation and analysis of this survey. The findings will then be presented at the AGM in October.

Submissions prepared by PDCN

To prepare submissions PDCN utilises a number of strategies to gain broad input from people in NSW who have a physical disability:

- Discussion with members of PDCN's Committee of Management (members of the Committee are people who have a physical disability or are the Representative of a person who has a disability (and is under 16 years of age).
- Comment via PDCN E-mail Discussion Group
- Input via the Telephone Information Service
- Community Consultations

*A list of **PDCN Submissions** during 2007-2008 is located in the Appendices, and are available at www.pdcnsw.org.au/publications/submissions*

Building NSW Sector Capacity

Promoting a positive view of people who have physical disability

PDCN has encouraged the media to present stories that promote a positive view of people with physical disability or that assist in the change to policy. Examples from the reporting year are:

- **The Manly Daily.** (April, 2008)
Lecturing is Child's Play.
By Sue Hoban
http://www.manlydaily.com.au/article/2008/04/29/9901_news_pf.html
- **Village Voice .com.au** (June 08 issue)
The one inch gap that causes a great divide.
By Lauren Farrow.

Providing web-management services to other not-for profit organisations

PDCN offers a service to organisations seeking regular website maintenance and updates on a weekly or daily basis

Services during this year have been provided to the:

- Multicultural Disability Advocacy Service
- Supported Living Forum
- Osteogenesis Imperfecta Society of Australia

Developing the capacity of people with physical disability

One of PDCN's objectives in its Constitution is to develop the capacity of people with physical disability in NSW to advocate for themselves. During the year a decision was taken to re-visit the educational resources associated with this aspects of PDCN's work.

Time has been 'set aside' to complete the 're-focusing' work associated with this. Any additional educational materials will be developed and completed for the Capacity Development Education.

The new materials will then be used in the Capacity Development Education for the workshops already committed to, and scheduled for early 2009 in regional areas. They are: Lismore in February; Orange in March; and Wagga Wagga in March.

Affecting the research agenda

PDCN provides advice to researchers on research projects and issues that affect people who have physical disabilities. A member of PDCN's Committee of Management began participating in a Pilot Study with the University of Western Sydney on 'Assisted Technology and Disability'.

Promoting Collaboration

PDCN develops working relationships with service providers, community organisations and other PEAK organisations. During 2007-2008 PDCN has participated in meetings, including:

- **National Disability Services**
- **Energy and Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON)**
- **NSW Disability Advocacy Network (NDAN)**
- **NSW Health**
Non Government Organisations Health Peaks Advisory Committee
- **NSW Health**
Program of Appliances for Disabled People (PADP) Advisory Committee
PADP Review of Aids and Equipment
- **Lifetime Care and Support Authority**
Guidelines for Levels of Attendant Care for people with Spinal Cord Injury - Advisory Committee
- **Ombudsman's Disability Round Table**
- **University of Sydney**
The Home Modification Information Clearing-house Project Team
- **Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care**
Supported Accommodation
Personal Care Expert Advisory Committee
- **Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care. Health Therapy Taskforce.**
Provision of Therapy Services in the Disability Sector
Therapy Taskforce Literature Review
University Sector Promotion
Recruitment and Retention
- **Non Government Organisations Research Forum**
- **City of Sydney**
Access Forum
Parking Forum
- **NCOSS**
Community Health Advisory Committee
Forum of non-government Agencies (FONGA)
- **Ministry of Transport**
Accessible Transport Consultative group
Planning and Design of Transportation in local government

Strengthening the Organisation

Strategic planning

To help inform the work of PDCN the organisation has undertaken a Strategic Planning Process during the last year.

An independent facilitator (Colin Slattery from Semann and Slattery) was used to assist in the process.

The result of the planning process was a plan that will provide the opportunity for the organisation to focus its work from 2008 - 2011, and clearly articulates the areas in which that work is to occur. Four major outcome areas were identified:

- **Reform:** Informing the policy agenda on inclusive community practices
- **Research:** Being an active partner in informing the research agenda
- **Governance:** Efficient and effective governance system guiding the decision making processes of the Council
- **Organisational development:** Financial and employee development

The Strategic Plan will be available for ratification by the Committee of Management in August 2008.

Planning Ahead:

Focusing the work of PDCN from 2008 - 2011

*Committed to providing
good governance
to PDCN*

Education / development for members of the Committee of Management

Governance training was provided for members of the Committee of Management in December 2007. The delivery of this training reflects the commitment PDCN has to providing good governance to the organisation:

- The training will be presented once a year to all Committee members
- This will provide an opportunity for new members to become aware of their responsibilities
- Committee members will gain information that enables them to carry out their responsibilities

In addition, it will provide an opportunity for Committee members who have participated previously to refresh, and build on earlier information.

Press Releases for 2007 / 08 included:

August	Back to the future: institutional living
September	PADP fails again!
Nov.	Separate is not equal
March	Employees of ability overlooked
April	Companion card for careers
May	Budget first step to National Disability Strategy
June	Budget boost for people with disabilities in NSW.

*All media releases
are available at
www.pdcnsw.org.au/press/*

**Summary of Committee of
Management Individual
Attendances (2007-2008)**

	Management Committee	Executive Committee	Totals
Ann-Mason Furrage	5 (of 5)	3 (of 3)	8 (of 8)
Jo Ragen	5 (of 5)	3 (of 3)	8 (of 8)
Stewart McLennan	1 (of 1)	1 (of 1)	1 (of 1)
John Morgan	4 (of 5)	0 (of 3)	4 (of 8)
Jenny Kapp	3 (of 4)	0 (of 3)	3 (of 7)
Andrew Longhurst	3 (of 4)	Na	3 (of 4)
Patricia Byrne	5 (of 5)	Na	5 (of 5)
Robert Manga	4 (of 4)	Na	4 (of 4)
Sonia Markoff	3 (of 5)	Na	3 (of 5)
Justine Acar	2 (of 4)	Na	2 (of 4)
Neil von Schill	4 (of 4)	Na	4 (of 4)
Chris Fallon	0 (of 4)	Na	0 (of 4)

Appendices

PDCN submissions during 2007/08

- **National Mental Health and Disability Employment Strategy** (June 2008)
Prepared for the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)
- **Report on the Feedback and Complaints Handling Principles and Guidelines** (May 2008)
Prepared for the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home care (D08/5757)
- **Report on the Review of Taxi Fares in NSW Transport - Draft Report and Draft Recommendations** (March 2008)
Prepared for the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal
- **Report on the 2007 State Election** (March 2008)
- **Response to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal Review into Taxi Fares** (March 2008)
- **Response to Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal Review into Taxi Fares** (March 2008)
- **Determining CityRail's revenue requirement and how it should be funded** (March 2008)
Response to Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART)
Transport Discussion Paper
- **Draft Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2007- 2011** (January 2008)
For the City Of Sydney
- **Notice of Application for temporary exemption: REX Express Pty Ltd.** (Regional Airline Carrier)
(December 2007)
Submitted to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
- **First of four Reviews of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport** (August 2007)
Prepared for the NSW Ministry of Transport and Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission

PEOPLE WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITY: *ordinary people; ordinary lives*



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