

## Welcome to the April PDCN Live Newsletter!

Welcome to PDCN's first PDCN Live for 2017. It's hard to believe we are already heading into April!

PDCN's team are back from holidays and continuing to progress the many areas of business we work in – including the delivery of our two major projects that are helping to prepare people with disabilities in NSW for access to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The Board too is working to continue to align our strategy with funding changes moving forward and endeavor to set us up with a viable long term future.

We have some great new PDCN staff and Board members – meet them later in the newsletter!

As I've been undertaking half yearly reporting I found it interesting, and perhaps a little concerning, to see that enquiries to our telephone information line have doubled over the past 6 months. There has been a huge increase in those wanting to take advantage of PDCN's workshops and training – but more than 10% of these enquiries were general questions about the NDIS. Another 8% were wanting to know how to prepare for an NDIS plan; 7% of individuals were needing referral to individual advocacy and the next highest concern was access to transport and the physical environment.

PDCN will continue to monitor these concerns and look to implement systemic change through Government, or other relevant bodies, where we are seeing repeated issues.

For those of you whom also connect with us via our enews, PDCN will shortly be sending out a consultation survey to get your feedback on the areas that you, our members and stakeholders believe are the most pressing for us to act upon, and for feedback on what we do well, could do better, or how we can support you more. We would greatly value everyone taking a few minutes out of your day to complete the survey – and if you should need us to provide the survey in hard copy or another accessible format – please email or call us and let us know your requirements (admin@pdcnsw.org.au phone: 1800 688 831)

Enjoy the upcoming Easter break,

**Serena Ovens,**  
**Executive Officer**

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## Contact Us



## Physical Disability Council of NSW

St Helens Community Centre  
3/184 Glebe Point Road,  
Glebe NSW 2037

1800 688 831  
*Freecall*

02 9552 1606  
*Sydney Metro*

[admin@pdcnsw.org.au](mailto:admin@pdcnsw.org.au)

# Profile: The Luff family

Patricia (Trish) Luff attended the recent NDIS Ready Workshop in Cronulla on behalf of herself and her two sons Greg and Liam. Trish has hereditary spastic paraplegia, alopecia and asthma, and is a wheelchair user. Greg and Liam also have hereditary spastic paraplegia and are wheelchair users. Post-workshop, Trish, Greg and Liam all requested pre-planning and were referred to PDCN Planner Krysten Taylor.



Liam Luff (far left) and Patricia Luff (far right) with friends at the SDU reception at Government House

Krysten met with the Luff family and helped them to develop their plan and prepare for their meeting with the NDIA. They aren't currently receiving any services from ADHC and have fundamental support needs that, when met, will improve their quality of life and time they spend with friends and family. Krysten helped the Luffs to develop goals and aspirations for their first NDIS plans, and the specific aims that will help them achieve these goals.

"I attended the Cronulla NDIS Ready Workshop as I wanted to find out more information about accessing the NDIS for myself and my two sons. I found the workshop very helpful and a vast amount of information was covered over the two days."



Following the workshop, we undertook pre-planning with Krysten. The pre-planning has helped us to explore how we can have more choice and control in our lives, and Krysten had great advice on how to put our ideas into a plan.” says Trish.

Krysten worked with Trish, Greg and Liam to create plans that would address each person’s individual goals. For example, Trish would like to increase her independence and there is certain assistive technologies and home modifications that would help her to maintain her independence. Not having to worry about these supports would in turn improve Trish’s quality of life.

Greg would like to continue wheelchair racing, and sees this as essential to maintaining his health and strength. Greg needs a new racing wheelchair as his current one is no longer suitable. This would contribute to achieving his goal to continue racing, and assist in maintaining his long-term health.

Liam plays wheelchair basketball and would like to continue to do so. He would also benefit from ongoing physiotherapy to help build and maintain good core strength. This is just a snapshot of the goals Krysten helped Trish, Greg and Liam address and of what can be covered in a pre-planning session. Trish was very happy with the information provided at the NDIS Ready Workshop and with Krysten’s approach during their pre-planning session. As we move towards the final roll out of the NDIS, the focus of the NDIS Ready Project will shift away from pre-planning and preparing you for your NDIA meeting, to shorter targeted specific skill workshops.



Greg Luff in action at the Summer Down Under Sydney International Track Meet

# NDIS Ready Workshops

The NDIS Ready Project has enjoyed another successful year, with eighteen (18) workshops held since July 2016, and another five scheduled before June. The workshops have been held in both metro and rural areas including Broken Hill, Orange, Wagga Wagga, Nowra, Cronulla, Newtown, Lismore and Port Macquarie. Workshops have been very well received, with over 350 individuals and carers attending so far. The remaining workshops are fully booked - some with extensive waitlists!

*"I found the workshop very helpful, and a vast amount of information was covered over the two days."*

- Cronulla NDIS Ready Workshop Attendee, Trish Luff

Feedback from the workshops has been extremely positive, particularly in regards to the content and knowledge of the facilitators. Many participants have noted that it was the most informative NDIS workshop they had attended, and that they particularly enjoyed meeting other people with disabilities and carers living in the same area. In addition, PDCN have also achieved positive outcomes for individuals by increasing their confidence to develop individual plans, and engage with and understand the NDIS.

## Are you emergency ready?

Do you have a plan ready for when an emergency happens?

PDCN's I'm Okay project can help you become emergency ready!

Simply head to: <http://www.pdcnsw-emergencyready.com/>



## Upcoming NDIS Ready Workshops

Our upcoming NDIS Ready Workshops are all fully booked at present however you can register to be placed on a waiting list. Dates are as follows:

**Broken Hill:** 2nd and 3rd of May

**Kogarah:** 1st and 2nd of May

**Gymea:** 3rd and 4th of April

**Grafton:** 4th and 5th of May

For further information on workshop content, or to register, go to [www.pdcnsw.org.au/workshops-and-training/ndis-ready/](http://www.pdcnsw.org.au/workshops-and-training/ndis-ready/) or call Alice Dixon-Wilmshurst on 9552 1606.

# Farewell and thank you!

As the new year starts PDCN says farewell to our Social and Online Media officer, Kieren Sainsbury, as he takes on an even greater challenge managing online communications for a new team in the NSW Department of Education. Kieren's assistance in building PDCN's new website, and strengthening our online communications has been invaluable in broadening our reach throughout the NSW disability sector and broader community.

In addition, PDCN thanks Beth Stockton, whom had been contracted to oversee the peer support project. Beth has done a great job of assisting the community connectors to continue to build and develop on the work of the peer groups, and manage this project through to the end of the funding period.

## And, welcome...

PDCN won't be left shorthanded though, as we have successfully engaged some fabulous new staff to take over these valuable positions.

Arabella Peterson steps in to take over the Social and Online Media officer role, and brings with her a wealth of experience in running and managing content for websites and social media. She will also oversee the maintenance and security of PDCN's CRM and member database.

Graham Newling also joins the team and will take the lead in developing the PDCN peer group project into a new phase, building on our successes so far, and working to continue to develop new groups throughout NSW, as well as implement some innovative ways in which peer groups can be run. If you haven't already, check out our Facebook peer support group – and join in the conversations as we support people to prepare for and implement their NDIS plans. Graham has previously worked for the Cancer Council in a similar peer support role and we're sure he'll use his knowledge and experience to add to this invaluable resource for all people with disability.

Lastly, for those of you whom receive our e-news, you will have already had a quick introduction to Alice Dixon-Wilmshurst whom joined the team in early January. Alice oversees the NDIS Ready Project, ensuring the success of the NDIS Ready workshops, and has her hands full as these are invariably oversubscribed!

The team looks forward to working with all our members to ensure continued engagement, and improved access to the NSW community for all our members and other stakeholders.

To see all the staff behind PDCN head to:  
[www.pdcnsw.org.au/about-us/staff](http://www.pdcnsw.org.au/about-us/staff)



# Peer Support Leaps and Bounds

Kim Tate is a foundation member of the Shoalhaven Self Advocacy Group, a peer support group which started in Nowra 5 years ago. Kim has a physical disability and mental health concerns. She describes the peer experience as the “best-ever” where she gained many benefits which she is now “giving back” to the community.

Kim says that the experience of peer support has given her new skills to “ask the right questions” and to be confident about her “needs and wants”.

Kim reports that Shoalhaven Self Advocacy group members have many shared experiences and interests. Due to the group’s progress Kim is “speaking-up for those who can’t”. Kim says that she has “gained new and long-lasting friends who are also survivors of traumatic experiences”. Kim and her new friends attend the group and meet socially.

Kim has recently launched the “Mental Health Treatment Program” which is a new community initiative aiming to improve access to mental health services in partnership with a local health professional. They are effectively advocating towards setting-up much-needed psychological services through local fundraising.

Still in production Kim has been interviewed for a film about community awareness of mental health. The film features recovery strategies and will be soon premiered in the local cinema. Afterwards it will be accessible online.

Kim says that her positive approach and her significant contributions to her peers are due to the power of peer support, which comes from the PDCN’s Shoalhaven Self Advocacy Group.



The Shoalhaven Self Advocacy Peer Group, February 2017

# PDCN fills the last vacant position on its Board!

PDCN is honoured to welcome Phil Burford to our Board, rounding off a great and diversified team to oversee the business of the organisation in exciting, but challenging times of change for advocacy organisations such as ours.

Phil is the CEO of Icon International Communications, and has more than 45 years experience as a communicator – from journalism, to corporate affairs and public relations with such companies as AC Nielsen, and Cathay Pacific.

Phil's own company provides business consulting to many firms throughout the Asia Pacific region, and he has previous Board experience, having been the National Treasurer of the Board of the Public Relations Institute of Australia (PRIA) and on the Board of Phoenix House, another NSW not for profit organisation.

PDCN look forward to working with Phil as we develop our brand strategy and continue to build our profile amongst government, the corporate sector, and the NSW community in a significantly changed marketplace.



Phil Burford, the latest member of the PDCN Board

## Donate to PDCN!

Remember, donations above \$2 are fully tax deductible.

You can make donations online at: <https://www.pdcnsw.org.au/get-involved/donation/>



# Handy Tips For Members

## Preparing for your planning meeting / pre-planning tips

- Start preparing for your NDIS meeting as soon as possible. There is a lot to consider as you transition to the NDIS, and knowing you're prepared will ensure the process is less stressful. The resources available [on our website](#) are a great place to start.
- Think about your goals and aspirations, both short and long term.
- Keep a diary of everything you do in a week to ensure you are aware of all the supports you need, both formal and informal. Don't forget about your transport needs.
- Start to gather any important supporting documentation e.g. letters from your doctor, specialists, information from your current service provider.
- Enlist the help of family and friends; the people in your support network can help you develop your plan and make sure you're not forgetting anything.
- Think outside the box: Under the NDIS you can use non-traditional service providers so this is an opportunity to meet your support needs in a creative way.
- Some planning meetings are held over the phone, however you have the right to ask for a face to face meeting, so don't feel you can't ask for one!

Find resources about pre-planning and preparing for your meeting at  
<https://www.pdcnsw.org.au/ndis/>

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## Don't Forget To Come Visit Us!

Sydney Showground, Sydney Olympic Park  
10 - 11 May 2017

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