



Physical Disability Council of NSW
Ordinary People Ordinary Lives

Submission for The City of Sydney

**Creative City: Draft Cultural Policy and Action
Plan 2014-2024**

June 2014

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Who is the Physical Disability Council of NSW?

The Physical Disability Council of NSW (PDCN) is the peak body representing people with physical disabilities across New South Wales. This includes people with a range of physical disability issues, from young children and their representatives to aged people, who are from a wide range of socio-economic circumstances and live in metropolitan, rural and regional areas of NSW

The objectives of PDCN are:

- To educate, inform and assist people with physical disabilities in NSW about the range of services, structure and programs available that enable their full participation, equality of opportunity and equality of citizenship
- To develop the capacity of people with physical disability in NSW to identify their own goals, and the confidence to develop a pathway to achieving their goals (ie self advocate).
- To educate and inform stakeholders (ie about the needs of people with a physical disability) so they are able to achieve and maintain full participation, equality of opportunity and equality of citizenship.

The Physical Disability Council appreciates the opportunity to consider, and make comment to The City of Sydney on the Creative City, Draft Cultural Policy and Action Plan 2014-2024.

We will not be making comment on all action areas, but will respond to those points raised, where we feel we can contribute to the discussion.

Strategic Priority 1 – Precinct Distinctiveness and Creativity in the Public Domain

Action point 1.11

PDCN agrees with the suggestion to refresh the website and communication tools for City Art to promote the City's existing and future public art projects.

After reviewing the City Art website, it appears the site does not provide information in accessible formats¹. Updating and refreshing the website to be more accessible will be consistent with Goal 2 of the *National Arts and Disability Strategy*:

“Information on access to arts and cultural facilities is widely available and in a variety of accessible formats”.

The guidelines of the National Arts and Disability Strategy also encourage organisations and cultural facilities to adopt the web accessibility standards of the Worldwide Web Consortium (W3C)².

¹ City Art website - <http://www.cityartsydney.com.au/cityart/>

² Cultural Ministers Council. (2009). *National Arts and Disability Strategy*

Within the filter options for the map/find facility of the website, a filter search for accessible events and amenities could also be included. This recognises that people with disability are also participants of cultural activities and would complement principles and responsibilities of the *United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 30 - Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport*³

Considerations and amendments relating to accessibility should be implemented collaboratively, involving peak organisations and individual consultations of target groups to ensure appropriateness of accessibility information. This collaboration will also work to build an awareness of the information available, reducing one of the main barriers identified for people with disability participating in cultural activities, a lack of information.⁴

Action Point 1.25

PDCN strongly support the City's proposal to advocate and support the development of an Art in Transit policy and program with Transport for NSW. As the discussion paper has highlighted, Sydney transport has been heavily criticised as playing a *significant role in inhibiting cultural participation*⁵. This criticism has been reflected on numerous occasions with our members, who identify issues with Sydney transport being a contributing factor that acts as a barrier to their participation in arts and culture⁶.

People with disability and mobility limitations are highly dependent on car travel to maintain their mobility and independence.⁷ The cost and availability of parking in the City also acts as a significant barrier for these individuals in engaging in arts and cultural activities, and policies should consider the needs of these individuals.

Making policy improvements will significantly improve the social participation of people with disability as well as satisfy obligations under the *National Disability Strategy 2010-2020*:

*Policy Direction 4 - A public, private and community transport system that is accessible for the whole community*⁸.

Strategic Priority 2 – New Avenues for Creative Participation

³ *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* Opened for Signature 30 March 2007, 999 UNTS 3 (entered into Force 3 May 2008).

⁴ Cultural Ministers Council. (2009). *National Arts and Disability Strategy*

⁵ *The City of Sydney. (2014). Creative City: Draft Cultural Policy and Action Plan 2014-2024. p49*

⁶ PDCN. (2014). *Individual consultations*

⁷ *The City of Sydney Neighbourhood Parking Policy Draft for Discussion, p10*

⁸ *Commonwealth of Australia. (2011). National Disability Strategy. p32*

In relation to the discussion on page 49 relating to studios and workshop space. PDCN does not agree with the suggestion that accessible studios and workshop spaces should solely be developed in areas which experience higher rates of social isolation and disability.

People with disability living in *all* areas of community, identify as feeling isolated and lonely, experiencing barriers in the built environment, which limit their ability to participate fully in community life, not just in areas which experience these higher rates⁹. Within the *Shut out Report*, submissions identified significant policy gaps that allow parts of the built environment to remain inaccessible¹⁰. Providing accessible studios and workshops in limited demographic areas would contribute to this gap in policy, In place of this, providing universal and coordinated approaches for access to *all areas* of the city will ultimately enable inclusion and a greater equality to access.

Action Point 2.5

Please see response to Action Point 1.11

Action Point 2.6.

Statistics show people with disability are more likely to be living in poverty; this is due to high living costs, lack of employment opportunities and costs associated with their disability¹¹. PDCN supports any policy actions that provide unique opportunities for community participation through the Cultural Grants Program and hope initiatives will consider and include the needs of people with disability.

Strategic Priority 3 – Sector Sustainability: Surviving and Thriving

Action Point 3.1, 3.19, 3.20, 3.34, 3.35, 3.37,3.38,

PDCN will provide a joint response for each of these points.

Artists with disability should be provided with the opportunity to engage in the mainstream cultural context. Investigations around cooperative housing, redevelopment and launches of new sites for workshops/indoor and outdoor sites, should take into consideration accessibility of properties as well as consider the application process. One of the Goals identified within the National Arts and Disability Strategy is:

⁹ Commonwealth of Australia. (2009). *Shut Out: The Experience of People with Disability and their Families in Australia*

¹⁰ Commonwealth of Australia. (2009). *Shut Out: The Experience of People with Disability and their Families in Australia*

¹¹ National Council of Social Services. (2014). *Cost of Living Report: Who's Really Hurting?*

Promote best practice in inclusive programming and universal design for all government supported and owned arts organisations and cultural facilities and give priority to accessibility considerations in future programs and capital projects including upgrades¹².

The City of Sydney should undertake to satisfy these goals, when considering sector sustainability action points, as well as upholding the rights of persons with disability as identified under the following articles of the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability*, in particular:

Article 5 – Equality and non discrimination;

Article 9 – Accessibility;

Article 19 – Living independently and being included in the community;

Article 30 – Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport.¹³

Strategic Priority 4 – Improving Access, Creating Markets

Action Point 4.2

As identified in our response at action point 2.6, there is a high incidence of people with disability living in poverty. The ‘theatre passport’ scheme should be opened up to people with disability and possibly other groups who are within the low income quintile.

Action Point 4.4

Again, as identified in our response to Action 1.25, people with disability experience barriers which allow them to engage in night-time cultural events from lack of transport and parking prices. Considerations of parking fee discounts should be extended to people with disability.

Action Point 4.5

PDCN encourage development of location-based apps (provided they were accessible to all diverse groups) that aggregate and promote the cultural offer of Sydney and to include access to ‘last minute’ discount or affordable tickets.¹⁴

¹² Cultural Ministers Council. (2009). *National Arts and Disability Strategy*. p9

¹³ *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* Opened for Signature 30 March 2007, 999 UNTS 3 (entered into Force 3 May 2008).

¹⁴ *The City of Sydney*. (2014). *Creative City: Draft Cultural Policy and Action Plan 2014-2024*. Action point 4.5

During June 2013, PDCN conducted a survey on behalf of the Transport and Access Department of the City of Sydney, relating to people with disability using smart phones. The results confirmed a high number of respondents (73.3%) own either smart phones or use technology such as tablets or iPads, one respondent reminded researchers “people with disability can be tech savvy”.

Some of the responses relating to development of apps included:

“It is difficult to pre plan going out, if an app was developed that also included details of accessible venues and tickets, it would allow for some spontaneity”

“If the City of Sydney develops an app, I will buy a smart phone immediately:

“apps (that also include info re accessibility) can have the potential for people with disability to feel connected and choose where they want to go”¹⁵.

These results only highlight the social benefits developments of apps can have for people with disability.

Action Point 4.11.

Relating to our response at action point 1.25, PDCN welcome the suggestion of extending the City’s free community transport services for disabled passengers to reach new cultural organisations and venues.

Action Point 4.13

PDCN agree the companion card should be promoted on the city’s website and encourage its promotion by major festivals it funds.

Action Point 4.15

After reviewing information contained on the City Art website relating to the City’s walking tours, it was evident that information was not in accessible formats. The maps also did not include any information on accessible routes or facilities, which can act as a barrier to people with disability participating in walking tours¹⁶.

PDCN agree future versions of the City’s walking tours should be accessible, but also suggest current walking tour information also be updated.

¹⁵ PDCN Survey (2013). *Smart Phones and People with Physical Disability*

¹⁶ City Art website - <http://www.cityartsydney.com.au/cityart/>

Action Point 4.16

Whilst PDCN welcome discount parking schemes, we do not feel the scheme should be isolated to the Kings Cross Car Park from Monday to Thursday. Providing a restricted scheme presumes people with disability do not participate in cultural events during weekends, or engage in culture in other parts of the City. It leaves those people with disability who wish to engage in cultural activities out of these areas and times no other option but to meet additional costs, costs which may not be affordable due to low income.

Action Point 4.21

PDCN strongly support the proposal to advocate for the needs and talents of people with disability in negotiations with other levels of Government, we hope some of the comments highlighted within this submission will be considered by those advocating on behalf of people with disability.

If you have any enquiries relating to this submission please contact:

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