

Happy New Year and welcome to our first issue of PDCN Live for 2016!

As the roll out of the NDIS begins in earnest from June this year across half of the state, PDCN have been engaging with key NSW Ministers and Government departmental heads, and the NDIA to ensure that transition into the NDIS for our members and all people with disabilities in NSW is as smooth, seamless and prepared as possible.

A very real concern for PDCN is the NSW State Government's return of all Systemic Advocacy monies to the Commonwealth as part of the Bilateral agreement, and how they will ensure that once this happens, people with disabilities in NSW will have access to independent advice and support as they plan for their futures, begin to take control of their lives and implement their first NDIS plans, especially when things "don't go to plan".

We will continue to present our case when we meet with the Premier's representative Ms Mary-Ann O'Loughlin, NSW Deputy Secretary Social Policy, later this week.

On a lighter note, PDCN turns 21 this year and we want to celebrate our achievements and successes with you all. From small beginnings under the leadership of Kevin Byrne, PDCN has progressed to become a respected peak body in NSW for people with physical disabilities, and along with our systemic advocacy work, also provide invaluable information services to anyone in NSW with a physical disability, and continues to work with the wider community to build empowered, inclusive communities for all.

We greatly value our members and your input into what we do, and will look to you as the year progresses to support us as we endeavour to ensure our future, seek your opinions on matters of importance to you, and how we can continue to best serve you all.

As you read through 'PDCN Live' you will hear of some of the projects we are currently undertaking. I encourage you all to take an active part in these projects; come and join with like-minded others to support the work we do; undertake an NDIS Ready workshop to help begin planning for your future, or merely enjoy the company of others in our 'In Good Company' program.

I look forward to 2016 being a year of proactive engagement, effective lobbying and many successes as PDCN once again work to make a positive difference throughout the NSW community for our members and stakeholders.

Serena Ovens,
Executive Officer

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Contact Us



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NSW**

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Glebe NSW 2037

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Freecall

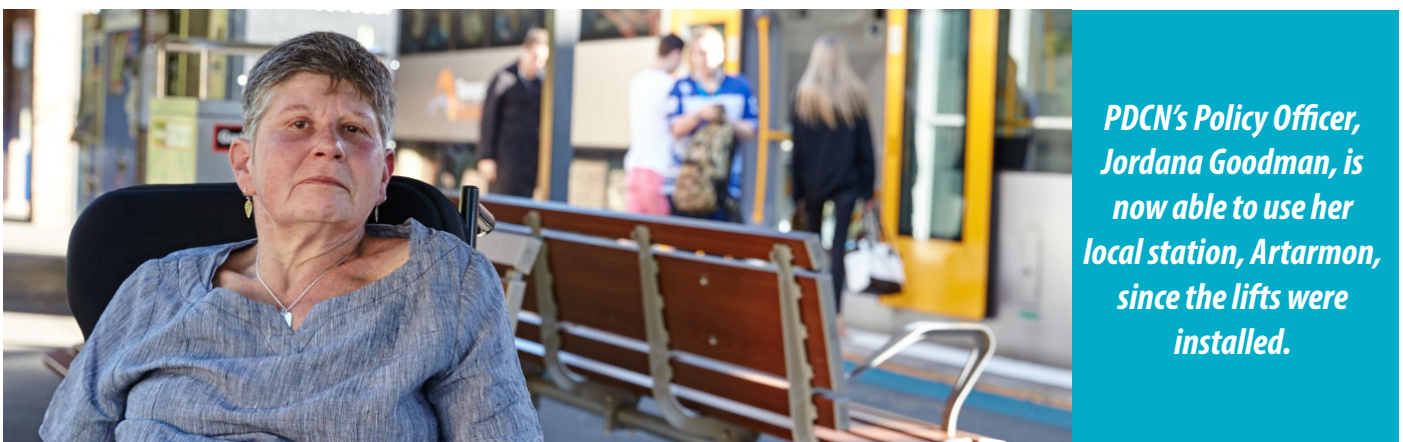
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Sydney Metro

admin@pdcnsw.org.au

PDCN assessment leads to big win for accessibility at Artarmon Station

About ten years ago the Physical Disability Council of NSW conducted a statewide assessment to determine how accessible public transport was in urban and rural NSW. This involved reviewing customer feedback and internet resources to flag priority locations.

At much the same time, Willoughby City Council was endeavoring to attain community support to improve access to Artarmon station and contacted PDCN to assist them in building a campaign to make Artarmon station accessible. PDCN understood that due to significant engineering and heritage issues, construction to improve access to Artarmon Station would be difficult but took up the challenge!



Following this, photo shoots were organised through *The North Shore Times* with State and Local members of parliament, and members of Willoughby Access Committee. Media publicity focused on the additional costs and inconvenience of having no other choice for people with a disability but to use inaccessible public transport in order to access employment, family and friends, or miss out on activities altogether.

Further lobbying was conducted over the next few months including contact with the Minister for Transport by mail, over the phone and in person. PDCN were informed that a petition with 5,000 signatures was required to show community support in order for the NSW Government to provide the funding required for the project to proceed. Signatures were obtained from local residents one afternoon down at the station and then again at federal election voting booths. Following these two campaigns we had just over 4,900 signatures. At this point Willoughby Council took the petition back to the Government and funding for the project was announced in the following State Government budget.

A number of reviews and consultations were conducted prior to construction in 2015, ensuring that accessible parking allowing passenger drop off close to the accessible lift and footbridge was also included in the project plan.

The project was completed in Dec 2015, and consists of two lifts and a connecting footbridge providing easy access to the rail platform via parking facilities on Hampton Rd.

Findings of the Tenancy Survey

Following a legislative review of the NSW Residential Tenancies Act 2010, PDCN conducted a survey and prepared a submission using survey responses. In the past literature on the needs of people with disability has tended to focus on public housing, boarding houses and institutional care. PDCN believes that, with the NDIS, trends in community inclusion and reforms to social housing, an increased number of people with physical disability will need to acquire accommodation through private tenancies.

The survey identified that concerns have tended to focus on unreasonable eviction, frequent and significant rent increases, and the need to obtain permission from the landlord or real estate agent when modifications are required.

View the submission in full at www.pdcnsw.org.au/publications/submission-and-responses/

Do you use Opal? We'd love to hear from you!

Go to surveymonkey.com/r/PDCNOpalSurvey to fill out our survey regarding the ease of use, cost and difficulties of the Opal Card for people with disability.



Exciting changes for I'm Okay project

The *I'm Okay* website assists individuals to plan for and become prepared for a variety of emergency situations. We have received additional funding from the NRMA Community Grants program to further develop content for the website and increase its reach so that more people with disability can benefit from its resources and information.

People with disability are more vulnerable in emergency situations and may be put at further risk due to a lack of preparation and planning. It is important that people with disability are provided the opportunity to develop a personalised plan that addresses their specific needs to become emergency ready. As part of the expansion of the *I'm okay* website, PDCN will be developing templates to simplify the process of making a personal emergency plan.

In addition, PDCN will be working with Enable NSW to develop protocols that will assist wheelchair users to handle issues they may encounter using powered and manual wheelchairs. The website will provide clear information to wheelchair users about caring for equipment, preventative maintenance and managing repairs.

Visit the *I'm Okay* website at www.pdcnsw-emergencyready.com



Ellen Small, the newest addition to the PDCN team, has taken over Hayley's role as Project Officer for Support Planning and is overseeing the I'm Okay Emergency Readiness project. To see all the staff behind PDCN head to: www.pdcnsw.org.au/about-us/staff

The PDCN peer groups have a new name: 'In Good Company'

'In Good Company' is seen as a clearer reflection of what being part of a PDCN peer group is all about. Some people shy away from the term *peer*, finding it somewhat intimidating, however we wanted to ensure our participants and potential participants knew that a peer group does not need to be an intimidating environment. In fact on the contrary, the group is a space in which participants can develop trust, share stories and make decisions in a safe and friendly environment.

We aim to create a space where people can build trust, share information and get to know each other, so group members will be better informed and take ownership over their NDIA process. We do this by listening to individual group members interests and aligning this with the kind of speakers that we hear from

Melanie Schlaeger, Community Connector

Questions can be asked about all aspects of life including health, housing, transport, employment, education, community access, and engagement. Participants can also gradually learn about the NDIS and the impact this scheme will have for all in the community.

Peer group participants have said "the groups have given me a sense of purpose" and that "being in a group with a facilitator with disability made me feel better understood." Many have said that they "longer feel alone or isolated" because they've been able to "show the world the real me."

To find out more about 'In Good Company', please contact Wendy Banfield at by calling 9552 1606, emailing wendy.banfield@pdcnsw.org.au or by visiting www.pdcnsw.org.au/projects/dso-peer-support/

Community Connector Sharon Holz (far left) and the Shoalhaven Peer Group meeting for their monthly self-advocacy group.



NDIS Ready Workshops have been a resounding success

PDCN has, to date, run a total of four NDIS Ready workshops and we've already received overwhelmingly positive feedback.

Workshops have taken place in Forster, Liverpool, Wagga Wagga and Gosford. We've had a total of 70 registrations for these events, with both the Wagga Wagga and Gosford workshops being oversubscribed.

Both presenters, Kerry and Jill, were well informed, articulate and worked extremely well together to assist all participants understand the new NDIS. I have attended a few information sessions with other organisations previously and have come away feeling daunted and confused. Not so after yours. I feel well informed and more comfortable to tackle the expectations placed upon me to provide the best possible outcome for my daughter.

- Jen Wicker, Gosford NDIS Ready Workshop Attendee

We believe this is a great example of how sought after our program is and will hopefully serve to illustrate the need for more NDIS Ready workshops over a larger area within NSW, particularly in regions preparing for a 2017 NDIS roll out.

We have 8 more workshops planned for the coming months (see back page) with 3 already being fully booked. We still encourage participants to register for these events as we will contact participants in the event of a cancellation. Additionally, more registrations support our bid to deliver additional workshops into 2016-17.

To find out more about NDIS Ready please visit www.pdcnsw.org.au/workshops-and-training/ndis-ready/

**Alternatively, contact Ryan on 9552 1606
or via email at ryan.saunderson@pdcnsw.org.au**

***Inside the
NDIS Ready
Workshop at
Gosford***



Upcoming NDIS Ready Workshops

Taree: March 14th & 15th (Fully Booked)

Club Taree: 121 Wingham Road, Taree.

Katoomba: March 22nd & 23rd

Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre, 6-10 Station St, Katoomba.

Lithgow: March 29th & 30th

Lithgow Workies Club, 3-7 Tank St, Lithgow.

Tamworth: April 5th & 6th

West Tamworth League Club, 58 Phillip St, Tamworth West.

Wollongong: April 13th & 14th

Venue to be confirmed.

Hornsby: April 14th & 15th (Fully Booked)

Hornsby RSL, 4 High St, Hornsby.

Nowra: May 3rd & 4th

Community Gateway, 69 Berry St, Nowra.

Workshops run from 10am until 4pm on day 1 and 9:30am until 3pm on the day 2.

For further information on workshop content, or to register, go online at www.pdcnsw.org.au/workshops-and-training/ndis-ready/ or call Ryan Saunderson on 9552 1606. If you wish to attend a fully booked workshop, you are invited to register to join the standby list for that event.



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I'm Okay

www.pdcnsw-emergencyready.com



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