

## Welcome to the June PDCN Live Newsletter!

It's hard to believe we are once again at the end of another financial year, and getting ready to report on our programs and funding requirements.

In this edition we'll give you a brief overview of how we delivered some of these projects, their outcomes and achievements. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who took part in any of these projects, and helped make them a success.

On another level as the 2015-16 financial year drew to a close we faced the potential challenge of not being re-funded for our Peak activities. The good news is that the NSW Government has now confirmed that PDCN will retain its PEAK funding for the next two years, until July 2018, and has, in addition, provided us with a further \$1 million over the next two years to continue to assist people with disabilities prepare for the roll out of the NDIS. After much advocating on our part, we are extremely pleased with this outcome, and will use these funds wisely to continue to build the capacity and readiness of our members and others with disability who engage with us during this timeframe.

On the flip side, we also know that the funding landscape will change dramatically for PDCN as of July 2018, and we now embark on further strategic work to ensure we remain a viable, innovative entity that can thrive in the NDIS realm, and still be an independent and strong voice of advocacy for our constituency, and in fact all people with a physical disability in NSW. As we go about this work we ask you, our members and stakeholders, to join in and have your say on what you value about PDCN and the work we do. This will ensure we continue to focus on your needs, and remain a relevant organisation into the future.

Lastly – welcome to our newest staff member Wilhelmina and a big farewell and thank you to a number of our staff, as they move onto other endeavours. Lindsay, our regional connector; Ryan, we wish you well as you travel the world; and Wendy, best of luck in your NDIS transition role, I'm sure we will work together into the future – you have left us big shoes to fill!

**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)

# A big quarter for PDCN Peer Groups

The DSO peer support network project is progressing well and continually looking for different ways to engage and broaden the lives of people with disability and educate community. In the last few months we have organised a social inclusion event in Bathurst to encourage the local Council, Ability Linkers, the Access Committee, local media and anyone else in the community who are interested in finding ways to work together to transition to the NDIS.

The event was advertised on local radio and in the paper. Services providers, Council, the access committee and businesses in the local area were all notified about the event. The event was hosted at a local pub which many did not realise was accessible. The event was catered and a local rock band, Iron Bob, was organised to draw people in. Presentations were given about the Peer Networks, the Access Committee, the role of Ability Linkers and myths and facts about the NDIS. Information was also provided about the people who were attending the event to encourage networking and looking at ways in which we can work together.



**Left to right: PDCN Project Officer Wendy Banfield, Community Connector Lindsay Cotte and Deputy Mayor of Bathurst Ian North.**

The event was well attended with many stating they had learnt a lot and others were pleased to find people in their community with whom they could connect. The event also resulted in three extra people attending the following week's peer group.

The Marrickville peer group members are identifying ways that they can both build on their own capacity, as well as educate community in the process. The group usually meet at a community centre, however decided it would be helpful to get out into the community to

confront barriers people had either created for themselves or barriers that are created in community. The group decided to hold the May meeting in a local wine/music bar. The venue was known to have an accessible toilet however had known access issues. The aim was to tackle access issues in an empathetic and educative way, to raise awareness about inclusion and gather outside a community centre setting, therefore providing people with disability the options of meeting new people. Whilst there, a person with epilepsy came and introduced herself to the group and joined in the discussion. This person spoke of how this particular venue knew of her epilepsy and had since adapted the lighting to suit her needs. This person also provided relationship counselling services for people with disability and was able to network with members of the group. Finally, bar staff and other members of community occasionally chatted to people in the group. This meeting should not be an extraordinary, but in fact provide people with disability the same ordinary opportunities as all members of community. Having said that it is amazing how something as simple as this outing can make such an impact on people's lives.

Melanie Schlaeger, the facilitator of the Central Coast peer group, has been bringing in guest speakers and is in the process of organisation a lunch time event to get the people in her group out and about in community.

Finally, Sharon Holz, one of our amazing Community Connectors, had her one year work anniversary on the 4th of May. Read more about her journey on **page 5**.

## Upcoming Peer Groups

### **Fri June 3, 10am**

Peer2Peer Wallsend  
Wallsend Library

### **Sat June 4, 11:30am**

Shoalhaven Self-Advocacy  
West St Community Centre

### **Mon June 6, 11am**

Liverpool Peer Group  
Liverpool Library

### **Fri June 10, 10:30am**

Wollongong Peer Group  
Community Gateway

### **Fri June 10, 12pm**

Erina Peer Group  
Erina Library

### **Tues June 14, 10am**

Peer2Peer Charlestown  
The Place Community  
Centre

### **Mon June 20, 11:30am**

Nowra Community Gateway  
Nowra Hub

### **Thurs June 23, 10am**

CDAH Planning Cafe  
The Place Community  
Centre

### **Thurs June 23, 1pm**

Bathurst Peer Group  
Bathurst Neighbourhood  
Centre

### **Thurs June 23, 5:30pm**

Marrickville Peer Group  
Tom Foster Community  
Centre, Newtown

### **Mon June 27, 10am**

Maitland Peer Group  
Rutherford Neighbourhood  
Centre

### **Wed June 29, 10:30am**

Essential Employment  
47 Burelli St, Wollongong

### **Thurs June 30, 10:30am**

Noah's Parent Room (Day)  
West Nowra

### **Thurs June 30, 6pm**

Noah's Parent Room (Night)  
West Nowra

**Peer groups run monthly unless otherwise advised on**  
**<https://www.pdcnsw.org.au/projects/dso-peer-support/>**





**Wilhelmina Brown**, the newest addition to the PDCN team, has taken over Ryan's role as Project Officer for NDIS Ready. To see all the staff behind PDCN head to: [www.pdcnsw.org.au/about-us/staff](http://www.pdcnsw.org.au/about-us/staff)

## NDIS Ready Workshops returning in the second half of 2016

The first round of our NDIS Ready workshops have come to a close! We've had a fantastic response from workshop participants, many of whom are now members of PDCN. Since November 2015, we've run 12 workshops across 7 major districts. We've delivered the workshop to 139 people, with 99% of attendees reporting that they were satisfied with the workshop. We're proud to report that in our follow-up evaluation, 4 out of 5 people said they had attempted to create a plan in preparation for the NDIS!

*"It was the most personal/comfortable workshop I've attended. I feel more capable of taking on what needs to be done to prepare for the NDIS."*

*- Tamworth NDIS Ready Workshop Attendee*

We're looking to improve our future workshops through better promotion and fine-tuning our workshop tools to help a broader range of people. We're also excited to announce that PDCN has been funded to continue running NDIS Ready workshops into 2017.

## Upcoming NDIS Ready Workshops

**Newtown:** 19th & 20th July  
Newtown Neighbourhood Centre  
1 Bedford St, Newtown

**Ulladulla:** 15th & 16th August  
Community Resource Centre  
78 St Vincent St, Ulladulla

**Temora:** 26th & 27th July  
Temora Ex-Services Memorial Club  
130 Barker St, Temora

**Bondi Junction:** 22nd & 23rd August  
Club Bondi Junction RSL  
1-9 Gray St, Bondi Junction

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

**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 Wilhelmina Brown on 9552 1606.**

# A big congratulations to PDCN Community Connector Sharon

In May, Sharon Holz, one of our community connectors, had her one year employment anniversary.

Prior to working for PDCN, Sharon had never been in paid employment and was struggling with confidence issues but with an opportunity to work for PDCN and the encouragement and support we were able to provide her, Sharon has said that the past year “has been one of the best years of my life.”

“PDCN is an organisation that I am very proud to work for. A person with a disability wants to live an ordinary life and be amongst ordinary people. When I got my job with PDCN at the age of 56 it was like being given a new chance. My role as a community coordinator gives me a sense of purpose, gets me involved with the community and I get to meet people, build networks and assist people like myself to believe in their dreams,” Sharon said.

We are very proud to have been on this journey with Sharon. She has become an integral part of the PDCN team, helping to facilitate peer groups with fellow people with disability on the South Coast.

She has described her journey as “a huge learning curve that has helped me grow so much as a person.”

Since joining PDCN, Sharon has been asked to be a key note speaker at various community events or launches, invited to joined the Board of Wollongong Community Gateway and to conduct a session on ‘enablement’ for TAFE students studying for Cert III and IV in Community Services. We are very proud to have been on this journey with Sharon.



**Left to right: PDCN Project Officer Wendy Banfield, Community Connector Sharon Holz and PDCN Executive Officer Serena Ovens.**

# PDCN wishes Ryan and Wendy all the best

NDIS Ready Project Officer Ryan Saunderson helped PDCN shape the NDIS Ready project during his time with us but has decided to take an opportunity to explore Europe for the remainder of 2016.

DSO Peer Group Project Officer Wendy Banfield will continue her service to the disability sector as she transitions into a new role within the NSW Government. She will continue to manage and co-facilitate the Marrickville Peer Group.

We wish them both the very best with their new careers, and the PDCN Board wish to take this opportunity to thank them both for their dedication to PDCN's vision and values, and the support they've provided our members during their time at PDCN.

## 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!

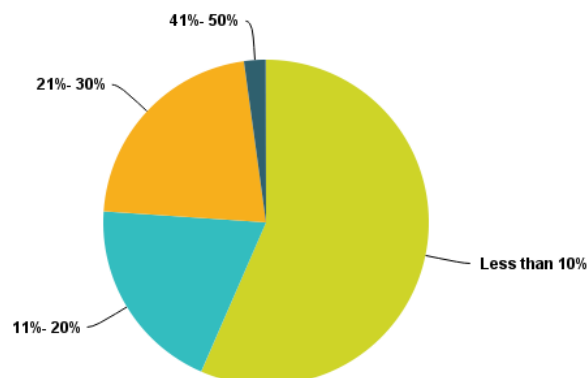
Simply head to: <http://www.pdcnsw-emergencyready.com/>



## Findings of the Opal Card Survey

The recent survey conducted by the PDCN regarding access to the Opal Card was undertaken to assist us in providing valuable feedback to relevant government departments such as Transport for NSW, and to provide feedback through transport advisory committees and planning forums.

Recipients of the survey included a broad range of people with different disabilities and subsequent differing transport needs. Feedback was provided by people who used manual and powered wheelchairs and scooters, people who used a selection of different walking aides, people who walked independently but had concerns with their stability, and a couple of others with vision, hearing and intellectual impairments.



**Q7 Approximately how much of your weekly income do you spend on transport costs? Including all public transport expenses**

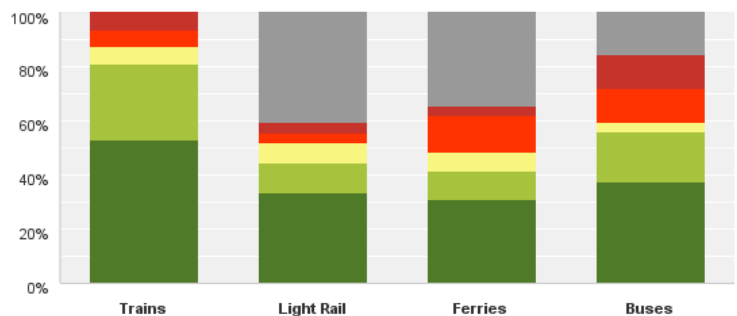
People responding to the survey indicated that they spent approximately 10% of their weekly wage on transport, and identified the most frequent measures of financial stress as being an inability to afford a vacation of any duration, and the inability to raise \$2,000 for something not expected.

Whilst it is noted that the survey was only completed by 50 respondents, patronage on public transport appears to have decreased since the introduction of the Opal Card.

A considerable number of respondents commented that they found the Opal Card more convenient. About 50% of those who provided feedback felt that the Opal Card had made no impact on their level of independence when using public transport. But interestingly approximately 25% of respondents felt that the Opal Card enhanced their independence, whilst the remaining 25% felt that the card inhibited their independence.

**Q31 Remembering back to the last time you used each of the following transport methods, evaluate how easy it was to tap on and off with Opal.**

Very easy to tap on/off    Somewhat easy to tap on/off  
Neither easy or hard to tap on/off    Somewhat hard to tap on/off  
Very hard to tap on/off    Never used Opal on this transport method



Generally respondents found the services provided by Opal as easy to access, but found buses the most difficult mode of transport to use particularly when tapping off. This was chiefly a concern for passengers with compromised stability and most commonly when tapping off, as illustrated in the following feedback;

*Exiting is worse because of all the obstacles such as other passengers that may have to move, packages etc, make it difficult to access the sensor or remembering to do so.*

*- Survey Respondent*

Additionally there was a small group of respondents who were completely unable to use the Opal Card for all modes of transport, and these people had had their card refunded.

**View the report in full later this month at**  
[www.pdcnsw.org.au/publications/submission-and-responses/](http://www.pdcnsw.org.au/publications/submission-and-responses/)

# Tax time is coming!

**With tax time fast approaching, now is the time to donate to PDCN.  
All donations above \$2 are fully tax deductible.**

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



# Save The Date!

## **June 23: PDCN Community consultation on Transport for people with disabilities**

Come along and tell us what is important to you when it come to transport issues, and help PDCN continue our work to bring about change and improve access to transport for all.

Thursday 23 June 2-4pm at St Helens Community Centre **184 Glebe Point Rd Glebe**

Please RSVP to [admin@pdcnsw.org.au](mailto:admin@pdcnsw.org.au) or call 1800 688 831 advise of your attendance.

PDCN really need to **hear from you!**

## **September 16 and 17: The Nepean Disability Expo**

PDCN will be at the Nepean Disability Expo in Penrith on September 16 and 17 along side the Invacare Australia/New Zealand stand. Go to [disabilityexpo.org.au](http://disabilityexpo.org.au) for more information on the expo.

## **October 19: 2016 PDCNSW AGM and 21st Birthday Cocktail Party**

Have you been involved with PDCN in the past? We are looking for all the amazing people who have worked for us and been an associate during our 21 years as a systemic advocacy organisation. We want to make sure that you get an invite to our birthday party!

Email us at [admin@pdcnsw.org.au](mailto:admin@pdcnsw.org.au) or call 1800 688 831 ASAP.



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