



Physical Disability Council of NSW  
Ordinary People Ordinary Lives



## Annual Report 2015 - 2016



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St Helens Community Centre  
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# Organisational Profile

The Physical Disability Council of NSW (PDCN) is the peak representative organisation of, and for, people with physical disability across NSW. PDCN has a majority of people with physical disability in its membership and its governance.

## Membership

Individual membership of PDCN includes people with a range of physical disabilities, from young children and their representatives to aged people.

Members live across New South Wales, from the greater Sydney metropolitan area to rural NSW, and are from a wide range of socioeconomic circumstances.

Organisational membership includes community organisations, human service providers and other organisations that have a commitment to people who have physical disability and to the work of PDCN.

## Vision

As people living with physical disability...

We strive to ensure that our human rights are protected, our equality of opportunity is assured and our full participation is a reality.

## Purpose

To build empowered, inclusive communities through:

- Information and education
- Engagement and participation
- Developing individual capacity and resilience

## Values

As we implement our vision, we will be guided by our values...

### Integrity

we are trustworthy, open and honest in all our undertakings

### Inclusion

we include people with physical disabilities in all we do

### Independence

we value our independence to remain true to our values

### Innovation

we are committed to finding new ways to better support people with physical disabilities and the work we do

### Collaboration

we work in partnership with our members, stakeholders and the broader community to achieve our purpose

**Ordinary People Ordinary Lives**



# Table of Contents

**3** Message from The President

**4** 2015 - 2016 Highlights

**5** The Executive Officer's Report

**7** Meet The Team

**9** Object One

**11** Object Two

**15** Object Three

**23** 2015 - 2016 Outcomes

**24** Appendices

**24** Appendix A: UNCRPD

**25** Appendix B: Audited Financial Report

**27** Appendix C: Independent Auditor's Report



# Message from The President

Once again this last financial year has been a busy time for our organisation.

As the first rollout of the NDIS began across the state this past June, PDCN has been conversing with NSW Ministers, government departments and the NDIA to ensure as smooth as possible a transition into the NDIS for our members and people with disabilities throughout NSW.

A lack of continued State Government funding for systemic advocacy is still a big concern for PDCN. As the NSW State Government returns all of its systemic advocacy monies to the Commonwealth as part of the bilateral agreement, how will they ensure that people with disabilities in NSW will have access to independent advice and support as they plan for their futures within the NDIS? In addition, who will advocate for continued improvements to transport, education, employment, health services, access to the built environment and other community issues?

PDCN will continue to present our concerns to NSW Government Ministers and their representatives, and will also look to the Commonwealth to address this serious deficit.

We are constantly aware that the funding landscape will change dramatically for PDCN after the full NDIS rollout in July 2018, and now continue with further strategic planning to

ensure we remain a viable, innovative entity that can thrive in the NDIS landscape, and still be a strong and independent voice of advocacy for all people with a physical disability in NSW. As part of this we seek the feedback of our members on what you value about PDCN and the work we do, ensuring we continue to focus on your needs, and remain a relevant organisation into the future.

## **PDCN turns 21 this year!**

Since being incorporated in January 1995, PDCN has always “punched above its weight” on providing systemic advocacy and information services, and in representing people with a physical disability throughout NSW and we look forward to celebrating the many achievements made over this time with our members and stakeholders that have supported us in our journey.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Board members for their work in the governance of PDCN and for the time and effort they give to this vital role.

I also thank our office staff and contractors, led by our Executive Officer Serena Ovens, who continue to assist in putting into action the PDCN vision through their skill, commitment, hard work and dedication.

  
**Peter A Simpson**  
President

# 2015 - 2016 Highlights



**Invitation to a seat on the Minister for Innovation's Social Innovation Council**

**7 specific issue, 2 community consultations, and 4 expos attended**



**Representation on 15 advisory groups**

**11 submissions to Government, regulatory and other bodies**



**264 individual support plans undertaken for individuals in readiness for the NDIS**

**Additional \$1 million in project funding secured for 2016 - 2018**



**Implementation and integration of new strategic plan, PDCN website and CRM (database)**

**I'm Okay Emergency Readiness website relaunch**







# The EO's Report

The 2015-16 year has been an incredibly busy one for PDCN, with a number of significant grant projects to implement over the year, alongside our core peak work of providing information, education and capacity building opportunities for people with disabilities and stakeholders alike. Across the year PDCN produced 11 written submissions in response to Commonwealth and State Government issues papers; held 2 community, 1 organisational and 7 specific issue consultations; represented our members on 15 committees and advisory boards, and attended an additional 14 one off consultations, an increase on the previous year's work, and an amazing achievement for such a small team!

This work is core to achieving successful outcomes for full inclusion in the NSW community for our members, and ensuring they have a voice in the NSW disability landscape.

In 2015-16 PDCN have advocated to ensure that the NDIS continues to be implemented in line with the NDIS Act, and that the Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) tier of the NDIS is structured in such a way that people with disability are the focus of both the delivery and outcomes of this important part of the scheme.

We have partnered with EnableNSW to achieve improvements in information and procedural processes for equipment repairs and emergency response for those whom have their equipment needs met by this organisation. In addition, our collaboration with Transport NSW has continued to progress the work on achieving Step Free Access to one of Sydney's most iconic structures - the Sydney Harbour Bridge - and we eagerly await an announcement on this project as I write this report!

The construction of our new website (launched on International Day of People with Disabilities in December 2015) and the integration of this with our new Salesforce database sees many improvements in data management, linking all the work that we do, and greatly assists PDCN's reporting ability moving forward - particularly important as we transition to outcomes based funding into the future.

The restructure of our Board, and addition of stronger corporate governance has helped PDCN begin to implement our 2015 – 2017 Strategic Plan, and the support of Invacare and the Suncorp Group through our new board members has been invaluable in strengthening our brand recognition in the NSW landscape.

The confirmation of continued ADHC Peak funding until July 2018 provides a welcome relief, and the stability to continue our invaluable work whilst we prepare for the changes ahead. We also thank ADHC for their recognition of the significant achievements of past funded PDCN projects, and the commitment of \$1million in additional one off funding until July 2018 to allow PDCN to build on our work in the areas of NDIS readiness and individual capacity building.

In the past year we have provided NDIS Ready workshops to over 198 participants and individual pre-planning for an additional 264 people across the state and have plans to continue these for another 250 plus individuals in the 2016/17 NDIS roll out regions over the coming year.

Our peer support groups have grown in number since this project began in early 2015, and we now have 16 groups running across the state, each group facilitated by a person with a disability or lived experience, and the early positive outcomes these groups are achieving for their individual members are fabulous to see. However, projects like these take time to establish and maintain, and PDCN look to the NDIA to recognise the value in these peer support structures, and ensure funding continues for the longer term.

You can read about all these projects in greater depth later in this annual report!

Finally, I'd like to thank my staff and the PDCN Board of Management, it's an honour to work with such a dedicated team whom go 'above and beyond' in their roles to ensure amazing outcomes for our members, and all people with disabilities in NSW.

Lastly, a big thank you to our members, supporters and other stakeholders whom continue to inform the work we do through participation in our forums, consultations, funded projects and events throughout the year.



**Serena Owens**  
**Executive Officer**

# Meet the PDCN Team

## Board and Executive



**Peter Simpson**  
President



**Kevin Finlayson**  
Vice President



**Arthur Theodore**  
Treasurer & Public  
Officer



**Caroline Daley**  
Secretary

## Staff



**Jordana Goodman**  
Policy Officer



**Alison Vella**  
Accounts &  
Membership Officer



**Kieren Sainsbury**  
Media &  
Communications Officer



**Ellen Small**  
Project Officer

## Training Facilitators

Ana Neale  
Carolyn Campbell-McLean  
Gillian Bonser  
Kerry Hartigan  
Melanie Lawson  
Michael Magro

## Support Planners

Alana Winn  
Ana Neale  
Barbel Winter  
Catherine Hogan  
Donna Rhall  
Gillian Bonser  
Hayley Tickner  
Karen Oddy

Kerry Hartigan  
Krysten Taylor  
Melanie Lawson  
Sandy Beech  
Ellen Small  
Sharon Smith  
Sue Gorman





**Matthew Kayrooz**  
Board Member



**David Jeffries**  
Board Member



**Serena Ovens**  
Executive Officer

## Attendance Record

<b>Peter Simpson</b>	10/10
<b>Kevin Finlayson</b>	7/10
<b>Arthur Theodore</b>	9/10
<b>Caroline Daley</b>	9/10
<b>Matthew Kayrooz</b> <i>from November 15</i>	5/6
<b>David Jeffries</b> <i>from November 15</i>	6/6
<b>Andrew Longhurst</b> <i>to October 15</i>	4/4
<b>Korey Gunnis</b> <i>to October 15</i>	4/4



**Wilhelmina Brown**  
Project Officer



**Wendy Banfield**  
Project Officer



**Sharon Holz**  
Community  
Connector



**Melanie Schlaeger**  
Community  
Connector

## Former Staff

Lachlan Hazelton to October 2015  
Hayley Brooks to December 2015  
Ryan Saunderson to May 2016  
Lindsay Cottee to May 2016

## Financial Support

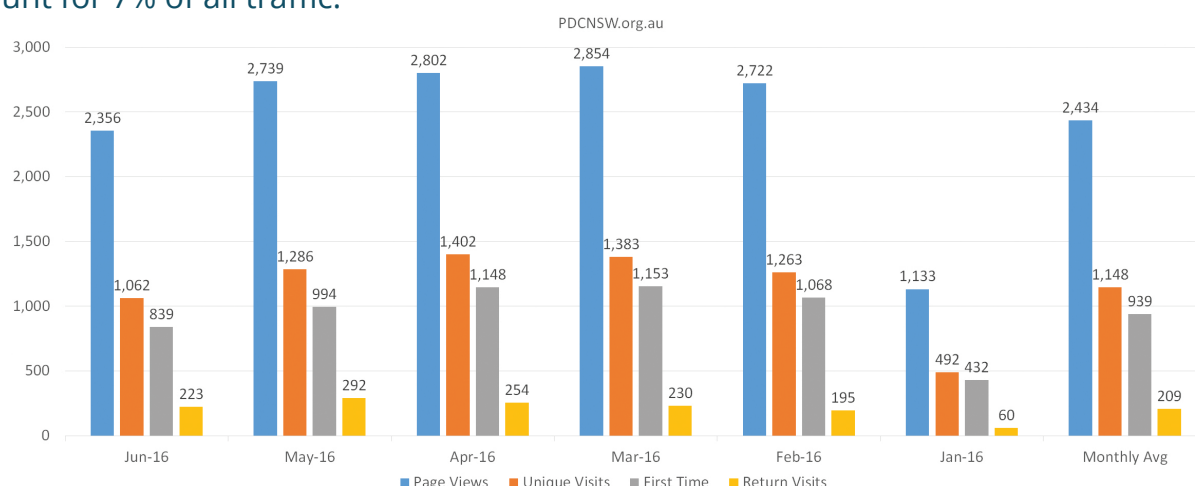
City of Sydney  
Department of Family and Community Services  
Invacare  
Marrickville Council  
National Disability Insurance Agency  
NRMA

# Object One

To educate, inform and assist people with physical disability in NSW about the range of services, structure and programs available.

## Website

PDCN launched a new accessible and responsive website for International Day of People with Disability on December 3, 2015. During the six months of 2015-16 the website was live, we saw a great deal of engagement with 16.6% of the traffic spending 5 minutes or more on the website. Of the 2,434 average monthly hits we achieved, nearly three quarters originated from Australia with 82% of this coming from within NSW. Each visitor generally views 2-3 pages and return visits account for 7% of all traffic.



Our NDIS Ready pages are the two highest ranking pages on the site other than the homepage. While #3 and #5 respectively, Useful resources and the newer NDIS Resources are the main port of call for people being referred to the website from a search engine, representing the importance of these pages for people searching for information.

## Newsletters & E-Bulletins

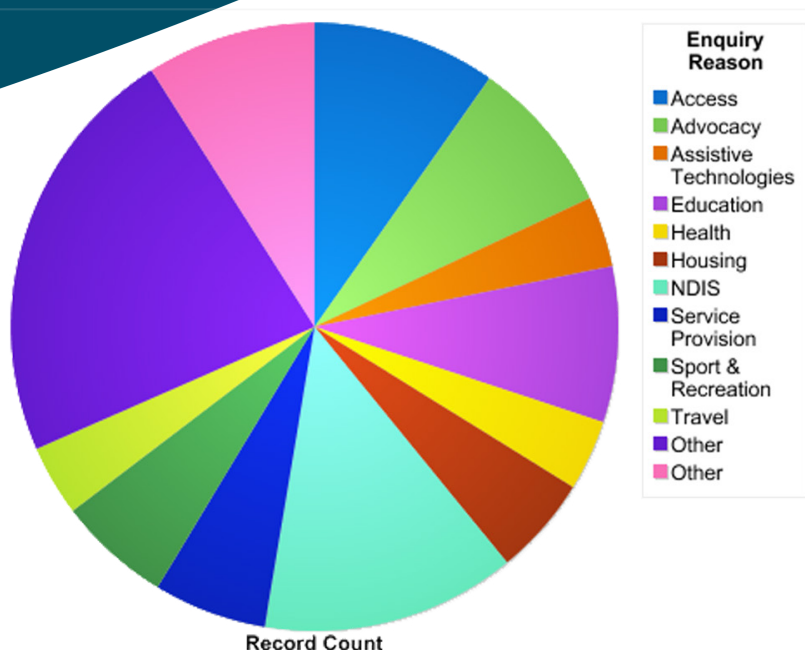
PDCN's monthly E-newsletters are short electronic news pieces through which we provide accurate, up-to-date, and timely information, comment and analysis on disability related issues to those whom subscribe to our enewsletter mailing list. They are also tools to seek comment from people with disabilities to inform the work of PDCN. In addition, PDCN also regularly post short news files on the PDCN website. These are usually related to opportunities available to PWD provided by other NGO's or Government bodies etc, or highlighted pieces on sector changes.

During the year PDCN prepared and distributed four hard copy newsletters (PDCN Live) to its membership via post, and also in an electronic version. Where appropriate these newsletters focused on a particular theme. The newsletters are also made available on the PDCN website,

distributed when PDCN give presentations and included in information bags at Expos and community consultations.

## Information and Referrals

PDCN deals with enquiries from people with disability and their families and carers on a daily basis, taking calls between 9-5pm weekdays. 91% of enquiries for information and assistance are made via phone, with the other 9% via email.



On average PDCN takes approximately 3 information calls a day and these calls often take up to (and some times longer than) 30mins to complete at the time of the call, with 40% of all calls taken throughout the year requiring onward referral to an individual advocate or external service, and a small amount requiring a follow up call from PDCN staff for completion.

Since 2011 our information line statistics show a swing from referral and information about 'getting about' to the provision of information on enabling and inclusion – a very positive swing towards capacity building for individuals with a disability.

In 2015/16 calls about the NDIS increased, becoming the biggest individual area of request for information, with education, advocacy and access also being highly represented across the caller requests.

## Social Media

Our Facebook page promotes our many community consultations, workshops, expos, and other important stakeholder events, and allows our members and interested parties to comment on our work. We have doubled both our post reach and total reach this year, while also increasing our likes by 53%.

PDCN's Twitter account also continues to increase its followers, up more than 68% since 2014-2015, and is invaluable in linking us with a broader cohort of concerned citizens. This assists us to broadcast latest news, issues and information to a wider audience. Our tweets were seen more than 84,000 times on twitter, an increase of 20,000 from last year, while profile views increased by 150%



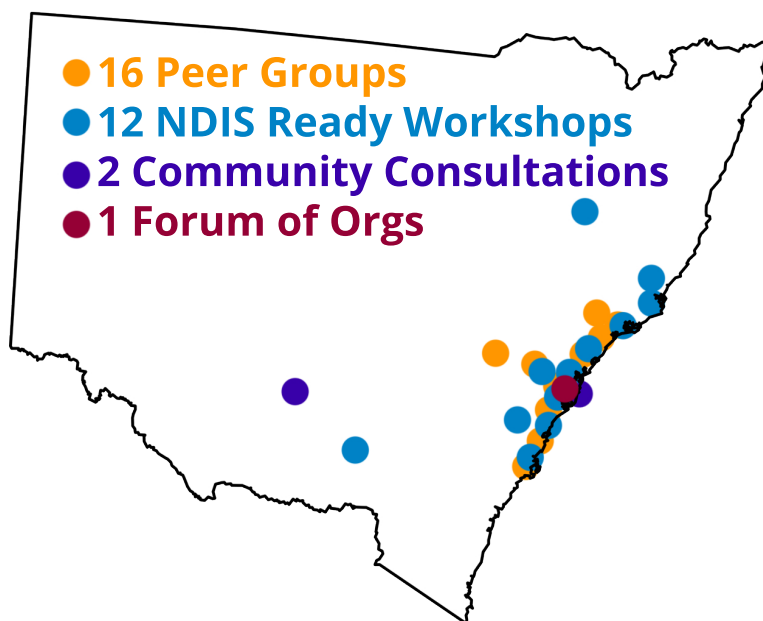
# Object Two

To develop the capacity of people with disability in NSW to advocate for themselves.



*The course was presented in a way that was easy to understand and not rushed, with time to ask about anything I was unsure about, and have it explained to me.*

**Feedback from  
NDIS Ready Mittagong**



## NDIS Ready

In 2015-16 PDCN received funding from the State Government's Department of Ageing Disability & Home Care (ADHC) as part of the NDIS preparation and individualised capacity building initiative. Development of educational material enabled PDCN to streamline the existing "Getting Ready - Living the Life I Want to Live" Workshops to create the "NDIS Ready" Program.

The NDIS Ready project aimed to provide information on the NDIS to people with a disability and/or their direct supports throughout NSW. Twelve workshops were facilitated across seven ADHC Regions reaching 183 individuals living in metropolitan and rural centers.

In these workshops we covered material relating to preparation for the NDIS, how to access the NDIS and the processes of defining personal aspirations, and goal setting in order to achieve these. Many participants commented on the small groups and one on one attention received and how this benefited them on their NDIS journey.

Workshops were supported by post-course individual pre-planning sessions, to build completed plans in readiness for NDIS roll out. Overall the workshops hoped to achieve:

- Participant satisfaction,
- Greater confidence in relation to knowledge of the NDIS, and
- Participant engagement with aspirational & goal setting planning.

The workshops were an overall success with many of these goals attained. Ninety-five percent (95%) of participants stated their high level of satisfaction with the program. This can be reflected anecdotally in the number of participants who attended workshops on the recommendation of past attendees. Similarly, we saw a high level of engagement with goal setting and planning. Ninety-four percent (94%) of participants reported greater confidence in developing a pre-plan which was later reflected in the high percentage of participants who chose to undertake post course pre-planning.

Whilst self-reported confidence surrounding the understanding of the NDIS was lower this can be understood as a result of the shifting landscape of service provision, and the constantly changing parameters of the NDIS as it is piloted throughout NSW.

Only sixty-one percent (61%) of participants agreed that they knew enough about the NDIS to access it when it rolls out in their area. To combat this, and continue to increase understanding, PDCN will continue to disseminate NDIS information as it updates or changes, in an easy to access format through the PDCN website, and our e-newsletters, ensuring we continue to assist our course participants, PDCN members and the wider community in keeping abreast of the latest information.

Workshop Site	ADHC Region	Registered Participants
Nowra	Illawarra Shoalhaven	19
Hornsby	Northern Sydney	21
Wollongong	Illawarra Shoalhaven	13
Tamworth	Hunter New England	9
Lithgow	Nepean Blue Mountains	7
Katoomba	Nepean Blue Mountains	11
Taree	Hunter New England	18
Mittagong	South Western Sydney	17
Gosford	Central Coast	23
Wagga Wagga	Murrumbidgee	19
Foster	Hunter New England	12
Liverpool	South Western Sydney	14
All Sites		183

As the NDIS continues to roll out from July 1st 2016, the NDIS Ready Project has been awarded renewed ADHC funding and will continue to reach communities across NSW until 2018.





Project Officer Wendy Banfield speaking at PDCN's Bathurst Community Event

## Peer Groups

PDCN is now in the 2nd year of funding from the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to establish and manage peer support groups for people with disability, with a majority of the peer groups facilitated by people with a disability.

The Peer Support Project aims to achieve the following outcomes for people with disability:

- Feel connected with each other and their community
- Increase their individual capacity
- Increase knowledge of the NDIS and other services and supports available
- Increase their confidence in navigating the National Disability Insurance Scheme

Over the 2015 – 2016 period the project has grown significantly, employing new facilitators throughout the year and celebrating many successes. There are currently 16 groups running across the state, led by 8 facilitators. All of the peer groups are running well with participants achieving significant and varied outcomes, not least of all the opportunity for social engagement, with facilitators inspiring and empowering participants to have their own voice in the group, and throughout their communities.

The ongoing challenge for the peer groups is in gaining clarity around funding options beyond December 2016 at which time the current NDIA funding ceases. The NDIA are currently exploring bridging funding options. PDCN hopes to continue the success of peer groups in years to come.

### Bathurst/Lithgow

Lindsay Cottee, the community connector in Bathurst resigned from the project to pursue other interests. We thank Lindsay for his service. Catherine Player is now the community connector for both Orange and Bathurst. The groups meet fortnightly and are currently participating in a TAFE program that aims to teach people with a disability skills in self-advocacy. The skills these participants are now working towards include goal planning, self direction, self-worth, communication and problem solving..

### Central Coast/Hunter Region

Melanie Schlaeger continues to facilitate groups in the Central Coast and in the Hunter region. In addition, PDCN has partnered with Community Disability Alliance Hunter to facilitate additional peer to peer support groups and planning cafes. In Erina, the peer support group focused on the individual goals, dreams and visions of participants, including goal mapping while in the Hunter region, there has been a strong focus on self-advocacy in the peer groups.



## **Liverpool**

Rebecca Sciroli facilitates the South West Sydney peer group in Liverpool. This group has focused on circles of supports and getting ready for the NDIS and also has a strong focus on improving transport options for people with disability.

## **Marrickville**

The Marrickville Peer group is co-facilitated by Wendy Banfield and Emily Dash. A large focus area for this group was on ensuring people with disability get out and about into community venues with the intention of not only improving on the lives of people with disability, but raising awareness and educating the community about inclusion. This group has also worked on building individual participant skills and securing meaningful employment.

## **Noah's Shoalhaven**

PDCN, in collaboration with Debra Jeffries at Noah's Shoalhaven, has established peer groups for parents of children with a disabilities. Both daytime and evening groups are run, providing an opportunity for working parents to participate. The group schedule for parent groups includes practical support and guidance for parents with newly diagnosed children, practical tips on self managing care and funds, as well as up-to-date information on early intervention in readiness for the NDIS.

## **Wollongong / Illawarra Region**

Sharon Holz continues to facilitate the Shoalhaven Self Advocacy group in Nowra. Since the last annual report Sharon has added three more groups to her region, including one in Nowra and another in Wollongong. Sharon is also facilitating a 'getting employment ready' group in collaboration with Essential Employment in Wollongong.

# **I'm Okay: Emergency Readiness for People with Disability**

The past year has seen PDCN's award winning website 'I'm Okay' receive a fresh new look and home at [www.imokay.org.au](http://www.imokay.org.au). PDCN has consistently increased the reach of the website, currently receiving three times the page views compared to figures last financial year. These impressive results will ensure that more people with disability can benefit from its information, tools and resources.

People with disability are often more vulnerable in emergency situations and may be put at further risk due to a lack of preparation and planning. It is imperative that people with disability are provided the opportunity to develop a personalised emergency plan that addresses their specific needs.

To celebrate the end of the project and showcase the changes made to I'm Okay, PDCN relaunched the website at an event held in Glebe Town hall, which saw a range of stakeholders and members of the community come together to celebrate the projects achievements and raise awareness of the importance of emergency planning for people with disabilities.

# Object Three

## To educate and inform stakeholders about the needs of people with physical disability

The Physical Disability Council has continued to work to further our core organisational objective of educating and informing stakeholders about the needs of people with a disability in all areas of their lives.

We do this through a number of means:

- Participation in advisory committees, working parties and forums with like minded organisations
- Writing submissions and input into policy and legislative development at local, State and Commonwealth levels
- Developing working relationships with service providers, other peak organisations, and government to develop programs and initiatives that positively impact on the lives of, and services and supports available to people with physical disability

### Access to the built environment

It is essential for everyone to be able to access all physical components of our environments, such as buildings, open spaces, streets and pathways in order to be able to participate fully in society. PDCN continues to advocate for greater access standards for buildings and developments, push for the full implementation of Universal Design principals and work in collaboration with NCOSS and the City of Sydney to further the push for more accessible and affordable housing in NSW using innovative and inclusive approaches to community.

Forums/Advisory Committee Membership:

- UNSW Home Modification Information Clearing House (HomeInf) Advisory Committee
- Australian Network of Universal Housing Design (ANUHD)
- Access to Premises Building Standards Forum
- City of Sydney - People First Consultation – working together for a strong inclusive society
- NCOSS Housing Innovation Fund Forum

Submissions undertaken:

- Proposal for change – National Construction Code
- NSW Dept of Fair Trading – Statutory Review of the Residential Tenancies Act 2010
- City of Sydney - Inner Sydney Parking Review

## Education, Employment and Financial Health

People with disabilities are still far below their able bodied counterparts when it comes to rates of attendance in higher education and employment opportunities, however PDCN are aware that inclusion in both, and greater financial stability is key to living an independent life, and developing greater self-esteem.

To this end PDCN continues to offer training such as our 'Words Matter' and newly developed 'Inclusion Policy' workshops to the wider community in an effort to ensure the business community, and those employing or working with people with physical disability are able to use appropriate language and inclusive behaviours within these environments, and feel empowered to include people with disabilities within their workplaces.

In line with the NSW Government's requirement for all NSW State and Local Government Departments to have written and implemented Disability Inclusion Action Plans (DIAP's) by 2015 and 2017 respectively. PDCN's Inclusion Policy workshop aims to ensure those responsible for the implementation of these plans are aware of how they can go about doing so, putting 'words into action.' Greater work will be undertaken in 2016-17 now that these two workshops have been updated to increase uptake in the workshops themselves, initially targeting local councils throughout the state.

Financial health refers to a person's ability to adequately provide for their needs - be it housing and food, health and personal care, aids and equipment or clothing and leisure activities. PDCN is aware that for some people with a disability meeting these costs can be difficult, and as such we work to ensure banks, providers of energy and other resources, and telecommunications providers to name a few - work to meet the needs of people with physical disability - through options for assistance, reduced rates, accessible devices and clear processes for dealing with complaints and grievances.

### **Forums/Advisory Committee Membership:**

- NSW Government Disability Inclusion Plan Implementation Committee (DIPIC)
- Forum of Non Government Associations (FONGA)
- Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA)
- NSW Disability Advocacy Network (NDAN)
- Energy and Water Consumer Advisory Panel (EWCAP)
- Public Interest Advisory Committee (PIAC)
- National Energy Roundtable

### **Submissions undertaken:**

- National Disability Employment Framework Issues Paper
- AGL Energy Affordability Consultation



## Health and Wellbeing

A major focus of PDCN's work in this area over the past year has been in emergency preparedness for people with disabilities, through the generous assistance of additional funding from the NRMA for PDCN's 'I'm Okay' Emergency Readiness website for people with disabilities.

To this end we have additional website content, updating emergency information and linking with various community groups to extend the reach of the website itself including NSW Police, NSW Ambulance, the SES, Fire and Rescue NSW, NSW Rural Fire Services, St Johns Ambulance, and the Red Cross.

Through the development of these partnerships, PDCN was also asked to have a seat on the University of Sydney's 'Disability and Disaster Preparedness in NSW: Enabling Local Community Resilience through collaboration' Advisory Panel, and has supported this project as it developed a self-assessment tool for both organisations, and individuals with a disability, to assess their capability to manage and act in an emergency.

In addition, after community consultation with people with disabilities it became apparent that individuals had concerns about their options for personal safety when their mobility equipment broke down in the local community. This identified the need for content on the website to include tips on preparedness for equipment failure outside of the home, and an emergency plan for this situation.

At the same time, work was also undertaken to add more interactive functions to the website, and now allows for

1. Individuals to 'tick off' steps as they develop their emergency readiness plan whilst using the website
2. Fill in and download/print off personal emergency planning tools for their own use

As the additional emergency information on the I'm Okay website caused it to reach capacity in its current form PDCN also undertook to rebuild the site, and find a better website address – purchasing "imokay.org.au" and also buying additional web hosting space to hold the additional web pages built for the newer emergency situations developed. This capacity is now unlimited, so the site can be added to without further constraint.

### 2016-17 I'm Okay Website Updates

1. Bushfires – information added
2. Storms and Flooding – information added
3. Extreme Heat - information added
4. Personal safety - new in 2015/16
5. Fires in the home - new in 2015/16
6. Out in the community - new in 2015/16
7. Air Quality and Dust storms - new in 2015/2016
8. Workshops and Events - new in 2015/16



Melanie Rebane from NSW Fire and Rescue speaking at I'm Okay Relaunch

## Project Evaluation/User testing

Upon completion of the updates to the website PDCN has tested the effectiveness of the site and requested user evaluation via a survey from people with disability throughout NSW.

### I'm Okay Survey

#### Demographics

Female	55%
Male	45%
Person with disability	90%
Age Range	19 - 64 years

#### Location

Metropolitan	60%
Regional/rural	40%

The purpose of the website was clear to me

73%

The checklists and tools were easy to use

91%

The I'm Okay website is user friendly

72%

The I'm Okay website provided useful information

72%

When asked if there was additional information that could be added to the I'm Okay website that individuals felt would be relevant to their needs the highest areas of interest were for the provision of information related to poor water quality, and pandemics/disease, leaving us with additional topics for expansion in the future.

The downside of the survey was that it indicated that many people had not ever considered completing an emergency plan prior to viewing the website. The reasons for this was respondents felt that competing time commitments had stopped them from doing so (70%) or they did not need one, with 80% of respondents having never experienced a personal or natural disaster.

The implications of this are considerable, and PDCN will look to how we can further promote the idea of readiness as not something that happens after an emergency takes place, for 'next time' but as a proactive step to safety. In addition, continuing to build templates that make the preparation of a plan as quick and simple as possible (whilst still allowing for personal needs) could assist in addressing time constraints.

#### Forums/Advisory Committee Membership:

- NSW Department of Health - Non Government Organisation Advisory Committee (NGOAC)
- Health Policy Advisory Group (HPAG)
- Assistive Technology Community Alliance NSW
- University of Sydney's Disability Preparedness Collaboration Advisory Committee
- COTA Policy Advisory Board
- EnableNSW procedural review

#### Submissions undertaken:

- NSW Dept Health - Partnerships for Health Consultation
- NSW Dept Health - Disability Inclusion Plan Consultation



## Human Rights

Human rights refer to the legal recognition of the inherent value, dignity and equality of all people.

PDCN strives to make these rights a reality for all people in NSW who have physical disability and in 2016 PDCN has worked in concert with the national disability advocacy peak body (DANA) and other like organisations in NSW, to highlight the increasing need for advocacy of all types for people with disabilities and ensure that access to such services remains upon instigation of the NDIS, as this is not assured in the current political climate, but is recognised as likely to be of a greater need in the initial stage of full scheme roll out.

PDCN know that many people with physical disability will not be eligible for the NDIS as funded participants, and feel strongly that there will still be a great need for advocacy for this cohort, and for areas of individual rights that fall outside of the NDIS remit.

It is still a major concern for PDCN that all advocacy funding will be withdrawn after July 2018 in NSW, and to this end we are engaging with the Department of Social Services to ensure PDCN is recognised as an advocacy peak in this arena, and is able secure the ability to tender for National Disability Advocacy Program funding into the future.



The PDCN Team at the SCIA Expo raising awareness for our cause and helping people access information



Additionally, we have continued to work to ensure the roll out and implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme occurs in such a way that anyone with a disability in NSW, whether they will obtain a package under the NDIS or not, has access to the scheme.

In this year we have consulted on the Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) commissioning framework, especially with regard to how NGO's will prepare and engage with the new outcomes framework requirements and tendering processes for gaining grants under the ILC, to ensure the ILC is driven by people with disability and the NGO's whom have significant experience in providing programs for the sector. We have also provided input into a working 'toolkit' to assist NGO's in upskilling staff in tender writing requirements.

A new area of work has been driven by our seat on the Minister for Innovation's Social Innovation Council, and allows PDCN a voice in driving systemic change in regulatory requirements, bringing about efficiencies in our partnerships with Government, reducing duplication of organisational information and documentation for funding and other identification purposes, and in setting up better outcomes measurements metrics that clearly align with funding objectives. In the long term this should mean the opportunity to apply for larger tenders, with funding for longer periods of time, a definite benefit when trying to assure long term change in our sector.

#### **Forums/Advisory Committee Membership:**

- Minister for Innovation – Social Innovation Council (SIC)
- NSW Disability Ombudsman Roundtable
- Lifetime Care and Support (LTCS) Advisory Panel
- Disability Network Forum (DNF)
- Forum of Non Government Associations (FONGA)
- Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA)
- NSW Disability Advocacy Network (NDAN)
- Lifetime Care and Support Authority - Dispute Assessor Panel
- National Advocacy Summit
- ILC Commissioning Framework Working Group

#### **Submissions undertaken:**

- National Disability Insurance Agency – Information, Linkages and Capacity Building Commissioning Framework
- Commonwealth Dept of Social Services – Review of the National Disability Advocacy Program and Framework
- NSW Dept of Family and Community Services – NSW Disability Inclusion Plan
- Commonwealth Govt – Review of the NDIS Act 2013

## Transport

PDCN continues to consider access to transport of all kinds as a necessity for full inclusion in society, allowing people with a disability to participate in education, employment and social activities. To this end our staff sit on various access and accessible transport committees, and actively advocate for improvements to NSW train station access, taxi reforms, greater numbers of accessible public transport options, and transport infrastructure, particularly in regional and rural areas.

This year we also held a community consultation on Public Transport for people with a disability (PWD) in the Sydney metro area, and a specific issues survey on use of the Opal Card by people with a disability using an online survey tool.

Results of our Community Consultation into public transport highlighted the following concerns:

- Lack of respect by drivers for the needs of PWD especially in regard to allowing time to get to seating, or assist PWD
- Lack of understanding by fellow public on inappropriate use of designated disability seating (and unwillingness to move when requested)
- Private provider transport services not accessible
- Physical access on buses to turn in wheelchair or reach opal card readers
- Regional concerns of lack of access to public transport in general and level path of access to public transport facilities (bus stops/stations etc)

In respect to Wheelchair Accessible Taxis (WAT) there were additional specific issues

- Refusal of fare (where pwd was considered drunk due to stability issues)
- Inability to get WAT taxis at school drop off/pick up times, and after hours
- Availability of WAT taxis in some areas (both suburban and rural)
- Paperwork for Transport Taxi Subsidy Scheme considered cumbersome and time consuming

### Opal card Survey

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 small sample of whom identified with vision, hearing and intellectual impairments.

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.

Survey respondents most frequently used trains, followed by buses and then taxis.

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.

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 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.’



Policy Officer Jordana at the now-accessible Artarmon Station

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 their card refunded. Passengers living in Queensland who are unable to use the states equivalent of the Opal card are able to obtain the ‘Translink Access Pass’ for \$67.40 annually to access all modes of public transport.

PDCN will use the findings of both these consultations to inform their advocacy work in the transport space, and through their position on the Transport for NSW Accessible Transport Advisory Committee position to continue to ensure improvements in these areas for our members.

Opportunities may also exist for additional educational workshops for train, bus and light rail drivers to assist in driver awareness.

#### Forums/Advisory Committee Membership:

- Transport for NSW – Accessible Transport Advisory Committee (ATAC)
- Transport Policy Advisory Group (TPAG)
- NSW Point to Point Transport Consultation
- PDCN specific issue consultation – Opal card use for people with a disability
- PDCN community Consultation - Public Transport for people with a disability

#### Submissions undertaken:

- NSW Government - Review of the Point to Point Transport Discussion Paper
- City of Sydney - Inner Sydney Parking Submission



## 2015 – 2016 Outcomes

As a result of some of the above human rights activities results were achieved in the following areas:

- Access To The Built Environment
- Sydney Harbour Bridge - Step Free Access Project nears completion
- Sydney Harbour Bridge – Cycle path access in development
- City of Sydney consultation undertaken to ensure accessibility in George St developments
- No reduction of the Building standards for ratios of accessible rooms in Australian hotels

### Financial Health

- Greater access to hardship programs for those experiencing strain paying energy bills

### Health and Wellbeing

- I'm Okay website launch and greater emergency readiness resources available
- Partnership with EnableNSW to improve repair response procedures, and access to emergency out of hours support for people with disability whose equipment is supplied by Enable.
- Review of EnableNSW information sheets and repair forms
- 15 peer support groups for people with disability established statewide

### Human Rights

- The reinstatement of a Disability Discrimination Commissioner
- The continued review of the implementation of Disability Inclusion Action Plans throughout State and Local Government (due for completion in Nov 2015 and 2017 respectively) - increasing inclusion throughout the general community for people with physical disability
- 264 individuals with finalised pre-plans in readiness for the NDIS

### Transport

- An additional 12 NSW stations are fully or partially (some platforms) accessible
- Continued increase in accessible buses across the Sydney metro region
- New trains and bus prototypes inspected for accessibility needs and appropriateness
- Opal card pension fares remain stable when 2016 increase occurred

# Appendix A

## United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)

To ensure the rights of people with disability are realised, the United Nations Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) was adopted in December 2006 at the United Nations Headquarters and was opened for signature on 30 March, 2007. There were 82 signatories of the convention on that day, including Australia.

A principle role of the CRPD is to demonstrate how traditional rights are to be applied in respect of people with disability. Australia ratified the Convention in July 2008 and has therefore joined other countries around the world in a global effort to promote the equal and active participation of all people with disability in society and community life. These are identified in the Articles of the Convention.

The work of PDCN in 2015 - 2016 has contributed to this work and responsibility, within the objects of PDCN's Constitution, including:

<b>Object One</b> To educate, inform and assist people with physical disability in NSW about the range of services, structure & programs available.	<b>Article 9</b> Accessibility	<b>Article 21</b> Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information
<b>Object Two</b> To develop the capacity of people with physical disability in NSW to advocate for themselves	<b>Article 11</b> Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies	<b>Article 21</b> Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information
<b>Object Three</b> To educate and inform stakeholders about the needs of people with physical disability	<b>Article 8</b> Awareness-raising	<b>Article 9</b> Accessibility
<b>Article 17</b> Protecting the integrity of the person	<b>Article 19</b> Living independently and being included in the community	<b>Article 20</b> Personal Mobility
<b>Article 21</b> Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information	<b>Article 24</b> Education	<b>Article 25</b> Health
<b>Article 26</b> Habilitation and rehabilitation	<b>Article 27</b> Work and employment	<b>Article 28</b> Adequate standard of living and social protection
<b>Article 30</b> Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport	Read the convention in full at <a href="http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml">www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml</a>	

# Appendix B

## Audited Financial Report

The Physical Disability Council of NSW Inc.

Detailed income and expenditure statement for year ending 30 June 16

26 858 845 702



	2016 (\$)	2015 (\$)
<b>Income</b>		
Government Funding	811,848	401,183
<b>Other Income</b>		
Interest Received	17,564	19,266
Members Contributions	5,129	3,644
Workshop Income	150	52,979
Other Income	10,355	10,753
Community Grants	-	13,352
Donations-Public	40	100
	33,238	100,094
	845,086	501,277
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Advertising	1,372	68
Annual Leave Provision	14,264	(8,858)
Auditor's Remuneration	4,800	4,500
Depreciation expense –Bank Charges leased property	826	849
Bookkeeping Fees	1,280	1,583
Capital Equipment W/Off	4,986	6,743
Computer Expenses	29,291	15,421
Conferences and Expos	2,049	2,500
Consultancy Fees	110,116	19,216
Board Expenses	3,491	4,436
Deprecation	1,635	4,207
DSO Grant Expenditure	-	80
Grant Expenses	-	35,032
Impact Website	9,860	14,751
Insurance	9,177	9,018
Long Service Leave	(12,193)	430
Permits, Licenses & Fees	472	845
Planning Support Grant Expenditure	-	14,152
Postage	-	1,829
Printing & Stationery	15,255	5,998
Rent	8,837	9,611
Repairs & Maintenance	10	65
Salaries & Wages	364,577	280,979
Staff Training & Amenities	3,731	3,000
Strategic Planning	-	5,189
Subscriptions	1,741	1,429
Superannuation Contributions-Compulsory	33,060	20,948
Telephone	5,977	2,852
Travelling & Accommodation Expenses	93,315	6,686
Volunteer Expenses	-	40
Workshop Expenses	-	10,402
Sundry	1,097	-
	709,026	474,001
<b>Current year surplus before income tax</b>	136,060	27,276
Income tax expense	-	-
<b>Net current year surplus</b>	136,060	27,276
Retained surplus at the beginning of the financial year	113,602	86,326
<b>Retained surplus at the end of the financial year</b>	<b>249,662</b>	<b>113,602</b>

# Appendix C

## Independent Auditor's Report

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of The Physical Disability Council of NSW Inc (the association), which comprises the assets and liabilities statement as at 30 June 2016, the income and expenditure statement for the year then ended, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the certification by members of the board on the annual statements giving a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of the association.

### **Board's Responsibility for the Financial Report**

The board of The Physical Disability Council of NSW Inc is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report, and has determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 is appropriate to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 and is appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The board's responsibility also includes such internal control as the board determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

### **Auditor's Responsibility**

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. We have conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the association's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the association's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the board, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

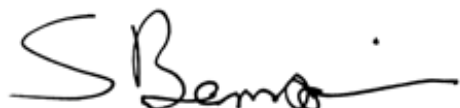
### Opinion

In our opinion, the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects [or gives a true and fair view of – refer to the applicable state/territory Act], the financial position of The Physical Disability Council of NSW Inc as at 30 June 2016 and its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements, and the requirements the Associations Incorporation Act 2009.

### Basis of Accounting

Without modifying our opinion, we draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist the Physical Disability Council of NSW Inc to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act 2009. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.

Auditor's signature:



Scott Bennison  
Infinity Financial Chartered Accountants

Auditor's address: 71 Longueville Rd Lane Cove  
Dated this 25th day August 2016

