

Welcome to the September PDCN Live Newsletter!

The last three months have seen the team at PDCN become very busy as we completed end of year reports, undertook our audit and developed a new workshop to assist people whom have now begun to action their NDIS plans and may need some additional support to understand the many changes this requires.

In addition, we have given evidence to the Federal Government's Senate Committee inquiry into the delivery of outcomes under the National Disability Strategy to build inclusive and accessible communities. We want to ensure that this occurs not only for those whom benefit from the NDIS, but everyone else; particularly older persons with disability and those whom will be more disadvantaged when the NDIS comes into play, ensuring continued and improved access to the community.

The retention of independent advocacy, information and referral supports will be a focus of the next three months, as the NSW Disability Advocacy Alliance (a group formed by many of the advocacy, information and peak representational organisations throughout NSW) formally launch our campaign to stop the massive loss of funding to the majority of organisations that currently offer you supports.

We hope that as PDCN members, you will assist us to spread the word to your local councillors, or MP's and let them know of how that loss will affect you – and your ability to engage in the community, or have a voice and support when you need it. Over the next few weeks, we will provide you with tools to help you do this. Sign an online petition, visit your local councillor or Member, tell your story to us of how advocacy has helped you, and why it is imperative that it remains available to you in the future... after all, none of us truly knows what the future brings, or when we may need a little extra support!

Enjoy the newsletter – and don't forget - join us on Wednesday 18 October at our AGM. We'd love to see you!

Serena Ovens,
Executive Officer

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Contact Us



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Save The Date!

Our Annual General Meeting is on Wednesday 18 October at The Westin Hotel, Barnet Room, 1 Martin Place, Sydney.



Speaker: The Honourable Liesl Tesch, MP for Gosford, seven time Paralympian and first wheelchair user in NSW Parliament.

Arrive at 5:45pm for a 6pm start. Drinks and canapes at 7pm. RSVP to 02 9552 1606 or admin@pdcnsw.org.au by Monday 9 October.

Council on the Ageing 50+ Report

Council on the Ageing NSW (COTA) has released its latest 50+ Report, 'The twin currencies: how people in NSW spend their time and money as they age.' The 2017 50+ Report was informed by COTA's 2016 survey which was completed by more than 6000 people over 50 across the state. The current report has chosen to focus on how older people spend their time and their money and seeks to gain a better understanding of the varied circumstances of people in the years leading up to and including their retirement.

Community engagement is key to the work carried out by COTA. Research provides COTA insight into the diverse perspectives of older people and assists with the formation of evidence based policy that is directly influenced by the views, wants and needs of older people in NSW.

The latest 50+ Report has highlighted the challenges older people face, particularly women on lower incomes and those on the disability support pension or the age/DVA pension. The report also explores participants lived experience of the concept of retirement and if this will be a reality for them given many individuals are choosing to remain in the workforce longer for economic reasons.

COTA's 50+ Report can be found here: <http://bit.ly/2xa2CSd> or contact us on 02 9552 1606 if you would like to be emailed a copy.

Community Conversations: Themes and Summary

During the month of June, PDCN held a series of Community Conversations in Ashfield, Rozelle and Newtown. The invitation was extended to anyone who was interested in the community wellbeing of that particular area. Thank you to all who contributed their time, experiences and ideas.

We gathered together the common themes and this is what the community said...

People want to live in a diverse, inclusive, accessible, safe and affordable community, but they are concerned that city is taking over and community connection is disappearing. They feel that diversity is not valued and they don't feel safe. As people talk more about those concerns they talk specifically about connection to community.

Residents want to focus on keeping the sense of community alive, with services working collectively, not competitively. Participants want to have more community gatherings, support local business, ensure community spaces are incorporated into new developments, such as high rise apartments and buildings. They want to raise awareness around accessibility with community members sharing their stories and experiences, helping people to think outwardly beyond their own personal circumstance and understanding how their actions affect others. They

want all departments and services, including Local MP's, Councils, access committees, neighbourhood centres, community services, Chamber of Commerce, businesses, peak bodies, all working collectively playing a part in those actions and then community would be more likely to trust the effort and step forward.

PDCN used the Harwood Community Engagement methodology to lead these conversations, which include a series of nine questions. In order to create an intimate and open conversation, we refer to these as a 'Kitchen Table' conversation, keeping each conversation to 15 people or less. If you are a community member or an organisation interested in bringing together additional people to facilitate more of these conversations, please contact us. A whole range of government and non-government services as well as community members are well placed to initiate these sessions.

You can contact us on 02 9552 1606 or admin@pdcnsw.org.au with any suggestions or feedback.



NDIS: Plans in Practice

In the last three months, PDCN has wrapped up its last scheduled NDIS Ready workshops in Rural and Remote NSW. The workshops were held in Wentworth, Kyogle and Tweed Heads with 35 people attending and 13 pre-planning referrals requested. Post workshop evaluations particularly highlighted the workshops to be informative and empowering with the majority of participants reporting that they feel more confident to develop their plans.

As NDIS Ready wraps up, PDCN launched its new free two day workshop NDIS: Plans in Practice on the 5th of September in Gosford. After receiving feedback from our members, workshop participants and other NDIS participants who found their NDIS plans to be confusing, PDCN identified a need to help demystify the implementation of the NDIS in participant's everyday lives. In response, PDCN



in partnership with our facilitators who have a lived experience of disability developed a new workshop focusing on understanding one's NDIS plan and how to make the most of it. The essence of the workshop is to empower people to take hold of the choice and control the NDIS offers and to make that 'good life' a reality.

The first workshop was well received with many participants able to ask questions during the day and have them answered in a meaningful way by our knowledgeable facilitators. And significantly, participants expressed feelings of clarity, hope and renewed direction going forward with their NDIS plans. Another outcome which we look forward to seeing in future workshops is the development of supportive networks between participants, as one person answered what she liked most about the course,

“Collaborating with so many great women! Not feeling so alone.”

- NDIS: Plans in Practice Gosford participant

Upcoming 2017 workshops have been scheduled in Toongabbie, Mittagong, Liverpool, Taree and Armidale.

For further information on peer support groups, or to register, go to <https://www.pdcnsw.org.au/projects/ndis-plans-practice/>

Upcoming Peer Support Groups

Essential Employment Peer Support Group

Date: 27/09/2017 (last Wednesday of every month)

Time: 10:30am-12:30pm

Location: Essential Employment and Training, Wollongong

Blacktown Peer Support Group

Date: 29/09/2017 (last Friday of every month)

Time: 11:00-1:00pm

Location: Assistive Technology Australian, Sydney

AAC Youth Group

Date: 01/10/2017 (first Sunday of every month)

Time: 11:00am-1:00pm

Location: The Place, Newcastle

Erina Peer Support Group

Date: 03/10/2017 (first Tuesday of every month)

Time: 11:00am- 1:00pm

Location: The Hive, Erina

Shoalhaven Self Advocacy Group

Date: 07/10/2017 (first Saturday of every month)

Time: 11:30-1:30pm

Location: West Street Community Centre, Nowra

Liverpool Peer Support Group

Date: 09/10/2017

Time: 11:00am-1:00pm

Location: Liverpool Library, Sydney

Nowra Peer Support Group

Date: 09/10/2017

Time: 11:30am-1:30pm

Location: Shoalhaven Regional Gallery, Nowra

Wollongong Women's

Date: 19/10/2017

Time: 2:00pm-4:00pm

Location: Flourish Australia, Wollongong

Top Ryde Peer Support Group

Date: 20/10/2017

Time: 1:00pm-3:00pm

Location: Top Ryde City Library, Sydney

The Parent Room

Date: 26/10/2017

Time: 10:30am-12:30pm (day session) & 6:00pm-8:00pm (evening session)

Location: Noah's Shoalhaven, Nowra

For further information on peer support groups, or to register, go to <https://www.pdcnsw.org.au/projects/peer-support-groups/> or call Sarah Humphery on 9552 1606.

Donate to PDCN!

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

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

Invisible but not Silent



Do you have an invisible disability? People with invisible disabilities often face discrimination when they try to access disability services because people wrongly assume that they are trying to take advantage of facilities that they are not entitled to. Blue Badge Insurance hears about these incidents all the time from customers and Facebook followers, so they decided to conduct a survey of people with invisible disabilities and their carers to gain insight into their day to day experiences.

Invisible Disabilities and Parking

Many invisible disabilities can affect a person's mobility, making them eligible for a disability parking permit. People with physical disabilities or chronic illnesses may be unable to walk long distances, or may need extra room to enter or exit the car. People with intellectual disabilities or brain injuries may need help with equipment like seat belts, or to walk safely through traffic. While others need quick access to exits in case of panic attacks or medical emergencies. Despite this, people with invisible disabilities often face harassment for using their disability parking permits.



The Impact of Harassment

While we have been aware of harassment, it appears that the problem is far more widespread than we had imagined, with 76 percent of permit holders surveyed experiencing abuse ranging from glares, rude notes, verbal harassment and even spitting.

"I have a young child and I am often scared for our safety and humiliated by the way some people speak to or look at us. I am sad and angry that my young child witnesses the nastiness of other people." - Survey respondent

The effects of this harassment on people who are legally entitled to use disabled parking is profound, with people reporting feeling frustrated, threatened, angry and offended. Many also reported that they were made to feel guilty, even though they knew that they had a right to use their permit. Sadly, 59 percent of respondents who had been abused in car parks said they have felt forced to change their behaviour as a result of their experience. These changes range from looking around to see if anyone is watching them when

they get out of their car, through to exaggerating their limp or even using a walking stick that they didn't really need to "prove" their disability. For some people, the effects were much more severe. One parent had to sit down and explain the situation to their children to console them after an incident, while others avoided using their permit altogether whenever possible.

Reporting Harassment

Although 77 per cent of the disability parking permit holders we surveyed told us they had received harassment as a result of an invisible disability, incidents of abuse seem to be vastly underreported, with only 8 percent of respondents saying that they had reported it to authorities. This under-reporting occurs for a number of reasons, with some people saying that they couldn't find an appropriate person to report the harassment to, while others said they were simply too upset or fatigued as a result of the incident and their disability to do anything about it. However, the most common response was that people didn't think that authorities could or would do anything even if they reported abuse, with 59 per cent of people saying that they didn't think reporting abuse would help.

How do We Fix the Problem?

A staggering 95 per cent of respondents said that there was not enough accessible parking in their area and 90 per cent would like to see their parking areas better monitored for misuse.



The need for increased education was a theme that came up regularly, and participants had lots of great ideas about how this should be done. Some suggested changing the International Symbol of Access (currently a picture of a person in wheelchair on a blue background), to something more inclusive of a range of disabilities. Many people also advocated more widespread education campaigns about the varied nature of disability, with government-sponsored awareness campaigns, targeted curriculum in schools and testing as part of drivers' licences and citizenship tests all being suggested.

Survey Results – A Quick Look

1. 77% of permit holders had faced harassment while parking.
2. Only 8% of people reported their harassment to authorities.
3. Of the people who reported to authorities, only 17% were happy with the response they received.
4. 59% of people have felt compelled to change how and when they use their permit as a result of being harassed.
5. Over 94% of respondents don't feel that there are enough accessible parking spaces in public parking areas.

If you're interested in getting an obligation free quote to find out how Blue Badge compares to your current insurer, call 1300 304 802.

*Full Terms and conditions for Blue Badge offer. It is important to read the PDS before deciding if a Blue Badge insurance policy is right for you.

Discounts for the Blue Badge Insurance Comprehensive Motor Vehicle Insurance will be applied to the base vehicle rates subject to the customer holding a permanent Disability Parking Permit and/or the vehicle has been converted for use by a driver or passengers that have a disability. The discounts do not apply to the Blue Badge Roadside Assistance Optional Benefit. Underwriting criteria will be applied to the consideration of the risk. Additional excesses will apply to drivers under 25 or those drivers who have held a full Australian drivers licence for less than 2 years. This offer may be withdrawn at any time. Not available with any other offer.

Consider the PDS at www.BlueBadgeInsurance.com.au to decide if the product is right for you. Blue Badge Insurance Australia Pty Ltd, ABN 59 162 783 306, (AR No. 438547) is an Authorised Representative of The Hollard Insurance Company Pty Ltd, ABN 78 090 584 473 (AFS Licence No 241436).

Quarterly Highlights

A successful Sydney Harbour Bridge Step free access rally and PDCN joins a Parliamentary round table discussion



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