

MEDIA RELEASE – WEDNESDAY 17 October 2018

SYDNEY HARBOUR BRIDGE NOW OPEN TO EVERYONE

Today, the iconic Sydney Harbour Bridge (SHB) becomes accessible to everyone. The much anticipated opening of the SHB elevators will enable those with disability, families with prams and seniors with reduced mobility to enjoy the vista of our magnificent Sydney harbour.

“After more than a decade of advocating for everyone to be able to access the Harbour Bridge, I’m delighted this day has come,” said Serena Ovens, CEO of Physical Disability Council of NSW (PDCN).

“We celebrate this milestone in access with the Minister for Roads and Maritime Services, Melinda Pavey, and Member for North Shore, Felicity Wilson, as they officially open the new lifts at the Northern and Southern ends of the walkway of the Bridge.”

This has been a significant achievement for PDCN, and all Australians and visitors to Sydney who rely on easier and safer access to what is doubtless a spectacular experience of a visit to Sydney.

“Our members, multiple stakeholders, and the general public, all united their voices behind PDCN’s ‘Everybody’s Bridge’ campaign last year when it looked like the project might stall, showing just how critical and far reaching the need for step free access to the bridge truly is,” said Ms Ovens.

“While PDCN acts as the voice for people with physical disability in NSW, inclusion benefits everyone. Now parents with prams, those with disability and seniors can all access the bridge too!”

PDCN President Mr Chris Sparks believes this is a landmark day for accessibility in Australia. “I have been a wheelchair user for over 50 years and today for the first time my wife and I will be able to stroll across Sydney’s legendary coat-hanger”, Sparks said.

“Nowadays 20% of the Australian tourism market is based on accessibility and accessible facilities are a major draw card for those with disability, seniors, their families and friends. For every person with disability the tourism multiplier for business is between 2 to 4”, Sparks asserted.

Making the Sydney Harbour Bridge accessible to all is a significant drawcard for Australia’s tourism market and coincides with work that PDCN is currently undertaking with companies such as the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse and AirBnB to improve accessibility.

Srin Madipalli, Accessibility Product and Program Manager at Airbnb is currently visiting Sydney and also welcomed the opening as a boon for accessible tourism in New South Wales.



“At the top of close to every travellers’ list is experiencing the Sydney Harbour Bridge. From today, more people with disability and their loved ones will be able to truly enjoy it. This is a watershed moment for inclusion and accessible tourism and will no doubt be a drawcard for travellers the world over,” Mr Madipalli said.

“One in five people in NSW have a disability and as our population ages, this figure is likely to increase. For this reason alone it is imperative we look to greater inclusive practices in all areas of life, be it tourism offerings to accessing public transport, shops and community spaces enabling everyone to be fully included, contributing members of our society, and PDCN won’t rest until that is achieved,” Mr Sparks concluded.

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