



**Serena Ovens,**  
**Executive Officer**

Welcome to the first PDCN Live newsletter of 2019!

As you will see from the articles within, it's already been a very busy start to the year and the PDCN team has been working hard to effect inclusive change across a range of policy areas and will continue to progress this

work throughout the year. In addition, we've also been furthering the call for secure, long-term funding for the NSW disability advocacy sector – and having small wins in our #StandByMe campaign - of which you can read more a little further into the newsletter.

With both the NSW and Federal elections looming and the State government now in 'caretaker' mode there is little in the way of decisions or change that will happen from now until April from the Government's end.

However I'm excited about some of the proactive systemic work PDCN is engaging in, particularly around inclusive entertainment and ticketing for events. I look forward to having even more of your input into how we can make this space inclusive of all our needs. PDCN has also been working with UNSW's Home Modification Information Clearing House to assist in user testing of their updated website and associated resources and I thank those of you who have provided your input into this project.

By the time this reaches your mailboxes it won't be far off Easter and the first term school holidays, so I'll end by wishing you a relaxing short break!

Serena

## In this issue

**2 MEET A BOARD MEMBER**  
Jacob Cross tells us why PDCN's work is so important to him

**3 STAND BY ME UPDATE**  
Our role in the fight to secure disability advocacy funding for all people in NSW

**6 PDCN ELECTION POLICY**  
We've had a great response to our first official election policy release

**7 VENUE ACCESSIBILITY**  
We're working with some major players to ensure everyone can enjoy entertainment venues

**8 FAREWELL SARAH HUMPHERY**  
Thank you for all your work

## 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)

# Jacob Cross

## Board Member Profile



### **What attracted you to the position on the PDCN board?**

I was attracted to PDCN because of the role it plays in improving the lives of people with physical disability and the opportunity to make a difference, both big and small, knowing that every positive difference made will carry on in perpetuity. Every person with physical disability has their own challenges and obstacles which are often shared by a wider community and without organisations like PDCN, these issues may not get the attention that is required to aid the greatest number of people.

### **Where do you feel you can add the most value to PDCN in your role as a Board member?**

I am about to graduate in April as a Town Planner. I have a strong interest in making the built environment the most accessible it can be, to be able to assist people of all abilities to equitably access the spaces around them. With this, combined with having a younger person's perspective, I feel I can approach issues from a different angle which provides a holistic and wider scope to the issues and discussions PDCN engages with.

### **What do you see as the most important issues for PDCN/or the disability sector currently?**

The most important issue for me is removing the physical barriers put in place by the way we design spaces and places and giving every person, no matter their ability, an equal opportunity to engage in activities and life's moments in the easiest and most comfortable way. Every person has the right to be able to access any public space and universal design is something which is the greatest enabler of this. Changing attitudes around equal access, with regard to creating a greater understanding that a person may need additional support to engage with their community and that these supports need to be accommodated is another issue I believe is important.

### **Tell us about other things that interest you outside of the disability sector.**

I have been a huge fan of cars and anything automotive since a young age. I have recently gained an incredible feeling of freedom through getting my provisional licence which has been a dream of mine from early on in my life. I'm looking forward to exploring more of this great country and attempting to try as many experiences along the way – even if they put me out of my comfort zone.

# #StandByMe - How Can You Help?

In the lead up to the NSW election the NSW Disability Advocacy Alliance, of which PDCN is a part, has been on the campaign trail, meeting with government Ministers and local MPs to discuss the now very imminent defunding of all state-based advocacy, information and peak representative services for people with disability.



**Don't Ditch  
Disability Advocacy**

Whilst in April 2018 we were promised transitional funding to June 2020, for some organisations there was a specific funding requirement that meant getting the second year of funds (for the 2019/20 year) was impossible. In addition, as many of you are aware, the NSW Government's current position is that the NDIS Information, Linkages and Capacity building grants would cover advocacy funding post 2020.

Over the past 10 months, we've done all we can to bring our plight to all politicians' attention, and make sure that all parties are aware of the inherent issues with the State no longer funding independent advocacy, and people with disability themselves being left with no voice, or much needed supports or information should things go wrong in their lives. Additionally, we've talked to all the good things advocacy and peak organisations like PDCN do together with government to continue to uphold the tenets of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCRPD), the National Disability Strategy, and of course the Disability Inclusion Act by working towards a fully inclusive society.

Thanks to the massive rally in Martin Place on 24 February, that I know many of our members came along to in support (our heartfelt thanks!), we've managed to remove the issue around the upcoming year's funding – which is a start. We are gradually getting government to see that losing our services means big holes in supports throughout NSW, but we're not there yet!

**To this end I urge all of you to take a few minutes out of your day in this week prior to election day to call, write or email the Premier**, and let her know just how important it is to you that our services remain in the long-term. If you need assistance, phone numbers or email addresses you can find everything you need at the [www.standbyme.org.au](http://www.standbyme.org.au) website to assist you in doing any of these actions.

Let's all put our voices behind this long-term funding call – after all, people with disability are 20% of the NSW population, and that's a pretty important group to leave behind!

# Stand By Me Rally to Save Disability Advocacy Martin Place - Sunday 24 February 2019





# PDCN Election Policy Platform Meetings

In January PDCN released our first Policy Platform in preparation for the upcoming NSW State Election on 23 March. The Policy Platform was sent to all NSW politicians, seeking their support to ensure the NSW Government addresses the barriers in the community that prevent people with disability from achieving full access and inclusion.

Our Policy Platform outlines four key priority areas where direct action is essential for people with disability. PDCN asked all members of NSW parliament to commit to actions in each of the priority areas, including:



- **Ensuring accessible transport services are available across NSW**



- **Addressing housing issues including tenancy insecurity, unaffordability and inadequate accessible housing**



- **Providing continued funding for disability advocacy services**



- **Ensuring the needs of people with disability are at the centre of government decision making through the creation of a Minister for Disability Inclusion and a permanent Disability Inclusion Unit**

We are extremely pleased to report that our Policy Platform has received a very positive reception. PDCN would like to thank Greens MP Jenny Leong and NSW Labor MP Hugh McDermott who took the time to meet with PDCN and discuss our key policy priority areas in more depth.

We would also like to thank staff from the office of Minister for Transport and Infrastructure Andrew Constance. PDCN Executive Officer Serena Ovens and Policy Officer Ellen Small had the opportunity to meet with the Senior Advisor and Head of Policy for Minister Constance. PDCN would also like to acknowledge Greens MPs Tamara Smith and Jamie Parker and Christian Democratic Party MLC Paul Green for their interest in PDCN's policy platform and their continued support.

PDCN has big plans for our future policy work. We will continue to actively engage with government to advocate on behalf of all people with disability in NSW to secure positive long-term changes that remove barriers to their full participation in society.

# We're Working to Improve Venue Accessibility



Following on from our recent strategic planning work, PDCN has committed to the following systemic advocacy priority areas for the upcoming financial year:

- Accessibility in Public Spaces
- Public Transport Access
- Accessible Tourism
- Accessible Housing
- Health

We will of course still provide input into all issues that affect people with disability, particularly through our policy writing and voice on the more than 25 advisory boards and committees on which we sit.

To begin building accessibility in public spaces we have made a decision to proceed with actively advocating for access to and inclusion in entertainment venues, as this is regularly brought to our attention by our members.

This work will comprise of working to include equality of access to online ticketing, addressing physical access into and within venues, and working with venue staff and management to ensure staff and security personnel are appropriately trained and inclusive attitudes are present.

At this initial stage we are talking with like-minded organisations in this space such as Accessible Arts and the Sydney Opera House and have begun discussions with Ticketek. We will be calling on members for your continued input and involvement in consultations to ensure this process accurately represents your views and experience and will continue to feedback on our consultations and progress throughout the year.

## Sarah Humphery Farewell



We recently said a fond but sad farewell to our Peer Support Project Officer Sarah Humphery, as she takes off to pursue new artistic opportunities overseas. During the nearly two years Sarah worked with PDCN she was responsible for creating and nurturing several new peer support groups, including one at Sydney Uni and an active online peer support community. Sarah was very proactive in organising interesting speakers and guests for the various groups and is widely admired for her ability to build and maintain relationships with a wide cross section of participants and group facilitators. Sarah was also instrumental in creating new opportunities and exploring avenues for the professional development of group facilitators, and everyone benefited from her ability to plan events

and work in a way that shows strong empathy and respect for all people. We will miss her work and her presence in the office, but we're also confident she is going on to great creative endeavours. Thank you, Sarah.

## ATSA Independent Living Expo

We're keen to head down and set up our exhibition at the ATSA Independent Living Expo at the Sydney Showground on 8-9 May. Come along and check out a range of assistive technology, mobility solutions, accessible recreation and holiday ideas, employment support, and a lot more. But especially make sure you drop in to the PDCN booth, our Executive Officer Serena Ovens will be there to listen and provide advice on anything you'd like to share with us!



Check out the website for more details [www.atsaindependentlivingexpo.com.au](http://www.atsaindependentlivingexpo.com.au)