



Serena Ovens,
Executive Officer

Welcome to the Spring edition of PDCN Live!

After three weeks away travelling in Scotland, it's great to be back in sunny Australia, though I have to say it's a bit frightening just how much is on PDCN's agenda over the next couple of months.

As you'll read about further in this issue, the NSW Disability Advocacy Review is in full swing, and the NSW Ageing and Disability Commissioner, along with Westwood Spice, are now travelling the state undertaking public consultations on what people with disability need in terms of advocacy into the future. This is your chance to have a very real say on your advocacy and representation needs and ensure funding reflects this after June 2020, so I urge you to consider attending, or responding to the Issues Paper that has been released. PDCN will of course put in a submission, as will the NSW Disability Advocacy Alliance, and we'll keep you posted on any other opportunities to contribute.

Additionally, there are some great opportunities to continue to resource our peer groups, peer mentoring and NDIS self-management workshops through the ILC funding grants, so we'll also be looking to apply for funds to do this, as the feedback we've had from those who've attended training or had one-on-one mentoring to date has been fabulous.

Lastly, I hope to see you all at our AGM – it's time to celebrate the achievements of the past year, and relax and enjoy each other's company, hope you can make it!

Serena

In this issue

2 MEET A BOARD MEMBER
What motivates Chris Sparks in his push for advocacy and representation?

3 NSW ADVOCACY REVIEW
The sector is undergoing a game-changing review

4 PDCN POLICY UPDATE
A summary of our current systemic advocacy and policy work

5 NDIS SELF-MANAGEMENT
New PDCN group workshops take the mystery out of self-managing your plan

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

Chris Sparks OAM

Board Member Profile



What attracted you to the position on the PDCN board?

I had previously worked on joint projects with PDCN involving assistive technology (AT) reforms and EnableNSW funding. I was genuinely impressed by PDCN's ability to deliver real change, and positively influence government policy with very limited resources. In short, we fix things, and PDCN bats way above the average with a much-needed focus on physical disability. I am also a huge supporter of systemic solutions, hence my enthusiasm for systemic advocacy – fix the problem, don't just plug the leak.

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

By sharing PDCN's work and ongoing campaigns throughout both my personal and business networks in order to build momentum behind what we do. I firmly believe we need to be constantly engaging with 'able-bodied' Australia to generate broad support for disability reform.

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

I am very concerned about those ageing with physical disability, too many of whom are excluded from accessing the NDIS purely because of their age. Disability doesn't magically disappear when you turn 65 and I have many mates who struggle with timely access to essential disability supports as they simply try to enjoy their senior years with a degree of basic human dignity.

We also need to address outdated government regulations and senseless bureaucratic red tape on assistive technology given the rapidly emerging technologies becoming available. There is a great deal of work to be done improving the built environment, particularly the great outdoors, to ensure accessibility for all NSW citizens and visitors.

With all that still needs to be achieved, it is a real frustration that PDCN has to invest so much time and energy trying to convince the NSW Government of the essential role of disability advocacy and the need for ongoing funding. Unfortunately, this remains an urgent imperative for PDCN.

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

Having spent a lot of time overseas with business and sport, I would really like to spend more time travelling. On my bucket list is the great American road-trip, visiting parts of Europe I am yet to experience and doing an extended lap of Australia towing a caravan.

NSW Advocacy Review



In August the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Robert Fitzgerald announced the commencement of a formal review into the purpose, functions and funding arrangements for independent specialist advocacy, information and peak representative organisations for people with disability across NSW. The review is the Commissioner's first major task and will shape the future of disability advocacy in NSW for many years to come. It is due to be presented to Parliament by 31 December 2019.

As a peak systemic advocacy organisation which ensures your voice is heard in the NSW landscape, we need to do everything we can to ensure a positive outcome which adheres to the principles of independent advocacy and creates room for improvement where needed.

The Commission has released an Issues Paper which will inform the review, and you now have the opportunity to read this and provide feedback. PDCN urge all our members to do so – you can view the Issues Paper at www.ageingdisabilitycommission.nsw.gov.au/about-us/consultations. You have until 18 October 2019 to submit feedback.

The Commissioner has also engaged an independent consultant who will conduct face-to-face and telephone consultations with people with disability and their families and carers throughout October. These consultations will be held across metro and regional NSW, and we'll keep you informed on those as information becomes available.

PDCN are already deeply involved with the review process and have met with the Commissioner as an individual organisation and also as part of the NSW Disability Advocacy Alliance to provide input into how advocacy for people with disability can best be provided moving forwards. We will be making a submission to the review and will continue to present the case that disability advocacy needs to be fully funded, independent and inclusive of all people with disability. Advocacy should always be available at no cost, often needs to be provided in a face-to-face situation, and government needs to ensure that rural and remote communities are not excluded. We remain deeply concerned that the NSW Government have stated that they won't take any position on funding past June 2020 until the review is complete, creating a precarious situation for many organisations. We have called on the NSW Government to guarantee all existing funding for a further year, thus allowing the review process to be completed and any subsequent funding or structural changes to be enacted and absorbed by the system.

Policy Update

PDCN has had a busy few months, preparing submissions to government consultations, and working on the issues that are important to you, our members! Some of the issues PDCN made submissions on include:

- NSW Fair Trading Residential Tenancies Regulation 2019 Review. PDCN's submission supports the updated regulation but made a number of recommendations that could better support tenants with disability.
- NSW Government Restrictive Practices Authorisation Consultation 2019. PDCN's submission reflected its position that restrictive practices should be eliminated, and that strict regulations should be in place until this occurs.
- Joint Standing Committee on the NDIS – NDIS Planning. PDCN's submission used responses from a recent survey of members to highlight issues with the current NDIS planning process.
- City of Sydney: Draft Inclusive, Accessible Public Domain Policy and Guidelines and Draft Disability Inclusive Event Guidelines. Among PDCN's recommendations were that a Changing Places facility be provided at every event, and that all events have an accessible ticket purchasing system.

Current submissions we are working on cover topics such as a nationally consistent framework for motorised mobility devices, the review of the NDIS Act, and a response to the Issues Paper as part of the review into disability advocacy in NSW.

PDCN also recently took a trip on the new Sydney Metro rail (*pictured right*) to learn about its accessibility features firsthand, as part of our role on the Accessible Transport Advisory Committee (ATAC). The Metro is fully accessible – all stations have a lift, and there is 'no step' access to the train. Other accessibility and safety features include wider Opal gates, accessible toilets, single deck carriages, automated screen doors, flashing lights and sounding chimes, priority seating and dedicated wheelchair spaces, audio announcements, hearing loops, interactive help points, tactile flooring and signs with braille.



Over the past few months, PDCN also attended the Shaping Sydney to 2050 – Our City, Our Future consultation at the City of Sydney, a Redfern Station Upgrade New Southern Concourse Stakeholder Forum, an NDIS Insights Forum and the Advocate for Children and Young People (ACYP) Solutions Summit – Ending Violence Against Children and Young People.

NDIS Self-Management Workshops



PDCN have received new funding through the NDIA which has made it possible for us to provide group workshops and individual support sessions aimed at strengthening the ability of self-managing NDIS participants to get the most out of their plan.

We are now offering group workshops and individual support sessions designed for people who are considering self-managing their NDIS plan, or who are already self-managing their NDIS plan but would like more information on how to do so effectively. The workshops are responsive to the needs of individuals and include discussions on the myths about self-management, the benefits of self-managing, what you can buy, and information on making claims and record keeping.

Group workshops are facilitated by people with extensive knowledge and experience in the day-to-day management of an NDIS plan and have the added advantage of allowing participants to share information in a relaxed small group setting.

Individual support sessions work very well as an adjunct to group workshops and are also available to anyone who may not be able to attend a scheduled group workshop.

If you have ever considered self-managing your own NDIS plan funding but were daunted by what's involved, or if you just want to improve your self-management skills, you can find more information and register for a workshop under the **Workshops & Training** section of the PDCN website at www.pdcnsw.org.au.

This project is made possible through funding from the NDIS Information Linkages and Capacity Building - Disabled People's and Families Organisations program.

Annual General Meeting

Please find enclosed with this newsletter your formal invitation to our 2019 Annual General Meeting.

We're delighted to have the NSW Ageing and Disability Commissioner Robert Fitzgerald AM as our special keynote speaker at this year's AGM, which is to be held on the evening of Wednesday 6 November.

As usual we'll be meeting at the Westin Hotel in Martin Place and all PDCN members are invited to attend and enjoy an evening where we can recap the last financial year's business and take a moment to celebrate PDCN's accomplishments together.

Thanks once again to GIO Suncorp for their generous sponsorship of this event.



Words Matter

We've just released the latest edition of *Words Matter*, our guide to inclusive language around disability. Past editions have focused on the use of inclusive language concerning disability in the media, but we've now expanded and revised this to cover more areas such as the workplace, community and social groups.

You can read and download the latest edition of *Words Matter* on our website at www.pdcnsw.org.au/publications/words-matter.

Find PDCN Online



facebook.com/PDCNSW



twitter.com/pdcnsw