



Serena Owens
Executive Officer

// Welcome to the final PDCN Live for 2019! //

As we gear up for Christmas and summer kicks in, we are already seeing significant challenges for people with disability as the temperatures soar, with crazy weather patterns already leading to numerous natural emergencies.

With this in mind I urge everyone to check their individual emergency readiness plans and ensure that you are prepared for what looks to be a challenging holiday period. Equally important - share your plan with your family, friends and neighbours, so others can assist if needed in an emergency, or know to check in on you should the situation arise that may require evacuation, or dealing with excessive smoke or high temperatures.

If you've never made a plan check out some of the great tools available to you on the www.imokay.org.au website, or the Australian Red Cross RediPlan. Both are great resources for helping you think through all the considerations you may need to address in varying emergencies.

On a brighter note we've had a great year at PDCN, despite the ongoing challenges of securing long-term funding, and for those who joined us at our AGM last month it was great to celebrate our achievements with so many of you – our members. We can't do what we do without your voice, input and support. It is truly valued!

I wish everyone a peaceful, happy and healthy Christmas, and look forward to returning refreshed and ready for bringing about even greater inclusive change in the new year.

Cheers,
Serena

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A Milestone Year for Disability Advocacy

What a year it's been for PDCN.

Enclosed with this issue of PDCN Live is our Annual Report for your information, providing fairly detailed coverage of the past financial year, and our reasonably comfortable financial position (\$836,628 members funds in reserve.)

Across the 2019 calendar year we've undertaken 18 policy submissions, provided evidence at a NSW Government Parliamentary enquiry, been a part of 23 regular advisory boards and committees, and attended a further 22 one-off consultations on issues ranging from online ticketing, to various transport access projects, NDIS Act and participant service guarantees, to mobility device regulation.

We've worked hard on your behalf to proactively engage with event and venue providers to build inclusive entertainment venues and ticketing and spent a lot of time this year on the continuing updates to motorised mobility device regulation. These are looking quite positive for power wheelchair users, however the introduction of personal mobility devices (motorised scooters, skateboards, Segways etc.) into the Australian market make for an interesting landscape, and greater complexity across this forum.

As part of our funded projects we've continued to deliver Peer Groups throughout NSW and are now successfully piloting some Peer-to-Peer Mentoring to assist individuals to work with a mentor on issues that may be difficult to address in a group forum, or need additional support. Our NDIS Self-Management Workshops have been as well received as ever, and the year has been significant for media interaction, with PDCN being represented both in traditional media (radio, news and print) and also through our online interactions through Facebook and Twitter, which have grown considerably.

So, what's on the agenda for 2020?

As we eagerly await the NSW Ageing and Disability Commissioner's Review of NSW Disability Advocacy funding (due to be released to Parliament on 19 December) we're gearing up for hopefully positive news for our organisation, but also preparing for what may be significant change in the sector. Initial indications suggest that the Commissioner indeed supports the continuation of disability advocacy and sees it as a vital part of NSW infrastructure for people with a disability. However, he feels that currently the spread across the state is not equitable, nor is the balance of the varying types of advocacy, so there is no doubt that there'll be some changes on the way. Our job will be to ensure that any proposed changes are in the interest of our members – people with physical disability – and that any changes ensure you are getting better services, supports and access to assistance, and ultimately, assist in providing greater access, equality and inclusion in the NSW community.

On a proactive note, look out for consultations in your area in early 2020, as we join with Health Consumers NSW to look at how we can better ensure that health services meet your needs, and continued work on greater access to social and entertainment venues.

Geoff Trappett Visits Liverpool Peer Group

A few months ago, PDCN's Liverpool peer support group decided to focus specifically on improving disability access in the local area. The group visited the local shopping centre, making notes about what was accessible and what needed improvement and then discussed how best to present their findings to retailers. The group also wanted to learn from others who work to improve access and inclusion and so invited Geoff Trappett to address the group.

The vision of Geoff's company, Inclusion Moves, is to equip people with disability to enact their full citizenship rights like anyone else. He also works with government and other organisations to improve access. We felt Geoff's lived experience would mean he'd have some valuable insight to assist us as we progressed our own work.



In his presentation to the group and other invited members of the community, Geoff highlighted the need to think about what you want to achieve, and how this may look from the point of view of the person or body you are wanting to make the change. Additionally, being 100% sure of the rules or legislation that backed up your call for change was essential.

He advised not to be deflated if in the initial conversation you don't get the change you want, but to be prepared to build relationships with those you are wanting to change and take them on a 'journey of understanding', meeting with them again and again, along with linking to others within the sector or organisation that you are speaking to – the more allies you have, the better!

Geoff also suggested another way to ensure people were receptive to improving access and inclusion was to talk about ALL the cohorts of people the change may benefit (i.e. not just people with disability, but mothers with prams, older persons etc.) This then frames an even wider portion of the community that would be included, and for the stakeholder, may mean access to more customers too!

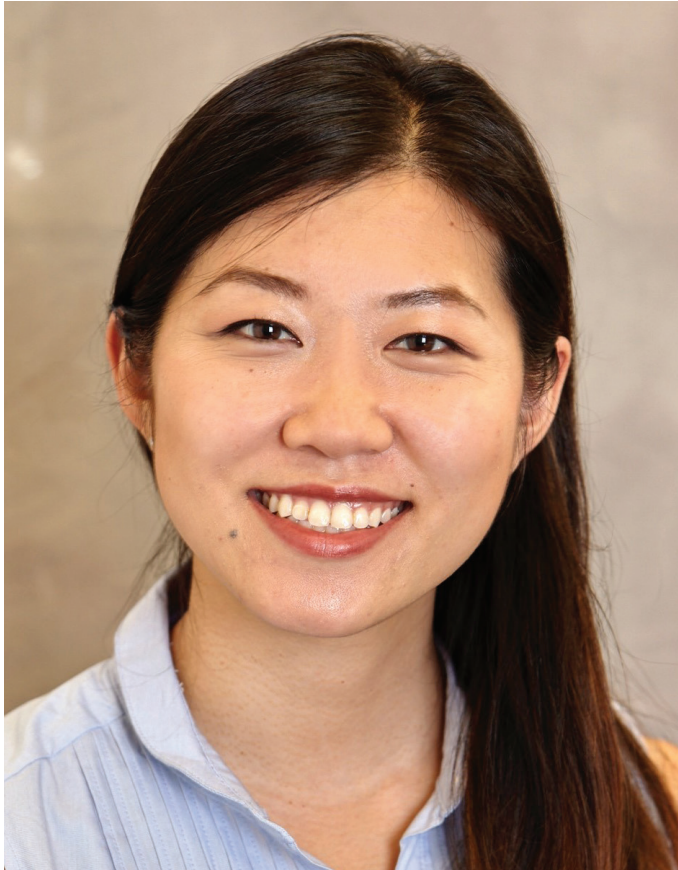
Thanks to Geoff for his invaluable insights. We look forward to making use of it as we work to improve access and inclusion in Liverpool.

2019 The Year In Photos





Diana Ferner | Board Member Profile



What attracted you to the position on the PDCN board?

The importance of systemic advocacy cannot be underestimated. Organisations like PDCN play a vital role in addressing fundamental issues at the heart of our systems to remove the barriers people face in participating in society. PDCN has had a strong history of successfully tackling important topics that address the root causes of the issues people face in their lives, and I was and remain excited to be a part of it.

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

Having worked both domestically and internationally across the corporate, non-profit, and public sectors, I bring a diverse perspective of what works. Over the last five years in particular, I have focused on helping social purpose organisations improve their effectiveness – by sharpening up their strategy and clarifying what role they play in the ecosystem, measuring and communicating their impact, and building the operational and financial foundations to deliver on their purpose – skills and experiences that I contribute as part of my role on the Board.

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

We are currently undergoing one of the most significant pieces of social reform with the NDIS, which is creating both significant opportunities and challenges for people with disability and is understandably taking up a lot of public attention. More work needs to be done to get this right. However, it's also critical that we remember that the NDIS is only one aspect of people's lives. We must not lose focus on the broader accessibility and inclusion issues that need to be addressed to ensure people with disability are able to live ordinary lives as they wish.

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

In my free time I enjoy reading, trying new recipes, and going for coastal walks on the weekend.

PDCN Has a New Look

You've probably already noticed our new look in this edition of PDCN Live. After consulting with our team, members, partners and stakeholders – and with the amazing help of the team at Carpe Diem design – we have settled on a new brand that we believe captures our identity, and gives us a fresh, vibrant look that we will now take with us as we endeavour to build a stronger, more independent organisation, with less reliance on government funds!

You told us our strengths are our drive and passion, our proactive outlook, your sense of belonging, and time and time again, our ability to collaborate – with you, with government, and with others in the sector. We hope our new brand signifies that collaboration and encompasses everyone's need to belong to an inclusive community.

We hope you love it as much as we do. Stay tuned as we roll it out across all of our online and printed materials.

PDCN Membership Is Now Free For People With Disability

We're very happy to announce that following a vote at our AGM in November, membership of PDCN is now FREE to all people with a physical disability, and representatives of people with disability who are under sixteen years old. As a current PDCN member, you are in an ideal position to help us spread the word about this positive development. So if you know someone who would enjoy becoming a PDCN member please let them know.

Members often tell us that they value the sense of belonging which comes with being a PDCN member. Our independence and expertise allow people to get on with their lives while we work on the issues that matter most. As you know, we will occasionally contact you about voluntary opportunities to participate in consultations and research on issues which directly affect you. Your invaluable input enables us to make full representation of the views and needs of people with disability as we prepare submissions to government on policy and legislation. Membership also provides an easy channel for you to proactively contact us about systemic issues and problems you experience, which we are often able to feedback to government via the various committees and groups we sit on. We also consider the issues you raise when determining our priorities and strategic plan.

All other individuals are still welcome to join as Associate Members for an annual fee of \$30. We also encourage membership from businesses, non-profit organisations and other stakeholders who are committed to systemic advocacy which furthers the rights of people with disability across New South Wales.

Find out more about the various benefits of PDCN membership on our website at www.pdcnsw.org.au/membership.

***The Staff and Board of PDCN wish
everyone a Merry Christmas
and a very safe, happy and
healthy New Year!***

***Our office will be closed from
Saturday 21 December and
reopen on Monday 6 January.***



Website - www.pdcnsw.org.au



I'm Okay - www.imokay.org.au



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