**Media Release: NSW Government Needs to Get Serious About Essential Services for People with Disability**

People with Disability Australia (PWDA) and the Physical Disability Council of New South Wales (PDCN) have urged the NSW Government to get serious about ensuring people with disability can access essential services like transport and housing.

PWDA Chief Executive Officer Sebastian Zagarella said the budget missed out several opportunities to improve services for the 1.4 million people with disability living in NSW.

“The NSW Budget delivered today missed the chance to get key basics right, including transport services and housing,” Mr Zagarella said.

“Without accessible transport and housing we will continue to be excluded.”

The 2022 budget flagged the acceleration of a number of large-scale transport infrastructure projects but had no cash for accelerating urgent accessibility upgrades.

PDCN Chief Executive Officer Serena Ovens said she was disappointed the government did not step up its timetable for accessible transport improvements.

“Upgrades to train stations under the Transport Accessibility Program are already behind schedule, without additional funding we cannot see how the 2023 project deadline will be realistically achieved,” Ms Ovens said.

“Transport accessibility upgrades are vital for people with disability to be part of the community – to go to work, school and have active social lives – we are dismayed to see funds to accelerate highway and bridge upgrades but not accessibility upgrades.”

While the two disability representative organisations welcome the expansion of the $57 million Together Home program, people with disability continue to be locked out of affordable and accessible homes.

The Together Home program provides housing and essential services for people experiencing homelessness.

Ms Ovens said, “we needed the NSW Government to commit to a comprehensive social and affordable housing strategy for people with disability. People with disability need urgent access to more accessible and affordable homes, and to move away from housing options such as group homes, cluster housing and supported accommodation.”

“We have the right to live in the community, just like people without disability do.”

Mr Zagarella said, “it is frustrating to see no buy-in from the NSW Government to create new jobs and stimulate recovery growth by significantly investing in social and affordable housing in terms of both new stock and retrofitting old stock.

“To meet the demand of people with disability, we need 20,000 accessible and affordable homes over the next four years, not 800 a year.”