**PDCN response to the 2023-2024 NSW Budget**

**Disability community forgotten as NSW Government omits the Park’NPay app from the budget.**

**Park’NPay:**

The NSW Government is considering discontinuing the Park’nPay app. PDCN is disappointed there is no funding to continue the roll out of this technology. The app’s accessibility portal is already helping people with disabilities to locate accessible bays and availability in real time. The disability community consider this technology to be a major success in improving inclusion in recent years.

Millions were invested developing this technology and the process included extensive consultation with the disability community. However, to date there has been no consultation with the disability community in deciding the future of the app.

**Ed Morris, CEO of the Physical Disability Council of NSW:**

*"Park’NPay technology is vital for people with disabilities to access their communities, not optional. We're disappointed by this potential letdown from the NSW Government and are eager to collaborate to ensure continued access for the disability community. The government should reconsider its budget omission, instead focusing on making community access easier for people with disabilities."*

**What PDCN welcomes in the 2023-2024 budget:**

Financial assistance for home-based energy-intensive life support equipment increases from $1,343 to $1,639 per household. This funding will help people who depend on such equipment to afford essential medical support for their health and well-being.

The government has committed $800.7 million over four years, which is more than the initial $693.4 million allocated in 2022-2023, to enhance independent travel for people with disabilities. Combining the Transport Access and Commuter Car Parking Programs may improve train station accessibility and safety. This funding is allocated to upgrading car parks, adding lifts, ramps, and footbridges. This will benefit people with disabilities who depend on these services for community access, employment, and essential appointments.

**Initiatives the NSW Government are continuing to fund but have cut the amount of funding allocated to:**

The Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme offers transportation assistance to NSW residents with disabilities who are unable to use public transport. This initiative is continuing to be funded but is facing a reduction in funding from $42 million in 2022-2023 to $40 million in 2023-2024.

**Initiatives the NSW Government refers to in the budget papers but does provide detail on:**

Assisting eligible people in New South Wales to access assistive technology through the Aids and Equipment Program.

Providing carers of people with significant and permanent disabilities the Companion Card to access free entry into participating venues and events.

**As the peak organisation in NSW representing people with physical disability, there are some key elements PDCN expected in this budget that the NSW government can do to make the lives of people with physical disability better.**

These include continuing to resource the rollout and maintenance of the Park’N Pay App and signing NSW up to adopt the new provisions in the National Construction Code. This requires all Class 1a residential buildings and Class 2 apartments to be built to minimum accessibility standards (Silver Level Livable Housing Design).

PDCN also wants the government to commit to provide additional funds to resolve issues associated with the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme and the Wheelchair Accessible Taxis (including the problems NSW residents face using the interstate vouchers in other states and territories). Additionally, there is a need to provide funds to improve digital health records for people with physical disability and complex health needs.

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