

pwd

people with disability

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

2016 to 2019

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About People with Disability Australia

Our vision

We have a vision of a socially just, accessible and inclusive community, in which the human rights, belonging, contribution, potential and diversity of all people with disability are recognised, respected and celebrated with pride.

Our purpose

Our purpose is to be a leading disability rights, advocacy and representative organisation of and for all people with disability, which strives for the realisation of our vision of a socially just, accessible, and inclusive community.

Who we are

People with Disability Australia (PWDA) is a grassroots, mutual support, representative and advocacy organisation of and for people with all types of disability.

We originated in New South Wales, in the lead up to the *International Year of Disabled Persons* in 1981 to provide people with disability with a voice¹ of our own that would support and empower us, and work for social change, to enable us all to live fulfilling lives.

Since that time we have been recognised as a peak representative group in New South Wales and we have provided a range of disability rights information and advocacy related services at the New South Wales level. This work continues.

In 2002, with overwhelming support from within our own membership, and from people with disability across Australia, we also established ourselves as a key disability rights and advocacy organisation at the national level.

We now have a large and growing national membership, and operate major disability rights and advocacy related projects at the national level and in other states and territories.

In 2014, we were formally recognised by the Australian Government as a national disability peak representative organisation.

Our work

PWDA has a fundamental commitment to self-help, mutual support and self-representation for all people with disability, by all people with disability.

PWDA's work addresses the discrimination, marginalisation, poverty and human rights abuses to which people with disability are often subject in our community.

It does so by empowering people with disability to take control of their own lives by providing information, education and mutual support, by providing personal advocacy support to individuals and groups whose rights have been violated, and by identifying and promoting social change to realise human rights.

PWDA works within the framework of, and seeks to bring into reality, the rights recognised in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* – a treaty we played a key role in bringing into force, both internationally and in Australia.

We work with and for all people with all types of disability, and with all specific population groups, including women with disability, children and young people with disability, First Peoples with disability, and people with disability from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

We work on issues that concern us all, learning from and linking our individual experiences to create comprehensive agendas for social change that leave no-one behind.

1 “Voice” includes all means and modes of expression of our own choices, it does not just mean vocalisation (see Our guiding principles)

Our people and partners

We are governed by a Board of Directors, drawn from our membership across Australia. All Board members are persons with disability and have lived experience of diverse impairment types. They also bring to us a diversity of other skills and experiences and personal backgrounds.

We employ a professional staff to manage our organisation and operate our various services and projects. Most of our staff are persons with disability or are close personal associates of persons with disability.

Our work as a national peak representative group is conducted in close association with other national peak representative groups through the Australian Cross Disability Alliance. The key purpose of the Alliance is to promote, protect and advance the human rights and freedoms of people with disability in Australia by working collaboratively on areas of shared interests, purposes and strategic opportunities.

We are part of an international network of disabled people's organisations working for the realisation of the human rights of persons with disability within their own countries and at the international level. We are founding members of the Pacific Disability Forum of disabled people's organisations. We are an Australian member of Disabled Peoples International, and through it, we participate in the International Disability Alliance.

We have consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, and regularly participate in its activities in the areas of human rights and social development.

Our members

We are a cross-disability organisation. Membership is open to people with any and all types of impairment and disability.

We have a large and growing membership of individuals and organisations across Australia.

Our primary (full) membership is limited to people with disability, and organisations primarily constituted by people with disability.

We also have a large associate membership of people and organisations committed to the disability rights movement.

Financial support

Our activities are supported by substantial grants of financial assistance from the Commonwealth and New South Governments, as well as a growing number of individual and corporate donors. This financial assistance is acknowledged with great appreciation.

Our values

We believe that people with disability, irrespective of age, gender, cultural or linguistic background, religious beliefs, geographic location, sexuality, or the nature, origin or degree of our disability:

- have a right to life and to bodily integrity; are entitled to a decent standard of living, an adequate income, and to lead active and satisfying lives;
- are people first, with human, legal and service user rights that must be recognised and respected;
- are entitled to the full enjoyment of civil rights and responsibilities;
- are entitled to live free from prejudice, discrimination and vilification;
- are entitled to social supports and adjustments as a right, and not as a result of pity, charity or the exercise of social control;
- contribute substantially to the intellectual, cultural, economic and social diversity and well-being of our community;
- possess many skills and abilities and have enormous potential for life-long growth and development;
- are entitled to live in and be a part of the diversity of the community;
- have the right to participate in the formulation of those policies and programs that affect our lives;
- are entitled to make our own life decisions, and to any decision-making support we may need to do so;
- are entitled to individualised services and supports which we are able to direct according to our needs and preferences; and
- must be empowered to exercise our rights and responsibilities, without fear of retribution.

Our guiding principles

- we will be passionate, innovative and fearless in the promotion and defence of the rights and interests of people with disability;
- we will be accessible and responsive to our community and inclusive of its diversity;
- we will actively facilitate and value the involvement of people with disability in our organisational governance and policy and program development;
- we will recognise and support all means and modes of communication of choice, including via sign languages, augmentative communication, communication technologies and live communication support, so as to ensure our voices are heard and understood;
- we will encourage, empower, and support the civic participation of people with disability;
- we will be collaborative and supportive in our relationships within the disability rights movement as a whole, at the local, regional, state, national and international levels;
- we will be accountable for our activities to our members, to people with disability generally, and to the public;
- we will always act with honesty and integrity;
- we will be resourceful and efficient in obtaining and managing the resources needed to undertake our work;
- we will recognise and value the contribution of our members, our Board, our staff and volunteers towards the achievement of our vision.

Our Strategic Directions

Over the period 2016 to 2019, we will work to achieve major impacts in the following four Key Result Areas:

Empowerment of people with disability

We will empower people with disability: as individuals, as specific population groups, and as a sector.

Advocacy for the rights of people with disability

We will advocate for the human rights of people with disability: at the individual, specific population group, and sector levels.

Effective representation of people with disability & sector development

We will represent the interests and concerns of people with disability as a sector to government and to the community generally.

Organisational capacity-building

We will build our organisational capacity to empower, advocate for, and represent people with disability.

Key Result Area 1

Empowerment of People With Disability

We will empower people with disability: as individuals, as communities of interest, and as a sector.

Strategies

- 1.1 We will continue to develop our social media platforms and networks to build communities of interest and facilitate rapid communication about disability rights issues.
- 1.2 We will continue to develop and make available on-line resources that will enable people with disability to quickly indicate their views on disability rights issues to key audiences.
- 1.3 We will continue to develop our website as a key source of information for people with disability about disability rights issues and current events.
- 1.4 We will continue to publish a regular E-bulletin for members and others that informs recipients about our work, current events, and key emerging issues.
- 1.5 We will continue to develop and provide disability rights-related education for people with disability across Australia, including on-line and through social media platforms.
- 1.6 We will continue to develop our role as a Disability Support Organisation, assisting people with disability through peer support models to prepare for and achieve transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme and to self-directed models of disability support.
- 1.7 We will continue to support people with disability who are child victims of sexual assault to engage with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.
- 1.8 We will continue to work with minority and other population groups of persons with disability who experience aggravated disadvantage, to build their capacity for self-representation and to achieve equitable participation and influence in the disability rights movement.

Outcomes

- People with disability across Australia are linked through on-line social media, and in on-line communities of interest.
- People with disability across Australia have rapid access to disability rights information and to information about current affairs.
- People with disability are able to take immediate action on disability rights concerns.
- People with disability are assisted through rights-related education, to develop the skills and knowledge and secure the supports necessary, to act in their own interests.
- People with disability are empowered to obtain assistance to which they are entitled from the National Disability Insurance Scheme, and to develop and implement self-directed models of disability support.
- People with disability who are child victims of sexual assault are empowered to participate in private and public hearings, and engage in other ways, with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Assault.
- People with disability from minority and disadvantaged population groups are empowered to act in their own interests and to participate in and influence the disability rights movement.

Key Result Area 2

Advocacy for the Rights of People with Disability

We will advocate for the human rights of people with disability: at the individual, specific population group, and sector levels.

Strategies

- 2.1 We will continue to provide disability rights related information, advice and referral to people with disability and their associates to enable them to understand and act on their service user, legal and human rights.
- 2.2 We will continue to mentor and support people with disability and their associates who are experiencing disability rights related problems to build their capacity to assert themselves and undertake advocacy on their own behalf in order to secure their service user, legal and human rights.
- 2.3 We will continue to provide individual advocacy with and on behalf of people with disability who are experiencing major disability rights related problems in order to secure their service user, legal and human rights.
- 2.4 We will continue to provide group advocacy with and on behalf of specific population groups of persons with disability who are experiencing the same or similar disability rights related problems in order to secure their service user, legal and human rights.
- 2.5 We will continue to undertake systemic advocacy on behalf of persons with disability generally, and on behalf of specific population groups of persons with disability, to ensure that their service user, legal and human rights are recognised and addressed.

Outcomes

- People with disability have access to information and advice, and are referred to the supports they require, to understand and act on their service user, legal and human rights.
- People with disability are effectively supported to assert themselves and act to resolve disability rights related problems that limit their enjoyment of service user, legal and human rights.
- People with disability have access to the individual advocacy support they require to resolve disability rights related problems that limit their enjoyment of service user, legal and human rights.
- Specific population groups of people with disability, who are experiencing the same or similar disability rights related problems, have access to the advocacy support they require to secure their service user, legal and human rights.
- There is social change that results in better recognition and realisation of the service user, legal and human rights of persons with disability.

Key Result Area 3

Effective Representation of People with Disability and Sector Development

We will represent the interests and concerns of people with disability as a sector to government and to the community generally.

Strategies

- 3.1 We will work with other national peak representative groups to build a strong and effective Australian Cross Disability Alliance that will ensure that the needs, concerns and rights of all Australians with disability are effectively represented to the Australian government and the community generally in areas of Commonwealth responsibility.
- 3.2 We will continue to operate, in our own right, as a national peak cross-disability rights and representative organisation that will ensure that the needs, concerns, and rights of all Australians with disability are effectively recognised and addressed by the Australian Government and the community generally in areas of Commonwealth responsibility.
- 3.3 We will continue to operate as a state peak cross-disability rights and representative organisation in New South Wales that will ensure that the needs, concerns, and rights of people with disability are effectively represented to the New South Wales Government and the community generally in areas of State responsibility.
- 3.4 We will continue to represent, both in our own right and in association with other national disability rights organisations, Australians with disability in international fora relevant to disability rights concerns, including within the United Nations system.
- 3.5 We will continue to participate in, and represent the interests of Australians with disability, in the international disability rights movement.
- 3.6 We will continue to contribute to the co-ordination, and build the capacity of, the disability rights and advocacy sector across Australia, and in New South Wales, so as to ensure that it continues to grow in its effectiveness.

Outcomes

- The needs, concerns and rights of all Australians with disability are effectively represented to the Australian Government and the community generally in areas of Commonwealth responsibility.
- The Australian Cross Disability Alliance is established and recognised across Governments and the community as the national peak representative structure for all Australians with disability.
- The needs, concerns, and rights of people with disability are effectively represented to the New South Wales Government and the community generally in areas of State responsibility.
- The views and interests of all Australians with disability are effectively represented in international fora dealing with disability rights issues, including within the United Nations system.
- The views and interests of all Australians with disability are effectively represented within the international disability rights movement.
- The Australian and New South Wales disability rights sectors are effectively coordinated and continue to grow in their reach and effectiveness.

Key Result Area 4

Organisational Capacity Building

We will build our organisational capacity to empower, advocate for, and represent people with disability.

Strategies

- 4.1 We will continue to work to secure the resources necessary to maintain and build our organisational capacity to achieve our vision and purpose.
- 4.2 We will continue to maintain and build the representativeness, capacity and effectiveness of our organisational governance.
- 4.3 We will continue to maintain and build the capacity and effectiveness of our organisational operations.
- 4.4 We will continue to ensure that the services we provide to our clients and constituency are of high quality and continue to improve.
- 4.5 We will continue to maintain and build our active membership and reach among people with disability across Australia.

Outcomes

- Our organisation continues to grow in its capacity to undertake activities that contribute to the realisation of our vision and purpose.
- Our organisation is effectively governed and our governance structures are viewed as legitimately representative by Australians with disability and by government and the community generally.
- Our organisational operations are effective and efficient in realising our vision and purpose.
- Our services to our clients and constituency are of high quality and continue to improve.
- Our membership and reach among people with disability across Australia continues to grow.

Implementation, Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

At the commencement of each year, PWDA's executive staff will develop in consultation with stakeholders an annual plan that will set out the priorities that will be pursued in each Key Result Area during the next twelve month period.

PWDA's Board will monitor progress in the implementation of these Strategic Directions at each of its Board meetings. For this purpose, executive staff will be required to submit operational reports that address each Key Result Area and the annual priorities being pursued in that area.

PWDA's Board will undertake a major mid-term review of these Strategic Directions in June 2017. The outcomes of that review will inform any necessary changes for the remaining period of these Strategic Directions.

PWDA's Board will conduct an evaluation of our effectiveness in implementation of these Strategic Directions in June 2019. The outcomes of this evaluation will inform the development of future Strategic Directions.

Copies of this document are available in alternative formats from:

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PWDA acknowledges the traditional owners on whose land our offices are located. These include the Gadigal people, the Dharug people, the Tharawal people, the Ngunawal people, the Kalkadoon people, the Gureng Gureng people, the Badtjala people, the Gubbi Gubbi people and the Yuggera people. We also acknowledge elders past and present.



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people with disability

For individual advocacy support contact the **Disability Rights Information Service (DRIS)** between 9:30 am and 4:30 pm (AEST) Monday to Friday on (02) **9370 3100** or Toll Free on **1800 422 015** or TTY Toll Free on **1800 422 016** or email **dris@pwd.org.au**

Join us!

Become a member of People with Disability Australia (PWDA) and show your support for human rights and equality!

As a PWDA member -

- You receive our E-Bulletin and Media Releases as they are published;
- You receive our regular member publication *Link-up*;
- You can participate in membership events, activities and PWDA Advisory Groups;
- You can stand up for the human rights of people with disability;
- You have a voice as a member on our social media forums, consultations and feedback;

You can be kept up-to-date on policy and government programs which directly affect people with disability.

FULL MEMBERSHIP

A. Individual Full Membership

To be an individual full member, you must be a person with a disability and you must live in Australia.

Individual full members are entitled to:

- Receive notice of, attend and vote at general meetings
- Nominate for election or appointment to the Board
- Nominate (or second or endorse) eligible people for election to the Board
- Receive information about PWDA's activities and disability issues

B. ORGANISATIONAL FULL MEMBERSHIP

To be an Organisational Full Member, the organisation must be incorporated in Australia and have a governing body made up of at least 75% of people with disability. Organisational members must appoint up to two delegates to exercise its membership rights.

Delegates of full organisational members are able to:

- Receive notice of, attend and participate at general meetings
- Exercise one vote on each motion at general meetings
- Nominate (or second or endorse) eligible people for election to the Board
- Nominate for election or appointment to the Board (provided the nominee is an Individual Full Member)
- Receive information about PWDA's activities and disability issues

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

A. Individual Associate Membership

Open to any person or organisation interested in supporting the disability rights movement and the aims and objectives of PWDA.

Individual associate members are entitled to:

- Receive notice of and attend general meetings
- Address general meetings with the agreement of the person chairing the meeting
- Receive information about PWDA's activities and disability issues

B. ORGANISATIONAL ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

Open to any person or organisation interested in supporting the disability rights movement and the aims and objectives of PWDA.

Delegates of full organisational members are entitled to:

- Receive notice of and attend general meetings
- Address general meetings with the agreement of the person chairing the meeting
- Receive information about PWDA's activities and disability issues