



**PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY
AUSTRALIA**



**A voice of
our own**

Annual Report 2017

People with Disability Australia (PWDA) acknowledges and thanks all of our members, supporters and staff featured in the photos in this report.



PWDA has been granted consultative status with the **United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)** which provides non-governmental organisations with access to ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies, participation in the various human rights mechanisms of the United Nations and special events organised by the President of the General Assembly.

PWDA is a signatory to the **Australian Council for International Development (ACFID)** Code of Conduct which is a voluntary, self-regulatory sector code of good practice. On behalf of the governing body of PWDA we confirm that our organisation continues to be committed to full adherence to the ACFID Code of Conduct. If you believe PWDA has breached the ACFID Code of Conduct, you may lodge a complaint with the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee on complaints@acfid.asn.au, telephone (02) 6285 1816 or contact PWDA. To lodge a complaint about PWDA you may contact us on pwd@pwd.org.au or free call 1800 422 015.

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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.



ACFID
MEMBER

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OUR NEW LOGO

The new PWDA logo was designed to build upon the popular recognition of our old logo, strongly represent PWDA as a national organisation, and reflect the dynamic and professional grassroots organisation that we are. The branding reflects the mission of PWDA, 'a voice of our own', and creates an approachable and friendly identity without being corporate.



ABOUT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY AUSTRALIA

A VOICE OF OUR OWN

People with Disability Australia Incorporated (PWDA) is a grassroots, mutual support, representative and advocacy organisation of and for people with all types of disability. We were founded in 1980, in the lead up to the International Year of Disabled Persons (1981), to provide people with disability with a voice of our own. We have a fundamental commitment to self-help and self-representation for people with disability, by people with disability.

We work within the framework of, and seek 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 provide advice and information; individual, group and systemic advocacy; training and education; and a representative voice of people with disability in New South Wales, nationally and internationally.

OUR VISION AND PURPOSE

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 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.

OUR MEMBERS

We have a cross-disability focus – membership is open to people with all types of disability. Individuals with disability and organisations of people with disability are our primary voting membership. We also have a large associate membership of people and organisations committed to the disability rights movement. Our services are not limited to members; they are available to people with all types of disability and their associates.

We are governed by a board of directors, drawn from our members across Australia, all of whom are people with disability. We employ professional staff to manage the organisation and operate our various projects. Many of our staff are also people with disability.

OUR WORK

Our work addresses the discrimination, marginalisation, poverty and human rights abuses that people with disability experience. We work with all people with disability, with a focus on people with disability who are in vulnerable and marginalised situations. Our strategic aims are to empower people with disability, advocate for the rights of people with disability, effectively represent people with disability, develop the disability sector, and to build the capacity of our organisation to deliver on these goals.



OUR PARTNERS

PWDA has entered into a number of Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with cross-disability Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) that share the same rights-based values and principles as PWDA. Our MOUs seek to maximise the strengths of our individual organisations by retaining our autonomy within a collaborative framework:

People With Disabilities ACT
People With Disabilities WA
Queenslanders with Disability Network

PWDA is a founding member of Disabled People's Organisations Australia (DPO Australia) the national cross-disability alliance of DPOs established in January 2015.

The other members are:

First Peoples Disability Network Australia
Women With Disabilities Australia
National Ethnic Disability Alliance

We are also part of an international network of DPOs through Disabled People's International and Disabled People's International Asia Pacific.

In 2016-2017 PWDA provided endorsement, technical and/or secretariat support to the following organisations and campaigns:

Australian Network for Universal Housing Design
NSW Disability Advocacy Network
White Ribbon

PWDA staff are Directors of the following organisations:

Australian Centre for Disability Law
Australian Disability and Development Consortium
Asia Pacific DPO United
Council of Social Services New South Wales
Pacific Disability Forum
Touching Base

We also acknowledge **Gilbert and Tobin Lawyers** for their pro-bono support this year, particularly with respect to the development of our new Constitution, and thank **Purpose Accounting** for the provision of financial services.

OUR FUNDING

In the 2016-2017 financial year, our activities were supported by peak disability funding from the **Commonwealth and New South Wales Governments**, funding received under the National Disability Advocacy Program, a variety of specific project grants won through competitive government tendering processes, and from a growing number of individual, corporate and philanthropic donors including the **Reichstein Foundation**. This financial assistance is acknowledged with great appreciation.



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Members

As I reflect on the events and activities of the last year, the importance of a clear mission and strong fundamentals in governance as well as disability advocacy emerge as constant themes. I'm proud to say that our organisation continues to stand out from the crowd in these respects. The roll out of the NDIS is presenting new opportunities and challenges for disability organisations every day, but PWDA is in an excellent position to weather the storm. The Special General Meeting we held in March confirmed our new constitution and streamlined board, we've transitioned from being an Incorporated Association to become a Company Limited by Guarantee, and we have a fresh new logo which is bright, appealing and approachable. I thank the board and members for their involvement and support in making these changes, and I'm delighted that the feedback on our new look has been so positive!

I've enjoyed a fair share of personal highlights during my first year as President too. Our Board and this organisation is my pride and joy, and as a young leader I have felt incredibly supported by my high calibre board colleagues, and the Co-CEO's Ngila Bevan and Matthew Bowden. I'm especially proud to be flying the flag for women in leadership positions, and celebrate the fact that the PWDA Treasurer and Vice President roles were also held by women this year, and all four of the Presidents or Chairs of the member organisations of Disabled People's Organisations (DPO) Australia were also women. Highlighting the experiences and concerns of women and girls with disability will remain a feature of my Presidency. I look forward to continuing this work through my involvement in the NSW Council for Social Services (NCOSS) A New Year for Women Campaign, and as Project Steering Group Chair of PWDA's NSW Domestic and Family Violence Innovation Fund projects.

As much as we have triumphed and celebrated as an organisation this year, it has not been without its sadness. We were devastated to hear of the deaths of Jan Daisley, Joan Hume, and Wendy Potter. All were life members of PWDA and fought tirelessly to make sure that the voices of people with disability were heard and listened to. They achieved great things for all of us, and I dedicate this issue of the Annual Report to them.

And finally it is you, our members and supporters, who are the bedrock upon which PWDA continues to stand and build. You empower us with your insights and feedback, and in doing so you demand the best from the organisation. I ask that you continue to do this, as we continue to march forward with deep gratitude for your ongoing support.

Bonnie Millen

Vale Amy Deguara, PWDA member, friend and comrade



Amy was an amazing young woman who contributed so much to advancing the human rights of people with disability, particularly young women and girls with disability. She was a keen supporter of PWDA's work on the Sunshine Coast where she lived, and our work across Queensland, nationally and internationally. Amy was a key contributor at the Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) National Forum of Women and Girls with Disability held this year. She was also instrumental in working with WWDA, DPO Australia, and the Youth Disability Advocacy Service (YDAS) to develop "WE DECIDE" - the Global Program for Young People with Disability, launched by the UN Population Fund. Amy had an incredible zest for life and was fiercely independent, always determined to make her own way in the world. She pursued her passions and dreams with vigour, and her humour and enthusiasm was infectious. Amy will be deeply missed by us all.

THE PWDA BOARD



President

Bonnie Millen

Vice-President

Kristy Trajcevski

Treasurer

Suzanne Keene

Appointed -
Secretary

Brendan Pearce

Board Director

Justin Ray

Appointed -
Board Directors

Jarad McLoughlin

Vanessa Fanning

Ebru Sumaktas

James Condren

Retired

Kevin Boyce

Stuart Mawbey

Vacated

Timothy Hart

Resigned

Suresh Rajan

Craig Wallace

Mark Tonga

Vale Jan Daisley, Joan Hume, and Wendy Potter

This year we paid tribute to 3 champions of the disability movement in Australia, all of whom were fearless activists and PWDA life members, and who made outstanding contributions to the realisation of rights for people with disability in Australia. We can't express the debt of gratitude we owe these 3 incredible women, for their leadership and their unwavering commitment to the movement. They are greatly missed.



Joan Hume OAM

was instrumental in the disability rights movement in Australia and in establishing

our organisation with other disabled activists in 1980 when we were called the Union of Handicapped People and then Disabled Peoples International (NSW). Joan raged against the barriers that prevented her and other people with disability from participating on an equal basis in society. She organised demonstrations against the inaccessible Eastern Suburbs Railway that led NSW Premier Wran to introduce the accessible taxi transport scheme. She headed the protest that ended the Spastic Centre's use of young women in a beauty pageant as fundraisers for people with cerebral palsy. Joan was a founding member of Women With Disabilities Australia, a founder of Lives Worth Living, and advocated against the introduction of euthanasia, advocating instead for support to allow people to live meaningful lives.



Wendy Potter

was a past Board Member and President of PWDA and active member

from the 1980s onwards. Wendy was President at the time PWDA became a national organisation and when we took on the operation of the national disability employment complaints service (CRRS) and the National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline. She headed up PWDA when we started legal action against the NSW Government because of the Minister's breaches of the Disability Services Act obligations and their failure to make sure services (particularly large institutions) complied. Wendy was passionate about people with disability having control over the services and supports they use, advocating for person centred services and the right to live independently.



Jan Daisley lived in an institution for 30 years. In 1993, as soon as she could communicate, she

clearly stated that she wanted to move out and into the community. Jan was a founding member and life member of PWDA, first elected to the Board in 2007 and President from 2010 to 2012. Jan was a key part of PWDA's campaign against institutionalisation of people with disability and a staunch believer in the right of people with disability to live in the community. She worked on PWDA's Shut In campaign to tell the story of what it was like to live in an institution and why they all needed to close. Jan featured in the 2017 documentary film Defiant Lives charting the disability rights movement in Australia, the USA and UK. She led PWDA during the campaign for the NDIS, was a tireless lobbyist working hard to ensure that the voices of people with disability were central to the design and development of the NDIS.

MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

PWDA experienced some exciting developments this year with national and state policy changes in the disability space providing impetus for program growth and consolidation, presenting opportunities to expand our fee for service offerings, and rewarding us with funding for numerous new projects.

Our training unit expanded beyond expectations in 2016-2017 with demand for our services at an all-time high. The roll out of the NDIS is compelling mainstream services to acknowledge that they need to address barriers to access for people with disability, and to ensure that people with disability are safe. With over 35 years' experience in training designed and delivered by people with disability we are leaders in the fields of training in both disability awareness and violence prevention.

Similarly, we have seen significant growth in our research unit. Government looks to academia to provide an evidence base for disability policy reform, and more and more universities are embracing the idea that in order to offer appropriate solutions, their work must be grounded in the experiences of people with disability themselves. The unrivalled depth of PWDA's disability rights expertise, our ability to draw on participation from our diverse membership base, and the high academic calibre of our staff is positioning us as the go-to DPO in Australia for inclusive research initiatives.

Our individual advocacy service and team also expanded this year as we were funded by the Commonwealth to provide advocacy support for NDIS Appeals in NSW and Queensland. Our partnership with Qantas as the administrator of their carer concession card also meant we assisted over 500 people with disability to fly with a companion at a discounted rate. In 2016 we bid a fond farewell to Sue Barnes, who retired after having been the manager of our individual advocacy team in NSW for over 10 years. Loved and respected across the state, Sue did a fabulous job for our clients and left us with the priceless legacy of a highly competent, compassionate, and dedicated individual advocacy team.

In the national policy arena we continued as the host agency for Disabled People's Organisations (DPO) Australia, and enjoyed the benefits that this closer collaboration with our allies provides. As a united voice our ability to campaign on key issues such as the NDIS and the call for a Royal Commission into violence against people with disability is strengthened, and we made

great strides in these areas over the year. Our DPO Australia role effectively compliments our robust PWDA led activism on other key issues. This Annual Report details advocacy and funding wins across NSW and nationally including successful social security campaigns, new projects in employment and domestic violence prevention, and publications in transport and planning.

We are encouraged that throughout the year membership of the organisation continued to grow, and our significant influence in the general community was reflected by an increased social media reach, and resolute interest from journalists and the media.

We thank the Board for their clear strategic direction and vision for the future of PWDA. We especially thank all of the staff, interns, and volunteers for their unwavering commitment to implementing this vision in order to realize the human rights of people with disability.

Ngila Bevan and Matthew Bowden

PWDA STAFF, INTERNS AND VOLUNTEERS

INDIVIDUAL ADVOCATES

Our individual advocates are based in Redfern, Sutherland, Bowral and Queanbeyan in NSW, and Bundaberg, Hervey Bay, Sunshine Coast, Logan and Mount Isa in Queensland. Full and part time staff included Gareth Elliott, Garry Oates, Paulina Gutierrez, Stephin Hargreave, Leonie Hazelton, Freya Higgins, Tanya Jovovic, Cath Posniak, Lindy Rodrigues, Jen Ruse and David Skidmore in NSW; and Luke Gale, Tracey Moffatt, Denise Robertson, Grace Stevenson and Ilona Wildauer in Queensland.

VOLUNTEERS AND INTERNS

PWDA is fortunate to have many people willing to contribute their time and skills to build the capacity of our organisation. In 2016-2017 these included Jacinta Faddoul, Gillian Fisher, Sara Imanian, Sheetal Gur, Hannah Solomons, Chloe Sullivan, and Edward Valenta.

SYSTEMIC ADVOCATES

Our systemic advocacy team is based in Redfern and includes staff working on policy and law reform, government relations, communications, training, community engagement and capacity building. Team members included Jessica Cadwallader, Frances Quan Farrant, Carly Findlay, Samantha French, El Gibbs, Mel Harrison, Meredith Lea, Ann Penhallurick and Dean Price.

CORPORATE SERVICES TEAM

The corporate services team keeps the PWDA engine running from the Redfern office with Chief Asare, Andrew Emmerson, Pete Darby and Sue Strasser all playing a central role.



INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY

People with disability remain among the most disadvantaged and marginalised members of the community. We are frequently subject to discrimination, violence, abuse and neglect. Our individual advocacy team promotes and protects the rights of individuals and groups of people with disability and works to ensure that their needs are met.

In 2016-17 PWDA Individual Advocates assisted over 2000 people with disability and their associates, a similar number to those assisted last year. PWDA also continued to provide mentoring support to many individuals and groups of people with disability and their associates with rights-related problems in order to build their self-advocacy skills and personal capacity to resolve complaints themselves. This year we also reached over 170 people with disability via group information sessions, presentations, workshops, forums and events.

On average PWDA Advocates assist in the resolution of one issue for a person with disability, every working hour (9am-5pm), every business day (Monday-Friday) of the entire year.

OUR CLIENTS

The individual advocacy assistance we provided was intensive, short term, issue-based advocacy to residents of New South Wales and Queensland in regions where we are funded through the Department of Social Services', National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP), and through a brokerage agreement with IDEAS.

Through our **Disability Rights and Information Service (DRIS)** we also provided disability rights-related information, advice and referral services to over 430 people with disability and their associates who reside outside of our funded service areas. Demand for our services continues to grow and we operate at full capacity, meaning that 64 requests for assistance had to be declined this year.

We provided advocacy services to a roughly equal proportion of male and female clients, representing people with disability of all ages. **The number of our clients who are children with disability almost doubled from last year to 9.7%, and this reflects ongoing issues with access to inclusive education and adequate disability supports.** Almost a third of our clients, 30%, are people aged

between 40-54 years old which is consistent with previous years. In QLD, the number of our clients identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, 12%, was half that of last year. The number of clients identifying as from a culturally and linguistically diverse background remained similar to last year across NSW and QLD.

The number of our clients with cognitive impairments increased by an enormous 20% this year, reflecting our ongoing work to secure fair wages for workers at Australian Disability Enterprises (sheltered workshops), and NDIS planning assistance to ensure that people living in Assisted Boarding Houses in NSW obtain the maximum benefits of the scheme. The number of clients with physical disability dropped by 10% compared to last year. Over a quarter, 26%, of our clients identified as experiencing multiple disability, and of these physical and psychiatric disability were the most prominent.

As in previous years, disability services, accommodation, and legal issues were the three areas where people with disability requested assistance most frequently. However, financial issues were a close 4th place, reflecting the feeling

“I don’t have the words to explain how grateful I am for what my PWDA advocate has achieved for me and the calm, respectful and gentlemanly-like way he has achieved it. He makes me feel believed, safe and respected. I could not think of a better advocate.”

Maggie* PWDA client

of uncertainty in the community following the changes to social security law and policy over the last couple of years. NDIS related individual advocacy assistance made up over 34% of all disability services related support provided.

THE BOARDING HOUSE PROJECT

PWDA provides individual and group advocacy to residents of Assisted Boarding Houses in NSW. Our role is to promote and protect residents’ legal, consumer and human rights; to ensure their access to health, allied health and community services; to support resident participation and decision-making in transition to new living arrangements; and to provide an independent source of information in their interactions with government agencies and service providers. This service is funded by the NSW Family and Community Services, Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care (ADHC).

This year PWDA provided intensive advocacy support to 149 residents of Assisted Boarding Houses. This included advocacy for residents during a house closure and their transition to individualised housing and supports, NDIS pre-planning workshops, and supporting people living in boarding houses in Western Sydney and the Southern Highlands to transition their supports to the NDIS.

Top 3 advocacy issues

Disability services and NDIS	29%
Accommodation	18%
Legal Issues	12.5%

Age ranges

<15	9.7%
15-24	13%
25-39	21%
40-54	31%
55-64	18.6%
65+	8.5%

Clients with disability

Cognitive	37%
Psychiatric	19%
Physical	17%
Neurological	11%
Autism, sensory or speech	17%

ADVOCATES IN ACTION

Frances* was a victim of domestic violence. Her baby was removed from her at birth by NSW Family and Community Services (FACS) because they determined the domestic violence made the family home unsafe, even though the perpetrator no longer lived there. A PWDA Advocate supported Frances through a protracted process of FACS meetings and Children’s Court proceedings. Frances was able to prove to the Court that she was capable of raising a child. After nearly a year of separation, mother and child were reunited. The baby has been thriving and there have been no further FACS concerns.

Rob* had a significant Centrelink debt. He sought help from a PWDA Advocate to go to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) to have the debt rescinded. The Advocate prepared a support letter for Rob and he contributed his own notes to strengthen that letter. Rob was very grateful that the advocate was able to attend the AAT Hearing with him.

**names have been changed*

TRAINING AND RESEARCH

INCLUSIVE RESEARCH AND COMMUNITY RESEARCHERS

PWDA supports disability research that is primarily driven by people with disability to answer the questions and issues that are most important to people with disability, ensuring our voices are clearly articulated and heard. This is community led research.

Community led research includes the use of inclusive research and participatory action research methodologies as potential research frameworks. It is grounded, narrative, qualitative research that draws out the voices of people with disability that are then analysed with rigour and reported.

“Delivering PWDA Disability Awareness training is always fun, interactive, and leaves a lasting impression on participants. The powerful impact we have as trainers with a disability delivering this training material sets the standard in the industry and is reinforced constantly by participant’s feedback and highlights of their experience with us.”

Michelina Pelosi,
consultant peer trainer

In 2016-17 we launched our **Research Protocols** which are a set of criteria that describe what kinds of research PWDA will be involved in, and our expectations around the involvement of people with disability. For example, financial and intellectual acknowledgment of expertise, accessibility of information and materials, and policy relevance of publications.

PWDA also conducts research on behalf of state and federal departments and supports research with universities and other non-government organisations. Our expertise lies in ensuring the voices of people with disability are heard – “Nothing about us, without us”.

“Guide Dogs NSW/ACT clearly has a specialisation in vision impairment but cannot offer the broad depth of knowledge & expertise required for disability awareness training across the board. Partnering with PWDA has given us the opportunity to educate even more people in the community on the needs & rights of people with vision impairment. The partnership has allowed us to provide unique & bespoke training to attendees, equipping them with skills specific to their job roles.”

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT

DISABILITY RIGHTS EDUCATION AND PEER TO PEER TRAINING

The high quality training that PWDA provides continues to enjoy strong support from the community. **We provided training to 518 people this year across New South Wales, Tasmania, Northern Territory, and Western Australia.** PWDA training is provided on a fee for service basis, or free for many of the organisations engaged in the work of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

As a DPO we believe that our training should be developed and delivered by people with disability themselves. Our primary team of trainers are all people with disability and we recruit other trainers with disability to co-present with us. The importance of this approach is increasingly being recognized, and this year we were awarded 2 project grants from the **NSW Domestic and Family Violence Innovation Fund**. The first 2 year project is a prevention initiative that will train women with intellectual disability to deliver education to their peers about respectful relationships. The second 4 year project aims to increase the accessibility of domestic and family violence services across NSW including through the delivery of disability awareness training.

Right: Mel Harrison, Training Manager, and Denise Robertson, Mount Isa Individual Advocate, with a group of training participants in the Northern Territory.



We introduced 2 new training courses this year:

Advocacy and the NDIS, which focuses on developing skills for self-advocacy during the NDIS planning process; and

Facilitating Access for Clients with Disability, an advanced level to our Disability Awareness training, in which we partner with Guide Dogs NSA/ACT and the Deaf Society to focus on effective communication.

Other courses this year:

Disability Awareness training is primarily provided to mainstream service providers such as local councils, government departments, museums and galleries, domestic and family violence services, homelessness services, legal centres, development agencies, schools, colleges, and businesses to raise their disability competence and confidence.

Sexuality and Respectful Relationships training equips people with disability with an in-depth understanding of their human and sexual rights.

Responding to Sexual Assault and Prevention of Domestic Violence training is usually provided to disability service providers or mainstream organisations who work with people with disability such as domestic and family violence services or health centers.

Training delivered 2016-2017

40

Sexuality and Respectful Relationships

120

Advocacy and Disability Awareness

22

Prevention of Domestic Violence

15

Facilitating Access for Clients with Disability

212

Disability Awareness

69

Responding to Sexual Assault

40

Advocacy and the NDIS

Examples of research projects PWDA contributed to this year include:

- Women, Disability and Violence: Creating Access to Justice Project, funded by Australia's National Research Organisation on Women's Safety (ANROWS)
- Review to Address the Impacts of Domestic and Family Violence on People with Disability, for the Queensland Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services
- Partnership with NSW Council for Intellectual Disability and the University of NSW to conduct community research using inclusive methodologists.
- Forum presentation on inclusive research with our DPO Australia Partners at the prestigious Australian Social Policy Research Conference.

PWDA representatives sit on Disability Inclusion Advisory Bodies at the following institutions:

- The Centre for Disability Research and Policy, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Sydney
- Centre of Research Excellence in Disability and Health, Universities of Melbourne, Sydney, Monash, RMIT and UNSW Canberra.
- The Hallmark Disability Research Initiative, Melbourne Social Equity Institute, University of Melbourne
- The School of Health & Social Development, Faculty of Health, Deakin University

SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY

Our policy team aims to achieve fundamental positive change to social structures and processes that result in the marginalisation and disadvantage, discrimination, exclusion, neglect and abuse of people with disability. We work within a human rights framework to advocate for the full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in Australia. The direction of our policy work is guided by the concerns of our members, patterns of issues drawn from our individual advocacy service, and the policy and law reform opportunities of the day.

This year we made over **40 submissions** to NSW, national and international inquiries or consultations, and continued to provide advice to government, the community and business sector directly and through various advisory groups. We published over **25 media releases**, and PWDA featured in national TV, radio or newspaper stories over 70 times.

Our policy work is focused in 4 areas: collaborative work with DPO Australia; other national project work; NSW advice, information, advocacy and representation; and international advocacy.

NSW

In 2016-2017 we continued our role as a NSW peak disability organisation providing information, advice and representation of and for people with disability across the state. Much of this advocacy work is done at the committee level, where we advocate for disability rights, inclusion and accessibility to be at the heart of all legislative and policy development relevant to people with disability.

Significant activities included:

- Submission to the NSW Legislative Committee Inquiry into provision of education for children with disability and special needs in NSW schools, and providing evidence at the public hearing;

- Multiple submissions to the NSW Law Reform Commission review of the NSW Guardianship Act, and meetings with Commissioners to provide case studies and raise concerns;
- Statewide survey on barriers experienced by people with disability in accessing their local communities in partnership with Guide Dogs NSW/ACT, Blind Citizens NSW, Inner West Council and Physical Disability Council NSW;
- Development of a **Pathways to Inclusion Guide**, for local government on developing disability action plans which address the livable and accessible communities goal of the National Disability Strategy;
- Co-hosting the disability specific **NSW Sexual Assault Strategy Roundtable** with Women NSW; and
- Working with the NSW Advocate for Children and Young People to increase representation of young people with disability in their advisory networks.





IN 2016-17 PWDA CONTRIBUTED TO THE FOLLOWING REFERENCE AND ADVISORY GROUPS IN NSW.

Housing

- Coalition for Appropriate Supported Accommodation
- Boarding House Expert Advisory Group
- NSW Public Housing Repairs Coalition
- NSW Social and Affordable Housing Fund Expert Advisory Group
- NSW NGO Housing Partners Reference Group
- NSW Anti-Social Behavior Reference Group
- NSW Housing Federation Exchange
- NSW Housing Connect
- Department of Family and Community Services Future Directions Collaborative Forum

Consumer

- NSW Pharmacy Council Advisory Group
- NSW Sydney Water Customer Council
- NSW Health Care Complaints Commission Consumer Consultative Committee
- Central and Eastern Sydney Primary Health Network Disability Network
- North Coast Primary Health Network Cancer Screening Collaborative Reference Group
- NSW Insurance Regulatory Authority
- Great Sydney Commission Social Panel

Transport

- NSW Accessible Transport Advisory Committee
- NSW Transport Way Finding Project Consultative Committee
- City of Sydney Council Way Finding Committee
- Transport for NSW Train Station Signage Testing Advisory Group
- Joint Transport for NSW and City of Sydney Council Access Advisory Group (Sydney Light Rail and Pedestrianisation of George St)

Sector coordination

- NSW Disability Network Forum
- NSW Disability Advocacy Network
- NSW Ombudsman Disability Roundtable
- NSW Forum of Non-Government Agencies

Rights and Justice

- ENABLE NSW
- Guardianship Tribunal Stakeholder Reference Group
- NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal Consultative Committee
- NSW Department of Justice Disability Advisory Council
- NSW Electoral Commission Equal Access to Democracy Disability Reference Group
- NSW Marriage Equality Working Group
- Women's Electoral Lobby Abortion Legislation Reference Group
- NSW Council for Social Services Women Expert Advisory Group

Violence prevention and response

- NSW Apprehended Violence Orders Legal Issues Coordinating Committee
- NSW Women's Alliance
- Women NSW Sexual Assault Strategy Expert Advisory Group
- NSW Victims of Crime Interagency
- Statewide Steering Committee, Joint Protocol to Reduce Contact of people with disability in Supported Accommodation with the Criminal Justice System
- Expert Advisory Group, NSW Advocate for Children and Young People Anti-Violence Campaign

Right: Assistant Minister for Disability Jane Prentice with PWDA Member Kobie Hicks, congratulating us on receiving funding for our Economic Activation E-Hub Project.



DISABLED PEOPLE'S ORGANISATIONS AUSTRALIA (DPO AUSTRALIA)

DPO Australia was founded by, and is made up of four national cross-disability DPOs: First Peoples Disability Network (FPDN); Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA); National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA); and People with Disability Australia (PWDA). The key purpose of DPO Australia 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 priorities and opportunities.

A major focus of our collaborative work as DPO Australia this year was the **NDIS**, with achievements including:

- releasing a Civil Society Statement, endorsed by over 40 disability organisations, calling for greater consultation with people with disability in the roll out of the scheme;
- multiple submissions to the Productivity Commission Inquiry into NDIS Costs and the Senate Inquiry into the Quality and Safeguards Framework;
- reacting to the NDIS shut down in the ACT;
- speaking out publically on many occasions demanding sufficient and sustainable NDIS funding that doesn't come at the expense of other essential services; and DPO Australia
- director Therese Sands being appointed 'as an Expert Advisor to the Independent Advisory Council.

Through the collective work of DPO Australia PWDA continues to have considerable influence with government regarding NDIS co-design, strategic directions, and ongoing development of policy and practice.

Left: DPO Australia Director Therese Sands speaking to the media at the Community Sector Post Budget Briefing 2017

We also continue to work with the NDIA as PWDA for example:

- through participation in the NDIA CEO's Forum and NDIS Practice Reference Group;
- by coordinating input into the development of the NDIS LGBTIQ strategy;
- as a grantee under the Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) program for our **Economic Activation E-Hub Project** linking disability confident employers to job seekers with disability;
- and as a **NSW Disability Support Organisation (DSO)**, facilitating people's transition to the NDIS by supporting peer connections for networks of people with disability who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex, people living with HIV, people with disability living in Western Sydney who are of culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds, people who are deafBlind, people who are blind or have low vision, ex-boarding house residents and young people with disability.





Left: DPO Australia members with Disability Discrimination Commissioner Alastair McEwin

This year PWDA continued to make a significant contribution to DPO Australia through our representation on the **National Accessible Public Transport Advisory Committee** (NAPTAC), and the **Disability Employment Services (DES) Transition Reference Group**. NAPTAC representation included participation in separate working groups on whole of journey, information technology, bus standards, rail standards, marine and ferry standards, and taxis. Our DES advocacy is focused on increasing choice and control for consumers, improving the quality of providers and performance, and ensuring services are fully accessible to all people with disability. Success in these intense areas of work included our involvement in the development of the Whole of Journey Guidelines by the Department of Infrastructure, and the formation of additional DES working groups in Informed Choice and Performance Framework Review.

OTHER NATIONAL ADVOCACY

PWDA continued to work across multiple policy portfolios as part of our national work, with a focus on accessibility, housing, wage justice, preventing violence, advocating for a fair social security system, and political participation.

We worked with a wide range of disability sector colleagues, government departments, community sector partners, and private sector stakeholders to raise issues of concern and ensure that the voice of people with disability was represented in reform processes and new project designs.

Our national advocacy work involved joint campaigns as well as making submissions, appearing at Inquiry hearings, providing expert disability advice and information, and lobbying politicians.

#endtheviolence

The DPO Australia led campaign calling for a Royal Commission into violence against people with disability had a number of successes this year, despite the government maintaining the view that an Inquiry isn't needed.

- We released a Civil Society Statement, endorsed by over 160 organisations, calling for the urgent establishment of a Royal Commission;
- The Australian Labor Party publically announced their strong support for the campaign,
- Over 120 academics added their voices by writing an open letter to the Prime Minister underlining the urgent need to address the issue;
- The ABC aired 2 investigatory programs highlighting the problem;
- The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recommended to Australia that a Royal Commission should be established to address the high levels of violence experienced.

Let's talk about the NDIS!

The PWDA Board is holding a social media forum, on Facebook and Twitter, to hear from you about your positive and negative experiences with the NDIS.

#OurNDIS
Saturday 25 March, 1-4pm
www.facebook.com/PWD.Australia
www.twitter.com/PWDAustralia

ROYAL COMMISSION NOW.

Disabled People's Organisations Australia



Key highlights included:

- Coordinating over 30 disability organisations to campaign against the transfer of the Mobility Allowance to the NDIS;
- Participation in the Banking Industry Reference Group and the Commonwealth Bank Consumer Advisory Group;
- Participation in the Modernization Committee for the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport, the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network, and the Australia Electoral Commission Disability Advisory Committee;
- Submissions to the Australian Law Reform Commission Inquiry into Protecting the Right of Older Australians from Abuse; and to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Issues Papers on Responding to Sexual Abuse and Criminal Justice, including giving evidence at the hearings;

- Collecting stories, supporting individuals, and advocating in partnership with ACOSS and the National Social Security Rights Network on the **#notmydebt** campaign;
- Submissions to the Senate Community Affairs Inquiry into Better Management of the Social Welfare System and provision of evidence at the hearing;
- Joint advocacy with the Australian NGO OPCAT Network for Australia to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT), and participation in the Australian Human Rights Commission Civil Society Roundtables on models for the OPCAT National Preventive Mechanism;
- Participation in the Disability Housing Futures Reference Group looking at the long term consequences of inadequate housing solutions for NDIS participants, and identifying and developing alternative housing assistance options;
- Continuing to fight for fair wages for workers with disability employed by Australian Disability Enterprises (sheltered workshops), through action at the Fair Work Commission;
- And of course our annual presence at the **Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras** where we advocate for everyone to be treated equally

regardless of sexuality and/or disability. This year we marched with over 150 people with disability, their staff and friends celebrating a dynamic display of disability, gender and sexuality alongside the Cerebral Palsy Alliance, Northcott, and Touching Base.

INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY

PWDA continues to represent people with disability on the international stage through our engagement with the United Nations. This ranges from participation in consultations and at conferences, hosting public events and speaking at seminars, making submissions on topics of key concern, and supporting young people with disability from Australia to have their voice heard on the international stage and build their leadership potential.

In 2016-2017 PWDA participated in the Australian civil society delegation to the 10th Session of the **Conference of States Parties (COSP) to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) at the United Nations Headquarters in New York**. The delegation undertook significant work at COSP including: hosting a screening of the film *Defiant Lives: The Rise and Triumph of the Disability Rights Movement*; holding a side event entitled *The Role of Disabled People's*

#NotMy
Debt



Left: Australian civil society delegation with Australian government delegation at COSP 2017, New York.

Organisations in the Developing Practical Approaches to Disaster Risk Management in the Asia Pacific Region with the World Bank, Nippon Foundation, National Ethnic Disability Alliance and the Australian Centre for Disability law; and participating in a range of events held by governments, international organisations and civil society. We also led the Australian civil society delegation to the **61st Session of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights in Geneva**. Our advocacy efforts were richly rewarded with the Committee making strong recommendations to Australia on a number of priority areas on concern such as prohibition of forced sterilisation of people with disability, the impact of cuts to social security payments, strengthening the National

Disability Strategy, addressing violence, and taking action to increase the number of people with disability in employment.

REGIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING

PWDA is committed to supporting the growth and development of our sister Disabled People's Organisations in the Asia Pacific Region. We work to ensure that regional human rights and development mechanisms are disability inclusive and engage appropriately with people with disability. We seek to encourage the participation of people with disability, particularly women, in governance arrangements for DPOs, self-advocacy, and the design and implementation of development projects. Funding for this work is secured on an ad hoc basis.

In 2016-17 PWDA collaborated with grassroots DPOs, civil society organisations, and governments from South Korea and Fiji, with highlights including:

- Participation in the **Regional Assembly of Asia Pacific-Disabled People's Organisations United (AP-DPO United)**, Republic of Korea, delivering a presentation on Access to Education for Women & Girls in the Pacific Region;
- Presenting a paper on Mainstreaming Issues for Women with Disability within Mainstream Gender Agendas and Development Efforts, at the **Pacific Disability Forum Fifth Regional Conference** in Samoa, and co-facilitating a side event with Action Aid on Building Resilience of Women with Disability in Disaster Risk Reduction; and
- Disseminating the Australian National Survey to DPOs and development agencies on the Mid-Term Review of the **Incheon Strategy** to Make the Right Real for Persons with Disabilities.



Left: PWDA Senior Policy Officer Samantha French with DPO delegates from across the Pacific at the Fifth Pacific Regional Conference on Disability, Samoa.

TREASURER'S REPORT

DIRECTORS REPORT

I present the audited financial statements for the 2016/17 financial year.

For the information of Members, People with Disability Australia Incorporated (PWDA) achieved a surplus of \$107,637 in 2016/17.

The financial performance improvement of last year was consolidated to again record a positive movement in the organisation's financial position.

The Statement of Financial Position shows that Cash and Other financial assets (term deposits) amount to \$944,529 and \$669,767 respectively. PWDA's Equity (Reserves) are \$318,956.

The cash position, along with the organisation's reserves and the confirmed funding for 2017/18, are the basis for the Directors declaration in the audit report that PWDA can meet its debts as they fall due. Our independent auditors LBW and Partners have provided an unmodified audit opinion to that statement.

Income

In the 2016/17 financial year, PWDA received government funding and other income as follows:

- Funding of \$3,822,104 from commonwealth and state governments.
- Other income of \$243,828 from training income, premises sub-leasing, sitting fees and reimbursements and fee for service.

Overall income was slightly lower than last year, by 2%. We note however that for FY2017/18 income is expected to increase again.

Expenditure

Expenditure for the year was managed within budget. Whilst still maintaining full and effective program delivery and acquittal of grant funding, costs were controlled.

Employee benefits expenses (wages) increased in the year due to indexation and the SACS Equal Remuneration increment, as well as a slight increase in program staffing. Offsetting some of the increase in wages, savings were made compared to the previous year for:

- Depreciation expense reduced as the office fit-out depreciation period came to an end during the year.
- Savings were made in travel, telephone and internet and consulting costs.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the commonwealth government, the NSW state government and our other funding partners for their continued support of the work of PWDA.



Suzy Keene
Treasurer

The directors submit the financial report of People with Disability Australia Incorporated (the Association) for the financial year ended 30 June 2017.

Directors

The names of directors throughout the year and at the date of this report are listed at page 7 of the Annual Report.

Principal activities

The principal activities of the Association during the financial year were to provide a range of disability rights related advocacy and consumer protection services for people with disability and their associates either at the New South Wales or national levels.

Significant changes

No significant change in the nature of these activities occurred during the year.

Operating result

The surplus of the Association for the financial year amounted to \$107,637 (2016: \$197,798)

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Members of the Committee:



Suzy Keene
Treasurer



Ebru Sumaktas
Director

Dated 14th October 2017

INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT

TO THE MEMBERS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY AUSTRALIA INCORPORATED

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report of People with Disability Australia Incorporated (the Association), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2017, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, the statement of changes in equity and the statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and directors' declaration. In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of the Association for the year ended 30 June 2017 is prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and Associations Incorporation Act (NSW) 2009.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. We are independent of the Association in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in

Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Emphasis of Matter – Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 of the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report is prepared to assist the Association to meet the requirements of *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and *Associations Incorporation Act (NSW) 2009*. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.

Responsibilities of Directors for the Financial Report.

The directors are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and *Associations Incorporation Act (NSW) 2009* and for such internal control as the directors determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the directors are responsible for assessing the Association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management

either intends to liquidate the Association or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report. A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial report is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website at: www.auasb.gov.au/Home.aspx. This description forms part of our auditor's report.



Rupaninga Dharmasiri Partner

LBW & Partners Chartered Accountants, Level 3, 845 Pacific Highway, CHATSWOOD NSW 2067,
Dated 16th October 2017

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income For the Year Ended 30 June 2017

	Notes	2017	2016
Revenue	3	4,065,932	4,144,960
Employee benefits expense		(2,803,610)	(2,566,553)
Depreciation and amortisation expense		(117,481)	(212,841)
Audit fees		(17,500)	(14,000)
Motor vehicle expenses		(32,864)	(40,068)
Computer/website costs		(48,537)	(48,551)
Consulting and professional charges		(28,509)	(40,099)
Electricity		(21,150)	(21,256)
Meeting expenses		(26,470)	(21,818)
Printing & stationery		(13,542)	(23,602)
Program costs		(22,716)	(25,404)
Rental and operating lease expenses		(308,901)	(316,781)
Repairs and maintenance		(16,848)	(33,625)
Telephone and internet		(89,590)	(108,695)
Travel and accommodation		(234,189)	(292,025)
Other expenses		(176,388)	(181,844)
Surplus before income tax		107,637	197,798
Income tax expense	2(a)	-	-
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR		107,637	197,798
Other comprehensive income		-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year		107,637	197,798

This information has been extracted from the audited financial statements of People with Disability Australia Incorporated for the year ended 30 June 2017 and is included here for information purposes only. A complete set of financial statements and Independent Audit Report is available at www.pwd.org.au and can also be provided upon request. With reference to the ACFID Code of Conduct, PWDA confirms that during the year the Association did not receive any international aid and development revenue.

Statement of Financial Position

As At 30 June 2017

	Notes	2017	2016
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	4	944,529	181,851
Trade and other receivables	5	202,060	92,810
Other financial assets	6	669,767	653,755
Prepayments		35,633	36,857
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		1,851,989	965,273
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	7	41,704	148,768
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		41,704	148,768
TOTAL ASSETS		1,893,693	1,114,041
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	8	182,839	122,684
Employee benefits	9	525,486	425,621
Deferred income		798,387	311,661
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		1,506,712	859,966
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Employee benefits	9	68,025	42,756
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		68,025	42,756
TOTAL LIABILITIES		1,574,737	902,722
NET ASSETS		318,956	211,319
EQUITY			
Retained earnings		318,956	211,319
TOTAL EQUITY		318,956	211,319



PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY AUSTRALIA

For individual advocacy support contact the **Disability Rights Information Service (DRIS)** between 9:00 am and 5:00 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



**A voice of
our own**