

OPS-006 Transparency and Open Information Policy

Authorised by: CEO / Board of Directors
Applies to: All PWDA Directors, Staff and Volunteers
Effective from: 11/11/2020
Review date: 11/11/2023
Policy Owner: Director-People, Quality and Systems

1.0 Policy statement

PWDA aims to be a leading disability rights, advocacy and representative organisation of and for all people with disability.

In promoting our vision of a socially just, accessible and inclusive community we build and strongly value the relationships with our clients, members, volunteers, funders, government agencies, and other community stakeholders. We recognise that transparency builds trust and understanding, and helps those relationships to flourish.

We are committed to being as transparent as possible in our work, and accountable to our stakeholders and community. This means:

- Sharing timely, relevant, accurate, and accessible information about what PWDA is doing, how it is performing, and its governance arrangements.
- Reporting annually to PWDA members.
- Providing stakeholders and the community with opportunities to ask questions and give input and feedback about PWDA's work.
- Reporting to government agencies in accordance with the terms of grants and funding contracts.

We place information about PWDA's activities in the public domain in a variety of formats - on our website; on social media; with 'traditional' media; via annual reports, newsletters and blogs; in policy papers; and at stakeholder consultations and presentations.

We only withhold information from stakeholders and the community where there is a valid reason to do so. This may be because:

- Release of the information would compromise the privacy of the personal information we hold about clients, staff, Board members or members.
- Making information available would contravene PWDA's legal obligations.

If transparency is not possible, then we provide reasons why we cannot place information in the public domain.

2.0 Guiding principles

Principles underlying this policy are as follows:

- PWDA is responsive and pro-active in making information available to stakeholders and the community, provided there is no legal, privacy or confidentiality requirement to protect the information.
- The privacy and confidentiality of personal information of PWDA clients is protected at all times and not exploited for public consumption.
- Information placed by PWDA in the public domain is accurate, appropriately sourced, verified and in accessible formats.

3.0 Definitions

Confidentiality – an obligation owed to the source of information regardless of who or what the subject is. The obligation is not to disclose information without permission.

Personal information – information or an opinion about a person whose identity is apparent, or can reasonably be ascertained, from the information or opinion.

Privacy – the obligation owed to a person whose personal information is held by PWDA, regardless of the source of the information. The obligation covers how personal information is collected, used, stored, and disclosed.

Transparency – an organisation's openness about its activities, providing information on what it is doing, where and how this takes place, and how it is performing. Transparency is supported by clear policies and procedures and open decision-making.

4.0 Accountabilities

Accountability for the policy rests with the following positions:

Board:

The Board is responsible for overseeing appropriate reporting to stakeholders and the community about PWDA's performance and financial position.

CEO:

The CEO is accountable for all information made available in the public domain. The CEO is also responsible for ensuring that:

- There are systems and processes in place to capture, record, and analyse the information necessary to enable the Board to perform its reporting functions.
- Privacy and other policies are in place to govern the access and use of documents including client records, staff records, member records, and minutes of Board meetings, in accordance with the PWDA Constitution.

All staff:

All staff are responsible for implementing and adhering to the Transparency and Open Information policy.

5.0 Procedure

5.1 Transparent reporting to stakeholders and the community

We place information about PWDA's activities in the public domain in a variety of formats:

- on our website
- on social media – Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
- with 'traditional' media
- in our Annual Report
- in newsletters and blogs
- in policy papers
- at stakeholder consultations, meetings, and presentations.

Information is regularly updated and stakeholders are invited to provide input or feedback at any time. Stakeholder complaints are dealt with in accordance with PWDA's Complaints Handling and Resolution policy.

5.2 Transparency and Board reporting

The PWDA Board ensures that it complies with its legal and contractual public reporting obligations which include:

- Reporting annually to the members on PWDA's activities in the preceding year, and providing an opportunity for questions and feedback.
- Preparing financial reports as required by law.
- Preparing an annual report.
- Reporting to government agencies in accordance with the terms of grants and funding contracts.
- Reporting to the Australian Tax Office
- Reporting to the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission.

5.3 Transparency and client records

PWDA deals with client records in accordance with its Privacy Policy and Procedure and privacy law obligations.

5.4 Transparency and staff records

PWDA deals with staff records in accordance with the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth), and its Privacy Policy and Procedure and privacy law obligations

5.5 Access to minutes of Board meetings and the Members Register

Access to minutes of Board meetings and the Members Register is provided in accordance with PWDA's Constitution.

6.0 Related policies, procedures and forms

- Privacy policy and procedure
- Media, Social Media and Public Comment policy and procedure
- Complaints Handling and Resolution policy and procedure
- Staff Code of Conduct and Ethics
- Board Code of Conduct and Ethics