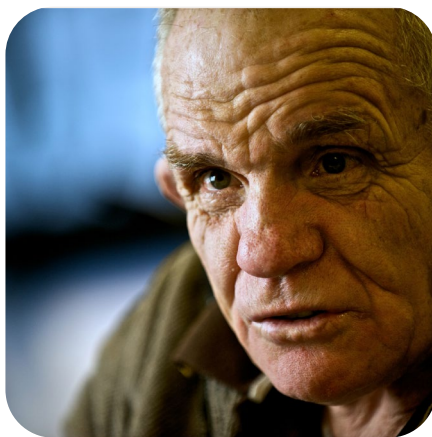




PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY
AUSTRALIA



Annual report 2020–21



PWDA acknowledges and thanks all of the members, supporters and staff featured in the photos in this report.

Copies of this document are available in alternative formats from:

People with Disability Australia Ltd. (PWDA)

Postal Address:
PO Box 666
Strawberry Hills NSW 2012

Street Address:
Level 8, 418A Elizabeth Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010

Phone: +61 9370 3100

Toll Free: 1800 422 015

Fax: +61 9318 1372

Email: pwd@pwd.org.au

TIS: 13 14 50

NRS: 1800 555 677

Acknowledgment of country

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands where we work, live, travel and gather, including the Gadigal people, the Dharug people, the Butchulla People, the Taribelang Bunda people, the Yugambah language people, the Kabi Kabi people, the Jinibara people, the Tharawal people, the Ngunawal people, the Kalkadoon people, the Gureng Gureng people, the Badtjala people, the Awabakal people, the Gubbi Gubbi people, the Yuggera people, the Noongar people and the Stoney Creek Nations clan.

PWDA's staff includes people from the Gamilaraay (Kamilaroi) and Yankunytjatjara nations. We recognise people's continued connection to the land and waters of these beautiful places, and acknowledge sovereignty was never ceded. We respect all elders and ancestors, and any First Nations people reading our report.

Image credits

We acknowledge our staff who have taken images featured in this report along with photographer Gary Radler and photographers who feature their images on Stocksy & Disabled And Here.

ACFID Code of Conduct complaints

PWDA is a signatory to the Australian Council for International Development (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 +61 2 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.

Contents

About People with Disability Australia	2
President's message	4
CEO's message	6
The year in review	8
Membership engagement	12
Staff, interns and volunteers	14
Individual advocacy – QLD and NSW	18
Individual advocacy – Projects and development	28
Representation and systemic advocacy	36
Systemic advocacy projects	38
Training	46
Communications	48
Financial report	50
Easy read translation	72



About People with Disability Australia



A voice of our own

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

We work within a human rights framework and seek to bring into reality, the rights recognised in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD), 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, research and education, and a representative voice of people with disability nationally and internationally, and in New South Wales and regional Queensland.

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 which means our membership is open to people with all types of disability. Individuals with disability and organisations of people with disability are our voting membership. We also have a supporter base 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 members are also people with disability.

President's message

The year 2020–21 has been a remarkable and challenging year for PWDA as well as the people and communities we serve. The COVID-19 pandemic continued to ravage our lives, as disabled people faced unprecedented challenges with government austerity measures impacting the National Disability Insurance Scheme while the Disability Royal Commission continued to highlight the appalling systemic treatment that many people with disability have experienced and continue to experience in this country.

But through all of this, we have come together to show the world what our community is made of – resilience, in the true sense of the word.

Our board members and staff worked together with members in incredibly challenging circumstances to deal with the continued impact of the COVID-19 virus. We advocated for people with disability at the national, state and territory level as we responded to the threat of coronavirus affecting our community, amplifying the voices of people with disability, especially those who are clinically vulnerable to the virus.

Following a robust election process, a new PWDA Board brought a renewed sense of energy, vigour and commitment to our work and strategic direction. We also welcomed our CEO, Sebastian Zagarella, who stepped into this role under challenging circumstances with calmness, kindness and a commitment to ensure PWDA is the best organisation it can be.

With the transition, the new board had been focused on facilitating a transparent and supportive working relationship between the PWDA Board and the organisation's operational team. This included improving PWDA's engagement with members as well as their access to the board, improving underlying processes and procedures and ensuring your voices and issues were truly represented when we spoke out.

Of course, the board have also continued to focus on all aspects of organisational governance and to this end engaged with our valuable membership and established a series of board advisories on finance & risk, governance, membership engagement and strategic direction. Each of these four

advisories have been progressing substantial pieces of work. I'd like to personally thank these teams and their members for offering their valuable time and expertise in supporting the board and staff and ensuring the ongoing viability and success of the organisation.

We must not forget the wins. NDIS independent assessments posed real threats to our lives and, by coming together strongly as a sector, we managed to defeat what could have been catastrophic. We have worked tirelessly to make sure disabled people are safe from COVID and will continue to do so to ensure none of us are left behind. As a board, we will continue to lift PWDA's profile within the media and across the sector.

On behalf of the board, I'd like to thank Sebastian and all PWDA staff members for continuing to step up to meet the enormous challenges the pandemic has brought to our organisation and people with disability across Australia.

PWDA progressed a dedicated work program in 2020–21 and I am pleased to present this to you in this annual report. With the Disability Royal Commission to continue for another 17 months and the threat of more COVID outbreaks across the country, we expect to continue to experience a life-changing era of change in our nation. We must respond by strongly moving forward with our advocacy efforts to gain further traction. We encourage you to stand with us as we work hard in 2021–22 to improve the lives of people with disability.

Yours faithfully,



Samantha Connor
PWDA President
(below)



CEO's message

Due to the impact of COVID-19, 2020–21 was a year like no other. The effect on the lives and livelihoods of people with disability has been profound and the pandemic will continue to significantly affect people with disability well into the future. Despite the turmoil, our community has responded with great courage and resilience, and I thank our community members for working with PWDA to help us protect and defend the health and rights of people with disability during this turbulent time.

Given the circumstances of the past year, this has also been a particularly challenging year for the PWDA operations team who worked hard to continue to consistently deliver services of exceptionally high standards while adapting our programs, services and other activities to deal with the impact of the virus. Despite the many lockdowns, our staff across Australia continued to provide vital support and assistance for clients seeking help. We continued our lobbying and campaigning

across a range of key issues and we continued to work with service providers, sector partners and other stakeholders to deliver important outcomes for the people with disability and the communities we serve. This is a testament to the passion, skill and ingenuity of the PWDA operational team and I thank all team members for their commitment and hard work.

Throughout the year we continued to provide our individual advocacy services to hundreds of people with disability. Our diverse suite of specialised projects addressed specific issues affecting people with disability. And we advocated for policy and social change on the state and national level, lobbying against independent assessments for the National Disability Insurance Scheme, making submissions to the Disability Royal Commission, and urging the prioritisation of a new Australian national disability strategy. More detail regarding these outcomes is highlighted throughout this report.

Having lived experience of disability but being new to the disability sector and PWDA, the last 10 months have provided me with a comprehensive insight into disability advocacy as well as disability health and rights. I also have a much greater appreciation of the incredible diversity, dynamism and determination of the disability community as well as the team at PWDA who I would like to personally thank for making me feel so welcome and for supporting and guiding me as I navigate through new terrain.

While my values naturally align to PWDA's mission and values, the past 10 months have given me enormous respect for the substantial positive impact PWDA makes and has fired my enthusiasm for engaging with our membership and continuing to deliver programs, services, partnerships and outcomes which allow people with disability to thrive in their own ways and on their own terms. I'm so grateful for the opportunity to work with so many talented and passionate people.

As a new CEO it has been important to me that PWDA continued to focus on looking after its people, a focus of mine for these past many months. I've also been looking to grow both the size and diversity of an already strong membership as well build on our current strengths, identify opportunities, and address areas where there is a need. It's imperative that PWDA remains responsive

to a range of challenges and opportunities to ensure we remain relevant and have the ongoing capacity to deliver effective programs and services where they are most needed while advancing our disability rights agenda.

I'd particularly like to thank the PWDA Board, our board advisory committees, and our members and supporters who have generously supported me during my time in the role. Their passion and drive have kept me focused and resolved, and filled me with optimism about how together we can make Australia a place where no one gets left behind.

Yours faithfully,



Sebastian Zagarella
PWDA CEO
(below)



The year in review

COVID-19

The impact of COVID-19 dominated PWDA's work in the 2020–21 financial year as it did in 2019–20 and continues to do so in 2021–22. Responding to the effect of the pandemic on the health and wellbeing of people with disability – together with our advocacy around relevant government policy and practice – was and continues to be a primary focus for PWDA team members across all our programs and services.

Throughout 2020–21, our organisation continued as a member of the Advisory Committee for the COVID-19 Response for People with Disability, advising the National Cabinet advisory group on a range of issues, including vaccine responses and the implementation of the *Management and operational plan for people with disability*.

In addition to this, we publicly campaigned for people with disability to be prioritised in all relevant pandemic strategies and defended the rights of people with disability to be consulted and included in relation to the

planning and implementation of the pandemic response. We also provided advice, support and individual advocacy to clients whose lives and livelihoods were impacted by the effects of the virus.

During the year, our staff worked from home and in offices when we could, engaging in advocacy in new ways from afar. Like people across the world, we now meet up on Zoom, and engage in our everyday work with improved accessibility for people with disability working remotely from home.

All this activity shifted into a higher gear from July to October 2021 in response to the second major wave of the pandemic in NSW. While we will report on this activity in next year's report, we thank all our staff, supporters and community members for their courage and resilience over the last 18 months and ask for their continued support as we respond to the ongoing impact of COVID-19 in the months and years ahead.

NDIS independent assessments

Another key activity was our successful campaign against the federal government's plan to use independent assessments for the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Our membership expressed overwhelming opposition to independent assessments as they were concerned such assessments would be traumatic and inaccurate.

We joined forces with many other disability representative organisations to oppose the government's plan which was designed without consultation with people with disability. The federal government eventually backed down following a rejection of the plan by state and territory disability ministers.



Disability Royal Commission

Another victory was our campaign to extend the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability to provide people with disability more time to give evidence. We are pleased the royal commission will now run an extra 17 months until September 2023.

Throughout the year, we also continued to support people with disability to tell their stories to the royal commission. This included developing trauma-informed disability advocacy guidelines for advocates working with people with disability who tell their stories to the DRC. This work was bolstered by PWDA launching a new website – OurRoyalCommission.com.au – which provides independent information about the commission and features all our relevant submissions to the DRC commissioners. We reported on outcomes of the commission through live coverage of all relevant hearings and provided a guest blogging feature for people with disability to promote their experiences.

Another DRC push we were involved with was a disability community-wide effort to ensure people sharing their stories with the commission had their privacy protected. A bill to this effect was passed by the Federal Parliament in August 2021. This will enable people with disability to share their stories in a confidential way that enhances their safety and security.

Individual advocacy

One of the key areas of our organisational work – our individual advocacy services – continued to provide support and assistance for people with disability to sort out any issues or problems they may be experiencing with service providers or government agencies or refer them to other services that can assist.

In 2020–21, we provided services to 1440 clients from across NSW and Queensland. We also provided support and assistance to 360 people with disability and 65 disability service providers via a range of specific projects addressing issues such as housing and accommodation, childhood sexual abuse, domestic and family violence, institutionalisation of people with psychosocial conditions, and legal rights awareness in First Nations communities.

Systemic advocacy

Campaigning for social change and the rights of people with disability is another major part of our work. Throughout 2020–21, we sought to understand and represent the views of our community members via a range of surveys and consultations about important health, economic and social issues. We produced a range of reports and submissions to government inquiries and panels – including the Disability Royal Commission – on a variety of topics including protecting people with disability from COVID-19, ending segregation of people with disability in all settings, preventing violence against people with disability in supported accommodation, ending restrictive practices such as the use



of restraints and forced medication, and establishing improved safeguards for people with disability across society. We sought to understand and represent the views of our community members via a range of surveys and consultations about important health, economic and social issues.

We also used our range of communications channels and media contacts to promote our campaigns and encourage our community members and stakeholders to support our activity for law reform and social change. We saw considerable growth in our digital comms and online engagement in 2020–21 and expanded our reach across multiple channels.

Our training and research teams further assisted our social change agenda by generating evidence to support our lobbying

and by providing activities that educate people and organisations about improving access and inclusion for people with disability. Our research team was involved in 13 research projects throughout the year while close to 140 individuals completed our training workshops. We also worked with various government agencies on developing large-scale bespoke training packages for delivery to their workforces.

Leadership change

Finally, we experienced leadership change this year at the board and executive levels. We welcomed board member Samantha Connor as our new president in October 2020 and Sebastian Zagarella as our interim chief executive officer in December 2020. Mr Zagarella replaced former CEO Jeff Smith.

Membership engagement

Our members are the heart and soul of PWDA and we greatly value the support, insights and guidance they provide the PWDA Board and operational team. We engage with our members in a variety of ways, including with regular dedicated print and digital communications, live meetings and member surveys about key issues.

This year, our member surveys allowed us to share the frustration of people with disability in trying to access COVID-19 vaccinations during a bungled rollout, and highlighted their opposition to independent assessments, enabling us to successfully advocate for the Australian Government to take a different path.

Due to the impact of the COVID pandemic, we felt it was important to increase the regularity of our communications with our members so they could feel connected and engaged. This involved producing our newsletters as fortnightly rather than monthly editions.

PWDA has had a steady increase in member numbers this year. Individual memberships continue to be free for people with disability across Australia.



Staff, interns and volunteers



Seventy-five staff members and four volunteers, along with pro bono advisers from Gilbert & Tobin and Kingston Reid worked hard for People with Disability Australia this year. We thank everyone for their service to people with disability and our members.

We value our staff and aim to provide a supportive environment, where we value to the wellness of our workforce and our people's individual wellbeing. We give all staff members access to free counselling support through our service provider Benestar.

Professional development is a priority for our organisation and we provided the following staff training this year:

- Staff induction
- Supporting staff in tough times' training for managers
- Respect and responsibility in the workplace WHS training for managers
- Respect and responsibility in the workplace WHS training
- What do you know about race & racism 101 – cultural awareness training
- Deconstructing whiteness, and people of colour power and resilience
- Vicarious trauma training.

Left: Queensland manager Ted Jensen with individual advocate Mina Hunt

CEO and corporate services

Our CEO and corporate services team is the engine room of PWDA and operates out of the Sydney office. The team covers everything to do with governance and compliance, finance, people and culture, and operations. Key outcomes this year included a review of our risk register, review of policies, ACFID audits, an NSDS audit, streamlining of processes and consolidation of efficiencies. Interim CEO Sebastian Zagarella, corporate services director Karin Waldmann and our former CEO Jeff Smith led the organisation this year, assisted by Carolyn Talbot who headed corporate services while Karin was acting CEO. This year team members included:

Maja Bulut	Jeff Smith
Pete Darby	Sue Strasser
Jana Dolezalova	Carolyn Talbot
Andrew Emmerson	Karin Waldmann
Hollee James	Sebastian Zagarella
Adrienne Prazauskas	

Individual advocacy

Our individual advocates are based in our offices in Surry Hills and Bowral in New South Wales, and Hervey Bay and Mount Isa in Queensland. Their work includes advocacy support to people with disability and managing key projects on disability rights and information, community outreach and institutional abuse. In NSW they were led by Stephen Kilkeary and Jen Ruse, assisted by Sunil Fernando, Leonie Hazelton, Fran Krix and Karen Kobier. In Queensland, Tracey Moffatt led the team before her retirement at the end of this year. Tracey was assisted by Luke Gale in Tasmania and Ted Jensen in regional Queensland. Ted now leads the team. During the year we closed our offices at Queanbeyan and Sutherland in NSW, as our advocates in these areas increasingly work online – and on the road when we’re not in lockdown.

Our individual advocacy work often involves engaging with people with disability who have been or who currently are affected by violence. Individual advocates receive ongoing support through access to monthly external group supervision which is facilitated by a trauma specialist engaged by PWDA. This forum provides an invaluable, safe space for individual advocates to critically reflect on their practice, to respectfully challenge each other and to foster an ever-stronger sense of team.

Individual advocates specialising in Disability Royal Commission work additionally have had access to monthly, external one-to-one clinical supervision.

Advocates working on the Australian Government’s Redress project for people

who have experienced childhood sexual abuse in institutions also received external one-on-one supervision.

Our individual advocacy team members last year included:

Martin A’Bell	Wanda Matthews
Michelle Arapovic	Margot McKnight
Jessica Bell	Natalie McMullen
Lizzie Blue	Tracey Moffatt
Andrew Boerma	Oliver Moore
Puneet Chaudhary	Tessa Newman
Karen Coughlan	Francis O’Neill
Shaana Dekker	Thara Pech
Gareth Elliot	Annie Piper
Sunil Fernando	Lee-Anne Pringle
Sue Fowles	Rebecca Rongotaua
Luke Gale	Natalie Ross
Stephin Hargreave	Jen Ruse
Leonie Hazelton	Danielle Santos
Liesl Homes	Jessica Saville
Mina Hunt	Polly Seymour
Jack Hutchison	Grace Stevenson
Ted Jensen	Kien Tang
Stephen Kilkeary	Robin Turnham
Karen Kobier	Andrea van der Kuijlen
Fran Krix	Ilona Wildauer
Matthew Langman	Charlotte Wilde
Natasha Lee	Linda Wiseham
Jaclyn Lindsay	



Systemic advocacy and research

Our systemic policy and advocacy staff work on government policy and law reform, government relations, community engagement, capacity building, advocacy, representation, projects and research. The team was led by Giancarlo de Vera and Romola Hollywood during the year, assisted by Amanda Ellis.

Fleur Beaupert	Lauren Henley
Giancarlo de Vera	Romola Hollywood
Amanda Ellis	Lisa Ira
Kate Finch	Frances Quan
Samantha French	Farrant

Media, communications and training

The media, communications and training team is based in the Sydney office, and also works remotely from Victoria, Western Australia and Queensland. The team was led by Mel Harrison and El Gibbs this year, assisted by Amanda Ellis. The comms team works together to get the word out about what PWDA is doing, and about the rights of people with disability, through the website, media, social media and newsletters. Team members included:

Naomi Chainey	Maggie Korenblum
Ben Crompton (consultant)	Adriana Malavisi
	Vicky Roach
Amanda Ellis	Denise Robertson
El Gibbs	Phuong Tran (consultant)
Mel Harrison	
Freya Higgins	Lindsey Woollard

Volunteers and supporters

PWDA is fortunate to have many people willing to contribute their time and skills to build the capacity of our organisation. This year these people included the following volunteers and individuals at our pro bono supporter organisations:

Gilbert & Tobin	Natalija Milosevic
Kingston Reid	Laxmi Rezmi
Matthew Mangiapane	Andy Yip

Individual advocacy – QLD and NSW

PWDA is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services (DSS) to provide individual advocacy to people with disability in Queensland and New South Wales. This support promotes the rights of people with disability and maximises our choice and control.

The ongoing, unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, along with the resulting restrictions, lockdowns, and quarantine measures, seriously impacted on the delivery of our outreach, education, training, and advocacy work throughout the year.

We responded by implementing a range of online and digital strategies to help advocates overcome these barriers and ensure a safe workplace.

The people with disability we advocate for have been heavily impacted as well. The unpredictable nature of the pandemic has disrupted many of the carefully planned supports they require. The impact of this is increased vulnerability and reduced capacity to access justice. Some of our clients have been forced to temporarily disengage from their work with us and focus on the crisis at hand.

Queensland

Our team of individual advocates in Queensland helped their clients achieve significant outcomes this financial year. As a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, our clients have experienced an increase in discrimination, isolation, exploitation, and abuse. Despite facing barriers to family, community, and access to justice, our clients have worked passionately with us to prove their voices matter, and that they are the key to making Queensland better for everyone.

In June, Queensland advocates held their annual conference. Queensland advocates met face to face for the first time in over 18 months to discuss issues and trends around the Disability Royal Commission, COVID, and the new Queensland *Human Rights Act 2019*. The highlights of the trip were hosting key members of the First Peoples Disability Network and a visit from our new CEO.

This year Queensland advocates travelled over 7300km to undertake outreach in rural, remote, and very remote areas, and talk to people about the services offered by PWDA. Advocates stopped at 12 towns

Case study A – Neither independent nor an assessment

Judy volunteered for a National Disability Insurance Scheme independent assessment as a last resort against the barriers she faced with her NDIS access request. She was well read, and wary of the process. But she was almost 60 – running out of time. Her condition had been stable since her brain surgery 20 years ago. She had done everything she could but was left with a neurological condition that regularly resulted in episodes of feeling as though every nerve in her body was on fire. She learned to live with the pain, but the exhaustion that followed forced her to carefully plan every moment of her week.

Her family and community never understood how a person who was fine one week could then spend days barely able to move. This social isolation increased until she found herself sleeping in her car, waiting to pay off repairs with her Disability Support Pension so that she could afford to pay rent again. She visited camp sites but regularly had to move along to avoid predators.

Her life had been too unstable for many years to manage a complicated NDIS application. When the pilot for independent assessments came up, she asked to be involved. She knew the risks, but also the benefits given the barriers she faced. She had carefully saved all her medical reports and could speak effectively about the impact the condition had on her.

The independent assessment team were cold, sharp, and confusing. They demanded Judy bring a support person for the first appointment but provided no context. When she asked questions, she was pushed to agree or risk her opportunity. She had no option but to ask the person she was currently renting a room from to attend. This was a barely civil arrangement that had existed for all of two months.

The appointment was a disaster. The assessor interrogated her, seeking any opportunity to raise suspicion about what she said. Judy could handle that – she knew the barriers she faced every day and could speak up about them. What she hadn't been prepared for was that a separate assessor had been assigned the task of taking her 'support person' into a separate room to cross-check her information.

She was rejected, an unappealable decision, stating 'inconsistent information'. She was betrayed and branded a failure for having even tried. Decades of lived experience and carefully preserved medical records, tossed aside on the word of a random acquaintance.

She then suffered a fall, was hospitalised and once again became homeless. A PWDA advocate helped her to engage with local, state funded services that provided her with weekly supports and access to an occupational therapist to write reports. She is currently focusing on recovering from her injury and will re-engage with PWDA once she feels up to going through the testing and assessments associated with the NDIS review and appeal process.

in key locations to engage with clients, community members, and services. Our trip highlighted the essential need for advocates in this area. Everyone we met with, from the mayor to a local coffee shop patron, was quick to express their frustration at the lack of information and consideration given towards basic service provision in their areas. However, it was heartening to see the whole community's commitment to improving the lives of people with disability.

There is a rising trend of service providers isolating clients, abusing them, and using these incidents, and the natural reactions of people with disability to abuse, to pressure medical assessors to apply for increased NDIS funding packages. The increase is then absorbed into the business with no improvements to the clients. This is made worse by a largely unqualified and inexperienced workforce, which is the result of the NDIS rapidly expanding services.



We have come across several cases where this lack of appropriate support has resulted in crisis situations that directly contributed to regular instances of hospitalisation and police action.

In many cases, the people we spoke to told us that this was the first time they were able to contact anyone who knew how to help. All their attempts to reach out for help previously had been blocked by NDIS bureaucracy. They were told there was no Early Childhood Early Intervention or local area coordinator in their area, and they couldn't visit one in another area either. Then they were arbitrarily dismissed because no one they were able to talk to had the power to fix the problem. Their only recourse was to escalate the matter to elected officials, who were sometimes able to make a difference.

Common barriers to NDIS access included:

- a poor understanding of the NDIS access process due to barriers to support and information
- many stories of phone calls to the NDIS that were never returned
- people feeling they had no choice or control with few or no providers in their area
- many people with no access to qualified medical professionals who can diagnose and/or assess
- no transport providers, resulting in social isolation and further barriers to accessing services
- lack of access to and information about services and programs available to most other Australians.

Case study B – Challenging service provider behaviour

Casey, a woman with intellectual disability and a history of 'challenging behaviours,' was unhappy with the service of her supported accommodation provider. After a year of trying to do something about it without success, Casey contacted PWDA.

An advocate helped her lodge a formal complaint and investigate the actions of her service provider. The provider demonstrated that they had no formal systems in place to help clients with an intellectual impairment who exhibited challenging behaviours. Further investigation showed the provider was generating misleading incident reports, and doctor-shopping. One doctor provided a written statement that they were pressured by the provider to diagnose the client with a mental health condition and prescribe anti-psychotics to control her.

After discussing the outcome of this complaint, Casey said she wanted to leave her current accommodation provider. With our assistance, Casey decided on what she needed in a provider and escalated this to her support coordinator, who then helped her to find an appropriate supported accommodation provider.



Case study C – Fighting financial mismanagement

Jess was hospitalised while under financial administration and guardianship by the state. The state guardian was delayed in finding appropriate accommodation so Jess could leave the hospital. The state-run hospital told Jess she owed them over \$6000 for staying longer than necessary. The state administrator forced Jess to use her federally protected Disability Support Pension to pay off this debt, which placed her in financial hardship.

An individual advocate helped Jess to liaise with the hospital, which resulted in half of the debit being waived. During this process, the advocate provided Jess with information, advice, and referrals to support her independence and self-advocacy. Jess then used her formal and informal supports to self-advocate to elected officials for several months, and she was able to independently remove the rest of the debt.

Case study D – Escape from exploitation

After graduating high school, Josh became incredibly isolated. A young adult with a speech impairment and mild intellectual disability, he was in foster care, on a remote property, until he turned 18. Josh slept on the ground in a tent, away from the main house. He could not independently access any social activities, banking, or support. His foster carer wanted to manipulate him into working on the property and to isolate him from the community.

After trying to run away several times, he found support from a neighbour, who helped him contact PWDA. An advocate helped Josh gain access to his Medicare, Centrelink pension, and photo ID, and to create a bank account. He was also supported to safely leave the foster carer's property and find accommodation. After settling into his new life, he contacted PWDA again to ask for help with NDIS access and was provided a warm referral to an appropriate support service.

New South Wales

During the 2020–21 year, the individual advocacy team supported people with disability across a range of issues in NSW. Most of the advocates' work involved supporting people through issues involving the NDIS and housing. This included liaising with health professionals and other stakeholders to ensure that they were able to uphold people's rights to safety and an adequate standard of living. Advocates also educated service providers to ensure people with disability are afforded the dignity and respect they have a right to.

Many people with disability who contact PWDA for support have been or still are affected by violence. To help individual advocates enhance their understanding of violence and their reactions to it, PWDA has continued to engage a trauma specialist to facilitate monthly group supervision

sessions. Individual advocates come together to discuss the impact of trauma and develop skills to apply when working with people with disability on trauma-related issues, and learn about how trauma affects people with disability and how they as advocates can improve their skills in responding to survivors. These sessions are also provided to ensure our advocates can recognise and understand vicarious trauma, and how this can personally affect them.

During the year, advocates provided remote advocacy and education support to many people with disability. At times this has been a challenge for both our clients and advocates who are used to face to face meetings. However, with the continued stressors of the COVID-19 pandemic, advocates have continued to use technology to safely support people with disability.

Case study E – Achieving financial independence

John is a 35-year-old man who has been diagnosed with a cognitive impairment and a neurological disorder. He had been subject to a financial management order since 3 November 2006. John receives the Disability Support Pension, had modest savings in a Trustee and Guardian (T&G) Trust Account, had no record of assets and paid more in fees to the T&G than he received in interest on his savings. In 2014 the NSW Trustee and Guardian approved John to manage his pension and bills under section 71 of the *NSW Trustee and Guardian Act 2009*.

It was an important goal of John's to achieve full financial independence. John first applied for review and revocation of the financial management order in 2016, but the application was dismissed. In 2021, John requested support from a PWDA advocate to help him try again.

The advocate provided a written submission to the tribunal outlining grounds for the revocation, and supported John at the hearing, where the tribunal asked him about his capability to independently manage his own affairs. Evidence of John's financially responsible practices included his completion of a financial literacy training course and the fact that the section-71 agreement remained in place. We argued that if managing his own bills and pension had compromised John's financial security, the agreement would have been withdrawn.

The financial management order was revoked, with one tribunal member commenting that it was "time to move on."



Case Study F – Out of the bureaucratic labyrinth

Leia contacted PWDA after her third application to join the NDIS was turned down. She was bewildered and frustrated by the National Disability Insurance Agency's decision, as her medical team assured her that she is eligible for the NDIS and she had spent over \$5000 on reports and assessments. Leia found the application process particularly difficult due to her attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, dyslexia and dysgraphia.

Leia's advocate reviewed the NDIA's decision, Leia's application and supporting evidence. The advocate suggested that Leia request an internal review of the NDIA's decision not to allow her to join the NDIS. The advocate wrote and submitted the request for an internal review and helped Leia obtain further supporting evidence from her psychiatrist, psychologist, and counsellor to address the NDIA's claim that she had not tried all available and appropriate treatment options.

Some weeks later, the NDIA told Leia that she had missed the deadline for requesting a review. After Leia's advocate established that this was not accurate, the NDIA acknowledged their error and agreed to conduct an internal review. The reviewer set aside the original decision, finding that Leia does meet the disability requirements described in the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* and is therefore eligible for the NDIS.

Case study G – No more excuses

The parents of Rina, a young woman with autism spectrum disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder and severe intellectual disability, applied to the NDIA for funding for bathroom modifications. Rina needs support and assistance when having a shower and this could not be done safely in the existing small and crowded bathroom. Rina needs a double-size walk-in shower, with no screen because she has previously broken the glass shower screen.

The NDIA refused the request for bathroom modifications. They said this was because (a) Rina does not have a behaviour support plan (BSP), even though Rina's previous NDIS plans had no funding for a behaviour support clinician to write a BSP, and (b) "insufficient evidence provided within the assessment." The evidence deemed insufficient included reports by two occupational therapists, a complex home modification assessment template and two builders' quotes. Rina's support coordinator arranged for a clinician to write a BSP while Rina's advocate used the NDIA's escalation pathway to expedite the matter. The NDIA agreed to conduct a fast-track internal review, which resulted in the approval of funding for the home modifications Rina needs.



Wayfinder Hub

The Wayfinder Hub project was established several years ago to provide people with disability, their families, and supporters easy access to information, advice and referrals to assist choice, link to appropriate supports and make informed decisions. The Wayfinder Hub information service has promoted the values of equality and respect with an understanding of disability and human rights.

People can access Wayfinder Hub online to link with information and services, to help with their choices and decision-making that directly affects them. Wayfinder Hub continues to receive contacts via phone, email and website-based assistance requests on any aspect of disability information.

Most of these contacts resulted in the provision of information or linkages with local services or other supports. A number of requests were directed to the PWDA individual advocacy teams across Queensland and NSW.

The Wayfinder Hub is an opportunity for PWDA to build on its advocacy intake service and promote capacity-building, self-advocacy and links within the community. Access to information is important for people with disability to make choices about our lives and get the support we need.

PWDA has continued to operate the Wayfinder Hub this year, despite the Information, Linkage and Capacity Building grant that funded it ending on 30 June 2020.

The **total contacts** for the period from July 2020 to June 2021 was **4003**, compared to last year's total of 3134.

This equates to a **27.7%** year-on-year **increase** in contacts to the service.



Individual advocacy – Projects and development

PWDA supports people with disability who advocate for their own interests or seek our support as advocates who can back their efforts to live life with autonomy. We have been involved with a number of individual advocacy projects over the past year, including housing advocacy efforts, the National Redress Scheme, Wayfinder and the NDIS appeals process.

Disability Housing Advocacy Service and Information Line NSW

These twin Disability Housing projects aim to assist people with disability living in group homes in NSW, including Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) housing, with their tenancy problems or concerns. This includes, through the Disability Housing Advocacy Service (DHAS), helping residents mediate disputes with their accommodation providers and negotiating tenancy outcomes between residents, their accommodation providers, and other key stakeholders. The Disability Housing Information Line (DHIL) provides information and advice

to people living in these accommodation settings, their supporters, and housing providers. Our project area covers Sydney as well as regional areas of NSW.

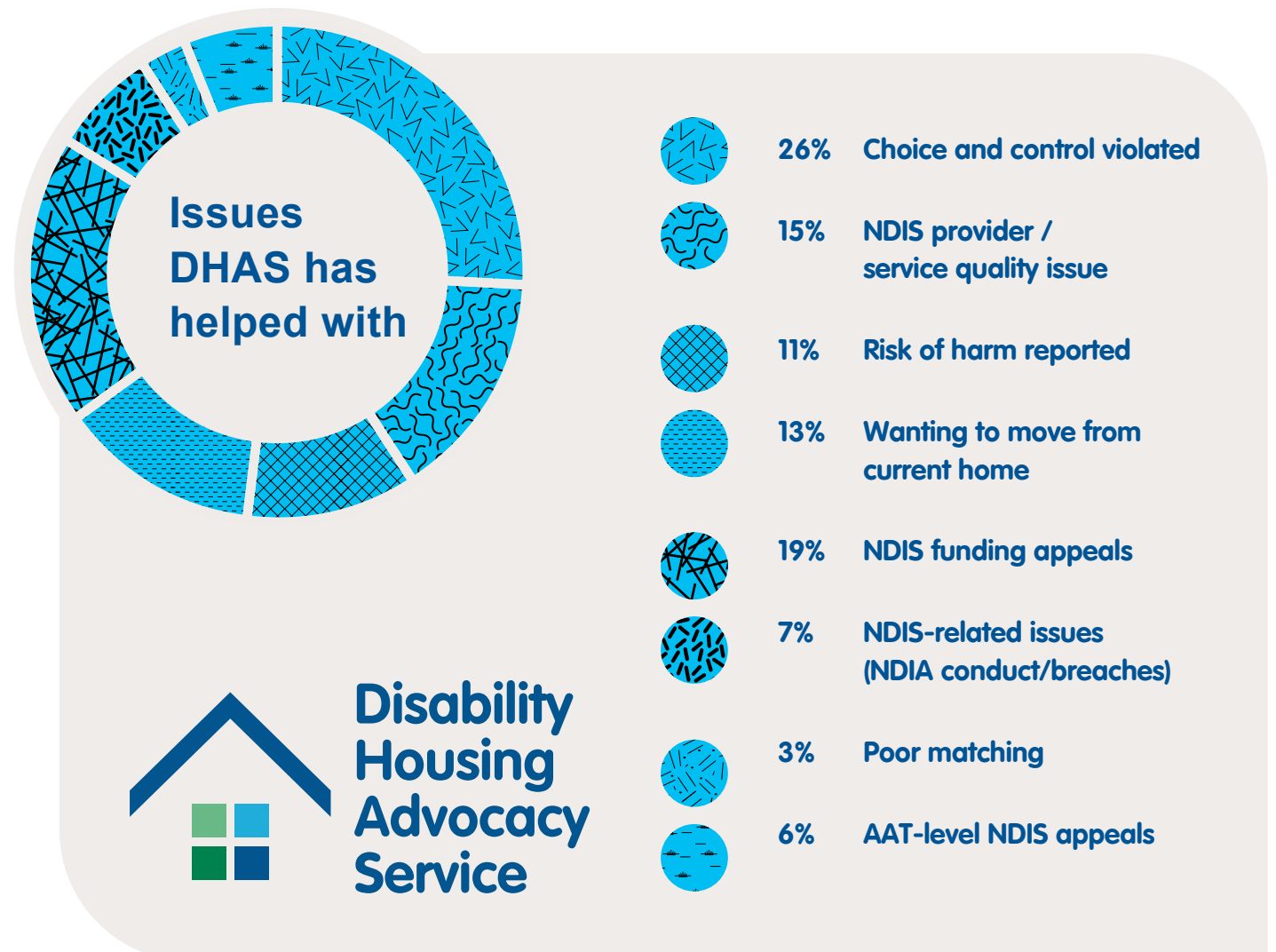
At the start of these projects, we faced some challenges in connecting with the people who needed our help. The lower number of advocacy requests at initiation was later increased through linkage development and promotion of intake and advocacy services among residents by the project staff. Our success is demonstrated well in 87 referrals received at the information line, and 96 clients being assisted either through information or advocacy, 38 clients being provided advocacy assistance, and the team successfully addressing over 90 client issues, despite COVID 19 restrictions.

Our clients have told us that they have lost services due to the lack of support available to resolve issues with service providers. Two systemic issues we have observed are delays in service coordination and the need for separation of services, which were resulting in inaction (not finding alternative accommodation) and poor outcomes for clients (eviction). We have raised the issue

of conflict of interest, where one service provider runs accommodation and multiple other services in several stakeholder forums.

We are working with key stakeholders in addressing systemic issues as a regular occurrence. We built key contacts with allied health, SDAs, and support coordination service providers that assist advocates to address areas outside the role of advocacy but are necessary to resolve the issue of their clients. Not having direct access to residents to promote or provide services and to receive requests directly from the residents is a key challenge. This has been exacerbated by current COVID-19 health regulations.

To reach out to residents, we have created a webinar program on rights education and established peer support groups. A former client living in an SDA has joined our team to co-facilitate webinars and peer support groups, which is a remarkable achievement.



Case study H – Better off without them

Lee lived in an independent SDA unit, accessing shared SIL supports. Lee's SIL provider had reported a range of issues associated with his so-called 'challenging behaviour.' It withdrew support, giving Lee only 24 hours' notice.

The SDA provider called for a meeting with Lee to discuss his eviction through a New South Wales Civil and Administrative Tribunal process. One of our advocates supported Lee to prepare for and represent himself in the meeting with the SDA provider. By the time the meeting rolled around, Lee had stopped all 'challenging behaviours,' and so the SDA provider decided that it would be inappropriate to evict him from the accommodation.

It turned out that Lee had been abused on various occasions by the SIL provider. When it withdrew support, the action had a majorly positive impact on Lee's life. We helped Lee with an NDIS planning meeting and understanding the Disability Royal Commission. He has continued to self-advocate and kept in touch with his PWDA advocate, reaching out to access support when an additional issue arose. Lee is now helping us in turn with the webinars and upcoming peer support groups that we are running. He is an excellent self-advocate and has appreciated PWDA's support through the Disability Housing projects. Lee enjoys educating other people with disability in shared accommodation settings about their rights.



National Redress Scheme

The National Redress Scheme was set up to acknowledge and recognise the sexual abuse many people, including people with disability, experienced as children in institutions. It was set up by the Australian Government in response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The National Redress Scheme is one way for people to get recognition for the harms they experienced.

PWDA provides confidential and free support across Australia to survivors of institutional child sexual abuse with disability, who are considering applying for redress. This year individual advocates provided direct information and support to people with disability interested in seeking redress located in NSW and Queensland, and provided information and referrals to people in other areas of Australia.

Our organisation shared accessible information for people with disability about the National Redress Scheme, including brochures in Easy Read format about the scheme and the support PWDA can provide. PWDA continues to give advice to the Australian Government about making information about the scheme accessible.

PWDA also works with other Redress support services to build capacity in working with people with disability. The federal Department of Social Services has approved and shared a video that we produced to these services. The aim of the video was to raise awareness about some of the additional barriers people

with disability face in accessing the scheme, and to provide some practical suggestions about ways of working with people with disability.

PWDA continues to give feedback to the Australian Government about systemic issues in accessing the scheme and structural changes to improve experiences and outcomes for people with disability engaging with the scheme. The Redress scheme marked its second anniversary this year but multiple barriers still exist that must be addressed to enable people with disability to seek redress. PWDA continued its work this year to develop our systemic responses to strengthen access to the Redress scheme for people with disability.

In the past year we have placed an emphasis on sharing information about the scheme to many different organisations across NSW and Queensland, as there is very little awareness that the scheme exists in many areas. Our Redress team and advocates have travelled to remote and regional areas when possible, and when travel was restricted have utilised technology to continue to make connections.

The organisation continues to work to promote awareness of the National Redress Scheme within the wider disability community, to create safe referral pathways, and advocate for safer ways for people with disability to access information and support to participate in the Redress process.

Case study I – Absconding is normal

A month into the commencement of Engage-in, we received a call from Charlie, who's been trying everything to get his sister out of Cumberland Psychiatric Institution. Charlie said, "Veronica needs to be in the community, not locked away and heavily medicated, just because she wants to live her life. She's got the NDIS, she can get housing support. There's no reason to keep her there any longer."

In Veronica's case, prolonged institutionalisation is making her increasingly unwell and unsafe. We've worked closely with Veronica and her family, her support coordinator, her guardian, accommodation providers, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, and clinicians at the Cumberland institution to clearly establish that the longer she remains institutionalised, the more she will continue to lose skills and hope. Veronica has all the supports needed to live a normal life, to sing, to be creative and make friends in the community. Furthermore, absconding is actually an indication that Veronica has the presence of mind to not tolerate further confinement which, under article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, is her fundamental right. With the sustained Engage-In campaign, Charlie is hopeful that Veronica's discharge will be imminent.

Pictured below, Leonie Hazelton and Jessica Saville take a work-break outside the Parramatta Female Factory (est 1818), which is the earliest iteration of the sprawling Cumberland Mental Health Precinct.

Talk Up

This year, we began an exciting partnership with First Peoples Disability Network Australia and the Australian Centre for Disability Law.

The Talk Up project provides a safe space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability to lead their own conversation about legal rights and problems that might be affecting them and their communities.

Together, we will create educational resources that empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability to know and use their legal rights in everyday life.



Our advisory committee of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders and community leaders with disability or awareness of disability held their first meeting in June 2021. This committee will guide all aspects of the project, by providing advice and feedback on project activities and resources. It will help us identify the important legal issues for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability.





Engage-In

Engage-in is an innovative PWDA project funded by the federal Department of Social Services which aims to help people with psychosocial disability to get out of institutions, through a combination of advocacy and strengths-based community supports.

Based on the evidence of the effectiveness of peer work in design and delivery, we work with consumers/survivors on ways to break through institutional barriers.

The work we do will inform an action research project, being developed in partnership with University of Sydney and co-designed with survivors.

A model of best practice will be formulated, which in turn will be rolled out as a training program to PWDA board, staff and volunteers.



Case study J – Staying out of trouble

Nev is a proud Eora man who has done a bit of time – by his own estimate, quite a bit, “if you add up all the little bits throughout my life.”

Nev was referred to Engage-In by the Red Cross Prisoner Release Program, to facilitate community supports and “to keep me out of trouble, and find something to do with my life.”

The immediate challenge has been to secure stable housing and link Nev to services, including the NDIS. While these actions are underway, we’re also meeting every week to help Nev take charge of his health and support him in planning his next adventure.

Nev is a talented artist and, prior to incarceration, was about to hit the big time. Nev was excited about the idea of connecting with Boomali Gallery and Art Cooperative.

Nev loves his community, and, though new Redfern has some shiny lofty apartments, old Redfern is ever-present. Nev, **pictured at left**, stands proudly beside a mural of his dad and the famous Redfern All Blacks.

Representation and systemic advocacy



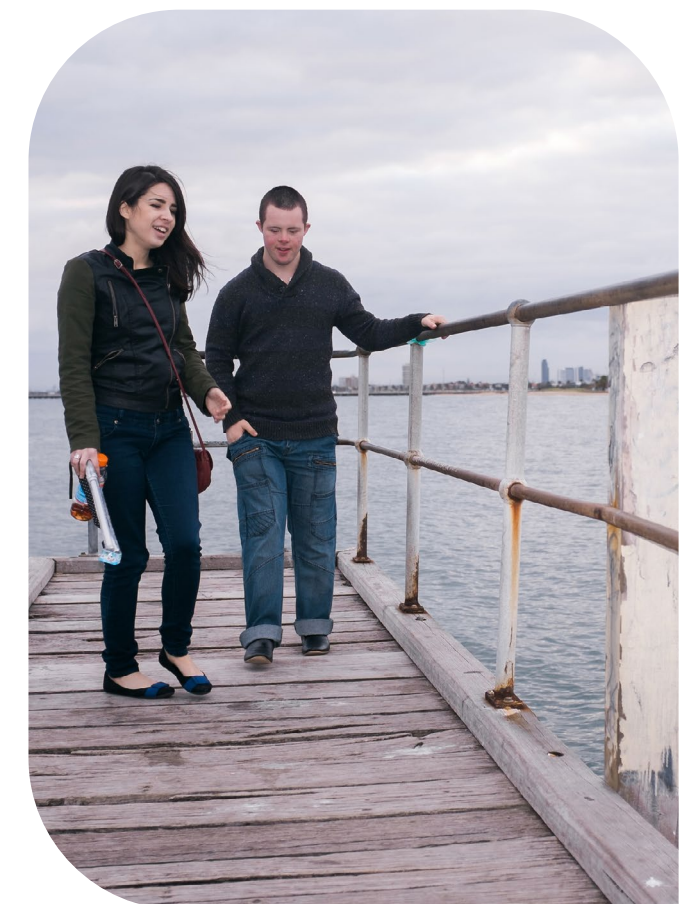
This year our systemic advocacy and policy efforts focused on the COVID-19 response, the National Disability Insurance Scheme, the National Disability Strategy and the Disability Royal Commission. We were also involved in systemic advocacy in a number of states, including New South Wales and Queensland, where we receive state government support for our efforts.

Responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and the emergence of vaccines we should be able to access formed a major part of our work this year. We gave evidence to the Select Committee on COVID-19 based on our submission to the inquiry on our People with Disability and COVID-19 report and undertook significant media engagement as part of our campaign for Australia's governments to effectively include people with disability in their COVID-19 responses and vaccine rollouts.

We successfully campaigned against independent assessments for the NDIS, conducting two member surveys and sharing members' views with the Australian Government, the National Disability Insurance Agency, Federal Parliament and its Joint Standing Committee on the NDIS, and Australia's disability ministers. We're pleased the government has chosen not to proceed with the plan it designed without people with disability. We continue to advocate for an NDIS that supports our needs and desires – an NDIS that keeps the government's promises and enables choice and control.

Our systemic advocates also made submissions to the Disability Royal Commission on emergency planning and response, quality and safeguards, and inclusion. They also started work on other submissions, including restrictive practices and taking into account the experiences of people with disability from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Under the umbrella of the Disabled People's Organisations Australia, we made a submission to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission's independent inquiry into the death of Ann Marie Smith in South Australia this year. We note investigations continue into matters surrounding Ms Smith's death and expect the story of what happened to her will continue to emerge over the coming years.



Systemic advocacy projects



DPO Australia

Disabled People's Organisations Australia is an alliance of four national cross-disability and population-specific organisations, PWDA, First People's Disability Network (FPDN), National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA) and Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA).

As an organisation, DPOA promotes better treatment for people with disability, making public statements on important issues and promoting better understanding of disability issues on social networks.

DPOA's public statements included campaigns to #MakeItSafeToSpeak to the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with

Disability and to #EndSegregation of people with disability in Australia, including in our workplaces and living environments. We put out nine joint media releases as DPOA on a variety of topics. These topics included our campaigns and take on a premises standards review and the National Awards for Disability Leadership.

PWDA continued to represent people with disability on behalf of DPO Australia, taking part in the following government reference and advisory groups:

- Commonwealth Department of Social Services (DSS) Disability Employment Services (DES) DES Reference Group
- National Disability Strategy (NDS) Reform Steering Group
- Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications' (DITRDC) National Accessible Public Transport Advisory Committee (NAPTAC) and Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport (DSAPT) Modernisation Committee (DCM) and associated sub-committee.

Building Access

In the past year, our Building Access project continued its work to increase access and inclusion in the sexual, domestic, and family violence (SDFV) sector in NSW. Some of these activities included comprehensive reviews of five SDFV services, providing a range of recommendations for each service, delivering Disability Awareness and NDIS training to four services and hosting four community of practice and Building Access Expert Advisory Group meetings.

We partnered with Domestic Violence NSW to create a new toolkit for SDFV services wanting to improve their accessibility and inclusion for people with disability. We also began the process of developing Easy Read resources and a promotional video about the importance of accessibility and inclusion in the SDFV sector.

We presented, consulted and advised broadly, including on Change the Story, the National Community Attitudes on Violence Against Women Survey, Women's Safety NSW, the Stop Domestic Violence conference, the NSW Collaboration on Primary Prevention and the AWARE ARC project.

As this was to be the final year of the Building Access project, we also undertook an evaluation which showed that the project had delivered excellent outcomes in the NSW SDFV sector. Our funding has now been extended for another nine months, which we're thrilled about as it gives us the opportunity to further our work in the NSW SDFV sector.

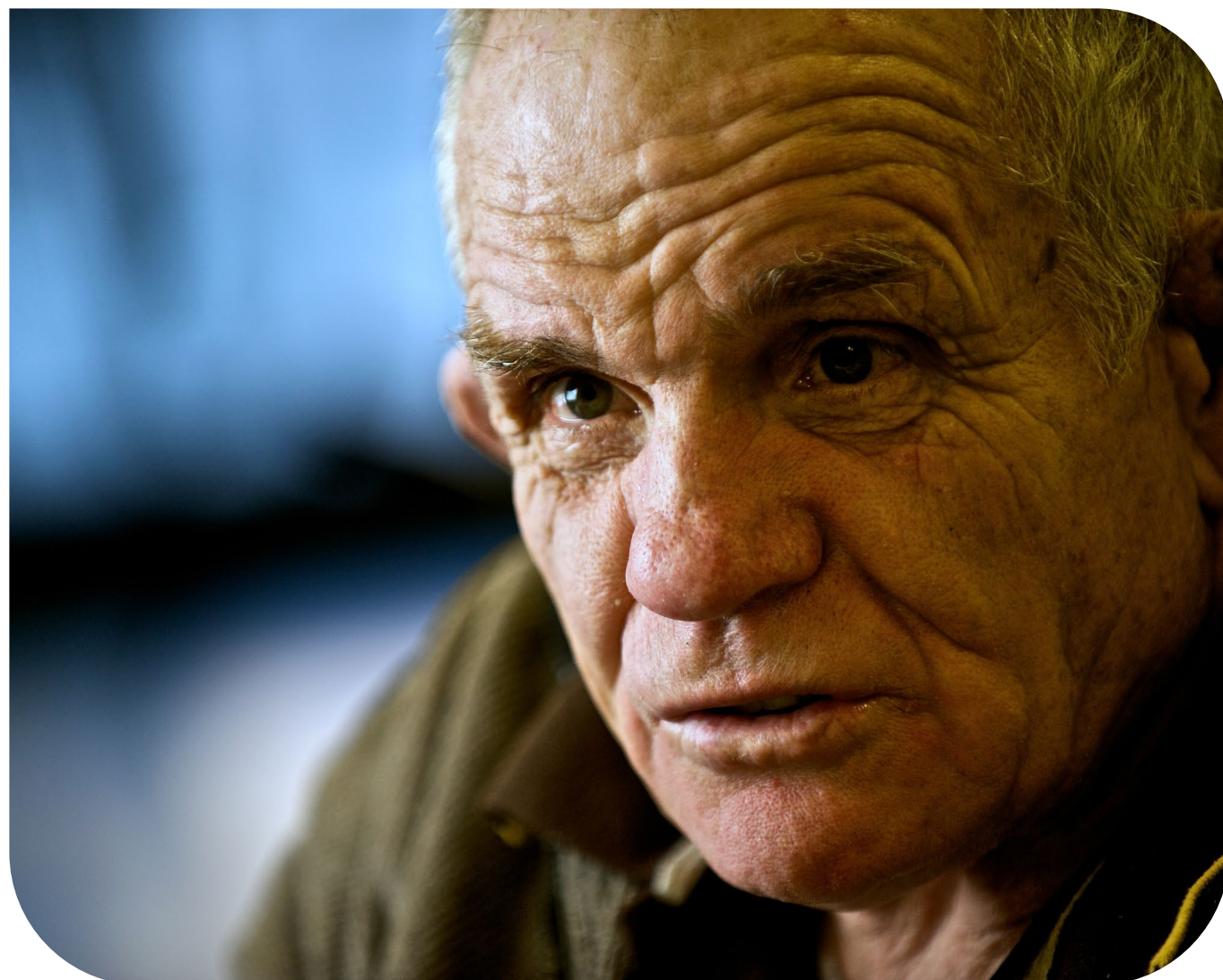
Disability Royal Commission

It has been a year of contrasts for the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

After a protracted campaign, to which PWDA made significant contributions, the Disability Royal Commission was extended and its final report is now due on 29 September 2023.

More time is needed for a variety of reasons, among them the postponement of multiple hearings for public safety reasons during the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak. Delays in the introduction of legislation to protect the long-term confidentiality of submissions have also continued to discourage people with disability from participating. The pandemic has also slowed down the commission's contact processes. People with disability are expected to wait many weeks before even receiving an acknowledgement of communication.





Despite these setbacks, throughout 2020–21, PWDA stuck by a commitment to make sure this royal commission works for people with disability. We are funded to undertake individual advocacy helping people engage with the royal commission in NSW and Queensland, and to undertake national systemic advocacy.

PWDA individual advocates helped 42 people with disability tell the Disability Royal Commission about their experiences through submissions and private sessions this year. We also engaged in significant outreach work, including to under-represented communities and to remote and regional Queensland. We found out about significant barriers to participation. Community leaders of multicultural groups told us that many members of their community feel very afraid

of stepping forward and speaking up. The public issues surrounding the privacy of DRC submissions further reduces their trust of the royal commission, which has advised people not to name and shame people and small organisations if they are concerned about being targeted with a defamation lawsuit. Some clients have been vocal about the protection that this provides to abusers.

General awareness of the Disability Royal Commission within the disability community appears limited even in urban areas, and is almost non-existent in regional, rural, and remote areas. Many remote communities report a feeling of ‘commission fatigue.’ So much has been done to investigate the systemic issues in their communities, but nothing has changed for them.

Our systemic advocacy team made submissions on four topics to the DRC and worked on many more that will be published in the next financial year. To advocate as effectively as possible, we coordinate and liaise with other disability advocacy organisations. We helped run a public campaign telling the government to prioritise introducing confidentiality legislation, including an open letter to the Commonwealth Attorney General which was endorsed by more than 200 organisations and members of the community. We also campaigned for the DRC’s extension.

We have continued to enhance public understanding of the Disability Royal Commission’s work. We live-tweeted the

public events that were able to go ahead throughout the 2020–21 year, helping many people follow along who might otherwise have found the long and bureaucratic hearings overwhelming and inaccessible. We also published a series of blog posts by people with disability about their experiences in different areas the royal commission is investigating.

Our DRC information and outreach work now has a dedicated website. OurRoyalCommission.com.au features explanations of where we stand on the issues each hearing examines, and our regularly updated jargon buster, which translates technical sector language into plain English, and more.



PWDA Key Submissions

July 2020: People with disability in the pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic brought a great deal of changes to everyone in Australia, and particularly to people with disability. PWDA asked our membership to tell us about their experiences in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. This report sets out the findings.

December 2020: #EndSegregation

The segregation of people with disability in a host of community settings – including health, housing, the workplace and formal education – is a driver of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability. We submitted a joint position paper opposing the segregation of people with disability in all settings, written under the DPOA umbrella.

February 2021: We have a right to choose homes without violence

People with disability experience a heightened risk of violence in the home. Our submission in response to the *Abuse of People with Disability at Home Issues Paper* recommends legislative reforms to state and territory family and domestic violence Acts to include paid and unpaid support workers and co-residents as potential perpetrators of domestic violence. People with disability also need more accessible crisis support and access to justice around domestic violence.

February 2021: People with disability need effective safeguards

Our response to the *Safeguards and Quality Issues Paper* outlined a number of safeguards people with disability need. These included personal capacity building measures to help us maintain personal safety in our communities, preventative measures like laws that uphold our rights, official visitor programs and affordable access to police checks, effective complaints mechanisms and a national independent statutory body in charge of all disability oversight and safeguarding commissions, tribunals and similar groups in Australia.

Case study K

Geoffrey has intellectual disability and a mental health condition. A PWDA advocate helped him tell the Disability Royal Commission about the lack of support he received to navigate the criminal justice and legal system. The advocate helped him apply for a private session, understand royal commission processes, and structure his story for the private session. The advocate also attended the private session with Geoffrey via video link to provide support.

Geoffrey said he felt relieved and happy that someone in authority had finally listened to him. The advocate followed up by referring Geoffrey to community legal assistance and other disability support services, as well as helping him put together documentation for his NDIS application and supporting him in an upcoming tribunal hearing. The advocate also encouraged him to ask his general practitioner for a mental health plan so he can talk to a psychologist. Geoffrey is now studying business at TAFE, because he wants more people with disability working in the criminal justice system.



International work

PWDA continues to represent people with disability at regional and international levels through our engagement with the United Nations and networks with our sister disabled people's organisations which are also known as organisations of people with disability.

Our aim in this international work is to act on PWDA's core values, including:

- advocacy on the rights of people with disability
- individual capacity building and empowerment
- effective representation, organisational capacity building and sector development.

We do this work by participating in United Nations, government and community consultations and at conferences. We also host public events, speak at seminars, make submissions on topics of key concern, and support people with disability to be heard and build leadership and representational skills. This year, much of this work has been conducted virtually, which presents unique challenges.

Our international advocacy and representation role is undertaken either in our own right or through DPO Australia.



Research

PWDA has been actively involved in a range of research activities that align with our inclusive research protocols over the past year. We support inclusive research that is led and driven by people with disability.

We ensure that the voice of people with disability is heard in research and that our voice helps drive research that benefits our daily lives.

PWDA provides expert advice to universities and other agencies on the experiences of people with disability.

We make sure that the social model of disability is part of any research project that we support. We also endorse the human rights model of disability and make sure researchers understand and include the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and respect the human rights of people with disability in their research.

We have been involved in the following projects over the past 12 months:

- A range of fee-for-service consultations to a variety of external stakeholders, providing expert advice on the social and human rights models of disability.
- As an expert advisor on the Centre for Excellence in Disability Health Advisory Panel. We met with panel members four times to discuss ongoing research projects related to the health of people with disability.

- An article in the long-running international journal of Social Policy & Administration with the University of New South Wales (UNSW) Social Policy Research Centre about the digital economy and work for people with disability.
- The work of the University of Melbourne Social Equity Institute and its co-research model. We provide expert consultation to the institute on a fee-for-service basis for projects related to people with disability. Our support continues but has not been required since lockdown.
- A small co-designed research project with the UNSW Social Policy Research Centre on the experiences of NDIS participants and self-management. We completed this project during the 2020 lockdown. We subsequently co-authored a journal article published by the Social Policy Research Centre at UNSW on the experiences of people who self-manage.
- The expert advisory panel for a University of Sydney research project on disability-specific, person-centred disaster risk management.
- Two projects with Our Watch to help develop packages to support the safety of women with disability who experience family and domestic violence. This is ongoing work.

Training

PWDA continued to deliver high-quality training to people with disability, service providers, family members and members of the community this year. PWDA provided training to people with two different training packages across New South Wales, in metropolitan and regional areas.

PWDA's training is provided on a fee-for-service basis, or within our funded projects. This year we trained 140 people across a range of different areas:

Disability awareness

This training looks at how people can work with people with disability. The training gives tools and strategies on how to communicate with people with disability, facts and statistics around disability including disability discrimination law and the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disability, how the disability movement has evolved over the years, appropriate and respectful language, and highlights the different barriers that people with disability may face when accessing services or accessing life in general. This one-day

course is appropriate for anyone working with people with disability, is interactive, and involves group discussions to support with accessibility and inclusion. This course is also offered in a half-day session.

NDIS and advocacy

This training course aims to prepare people to understand the process of applying for the NDIS, and to be able to advocate for people with disability throughout the process, or to teach people with disability the skills and tools needed for them to be able to self-advocate through the process. This is important as it can help people with disability to go through the NDIS process without the need to adjust their current NDIS plans or to appeal decisions that have been made about their eligibility for NDIS or because of the inadequacies of their current NDIS plan to address their specific needs.

Facilitating access for clients with disability

This training course is an advanced course from the Disability Awareness training and looks at putting practical skills around disability. PWDA partners with Guide Dogs NSW/ACT and the Deaf Society to provide three-hour interactive training sessions, covering all disability types but focusing more on people who are deaf, blind, have a mobility impairment and/or intellectual disability.

NDIS reviews, appeals and self-advocacy

This is a free information and education session provided to people with disability. It outlines what a person with disability can do if their eligibility hasn't been met, or they have not received an adequate plan to meet the needs and requirements of their disability. The session helps a person with a disability or their support person to understand how they can review a decision, and/or appeal a decision. The course aims to build the skills of people with disability in being able to self-advocate through the process.

PWDA's training efforts turned to online platforms this year, as we:

- partnered with Domestic Violence NSW (DVNSW) and the Education Centre Against Violence (ECAV) on training programs to be developed and facilitated over the 2021–22 financial year
- continued a successful working partnership with the Australian Centre for Disability Law (ACDL) when delivering Disability Awareness Training, with ACDL presenting an information session around disability discrimination law and other general disability law
- worked at putting all training packages online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so in future PWDA training can be accessed online and face-to-face
- facilitated training department efforts to produce a Disability Awareness video for the Department of Land and Housing New South Wales.



Communications

PWDA's website continued to be a useful resource for members, the media and the disability community this year as people increasingly went online during another year of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The PWDA homepage links to useful content, driven by our member needs and our current engagement priorities.

PWDA posts daily on Facebook. We share a curated selection of news, keep people up to date on key developments in disability policy and highlight our work in the media. We also share and promote PWDA web content and services. This year we campaigned with the disability sector on Facebook and other platforms on a variety of topics, including a successful campaign to end independent assessments for the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Our posts have a consistent and strong engagement level and are widely shared and commented on by people with disability. This year, we increased our Facebook followers by more than 1360 users, with consistent and strong engagement with our posts, including comments and shares.

This year on the website...

Our visitors increased by **71,675**
or **48.33%** to **219,984**

New users increased by **75,188**
or **52.26%** to **219,062**

Page views increased by **4,515**
or **26.51%** to **450,999**

We often had **700 users** a
day, with visits reaching a record
2547 a day on February 15

87.5% of these visitors were
new users, while **12.5%**
were **returning visitors**



PWDA and its staff post daily on Twitter, including live-tweeting events such as public hearings of the Disability Royal Commission. We take part in hashtag campaigns related to people with disability, like #EndSegregation, and post information of interest to people with disability, as well as retweeting other disability organisations to share relevant information. We built our number of Twitter followers by 512 this year.

We also continued to use our Instagram account to reach younger people with disability, adding 545 followers.

Our email newsletter **PWDA News** is published each fortnight to showcase what is happening across our organisation and

share information of interest to our members and supporters. We also send out a **Daily Media Round-Up** with a summary of disability-related news each weekday.

PWDA has a strong media presence, as the national peak cross-disability rights organisation. We have been in the media with our advocacy efforts on the importance of access to vaccines for people with disability, the Disability Royal Commission, housing, the NDIS, and transport, parking, accommodation and recreation accessibility.

The comms team also produced a range of publications for our programs and projects that highlight and promote the wide range of work that we do.



Financial report 30 June 2021

People with Disability Australia Ltd.
ABN 98 879 981 198



Directors' report

People With Disability Australia Ltd is registered as a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital under the provisions of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*.

The Directors present the report on People With Disability Australia Ltd for the financial year ended 30 June 2021 and report as follows:

Directors

The names of and other information on the Directors in office during or since the end of the year are as follows. The Directors were in office for this entire period unless otherwise stated.

Current directors		
Name	Position	Date appointed
Samantha Connor	President	20 November 2019
Kelly Cox	Vice President	20 November 2019
Suresh Rajan	Treasurer	11 November 2020
Nicole Lee	Secretary	11 November 2020
Andrew Fairbairn	Board Director	11 November 2020
Marayke Jonkers	Board Director	11 November 2020
Craig Andrews	Board Director	30 November 2020

Principal activities

People with Disability Australia (PWDA):

- is a national disability rights and advocacy organisation;
- is made up of people with disability and organisations primarily constituted by people with disability;
- has a cross-disability focus; and
- is a non-profit, non-government organisation.

The principal activities of PWDA were to represent, support, educate and advocate for people with disability and undertake necessary activities and programs to achieve the organisation's objectives. There were no significant changes in the nature of the activities during the year.

Operating result

The operating result of the company for the financial year was a surplus of \$445,373 (2020: surplus \$384,542).

Objectives of the company

PWDA's objectives are:

- Empower people with disability as individuals, as specific population groups, and as a sector;
- Advocate for the human rights of people with disability at the individual, specific population group, and sector levels;
- Effective representation of people with disability as a sector to the government and to the community generally; as well as focus on sector development; and
- Build our organisational capacity to empower, advocate for, and represent people with disability.

Auditor's independence declaration

The auditors' independence declaration for the year ended 30 June 2021 has been received and can be found on the following page.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors:



Samantha Connor
President



Suresh Rajan
Treasurer

28 October 2021

Auditor's Independence Declaration to the members of People With Disability Australia Ltd

In accordance with the requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, as lead auditor for the audit of People With Disability Australia Ltd, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, during the year ended 30 June 2021 there has been:

- a. no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements as set out in the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* in relation to the audit; and
- b. no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.



StewartBrown

Chartered Accountants



S.J. Hutcheon

Partner

28 October 2021

Statement of financial position

Assets

	Note	2021 \$	2020 \$
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	6	3,307,637	1,972,153
Trade and other receivables	7	222,463	468,778
Total current assets		<u>3,530,100</u>	<u>2,440,931</u>
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	8	414,493	515,584
Right-of-use assets	9	1,410,420	1,918,383
Total non-current assets		<u>1,824,913</u>	<u>2,433,967</u>
Total assets		<u>5,355,013</u>	<u>4,874,898</u>
Liabilities			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	10	1,715,534	1,169,422
Provisions	11	673,701	785,368
Lease liabilities	12	527,113	518,920
Total current liabilities		<u>2,916,348</u>	<u>2,473,710</u>
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions	11	244,217	125,000
Lease liabilities	12	979,007	1,506,120
Total non-current liabilities		<u>1,223,224</u>	<u>1,631,120</u>
Total liabilities		<u>4,139,572</u>	<u>4,104,830</u>
Net assets		<u>1,215,441</u>	<u>770,068</u>
FUNDS			
Accumulated funds		<u>1,215,441</u>	<u>770,068</u>
Total funds		<u>1,215,441</u>	<u>770,068</u>

Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income

	Note	2021 \$	2020 \$
Revenue	4	7,708,249	7,963,178
Other income	4	5,438	21,144
		<u>7,713,687</u>	<u>7,984,322</u>
Expenses			
Computer and website costs		(201,947)	(152,784)
Consulting and professional charges		(543,784)	(546,914)
Depreciation expense	5	(658,516)	(651,380)
Electricity		(15,410)	(24,355)
Employee benefits expense		(5,379,216)	(5,430,670)
Meeting expenses		(71,672)	(54,732)
Motor vehicle expense		(34,032)	(45,814)
Program costs		(33,905)	(46,331)
Rental and operating lease expenses		(53,891)	(79,516)
Repairs and maintenance costs		(25,416)	(29,272)
Telephone and internet		(59,559)	(129,709)
Travel and accommodation		(69,587)	(242,104)
Other expenses		(121,379)	(166,199)
		<u>(7,268,314)</u>	<u>(7,599,780)</u>
Surplus before income tax		445,373	384,542
Income tax expense		-	-
Surplus for the year		<u>445,373</u>	<u>384,542</u>
Other comprehensive income		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total comprehensive income for the year		<u>445,373</u>	<u>384,542</u>

Statement of changes in funds

	Accumulated Funds \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2019	385,526	385,526
Comprehensive income		
Surplus for the year	384,542	384,542
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	384,542	384,542
Balance at 30 June 2020	770,068	770,068
Balance at 1 July 2020	770,068	770,068
Comprehensive income		
Surplus for the year	445,373	445,373
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	445,373	445,373
Balance at 30 June 2021	1,215,441	1,215,441

Statement of cash flows

	Note	2021 \$	2020 \$
Cash flows from operating activities			
Receipts from grants and customers		9,152,330	7,359,476
Payments to suppliers and employees		(7,253,902)	(7,350,993)
Interest received		5,243	21,144
Net cash flows from operating activities		1,903,671	29,627
Cash flows from investing activities			
Proceeds from sale of property, plant and equipment		1,818	-
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(51,085)	(192,523)
Net cash flows from investing activities		(49,267)	(192,523)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Repayment of lease liabilities		(518,920)	(401,306)
Net cash flows from financing activities		(518,920)	(401,306)
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		1,335,484	(564,202)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		1,972,153	2,536,355
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	6	3,307,637	1,972,153

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2020

Note 1 - Reporting entity

The financial report is for People With Disability Australia Ltd as an individual entity. People With Disability Australia Ltd is registered as a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital under the provisions of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 28 October 2021.

Note 2 - Basis of preparation

Statement of compliance

People With Disability Australia Ltd has adopted Australian Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements as set out in *AASB 1053 Application of Tiers of Australian Accounting Standards* and *AASB 2010-2: Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards arising from Reduced Disclosure Requirements*.

These financial statements are general purpose financial statements that have been prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*. The company is a not-for-profit entity for financial reporting purposes under Australian Accounting Standards.

Australian Accounting Standards set out accounting policies that the AASB has concluded would result in financial statements containing relevant and reliable information about transactions, events and conditions.

Basis of measurement

The financial statements, except for the cash flow information, have been prepared on an accruals basis and are based on historical costs, modified, where applicable, by the measurement at fair value of selected non-current assets, financial assets and financial liabilities.

Comparatives

Where required by Accounting Standards comparative figures have been adjusted to conform to changes in presentation for the current financial year. Where the company has retrospectively applied an accounting policy, made a retrospective restatement or reclassified items in its financial statements, an additional statement of financial position as at the beginning of the earliest comparative period will be disclosed.

Critical accounting estimates and judgements

The Directors evaluate estimates and judgements incorporated into the financial statements based on historical knowledge and best available current information. Estimates assume a reasonable expectation of future events and are based on current trends and economic data, obtained both externally and within the company.

Key estimates

Impairment

The Directors assess impairment at the end of each reporting period by evaluation of conditions and events specific to the company that may be indicative of impairment triggers. Recoverable amounts of relevant assets are reassessed using value-in-use calculations which incorporate various key assumptions.

Long service leave provision

The liability for long service leave is recognised and measured at the present value of the estimated future cash flows to be made in respect of all employees at the reporting date. In determining the present value of the liability, estimates of rates and pay increases through promotion and inflation have been taken into account.

Note 2 - Basis of preparation (continued)

New and revised standards that are effective for these financial statements

Several amendments to Australian Accounting Standards and interpretations are mandatory for the 30 June 2021 reporting period. These include:

- *AASB 2018-6: Definition of a Business* (amendments to *AASB 3*)
- *AASB 2018-7: Definition of Material* (amendments to *AASB 101* and *AASB 108*)
- *AASB 2019-1: References to the Conceptual Framework* (revises the Conceptual Framework for Financial Reporting)
- *AASB 2020-4: Amendments to AASs - Covid-19-Related Rent Concessions* (amendments to *AASB 16*)

The amendments listed above did not have any impact on the amounts recognised in the current or prior periods but may affect future periods.

New standards and interpretations not yet adopted

Certain new accounting standards, amendments and interpretations have been published that are not mandatory for 30 June 2021 reporting periods and have not been early adopted by the company. These include:

- *AASB 1060: General Purpose Financial Statements - Simplified Disclosures for For-Profit and Not-for-Profit Tier 2 Entities* (effective for the year ending 30 June 2022)
- *AASB 2020-1: Amendments to AASs - Classification of Liabilities as Current or Non-current* (effective for the year ending 30 June 2024)

It is not expected that *AASB 2020-1* will have a material impact on the company in future reporting periods. *AASB 1060* may have a material impact on the company in future reporting periods and on foreseeable future transactions and disclosures since *AASB 1060* acts to mandate that the company prepare a general purpose financial report under a new Simplified Disclosure Standard in future reporting periods. The company has not yet assessed the specific financial reporting impacts of *AASB 1060*.

Note 3 - Significant accounting policies

The principal accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the financial report are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

Income Tax

People With Disability Australia Ltd is a not-for-profit Charity and is exempt from income tax under Division 50 of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*.

Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO is included with other receivables or payables in the statement of financial position. Cash flows are presented on a gross basis. The GST components of cash flows arising from investing or financing activities which are recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO are presented as operating cash flows included in receipts from customers or payments to suppliers.

Revenue recognition

Amounts disclosed as revenue are net of returns, trade allowances and duties and taxes including goods and services tax (GST). Revenue is recognised for the major business activities as follows:

Interest

Interest revenue is recognised as it accrues using the effective interest method.

Note 3 - Significant accounting policies (continued)

Revenue recognition (continued)

Grants, donations and bequests

Income arising from the contribution of an asset (including cash) is recognised when the following conditions have been satisfied:

- a. the company obtains control of the contribution or the right to receive the contribution;
- b. it is probable that the economic benefits comprising the contribution will flow to the company; and
- a. the amount of the contribution can be measured reliably at the fair value of the consideration received.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits held at call with financial institutions, other short-term, highly liquid investments with original maturities of twelve months or less that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and which are subject to insignificant risk of changes in value.

Trade receivables

Trade receivables are recognised initially at fair value and subsequently measured at amortised cost, less a provision for impairment. Collectability of trade receivables is reviewed on an ongoing basis. Debts which are known to be uncollectible are written off. A provision for impairment is established when there is objective evidence that the entity will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original terms of receivables.

Property, plant and equipment

Recognition and measurement

Each class of property, plant and equipment is carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation and impairment losses. Cost includes expenditure that is directly attributable to the acquisition of the items.

Gains and losses on disposals are determined by comparing proceeds with carrying amount. These are included in the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income.

Depreciation

The depreciable amount of all property, plant and equipment is depreciated on a straight-line basis over the asset’s useful life to the company commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use.

The depreciation rates used for each class of depreciable assets are:

Office equipment	20%
Motor Vehicles	20%
Leasehold improvements	Period of lease

The assets’ residual values and useful lives are reviewed, and adjusted if appropriate, at the end of each reporting period. An asset’s carrying amount is written down immediately to its recoverable amount if the asset’s carrying amount is greater than its estimated recoverable amount.

Note 3 - Significant accounting policies (continued)

Right-of-use assets

At inception, a right-of-use assets and a lease liability is recognised. Right-of-use assets are included in the *Statement of Financial Position* within a classification relevant to the underlying asset.

Right-of-use assets are initially measured at cost, comprising of the following:

- the amount of the initial measurement of the lease liability
- Any lease payments made at or before the commencement date, less any lease incentives received
- Any initial direct costs incurred
- An estimate of costs to be incurred in dismantling and removing the underlying asset, restoring the site on which it is located or restoring the underlying asset to the condition required by the terms and conditions of the lease, unless those costs are incurred either at the commencement date or as a consequence of having used the underlying asset during a particular period

Subsequently, right-of-use assets are measured using a cost model. The right-of-use asset is depreciated to the earlier of the useful life of the asset or the lease term using the straight-line method and is recognised in the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income in “Depreciation and amortisation”.

The company tests for impairment where there is an indication that a right-of-use asset may be impaired. An assessment of whether there is an indication of possible impairment is done at each reporting date. Where the carrying amount of a right of use asset is greater than the estimated recoverable amount, it is written down immediately to its recoverable amount. The resulting impairment loss is recognised immediately in surplus or deficit, except where the decrease reverses a previously recognised revaluation increase for the same asset.

The resulting decrease is recognised in other comprehensive income to that extent and reduces the amount accumulated in equity under revaluation surplus, and future depreciation charges are adjusted in future periods to allocate the revised carrying amount, less its residual value, on a systematic basis over its remaining useful life.

Leases

The company leases its premises on an arm’s length basis from a third-party lessor. A lease is a contract, or part of a contract, that conveys the right to use an asset for a period of time in exchange for consideration.

At inception of a contract, it is assessed to determine whether the contract is, or contains, a lease. A contract is, or contains, a lease if the contract conveys the right to control the use of an identified asset for a period of time in exchange for consideration. If the terms and conditions of a contract are changed, it is reassessed to once again determine if the contract is still, or now contains, a lease.

The term of a lease is determined as the non-cancellable period of the lease, together with the periods covered by an option to extend the lease where there is reasonable certainty that the option will be exercised, and periods covered by an option to terminate the lease if there is reasonable certainty that the option will not be exercised.

The assessment of the reasonable certainty of the exercising of options to extend the lease, or not exercising of options to terminate the lease, is reassessed upon the occurrence of either a significant event or a significant change in circumstances that is within the company’s control and it affects the reasonable certainty assumptions. The assessment of the lease term is revised if there is a change in the non-cancellable lease period.

The company does not recognise leases that have a lease term of 12 months or less or are of low value as a right-of-use asset or lease liability. The lease payments associated with these leases are recognised as an expense in the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

Note 3 - Significant accounting policies (continued)

Lease liability

At the commencement date of the lease, the lease liability is initially recognised for the present value of non-cancellable lease payments discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease or, if that rate cannot be readily determined, the company's incremental borrowing rate.

The tenor of a lease includes any renewal period where the lessee is reasonably certain that they will exercise the option to renew. The company has reviewed all its leases and included any extensions where the company assessed it is reasonably certain the lease agreement will be renewed.

The lease payment used in the calculation of the lease liabilities should include variable payments when they relate to an index or rate. Where leases contain variable lease payments based on an index or rate at a future point in time, the company has used the incremental uplift contained in the lease or the respective Reserve Bank forward-looking CPI target for CPI-related increases.

In the absence of any floor or cap clauses in the lease agreements, the company measures the rent for the year under market review at an amount equal to the rent of the year preceding the market review increased by a fixed rate.

The lease liability is initially measured at the present value of the lease payments that are not yet paid at the commencement date. Lease payments are discounted using the relevant company's incremental borrowing rate. The incremental borrowing rate used for this calculation is dictated by the tenor of the lease and the location of the asset. The incremental borrowing rate is the rate the company would be charged on borrowings, provided by our banking partners. The weighted average incremental borrowing rate is 0%. The following lease payments being fixed payments, less any lease incentives receivable are included where they are not paid at the commencement date.

Impairment of assets

Assets that have an indefinite useful life are not subject to amortisation and are tested annually for impairment. Assets that are subject to amortisation are reviewed for impairment whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying amount may not be recoverable. An impairment loss is recognised for the amount by which the asset's carrying amount exceeds its recoverable amount. The recoverable amount is the higher of an asset's fair value less costs to sell and value in use. For the purposes of assessing impairment, assets are compared at the lowest levels for which there are separately identifiable cash flows (cash generating units).

Trade and other payables

Trade and other payables represent the liability outstanding at the end of the reporting period for goods and services received by the company during the reporting period, which remain unpaid. The balance is recognised as a current liability with the amounts normally paid within 30 days of recognition of the liability. The carrying amount of trade and other payables is deemed to reflect fair value.

Income and grants received in advance

Income, including government funding income, that is received before the service to which the payment relates has been provided is recorded as a liability until such time as the service has been provided, at which time it is recognised in the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income.

Employee benefits

Provision is made for the company's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to the end of the reporting period. Employee benefits that are expected to be settled within one year have been measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled.

Note 4 - Revenue and other income

Revenue	2021 \$	2020 \$
Operating grants	6,573,536	7,014,985
Government support - COVID-19	861,083	793,094
Rental income	56,138	51,905
Training income	-	65,303
Travel reimbursement	12,015	27,165
Donations	139,774	10,726
Other income	65,703	-
	<u>7,708,249</u>	<u>7,963,178</u>
Other revenue		
Interest income	5,243	21,144
Gain on disposal of property, plant and equipment	195	-
	<u>5,438</u>	<u>21,144</u>
Total revenue and other income	<u>7,713,687</u>	<u>7,984,322</u>

[Return to Statement of profit or loss](#)

Note 5 - Expenses

Depreciation and amortisation		
Leasehold improvements	108,096	105,627
Office equipment	29,596	25,910
Motor vehicles	12,861	11,880
Right-of-use assets	507,963	507,963
Total depreciation expense	<u>658,516</u>	<u>651,380</u>

[Return to Statement of profit or loss](#)

Note 6 - Cash and cash equivalents

Cash at bank and on hand	1,909,106	1,325,439
Term deposits	1,398,531	646,714
Total cash and cash equivalents	<u>3,307,637</u>	<u>1,972,153</u>

[Return to Statement of financial position](#)

[Return to Statement of cash flows](#)

Note 7 - Trade and other receivables

Current		
Trade receivables	105,471	21,963
Other receivables	7,189	393,496
Prepayments	109,803	53,319
Total current trade and other receivables	<u>222,463</u>	<u>468,778</u>

[Return to Statement of financial position](#)

Note 8 - Property, plant and equipment

	Leasehold Improvements \$	Office Equipment \$	Motor Vehicles \$	Total \$
At 30 June 2020				
Cost	520,212	253,858	143,330	917,400
Accumulated depreciation	(105,627)	(200,810)	(95,379)	(401,816)
Net carrying amount	414,585	53,048	47,951	515,584

Movements in carrying amounts

Opening net carrying amount	414,585	53,048	47,951	515,584
Additions	-	29,297	21,788	51,085
Disposals	-	-	(1,623)	(1,623)
Depreciation charge for the year	(108,096)	(29,596)	(12,861)	(150,553)
Closing net carrying amount	306,489	52,749	55,255	414,493

At 30 June 2021

Cost	520,212	283,156	148,890	952,258
Accumulated depreciation	(213,723)	(230,407)	(93,635)	(537,765)
Net carrying amount	306,489	52,749	55,255	414,493

[Return to Statement of financial position](#)

Note 9 - Right-of-use assets

	2021 \$	2020 \$
Leases - at cost	2,426,346	2,426,346
Accumulated depreciation	(1,015,926)	(507,963)
Total right-of-use assets	1,410,420	1,918,383

Movements in carrying amounts

Opening net carrying amount	1,918,383	2,426,346
Depreciation charge for the year	(507,963)	(507,963)
Closing net carrying amount	1,410,420	1,918,383

[Return to Statement of financial position](#)

Note 10 - Trade and other payables

Current		
Trade payables	183,070	144,260
Grants in advance	1,187,394	741,347
Other payables	345,070	283,815
Total current provisions	1,715,534	1,169,422

[Return to Statement of financial position](#)

Note 11 - Provisions

Current	2021 \$	2020 \$
Annual leave	396,464	374,337
Long service leave	113,634	220,454
Time in lieu	39,193	53,850
Redundancy	124,410	136,727
Total current provisions	673,701	785,368

Non-current

Long service leave	119,217	-
Make good provision	125,000	125,000
Total non-current provisions	244,217	125,000

[Return to Statement of financial position for current provisions](#)

[Return to Statement of financial position for non-current provisions](#)

Note 12 - Lease liabilities

Current

Lease liabilities	527,113	518,920
Total current lease liabilities	527,113	518,920

Non-current

Lease liabilities	979,007	1,506,120
Total non-current lease liabilities	979,007	1,506,120

Movements in carrying amounts

Opening net carrying amount	2,025,040	2,426,346
Repayments	(518,920)	(401,306)
Closing net carrying amount	1,506,120	2,025,040

[Return to Statement of financial position for current lease liabilities](#)

[Return to Statement of financial position for non-current lease liabilities](#)

Note 13 - Key management personnel

Remuneration of key management personnel

The aggregate amount of compensation paid to key personnel during the year:	808,571	1,205,354
---	---------	-----------

Key management personnel is defined as the Senior Leadership Team. The number of Senior Leadership Team members increased during FY20. The FY20 expenditure also includes the one-off payout of historical entitlements owing to two long-standing Co-CEOs who resigned during the financial year.

Note 14 - Lease commitments

Operating lease commitments

Commitments for minimum lease payments in relation to non-cancellable operating leases are payable as follows:

Within one year	6,756	6,756
Later than one year but not later than five years	13,512	20,268
	<u>20,268</u>	<u>27,024</u>

The company is committed to short-term and low-value leases in relation to office equipment which expires in July 2023.

Note 15 - Limitations of members' liability

The company is incorporated as a company limited by guarantee, and in accordance with the Constitution the liability of members in the event of the company being wound up would not exceed \$1 per member. At 30 June 2021 the number of members of this company was 2,338 (2020: 1,801).

Note 16 - Events occurring after balance date

Subsequent to the end of the financial year, there remains a degree of uncertainty in relation to future economic and other impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, emergency control measures and progressive withdrawal of Government emergency support.

At the date of signing the financial statements the Directors are unable to determine what financial effects the outbreak of the virus could have on PWDA in the coming financial period.

The Directors acknowledge their responsibility to continuously monitor the situation and evaluate this impact including the ability to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

There were no other significant events occurring after balance date.

Note 17 - Economic dependency

The company considers that it is economically dependent on revenue received from the Commonwealth and New South Wales Governments for its various programs. The Directors believe that this revenue will continue to be made available to the company for the remainder of the terms of the grant agreements.

The total amount of recurrent government funding recognised during the financial year was \$6,753,536 (2020: \$7,014,985) and this represented 85.2% of total revenue (2020: 87.9%).

Note 18 - Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions during the financial year.

Note 19 - Company Details

The registered office and principal place of the company is:

People with Disability Australia Limited
Level 8, 418A Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010

Directors' declaration

The Directors of People With Disability Australia Ltd declare that:

1. The financial statements, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2021, and the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, statement of changes in funds and statement of cash flows for the year ended on that date, a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes are in accordance with the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and:
 - a. comply with Australian Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations) and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013*; and
 - b. give a true and fair view of the financial position as at 30 June 2021 and of the performance for the year ended on that date of the company.
2. In the opinion of the Directors there are reasonable grounds to believe that the company will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors:



Samantha Connor
President



Suresh Rajan
Treasurer

28 October 2021

Directors' declaration under the Charitable Fundraising Act

In the opinion of the Directors of People With Disability Australia Ltd:

1. The financial statements and notes thereto give a true and fair view of all income and expenditure with respect to fundraising appeals conducted by the company for the year ended 30 June 2021; and
2. The statement of financial position as at 30 June 2021 gives a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company with respect to fundraising appeals conducted by the organisation; and
3. The provisions of the *Charitable Fundraising Act 1991*, the regulations under that Act, and the conditions attached to the authority to fundraise have been complied with by the organisation; and
4. The internal controls exercised by the company are appropriate and effective in accounting for all income received and applied by the organisation from any of its fundraising appeals.

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors.



Samantha Connor
President



Suresh Rajan
Treasurer

28 October 2021

Independent Auditor's Report to the members of People With Disability Australia Ltd

Opinion

We have audited the financial report of People With Disability Australia Ltd which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2021, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, the statement of changes in funds and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the Directors' Declarations.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of People With Disability Australia Ltd is in accordance with the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

- a. giving a true and fair view of the company's financial position as at 30 June 2021 and of its financial performance for the year then ended, and
- b. complying with Australian Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013*.

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 Responsibility for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the company in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and 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 confirm that the independence declaration required by the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, which has been given to the Directors of the company, would be in the same terms if given to the Directors as at the time of this auditor's report. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Directors' Responsibility for the Financial Report

The Directors of the company are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and for such internal control as the Directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of a financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the Directors are responsible for assessing the company'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 the Directors either intend to liquidate the company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

The Directors are responsible for overseeing the company's financial reporting process.

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* and the website address is <http://www.auasb.gov.au/Home.aspx>

We communicate with the Directors regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Report on Other Legal and Regulatory Requirements

In addition, our audit report has also been prepared for the members of the company in accordance with section 24(2) of the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991. Accordingly, we have performed additional work beyond that which is performed in our capacity as auditors pursuant to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012. These additional procedures included obtaining an understanding of the internal control structure for fundraising appeal activities and examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting compliance with the accounting and associated record keeping requirements for fundraising appeal activities pursuant to the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and Regulations.

It should be noted that the accounting records and data relied upon for reporting on fundraising appeal activities are not continuously audited and do not necessarily reflect after the event accounting adjustments and the normal year-end financial adjustments for such matters as accruals, prepayments, provisioning and valuations necessary for year-end financial report preparation.

The performance of our statutory audit included a review of internal controls for the purpose of determining the appropriate audit procedures to enable an opinion to be expressed on the financial report. This review is not a comprehensive review of all those systems or of the system taken as a whole and is not designed to uncover all weaknesses in those systems.

The audit opinion expressed in this report pursuant to the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 has been formed on the above basis.

Auditor's opinion

Pursuant to the requirements of Section 24(2) of the *Charitable Fundraising Act 1991* we report that, in our opinion:

- a. the financial report gives a true and fair view of the financial result of fundraising appeal activities for the financial year ended 30 June 2021; and
- b. the financial report has been properly drawn up, and the associated records have been properly kept for the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021, in accordance with the *Charitable Fundraising Act 1991* and Regulations; and
- c. money received as a result of fundraising appeal activities conducted during the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021 has been properly accounted for and applied in accordance with the *Charitable Fundraising Act 1991* and Regulations; and
- d. at the date of this report there are reasonable grounds to believe that the company will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.



Stewart Brown

Chartered Accountants



S.J. Hutcheon

Partner

28 October 2021

Easy read translation



Contents

Message from the president	73
Message from the CEO	76
What we did this year	78

CID made this document Easy Read.
You need to ask CID if you want to use the pictures.
Contact CID at business@cid.org.au.

Message from the president



This is a message from Samantha Connor.



I am the president of PWDA.

The **president** helps decide how PWDA is run.



It has been a hard year for people with disability and for PWDA.

We showed the world that we are strong.



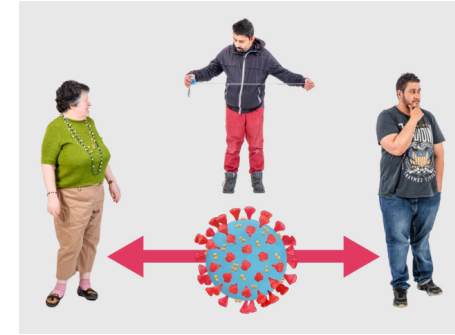
This year we got a new CEO.

The **CEO** is the leader of PWDA.



Our members voted for our new board.

The **board** is a group of people that looks at how the organisation is run.



We helped keep people safe from COVID.



I want to thank our new CEO and all the staff at PWDA.

You have done great work during COVID.



We kept speaking up for people with disability.

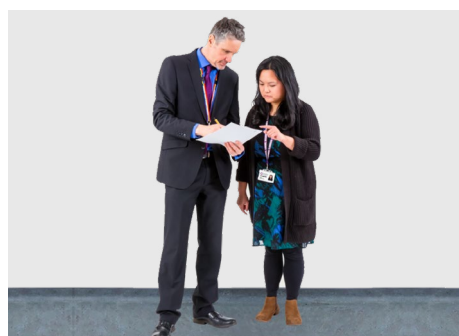


This year we made some great things happen.

We stopped bad changes to the NDIS like independent assessments.



Next year we will keep speaking up for people with disability.

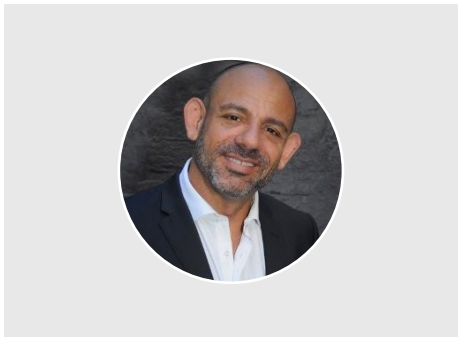


Independent assessments are like a test to see who can get support from the NDIS.



We want everyone to work together to make things better for people with disability.

Message from the CEO



This is a message from Sebastian Zagarella.



I am the new CEO at PWDA.



This year was different because of COVID.

COVID made it very hard for PWDA to do its work.



Everyone did a great job to support people with disability.

Thank you for all your work.



I have a disability too.

But I have never worked for a disability organisation.



I have learnt a lot since I started at PWDA.



The disability community and PWDA do amazing work.



I look forward to support the work.



Thank you to everyone for welcoming me.

What we did this year



This is the annual report for 2020 to 2021.

The **annual report** says what we did during the last year.

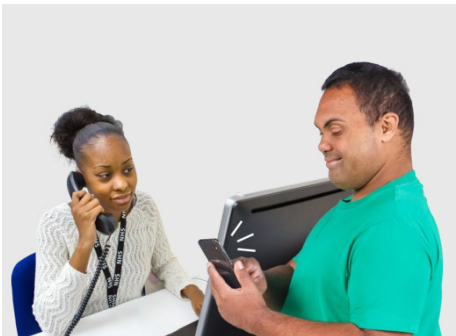


We spoke up about what the government should do about COVID.

COVID work



This year lots of the work at PWDA had to do with COVID.



We made sure the government helps people with disability during COVID.



We worked to make sure people with disability are safe and well.



We worked hard so that people with disability have a say about COVID.



We supported people who had bad things happen to them because of COVID.



We helped to stop independent assessments.

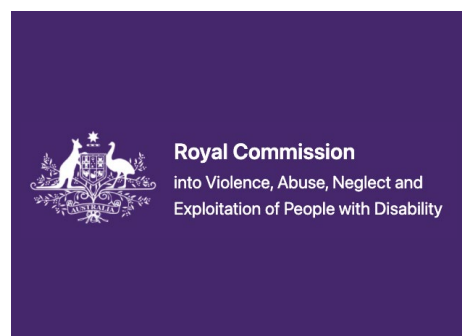


Independent assessments are like a test to get support from the NDIS.



Most people did not want independent assessments.

Disability Royal Commission



We helped make good changes to the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

Disability Royal Commission for short.



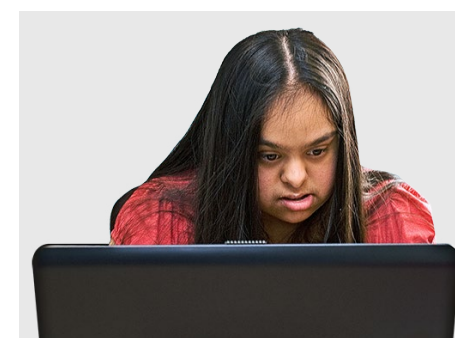
The Disability Royal Commission hears stories from people with disability.

They want to look after the rights of people with disability better.



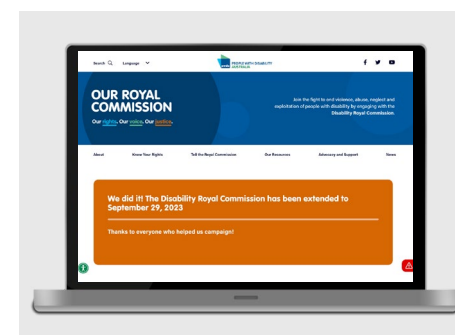
PWDA made sure people had

- Support to tell their stories
- Enough time to tell their stories
- Their stories kept private



We set up a website with information about the Disability Royal Commission.

982 people have looked at the website.



To see the website go to

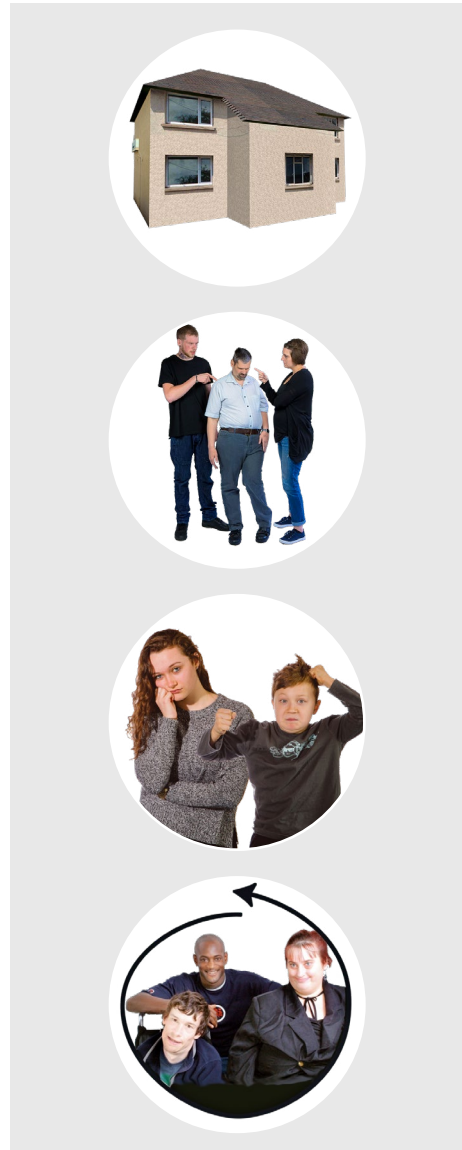
www.ourroyalcommission.com.au

Advocacy support



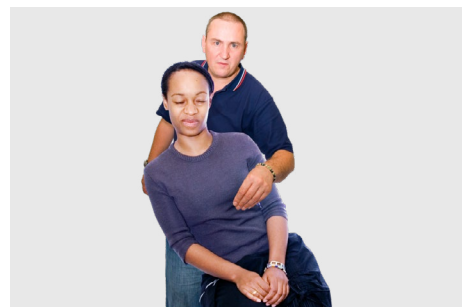
PWDA gave advocacy support to many people in NSW and QLD.

Advocacy support is when someone helps you speak up about a problem.



We supported disability organisations with projects about

- Housing
- Abuse
- Mental Health
- Rights



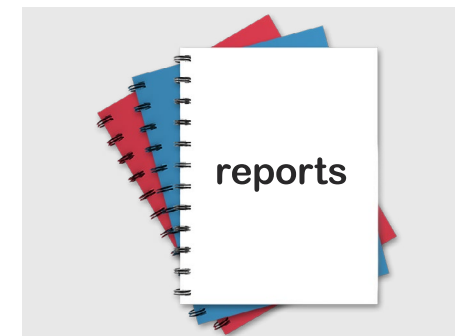
Abuse is when someone

- Hurts your body
- Does bad things to you
- Does sexual things to you that you do not want



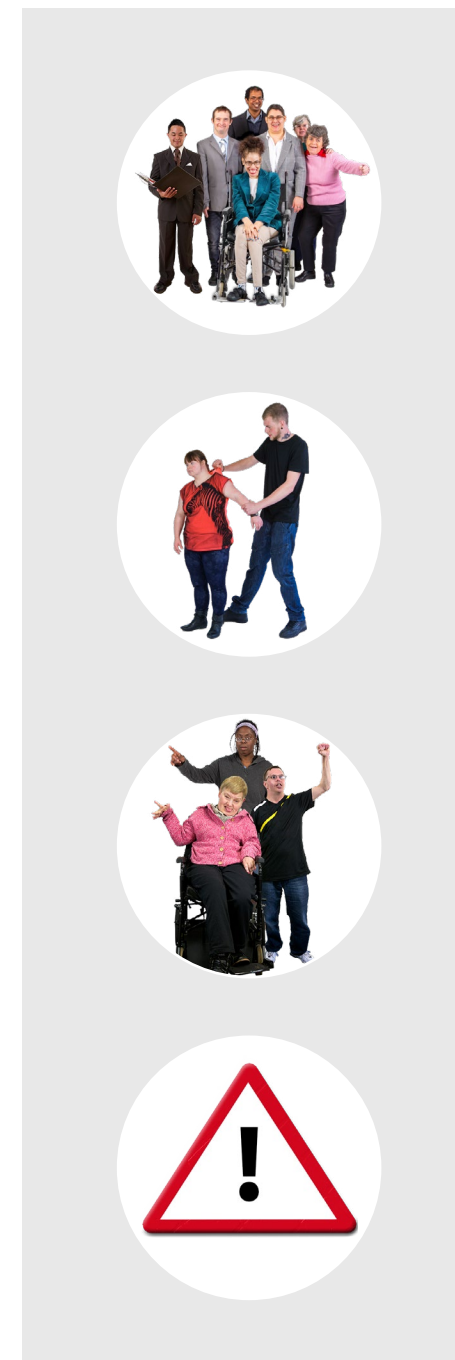
Mental health means looking after your mind and wellbeing.

Getting our messages out there



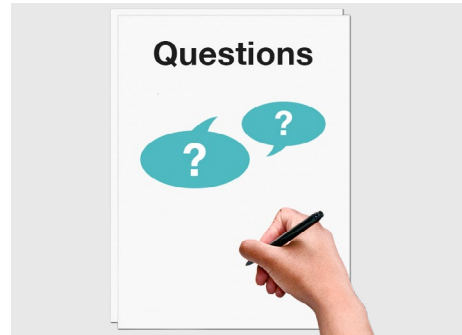
We wrote lots of reports about important topics.

We want the government to make things better for people with disability.



Our reports were about

- Inclusion
- Violence at home
- Rights
- Safety



We did studies to support our work.



We ran training for the government.



We want government workers to include people with disability better.



Lots of people read about PWDA on the internet.

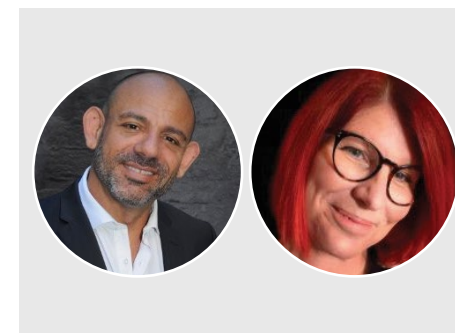
More than last year.

Thank you and welcome



PWDA wants to say thank you to our

- Workers
- Members
- Supporters
- Community



We also say welcome to

- Our CEO Sebastian Zagarella
- Our president Samantha Connor



PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY
AUSTRALIA



pwd.org.au



pwd@pwd.org.au



(02) 9370 3100



PWDAustralia



PWD.Australia