



Annual Report 2021–22

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 Yugambeh 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.

We recognise First Nations 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 this 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. We acknowledge and thank all of the members, supporters and staff featured in the photos in this report.

Acknowledgment of contributors

PWDA acknowledges and thanks all of the members, supporters and staff who have contributed information featured in this report.

Alternative formats

Copies of this document are available in alternative formats from:

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PWDA complaint handling

To lodge a complaint about PWDA directly with us, you can contact us at pwd@pwd.org.au or free call 1800 422 015.



40
years



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About PWDA

People with Disability Australia (PWDA) is a national peak disability rights and advocacy organisation made up of and led by people with disability.

Founded in 1981, PWDA represents the interests of people with all kinds of disability. We're a not-for-profit, community-based organisation. Our members comprise a diverse range of individuals and organisations from across Australia.

Our vision is for 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.

We work both nationally and internationally, and our work is grounded in a human rights framework that recognises the United Nations human rights conventions and related mechanisms as fundamental tools for advancing the rights of people with disability.

We deliver our programs, services and activities in partnership with our members and supporters as well as a variety of stakeholders across the government, disability, education and research sectors. We receive funding from a range of sources including the Australian Government, the New South Wales and Queensland Governments, and donations from our supporters.



President's message

Just over 40 years ago, a group of dedicated PWDA disability activists gathered together in a garage with 240 bottles of wine, determined to help advance and protect the rights of people with disability.

“We’re talking grassroots community organisation fundraising,” said Graeme Innes at PWDA’s 30th anniversary. “Five dollars from each bottle goes into the bank account of this new organisation, whose members are full of passion and energy for equal rights in society.”

That garage belonged to Graeme Innes, and the other young disabled people included movers and shakers from the disability rights movement. That was the beginning – the Handicapped Persons Alliance, from which People with Disability Australia was born. Read the rest of [Graeme’s speech here](#).

Our ability to commemorate and celebrate our 40th year was severely impacted by the challenges we faced this year, so we’re pleased that this annual report provides us with the opportunity to mark the occasion in some small way. We have featured some historical content in these pages to showcase – and express our gratitude for – the contributions of thousands of people who

have worked over the last four decades to support the work of PWDA and the disability rights movement.

Their work has achieved so much for so many, and it’s on their shoulders that we stand today as we embark on the next 40 years fighting for our rights and representing people with disability.

2021-22 was a remarkable and challenging year for PWDA as well as the people and the communities we serve. We continued to fight through the COVID-19 pandemic, which presented significant risks to our health, safety and wellbeing. Many of us continued to be negatively impacted by cost-cutting



measures affecting the National Disability Insurance Scheme. And 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.

Despite adversity, we were able to work together as a community of people with disability to advance and protect our health and our rights and to show the world our capacity for courage and resilience. In partnership with our members and supporters, our Board and staff worked together in often difficult circumstances to deal with the continued impact of COVID-19. We advocated for people with disability at the international, national, state and territory levels as we responded to the threat of the pandemic and its effect on our community.

The Federal Election also took a lot of our focus this year. Once again, we worked in partnership with our members and supporters to develop and promote a comprehensive election platform and then secure commitments on a range of issues from the major parties and key independents. We'll continue working in 2022-23 to ensure their commitments are upheld.

Throughout 2021-22, we also worked in many other ways to progress and preserve our rights as people with disability. Through our individual advocacy service, we empowered and supported hundreds of people to resolve issues related to their rights. Our policy team worked to influence how governments and industry across the country enact and uphold our rights. We advocated for our rights at the international level at the annual Conference of State Parties (COSP) summit in New York.

The PWDA Board continued to oversee a range of improvements across strategic matters and governance for PWDA.

My thanks to former Vice President Kelly Cox for her outstanding contributions in the role and to Clare Gibellini for stepping into the role as our current Vice President. I'd also like to thank all my fellow Board Directors and all the members of our Board Advisory Groups for offering their valuable time and expertise in supporting the Board and staff, and ensuring the ongoing viability and success of the organisation.

In terms of PWDA's operations, I'd like to express the Board's gratitude to our CEO Sebastian Zagarella for his hard work and dedication. Seb has been a stalwart in our organisation and has brought vision, energy and an incredible presence to the role. My personal thanks go to Seb for his steady

support and massive capacity for work. A big welcome also to Carolyn Hodge, who has stepped into the role of Deputy CEO.

And of course, our thanks also to all PWDA volunteers, donors and supporters for their valued contributions throughout the year.

On behalf of the Board, I'd also like to thank 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 2021-22 and I'm pleased to present this to you in this Annual Report. With an NDIS in need of urgent reform, with the Disability

Royal Commission to continue into 2023, and with the ever-evolving threat of COVID-19, we expect eventful times ahead. We must respond by moving forward strongly with our advocacy efforts to gain further traction.

We encourage you to stand with us, as many others have over the past 40 years, as we work hard to improve the lives of people with disability.



Samantha Connor
PWDA President

It has been a great honour to serve our community over the past two years and I thank each and every member who has worked with us to make sure PWDA is truly a voice for people with disability. Thank you.



CEO's message

After commencing in 2020 as an interim CEO, I was honoured to be appointed as permanent CEO of an organisation that has made such a significant impact to the lives of people with disability for over 40 years.

The impact of the work undertaken and the contributions made by our members, staff and supporters over the past four decades has been instrumental in delivering many important gains in terms of equity, dignity and respect for the people and communities we serve. If the passion, commitment and high levels of proactive engagement from our staff and membership are anything to go by, I have no doubt that the history and heritage of PWDA and the disability rights movement will continue to inspire many others to fight for our rights, freedoms and aspirations.

COVID-19, bushfires and flooding not only negatively impacted our ability to properly commemorate our landmark 40th anniversary year; they also ensured that 2021-22 was a year filled with many challenges and concerns for the team at PWDA, our members and our wider community. Having said that, despite the turmoil, what I experienced was our team and our community rallying and responding to these challenges as they always have, with great compassion, courage, tenacity and resilience.

From an operational perspective, the impact of these events challenged resources across each team at PWDA, which required the operations team to stay flexible, finding creative solutions to adapt our programs, services and other activities. Despite the many obstacles, our staff across Australia continued to provide consistently high levels of service, vital support and assistance for clients seeking help.

We continued our lobbying and campaigning across a range of key issues, we continued to work with service providers, sector partners and other stakeholders to deliver important outcomes for the people and communities we serve, and we continued to educate and inform our membership and the wider community on issues concerning our community. This is a testament to the passion, skill and ingenuity of the PWDA operational team and I thank all team members for their incredible resilience, commitment and hard work.

Despite the many demands we faced, we continued to provide our individual advocacy services to over 900 people with disability – and of course we continued to advocate for policy and social change at the state, national and international levels, most notably during the Federal Election campaign and at the 15th session of Conference of State Parties (COSP) summit in New York.

As I reflect on the past 12 months, I'm enormously proud of the number of important initiatives we were able to execute beyond our core business:

- We were successful in obtaining additional funding that allowed us to expand the reach of our individual advocacy services into new areas of Queensland and New South Wales.
- We successfully obtained ongoing funding which allowed our diverse suite of specialised projects to continue to address specific issues affecting people with disability.
- Through a review of work practices and resource management, we reduced our Information, Intake and Referral client wait times by 92%.
- We built a new, more accessible website.
- We published a new PWDA client handbook.
- We began work on PWDA's first Reconciliation Action Plan.
- We successfully achieved ACFID and NSDS accreditation for another year.

And, with a focus on our people:

- We developed and implemented an adaptable Return to Office Plan for our staff across all our offices.
- We implemented PWDA's first Safety Management System, which included the development of a suite of new WHS policies and procedures, an assessment of all staff working from home arrangements and an accessibility audit of our Surry Hills office.
- We developed an ICT strategy and began to introduce a number of technology enhancements which allowed the team to work collaboratively in a remote environment. This included the migration to a new payroll system and the introduction of a new Learning Management System (LMS).
- We commenced a review of our employee experience from recruitment through induction and onboarding.



- With the assistance of our staff, we developed an 18-month training and professional development program of work.

The past year also saw the operations team work ever more closely with our Board and Board Advisory Groups. With the invaluable support and advice of the Membership Engagement Advisory, the Governance Advisory and the Strategic Direction Advisory:

- We developed a Membership Engagement Strategy which we will look to implement in the coming year.
- We completed a review of our Organisational Risk Matrix.
- We began work on our first Business Continuity Plan.
- We continued our review of all PWDA policies. To date, 32 policies have been reviewed.
- We have been pleased to support the development of PWDA's next three-year strategy.

I would like to personally thank my team at PWDA, the Board, our Board Advisory Groups and our membership for the support and guidance they provided throughout this most challenging of years. I also welcome Carolyn Hodge as my Deputy.

I look forward to the year ahead and am excited by the opportunities we have to continue to grow our membership, the PWDA team and the programs and services we offer.



Sebastian Zagarella
PWDA CEO

Throughout 2021-22, I continued to develop my appreciation for the incredible diversity, dynamism and determination of the disability community.



40 years of PWDA

Since the early 1980s, PWDA has been leading the charge in Australia for advancing and protecting the rights, health and wellbeing of people with disability.

Our history as an organisation is full of struggles and triumphs, and in many ways has mirrored the history of the wider disability rights movement in Australia.

From then to now

1981 was a turning point in the history of the Australian and international disability rights movements.

The United Nations had declared 1981 as the inaugural International Year Of Disabled Persons, and global disability advocacy organisation Disabled Peoples' International was formed.

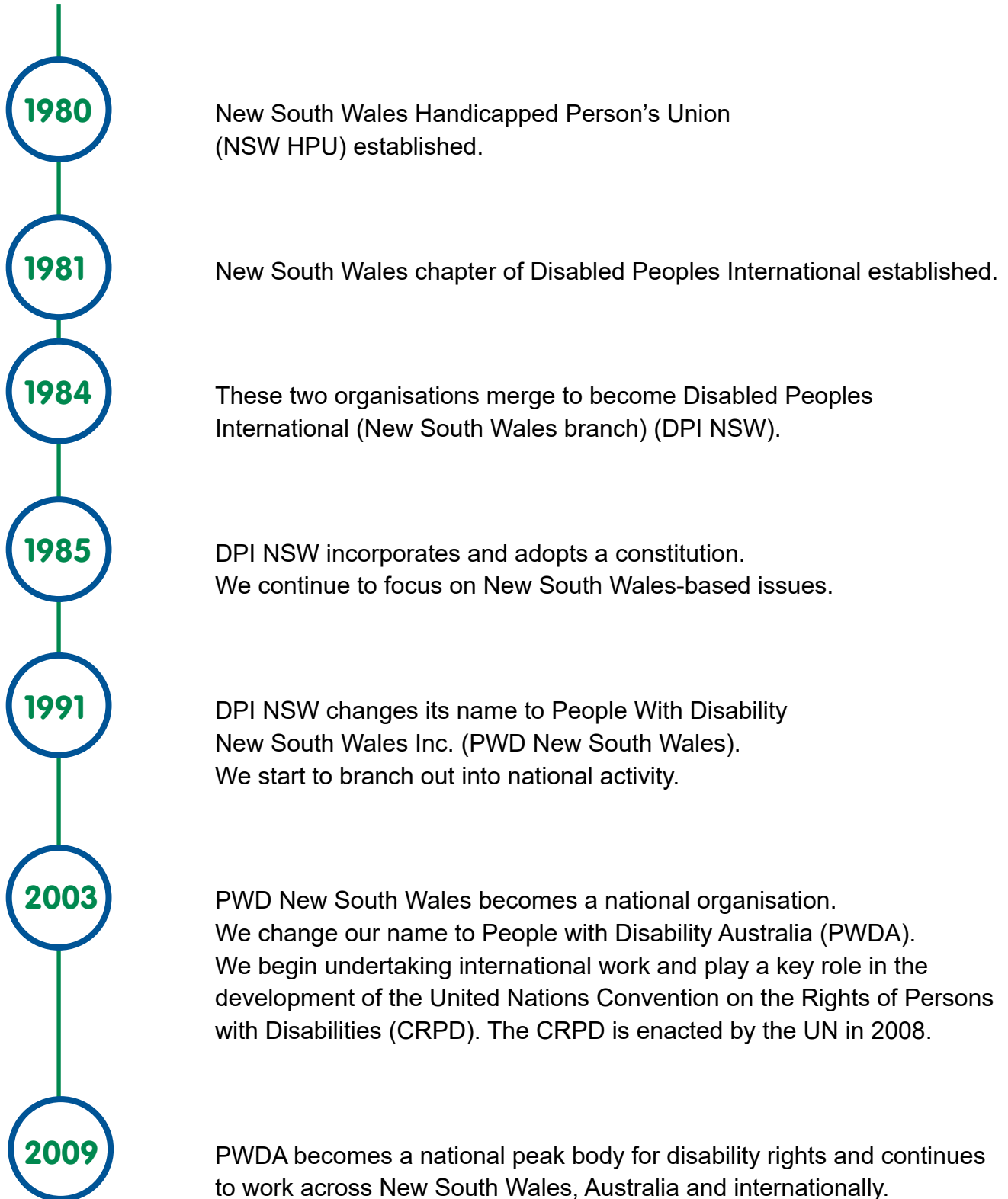
While PWDA can trace its roots back to 1980 and the formation of the New South Wales Handicapped Persons' Union, it was in late

1981 when this group of activists formalised their association as the New South Wales chapter of Disabled Peoples International, which later became People with Disability Australia.

Since then, the hard work, determination and camaraderie of thousands of people has delivered significant improvement in the lives of people with disability across Australia, and helped to forge a formidable political and social movement that will continue to empower, champion and celebrate the rights, health and wellbeing of people with disability into the future.



PWDA timeline



2010

PWDA begins playing a key role in advising on the establishment of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The NDIS is launched in 2013.

2016

PWDA partners with other DPOs to form DPO Australia (DPOA), a coalition of key Australian disability representative organisations.

2020-
2022

- PWDA plays a key role in advocating for increased protection for people with disability during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- PWDA advocates for the removal of NDIS independent assessments.
- PWDA works with people with disability to support them to tell their stories to the Disability Royal Commission.



Key statistics 2021-22

915

clients supported

283

people engaged in
disability awareness
and advocacy training

19,232

occasions of client service

2,650

media stories

49

policy and advocacy
reports and submissions

43

media releases

3.6 million

people reached on social media

59

staff members
(as at 30 June 2022)

219,984

website visitors

Client satisfaction

I am satisfied with
the services
I have received

86%

of respondents rated this
as high or very high

The service listened
to me and understood
my issues

85%

of respondents rated this
as high or very high

I am better able to
deal with issues that
I sought help with

72%

of respondents rated this
as high or very high

Program	Cases
Disability Royal Commission (DRC) – Advocacy support	58
National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP)	446
NDIS appeals	335
Redress support services	34
Engage-In	18
Disability Housing Advocacy Service (DHAS)	78
Disability Advocacy Futures Program (DAFP)* - Jan to Jun 2022 only (implementation phase)	14
Queensland Disability Advocacy Program (QDAP)	70
Total	1,053

Number of cases by program

40
years



Year in review



COVID-19

For the third year in a row, the impact of COVID-19 dominated PWDA's agenda and the way we worked in 2021-22. Responding to the effects 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 our programs and services.

The COVID waves that swept across the country from July to October and again from December to April were a source of extreme concern for our team and the communities we serve. We advocated for a range of measures, including expedited vaccination, free rapid antigen testing and N95 face masks, to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of people with disability, fighting for those who were left behind in the official response to COVID-19.

Throughout 2021-22, our organisation continued as a member of the Advisory Committee for the COVID-19 Response for People with Disability, advising the National Cabinet on a range of issues, including vaccine responses and the implementation of the Management and Operational Plan for People with Disability. We also provided advice, support and individual advocacy

to clients whose lives and livelihoods were impacted by the effects of the virus, and continued to share information through our communication channels to help our members and followers to stay updated.

The ever-changing pandemic landscape also informed how we worked. With health and wellbeing top of mind, we implemented a Return to Office Plan that included a range of protocols to protect the safety of our clients and staff. Our staff pivoted to and from our offices as the pandemic allowed. Regardless of where our team worked, advocacy and other services remained available and the high level of service did not falter.

We thank our staff, supporters and community members for their courage and resilience over these 12 months and ask for their continued support as we respond to the ongoing impact of COVID-19 in the months and years ahead.

Federal Election

A key event this year was the 2022 Federal Election. Our Board was focused on ensuring our membership set the priorities through our PWDA Strategic Planning Member Survey (July-August 2021) and three member forums taking place over March, April and May 2022.

After consulting with our membership via a survey and a member forum, we developed **an election platform** addressing issues across seven key policy areas which we advocated on throughout the election campaign. Our campaign also involved surveying all major parties and some key independents on their level of commitment to our platform. We evaluated their responses and then **communicated our findings** to our members and supporters so they could make informed decisions about their votes.

Throughout the campaign, we kept our members and supporters updated about important matters related to the election as well as information about their voting rights, how to lodge their vote, and how to access information about commitments that candidates and parties were making in relation to people with disability. This included two community forums about disability and election participation which we presented in partnership with the Australian Electoral Commission.

Since the election, we have worked constructively with the new government, opposition and crossbenchers, and look forward to continuing to work with all our federal representatives to deliver outcomes that will advance and protect the rights, health and wellbeing of people with disability across Australia.

15th Session of the Conference of States Parties

In June 2022, we coordinated and participated in a delegation of Australian disability advocates led by Disabled Peoples Organisations Australia (DPOA), that travelled to New York for the 15th session of the Conference of States Parties (COSP) to the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). This annual conference brings together countries that have ratified the UN CRPD, including representatives from DPOs and civil society organisations, to discuss the implementation of the CRPD.

This year's COSP – their first in-person event since the start of the COVID pandemic – focused on international best practice for the inclusion of people with disability in situations where they are at risk, such as natural disasters, the COVID-19 pandemic, and during armed conflicts. The event also looked at best practices for the employment of people with disability.

In addition to attending all regular COSP sessions, PWDA presented two side events. Our President Sam Connor co-presented a session about improving the safety and security of people with disability affected by armed conflicts, natural disasters and climate change. Another was developed by Board Director Clare Gibellini, President Sam Connor and Vice President Kelly Cox, who presented on the topic of how people with disability can use microbusiness models to create employment opportunities, safeguard livelihoods and develop skills.

Vice President Kelly Cox also gave a speech during the General Debate on key issues underpinning effective international cooperation and rights of people with disability in all situations of risk, with a focus on the experiences of people with disability during the floods in New South Wales.

Our delegation also worked closely with representatives from the Department of Social Services, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the Australian Human Rights Commission, and were there to support, and present at, the re-appointment of Rosemary Kayess as the Chair to the Committee of the CRPD.

Disability Royal Commission

Throughout the year, we continued to support people with disability to tell their stories to the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability. We also continued to operate our [dedicated DRC website](#), providing information about the Royal Commission, its hearings and how to get involved. Over 5,000 people visited the site in 2021-22.

This year, we also launched a digital advertising campaign encouraging people to tell their stories to the Commission. Our Vice President Kelly Cox and Senior Research Officer Frances Quan Farrant participated in a public hearing about implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and we continued to engage with the Commission behind the scenes to make sure that the Royal Commission our

community fought long and hard for has the best chance of creating real, positive change.

We also reported on outcomes of the Commission through live Twitter coverage of 11 hearings and provided a guest blogging feature for people with disability to highlight their experiences.



Disability rights

Campaigning for social change and the rights of people with disability at a federal and state level remains a major part of PWDA's work. Throughout 2021-22, we sought to understand and represent the views of our community members via surveys and consultations about important health, economic and social issues. We produced 49 reports and submissions for various government inquiries and panels – including the Disability Royal Commission – on a variety of topics including welfare reform, the experience of people with disability from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Australian Disability Enterprises, the NDIS and Disability Employment Services.

Client services

Our Individual Advocacy and Information, Intake and Referral services continued to provide support and assistance this year for people with disability.

In 2021-22, our advocates provided services to 915 clients from across New South Wales and Queensland. 335 of these cases were support for NDIS appeals. 130 clients were assisted by our specialist teams on the Disability Housing, Redress and Engage-In projects, which support people with complex issues related to housing and accommodation, childhood sexual abuse or psychosocial disability in closed settings.

Our Information, Intake and Referral team supported 4,706 people this year, and we also reduced our response times by a huge 92%. In 2021-22, we were successful in

obtaining new funding that has allowed us to expand our services to new areas within Queensland as well as New South Wales.

Projects, research and training

Our education, research and training services continue to be valuable resources and a 'go-to' for information and support. In 2021-22, our staff supported our social change agenda by generating evidence to support our lobbying, and providing activities that educate people and organisations about access and inclusion for people with disability. We were involved in seven research partnerships throughout the year. Our training team worked with various government agencies on developing four large-scale, bespoke training packages for delivery to their workforces, including a program to help New South Wales healthcare workers understand and respond to domestic violence. 283 people completed a training workshop with PWDA this year.

We continued to work on a range of multidisciplinary projects to improve how our community empowers and supports people with disability and understands disability issues. These included projects related to domestic and family violence, institutionalisation of people with psychosocial conditions, legal rights awareness in First Nations communities and the experience of women during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Communications and development

To celebrate our 40-year anniversary this year, we built a **new website**, which we launched in early August 2022. The new site provides a more accessible and inclusive user experience with improved functionality, streamlined content and WCAG 2.1 AA compliance. We also reviewed and relaunched one of our most-used resources, the **PWDA Language Guide**.

We used our existing range of communications channels and media contacts to promote our individual advocacy services, encourage our community members and stakeholders to support our activity for law reform and social change, and provide useful information to people with disability about relevant news and opportunities. We saw considerable growth in our digital communications and online engagement in 2021-22, and expanded our reach across multiple channels.

PWDA leadership

The PWDA Board elected three Board members this year. We welcomed new Board Director Clare Gibellini. Clare is a disability advocate from Western Australia with over 16 years of experience in the disability rights and disability employment sectors. The Board also welcomed back Samantha Connor and Kelly Cox, who renominated and were successfully re-appointed to the Board for an additional two-year term at the 2021 PWDA Annual General Meeting.

In December 2021, interim CEO Sebastian Zagarella was appointed to the role of CEO by the Board on a permanent basis following a 12-month period as PWDA's interim leader. In June 2022, PWDA appointed Carolyn Hodge as Deputy CEO. This role sees the introduction of succession planning and allows PWDA to increase its capacity to do the work we do and to continue its growth.

Membership

As a member-based organisation, our members remain at the centre of everything we do. We are here to represent them.



This year, PWDA continued to steadily grow our membership. Engaging with our members remained a focus so we could remain connected as our members continued to deal with multiple crises including the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and unprecedented floods. We engaged with PWDA members through regular dedicated digital and print communications as well as member surveys and a scheduled program of online and in-person meetings and events. These helped us to better understand our members' experiences and concerns, which in turn set the agenda for our strategic and organisational priorities, and our advocacy with government and industry.

We produced five member forums this year.

- In February, we held a COVID-focused forum to give our members an opportunity to highlight their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, ask questions about protecting themselves from the virus, and find out more about our COVID-related advocacy.
- In March, we held a forum to get feedback from our members for the development of our 2022 Federal Election Platform.
- In April and May, we held two forums in partnership with the Australian Electoral Commission to inform our members about participating in the upcoming federal election.
- In June, we held a forum for members to meet the PWDA Board and discuss the results of the recent federal election.

We also conducted two surveys of our membership this year. From July to August, we ran our PWDA Strategic Planning survey to inform the development of PWDA's

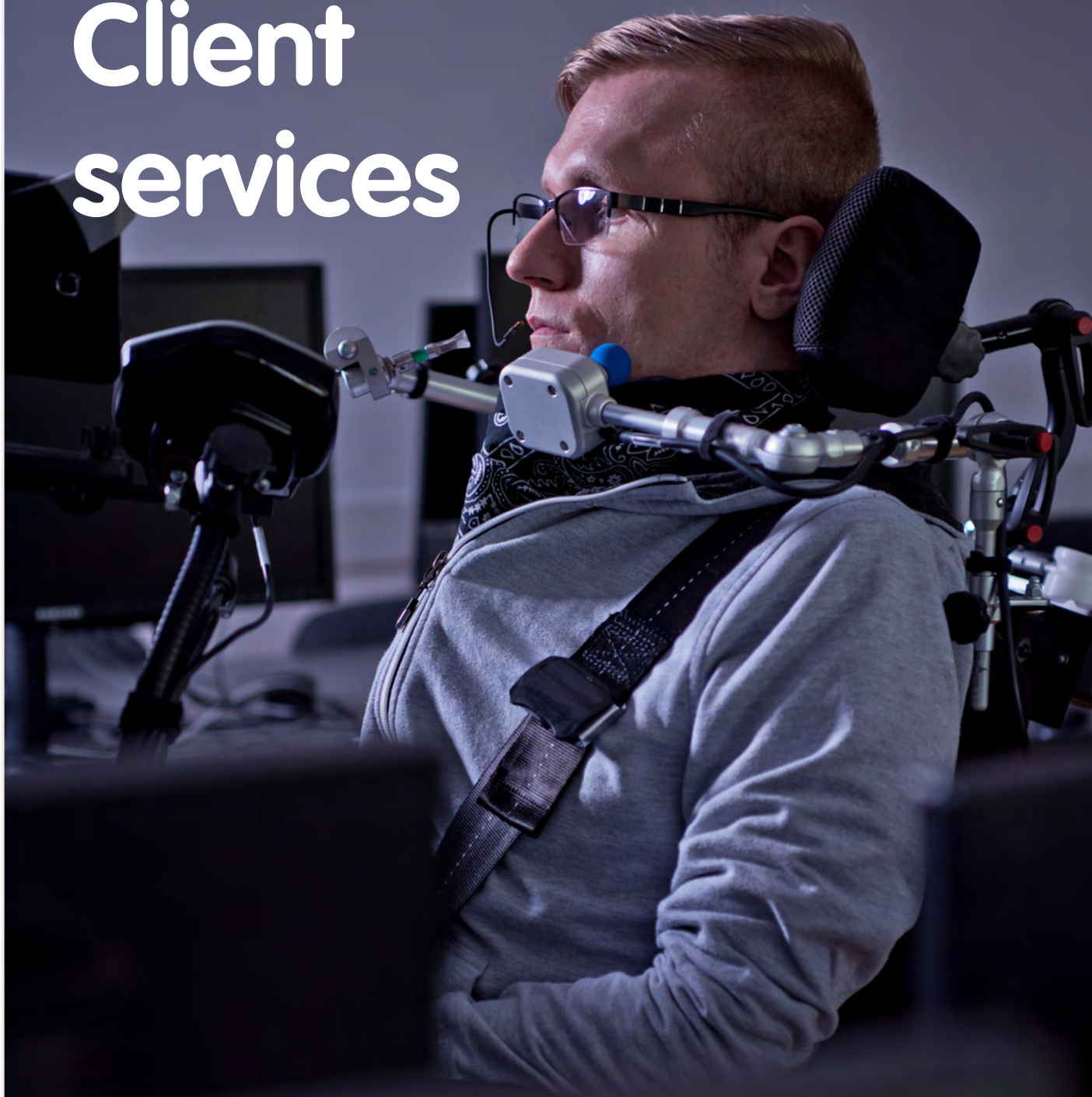
Strategic Plan and our Federal Election Platform based on our member's priorities. From November to March, we ran our Pandemic Survey for women with disability. This survey was conducted as part of our Pandemic Research Project to examine the ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic specifically impacted women with disability. You can read more about [this project](#) in the Research section of this report.

In 2021-22, we also established a Membership Engagement Board Advisory Group and reinvigorated our Strategic Direction Advisory Group.

The Membership Engagement Board Advisory Group helped develop our Membership Engagement Strategy. This Advisory, led by Marayke Jonkers, includes six of our members from diverse disability types, geographic locations and cultural backgrounds. We encourage members to engage with our Membership Engagement Board Advisory Group so their experience of being a PWDA member continues to be positive and meaningful.

Key recommendations of the Membership Engagement Strategy focused on growing our membership and its diversity to ensure we continue to represent the voices of all people in our community. Recommendations will also guide and inform engagement activities and opportunities we provide for our members.

Client services



Individual advocacy

915

clients supported across
NSW and QLD

19,232

occasions of client service
across NSW and QLD

Client satisfaction survey returned excellent results

I am satisfied with
the services
I have received

86% of respondents rated this
as high or very high

The service listened
to me and understood
my issues

85% of respondents rated this
as high or very high

I am better able to
deal with issues that
I sought help with

72% of respondents rated this
as high or very high

PWDA provides advocacy for people with disability in Queensland and New South Wales that is independent and free from conflicts of interest. We act for and support our clients in a way that is loyal and fully accountable.

PWDA's Individual Advocacy support has three main elements:

Information

Telling the client about their rights and the resources available to them.

Self-advocacy

Talking the client through what they can do to solve their own problem, boosting their confidence and helping them make plans.

Advocacy

Working with the client to help them solve their problem directly, such as by accompanying or representing them in meetings or tribunals, contacting other services on their behalf, or organising paperwork for applications or appeals.

This year, our work has been complicated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions this has placed on one-on-one contact with clients. The team worked successfully around these barriers by engaging more with teleconferencing technology for client meetings, and to participate in client-related events such as hearings, tribunals, and case conferences.

Testimonies from our clients show the positive impact of our work. Sometimes, the most important outcome for the client is feeling empowered with the knowledge that they have rights and can achieve their goals. At other times, the work we do has literally saved someone's life. You can read some of these testimonials and client stories throughout this report.

This year also saw the introduction of PWDA's new, purpose-built Client Management System (CMS). The CMS gives individual advocates a functional, accessible space in which to record and store all their client work. It also improved PWDA's reporting capability and streamlined the process of reporting data to our government funders. And for the first time ever, we now have a source of de-identified data stored in one place that we can draw on, so the work of our individual advocates can better inform our systemic, policy, and research outputs.

NDIS support

Without a doubt, the biggest issue for PWDA's Individual Advocacy service this year has been the dramatic spike in support requests for NDIS Appeals.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme Appeals Program (NDIS Appeals) is a critical support for people seeking to ensure the decisions made by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) are fair and appropriate.

Our NDIS work faced many challenges due to this unprecedented increase in clients facing the AAT to maintain their existing NDIS plans this year. This meant that issues normally resolved quickly by internal review now faced lengthy case conferences and adversarial legal action against the client. The stress put on our clients during this AAT process was devastating.

PWDA assisted our clients to understand and navigate this system, as well as access legal advice and other support as required. With the support of our advocates, PWDA's clients successfully overturned many of the NDIA's decisions and defended their right to access the NDIS.

Queensland

Since the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, the Queensland team has been busy with face-to-face individual advocacy work and stakeholder engagement. This year, PWDA's Queensland advocates travelled over 80,000km to ensure people with disability knew about and could access advocacy support.

We are continuing to expand our networks in the Logan regional area, Gympie, Sunshine Coast, Bundaberg, Mount Isa, and Hervey Bay. This outreach has improved the visibility of disability advocacy and disability rights in the community.

Our team has built a strong reputation with the services and organisations our clients use and engage with, including Legal Aid, Queensland Statewide Tenant Advice and Referral Service (QSTARS), Child Services, Primary Health Networks, other advocacy organisations, Office of the Public Guardian, Public Trustee, Office of the Public Advocate and Local Area Coordinators/NDIA partners in the community.

Our clients have experienced great success in overcoming many challenges created or exacerbated by floods, COVID-19, and ongoing issues with the NDIS this year. Working with their advocates, they have successfully spoken up to address issues that were impacting on their fundamental needs and rights, such as housing, access to justice, and access to necessary services.

Queensland Disability Advocacy Program

PWDA was granted Queensland Disability Advocacy Program (QDAP) funding in January 2022, which allowed us to increase our capacity to provide advocacy services to people with disability in Queensland. As a result, our team of advocates grew and our coverage expanded to include Gympie and Noosa.

With a substantially increased footprint in Queensland, we now offer disability advocacy for a region from Bundaberg to the Sunshine Coast, as well as Logan–Beaudesert and all of outback Queensland. As our new areas previously had relatively little advocacy presence, we have worked hard to engage the community and build a presence.

We have been very successful in raising awareness of disability advocacy and have been contacted by more than 70 individuals seeking an advocate from the parts of Queensland we are newly funded to work in.

Many regional areas in Queensland are experiencing issues with access to services and appropriate housing when people leave major metro areas due to flooding or COVID-19 risks. Many people are sleeping rough or living in cars with no access to their usual supports. Other clients were unexpectedly cut off from critical treatments for weeks or months due to the impact of widespread infrastructure failures.

PWDA has been instrumental in reconnecting these clients to supports and starting the recovery process. We have also supported clients to remove themselves from situations of isolation, abuse, and neglect.



Rebecca*

Rebecca is a sole parent with disability whose NDIS plan was severely cut in 2021, restricting her access to the supports and services she needs. Rebecca wanted to appeal the decision at the AAT.

How we helped

A PWDA advocate helped Rebecca get ready for case conferences, access legal advice and prepare statements, including a detailed statement of lived experience to address the AAT's lack of understanding of the barriers faced by people with disability.

Rebecca was also struggling with barriers to employment and access to services. Her advocate helped her identify strategic solutions to her immediate problems, providing support to contact a local provider of food hampers and to access a No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS) loan to pay her car registration and fix her refrigerator. Her advocate also supported her to find and access low-cost training options to upskill and re-enter the workforce, supporting her to apply for scholarships and receive financial help from an employment agency.

“I was standing alone against an aggressive NDIA lawyer, in a system that doesn’t understand the barriers faced by people with disability. Because of this I have suffered immense stress, depression, and anxiety.

I was made to feel hopeless by the NDIA, and I was afraid for both myself and my child. Thankfully, I heard about PWDA and contacted them for help. I’m glad I did, I’m sure I wouldn’t be here to tell the story of my success without my advocate.

My child and I are still on this journey. It has been long and full of ups and downs. Throughout it all, my advocate was there to assist me with his immense level of professionalism, knowledge, compassion and understanding.”

**Client stories
from Queensland**

Stacey*

Battling homelessness, escaping violence, and struggling with health issues, Stacey was referred to PWDA by another disability advocacy service that had no capacity to provide a local advocate for face-to-face support at that time. Stacey needed someone to be there in person due to the effects of psychosocial disability and limited access to technology.

How we helped

A PWDA advocate completed a referral to a counselling service to assist Stacey with the ongoing impact of trauma. The advocate also helped apply for social housing and other accommodation options. To get her the ongoing disability support she needed, Stacey was referred to the Queensland Community Support Scheme (QCSS), a state government service designed to provide a safety net for people who have a disability, but who are not able to access NDIS supports.

Stacey now has stable accommodation, is able to attend her medical appointments, and has support to be active and independent in her home and community.

“With my advocate’s support, I now have a place to live. My advocate also helped me find a GP who takes the time to listen to me and care about my complex health issues, and a psychologist who was able to assist me to work through my years of trauma.

I’m now receiving in-home support with cooking and cleaning tasks, as well as support to undertake activities in the community.

The first time I spoke with my advocate, I was suicidal and had nowhere to turn, now I have so many support mechanisms in place around me, I have a reason to get up each day and this can be put down to my advocates determination to open doors that had previously been closed in my face.”

*Names have been changed.

New South Wales

Individual advocates in New South Wales provided support for people with disability across a range of issues this year, including NDIS appeals, escaping or reporting violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation, engaging with the Disability Royal Commission through private sessions or submissions, guardianship and financial management review or revocation, and education on rights, accessibility and inclusion.

In 2022, PWDA received funding from the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) under the Disability Advocacy Futures Program (DAFP), to provide advocacy assistance to people with disability in the Local Health Districts (LHDs) of Sydney, Southeast Sydney and Southwest

Sydney. The individual advocacy services in this program help people with disability to access NSW Government directly funded or provided services.

Under the DAFP, PWDA collaborates with key stakeholders, such as agencies that provide services to people with disability in the areas of housing, health, education, and transport. We work with these agencies to improve connections for people with disability to NSW Government services while identifying structural barriers to access. We work specifically with residents in Assisted Boarding Houses across the three LHDs to ensure all their support needs are met. Our advocacy approach combines tailored one-on-one support with targeted community outreach, so that people with disability and their supporters can learn about the service we offer and how to contact us.



"My advocate is kind, caring, knowledgeable, friendly, easy to liaise with and devoted.

Her advocacy got me a massive breakthrough with my issue where no other could.

This is a step closer to achieving my goal.

Keep up the great work, what you do is amazing!"

Sian*, PWDA client

Kelley*

Kelley asked for our help going to the AAT to appeal a decision which left him without NDIS support for his multiple chronic health conditions and physical impairments. Before he contacted us, he had applied for the NDIS unsuccessfully, and his internal appeal had been knocked back.

How we helped

Over a period of two and a half years, a PWDA advocate supported Kelley at eight case conferences, an occupational therapy assessment, two conciliation hearings, three directions hearings and a three-day formal hearing at the AAT, before the Presiding Member reached their final decision. The advocate also wrote several submissions to support Kelley's case.

The AAT finally overturned the original decision by the NDIS and Kelley was given long-overdue access to the Scheme.

**Client stories from
New South Wales**

Max*

Max was in a motor vehicle accident which left them with a traumatic brain injury. While Max was unconscious in hospital, the ward social worker made an application for a Financial Management Order (FMO), to permanently take control of Max's financial affairs. When Max recovered and went home, they sought support from PWDA to get the FMO revoked.

How we helped

A PWDA advocate helped Max collect the necessary evidence and complete the required paperwork to seek revocation of the FMO. This included supporting Max to access a clinical psychologist for an updated assessment. The order was revoked at hearing in time to allow Max to go on an extended overseas holiday with their family.

Max was glad to be free from government intrusion and to have their independence restored.

“In my opinion, [my PWDA advocate] is the type of advocate that anyone would be thrilled to have in their corner. I found him to be kind, courteous, professional, a voice of reason in times of uncertainty, always providing wise counsel, and a tireless champion for my cause.

With his invaluable advocacy, we were able to upset the odds and secure a good result. It's impossible for me to accurately state just how much my advocate's assistance has meant to me, or how big the debt of gratitude I owe to him and PWDA.

Thank you! And thank you to all at PWDA!”

William*, PWDA client

*Names have been changed.



Information, intake and referral

4,706

**people supported with
information, referral and
advocacy support**

For the second consecutive year, PWDA's Information, Intake and Referral team experienced an increase in demand for its services.

In 2021-22, our team supported 4,706 clients with information, support and referrals; including referrals to PWDA's individual advocacy services across New South Wales and Queensland. This was an increase from 4,003 client enquiries in 2019-2020, and 3,134 contacts in 2018-19: representing a 33.3% increase over two years. In 2021-22, the most significant factors negatively impacting volumes were the increase in support requests from NDIS participants around AAT matters and COVID-19.

In light of increasing demand, a major focus for the team was to address increasing client wait times. A review of processes, workflows and resource management

92%

reduction in response time

resulted in efficiencies and an initial reduction in wait times. The transition to a new Client Management System (CMS) and the launch of our new website, with improved functionality and streamlined workflows, realised further improvements. As a result, in 2021-22 our clients experienced a significant 92% reduction in response times.

When people with disability and local advocacy services in Queensland and northern New South Wales were impacted by devastating floods, PWDA's Information, Intake and Referral Team stepped in to help the community, offering support where there was a visible need.

We were grateful to secure funding from the DCJ Social Sector Support Fund, which allowed us to allocate additional resources to increases in COVID-19-related client inquiries.

AJ*

AJ contacted the PWDA Information, Intake and Referral Service by phone. AJ said they had been subject to several acts of violence within disability services, including in residential settings.

How we helped

An Information, Intake and Referral Officer checked on AJ's current safety before discussing support and justice options with them. AJ did not want to pursue any legal action at this stage, but they were considering making a submission to the Disability Royal Commission (DRC) and accessing the National Redress Scheme.

We let AJ know that PWDA offers support to people with disability to engage with the DRC, and the Redress Scheme. AJ was interested in taking up this support and so we allocated them to one of our individual advocates.

AJ was able to make their submission to the DRC and to apply for Redress.

Martin*

Martin called the PWDA Information, Intake and Referral Service, in a highly distressed state. He identified as someone living with 'paranoid schizophrenia'. Martin was concerned about his partner, David, who had recently been scheduled in a psychiatric hospital. Martin missed David and commented on how he was dependent on him for much of his day-to-day care.

How we helped

An Information, Intake and Referral Officer was able to clarify the whereabouts of Martin's partner while also liaising with local support services to assist Martin at this distressing time.

Intake client stories

*Names have been changed.



Housing and accommodation

78

clients assisted by Disability Housing Advocacy Service

- 42 continuing from the previous FY
- 36 new clients

Of these 78

- 54 cases closed to end of June 22
- 24 cases still active

31

stakeholder engagement and service promotion activities conducted by Disability Housing Information Line (DHIL)

- 5 Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) providers
- 7 Supported Independent Living (SIL) providers
- 14 health institutions
- 2 advocacy providers
- 3 govt agencies: Public Guardian, NDIS Services and Legal Services

104

referrals received by the Disability Housing Information Line

- 39 provided with advice and information
- 31 referred to advocacy support
- 9 referred to other PWDA projects
- 14 referred to external agencies for assistance
- 8 referred to services in their local area
- 3 lost contact

4

webinars delivered

The Disability Housing Advocacy Service (DHAS) and the Disability Housing Information Line (DHIL) assist people with disability living in supported accommodation throughout New South Wales that have tenancy problems or concerns. This includes people living in Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) settings.

DHAS supports residents to mediate disputes with their accommodation providers, and negotiates tenancy outcomes between residents, their accommodation providers, and other stakeholders. DHIL provides information and advice to people living in these accommodation settings, their supporters, and housing providers.

This year, DHAS and DHIL successfully connected with 139 clients in residential settings across New South Wales to provide them with information and advocacy support. From July 2021 to June 2022, DHAS assisted 78 clients (36 new cases and 42 continuing from the previous financial year). 24 cases are still active, and 54 cases were closed. A total of 104 referrals were made to the DHIL as a direct result of our community outreach work and through our existing connections with other key stakeholders. Of these, 39 were provided with advice and information, 40 referred to PWDA individual advocates working in DHAS or other projects, and 14 were referred to external agencies for assistance. The remaining 11 people were outside the project area.

We enhanced our already robust understanding of systemic issues by continuing to grow our stakeholder network. Our good reputation in the sector fostered over 60 information and advice requests from service providers, including support coordinators, supported accommodation providers and government agencies.

Clients assisted included:

- People with Supported Independent Living (SIL) approvals
- People with Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) approvals
- People residing in group home settings
- People seeking higher/alternative levels of SDA/SIL
- People in independent SDA/SIL settings

As part of a larger individual capacity building strategy, we designed and delivered four interactive webinars on disability rights for residents in supported accommodation. We also created and facilitated a peer-support group for residents in supported accommodation, which continued until the end of December 2021.

The team participated in five community engagement activities and shared information about DHAS and DHIL, as well as useful tips and strategies to help build the capacity of residents to self-advocate and demonstrate the importance of open communication in preventing and resolving disputes.

Top housing and accommodation issues affecting the people we supported:

- **SDA funding levels**
- **SIL service provision**
- **Lack of choice and control**
- **Poor quality NDIS supports**
- **Frustrated relocation requests**
- **AAT appeals to do with NDIS**
- **Threats to personal safety**

Chen*

Chen contacted us when they lost a trusted support worker. This worker had for several years assisted Chen, who has physical and psychosocial disability, to understand and navigate the NDIS. Chen was anxious that they now had no one to support them with this important task.

How we helped

The DHAS team successfully supported Chen to ask for a better NDIS plan. The new plan has three times the funds and includes provision for extensive community access, which Chen had never received before. They were extremely happy with this outcome and immensely appreciative of PWDA's support.

Andy*

After a huge drop in her Supported Independent Living (SIL) funding, Andy was at risk of eviction due to her alleged 'behaviours of concern'. The loss of funding left Andy without active overnight support, so she was no longer able to attend sporting or cultural events held during the evening. This negatively impacted Andy's independence and inclusion in the community.

How we helped

PWDA worked collaboratively with Andy and her family and convinced the NDIS to restore the active overnight support. Andy's evening 'curfew' was lifted. Her family thanked us for how quickly we were able to resolve this stressful situation.

**Client stories from
DHAS & DHIL**



**Disability
Housing
Advocacy
Service**

Sim*

Sim, who lives with the chronic effects of trauma and physical ill health, shared a private rental property with a long-time friend. He faced a crisis when his tenancy was terminated at short notice, putting him at risk of imminent homelessness.

How we helped

A PWDA advocate supported Sim and his friend to organise temporary accommodation through DCJ Housing and to apply for longer term social housing. While waiting for an offer to come through, the advocate liaised with Sim's other support services to ensure his health and wellbeing was maintained. Within a month, Sim and his friend were offered a suitable social housing property, which they accepted.

“We have a severely intellectually disabled adult son who lives at home. We were most unhappy with his May 2021 NDIS plan and appealed against the decisions made in it which reduced his funding.

After a 12-month appeal process against the NDIA, we had an outstanding outcome that exceeded our expectations and will be a life-changer for our family, and especially our son.

This outcome would not have happened without [the PWDA advocate's] support, guidance, advice, and time throughout the whole appeal process. We are extremely thankful and appreciative to [the advocate] for it and wish him all the best.”

Mark*, parent of PWDA client

*Names have been changed.

Childhood sexual abuse: PWDA Redress Project

34

active clients

395

services contacted

15

applications lodged

103

educational presentations
given to 436 people

6

outcomes received

842

outreach emails sent out
to services

13

supported to access counselling
through Victim Services

516

outreach phone calls
made to services

30

referred to Knowmore
Legal Service



The PWDA Redress Project supports adult survivors of institutional child sexual assault to engage with the National Redress Scheme. The potential outcomes of this engagement are:

- 1. Counselling support**
- 2. Redress payment**
- 3. Apology (from the offending institution)**

We support survivors throughout the entire process, from providing them with information about the Scheme, to assisting them to complete and lodge the application form, to receiving and understanding any offer made by the Scheme, to accessing psychological support and participating in the direct personal response process.

Despite some limitations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Redress Project team sustained its community outreach work in 2021-22, in person when possible and via other means when restrictions dictated otherwise. Our outreach work extends across New South Wales, including regional and remote areas. This work includes the provision of information to services and individuals, warm referrals, and collaboration with a wide range of services to meet client needs.

The PWDA Redress Project incorporates an identified Indigenous role. This Project Officer/Advocate position has been a great success, with more than half our Redress clients now coming from First Nations

communities. We have been able to build strong working relationships with First Nations communities throughout New South Wales.

This year, we also worked with several other NSW Redress support services to run a pilot collaborative outreach program in South-Western and Western Sydney. This project ran for six months and involved an audit of services in the chosen Local Government Areas. This outreach was very well-received.

- **Towns/regions visited in person: Wollongong, Shellharbour, Nowra, Kiama, Bathurst, Dubbo, Orange, Broken Hill, Coonamble, Nyngan, Narromine, Bourke, Brewarrina, Coonabarabran, Mudgee, Tamworth, Lithgow, Oberon.**
- **Towns/regions connected via phone and email: All the above as well as Armidale, Newcastle, Campbelltown, Wagga Wagga, Central Coast, Port Stephens, Newcastle, Lightning Ridge, Cobar, Walgett, Griffith, Cowra, Parks, Forbes, Lismore, Gilgandra, Ulladulla, Sydney basin as well as services that are state and/or country-wide.**



Emma*

Emma came to the PWDA Redress Project for help with their application. They were not eligible for the financial component due to a previous payment for abuse, but they did apply for (and were granted) a lifetime supply of counselling and a direct personal response from the responsible institution.

How we helped

The PWDA Redress Project Officer assisted Emma with their application and provided them with support, throughout and after the offer. The Project Officer also assisted Emma in accessing the NDIS and the disability support pension.

"[My PWDA Redress advocate] assisted me so much in being able to talk about my problems and listened to me in a way that no one else had been able to do. I could not speak more highly of Linda and her caring nature and expertise. I would like to say that Linda is an exceeding credit to PWDA and her abilities and professional skills are far more superior than any of the professionals I had seen in the past."

Henry*, PWDA client

Redress client story

*Names have been changed.



Disability rights

49

reports and submissions

7

position statements

65

**key sector and
stakeholder meetings**

The Policy and Systemic Advocacy team had a busy year advocating for the rights of people with disability.

We undertook this work through participation in consultations and conferences, hosting public events and speaking at seminars, making submissions on topics of key concern, and supporting people with disability to have their voices heard and build leadership and representational skills. We did this while ensuring we engaged and consulted with our members along the way.

Alongside our colleagues in the disability sector, PWDA played a key role in the successful campaign against the independent assessments the Government wanted to put us through to access and stay on the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

We also continued to push states that have not adopted silver-level accessibility standards in the National Construction Code (NCC), after successfully advocating for changes to the NCC to include minimum accessibility standards. People in our community should be able to live in homes that are accessible no matter where they live in Australia, and national consistency is of vital importance.

PWDA has been at the forefront of pandemic and natural disaster advocacy, including through our continuing participation in the government's COVID-19 Disability Advisory

Committee. We have continued to engage in and encourage persistent media coverage on these issues, developing position statements, and initiating a Leave No One Behind campaign with Queenslanders with Disability Network, urging the government to develop a National Plan and Roadmap to deliver disability inclusive responses to disasters including COVID-19. At the Conference of State Parties (COSP) to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, we also learned how other countries were disability-inclusive in their responses to the pandemic and natural disasters, which will inform our ongoing advocacy.

Over the year, the PWDA policy team produced seven [position statements](#) and 49 [submissions](#) to the Federal, Northern Territory and New South Wales Governments, including three submissions to international

forums including the United Nations. This was done in partnership with PWDA's Board, and our individual advocates and members. All submissions were made public on the PWDA website, where possible. The position statements included five COVID-19 statements. The team also worked alongside the Board to produce a [Federal Election Platform](#) soon after we published a Federal Budget 2022 [wish list](#) and [critique](#).

We publicly highlighted the inappropriate sentence given to Rosa Maione, an Adelaide disability support worker who pled guilty to manslaughter, over her role in the death of Ann Marie Smith in 2020. It was a timely reminder of the reasons we do what we do. Ensuring people with disability across the country have their rights upheld can be a life-or-death matter.



International advocacy

Our international work focuses on the advocacy and empowerment of people with disability through effective representation of people with disability and organisational capacity building.

PWDA continues to represent people with disability regionally and internationally through our engagement with the United Nations and our networks with our sister Disabled People Organisations (DPOs) in the Asia-Pacific Region.

Key activities and achievements in 2021-22 included:

- Participation at the 15th session of Conference of State Parties (COSP): Members of the PWDA Board, our CEO, and our Senior Manager of Policy, as well as colleagues from other disability organisations attended the

15th session of the COSP to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Our advocacy focused on inclusive natural disaster responses and employment, where we presented at two side events on each topic. Vice President Kelly Cox spoke about the importance of international cooperation.

- Participation in the Eighth Session of the UN Working Group on the Asia-Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities 2013-2022: The Incheon Strategy implements the CRPD in the Asia-Pacific region and is due to end in 2022. PWDA ran a session on what the Incheon Strategy achieved in the last decade and lessons learned, providing opportunities for DPOs to influence further action.



Regional engagement and capacity building

PWDA also supports the growth and development of our sister DPOs in the Asia-Pacific region. Our work in this area is aligned with our commitment to build the disability rights movement regionally and internationally by fostering mutually beneficial partnerships and platforms where people with disability can share knowledge, experience and expertise. In 2021-22, our work included:

- The Pacific Disability Forum (PDF): PWDA remains an active member of the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF), a regional DPO network that works to build the capacity of DPOs, to strengthen self-representation and improve the lives of people with disability in the Pacific through advocacy and capacity-building.
- Disability-inclusive development and disaster preparedness: PWDA continued to actively advocate for disability-inclusive development and disaster preparedness regionally and internationally, through key stakeholder networks and forums such as the Australian Disability and Development Consortium and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Inclusion Reference Group.



Disability Royal Commission

58

clients supported to engage with the DRC through 657 sessions

4

community blogs

3

policy submissions:

- We belong here – Our nation must end exclusionary systems that harm people with disability
- The Experiences and Perspectives of People with Disability From Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds (joint submission with NEDA and FECCA)
- Wage equity and more choices in employment for people with an intellectual disability (joint evidence review with Inclusion Australia)

5,696

visitors to Our Royal Commission website

1 million +

digital advertising views

46

people watched our Private Sessions 101 webinar live, and the Facebook post with the recording reached over 600 people

11

public hearings live-tweeted

The voices and stories of people with disability are vital to ensuring that the Royal Commission's final report and recommendations truly reflect what our community is going through and the transformative change we need to create a fully inclusive society and end violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation against people with disability.

The establishment of the Disability Royal Commission (DRC) was hard fought for by the disability community, and we remain committed to ensuring that it explores the issues that matter to the disability community the most. Whenever possible, we live-tweet hearings so that disabled voices are heard and amplified, and so that people with disability who find the DRC inaccessible can stay informed and participate in the public discussion.

Our individual advocates supported people with disability in New South Wales and parts of Queensland to engage with the Disability Royal Commission (DRC) this year by assisting them to make submissions, attend private sessions, and address current issues that may be seriously impacting on their lives. On a systemic level, we worked to hold the Royal Commission to a high standard through behind-the-scenes policy engagement and supported its work by sharing information with the public, writing reports and submissions, and leading the conversation through media engagements. A cross-team collaborative working group at PWDA met fortnightly throughout the year to ensure the DRC remained a focus and to plan out work involving people from multiple teams.



This year, we helped put the voices of people with disability front and centre by:

- **supporting people with disability to make individual submissions;**
- **providing reports and case studies rooted in years of individual advocacy work;**
- **engaging in outreach campaigns to spread the word about the Royal Commission and encourage people with disability to share their stories; and**
- **publishing information on our website and social media to make the Royal Commission's output more accessible to the public.**

DRC individual advocacy

This year, PWDA advocates helped 58 people tell their stories to the Disability Royal Commission through a private session, a written submission, or both, as well as to overcome current problems in their lives.

Our advocates supported their clients to structure and tell their story to the DRC, and to make recommendations on how we can improve life for people with disability. Being truly heard for the first time has helped people with disability overcome the impact of trauma.

Our individual advocates frequently assisted survivors with several issues at once: for example, to help them resolve a tenancy dispute; apply for the NDIS; and make a disability discrimination complaint as well as telling their story to the DRC. Many clients have approached us with stories of decades of abuse, neglect, and exploitation which continue to affect them to this day. PWDA acknowledges the strength of these survivors in speaking up for positive change.

DRC systemic advocacy

While our advocates supported clients, our policy team worked to highlight policy issues faced by people with disability to the DRC through submissions on promoting inclusion, the experiences and perspectives of people with disability from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and wage

equity. Our Vice President Kelly Cox and Senior Research & Policy Officer Frances Quan Farrant appeared in a panel with representatives of First Peoples Disability Network during **Public hearing 18**: The human rights of people with disability and making the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities a reality in Australian law, policies and practices.

We continued to attend sector coordination meetings with other Disabled People's Organisations and Disability Representative Organisations, participating in valuable information-sharing, policy collaboration and the successful joint sector campaign for the Royal Commissions Amendment (Protection of Information) Bill 2021, which changed the law to fully protect the privacy of people with disability making confidential submissions.

DRC communications and engagement

In 2021, the Disability Royal Commission announced 2022 deadlines for submissions and private session registrations. In response, we ramped up outreach and publicity work to make sure as many people with disability as possible had the opportunity to share their story in the time available. We ran two social media advertising campaigns to let people know about our Individual Advocacy service, which totalled over a million views, and published two print ads (in the Koori Mail and South Sydney Herald) kicking off an ongoing outreach campaign to get the word out in community newspapers.

In the lead-up to the 30 June private sessions registration deadline, we collaborated with

Your Story Disability Legal Support and Blue Knot Foundation to present a webinar called 'Private Sessions 101', in which an advocate, a lawyer and a counsellor talked about their work around private sessions and answered questions about engaging with the Royal Commission. 46 people watched the webinar live on Zoom or Facebook, and the Facebook post sharing the recording reached over 600 people.

We live-tweeted 11 public hearings this year, which had strong engagement from the community. We also kept our members and community up-to-date by regularly updating Our Royal Commission website with information about upcoming hearings and plain language glossaries explaining legal and academic terminology to make the Royal Commission's work more accessible to more people. We also published four new topical guest blogs by people with disability in the well-received Our Voice series.



Hannah*

Hannah has experienced nearly 70 years of severe emotional and physical abuse and coercive control by her father and younger siblings. She suffered neglect and misdiagnoses of her health needs resulting in significant issues from both incorrect and over-prescribed medication. She struggles with the ongoing impact of this abuse and experiences great difficulty accessing necessary services as a result.

How we helped

A PWDA advocate supported Hannah to go through years of documentation and assisted her in writing her DRC submission.

The advocate also provided support and guidance about Hannah's rights when dealing with current issues involving the legal system. Hannah's elder brother, who is her legal guardian, supported her to move interstate to escape the coercive control. However, her abusive family members continued their regime of harassment despite a Temporary Protection Order and later a Court Agreement. Hannah's estranged relatives demanded her inheritance go to the Public Trustee.

Hannah was unable to obtain any community legal assistance and had to engage and pay for private lawyers upfront. Hannah's first barrister was not a good fit.

With the support of her advocate and brother, Hannah pressed forward, hiring another legal representative who understood Hannah's position and agreed that she needed to be part of the decision-making process for her own life. The judge publicly rebuked the abusive family members and found in Hannah's favour, even awarding some cost recovery to Hannah.

Mick*

Mick contacted PWDA for support to tell his story to the DRC in a private session.

With his advocate's support, Mick told the DRC about his confusion and fear when he was admitted to a mental health ward for the first time under an Involuntary Treatment Order. There, he was forced to take high doses of antipsychotic medication. He discussed the power imbalance between psychiatrists and patients, poor communication, and the lack of holistic and trauma-informed care in the inpatient mental health system.

Mick also had to deal with being misdiagnosed and overmedicated, which led to chronic health problems after his hospital admission. Mick noted the detrimental effects his experience had not just on himself, but also on his children and their mother. He described inadequacies of the complaints processes within multiple government organisations.

How we helped

A PWDA advocate helped Mick to structure his story, go through documentation and get access to appropriate counselling. His advocate also put him in touch with other organisations that could assist with NDIS access and support within the home.

*Names have been changed.

Projects, research and training



Building Access Project

3

Easy Read resources produced

7

videos created

3

webinars

1

workshop delivered

1

handbook created

A positive response to our work on the Building Access Project in 2020-21 resulted in an invitation to continue the project in 2021-22 into 2023. The Building Access Project is hosted by PWDA and is part of an innovative movement enabling Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) services to better meet the needs of women and children with disability.

This year, with the support from our women's advisory, PWDA co-designed and co-created three Easy Read resources and six educational videos, which we launched over the 16 Days of Activism. These resources, which are now [available on our website](#), addressed widespread gaps in the sexual, domestic, and family violence (SDFV) sector, and amplified our work raising awareness around the importance of access and inclusion in the sector.

The women with disability on our advisory group expressed a sense of pride in being part of the process of creating these materials, feeling that they have made a meaningful contribution to a project that will have a positive impact on other women with disability.

We worked with the eSafety Commission to develop a training package aimed at disability and SDFV workers supporting women with disability who experience technology-facilitated abuse. We also created a series of training resources aimed at up-skilling and building capacity in the SDFV sector.

This included designing and delivering webinars on:

- Advocating for the human rights of women with disability who experience abuse
- Supporting women with disability who experience abuse and who use or require access to the NDIS.

In collaboration with WWILD (Women with Intellectual Learning Disability), we created a handbook for SDFV workers on supporting women with intellectual and cognitive

disability, which was identified as a much-needed resource in the sector through our consultation. In June, we prepared and delivered a workshop with the City of Sydney to share lessons learned and to promote the handbook, which is also [available on our website](#). We were able to reach law enforcement personnel, the justice sector, New South Wales Health, local government officers and the SDFV sector through this event.

Following the exciting news that the Building Access Project would be extended to June 2023, we have been planning and scoping work with sector partners. These partnerships will help us roll out guidelines for services across the New South Wales SDFV sector, and to reach more victim-survivors with disability to better inform and shape our work in this critically important space.



Talk Up Project

6

**community consultations
and stakeholder
engagement sessions**

3

**expert advisory
committee meetings**

23

community members consulted

Talk Up is a joint project run in partnership with the Australian Centre for Disability Law (ACDL) and First People's Disability Network (FPDN). The aim of the project is to develop resources which will help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability to understand their legal rights and, where possible, empower them to advocate for themselves and their community. To make these resources most useful, Talk Up will run educational workshops in the community to teach people how to use them.

Starting in 2020-21, the Talk Up project continued into this year.

The Talk Up project team works in three project locations: Western Sydney, Dubbo and Northern Rivers; with plans to finish work in our first location, Western Sydney, by the end of 2022.

Talk Up!

Engage-In Project

18

clients supported

The Engage-In team continued to provide support to people with disability in hard-to-reach settings including prisons, psychiatric institutions and boarding houses this year. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, most of this work was undertaken via videoconferencing.

Our Engage-In project has drawn much-needed attention to the problems of people with disability who have chronic, complex support needs. In 2021-22 the project continued to identify and break down significant barriers faced by clients in hard-to-reach settings.

We worked with key stakeholders to support clients' journeys from institutional to community-based living, and supported clients living with psychosocial disability to increase funding in their NDIS packages.

As well as supporting clients, this year the team finalised an action research project which was developed in partnership with the University of Sydney; and importantly co-designed with survivors. A research evaluation and final report was also prepared by our partners in the social work department at the University of Sydney. This report confirms the positive benefits of our 'Engage-In' approach, which starts with

1

research report delivered

building relationships with key stakeholders to maximise access to clients in closed settings.

The report commends PWDA for putting lived experience at the centre of the Engage-In project. Our work in this space is drawn from, and guided by, people living with psychosocial disability. This includes those clients who agreed to be interviewed about the barriers they face in getting support.

With the project coming to a close, the Engage-In team's focus is now on developing a model of best practice and an organisational capacity-building training package. This package will embed trauma-informed, strengths-based, person-centred engagement with clients and colleagues living with psychosocial disability at PWDA. This training will then be rolled out to PWDA Board, staff and volunteers and will eventually be added to PWDA's suite of education and training modules.



Kylie*

Another disability rights organisation put us in touch with Kylie, who was in custody and wanted to apply for the NDIS. An Engage-In Project Officer contacted Kylie, who told us she had been without support for her psychosocial disability for some time.

How we helped

The Project Officer helped Kylie gather and submit the required evidence to make an application to the NDIS, which was successful.

During this time, the Project Officer supported Kylie to identify her goals and the support she needed to achieve them. Kylie's NDIS plan contained sufficient funding to cover the cost of those supports, as well as support coordination to help her implement the plan.

The Project Officer liaised with Kylie, her Support Coordinator, and other key stakeholders to facilitate Kylie's release from jail and transition into affordable, accessible social housing. She now lives happily in the community, with the supports she needs. Kylie looks forward to participating in even more social activities and is planning to return to study.

Engage-In client story

*Name has been changed.



Research

7

research partnerships

PWDA conducted work this year on a range of research projects and partnerships that support our policy and systemic advocacy team, our key projects and our services.

Our participation in research ensures the voices of people with disability inform research that is used by the government to make decisions, and inform policies that impact on our daily lives. Having disability-led research is fundamental to ensuring the research on disability issues is about us and for us.

Research methodologies must be inclusive. For this reason, we have developed our **Research Protocols** to provide guidance on what inclusive research on disability issues looks like. The protocols are a leading example of disabled people determining how research is commissioned, and the approach of that research, so it serves the priorities of people with disability first.

PWDA is looking to be part of a wider push to drive a research agenda that seeks to answer the questions and investigate the issues that are most important to the disability community.

1

independent research project: Pandemic Research Project

This year, we were involved in seven research partnerships:

- Two with the Disability Royal Commission, where PWDA's expertise helped shape the Commission's thinking on:
 - restrictive practices; and
 - effective, accessible complaint mechanisms.
- With the Our Watch project - Supporting the ongoing prevention of violence against women and children in Australia.
- With Griffith University - A research project on adjudicating rights in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). This research is being used to improve the quality of decision-making at the National Disability Insurance Agency for funded supports.
- With the Centre for Research Excellence in Disability and Health - a centre that brings together minds from the University of Melbourne, University of Sydney, RMIT University, Monash University and the University of New

South Wales - we accessed real-time research to support our ongoing advocacy on disability inclusive responses to the pandemic.

- With the University of Technology Sydney - Our focus this year was on getting a dementia redress project off the ground. The project will develop dementia redress principles and a framework for redress.
- With the NSW Council of Social Services - On research to model the long-term impacts of COVID-19 in New South Wales so we are better equipped to ensure human services meet the needs of people with disability into the future.

We also continued work on the Pandemic Research Project, investigating the experiences of women with disability during the COVID-19 pandemic. You can read more on this project's achievements in the next section of this report.

And in 2021-22, we started to directly fund research that matters. We funded Inclusion Australia to do a [research review](#) into wage equity and more choices in employment for people with intellectual disability. This research was drawn upon at the Disability Royal Commission's hearing into Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs) in May 2022.





Pandemic Project: COVID-19 research project

- **112 survey responses**
- **13 one-on-one interviews**
- **2 expert advisory committee meetings**

In 2021-22, the National Mental Health Commission (NMHC) funded PWDA to investigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of women with disability. The aim of the project was to better understand the challenges faced by this marginalised group and suggest ways in which women with disability can be better supported in the future.

First-hand research to inform PWDA's project report was gathered through an in-depth online literature review, an online survey completed by 112 participants, and 13 one-on-one interviews with women with disability.

The **final report** – published in August 2022 – outlines the diverse impacts this pandemic had on women with disability, both negative and positive. These ranged from higher rates of domestic violence and housing insecurity to increased full-time employment opportunities and access to healthcare due to telehealth.

The final report was sent to the NMHC to inform future policies and support the Government to work effectively with women with disability to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Six recommendations were outlined in the report:

1. Continue bulk-billed telehealth
2. Promote and ensure data gathering and studies about women with disability occur
3. Prioritise disability inclusive responses, messaging, and information
4. Maintain work-from-home alternative in the public service and encourage private companies to do the same
5. Include women with disability in the consultation and stakeholder engagement processes
6. Increase mental health and domestic violence supports with specific training, understanding and accessibility requirements for women with disability

The Pandemic Research Project team also worked alongside PWDA's policy team to ensure findings and recommendations inform PWDA's relevant policy work.

Training

283

people trained

PWDA continued to educate and deliver high-quality training to people with disability, service providers, family and community members in 2021-22. All of PWDA's training is delivered by people with disability.

45

PWDA staff trained

Because COVID-19 continued to negatively impact the team's ability to undertake face-to-face training, we focused on online delivery. We converted several of our existing training packages into online modules. All PWDA training packages are now offered face-to-face and online, making our training offerings more flexible and accessible.

4

bespoke training packages developed

The team also developed an online induction for new staff. As part of this induction training, we developed modules for staff on the social model of disability, the CRPD, and the human rights model of disability.

3

training partnerships

While the training team oversees induction training for new PWDA employees, they also offer external training on a fee-for-service basis and, on request, develop training packages within funded projects. This year, the team trained 283 participants through our fee-for-service offering and we developed a relationship with the Council for Intellectual Disability (CID) to have women with intellectual disability co-deliver workshops.

Funded projects this year saw us partner with Domestic Violence NSW (DVNSW) and the Education Centre Against Violence (ECAV) on training programs, for which we developed a training package for DVNSW and co-delivered it at the DVNSW conference. We initiated focus groups with ECAV to

develop a training program for NSW health workers and delivered six sessions across New South Wales.

The training team also facilitated the production of a disability awareness video for the Department of Land and Housing NSW.

Disability Awareness

PWDA's most popular training workshop, **Disability Awareness**, helps support workers

and community members to work respectfully with people with disability. The training highlights the different barriers that people with disability may face when accessing services or simply living daily life. It includes tools and strategies for how to communicate with people with disability, information about appropriate and respectful language, and important facts and statistics about disability discrimination law, the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disability, and the history and evolution of the disability rights movement.



Communications and media

210,751

website visitors

3.6 million

people reached on social media

2,650

media stories

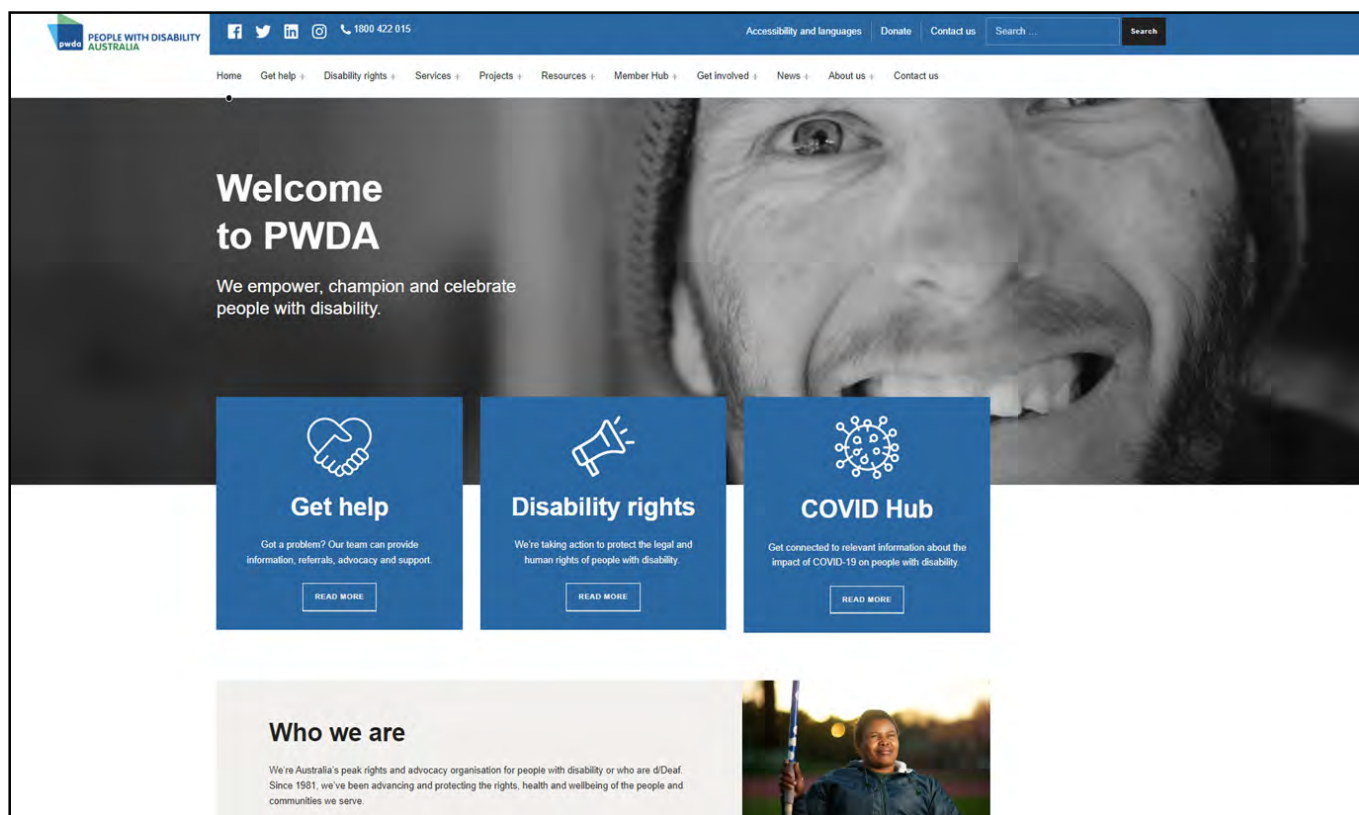
43

media releases

PWDA shares and promotes information about the important issues impacting people with disability, as well as PWDA advocacy, activities and events – and we provide insight into what our community members are thinking. We do this via digital communications including our website, social media and popular emails; a diverse range of bespoke publications; and media engagement. By promoting our voices, our issues and our stories, we help to inform and educate people about advancing and protecting disability rights throughout our community.

We generated thousands of media stories across Australia about issues affecting people with disability this year. The Federal Election was a key media engagement opportunity, and our spokespeople appeared in hundreds of TV, radio, print and digital stories related to the election and our advocacy around it. We also generated significant media engagement about PWDA's advocacy in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, the NDIS, the Religious Discrimination Bill, the Federal Budget and the Disability Support Pension.

Engagement increased significantly this year across digital channels, with our Facebook, Instagram and YouTube channels seeing much greater reach, and our Twitter account continuing to reach millions of people. Website user numbers remained strong.



We also produced 24 newsletters for our members and subscribers and over 250 curated media summaries of disability-related news from around Australia and the world. Subscribers to these newsletters – and engagement with them – continued to grow.

This year, we developed and built a new PWDA website, which was launched in the first week of August 2022. The new site provides an inclusive, easy-to-use experience with improved functionality, streamlined content, new accessibility features and WCAG 2.1 AA compliance. We thank digital solutions agency Sitback for its generous support with this project, and the Australian Department of Industry and Innovation for providing a project grant.

We produced a range of new publications to promote our work and our engagement with clients, members and supporters.

This included a new suite of accessible corporate brochures, new promotional material for our Housing service and Redress project, a **Client Handbook** for people using our Individual Advocacy service, an update to our popular **Language Guide** and our **2020-21 Annual Report**. These complemented our ongoing publications which include the PWDA website, member communications, email communications and media releases.



PWDA Board and Corporate Services

3

new Board members were appointed at the 2021 PWDA Annual General Meeting:

- Samantha Connor
- Kelly Cox
- Clare Gibellini

20

Board Advisory Group meetings

59

staff members (at 30 June 2022)

12

Board meetings

15

new starters

32

policies reviewed and finalised by Governance Advisory Group and Board

311

Qantas Carer Concession Card applications

Key activities of the Board and Board Advisory Groups

With a focus on governance, the PWDA Board commenced a thorough review of all PWDA policies this year. This was carried out with the support of the Governance Advisory Group, and reviews were prioritised based on organisational needs. Our policies ensure that PWDA complies with regulations and legislation, and provide guidance for decision-making and streamlining internal processes. 32 policies were reviewed and approved by the Governance Advisory Group and Board as final this year.

The Board and its Governance Advisory Group asked the operations team to review the existing Operational Risk Matrix with a focus on deepening our understanding of the risks as they pertained to each department or program of work across PWDA. This deep dive allowed us to identify new potential risks and place mitigations against these.

The Board also started work on PWDA's new Strategic Plan. This included consultations with members and staff as well as the establishment of the Strategic Directions Advisory Group, who provided advice on the development and direction of the new Strategy.

This year, the Membership Engagement Board Advisory Group helped develop, review and approve our new Membership Engagement Strategy. (Read more on this in the [Membership section](#) of this report.)

The Corporate Services team took on feedback from the Board and worked on further developing the Board Induction. As a result, this year's induction included additional Board-specific training on Governance and WHS, as well as overviews from each of the following senior managers at PWDA:

- Policy (Systemic Advocacy)
- Individual Advocacy – NSW and Queensland
- Corporate Services
- Media and Communications.

This helped new Board members to better understand the organisational structure and roles and responsibilities of the PWDA Operations Team.

The Board also dedicated time to:

- identifying opportunities for professional development, which saw a number of Board members attend media training sessions;
- engaging in succession planning; and
- diversifying the Board's membership in order to see the voices of all people with disability represented.

Key Corporate Services activities

FY21-22 ushered in the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic. The wellbeing of our staff and clients was our highest priority, with a COVID Safety Plan for our offices, a vaccination policy for our staff, and client procedures developed and implemented to ensure their safety.

To enhance PWDA's organisational effectiveness, we worked with the Board and Board Advisory Group on areas of governance identified as a priority.

This included:

- Implementing a new Safety Management System (SMS) which included providing training to our Health Safety Committee (HSC), developing a robust suite of WHS policies, and ensuring appropriate reporting mechanisms
- Beginning a comprehensive policy review to ensure all PWDA organisational policies are accessible and up-to-date with legislation and best practice
- Completing an assessment of our organisational risks and risk mitigations as well as working on our Business Continuity Plan (BCP)
- Migrating our IT operating systems to Office365 and Sharepoint to increase online security and to improve collaboration for our staff within and across teams in the new remote working environment

- Implementing a new HR Information System to manage policies, streamline on-boarding and give staff a better user interface for timesheets and leave applications
- Launching a Learning Management System (LMS) within the new HR platform, which now offers staff access to training resources and has become PWDA's knowledge database and information repository
- Developing a 12-month professional development and training plan in collaboration with staff.

We held 31 sessions of staff training this year, ranging from foundational and PWDA systems courses to tailored professional development for individual advocates.

Every three years, PWDA is required to undergo a National Standards for Disability Services Audit in order to ensure we meet the standards to be eligible for government funding. In November 2021, the team successfully passed the audit and was recertified by our auditors Global Mark.

PWDA is a member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID). Our ACFID membership helps us to participate in the international and regional discussions around the implementation of the CRPD, and disability rights more broadly. To stay a member of ACFID, we need to demonstrate that we meet or exceed ACFID standards and Code. In November 2021, we were also successfully recertified by ACFID.

Reconciliation Action Plan

PWDA began developing its first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in 2021-22. As an organisation, we have always worked closely with First Nations peoples, and the development of this RAP allows us to reflect on our role in progressing the reconciliation journey.

We know our members have the capacity to contribute meaningfully to reconciliation within our sphere of influence, and we appreciate that the intersectionality of being an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person with disability often leads to increased discrimination. As an organisation, we can see the importance of implementing a Reconciliation Action Plan, and we are proud to do so.

To date, we have asked PWDA staff to complete a survey which has not only helped us understand where everyone is on their reconciliation journey, but importantly also what staff want to see PWDA do to promote reconciliation in their workplace. A draft RAP which outlines actions and targets was developed followed by a review and input from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members.

Through this work, we have developed a realistic and achievable RAP that is relevant to the areas in which we work. This first draft is to be submitted to Reconciliation Australia. The RAP will undergo many iterations and require input from our Board and Board Advisories before it is finalised.



Board, staff and volunteers

Board

Board members in the 2021-22 financial year included the following:

President: Samantha Connor

Vice President: Kelly Cox

Craig Andrews

Andrew Fairbairn

Clare Gibellini

Marayke Jonkers

Nicole Lee

Suresh Rajan

Puneet Chaudhary

Sean Connelly

Karen Coughlan

Peter Darby

Giancarlo De Vera

Shaana Dekker

Jana Dolezalova

Gareth Elliott

Amanda Ellis

Andrew Emmerson

Colombapatabendige Fernando

Susan Fowles

Samantha French

Luke Gale

Sharee Gale

Stephin Hargreave

Melinda Harrison

Leonie Hazelton

Freya Higgins

Sally Holmes

Liesl Homes

Mina Hunt

Jack Hutchison

Lisa Ira

Hollie James

Staff

Staff members in the 2021-22 financial year included the following:

Martin A'Bell

Michelle Arapovic

Miriam Aslan

Michael Badorrek

Jessica Bell

Elizabeth Blue

Maja Bulut

Naomi Chainey

Theodore Jensen
Rachel Kayrooz
Michelle Keogh
Stephen Kilkeary
Euna Kim
Karen Kobier
Maggie Korenblum
Fran Krix
Matthew Langman
Natasha Lee
Jaclyn Lindsay
Adriana Malavisi
Wanda Matthews
Indre McGlinn
Margot McKnight
Tracey Moffatt
Tessa Newman
Garry Oates
Francis O'Neil
Thara Pech
Annie Piper
Adrienne Prazauskas
Lee-Anne Pringle
Frances Quan Farrant
Vicky Roach
Rebecca Rongotaua
Natalie Ross
Jen Ruse
Danielle Santos
Jessica Saville
Polly Seymour

Jessica Small
Grace Stevenson
Susan Strasser
Carolyn Talbot
Kien Tang
Miia Tolvanen
Robin Turnham
Andrea van der Kuijlen
Karin Waldmann
Erin Webster
Ilona Wildauer
Linda Wiseham
Lindsey Woollard
Sebastian Zagarella

Volunteers

Gilbert and Tobin lawyers assisted PWDA with pro bono work throughout the year.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic had a significant effect on volunteering this year. We had one volunteer in the Systemic advocacy area, Nelson Liaqat.



Susan*

Susan is over 60 years old, and her property was in a state of severe disrepair that posed a daily risk of harm. Susan had the money to make these repairs, but the Queensland Public Trust, acting as financial administrator, was blocking her access to this money. All attempts to address these issues by Susan and her supporters were dismissed or not responded to.

Susan asked a PWDA advocate to support her choice to remain in her home and not be moved to supported accommodation. After talking to Susan and her supporters, the advocate approached the Public Trustee, raising an urgent concern about the property disrepair. After much perseverance and many failed attempts, the advocate successfully engaged the Public Trustee in a stakeholder meeting with Susan.

The Public Trustee recognised how serious the risk was and took responsibility for ensuring the repairs were made. These repairs not only safeguarded Susan from harm, but also allowed her to exercise choice and control over her life and home. She is now able to progress with home modifications using her NDIS plan.

Piotr*

Piotr had become homeless, lost access to his daily supports, and his overall physical and psychological wellbeing was declining. PWDA advocates called emergency accommodation providers, homeless shelters and support providers for him and supported Piotr to register. He was rated as the highest priority with regional housing providers and social housing.

PWDA was able to help Piotr access psychosocial support services in the community and use the local knowledge of our Gympie and Sunshine Coast advocates to look for appropriate support and accommodation options. After a short, very intensive period of advocacy, Piotr was successful in finding accommodation in Bundaberg and had his supports reinstated.

This was a very successful outcome that shows how locally-based advocates with good regional networks and insights can generate results.

Sam*

Our advocates helped Sam with an external review of an NDIS decision through the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT). The NDIS had rejected appropriate assistive technology, and later insisted it would only pay for the slightly cheaper and less suitable model.

PWDA helped Sam demonstrate how her choice of equipment came at a larger initial cost but provided

substantial savings due to lower ongoing cost of consumables. Sam was also able to confidently demonstrate to the NDIA's lawyer that her choice of equipment was easier to use and safer.

Sam was successful at the AAT and was able to use her choice of assistive technology. Working with an advocate eased a lot of Sam's anxiety, provided her with increased levels of independence, and reduced her need for informal supports.

“With my advocate’s support, I now have a place to live. My advocate also helped me find a GP who takes the time to listen to me and care about my complex health issues, and a psychologist who was able to assist me to work through my years of trauma. I’m now receiving in-home support with cooking and cleaning tasks, as well as support to undertake activities in the community.

The first time I spoke with my advocate, I was suicidal and had nowhere to turn, now I have so many support mechanisms in place around me, I have a reason to get up each day and this can be put down to my advocates determination to open doors that had previously been closed in my face.”

Stacey*, PWDA client

*Names have been changed.

Financial Report

30 June 2022

People with Disability Australia Ltd.
ABN 98 879 981 198

Financial Report

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Directors' report

The directors present their report on People With Disability Australia Ltd for the financial year ended 30 June 2022.

General information

Current directors

The names of the directors in office at any time during, or since the end of, the year are:

Name	Position	Appointed/resigned
Samantha Connor	President	
Kelly Cox	Vice President	Resigned 28th June 2022
Suresh Rajan	Treasurer	
Nicole Lee	Secretary	
Andrew Fairbairn	Board Director	
Marayke Jonkers	Board Director	
Craig Andrews	Board Director	
Clare Gibellini	Vice President	Appointed 16th July 2022

Directors have been in office since the start of the financial year to the date of this report unless otherwise stated.

Principal activities

The principal activity of People With Disability Australia Ltd during the financial year was to represent, support, educate and advocate for people with disability and undertake necessary activities and programs to achieve the organisation's objective.

No significant changes in the nature of the Company's activity occurred during the financial year.

Long term objectives

The Company's long term objectives are to:

- 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.

Review of operations

The surplus of the Company amounted to \$45,501 (2021: \$445,373).

Auditor's independence declaration

The auditor's independence declaration in accordance with section 307C of the Corporations Act 2001 for the year ended 30 June 2022 has been received and can be found on page 3 (page 84 of annual report) of the financial report.

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



Samantha Connor
President



Suresh Rajan
Treasurer

Dated this 6 day of October 2022

ESV

Auditors Independence Declaration under sub division 60-C Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012

As auditor of People with Disability Australia Limited for the year ended 30 June 2022, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been no contraventions of:

- a. the auditor's independence requirements as set out in the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* in relation to the audit; and
- b. any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

Dated at Sydney on the 6th of October 2022.

ESV

ESV Business Advice and Accounting

T. Burns

Travas Burns

Partner

Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income

	Note	2022 \$	2021 \$
Revenue	4	7,868,069	6,575,681
Interest income		3559	5,243
Other income	4	528,288	1,132,763
		8,399,916	7,713,687
Expenses			
Employee benefits expense		(5,974,329)	(5,379,216)
Depreciation and amortisation expense		(670,851)	(658,516)
Advertising		(62,412)	-
Meeting expenses		(64,342)	(71,672)
Consulting and professional fees		(727,080)	(543,784)
Electricity		(13,665)	(15,410)
Computer and website costs		(192,466)	(201,947)
Motor vehicle expenses		(32,738)	(34,032)
Other expenses		(222,701)	(121,379)
Repairs and maintenance		(29,865)	(25,416)
Program costs		(112,791)	(33,905)
Telephone and internet		(60,433)	(59,559)
Travel		(136,971)	(69,587)
Rental and operating lease expenses		(53,771)	(53,891)
Total expenses		(8,354,415)	(7,268,314)
Surplus before income tax		45,501	445,373
Income tax expense		-	-
Surplus for the year		45,501	445,373
Total comprehensive income for the year		45,501	445,373

Statement of financial position

Assets

	Note	2022 \$	2021 \$
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	5	1,359,530	1,909,106
Trade and other receivables	6	114,205	110,631
Other financial assets		1,398,531	1,398,531
Other assets		193,913	111,833
Total current assets		3,066,179	3,530,101
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	7	287,486	414,493
Right-of-use assets	8	938,577	1,410,420
Total non-current assets		1,226,063	1,824,913
Total assets		4,292,242	5,355,014

Liabilities

Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	9	434,816	528,141
Lease liabilities	8	557,386	527,113
Employee benefits	11	725,980	673,701
Grants in advance		620,012	1,187,394
Total current liabilities		2,338,194	2,916,349
Non-current liabilities			
Lease liabilities	8	448,139	979,007
Employee benefits	11	119,967	119,217
Longterm provisions	10	125,000	125,000
Total non-current liabilities		693,106	1,223,224
Total liabilities		3,031,300	4,139,573
Net assets		1,260,942	1,215,441

Equity

Retained surpluses		1,260,942	1,215,441
Total equity		1,260,942	1,215,441

Statement of changes in equity

2022

	Retained surpluses \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2021	1,215,441	1,215,441
Surplus for the year	45,501	45,501
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Balance at 30 June 2020	1,260,942	1,260,942

2021

	Retained surpluses \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2020	770,068	770,068
Surplus for the year	445,373	445,373
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Balance at 30 June 2021	1,215,441	1,215,441

Statement of cash flows

	Note	2022 \$	2021 \$
Cash flows from operating activities			
Receipts from grants and customers		8,559,905	8,291,247
Payments to suppliers and employees		(8,566,208)	(7,253,902)
Interest received		3,559	5,243
Receipt from government support COVID 19		-	861,083
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities		(2,744)	1,903,671
Cash flows from investing activities			
Proceeds from sale of plant and equipment		6,565	1,818
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(36,442)	(51,085)
Net cash flows from investing activities		(29,877)	(49,267)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Repayment of lease liabilities		(516,955)	(518,920)
Net cash flows from financing activities		(516,955)	(518,920)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents held		(549,576)	1,335,484
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		1,909,106	573,622
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	5	1,359,530	1,909,106

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2022

The financial report covers People With Disability Australia Ltd as an individual entity. People With Disability Australia Ltd is a not for profit Company limited by guarantee, registered and domiciled in Australia.

The functional and presentation currency of People With Disability Australia Ltd is Australian dollars.

The financial report was authorised for issue by the Board of Directors on 06 October 2022.

Comparatives are consistent with prior years, unless otherwise stated.

1 Basis of Preparation

The financial statements are general purpose financial statements that have been prepared in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards Simplified Disclosures and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*.

The financial statements have been prepared on an accruals basis and are based on historical costs modified, where applicable, by the measurement at fair value of selected noncurrent assets, financial assets and financial liabilities.

Significant accounting policies adopted in the preparation of these financial statements are presented below and are consistent with prior reporting periods unless otherwise stated.

2 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

(a) New or amended Accounting Standards and Interpretations adopted

The entity has adopted all of the new or amended Accounting Standards and Interpretations issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board ("AASB") that are mandatory for the current reporting period.

The adoption of these Accounting Standards and Interpretations did not have any significant impact on the financial performance or position of the entity.

The following Accounting Standards and Interpretations are most relevant to the entity:

Conceptual Framework for Financial Reporting (Conceptual Framework)

The entity has adopted the revised Conceptual Framework from 1 July 2021. The Conceptual Framework contains new definition and recognition criteria as well as new guidance on measurement that affects several Accounting Standards, but it has not had a material impact on the entity's financial statements.

AASB 1060 General Purpose Financial Statements Simplified Disclosures for ForProfit and NotforProfit Tier 2 Entities

The entity has adopted AASB 1060 from 1 July 2021. The standard provides a new Tier 2 reporting framework with simplified disclosures that are based on the requirements of IFRS for SMEs. As a result, there is increased disclosure in these financial statements for key management personnel, related parties, tax and financial instruments.

(b) Revenue and other income

Revenue from contracts with customers

The company recognises revenue as follows:

Revenue from contracts with customers

Revenue is recognised at an amount that reflects the consideration to which the company is expected to be entitled in exchange for transferring goods or services to a customer. For each contract with a customer, the company: identifies the contract with a customer; identifies the performance obligations in the contract; determines the transaction price which takes into account estimates of variable consideration and the time value of money; allocates the transaction price to the separate performance obligations on the basis of the relative standalone selling price of each distinct good or service to be delivered; and recognises revenue when or as each performance obligation is satisfied in a manner that depicts the transfer to the customer of the goods or services promised.

Variable consideration within the transaction price, if any, reflects concessions provided to the customer such as discounts, rebates and refunds, any potential bonuses receivable from the customer and any other contingent events. Such estimates are determined using either the 'expected value' or 'most likely amount' method. The measurement of variable consideration is subject to a constraining principle whereby revenue will only be recognised to the extent that it is highly probable that a significant reversal in the amount of cumulative revenue recognised will not occur. The measurement constraint continues until the uncertainty associated with the variable consideration is subsequently resolved. Amounts received that are subject to the constraining principle are recognised as a refund liability.

Grants

Grant revenue is recognised in profit or loss when the company satisfies the performance obligations stated within the funding agreements.

If conditions are attached to the grant which must be satisfied before the company is eligible to retain the contribution, the grant will be recognised in the statement of financial position as a liability until those conditions are satisfied.

Interest

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

Donations

Donations collected, including cash and goods for resale, are recognised as revenue when the Company gains control of the asset.

Other income

Other revenue is recognised when it is received or when the right to receive payment is established.

(c) Goods and services tax (GST)

Revenue, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST), except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

Receivables and payable are stated inclusive of GST.

Cash flows in the statement of cash flows are included on a gross basis and the GST component of cash flows arising from investing and financing activities which is recoverable from, or payable to, the taxation authority is classified as operating cash flows.

(d) Property, plant and equipment

Each class of property, plant and equipment is carried at cost or fair value less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation and impairment.

Items of property, plant and equipment acquired for significantly less than fair value have been recorded at the acquisition date fair value.

Plant and equipment

Plant and equipment are measured using the cost model.

Depreciation

Property, plant and equipment, excluding freehold land, is depreciated on a straight line basis over the asset's useful life to the Company, commencing when the asset is ready for use.

Leased assets and leasehold improvements are amortised over the shorter of either the unexpired period of the lease or their estimated useful life.

The depreciation rates used for each class of depreciable asset are shown below:

Office equipment	20%
Motor vehicles	20%
Leasehold improvements	20%

At the end of each annual reporting period, the depreciation method, useful life and residual value of each asset is reviewed. Any revisions are accounted for prospectively as a change in estimate.

(e) Financial instruments

Financial instruments relate to term deposits and are recognised initially on the date that the Company becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

On initial recognition, all financial instruments are measured at fair value plus transaction costs (except for instruments measured at fair value through profit or loss where transaction costs are expensed as incurred).

(f) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprises cash on hand, demand deposits and short term investments which are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and which are subject to an insignificant risk of change in value.

(g) Leases

At inception of a contract, the Company assesses whether a lease exists.

At the lease commencement, the Company recognises a right of use asset and associated lease liability for the lease term. The lease term includes extension periods where the Company believes it is reasonably certain that the option will be exercised.

The right of use asset is measured using the cost model where cost on initial recognition comprises of the lease liability, initial direct costs, prepaid lease payments, estimated cost of removal and restoration less any lease incentives received.

The right of use asset is depreciated over the lease term on a straight line basis and assessed for impairment in accordance with the impairment of assets accounting policy.

The lease liability is initially measured at the present value of the remaining lease payments at the commencement of the lease. The discount rate is the rate implicit in the lease, however where this cannot be readily determined then the Company's incremental borrowing rate is used.

Subsequent to initial recognition, the lease liability is measured at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method. The lease liability is remeasured whether there is a lease modification, change in estimate of the lease term or index upon which the lease payments are based (e.g. CPI) or a change in the Company's assessment of lease term.

Where the lease liability is remeasured, the right of use asset is adjusted to reflect the remeasurement or is recorded in profit or loss if the carrying amount of the right of use asset has been reduced to zero.

Exceptions to lease accounting

The Company has elected to apply the exceptions to lease accounting for both short term leases (i.e. leases with a term of less than or equal to 12 months) and leases of low value assets. The Company recognises the payments associated with these leases as an expense on a straight line basis over the lease term.

(h) Employee benefits

Provision is made for the Company's liability for employee benefits, those benefits that are expected to be wholly settled within one year have been measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled.

Employee benefits expected to be settled more than one year after the end of the reporting period have been measured at the present value of the estimated future cash outflows to be made for those benefits. In determining the liability, consideration is given to employee wage increases and the probability that the employee may satisfy vesting requirements. Cashflows are discounted using market yields on high quality corporate bond rates incorporating bonds rated AAA or AA by credit agencies, with terms to maturity that match the expected timing of cashflows. Changes in the measurement of the liability are recognised in profit or loss.

(i) Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the Company has a legal or constructive obligation, as a result of past events, for which it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will result and that outflow can be reliably measured.

Provisions are measured at the present value of management's best estimate of the outflow required to settle the obligation at the end of the reporting period. The discount rate used is a pre tax rate that reflects current market assessments of the time value of money and the risks specific to the liability. The increase in the provision due to the unwinding of the discount is taken to finance costs in the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income.

(j) Adoption of new and revised accounting standards

The Company has adopted all standards which became effective for the first time at 30 June 2022, the adoption of these standards has not caused any material adjustments to the reported financial position, performance or cash flow of the Company.

3 Critical Accounting Estimates and Judgments

The Board of Directors make estimates and judgements during the preparation of these financial statements regarding assumptions about current and future events affecting transactions and balances.

These estimates and judgements are based on the best information available at the time of preparing the financial statements, however as additional information is known then the actual results may differ from the estimates.

The significant estimates and judgements made have been described below.

Employee benefits provision

As noted in the accounting policies, the liability for employee benefits expected to be settled more than 12 months from the reporting date are 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 attrition rates and pay increases through promotion and inflation have been taken into account.

4 Revenue and other income

Revenue from contracts with customers (AASB 15)	2022 \$	2021 \$
Operating grants	7,868,069	6,575,681
Total revenue from operating grants	7,868,069	6,575,681
Other revenue		
Training income	148,090	-
Donations	5,791	139,774
Travel reimbursement	14,220	12,015
Insurance reimbursement	170,633	63,558
Rental income	59,727	56,138
Government support - COVID-19	-	861,083
Gain on sale of asset	198	195
Other income	129,629	-
Total other revenue	528,288	1,132,763
Total revenue and other income	8,396,357	7,708,444

5 Cash and cash equivalents

	2022 \$	2021 \$
Cash at bank and in hand	1,359,530	1,909,106
Total cash and cash equivalents	1,359,530	1,909,106

6 Trade and other receivables

	2022 \$	2021 \$
Current		
Trade receivables	109,545	105,471
Deposits	4,660	5,160
Total current trade and other receivables	114,205	110,631

7 Property, plant and equipment

	2022 \$	2021 \$
Plant and equipment		
At cost	293,103	283,156
Accumulated depreciation	(258,103)	(230,407)
Total plant and equipment	35,000	52,749
Motor vehicles		
At cost	131,535	148,890
Accumulated depreciation	(93,817)	(93,635)
Total motor vehicles	37,718	55,255
Leasehold Improvements		
At cost	545,517	520,212
Accumulated depreciation	(330,749)	(213,723)
Total leasehold improvements	214,768	306,489
Total property, plant and equipment	287,486	414,493

a. Movements in Carrying Amounts

Movement in the carrying amounts for each class of property, plant and equipment between the beginning and the end of the current financial year:

Year ended 30 June 2022	Plant and Equipment \$	Motor Vehicles \$	Leasehold Improvements \$	Total \$
Balance at the beginning of year	52,749	55,255	306,489	414,493
Additions	11,137	-	25,305	36,442
Disposals	(794)	(1,736)	-	(2,530)
Depreciation expense	(28,092)	(15,801)	(117,026)	(160,919)
Balance at the end of the year	35,000	37,718	214,768	287,486

8 Leases

Company as a lessee

The Company has leases over a range of assets including land and buildings and vehicles.

- Terms and conditions of leases
- Buildings

The Company leases land and buildings for their corporate offices. The lease term is for 5 years.

- Vehicles
- The Company leases a vehicle with lease terms of 3 years, the lease payments are fixed during the lease term.

Right-of-use assets

Year ended 30 June 2022	Buildings \$	Total \$
Balance at beginning of year	1,410,420	1,410,420
Additions	38,185	38,185
Amortisation	(510,028)	(510,028)
Balance at end of year	938,577	938,577

Lease liabilities

Lease liabilities	< 1 year \$	1 - 5 years \$	> 5 years \$	Total undiscounted lease liabilities \$
2022 Lease liabilities	557,386	448,139	-	1,005,525
2021 Lease liabilities	527,113	979,007	-	1,506,120

9 Trade and Other Payables

Current	2022 \$	2021 \$
Trade payables	60,160	183,070
GST and PAYG payable	118,834	125,553
Sundry payables and accrued expenses	255,822	219,518
Total trade and other payables	434,816	528,141

Trade and other payables are unsecured, non interest bearing and are normally settled within 30 days. The carrying value of trade and other payables is considered a reasonable approximation of fair value due to the short term nature of the balances.

10 Provisions

Non-current	2022 \$	2021 \$
Make good provision	125,000	125,000
Total provisions	125,000	125,000

11 Employee Benefits

Current liabilities	2022 \$	2021 \$
Long service leave	112,066	113,634
Provision for employee benefits	613,914	560,067
Total current employee benefits	725,980	673,701

Non-current liabilities	2022 \$	2021 \$
Long service leave	119,967	119,217
Total non-current employee benefits	119,967	119,217

12 Members' Guarantee

The Company is registered with the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and is a Company limited by guarantee. If the Company is wound up, the constitution states that each member is required to contribute a maximum of \$ 1 each towards meeting any outstanding obligations of the Company. At 30 June 2022 the number of members was 2,457 (2021: 2,338).

13 Key Management Personnel Disclosures

The remuneration paid to key management personnel of the Company is \$ 996,160 (2021: \$ 808,571).

14 Auditors' Remuneration

Remuneration of the auditor ESV	2022 \$	2021 \$
Business advice and accounting (2021: Stewart Brown)		
Audit services	16,000	16,500
Other services	1,800	7,500
Total auditors' remuneration	17,800	24,000

15 Contingencies

In the opinion of the Board of Directors, the Company did not have any contingencies at 30 June 2022 (30 June 2021:None).

16 Related Parties

a. The Company's main related parties are as follows:

There were no related party transactions during the financial year.

17 Events after the end of the Reporting Period

The financial report was authorised for issue on 06 October 2022 the Board of Directors.

No matters or circumstances have arisen since the end of the financial year which significantly affected or may significantly affect the operations of the Company, the results of those operations or the state of affairs of the Company in future financial years.

18 Statutory Information

The registered office and principal place of business of the company is:

People With Disability Australia Ltd
Level 8, 418A Elizabeth Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010

Directors' declaration

The responsible persons declare that in the responsible persons' opinion:

- there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Company is able to pay all of its debts, as and when they become due and payable; and
- the financial statements and notes satisfy the requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not for profits Commission Act 2012*.

Signed in accordance with subsection 60.15(2) of the *Australian Charities and Not for profit Commission Regulation 2013*.



Samantha Connor
President



Suresh Rajan
Treasurer

Dated this 6 day of October 2022



Independent Audit Report to the members of People With Disability Australia Ltd

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a general purpose financial report – simplified disclosures of People with Disability Australia Limited (the ‘Company’), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2022, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, the statement of cash flows and the statement of changes in equity for the year ended on that date, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the directors’ declaration.

In our opinion the financial report of People With Disability Australia Ltd has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

- a. giving a true and fair view of the Registered Entity’s financial position as at 30 June 2022 and of its financial performance for the year ended; and
- b. complying with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013*.

Basis of Opinion

We have conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditors Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the entity in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the *Corporations Act 2001* 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 believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

We confirm that the independence declaration required by the Corporations Act 2001, 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.

Director’s Responsibility for the Financial report

The directors of the entity are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and for such internal control as the directors determine it necessary to enable the preparation of the 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 entity’s ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis

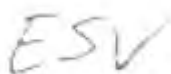
of accounting unless the directors either intends to liquidate the registered entity or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so. The directors are responsible for overseeing the entity's financial reporting process.

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 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 aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

[A further description of our responsibilities](#) for the audit of the financial report is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Dated at Sydney on the 7th of October 2022.



ESV Business Advice and Accounting



Travas Burns

Partner

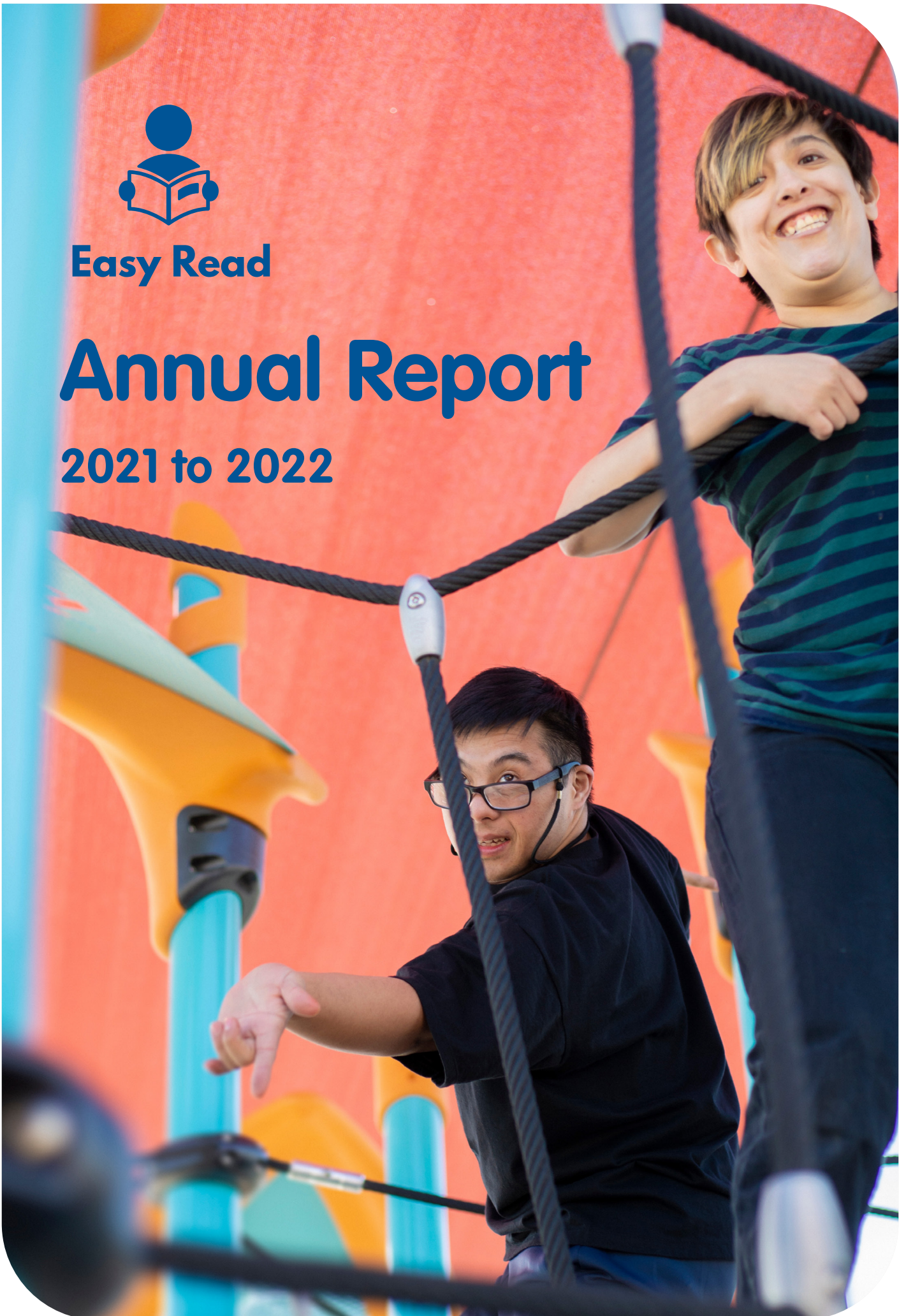




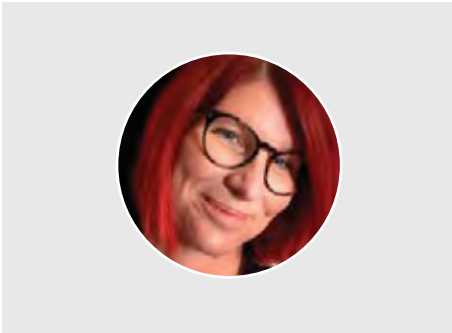
Easy Read

Annual Report

2021 to 2022



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.

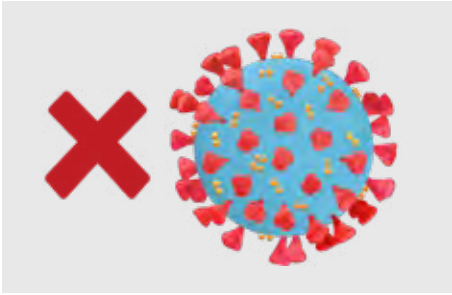


It has been a hard year for people with disability and for PWDA.

We showed the world that we are strong.



PWDA has been doing hard work for more than 40 years.



We could not have a party for 40 years of PWDA because of the COVID-19 pandemic.



We want to share some things that PWDA has done to celebrate the 40 years.



This year we made a lot of good things happen.



We helped people with disability in the COVID-19 pandemic to get their rights met.



We spoke up at the Federal Election.

The **Federal Election** is a big event that Australia has to vote for people they want to work in government.



We worked together to find the most important issues to tell the government about.



We did a lot of individual advocacy to make things better for people with disability.



Individual Advocacy is when someone with a disability is supported by a PWDA worker to get their rights met.



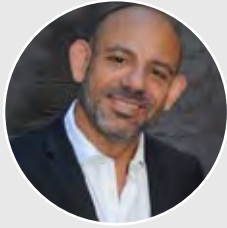
We spoke up for our rights at a big rights event.

It is called the **Convention of State Parties** in New York.



I want to say thank you to everyone for working hard this year.

Message from the CEO

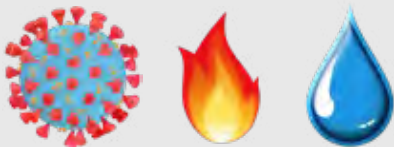


My name is Sebastian Zagarella.

CEO



I am the CEO at PWDA.



This year was hard for everyone because of

- COVID-19
- Bush fires
- Floods.



We did a lot of speaking up for people with disability.

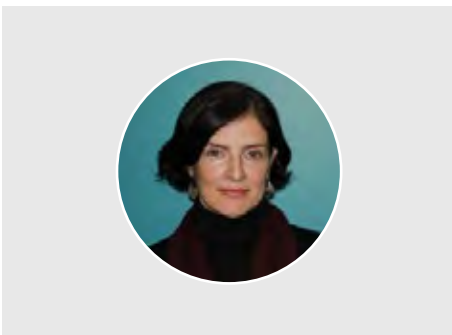


Thank you for all your work this year.



This year we got a new Deputy CEO.

A **Deputy CEO** is someone who supports the CEO.



Carolyn Hodge was chosen to be Deputy CEO.

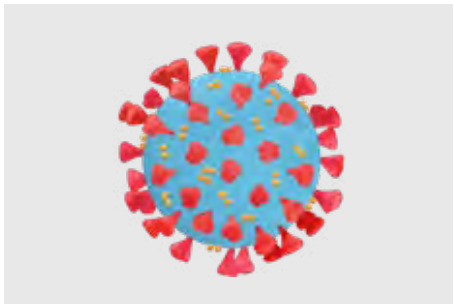
What we did this year



This is the annual report for 2021 to 2022.

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

COVID-19



This year we worked hard to keep people with disability safe in the COVID-19 pandemic.

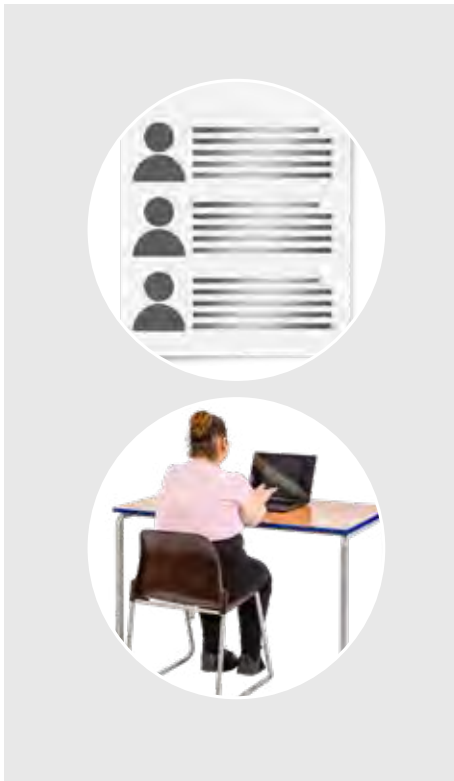


We spoke up about what the government can do for people with disability during COVID-19.



We told them we wanted more things that can keep people with disability safe like

- Vaccinations
- Masks
- RAT tests.



We shared information about COVID-19 and ways to keep safe and well with

- Our members
- People who follow our things online.



We worked out a plan to keep PWDA staff safe from COVID-19 in the PWDA office.

Federal Election



The federal election was a big thing that happened this year.



We wanted to tell the government the most important issues for people with disability.



We asked the members to have their say.



We used what they told us to make an election platform.



An **election platform** is a list of the important issues we want the government to know.



We asked the government what they thought about our election platform.



We found people in government who supported our election platform.



We told the members who they were.



This helped members decide who to vote for in the federal election.



We have been working with the new government to make things better for people with disability.

15th Session of the Conference of States Parties



We went to the 15th Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability.

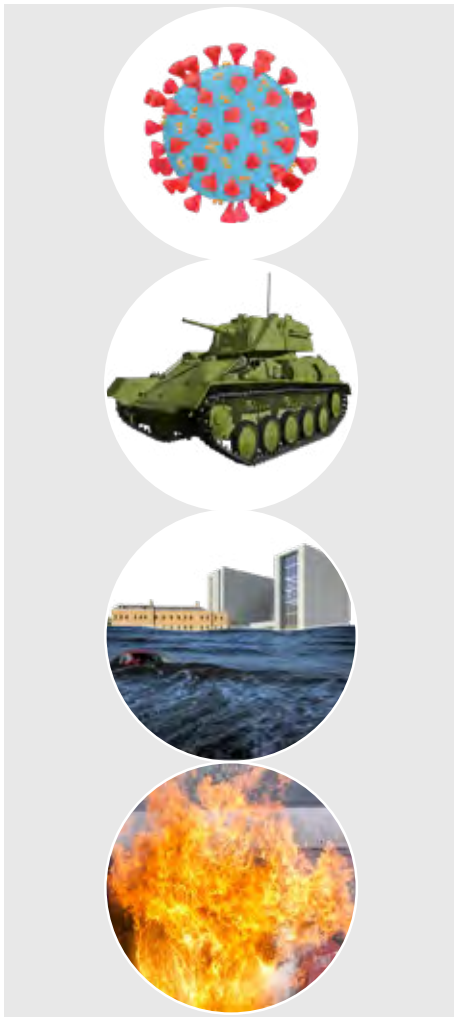
COSP for short.



This is a big meeting every year to talk about what is important for people with disability.



It was at the United Nations in New York.



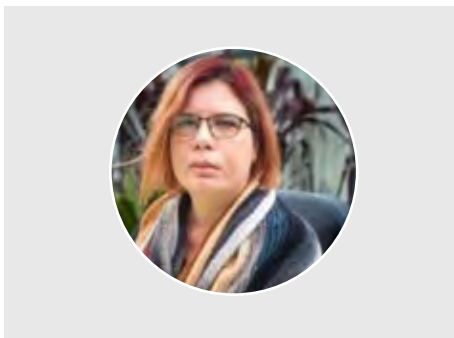
This year the big topic was inclusion for people with disability when things happen that can make them not safe like

- COVID-19

- War

- Floods

- Bush fires.



Kelly Cox gave a talk about what PWDA thinks about these big topics.



People from PWDA also gave talks on

- Business

- Jobs

- Life skills.

Disability Royal Commission



We helped make things better for people with disability at the Disability Royal Commission.



The Disability Royal Commission hears stories from people with disability.

They want people with disability to have their rights.



We gave support to people with disability to tell their stories to the Disability Royal Commission.



We sent out information about the Disability Royal Commission so that people knew about things like

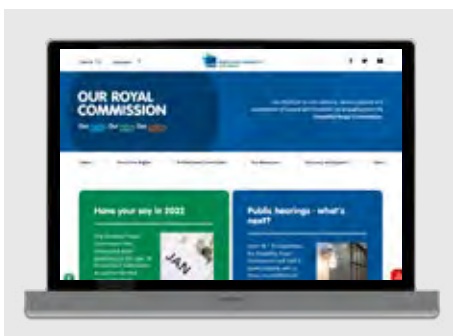
- When they were having a meeting
- What stories were being told.



We shared what they talked about on our Twitter.



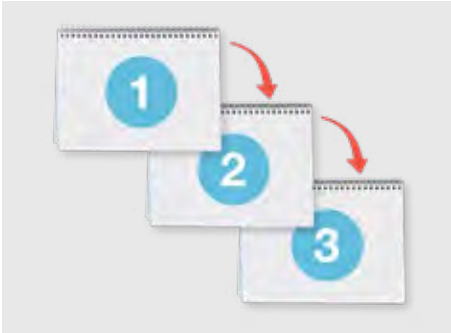
We also made sure our website on the Disability Royal Commission had all the important information.



To see the website go to

www.ourroyalcommission.com.au

Disability Rights



We wrote lots of reports for government on disability rights.

These are 3 topics we wrote about.



1. Making the way people get money from the government better.

This is called Welfare Reform.



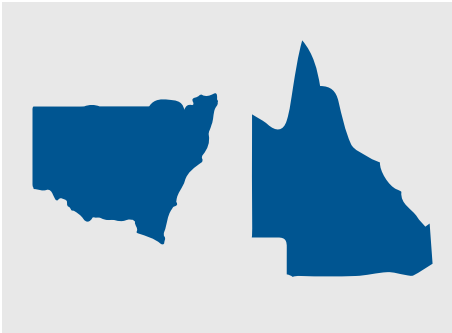
2. People with disability from different cultures who might speak different languages.



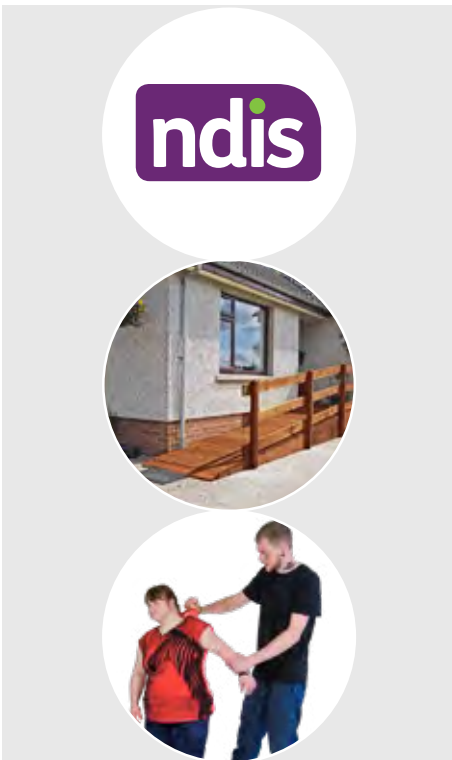
3. Australian Disability Enterprises

Australian Disability Enterprises are places that people with disability work with supports.

Advocacy



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



We supported people with disability with things like

- NDIS
- Housing and accommodation
- Abuse.



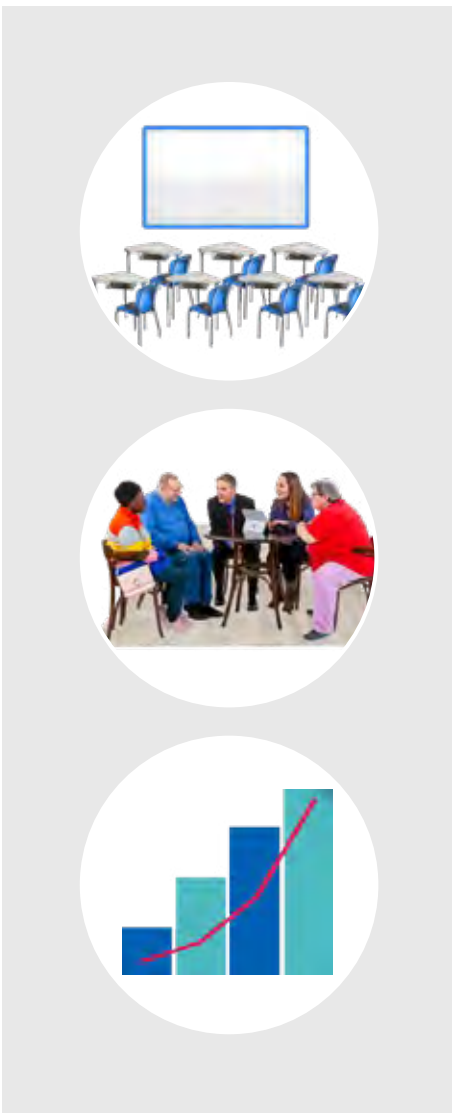
We got more money from the government to keep doing all our advocacy work.

Research projects and training



There are 3 teams at PWDA that

- Put together the information for government
- Teach other places about disability.



The teams are

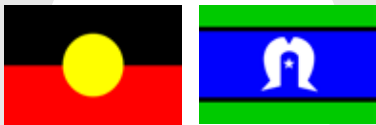
- Education
- Training
- Research.

Research is when we look into something to find out more about it.

Those teams also did a lot of work this year on



- Domestic violence



- First Nations peoples rights



- Institutions

Institutions are big places with many people like prisons.

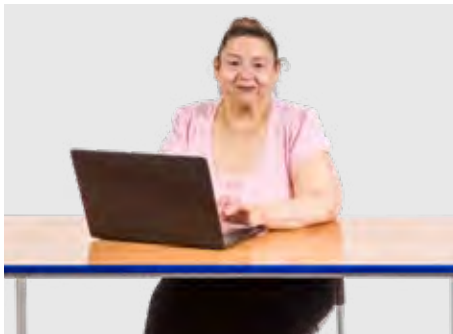


- Women and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Making PWDA better



This year we built a new website.



Our new website is easier to use for people with disability.



We told a lot of people about the work we do by sharing information online like on

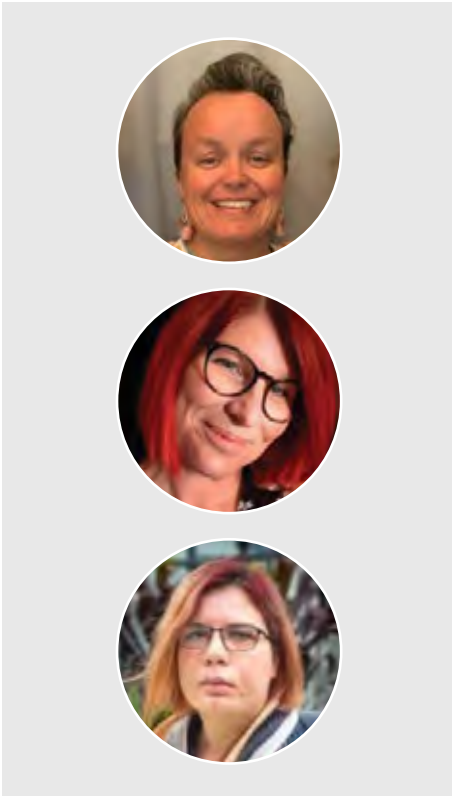
- Our website
- Twitter
- Facebook.



We got money from the government to do

- Support services
- Disability rights advocacy
- Make PWDA bigger.

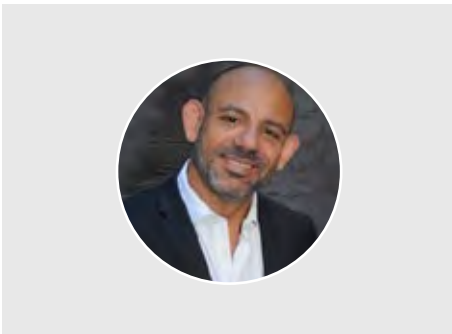
PWDA leaders



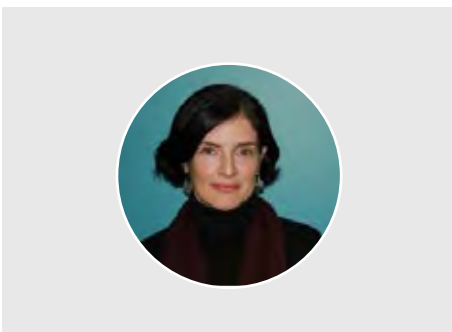
We chose 3 Board members this year.

They are

- Clare Gibellini
- Samantha Connor who is the President
- Kelly Cox who is the Vice President.



Sebastian Zagarella was chosen to be CEO.



Carolyn Hodge was chosen to be Deputy CEO.

A **Deputy CEO** is someone who supports the CEO.

Thank you



PWDA wants to say thank you to our

- Workers



- Members

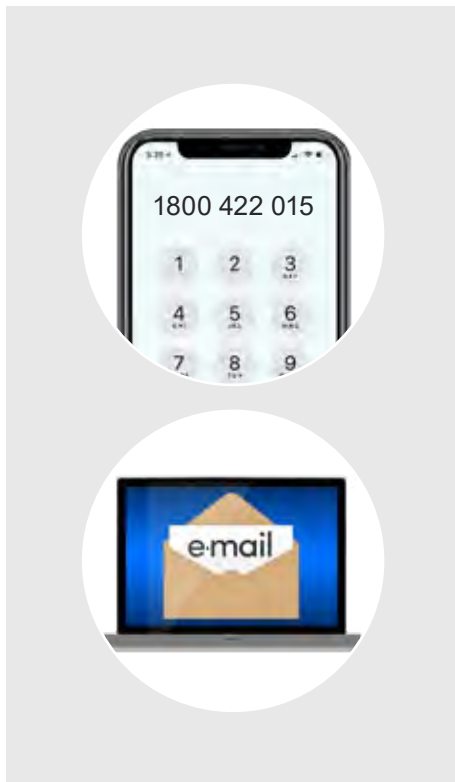


- Supporters



- Community.

Contact us



Contact us if you need support.

- Call us on **1800 422 015**
- Email us at **pwd@pwd.org.au**

Council for Intellectual Disability made this document Easy Read. **CID** for short.
You need to ask CID if you want to use any pictures in this document.
You can contact CID at **business@cid.org.au**.

 pwd.org.au

 pwd@pwd.org.au

 (02) 9370 3100

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