



PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY  
AUSTRALIA

# Annual Report

## 2022–23

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A voice  
of our own



## Acknowledgment of Country

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

We recognise First Nations Peoples' 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 are grateful for the contributions of our staff, who have taken images featured in this report, along with photographer Gary Radler and photographers who feature their images on various photography websites. We recognise and thank all the members, supporters and staff featured in the photos in this report.

## Acknowledgment of Contributors

PWDA acknowledges the lives and experiences of the people with disability represented in this report. We recognise and thank all the members, supporters and staff who have contributed information featured in this report.

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## PWDA complaint handling

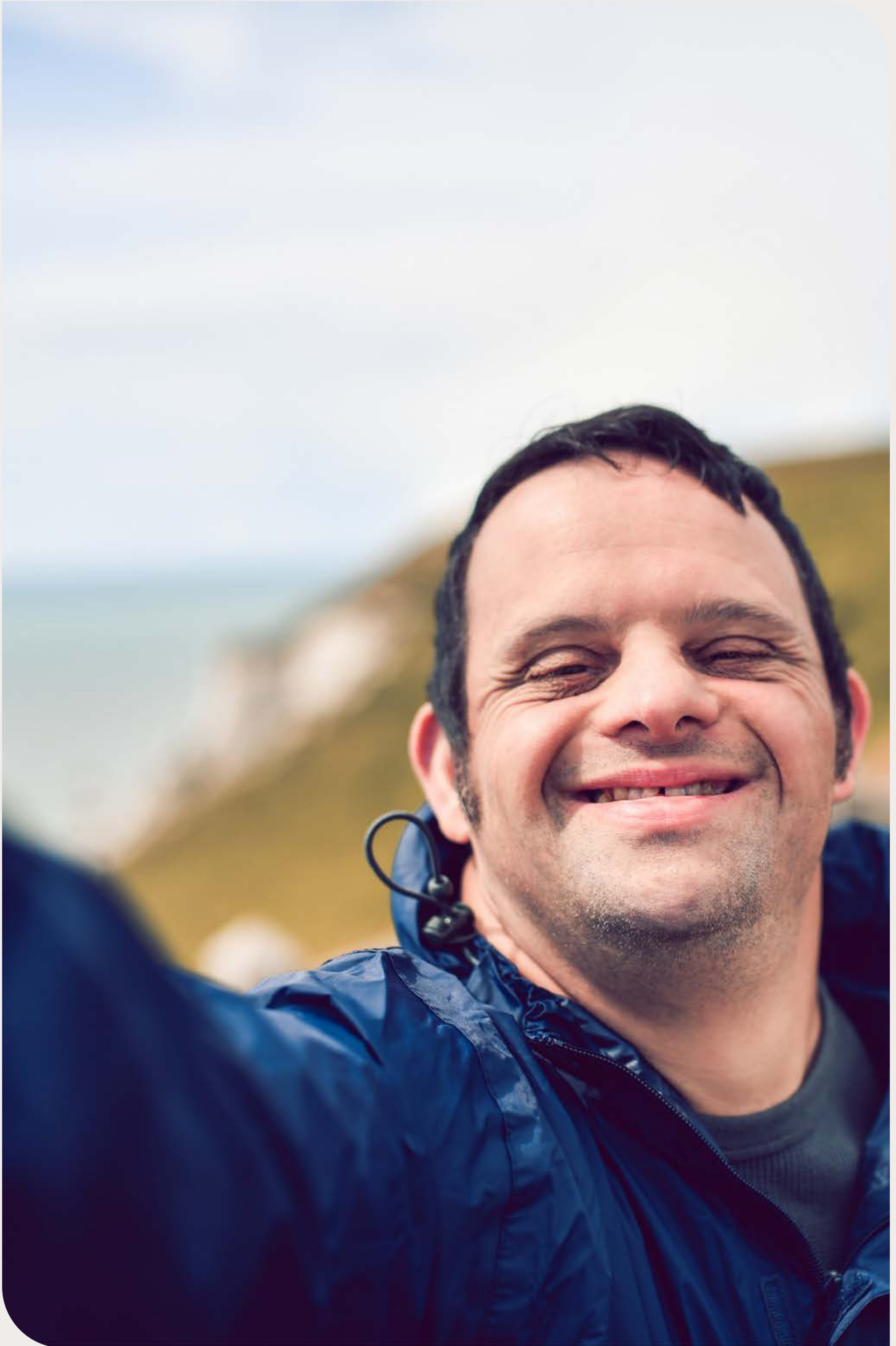
To lodge a complaint about PWDA directly with us, you can contact us at [pwd@pwd.org.au](mailto:pwd@pwd.org.au) or free call 1800 422 015. You can also lodge a complaint via our website at [pwd.org.au](http://pwd.org.au).





**Image |** Nicole Lee, President PWDA and Suresh Rajan, Treasurer PWDA at 45th Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade joined by PWDA members.





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# About People with Disability Australia

## Who we are

**People with Disability Australia (PWDA) is the leading national cross-disability member driven organisation. We are a national peak disability rights and advocacy organisation, run by and for 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, communities 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.

We live our dream.

We have a clear vision for the purpose and impact of our work as well as a comprehensive set of values, beliefs and principles which guide and inspire our work.



## Our vision

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



## Our purpose

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



# President's message

**In last year's Annual Report, we celebrated our 40<sup>th</sup> year as an organisation committed to promoting and furthering the rights of people with disability. We took some time to look back at the origins of People with Disability Australia (PWDA), our rich history and achievements, and to remind ourselves of our grassroots foundations that enable us to advocate at the level we do today.**

This year has brought with it many things to contemplate as a community – from what life looks like for us still living in a pandemic; to what will be the outcome of the Disability Royal Commission (DRC) that we collectively advocated for; and to what the future holds for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) as we see the end of the review process. The Board and I take this opportunity in leading the organisation at such an important and complicated time seriously, and we feel now more than ever that we're in a strong position to continue our fight for an inclusive future in which all our rights are respected and celebrated.

In line with continuing to build on the work of activists who came before us, it was fitting that this year PWDA launched its three-year Strategic Plan, underpinned by four strategic pillars that uphold our organisation's core principles. Throughout this report you will see reference to the pillars of Represent, Advocate, Educate and Sustain, each of which guides our day-to-day work. Alongside the 2022-25 Strategic Plan, the PWDA workforce now benefits from a corresponding Operational Plan, which lays out the groundwork that will help us achieve the outcomes we are striving for.

This year saw us in the position of discussing as a community what life alongside the loosening of COVID-19 protections looks like for us. Many of our community have suffered at the hands of the pandemic, and we continue to campaign for restrictions that prioritise the safety of our members. Through ongoing engagement together, we collectively (as





**Image |** Nicole Lee, President People with Disability Australia (PWDA)

PWDA members and Board) heard your concerns about the Government's 'Living with COVID-19' strategy, and the PWDA Board has now drafted its COVID-19 Position Statement on behalf of our members. This position statement gives us a basis on which to continue our advocacy for safety measures to be reinstated to counter the ongoing impact of COVID-19.

It's with a heavy heart that I take this next moment to acknowledge the passing of one of our loved and respected grassroots disability advocates John Moxon, who passed away in September 2022. After an accident later in life, John acquired a disability which led him to the world of disability activism and saw his voice be instrumental in numerous organisations and foundational work. John's passion for social change and human rights has left behind a proud legacy that has been enshrined in the

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). We thank John for his activism and hope we can honour him and others by continuing to advocate with integrity and pride. John always took the time to support and mentor us as we found our activist voices, and as someone who found their voice in this space later in life, I'll never forget his kindness and generosity. I hope I can honour and be part of continuing his legacy in supporting new and emerging activists as he did with me. Thank you, John.

The PWDA Board has also seen considerable change in the last 12 months. In July 2022 we said farewell to Vice President Kelly Cox, who moved on after several years of hard work, with Board member Clare Gibellini stepping into the role of Vice President. Tim Morrissey was also co-opted to the Board to serve until the next Annual General Meeting (AGM).

In November 2022 PWDA held its AGM, following the meeting I was elected as President by the new board.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Samantha Connor for all of her hard work and commitment to the organisation and our community during her time as President. Sam led the organisation during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and has been a strong advocate of the important role PWDA plays in advocating for our members and the disability rights movement more broadly. We are grateful Sam remained on the Board as co-Vice President alongside Marayke Jonkers this year.

I would also like to thank my fellow Board Members, Michelle Hyde, Dr Zhila Hasanloo, Arun Barramundi, and Haidi Badawi, who were elected in 2022 for a two-year period as well as returning Board Directors, Marayke Jonkers, Clare Gibellini, and Suresh Rajan. Additionally, I would like to thank Presley Chihuri who was co-opted to the PWDA Board in 2023.

On behalf of all Board Directors, I'd like to again say that we do not take our

positions lightly. We know we have a huge responsibility in representing the voice of our members and to continue to build on 40 years of disability led advocacy. Over the past year we have prioritised engaging with our members, consulting with you on topics such as COVID-19, the NDIS Review, and the Disability Royal Commission (DRC).

The DRC is a watershed moment for our community that we should be proud of, even when it comes with mixed and conflicting emotions. To feel pride in getting violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation of disabled people on the national agenda, in the face of the adversity we've encountered in our lives, is something we can collectively begin to process as we sit with the release of the Final Report. We have put our stories of abuse and trauma on the public record in the hope of seeing a future where everyone's right to live free from violence and abuse is upheld.

In advocating for that future, I was proud to sit alongside my Australian peers in New York at the annual Conference of State Parties (CoSP) summit. Over the course of the summit, PWDA and other Disabled People's Organisations Australia (DPO Australia) delegates were involved in a range of discussions on a wide range of topics including the sexual and reproductive rights of people with disability; reframing mental health and psychosocial disability; and different models of legal capacity and supported decision making. After this I received an invitation to attend the 29<sup>th</sup> Session, Committee on the Rights of

Persons with Disabilities panel discussion to mark the first anniversary of the Guidelines on deinstitutionalisation in Geneva, where I had the honour of giving a voice to the underrepresented cohort of women with psychosocial disability, and I look forward to continuing our international advocacy in the year ahead.

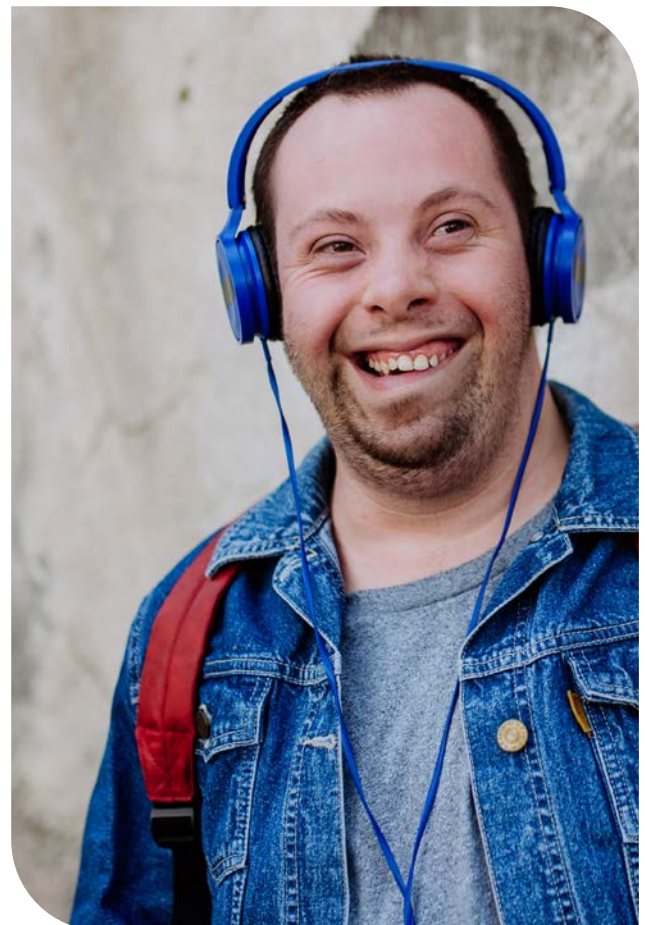
Many of you stepped forward over the course of the year to share your feedback on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) as part of the NDIS Review. More of our members shared feedback on this topic than in any other consultation through the year, and we are proud to be delivering your insights to the Independent Review Panel, together with recommendations for a better way forward.

Throughout the year we have all worked together in many ways to preserve and progress our rights as disabled people. Our operational team has continued to benefit from the leadership of CEO, Sebastian Zagarella, and Deputy CEO, Carolyn Hodge, and the Board extends their gratitude to both for their collaborative leadership and operational insights. We're a team, and we're proud of how we work together in our collective vision. I'd also like to thank the PWDA workforce, our volunteers and partner organisations, who have continued to contribute to our collective efforts in making an impact over the past 12 months.

As I reflect on the stories, and voices of disabled people that informed the case

studies within this Annual Report, I am reminded that each of these stories contributes to the effectiveness of PWDA's work. I thank you for sharing your lives and stories through what has been a difficult period in time, being there alongside myself and the Board, and for your ongoing support as we all continue to work towards a future in which the rights of disabled people are not only acknowledged and upheld, but also celebrated.

**Nicole Lee,**  
President, PWDA





# CEO's message

**Looking back on the past 12 months there is no doubt the COVID-19 pandemic has continued to inform our operations. This was most evident during the first six months of the financial year when we saw an increased need for advocacy support as infections in the community rose. Throughout this time, the wellbeing of our staff continued to be a priority as the pandemic tested their resilience.**

Following months of working from home, it wasn't until January 2023 that we took our first steps towards cautiously reopening our office spaces, inviting staff and clients to begin returning to face-to-face meetings and events while abiding by our established COVID-19 protocols. At this time, we undertook an organisation-wide review of our Reasonable Adjustments and Flexible Work Arrangements to ensure staff accommodations remained current and addressed their needs given the ongoing risks posed by COVID-19 to many in our community.

The pandemic impacted the way we would continue to work, introducing a new way of working that saw us consult with staff during the latter part of the year as we trialed and then moved to a hybrid working model. Throughout this time, our clients' needs and operational requirements remained front of mind as we embraced new ways of working.

Perhaps most significantly, our three-year strategy was launched in December 2022, becoming the anchor point for our operations. The development of the strategy saw us revisit our operational priorities, mapping them to the four strategic pillars of Represent, Advocate, Educate and Sustain; and realigning priorities to an 18-month operational plan. I am pleased to share more about the work delivered against these pillars in the following sections of this Annual Report.

The launch of the strategy and operational plan also saw us examine our organisational structure, which included succession planning. The positive





**Image |** Sebastian Zagarella speaking at the 2023 PWDA All Staff Conference

changes made not only allow us to deliver on the strategy but also set us up for success into the future.

As a member-based organisation, our members are front and centre in everything we do. We're excited to share that we've recently implemented a new strategy to grow our membership base, emphasising diversity. As a result of this approach, we're thrilled to report a 19% growth in membership over the past year, up from the 6% increase achieved the previous year.

This year PWDA embraced new technology to support staff training and development through online learning, introducing new modules including LGBTQIA+ training and launching our own training course co-designed and developed by people with lived experience of psychosocial disability.

We also reviewed the PWDA training model to ensure we can deliver contemporary and effective training and education which saw the introduction of our new national training team. We now offer customised online

training modules as well as face-to-face and online training sessions.

Guided by our strategy and with a focus on continuous improvement we introduced a more comprehensive range of services, which now includes consultancy work with organisations.

Our Disability Inclusion and Accessibility Working Group also continued its vital work, focusing on improvements to accessibility across the organisation. This included Disability Inclusion Action Plans and the review of policies and documentation.

As a result of increased cyber attacks we have also reviewed all PWDA platforms to ensure data security and integrity of the information we hold.

As well as maintaining our Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and National Standards for Disability Services (NSDS) accreditation, we were thrilled PWDA retained all existing funding into the new financial year. Highlights included an increase of funding for our Disability Advocacy Futures Program, allowing us to work more regularly on education-related advocacy matters. Our Engage-In and Building Access projects also received funding extensions due to the positive outcomes achieved for people with disability. This year PWDA was also successfully funded by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet as part of the Women's Leadership and Development Program: Lead and Succeed grant opportunity to deliver a project that would seek to fundamentally improve outcomes for women, girls, feminine-identifying and non-binary people with disability in Australia across leadership representation and workforce participation and safety. We are proud to continue positively impacting the lives of those we serve, represent and work alongside through our project work.

We continued to implement our Safety Management System with the help of our Work Health and Safety Committee and an expert consultant. We conducted audits of all our offices, introduced Mental Health First Aid Officers, implemented new policies, and provided work health and safety refresher training for all staff.

Earlier this year, PWDA presented our first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

to Reconciliation Australia to coincide with National Reconciliation Week. Our RAP will map out how we will contribute to reconciliation and strengthen our relationships with First Nations Peoples.

With a new strategy to guide us, an operational plan in place and a streamlined structure to help realise our plan, I'm excited by what we can achieve in the next 12 months. I'm also extremely proud of all the team has achieved in the past year. This would not be possible without the collective effort of the team and I would like to thank our Board, the Advisories and all our staff for their commitment and diligence throughout the year. I would particularly like to acknowledge the invaluable support of my Deputy, Carolyn Hodge, our new Director of Communications & Strategic Projects, Lizzy Fowler, our President, Nicole Lee, and Past President, Sam Connor.

Finally, I'm very pleased at the end of this financial year to provide our membership with a positive financial outcome. It's wonderful to see the team's hard work and our plans to ensure PWDA's ongoing sustainability coming to fruition - allowing us to continue advocating for human rights and representing our community at such a crucial time.

**Sebastian Zagarella,**  
Chief Executive Officer, PWDA





# Key statistics

**1,370**

clients supported

**1,567,835**

people reached on social media

**38,149**

occasions of client service

**203,707**

website visitors

**19%**

increase in membership

**23**

media releases

**36**

policy and advocacy reports,  
statements and submissions

**66**

staff members

## Client satisfaction



**I am satisfied with the services I have received**

**96%** of respondents rated this as high or very high



**The service listened to me and understood my issues**

**94%** of respondents rated this as high or very high



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

**90%** of respondents rated this as high or very high



## Number of advocacy cases by program

We supported **1370** individual cases of advocacy.

**45**

Disability Royal Commission (DRC)

**99**

Disability Housing Advocacy Service (DHAS)

**535**

National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP)

**153**

Disability Advocacy Futures Program (DAFP)

**356**

NDIS appeals

**19**

Disability Advocacy Futures Program (DAFP) Education

**64**

Redress

**83**

Queensland Disability Advocacy Program (QDAP)

**16**

Engage-In



# Strategic Focus Areas

**Our operations are now guided by a three-year strategic framework to ensure our programs, services and activities deliver maximum impact for our members and people with disability. Launched in 2022, our 2022-25 Strategic Plan outlines a comprehensive vision for the future of PWDA and helps guide the focus and priorities of the Operations Teams to deliver on the outcomes to which we're committing.**

## Strategic Pillars

The Strategic Plan is underpinned by four Strategic Pillars, which outline our objectives:

### Represent

Remain the leading national cross-disability member driven organisation. Reflect the diversity of our community and represent their voice nationally and internationally.

### Advocate

Advocate for the human rights of all people with disability at individual and systemic levels.

### Educate

Drive positive change for people with disability through education and advocacy.

### Sustain

Maintain a financially viable and sustainable organisation.



# Represent

**Remain the leading national cross-disability member driven organisation. Reflect the diversity of our community and represent their voice nationally and internationally.**

## Membership

**As a member-based organisation, our members remain at the centre of everything we do. Over the year, our membership steadily grew with a 19% increase, up from the 6% increase achieved the previous year.**

Regular engagement with our members remained a focus and we continued to strengthen our communications with informative newsletters and surveys as well as a scheduled program of member events. Our social media community has also continued to grow, providing new opportunities for us to engage with members and our community in real-time.

In the first half of the financial year and in the lead up to the Annual General Meeting and Board Elections, PWDA members were consulted so we could break down any potential barriers to members applying for and joining the Board. Following this consultation, we received 17 nominations to join the PWDA Board in 2022.

In September, PWDA hosted a series of online workshops for our members. The workshops were aimed at gathering feedback for the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to help guide them in developing new NDIS participant safety principles that have now been included in the NDIA's Participant Safeguarding Policy.

In November, we held our Annual General Meeting which saw the election of seven members to PWDA board positions including four new Board members. Following the election a forum for members was held to meet the PWDA Board and launch the new Strategic Plan.

We continued to consult with our members regarding their experiences and concerns about 'Living with COVID-19'. Information and feedback gathered from our members was then used to inform our Board's PWDA COVID-19 Position Statement, which will be released in late 2023.

PWDA also supported members in the lead up to the New South Wales (NSW) state election, providing accessible communications to support them in voting.

The Membership Engagement Board Advisory Group, led by Marayke Jonkers, continued to work towards our Membership Engagement Strategy.



Regular communication and consultation helped us better understand our member's experiences and concerns, which then in turn set the agenda for our systemic advocacy.

## International and National Representation

Representation of our members and wider community both nationally and internationally remained a key priority in the 2022-23 financial year.

### International Representation

PWDA continued to represent people with disability at regional and international levels through our engagement with the United Nations (UN) and networks with our sister Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) and Disabled People's Organisations Australia (DPO Australia)

As one of four founders of DPO Australia, we continued to undertake a range of work in the international human rights space concerning the key issues affecting people with disability living in Australia.

As a representative of DPO Australia, PWDA sent PWDA President, Nicole Lee, Board Secretary, Clare Gibellini and Senior

Manager of Policy, Giancarlo de Vera, as delegates to New York in June 2023 to take part in the 16<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of States Parties to the *Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities* (COSP16). Giancarlo also had the distinguished honour of being the lead youth delegate for the Australian Civil Society Delegation to COSP16.

The overarching theme of the conference was 'Harmonising National Policies and Strategies with the CRPD: achievements and challenges.'

During COSP16, Clare Gibellini delivered an intervention at the UN, highlighting the need to end indefinite detention of people with disability. Nicole Lee's participation focused on the roles that guardianship, substitute decision-making and mental health laws play in perpetuating this form of abuse.

While at COSP16, PWDA also worked with the Australian Human Rights Commission to call for the improvement of Australia's systems to preserve the legal capacity of people with disability; ensure will and preference of people with disability are respected; and ensure supported decision-making principles and supports are in place.

PWDA also partnered with Queensland Advocacy for Inclusion (QAI) to deliver a side event at the UN focused on ensuring people with disability of diverse genders and sexualities have equal access to sexual and reproductive health and supports, with Giancarlo moderating a panel on this topic.

During the year PWDA has also engaged in international consultation mechanisms relating to the *Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment* (CAT). We made a submission to the Committee Against Torture's examination of Australia's sixth periodic CAT report, raising a range of issues including sexual assault in mental health facilities and forced sterilisation of people with disability, and we continued to fight for a disability-aware implementation of the *Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment and Punishment* (OPCAT) in Australia.

Our OPCAT work revved up in the second half of 2022, in anticipation of the Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture's (SPT) planned visit to Australia to conduct inspections of places of detention. PWDA made a submission to the Subcommittee urging them to visit disability group homes and aged care homes during their visit to Australia. Unfortunately, the Subcommittee's visit was suspended and ultimately terminated, but we hope our advocacy will help to assist the Subcommittee's future work with Australia.

In April 2023, PWDA and Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) made a joint submission with the support of Dr Dinesh Wadiwel (University of Sydney) and Dr Linda Steele (University of Technology Sydney) to the SPT's Draft General Comment No.1 on Places of Deprivation of Liberty (Article 4). The submission recommended that the general comment must have a stronger

disability focus, including through a wider interpretation of 'places of deprivation of liberty'.

PWDA continued its involvement in the Asia-Pacific disability rights movement, through participation in the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific consultations on the review of the Asia-Pacific decade of persons with disability (2013-2022) and participation in the Pacific Disability Forum Board Meetings.

PWDA also facilitated a session on disability inclusive disaster risk reduction at the UN Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in September 2022, and supported our sister DPOs in Korea on adopting the optional protocol to the CRPD in Korea alongside the Australian Centre for Disability Law.



**Image |** PWDA Senior Policy Officer, Samantha French with Mark Patrick, CEO of the Australian Centre for Disability Law (ACDL) and Mr Sir In Hwan, Chairman Policy Committee, Korean Federation of Organisations of the Disabled and former Chair of Asia-Pacific DPO United.

## National Representation

Guided by the concerns of our members, PWDA continued to work across multiple policy areas, promoting the inclusion of people with disability across all aspects of life in Australia.

Throughout the year the PWDA team collaborated and met with a wide range of disability sector colleagues, services, government departments, community sector partners, and private sector stakeholders to promote advocacy services and the rights and needs of people with disability.

The PWDA team also attended sector networking events, interagency and local health district meetings, as well as large scale disability expos to spend time, connect, answer questions and provide support to the community.

In September, PWDA's Deputy CEO, Carolyn Hodge, spoke at the Jobs and Skills Summit about the need for people with disability to earn at least minimum wages and have greater opportunities for careers in open employment.

PWDA continued to be part of the Women's Economic Equality Taskforce, participated

actively in the Disability Royal Commission, NDIS Review and appeared across media channels, featuring on Q&A, The Drum and many more.

In December, PWDA celebrated International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD), joining our communities of people with disability, our sector partners, and organisations around the world in celebrating and recognising the contributions of all people with disability.

We called for solutions that will ensure people with disability are included at all levels of society, and we recognise our siblings who continue to be marginalised during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

PWDA staff members also shared their experiences and reflections on invisible disability for International Day of People with Disability event 'Sydney Living Library: Not all Disabilities are Visible'.

In February and March, PWDA members represented the LGBTQIA+ disability community by participating in Fair Day and the 45th Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade.

**There is a key opportunity to provide immediate and tangible change for people with disability and benefit employers at the same time by boosting the workforce**

**PWDA Deputy CEO Carolyn Hodge**





**People with disability are all genders and part of the beautiful and diverse shades of the LGBTQIA+ rainbow. With all eyes on Sydney, we are proud to represent our community and its wonderful diversity at this world event as we kick off the season at Fair Day.**

**PWDA CEO Sebastian Zagarella.**



**Image |** PWDA members, staff and community at the 45th Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade



## Advisory Committee Positions and Reference Groups 2022-23

During the year, PWDA continued to attend or take part in a significant number of committees, networks and advisories, representing the interests of our membership.

Highlights included:



**Image |** PWDA President Nicole Lee with Emerson Damasceno, the President of the Brazilian National Commission for Autistic People (Comissão Nacional da Pessoa Autista), and colleague.

Australian Disability & Development Consortium

Australian Electoral Commission Advisory Group

Australian OPCAT Network

Building Better Homes Steering Committee and Strategic Advisory Group

Charter of Human Rights Advisory Committee

Community Housing Disability Network

COVID-19 Disability Advisory Committee

Disability Representative Organisations Forum

National Advisory Committee for NDIS Consumer Technical Expert

National Autism Strategy Oversight Council

National Emergency Management  
Agency Charitable, Not-for-Profit  
and Philanthropic Roundtable

National Inclusive Transport  
Advocacy Network

NDIA Disability Representative and  
Carer Organisations CEO Forum

NDIS Cultural and Linguistic Diversity  
(CALD) Strategy Summit

NDIS Home and Living Steering  
Committee

NDIS Quality and Safeguards  
Commission Disability Sector  
Consultative Committee

NSW Ageing and Disability  
Commission Disability Roundtable  
meeting

NSW Coercive Control People with  
Disability Reference Group

NSW Domestic, Family and Sexual  
Violence Sector Group

NSW Education Disability Strategy  
Reference Group

NSW Women's Alliance

Pacific Disability Forum (PDF)

Specialist Homelessness Services  
Access and Withdrawal Working  
Group



**Image** | PWDA Senior Manager of Policy  
Giancarlo de Vera with Paula Tesoriero,  
NZ's former Disability Rights Commissioner  
and now CEO of Whaikaha, NZ's new  
Disability Ministry



# Advocate

Advocate for the human rights  
of all people with disability at  
individual and systemic levels.

## Introduction by Deputy CEO, Carolyn Hodge

**This year has seen some change to PWDA structures aimed at maximising our capacity to bring about positive outcomes for people with disability. The role of Deputy CEO was created to consolidate PWDA advocacy under one lead and align our individual and systemic advocacy work. Joining PWDA on 4 July 2022, the end of this year saw me clock up a full 12 months' experience leading the two advocacy teams.**

In the first half of the year, we focused on ensuring the safety and wellbeing of staff and clients while moving in and out of remote working arrangements during waves of COVID-19. In January 2023, our advocates were able to return in numbers to provide face-to-face services.

During the later part of 2022, we worked on setting up a new structure that would allow us to deliver on PWDA's Strategic Plan, maintain business as usual at a high level of quality, and look forward to new opportunities. As part of that structural change, we also introduced the new role of National Director of Individual Advocacy taken on by Ted Jensen in December.

Throughout the year we have worked solidly on building connections between individual and systemic advocates so the voices, experience and lived expertise of people with disability are amplified in everything we do. We have also worked to engage with our members, so we have a strong evidence base about what is working and what needs to improve. For example, members and the broader disability community have responded to surveys to inform PWDA responses to the NDIS Review and members have shared their experiences and concerns about COVID-19 through a survey and member forum. We have heard loud and clear that the pandemic is not over.



While you may see us in the media or at events like the 2022 Jobs and Skills Summit, we worked behind the scenes too. The deep experience of our individual advocates allows us to talk with authority about what needs to change, and we have been having quiet as well as loud conversations about many policies, processes and programs - including the NDIS appeals processes and the negative impact on people who have to fight too hard for essential supports.

As a Disabled People's Organisation, we are strongly led by a board of people with disability and, this year, our Board have

provided invaluable guidance and vision that is infused into our advocacy and keeps our focus on a human rights approach.

I thank all our members, clients, Board, staff and the broader disability community for sharing their expertise with us and allowing us to strengthen the capacity of our advocacy services to keep achieving great results. I hope you enjoy reading more about what our individual and systemic advocates have achieved this year. With the structural changes we made now bedded down, I look forward to our team having an even greater impact in the year ahead.



**Image |** Carolyn Hodge speaking at the 2023 PWDA All Staff Conference

# Individual Advocacy

## National Disability Insurance Scheme Appeals Program

**We supported 356 individual cases of advocacy under the NDIS Appeals Program.**

The National Disability Insurance Scheme Appeals Program (NDIS Appeals), funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Social Services (DSS), remains 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.

This year, individual advocates worked across Queensland, Sydney, Southern Highlands, Shoalhaven and the Capital Region including Cooma, Goulburn and Batemans Bay to support clients with NDIS appeals matters. Very strong demand demonstrated that improvements are still required in NDIS decision-making processes. Trends identified include people with disability feeling unfairly targeted and disadvantaged by the NDIS appeals process; feeling like AAT matters are prolonged to wear them down; and a lack of communication from NDIA Case Managers

who also require greater understanding of disability. Our culturally and linguistically diverse communities also find the appeals system increasingly difficult to navigate due to language barriers. People with disability do not feel safe going through an adversarial legal process, when it is their essential supports that hang in the balance.

**I just wanted to provide feedback on my PWDA Advocate, from the get-go they were amazing. He made sure he knew exactly what was going on and what the desired outcome was, he even helped me after the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) issue had ended when they messed up my new NDIS plan. He went above and beyond, and I wouldn't have been able to do it without his support.**

**Client Testimonial**



Also funded by DSS, the Independent Expert Review (IER) trial program concluded in June 2023. Our advocates supported clients to access and participate in this alternate dispute resolution pathway which was designed to provide a quicker decision and resolution process for NDIS appeals matters and reduce the number of cases needing to go through to an AAT hearing.

**My PWDA Advocate helped me enormously. I would not have been able to get through it without her ... [My Advocate constantly kept] contacting the Independent Expert Review team to keep the process moving and to not stall the process.**

Client Testimonial



## Disability Royal Commission (DRC)

### **We supported 45 individual cases of advocacy under the DRC Program.**

PWDA supported people with disability across New South Wales; and South-Eastern and Outback Queensland to engage with the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (Disability Royal Commission) this year.

Made possible by funding from DSS, our advocates were able to support clients to tell their stories to the Disability Royal Commission, make individual submissions and help people understand and navigate the process.

Client stories related to experiences with the NDIS; Supported Independent Living (SIL), Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA); police, justice and court processes; child safety; employment; health and mental health; guardianship and financial management.

PWDA would like to acknowledge the strength and courage of all individuals who spoke up and shared their stories.

With the DRC hearings coming to a close this year and the Final Report expected in September 2023, this advocacy program concluded at the end of the financial year.

**My PWDA Advocate not only helped me with my personal mess, however she has supported me with the Disability Royal Commission in a way that I have never seen or felt before from another person due to not only her experience and knowledge within her field, but together with her incredibly high levels of empathy. I honestly wish there were more people in the world like her, and yes, I would strongly recommend your service to other individuals in need.**

**Client Testimonial**





## National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP)

### We supported 535 individual cases of advocacy under the National Disability Advocacy Program.

PWDA continued to deliver individual advocacy in both Queensland and New South Wales through the National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP). Funded by the Department of Social Services (DSS), this initiative offers vital advocacy support to people with disability.

In New South Wales, individual advocates are based in our offices in Surry Hills and Bowral and delivered advocacy across regions including the Southern Highlands, Cooma/Snowy Mountains, Goulburn/Southern Tablelands, Central Coast and South Coast of NSW as well as metropolitan areas of Sydney.

In Queensland, PWDA provides services to people with disability across nine regions: Logan – Beaudesert, Sunshine Coast, Gympie, Noosa, Fraser Coast, Port Douglas – Daintree, Bundaberg, Maryborough, and Outback Queensland.

This year, PWDA Advocates supported people with disability across a range of issues, including but not limited to

NDIS; housing and tenancy; health; mental health; child safety; escaping and reporting violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation; guardianship and financial management orders; and education on rights, accessibility and inclusion. PWDA Advocates also assisted people to address breaches of human rights.

**[My] PWDA Advocate went above and beyond to try and help me. She literally saved my life. She has such determination to help people with disabilities have a voice. She is [a] kind, respectful, and genuine advocate who is suited to her role.**

**Client Testimonial**



## Queensland

In addition to the programs above, PWDA also receives disability advocacy funding under the Queensland Disability Advocacy Program (QDAP). This funding plays a crucial role in championing the rights and wellbeing of individuals with disability.



## Queensland Disability Advocacy Program (QDAP)

### **We supported 83 individual cases of advocacy under the Queensland Disability Advocacy Program.**

The Queensland Disability Advocacy Program is a Queensland Government initiative designed to provide individual advocacy support for people with disability throughout the state of Queensland.

With QDAP funding, PWDA provides individual advocacy services to people in Noosa, Sunshine Coast, Gympie and surrounding areas. Throughout this year, clients sought support with a range of matters including access to the NDIS and other services, housing, child safety, legal issues and flood recovery.

Advocates noted the fact that many clients were adversely impacted by isolation. This meant that people with disability were left without the services and supports they need. In an effort to reduce the impact of isolation, one PWDA Advocate has

been involved in actively promoting and referring to a peer support group in Gympie that is now attended by 30+ people.

Informal networks like this are critical in rural communities, as they help members address issues of social and physical isolation and the lack of informal supports.

In order to enhance referral pathways and ensure people with disability are aware of our services, PWDA attended a range of community meetings and interagencies across our QDAP service footprint this year.

## New South Wales

As well as delivering individual advocacy via the NDIS Appeals, Disability Royal Commission and NDAP services noted above, our New South Wales Advocates deliver individual advocacy services under the Disability Advocacy Futures Program (DAFP) and the Disability Housing Advocacy Service (DHAS).



## Disability Advocacy Futures Program (DAFP)

### **We supported 153 individual cases of advocacy under the Disability Advocacy Futures Program.**

PWDA's Disability Advocacy Futures Program (DAFP), funded by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ), continued to provide advocacy assistance to people with disability in the Sydney, South-Eastern Sydney and South-Western Sydney Local Health Districts (LHDs).

Individual advocacy under the DAFP assists people with disability to access and address any issues with services and supports directly funded or provided by the NSW Government.

Over the course of the year, clients with disability requested assistance with matters about a range of issues including housing, abuse and exploitation, education, employment, guardianship, legal matters and service access and quality.

PWDA Advocates have closely worked with all five Assisted Boarding Houses in the targeted LHDs, making regular monthly visits and providing advocacy assistance to several residents.



**I contacted your organisation and the PWDA Advocate assisted me greatly through the trauma of my situation and to eventually get a transfer to another housing department property.**

**I am a primary example of what your organisation does to assist individuals with disability and what they are up against with the chaotic broken system.**

**I was physically extremely ill and on two months of high-dosage antibiotics through assistance including an inhaler etc.**

**I cannot thank the PWDA Advocate and your organisation enough for all you have done for me – a highly professional, compassionate and ethical organisation.**



## **Disability Advocacy Futures Program (DAFP) Education**

**We supported 19 individual cases of advocacy under the Disability Advocacy Futures Program Education.**

Since January 2023, DCJ, in collaboration with the Department of Education, provided additional funding to increase the capacity of DAFP providers to deliver individual advocacy services for students with disability in New South Wales (NSW) public schools and for their families and guardians.

PWDA was successfully funded to assist students, families and carers to ensure they are supported in navigating the education system and expressing their needs to their school.

As a new program for PWDA our DAFP Education team focused on raising awareness of the services and what it offers. The team also worked collaboratively with students, parents, carers, schools and providers in response to the needs of students.



## Case Study – Sara\*

Sara is a child with disability who is in a mainstream class of a NSW public school. Her mother Lydia\* contacted PWDA as she was concerned Sara was not getting enough support in the classroom.

“Sara only has 1-2 hours of additional support from a Student Learning and Support Officer (SLSO) each day (including playground time). Sara is often left on her own in the classroom and was not being sufficiently encouraged to participate.”

### How we helped

A PWDA Advocate supported Lydia to prepare for a meeting with the school and attended the meeting with her. The Advocate also helped explore what other options there might be to obtain further support for Sara. At the meeting, the school agreed that Sara needed more support and said they were in the process of asking the Department of Education ‘Panel’ for a review of the funding for SLSO hours and other supports. PWDA supported Lydia in explaining some of the strategies that would work well for Sara at school and requested more communication from the teacher about Sara’s progress. An agreement was reached to improve communication and better support Sara using existing resources.

Several weeks later, the Panel found that Sara was still ineligible for other supports, but they agreed to a small increase to funding for SLSO support. Lydia asked if she could submit her own appeal to the Panel. PWDA helped draft the appeal to the Panel. In the appeal letter, Lydia requested further funding and asked for the funding to be used to hire qualified professionals who understand Sara’s disability.

After a few weeks, the Panel agreed to provide additional hours per week of SLSO support. PWDA also provided advice to Lydia about setting up a learning and support plan to formalise the support needs.

\*The names of the people in this case study have been changed.





## Disability Housing Advocacy Service (DHAS)

### **We supported 99 cases of individual advocacy under the Disability Housing Advocacy Service.**

The Disability Housing Advocacy Service (DHAS) Project and the 1800 Disability Housing Information Line (DHIL), both funded by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) continued to support people with disability living in supported accommodation in New South Wales (NSW) who experienced tenancy-related issues.

Throughout the year, our DHAS team members worked collaboratively with

clients, service providers, their families and supports to negotiate positive outcomes for residents of Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) and Supported Independent Living (SIL).

Key issues facing residents included violations of choice and control, guardianship issues, risk of harm, moving home, poor matching with co-tenants, as well as other issues with service provision.

In addition to the advocacy services, the team also provided information on a range of housing topics including accommodation agreements; independent dispute resolution processes; applying for mediation; and rights and responsibilities under relevant legislation, policies, guidelines, and how to enforce them.

## Case Study - Charlie\*

Charlie is a middle-aged man with significant physical and cognitive disability who requires assistance with all aspects of daily living. Charlie lives in a SIL/SDA residence in NSW. To ensure that Charlie's health and welfare are maximised, he receives support from external organisations providing exercise and community-based activities.

Significant challenges have arisen because Charlie and his external care providers are denied access to his home when the SIL provider staff are not on site. This has been an ongoing issue the family and support coordinator have been attempting to negotiate and rectify for many years. To support Charlie, PWDA engaged with Legal Aid to issue a letter of demand. This restriction has compromised Charlie's ability to undertake and enjoy these quality-of-life activities. One incident involved Charlie's inability to use the bathroom in his home when he returned early from a walk.

These issues are not uncommon for people with disability living in SIL/SDA who are denied the usual legal rights given to tenants, such as free access to their homes and the issuing of keys. The NSW Government is currently considering legislative reform to overcome the problems that Charlie and other SIL/SDA residents face. In the meantime, PWDA has been working with Charlie and his family, and other residents of SIL/SDA, to maximise their quality of life while maintaining their accommodation options.

\*The names of the people in this case study have been changed.







## PWDA Redress Project

### **We supported 64 clients under PWDA's Redress Project.**

The PWDA Redress Project supports adult survivors of institutional child sexual abuse to engage with the National Redress Scheme. This year our Redress Team has continued to provide information and referrals nationally about the Scheme and has supported people with disability to make informed choices about accessing the Scheme or other options. Clients were supported throughout the entire process, from providing information to completing and lodging an application form, to receiving and understanding offers made by the Scheme, and assisted to access legal and financial advice if needed.

Our Redress Team continued to engage in community outreach work, in person

and online across NSW including regional and remote areas. Our focus on building relationships with these communities ensures that people with disability can learn about the Scheme and have the best possible support if they decide to engage with the process.

45% of PWDA Redress Clients identify as First Nations. Our Identified Aboriginal Project Officer and Advocate continued to assist us in engaging with First Nations Communities in a culturally appropriate way and provided First Nations People with the opportunity to be supported by someone of their own culture when participating in the Scheme.

We also collaborated with other NSW Redress Support Services to run information workshops for services and organisations in various locations, to provide the community with information about the Scheme and the role of Redress Support Services. The workshops also



provided information about free financial and legal services available to Redress participants and educated support workers on how to safely respond to a client who discloses they have been subjected to sexual abuse.

Our Redress Team was regularly consulted by the funding body and the administrators of the Scheme about improving accessibility and participation of people with disability.

Our Redress Team working with the PWDA Systemic Advocacy Team also provided a submission addressing these issues to the Joint Standing Committee on Implementation of the National Redress Scheme.

## Case study – Aaron\*

Aaron approached the PWDA Redress Team for assistance to apply to the National Redress Scheme. At that time, Aaron was not accessing disability support services and was long-term unemployed.

### How we helped

The PWDA Redress Team assisted Aaron to lodge an application to the National Redress Scheme. We also facilitated Aaron's engagement with psychological supports during this process and were able to assist Aaron to identify and engage with suitable disability support services. Aaron had been seeking employment for some time but was finding it difficult to find an employer who was willing to take him on. He also had no transportation which made getting to a place of work difficult. Aaron received an offer of Redress which included a monetary payment enabling Aaron to purchase a vehicle and start up his own small business.

\*The names of the people in this case study have been changed.



## Systemic Advocacy

While work for the Disability Royal Commission and NDIS Review dominated the work of our Systemic Advocacy Team in the past 12 months, economic security and employment were also key themes in our work this year. As a result of our extensive advocacy, the Government significantly improved the Disability Support Pension impairment tables, with new tables coming into effect in 2023. While the new tables aren't perfect, they are much improved.

We advocated for the Government to increase income support for people with disability. Although we were hoping for bigger changes, the 2023 Federal Budget marginally increased the Jobseeker, Youth Disability Support Pension and Commonwealth Rent Assistance rates.

PWDA also advocated for our better employment and economic security by representing people with disability at the Jobs and Skills Summit, attended by Carolyn Hodge, submitting to the Employment White Paper and being involved in the ongoing reform of Disability Employment Services.

In 2023, PWDA entered the modern slavery reform area for the first time, as both the NSW and Federal governments accelerated efforts to combat modern slavery. We successfully advocated for the NSW Anti-Slavery Commissioner's strategy to formally recognise that people with disability are

being exploited in segregated workplaces and institutional care. We will continue to fight for modern slavery efforts to be disability inclusive.

PWDA continued to advocate in the domestic and family violence and women's space with our ongoing contributions to the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-2032 and the forthcoming National Gender Equality Strategy.

In NSW, we were also part of a successful coalition that advocated for much-needed coercive control legislation (*Crimes Legislation Amendment (Coercive Control) Act 2022*). PWDA President, Nicole Lee is now part of a Reference Group to provide advice on the impact a coercive control offence will have on people with disability.

Following the 2022 statutory review of the *Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW)*, PWDA has also continued to call for the creation of a new role, so an appropriately qualified person with disability can be appointed as the Deputy Children's Guardian for children and young people with disability in the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian.

With the conversation for a national Charter of Human Rights back on the agenda, PWDA also led the disability sector in advocating for national human rights legislation that enshrines our rights under the CRPD.

As COVID-19 continued to be a significant issue for our members, PWDA also consulted with members to develop our forthcoming COVID-19 Position Statement.

PWDA also developed a comprehensive platform for the NSW 2023 state election, containing 23 election asks that align with Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031.

The platform was sent to the NSW Premier and Ministers, as well as the Leader of the Opposition, Shadow Ministers, Green's spokespeople and crossbenchers, and PWDA continues to advocate for further change with the new NSW Government.

Our position statement on guardianship and supported decision-making is based on the CRPD and supports the end of substituted decision-making and the introduction of a national supported decision-making framework.

Australia should transition away from guardianship and substitute decision-making models and practices and move towards a national supported decision-making model, consistent with Australia's obligations under the CRPD and other international human rights treaties.

We conducted extensive desktop research, including looking at reforms in other countries to inform our position. We also consulted with our Individual Advocates and other DROs to reach our position.

We also developed a position statement on the extent and nature of poverty in Australia.

The position statement outlines the key statistics on disability and poverty, identifies its drivers and impacts and makes key recommendations for breaking the poverty cycle.

Our modern slavery position statement explains the link between modern slavery and disability, including the factors that place us at greater risk of experiencing this crime. It also sets out recommendations for ensuring that Australia's efforts to combat modern slavery are disability inclusive.

PWDA acknowledges the funding it receives from the Department of Social Services to undertake nationally focused systemic advocacy and the NSW Government's Disability Advocacy Futures Program to undertake systemic advocacy in NSW.

## **Disability Royal Commission (DRC)**

This year, PWDA's Systemic Advocacy Team focused on the Disability Royal Commission (DRC) ahead of the Commission's conclusion in September 2023. As the DRC hearings came to a close, our priority was on delivering strong submissions to the Commission's final thematic hearings and our Policy Team worked hard to advocate for the rights of people with disability, both through submissions and oral advocacy.

PWDA made a submission to the guardianship, substituted and supported decision-making hearing, arguing for a national supported decision-making framework and an end to substituted decision-making.

Members of both our individual advocacy and policy teams met with the Commission's legal team to further advocate for CRPD-compliant guardianship reform.

PWDA worked closely with other Disability Representative Organisations (DROs) in our advocacy, attending fortnightly meetings to discuss and organise sector advocacy. This resulted in strong outputs, including a submission identifying gaps in the Disability Royal Commission's work and issues requiring further examination. Together, we also developed a joint statement ahead of the Disability Royal Commission's hearing on homelessness, outlining the urgent need for housing reform.

PWDA also contributed to Inclusion Australia's important *Equal Pay, Equal Rights* submission to the Disability Royal Commission on inclusive employment of people with an intellectual disability. We later supported that submission by writing a letter to the Disability Royal Commission recommending the adoption of a five-year transition plan towards ending all forms of segregated employment.

In October 2022, PWDA's Senior Manager of Policy, Giancarlo de Vera, gave evidence alongside the National Ethnic

Disability Alliance and the Federation of Ethnic Communities Council of Australia, advocating for greater focus on intersectional discrimination experienced by people with disability who are also from CALD backgrounds at the Commission's hearing about people with disability from CALD communities.

As the Disability Royal Commission's hearings came to an end, we were pleased to make a joint submission calling on the Commission to recommend an Australian Charter of Human Rights and a submission to the Commission's final hearing 'Vision for an Inclusive Australia', which Senior Policy Officer, Michelle Keogh and Senior Manager of Policy, Giancarlo de Vera, also attended in Brisbane.

PWDA acknowledges the funding it receives from the Department of Social Services to undertake DRC systemic advocacy.

## NDIS Review

The Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), The Hon Bill Shorten MP, announced an independent review of the NDIS (the Review) on 18 October 2022.

The Review is examining the design, operations and sustainability of the NDIS, and NDIS workforce capability and capacity.

PWDA played an important role in gathering and representing the views of people with disability.



For most of the second half of the 2022/2023 financial year, PWDA engaged with people with disability on their experiences of the NDIS through three surveys, including one Easy Read survey and one survey dedicated to housing, and seven focus groups.

PWDA received over 500 valid responses to the three surveys. The evidence from survey responses informed our development of consultation questions for all our focus groups, which further explored the themes of:

- LGBTQIA+
- Access, Eligibility and Planning
- Quality and Safeguards
- Experiences with NDIS Services
- What does the NDIS need to know about disability?
- Housing
- Non-NDIS participants

For each focus group, PWDA submitted summary reports and deidentified transcripts to the NDIS Review.

The findings from surveys, focus groups as well as feedback from PWDA individual advocacy and our own expertise as a Disabled People's Organisation provided valuable direction and evidence for our subsequent submissions to the Review.

PWDA's submissions explored issues of housing, quality and safeguarding,

participant safety, access, eligibility and planning, and pricing and payment frameworks in the NDIS.

PWDA also participated in a fortnightly NDIS Review Co-Group of Disability Representative Organisations to consider the future state of the NDIS and explore proposed changes to the operation of the NDIS in areas like NDIS access and planning.

PWDA acknowledges the funding it received from the Australian Government to engage with people with disability on the NDIS Review.

**Image |** PWDA President, Nicole Lee and Deputy CEO, Carolyn Hodge with The Hon Bill Shorten MP.



# Educate

Drive positive change for people with disability through education and advocacy.

**This year our focus on responding to opportunities to educate and advocate for positive change for people with disability led to the consolidation of our Training and Strategic Projects arms.**

**Within this portfolio, we expanded our training services nationally, launched new training modules, increased our strategic partnerships and delivered significant impact across areas including domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV) and women's leadership.**

## Strategic Projects

Through 2022-23 PWDA continued to strengthen its Strategic Projects arm, which delivers project outcomes across a range of specific issues that affect the rights of people with disability.



## Advancing Women with Disability in the Workplace

PWDA was successfully funded by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in July 2022 as part of the **Women's Leadership and Development Program: Lead and Succeed** grant opportunity. The funding enables PWDA to deliver a project that seeks to fundamentally improve outcomes for women, girls, feminine-identifying and non-binary people with disability in Australia across both leadership representation and workforce participation and safety.

Following recruitment, the Advancing Women with Disability in the Workplace

(Advancing Women) project was officially launched on 8 March, 2023 - International Women's Day.

Through the delivery of two streams of activity – an educational and training program for employer organisations and a mentoring program for women with disability – the project seeks to increase the representation of women with disability in leadership roles; increase participation in the workplace by women with disability; and improve the safety of workplaces for women with disability. When combined, it is hoped that the educational and mentoring programs will impact 60 individuals, organisations and/or workplaces and support 39 women, girls, feminine-identifying and non-binary people with disability to secure sustainable, ongoing employment.

The Advancing Women project was developed in recognition of the gross underrepresentation of women, girls, feminine-identifying and non-binary people with disability in leadership and decision-making roles both overseas and across the Australian workforce. While data specifically relating to women with disability in leadership roles is notably lacking, United Nations Women noted in 2019 that women with disability are severely underrepresented in decision making. While there is a growing recognition that organisations need to

cultivate a more diverse workforce to reap the rewards that diversity brings, a focus on people with disability is lacking. The timing of this project is therefore critical. While Australia makes great strides to improve the safety and representation of women and other minorities in the workplace, it is crucial that we do not leave women with disability behind – women who, as cited by Kylee Tyndall, 'experience the double bind of sexism and ableism in their day to day lives.'

Following the launch of the project, considerable work was undertaken to understand the barriers facing women and gender diverse people with disability in the workplace, and to identify enablers that would support women in accessing and sustaining leadership and decision-making roles. During the research phase, a literature review, surveys and interviews with women with lived experience and employer organisations were undertaken.

Through surveys and interviews, 159 women, feminine-identifying and non-binary people with lived experience of disability were engaged to contribute their experiences and a further nine organisations shared their strategies and insights in relation to employing and supporting people with disability in the workplace. A literature review canvassed academic and grey literature from the past five years, highlighting the systemic structural barriers

faced by women with disability including sexism, stereotypes, ableism as well as discrimination and prejudice.

The barriers evidenced by the research are wide-reaching and cannot be addressed by a single project. However, several consistent themes emerged from the research that were taken into consideration in compiling recommendations for the future direction of the project, including recruitment, adjustments, representation, internal ableism and lack of mainstream opportunities.

The resulting recommendations were published in a draft Recommendations Report in July 2023, which will be used by the project's Expert Advisory and Co-Design Panels to progress the development of the project's educational and sponsorship programs through the 2023-24 financial year. From January 2024 it is expected that the program will be rolled out across five organisations in NSW and ACT as part of the project's initial pilot delivery and we look forward to reporting on the impact and outcomes of the pilot next year.



## Building Access

The Building Access Project is funded by Women NSW under the Domestic and

Family Violence (DFV) Innovation Fund and aims to better meet the needs of women and children with disability.

It seeks not only to improve the accessibility of frontline domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV) services, but also to advance the fundamental human rights of women with disability.

The Building Access Project is an innovative initiative enabling DFSV services to better meet the needs of women and children with disability.

Many women find it harder to escape violence because DFSV services are inaccessible for women with disability. PWDA's Building Access Project aims to increase the accessibility of DFSV services for women with disability in NSW. PWDA has worked with Domestic Violence NSW and Women's Community Shelters to improve responses for women with disability experiencing violence.

Originally funded in 2017, Building Access was granted an extension to continue the project work, with the objective of making domestic and family violence services more accessible to women and children with disability. This work was continued on from Phase 1 of the project (which ended in March 2022), through to June 2023. It was identified in the evaluation report of Phase 1 of the Building Access Project that the voices of women with disability need to be captured. It was also identified that PWDA needed to undertake research that will help provide an evidence base for our ongoing advocacy work.



During the 2022-23 financial year, considerable research has been undertaken, seeking to understand the experiences of women with disability, when it comes to violence and abuse, and the barriers they face when trying to access DFSV services. This research was conducted by and with women with disability who have lived experience of domestic and family violence. Concurrent research was also conducted with organisations in the DFSV sector, which involved surveying key staff sector-wide, and conducting separate interviews with organisations involved in Phase 1 of the Building Access Project. It also involved a Literature Review. PWDA will publish the key findings and recommendations of this research in late 2023.

The second phase of Building Access saw the development of resources as recommended by Phase 1 of the project. These resources were determined essential for the DFSV sector to deliver best practice regarding inclusivity and accessibility. They are the first resources of their kind in the DFSV space for services working with women with disability experiencing violence.

PWDA collaborated with women with lived experience, the Expert Advisory Group, Domestic Violence NSW (DVNSW) and frontline services including WWILD, to create an online resource library to assist services in becoming more accessible. This included the updating of resources that inform key policies and organisational practices, and the development of online training and self-assessment tools. One

of the key tools developed was to help DFSV services better support women with intellectual disability who are experiencing violence.

Easy-read resources were also included in the library. These were developed to ensure that information about abuse and how to seek support when experiencing violence was more accessible for women with disability as clients of referring services.

All of these resources, guidelines and training materials are housed on the [Building Access Page on PWDA's website](#) and are an excellent resource for the sector.

Finally, under the Building Access Project, PWDA has this year continued to represent women with disability who are experiencing violence, in key forums such as stakeholder meetings, government consultations, and other sector advocacy work that strives for access and inclusion. The Building Access Project informed the work of co-design committees, DFSV conferences, leaders in primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia, state and national government strategies, and other initiatives across many NSW and national government departments. We collaborated with DVNSW to create resources for individual organisations and the sector at large, as well as an online seminar in 2022 as part of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence.



## Talk Up

PWDA is funded by the Department of Social Services (DSS) to project manage the Talk Up Project. This is a consortium project, delivered in partnership with First Peoples Disability Network (FPDN) and The Australian Centre for Disability Law (ACDL).

The primary objective of Talk Up is to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with disability understand their legal rights and advocate for themselves in legal situations. This is done through the development of educational resources.

Talk Up is being delivered across three locations in NSW: Mount Druitt; Dubbo/Wellington; and the Northern Rivers; with each of the regions identified due to established community connections.

While the impact of COVID-19 saw significant delays in the physical roll out of the project, during the past year we were able to commence delivery in the first two project locations.

Four community consultations were conducted in Mount Druitt throughout August 2022, with consultations held at a local community centre. During the consultations, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability, their families and communities, were asked

about the primary legal issues affecting them. Based on the information drawn from the consultations, the Talk Up Team developed three resources focused on five legal issues, including the NDIS, disability discrimination, police and the criminal justice system, housing and homelessness. The Talk Up Team developed a series of resources designed to provide information to the community and, in February 2023, the team returned to Mount Druitt to run three educational workshops. These workshops focused on taking community members through the resources, dispersing them and seeking feedback.

There has been extremely positive feedback and great demand from the community in relation to the resources, which have been distributed through the community, via local organisations and community centres.

In May 2023, the Talk Up Team began consultation in its second project location, Dubbo/Wellington, holding a consultation in Nanima Village and work is underway to develop targeted resources to support the community in this location. We are looking forward to concluding the project with the delivery of consultations in the third project location in later 2023.





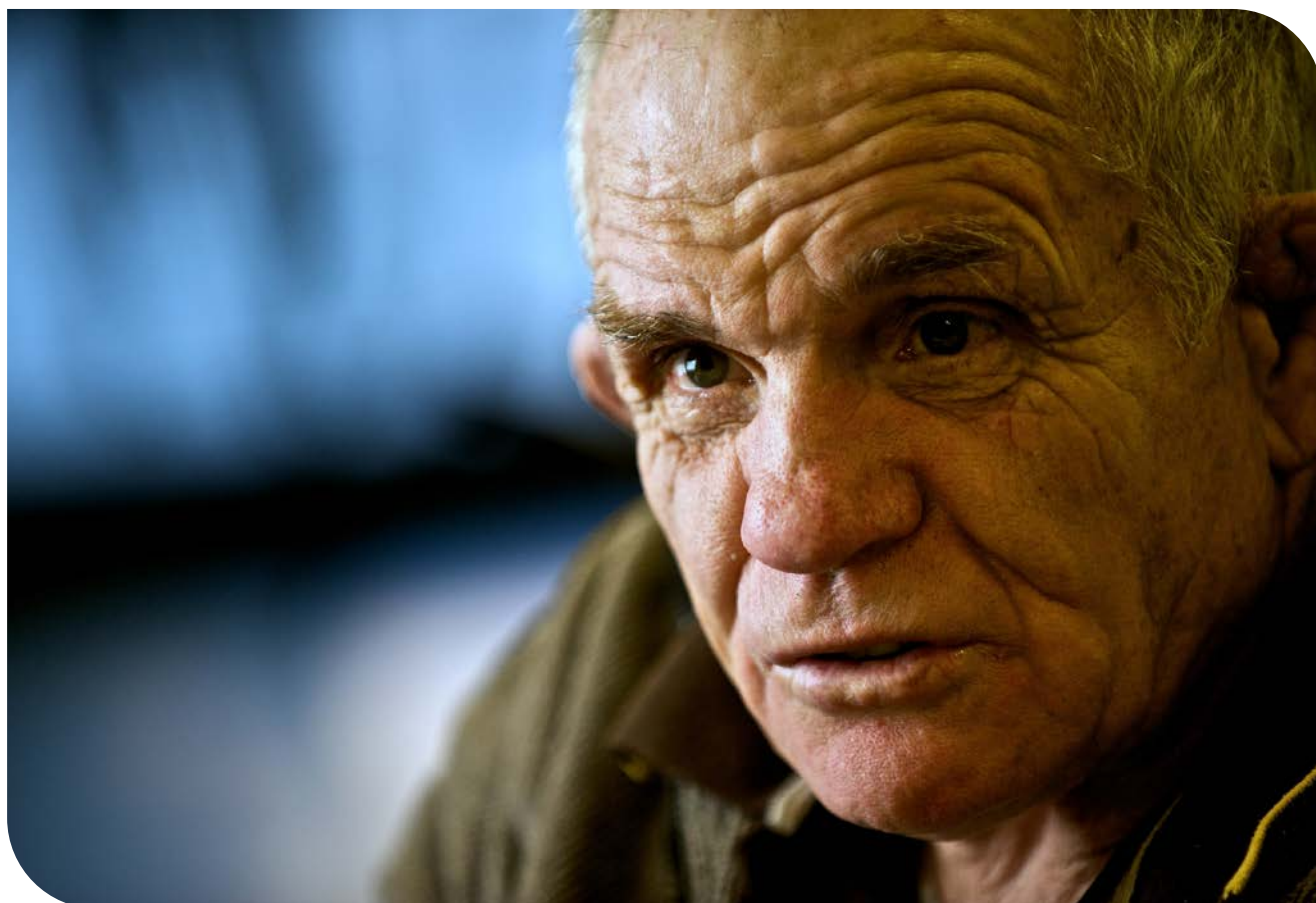


## Engage-In

In late 2022, PWDA welcomed the news that the Engage-In project would receive funding until 2024. A new manager was appointed, and the work of supporting people with psychosocial disability in hard-to-reach settings including prisons and forensic units recommenced in early 2023. 16 people received support from that time until the end of the financial year. Our focus

has been on connecting people in these settings with services that can support them to successfully reintegrate into the community and assist them to apply for the NDIS and/or Disability Support Pension (DSP) if needed. This often involves a whole-of-community approach to ensure that when a person has left the institutional setting, they are fully supported within the community and that they have services and structures in place to reduce recidivism.

Our team continues to develop a large network of stakeholder relationships to facilitate the best outcomes for our clients through warm referral pathways





and working collaboratively with disability and mainstream services. In the past year, we reconvened our Community of Practice, which is comprised of a range of stakeholders including other advocacy organisations, legal professionals, service providers, non-government organisations, and representatives from NSW Justice Health and Corrective Services NSW. We are very excited that there is a high level of enthusiasm in this group to work together to reduce barriers for people in institutional settings and build their confidence and capacity to successfully reintegrate and contribute to the community.

Our work is always informed and guided by people living with psychosocial disability through the Project Advisory Group and engaging with consultants with lived experience and peak bodies such as Being Mental Health Consumers.

Engage-In staff remain tenacious in working within systems that not only create and enforce barriers for the people living within these settings, but also for workers seeking to provide assistance and support. The Engage-In Team also continues to seek avenues for systemic advocacy to address the barriers and human rights issues that are endemic within institutional settings.

PWDA acknowledges the funding provided by DSS under an Information Linkages and Capacity Building Grant for the Engage-In project.

## Case Study - James\*

James is a prison inmate and was referred to us by another client. James is a survivor of childhood trauma, resulting in lifelong psychosocial challenges. James has contact with his family and the hope of being reunited with them is what keeps him from suicide. He has been subject to bullying while incarcerated, and his disability is not acknowledged which creates unnecessary barriers.

### How we are helping

Engage-In is assisting James to apply for the NDIS, and has networked with James' lawyer, psychologist, doctor, justice, health and corrective services to facilitate the application and address some of the issues James is currently facing. The Engage-In Project will support James with locating relevant NDIS support coordinators to suit his needs as he transitions out of a closed setting.

\*The names of the people in this case study have been changed.



## Training

Over the past 12 months, appetite for disability confidence, inclusion and accessibility training increased, with a significant number of organisations reaching out to PWDA for trusted services.

PWDA continued to employ a number of experienced trainers and educators, nationally, all whom have lived experience of disability. Over the course of the year, trainers were engaged to deliver full and half-day courses to organisations including Ramsgate RSL, Your Story Disability Legal Supports, SDA Services, SAMSN, Solve TAD, the Victorian Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Change, Scarlett Alliance, Georges River Council and more.

While disability confidence training continues to be a popular option for many organisations, an increasing number are reaching out to PWDA for the delivery of more specific training, as well as the creation of tailored training that is specific to the challenges and needs of their organisations.

This year we took time to review all course content, updating our Facilitating Access course to include content relating to recruitment, onboarding and reasonable adjustments, and we launched our hugely successful peer-reviewed program 'Engaging Confidently with People with Psychosocial Disability'.

Over the past year PWDA introduced new platforms and worked with several organisations including The Centre for Volunteering, Monash University and Settlement Services International, to develop eLearning courses and training content to showcase lived experience.

Training was also delivered through our project work, with training targeting the domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV) sector delivered between January and June 2023 in partnership with Domestic Violence NSW (DVNSW). Similarly, PWDA partnered with the NSW Education Centre Against Violence (ECAV) to develop and deliver training to disability service providers designed to support them in identifying and responding to incidents of DFSV with those they support. Central to the development and delivery of content was the inclusion of those with lived experience and subject matter expertise, and we thank all our trainers for so generously sharing their experiences when delivering training.



## PWDA & Monash University

In 2023, PWDA Trainers worked with Monash University to deliver videos for the University's new unit, Disability and Inclusive Practice, designed to enrich students' online learning experience.

**Students gave feedback throughout the unit that the inclusion of the videos from PWDA of people with lived experience really challenged their preconceptions and stereotypes related to disability. These stories/videos increased the students' awareness about disability inclusion in the context of educational settings and the workplace environment. Students learned strategies and ways to make the workplace more accessible and inclusive. Students discussed ways to challenge attitudinal barriers in the workplace, especially stereotypes and stigma.**

**One student in particular used content from this unit to implement changes in the organisation he manages in terms of recruitment procedures and new employee induction. Students provided weekly feedback that this course was very practical, and students found ways to apply this learning in their work and personal life.**

**As unit coordinator and having experience in this field, these videos add real value to the overall goal of this unit.**

**Dermott Carberry, OUC, Monash University**



## PWDA & Central and Eastern Sydney PHN

PWDA was engaged in 2023 to deliver a series of disability confidence training workshops to 100 delegates from Central and Eastern Sydney Primary Health Network. With the organisation about to undertake consultations as part of developing its first Disability Inclusion Action Plan, the training was designed to equip delegates with a fundamental understanding of inclusion, barriers to access and disability rights, leading into the consultations. Held across five days, PWDA hosted five, two-hour workshops, each with 20 delegates. Delivered by a trainer with lived experience of psychosocial disability to a small audience, delegates had the opportunity to work through scenarios of relevance to their organisation, and safely ask the trainer questions relating to their lived experience.

## Capacity Building for DFSV and Disability Service Providers

In partnership with DVNSW and ECAV, PWDA developed and delivered an educational series comprising full-day workshops and pre-learning e-modules designed to improve outcomes for women with disability experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence.

Informed by a comprehensive needs analysis as well as subject matter expertise, the two courses developed targeted the needs of two separate audiences – disability service providers and DFSV crisis centres – with the dual goals of improving response by support workers to disclosures of violence and abuse, while also improving the accessibility of crisis centres. PWDA was also engaged to deliver project management as well as subject matter expertise and workshop facilitation.

## Improving Disability Awareness in the Workplace

PWDA was engaged by the Australian Digital Health Agency (ADHA) to improve accessibility and inclusion capabilities across the Agency. As a key partner, PWDA worked with ADHA to deliver a number of educational resources, including a video explainer and fact sheet, tailored to the specific needs of the Agency and designed to improve employees' disability awareness and understanding of accessibility and inclusion. PWDA also drew on lived experience and subject-matter expertise to advise on the accessibility of key ADHA resources and projects. As well as resource development and consultation, PWDA delivered project management to ensure the timely delivery of outputs in line with the agreed project plan and budget.





Image | PWDA Trainer & Facilitator, Janel Manns

# Sustain

**Maintain a financially viable and sustainable organisation.**

**This year, PWDA focused on identifying opportunities to diversify revenue streams, growing strategic alliances, identifying new collaborative partnerships and succession planning across the organisation and Board.**

This saw PWDA increase our consultancy services, develop working partnerships with other organisations and continue to apply for grant and philanthropic funding for activities in line with our values and goals.

PWDA established new partnerships with the Australian Digital Health Agency, Nous, Portable and City of Ryde Council as well as other organisations seeking to improve accessibility and inclusion.

We undertook a review of our organisational structure to ensure we have the capacity to meet organisational commitments, identify future opportunities and risks and follow best practice in employment and accessibility for people with disability.



## PWDA Board & Corporate Services

Over the year, the PWDA Board maintained its focus on governance and strategic planning, as well as turning its attention to succession planning, ensuring the Board was working at full strength and providing pathways for members to accept leadership roles within PWDA.

The Board took a proactive approach to engaging and encouraging members from diverse backgrounds, as well as disabilities, professional backgrounds and lived experiences to consider being part of the PWDA Board.

In July 2022 we farewelled Vice President Kelly Cox, who moved on after several years of hard work, with Board member Clare Gibellini stepping into the role of Vice President. Tim Morrissey was also co-opted to the Board to serve until the next AGM.

The Board's work in driving diversity was reflected in the 2022 AGM elections with 17 members submitting applications to join the board. At the AGM four new board members, Arun Barramundi, Haidi Badawi, Michelle Hyde and Dr Zhila Hasanloo were elected for a two-year period. Nicole Lee was elected President, alongside returning Board Directors Suresh Rajan, Clare Gibellini, Marayke Jonkers and Samantha Connor.

As part of succession planning, the Board decided to put forward a recommendation to the membership to make changes to the constitution to provide for co-Vice Presidents, which was voted in by the membership in November 2022. Following this change, Samantha Connor was elected as co-Vice President alongside Marayke Jonkers.

A focus on succession planning also ensured that the Board's skills supported their ability to govern, provide strategic direction and support the Operational Team. The Board recognised that, with our current Treasurer, Suresh, entering his final term on the Board, it was important the Board look to a succession plan for financials, and this saw Presley Chihuri co-opted to the Board in May 2023.

PWDA Board Advisory Groups also continued to support the Operations Teams. The Governance Advisory Group continued its review of PWDA policies, to date, 20 policies have been reviewed.

The Strategic Directions Advisory continued to work alongside the Executive Team and was instrumental in the delivery of PWDA's new Strategy 2022-2025, which was launched in December 2022. The new Strategy includes a focus on maintaining a financially viable and sustainable business and affords PWDA the opportunity to diversify revenue streams.

The Membership Engagement Advisory Group, which was instrumental in the

delivery of the Membership Engagement Strategy at the end of the previous financial year, continued to support the Operations Team with guidance on implementation.

## Best Practice and Employment

As a DPO, being recognised as an accessible and inclusive workplace is of critical importance to PWDA and significant focus has been on our member, client and staff experience.

The first part of the year saw a mix of movement between stage three and four Government-enforced lockdowns due to COVID-19. Most staff chose to work from home during this time, however, the offices were still open to staff who were unable to or preferred not to work from home. In January, we saw an option to return to PWDA offices across the country. Safety was paramount, and staff were asked to follow protocols outlined in the PWDA COVID-19 Policy, in particular the requirement to be fully vaccinated (three shots). During this time, we commenced a successful trial of hybrid working arrangements and have committed to building out our hybrid working offering in the future.

We also worked with staff, union and Board to successfully implement new employment protocols as well as a new recruitment policy, which saw us convert 38% of our

contract staff to permanent and introduce a new 'talent pool.'

An audit was conducted in March/April of PWDA's Information Communications and Technology (ICT) strategy, reviewing what systems were in place and their effectiveness and efficiency across the organisation. Cyber security and increasing the protection of client and member information was a key focus area, and a new telephony system was also recognised as a priority for the 2023-24 financial year.

As we implemented our Safety Management System to build upon our WHS culture we reviewed our WHS policies and procedures and undertook WHS inspections of all our offices in April.

The review of all PWDA policies continued to ensure they met the need of the disability community and PWDA staff.

PWDA continues to provide services to areas of need through a mix of outreach and online/telephone service delivery and maintains offices in Mount Isa, Fraser Coast and Surry Hills (Head Office).

The Qantas Carers Concession Card continued to grow in its membership this year with 570 cards produced during the financial year – a significant increase on the 311 produced the previous year.

With a strong focus on human resources and ensuring a positive and engaging workplace culture for our people to thrive,



this year we onboarded a new Director of People & Culture, Jodie Burling, and several other appointments across the Corporate Services Team. The team is committed to

reviewing infrastructure, systems and opportunities for improvement across the organisation.



**Image |** Jodie Burling, PWDA Director of People & Culture speaking at the 2023 PWDA All Staff Conference

## Case Study - Karina, Project Manager, PWDA

Karina joined the organisation as a casual employee in January 2023, bringing both expertise and lived experience to the role of Project Manager, Building Access. Karina continued the work of the previous project manager for the final six months of the project, to promote the rights of women and children with disability experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence. A key piece of work was ensuring that the voices and experiences of victim-survivors were incorporated into research and the Building Access End of Project Findings and

Recommendations Report. The Project has been a success and recommended to the Department of Social Services (DSS) by an independent researcher as a model to be rolled out in other states.

Subsequently, Karina was offered the role of Project Manager for the Advancing Women with Disability in the Workplace Project, starting July 1, 2023. This brought Karina's employment into a new three-year contract and from casual to permanent status. The interview and conversations discussed reasonable adjustments and Karina's requirements to make this role accessible for them. Funding for an extra year for Building Access was also secured so Karina currently works across both projects.

**My immediate manager always works to ensure that my support needs are being met. After settling into the organisation and establishing trust with HR and Senior Management, I felt comfortable to have the conversations about my access needs for ongoing full-time employment. The last barrier is probably my own internalised ableism, but I feel confident that the organisation will work with me to ensure this work is sustainable and accessible for me. PWDA has been accommodating and flexible, and as a result I can consistently produce high quality work and meet deadlines. The role requires some travel but the agency in this organisation means I can minimise the impact and toll.**

”

In her early career Karina worked in systemic advocacy, volunteer management and fundraising in the Not-for-Profit Sector, but only managed part-time work most of the time, usually only two days a week. In her mid-20s, additional disabilities meant that Karina needed to run her own businesses, due to the need to create their own accessibility. Karina continued to be involved in advocacy, project and human rights work where possible as a volunteer, as although highly skilled volunteer roles were acceptable to organisations to be completed remotely, their paid counterparts generally weren't.

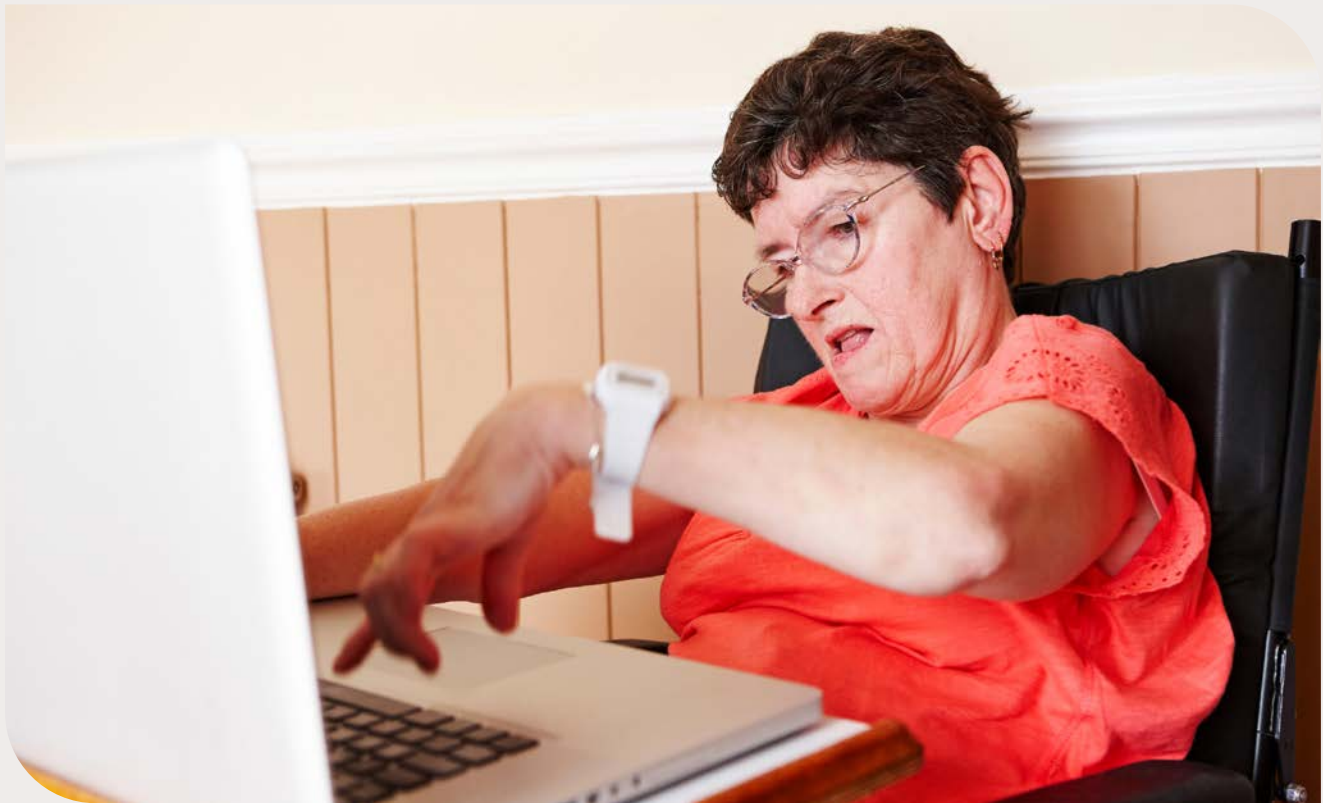
Karina lives over in the west on the lands of the Whadjuk Noongar people. However, it is only since the pandemic that more organisations opened up the possibility of working remotely. This prospect enabled them to go back to working in the Not-for-Profit Sector consistently as both an employee and a consultant.



**Image |** Karina with colleagues Janel and Jo

**If you had asked me three years ago, I would have told you that I would never again work in an office. Historically, the lights were problematic and the constant noises, interaction and proximity with people is very exhausting for me. I realised that I had been creating my own accessibility for most of my life in my own businesses, where I worked long hours, but predominantly from home where I could control my environment and enable concentration and productivity. I'm a passionate advocate and I'm really grateful for the opportunity to do work such as project management in workplaces again, with a security previously unknown to me. Living in Boorloo/ Perth has previously meant that particular roles and organisations weren't available to me and it's exciting that they are increasingly so.**





## NSDS Audit Summary

The National Standards for Disability Services (NSDS) were adopted by the Australian Government in 2014 for advocacy agencies such as PWDA, which are funded under the National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP). Since this time, it has broadened to include the NDIS Appeals Program. The Standards cover the six areas below.

1. Rights
2. Participation and Inclusion
3. Individual Outcomes
4. Feedback and Complaints
5. Service Access
6. Service Management.

PWDA is audited regularly to ensure we meet these Standards and can continually improve our service delivery using these Standards as a guide and benchmark.

This year PWDA was audited against standards 1, 3, 4 and 6 from the National Standards for Disability Services (NDAP and NDIS Appeals). The audit also covered our systemic advocacy work which is funded by the Department of Social Services (DSS).

The auditors met with a random selection of our clients, PWDA employees and senior management examining our practices across client rights, individual outcomes, feedback and complaints, and service management.

We are pleased to pass the audit with no non-conformances and no recommendations for improvement. The auditors reported that feedback from clients and employees was very positive throughout the audit and across every area of the business and applauded our advocacy – both at an individual and systemic level.

This excellent outcome reflects the hard work the PWDA team has put in over the past 12 months to embed robust processes.




# Financial Report

**30 June 2023**

People with Disability Australia Ltd.  
ABN 98 879 981 198

## Contents

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**PWDA recorded a surplus of \$481,700 for the 2022-2023 year. It was achieved through a combination of higher income and good cost control across the organisation.**

PWDA's income was \$9,722,118 for the year. Over 90% of PWDA's income comes from government grants, which fund the programs and projects of PWDA across Australia. During the year PWDA received funding from the Australian Government, as well as the New South Wales and Queensland state governments.

Income grew in the 2022-2023 year. This growth included:

- A new Women's Leadership project, funded by the Australian Government, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
- An increase to the funding of PWDA's national systemic advocacy services, from the Australian Government, Department of Social Services
- Community Sector Organisation supplement payments for a range of programs from the Australian Government, Department of Social Services
- Delivery of project consultancy services on a fee-for-service basis, to a range of government bodies including the NDIA and the Australian Digital Health Agency

We thank all funding agencies for their ongoing support of the work of PWDA.

Looking at expenses, our total expenditure for the year was \$9,240,418. Employment costs make up nearly 70% of our expenditure. Staffing costs increased this year due to workforce expansion and the application of the Award increase (via the Fair Wage Case) that underpins our salaries.

Travel and meetings costs returned closer to pre-pandemic levels, with staff able to move more freely to deliver services and come together as a team/organisation.

PWDA's financial position is sound.

- Cash holdings increased on the prior year.
- Equity reserves of \$1,742,642 underpin the organisation's financial health.

An unqualified audit opinion was issued by our auditors ESV.

# Directors' report

The directors present their report on People With Disability Australia Ltd for the financial year ended 30 June 2023.

## General information

### 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	Vice President	
Suresh Rajan	Treasurer	
Nicole Lee	President	
Andrew Fairbairn	Board Director	Resigned 16th November 2022
Marayke Jonkers	Vice President	
Craig Andrews	Board Director	Resigned 28th October 2022
Clare Gibellini	Board Director	
Michelle Hyde	Board Director	Appointed 16th November 2022
Haidi Badwai	Board Director	Appointed 16th November 2022
Zhila Hasanloo	Board Director	Appointed 16th November 2022
Presley Chihuri	Board Director	Appointed 13th April 2023
Arun Bharatula	Board Director	Appointed 16th November 2022
Tim Morrisey	Board Director	Appointed 7th July 2022, Resigned 15th November 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

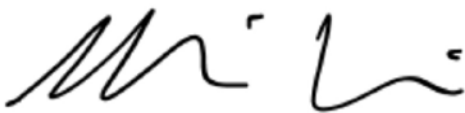
The surplus of the Company amounted to \$ 481,700 (2022: \$45,501).

With reference to the ACFID Code of Conduct, PWDA confirms that during the year the organisation did not receive any international aid and development revenue (2022:Nil).

## 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 2023 has been received and can be found on page 3 of the financial report.

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



Nicole Lee  
President



Suresh Rajan  
Treasurer

Dated this 28 day of September 2023



## 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 2023, 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 28th of September 2023.

ESV

### ESV Business Advice and Accounting

T. Burns

**Travas Burns**

Partner

# Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income

<b>Profit or loss</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>2023 \$</b>	<b>2022 \$</b>
Revenue	4	9,343,408	7,868,069
Interest income		35,603	3559
Other income	4	343,107	528,288
		<b>9,722,118</b>	<b>8,399,916</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Employee benefits expense		(6,522,138)	(5,974,329)
Depreciation and amortisation expense		(688,230)	(670,851)
Advertising		(90,842)	(62,412)
Meeting expenses		(112,370)	(64,342)
Consulting and professional fees		(537,579)	(727,080)
Electricity		(16,413)	(13,665)
Computer and website costs		(150,766)	(192,466)
Motor vehicle expenses		(36,649)	(32,738)
Other expenses		(379,744)	(222,701)
Repairs and maintenance		(40,094)	(29,865)
Program costs		(322,453)	(112,791)
Telephone and internet		(66,871)	(60,433)
Travel		(204,354)	(136,971)
Rental and operating lease expenses		(71,915)	(53,771)
<b>Total expenses</b>		<b>(9,240,418)</b>	<b>(8,354,415)</b>
<b>Surplus before income tax</b>		<b>481,700</b>	<b>45,501</b>
Income tax expense		-	-
<b>Surplus for the year</b>		<b>481,700</b>	<b>45,501</b>
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>		<b>481,700</b>	<b>45,501</b>

# Statement of financial position

## Assets

<b>Current assets</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>2023 \$</b>	<b>2022 \$</b>
Cash and cash equivalents	5	3,246,037	1,359,530
Trade and other receivables	6	29,966	114,205
Other financial assets		1,138,531	1,398,531
Other assets		146,768	193,913
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>4,561,302</b>	<b>3,066,179</b>
<b>Non-current assets</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	7	132,416	287,486
Right-of-use assets	8	428,361	938,577
<b>Total non-current assets</b>		<b>560,777</b>	<b>1,226,063</b>
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>5,122,079</b>	<b>4,292,242</b>

## Liabilities

<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Trade and other payables	9	657,148	434,816
Lease liabilities	8	448,139	557,386
Employee benefits	11	490,205	725,980
Grants in advance		1,545,130	620,012
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>3,140,622</b>	<b>2,338,194</b>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>			
Lease liabilities	8	-	448,139
Employee benefits	11	88,815	119,967
Longterm provisions	10	150,000	125,000
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>		<b>238,815</b>	<b>693,106</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<b>3,379,437</b>	<b>3,031,300</b>
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>1,742,642</b>	<b>1,260,942</b>

## Equity

Retained surpluses	1,742,642	1,260,942
<b>Total equity</b>	<b>1,742,642</b>	<b>1,260,942</b>

# Statement of changes in equity

## 2023

	Retained surpluses \$	Total \$
<b>Balance at 1 July 2022</b>	1,260,942	1,260,942
Surplus for the year	481,700	481,700
Other comprehensive income	-	-
<b>Balance at 30 June 2023</b>	<b>1,742,642</b>	<b>1,742,642</b>

## 2022

	Retained surpluses \$	Total \$
<b>Balance at 1 July 2021</b>	1,215,441	1,215,441
Surplus for the year	45,501	45,501
Other comprehensive income	-	-
<b>Balance at 30 June 2022</b>	<b>1,260,942</b>	<b>1,260,942</b>



# Statement of cash flows

	Note	2023 \$	2022 \$
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Receipts from grants and customers		11,803,702	8,559,905
Payments to suppliers and employees		(9,657,463)	(8,566,208)
Interest received		35,603	3,559
<b>Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities</b>		<b>2,181,842</b>	<b>(2,744)</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Proceeds from sale of plant and equipment		2,055	6,565
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		-	(36,442)
Acquisition of security deposits		260,000	-
<b>Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities</b>		<b>262,055</b>	<b>(29,877)</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>			
Repayment of lease liabilities		(557,390)	(516,955)
<b>Net cash (used in) financing activities</b>		<b>(557,390)</b>	<b>(516,955)</b>
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents held		1,886,507	(549,576)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		1,359,530	1,909,106
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	5	<b>3,246,037</b>	1,359,530

# Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2023

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 28 September 2023.

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 non-current 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.

### Historical cost convention

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

### Critical accounting estimates

The preparation of the financial statements requires the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires management to exercise its judgement in the process of applying the company's accounting policies. The areas involving a higher degree of judgement or complexity, or areas where assumptions and estimates are significant to the financial statements, are disclosed in note 3.

## 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.

Any new or amended Accounting Standards or Interpretations that are not yet mandatory have not been early adopted.

## **(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 stand-alone 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 2023, 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

<b>Revenue from contracts with customers (AASB 15)</b>	<b>2023 \$</b>	<b>2022 \$</b>
Operating grants	<b>9,343,408</b>	7,868,069
<b>Total revenue from operating grants</b>	<b>9,343,408</b>	7,868,069
<b>Other revenue</b>	<b>2023 \$</b>	<b>2022 \$</b>
Training income	<b>72,061</b>	148,090
Donations	<b>21,263</b>	5,791
Travel reimbursement	<b>25,965</b>	14,220
Insurance reimbursement	<b>59,814</b>	170,633
Rental income	<b>69,717</b>	59,727
Interest income	<b>35,603</b>	3,559
Gain on sale of asset	-	198
Other income	<b>94,287</b>	129,629
<b>Total other revenue</b>	<b>378,710</b>	531,847
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>9,722,118</b>	8,399,9167

### 5 Cash and cash equivalents

<b>Cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>2023 \$</b>	<b>2022 \$</b>
Cash at bank and in hand	<b>3,246,037</b>	1,359,530
<b>Total cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>3,246,037</b>	1,359,530

## 6 Trade and other receivables

Current	2023 \$	2022 \$
Trade receivables	25,306	109,545
Deposits	4,660	4,660
<b>Total current trade and other receivables</b>	<b>29,966</b>	<b>114,205</b>

## 7 Property, plant and equipment

Plant and equipment	2022 \$	2021 \$
At cost	265,684	293,103
Accumulated depreciation	(257,235)	(258,103)
<b>Total plant and equipment</b>	<b>8,449</b>	<b>35,000</b>
<b>Motor vehicles</b>		
At cost	131,535	131,535
Accumulated depreciation	(109,619)	(93,817)
<b>Total motor vehicles</b>	<b>21,916</b>	<b>37,718</b>
<b>Leasehold Improvements</b>		
At cost	570,517	545,517
Accumulated depreciation	(468,466)	(330,749)
<b>Total leasehold improvements</b>	<b>102,051</b>	<b>214,768</b>
<b>Total property, plant and equipment</b>	<b>132,416</b>	<b>287,486</b>

### 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 2023	Plant and Equipment \$	Motor Vehicles \$	Leasehold Improvements \$	Total \$
Balance at the beginning of year	35,000	37,718	214,768	287,486
Additions	-	-	25,000	25,000
Disposals	(2,056)	-	-	(2,056)
Depreciation expense	(24,495)	(15,802)	(137,717)	(178,014)
<b>Balance at the end of the year</b>	<b>8,449</b>	<b>21,916</b>	<b>102,051</b>	<b>132,416</b>

## 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 2023

	<b>Buildings Total \$</b>
Balance at beginning of year	<b>938,577</b>
Amortisation	<b>(510,216)</b>
<b>Balance at end of year</b>	<b>428,361</b>

### Lease liabilities

<b>Lease liabilities</b>	<b>&lt; 1 year \$</b>	<b>1 - 5 years \$</b>	<b>&gt; 5 years \$</b>	<b>Total undiscounted lease liabilities \$</b>
<b>2023</b> Lease liabilities	<b>448,139</b>	-	-	<b>448,139</b>
<b>2022</b> Lease liabilities	557,386	448,139	-	1,005,525

## 9 Trade and Other Payables

<b>Current</b>	<b>2023 \$</b>	<b>2022 \$</b>
Trade payables	<b>117,709</b>	60,160
GST and PAYG payable	<b>245,618</b>	118,834
Sundry payables and accrued expenses	<b>293,821</b>	255,822
<b>Total trade and other payables</b>	<b>657,148</b>	434,816

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	2023 \$	2022 \$
Make good provision	150,000	125,000
<b>Total provisions</b>	<b>150,000</b>	<b>125,000</b>

## 11 Employee Benefits

Current liabilities	2023 \$	2022 \$
Long service leave	80,639	112,066
Provision for employee benefits	409,566	613,914
<b>Total current employee benefits</b>	<b>490,205</b>	<b>725,980</b>

Non-current liabilities	2023 \$	2022 \$
Long service leave	88,815	119,967
<b>Total non-current employee benefits</b>	<b>88,815</b>	<b>119,967</b>

## 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.

## 13 Key Management Personnel Disclosures

The remuneration paid to key management personnel of the Company is \$ 1,227,631 (2022: \$ 996,160).

## 14 Auditors' Remuneration

Remuneration of the auditor ESV - Business advice and accounting	2023 \$	2022 \$
Audit services	18,100	17,000
Other services	1,800	1,600
<b>Total auditors' remuneration</b>	<b>19,900</b>	<b>18,600</b>

## 15 Contingencies

In the opinion of the Board of Directors, the Company did not have any contingencies at 30 June 2023 (30 June 2022: 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 28 September 2023 by 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:

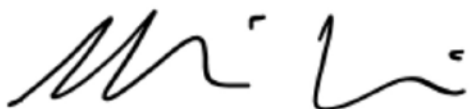
People With Disability Australia Ltd  
Level 8, 418A Elizabeth Street  
Surry Hills NSW 2010

# 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-profits Commission Regulation 2013*.



Nicole Lee  
President



Suresh Rajan  
Treasurer

Date 28 September 2023

## 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 2023, 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 Limited 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 entity’s financial position as at 30 June 2023 and of its financial performance and cash flows for the year ended on that date; and
- b. complying with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures and with 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 (including Independence Standards)* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code

We confirm that that independence declaration required by the *Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, which has been given to the directors of the Company, would be in the same terms if given to the directors as at the time of this auditor’s report.

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

### 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.

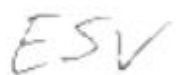
In preparing the financial report, the directors are responsible for assessing the entity’s ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intends to liquidate the registered 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 at [www.auasb.gov.au/auditors\\_responsibilities/ar4.pdf](http://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors_responsibilities/ar4.pdf). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Dated at Sydney on the 29th of September 2023.



**ESV Business Advice and Accounting**



**Travas Burns**

Partner





**Easy Read**

# **Annual Report**

**2022 to 2023**





**People with Disability Australia** made this.

We will say **PWDA** for short. When you see the word we it means PWDA.



This is the PWDA annual report for 2022 to 2023.



This report tells you what work we did this year.

# Message from the president



This is a message from Nicole Lee.



I am the **President** of PWDA.

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



I want to share some of the things PWDA did this year.



We worked with our community and **members** on lots of things.

PWDA **members** are people with disability.



We worked together on things like

- Living with COVID-19
- The NDIS



We did a lot of **advocacy** work.

**Advocacy** is when we speak up for human rights.



We talked at events in Australia and other countries.



We talked about **disability rights**.

**Disability rights** are the rights of people with disability.



There were changes to the PWDA **Board**.

The PWDA **Board** is a group of members who run PWDA.



We said goodbye to the **Vice President** Kelly Cox.

The **Vice President** is a person who works with the president.



We chose new members to be on the PWDA board.

They are

- Michelle Hyde
- Zhila Hasanloo
- Arun Barramundi
- Haidi Badawi.







We chose board member Clare Gibellini to be our **Secretary**.

A **Secretary** writes down what happens at each meeting.



We chose board member Marayke Jonkers to be our new Vice President.



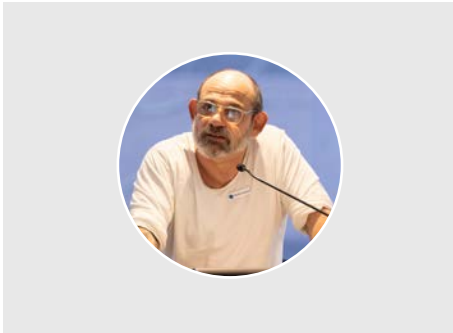
I would like to pay respect to John Moxon.

He spoke up for people with disability and he died in 2022.



I want to thank everyone at PWDA for working hard this year.

# Message from the CEO



This is a message from  
Sebastian Zagerella.



I am the **CEO** of PWDA.

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



This year PWDA staff came back to work  
in the office.

Our staff were working at home because of  
COVID-19.



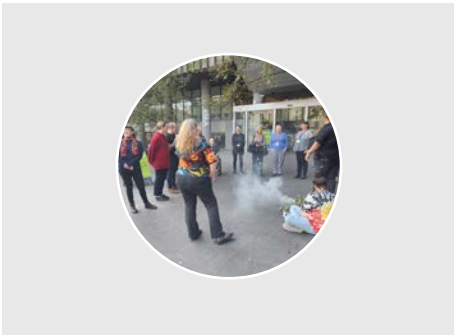
We did lots of **training**.

**Training** helps us do our work better.



We worked with First Nations Peoples to create our first **Reconciliation Action Plan**.

A **Reconciliation Action Plan** says how we will work with and support First Nations Peoples.



We celebrated **National Reconciliation Week**.

**National Reconciliation Week** is a week where Australia does things to show respect to First Nations Peoples



Our programs kept helping people with disability.

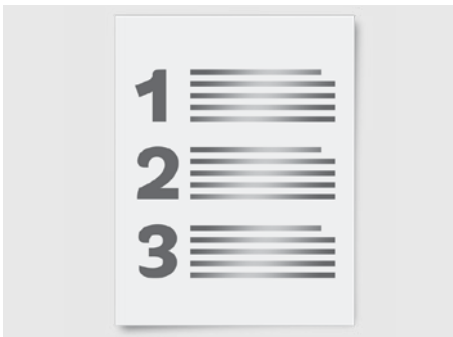


We received **funding** from the Government.

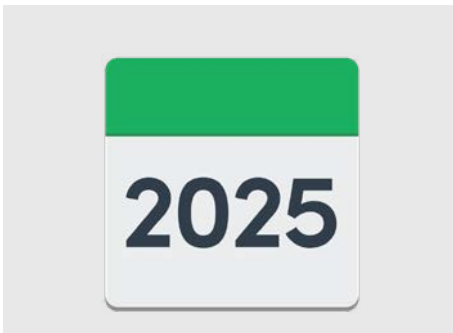
**Funding** is money for the things we do.



We made a **strategic plan**.



A **strategic plan** is a list of things that PWDA want to do.



The plan goes for 3 years.



The plan has 4 areas we want to work on.



The 4 areas are

### 1. **Represent**

This means we want to show what people with disability want.



### 2. **Advocate**

This means we support all people with disability to get their rights.



### 3. **Educate**

This means we teach the community about people with disability and their rights.



### 4. **Sustain**

This means we make sure PWDA can work well for a long time.





I would like to thank our board and staff for all their work this year.

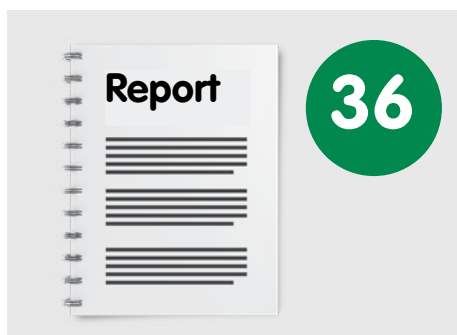


I am happy we gave our members good work this year.

# What we did this year



This year we helped over 1 thousand people.



We wrote 36 reports about issues people with disability have to deal with.



We wrote 23 **media releases**.

A **media release** is how we tell people about a big issues.



We got lots of new members.

# Represent



This year we did a lot with our members.



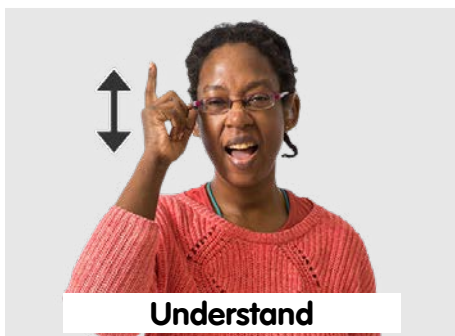
We had member workshops.

At the workshops we asked members to tell their stories.



We talked about

- COVID-19
- The NDIS.



This helped us understand

- What our members need
- How we can help them.



We supported members before the  
NSW **state election**.

A **state election** is when you vote for who  
will be in the NSW government.



Our members are important to us.



Our members tell us about things they  
want the government to change.



We spoke about issues in Australia and in  
other countries.



We spoke at the **Conference of State Parties** to the **Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities**.

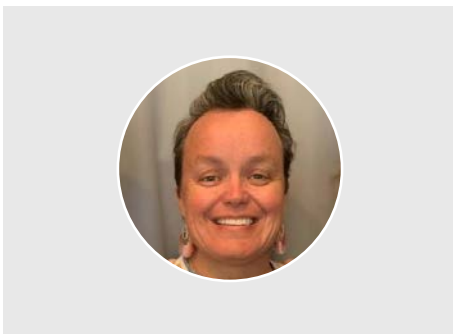
The **Conference of State Parties** is a big meeting that talks about what is important for people with disability.



The **Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities** says all the rights people with disability have.



It was at the United Nations in New York.



Clare Gibellini spoke about the **detention** of people with disability.

**Detention** is when people are put in a place they can not leave.





Nicole Lee spoke about the **abuse** of people with disability.

**Abuse** is when someone hurts you.



We held an event with **Queensland Advocacy for Inclusion**.

**Queensland Advocacy for Inclusion** help people with disability in Queensland.



At the event we talked about rights for people who have different

- **Genders**
- **Sexuality.**



**Gender** means how you feel inside and show yourself to the world.

**Sexuality** means how you feel about other people.

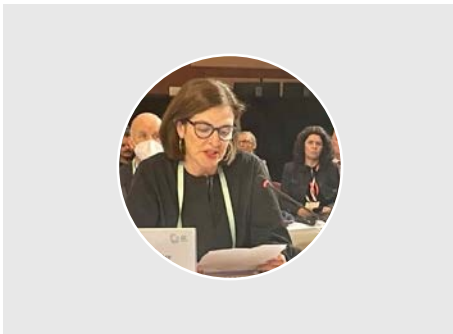


In Australia we continued to work on the rights of people with disability.



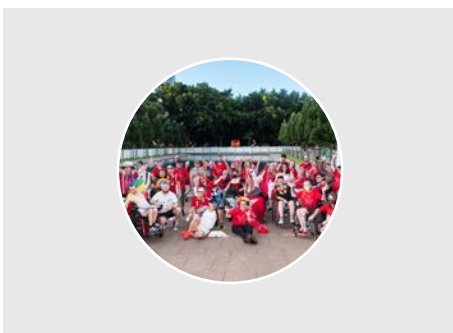
We worked with the **Australian Human Rights Commission** to make better rights of people with disability in Australia.

The **Australian Human Rights Commission** looks after human rights complaints and issues.



Our **Deputy CEO** Carolyn Hodge spoke in Canberra about changes we need to jobs and pay for people with disability

A **Deputy CEO** helps the CEO do work for PWDA.



We represented our members at lots of community events with other services.

# Advocate



PWDA has 2 advocacy teams.

They are

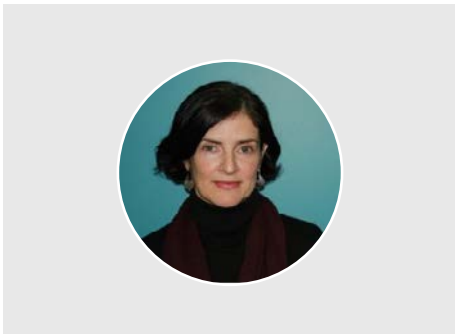
## 1. **Individual Advocacy**

**Individual Advocacy** gives support to people with disability.



## 2. **Systemic Advocacy**

**Systemic Advocacy** works with the government to change laws.



Carolyn Hodge is the boss of both teams.



These teams work together to make sure we listen to people with disability.



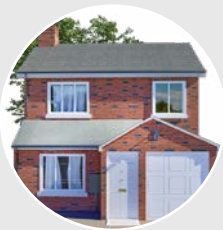
PWDA gave individual advocacy to many people in NSW and QLD.



We helped people with disability with things like

- The NDIS
- The **Disability Royal Commission**.

The **Disability Royal Commission** looked into big issues for people with disability.



- Places they live



- Abuse



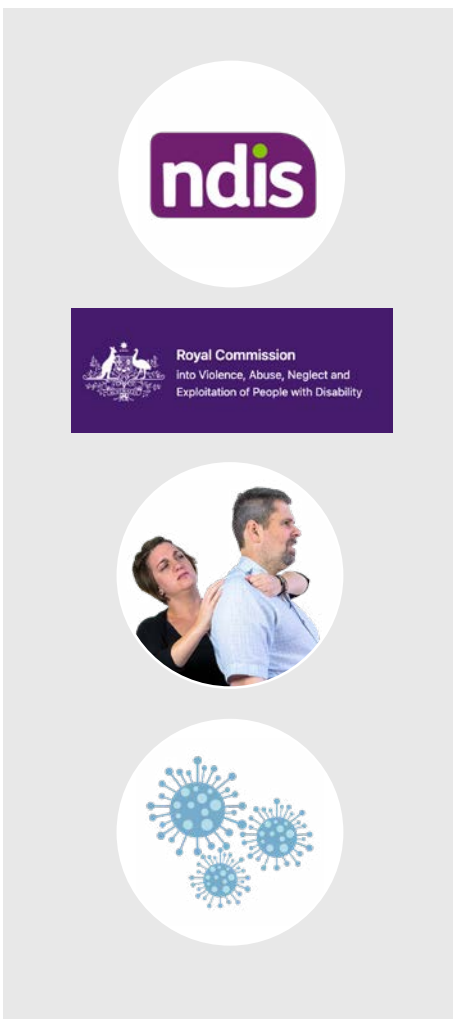
- Health
- Students with disability at school.



PWDA gets money from the government to provide individual advocacy.



Our Systemic Advocacy team made lots of reports about disability rights.



We wrote about topics like

- How the NDIS was working for people
- The Disability Royal Commission

- **Domestic and family violence**

**Domestic violence** is when someone you live with hurts you.

**Family violence** is when someone from your family hurts you.

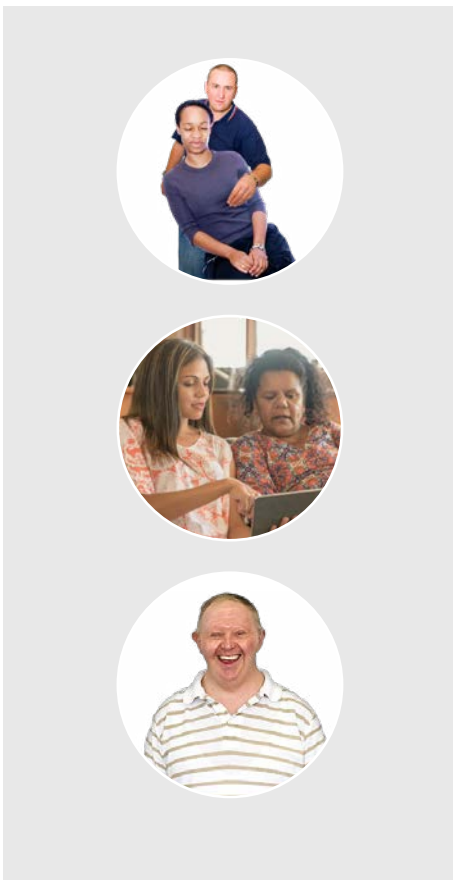
- COVID-19



# Educate



This year we made our training and education services bigger.



We did lots of training on

- Domestic violence
- How women can be leaders
- The rights of First Nations Peoples
- **Psychosocial disability**  
**Psychosocial disability** is about your mental health.
- **Institutions**  
**Institutions** are big places where lots people live like prison.



All our trainers are people with disability.

# Sustain



This year we did lots of work to make sure PWDA can keep doing a good job.



We looked at our teams to make sure they work well.

We made sure they had the right things to do their jobs.



We gave jobs to 26 people.



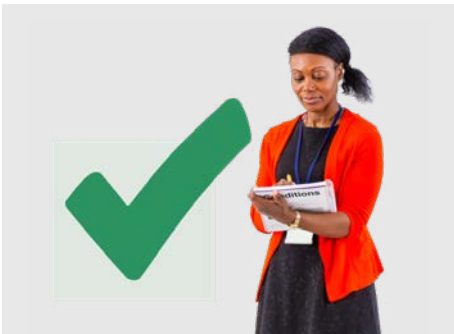
We chose 4 members to be on the Board.



Our Board did training.



Our Board made groups to work with our members and PWDA staff.



PWDA passed the **National Standards for Disability Services Audit**.

**National Standards for Disability Services** are the things we need to do to keep people safe.



An **audit** is when people outside of PWDA come to check we are working well and people are safe.

Passing the audit means we are doing a good job.

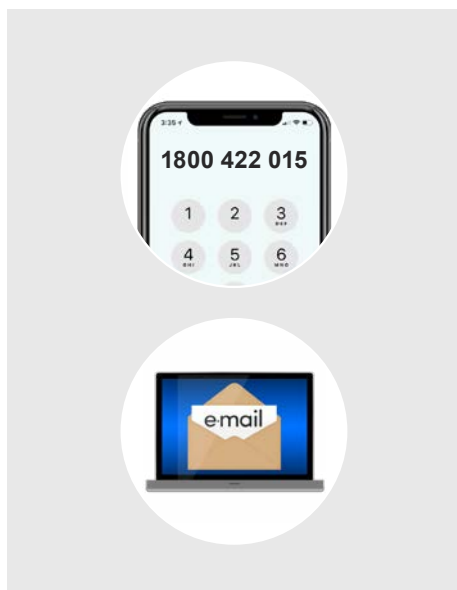
# Thank you

PWDA wants to say thank you to our

- Staff
- Members
- Supporters
- Community.



# Contact us



If you want support from us you can

- Call us on **1800 422 015**
- Email us at [pwd@pwd.org.au](mailto:pwd@pwd.org.au)







 [pwd.org.au](https://pwd.org.au)

 [pwd@pwd.org.au](mailto:pwd@pwd.org.au)

 1800 422 015

 PWDAustralia

 PWD.Australia