

GOV-004 Access to Information Policy

Applies to: All PWDA Workers and Volunteers
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Policy approver: PWDA Board
Policy owner: Chief Executive Officer

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Purpose

- To set out PWDA's commitment to transparency and access to information.
- To support people's rights to access information held by, and about, PWDA.
- To explain:
 - what information can be shared and what must remain private and confidential
 - who may access different types of information, how it is shared, and how access can be requested.
- To define the roles, rights and responsibilities of all people involved in handling information at PWDA.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the PWDA Privacy Policy.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- all Board Directors, employees, independent contractors, subcontractors, and consultants (collectively "workers")
- all volunteers and students (collectively "volunteers").

The policy covers personal information and all other information about or held by PWDA.

Policy Statement

PWDA is committed to transparency in our work, and to being accountable to our stakeholders and the community. We believe a culture of transparency is fundamental to how we pursue our vision of a socially just, accessible, and inclusive community.

We build and value strong relationships with our clients, members, workers, volunteers, funders, government agencies, and other community stakeholders. We recognise that transparency builds trust and understanding and supports these relationships to grow and thrive.

PWDA complies with its Constitution, the Corporations Act, and the Privacy Act, and adheres to recognised principles of good corporate governance. These frameworks guide what information we can, must or must not share or disclose to members, stakeholders, and the community.

In addition to complying with privacy laws, PWDA must meet a range of other legal and organisational obligations. This means that some information can only be shared with specific people or organisations.

This includes Board and other confidential meeting minutes, information subject to confidentiality agreements, commercially sensitive material, and requirements set by the NDIA, PWDA's Constitution, the Corporations Act, and any other applicable legislation.

PWDA recognises and upholds the rights of members, clients, workers, and volunteers to have their personal information protected.

PWDA's **Privacy Policy** outlines our commitment to protecting personal information, how confidentiality is maintained, and individuals' rights to access their own personal information.

PWDA recognises and upholds the rights of members, clients, workers, volunteers stakeholders and the broader community to access appropriate information about PWDA, consistent with our legal and governance obligations.

We are pro-active in providing relevant information to stakeholders and the community. This means we:

- share timely, relevant, accurate and accessible information about:
 - what PWDA is doing
 - how PWDA is performing
 - PWDA's governance arrangements
- report annually to PWDA members
- provide opportunities for stakeholders and the community to ask questions, contribute input, and provide feedback about our work
- meet funding reporting requirements.

PWDA also publicly shares information about its work through a range of channels, refer to **Procedures** below for details.

Principles

Transparency and the right to access information: PWDA upholds UNCRPD Article 21 and supports the right to freedom of expression and access to information.

Accessibility: In line with UNCRPD Article 9 PWDA provides this policy in accessible formats, including Easy Read, which is available on our website and in new service user information packs.

Privacy: PWDA complies with all relevant privacy legislation, regulations and standards including the Privacy Act, UNCRPD Article 22, and the National Standards for Disability Services (NSDS), and upholds the rights of people with disability to privacy and confidentiality.

Governance and Compliance: PWDA follows its Constitution regarding member access to information and meets transparency and reporting obligations under the Corporations Act, and the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct.

Risk Management: PWDA workers and volunteers understand their rights and responsibilities around information access, and manage risks associated with sharing or withholding information.

Continuous Improvement: PWDA actively seeks and uses feedback to continually improve access to information and related practices.

Roles and Responsibilities

All roles must consider the right to access information in relation to PWDA's legal, ethical, and contractual obligations to protect privacy, confidentiality, and sensitive information.

Board – is responsible for:

- approving this policy, and monitoring its effectiveness

- upholding PWDA's accountability for transparency and lawful access to information
- ensuring access to information is managed according to privacy, confidentiality, contractual and legal obligations
- assessing complex, sensitive, or high-risk requests for access to information, when required, and determining whether information is released in accordance with legal, contractual and governance obligations
- overseeing risks associated with breaches or inappropriate disclosure of information.

CEO – is responsible for ensuring that:

- this policy is implemented across PWDA
- information shared across PWDA or made publicly available is accurate, current, and appropriate
- effective systems and processes are in place to collect, analyse, and report information to the Board, enabling PWDA to meet reporting obligations and support continuous improvement
- requests for information are appropriately assessed, managed and, where required, escalated to the Board for consideration
- policies and procedures are in place to support access to information, privacy obligations, and members' rights under the Constitution
- a system is established and maintained to support lawful, accurate and timely access to information.

Leaders – are responsible for:

- managing Access to Information requests
- embedding access to information requirements into processes, systems, and service delivery
- supporting worker understanding of access, privacy, and confidentiality obligations
- identifying and managing information-related risks within their areas of responsibility
- using complaints and feedback to improve access to information practices.

Manager Governance and Compliance – is responsible for:

- receiving requests for access to information and recording details in the Access to Information Register
- forwarding requests to the relevant Leaders, or CEO as required
- recording outcomes in the register
- preparing bi-monthly CEO reports.

Receiving requests for access to information

Workers – are responsible for:

- complying with and implementing this policy and related policies, including, Privacy and Records Management
- managing information responsibly, maintaining confidentiality and protecting personal information
- ensuring information they create, use or share is accurate and complete
- referring requests for access to information to the Manager Governance and Compliance
- supporting people's right to access information while respecting privacy and legal limits.

Procedures

PWDA is proactive in ensuring stakeholders and the community have access to relevant information. Our governance framework guides us on what information we can and cannot share or disclose.

Transparent reporting to stakeholders and the community

PWDA publishes information about our activities through a range of channels, including:

- PWDA website
- social media – Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and Instagram
- 'traditional' media
- Annual Reports

- newsletters and blogs
- policy papers
- stakeholder consultations, meetings, and presentations.

Information is updated regularly, and stakeholders are encouraged to provide input or feedback at any time. Complaints relating to access to information are managed in accordance with PWDA's **Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Policy**.

Transparency and Board reporting

The PWDA Board meets all legal and contractual public reporting obligations, including:

- annual reporting to members on PWDA's activities and providing opportunities for questions and feedback
- preparing financial reports and statements
- publishing an Annual Report
- reporting to government agencies in line with grant and funding contracts
- reporting to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO), Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).

Transparency and client records

PWDA manages client records in accordance with its Privacy Policy, and legislative and regulatory requirements, including applicable privacy legislation, and ACNC and NSDS standards.

Transparency and employee records

Worker records are managed in accordance with PWDA's Privacy Policy, privacy laws, the Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth), and applicable ACFID, ACNC and NSDS standards.

Access to personal information

Individuals may request access to, or correct, personal information PWDA holds, by:

- completing and submitting **Attachment 1: Access to Information Request Form**

- phoning: 1800 422 015
- emailing: feedback@pwd.org.au
- submitting a [Contact Us Form](#) on the PWDA website.

Access will be provided in an appropriate format such as by mail or email.

If an individual believes that the personal information we hold about them is incorrect, incomplete, or inaccurate, they may request a correction.

There is no charge for accessing or correcting personal information.

Refusing Access

PWDA will carefully consider all requests. If a requested change is not agreed, a note will be added to the file explaining the reason for the decision.

The right to privacy, set out in PWDA's Privacy Policy, takes precedence over access to information.

There are some circumstances where access may be refused, for example, if giving access to the information would breach the privacy or confidentiality of other people.

If access is refused, PWDA will provide a reason in writing.

Access to Information Request Form

Anyone may use the **Access to Information Request Form** (Attachment 1) to request access to personal or non-personal information, or to update or correct the details PWDA holds.

Assistance to complete the form is available on request.

Related Documents

Legislation, Regulations and Standards

- UNCRPD
- Privacy Act
- Fair Work Act
- National Standards for Disability Services
- Corporations Act

- ACFID Code of Conduct

PWDA Policies

- About our Access to Information Policy Easy Read
- PWDA Constitution
- Privacy Policy
- Delegations of Authority Policy
- Board and CEO Relations Policy
- Information Security Policy
- Records Management Policy and Procedure
- Media Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Board Code of Conduct and Ethics
- Employee Code of Conduct and Values
- Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Policy and Procedures.

Supporting Documents

Attachment 1: Access to Information Request Form

[Contact Us Form](#) on the PWDA website.

Attachment 1: Access to Information Request Form

Please provide your details below and describe the information you wish to access or update, in as much detail as you can. This will help with processing your request.

Applicant Information

Full Name:	
Address:	
Phone / Mobile:	
Email:	
Client ID: (if relevant)	

Details of Request

- I am requesting that my personal information be **updated / corrected**.
- I am requesting access to information that is **personal**.
- I am requesting access to information this is **NOT personal**.

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Signature	
Date	

Please email the completed, signed form to: feedback@pwd.org.au