

Minutes of 2025 PWDA Annual General Meeting

On Thursday November 13 2025, 6.10pm – 8:36pm

Online via Zoom

Present:

Members and PWDA Staff:

Daniel Flynn -Interim President and Chair, Steph Travers- Secretary, Stuart Mawbey – Treasurer, Kevyn Morris- Board Director, Alexandra Bignell- Board Director, Megan Spindler-Smith - Acting CEO of PWDA, Lyndsey Woodberry (Staff - Minute Taker), Tracie Junghans (PWDA Staff), Kath Caller (PWDA Staff), Kylie Rees (PWDA Staff), Stephin Hargreave (Staff - Member), Paul Calcott, Emma Bennison, Jeramy Hope, Dr David Abello, Chris Matthey, Emily Hutchinson, Cheryl Langdon-Orr, Wildaliz De Jesús Arocho, Tahlia-Rose Vanissum, Jason D Soderblom, Peter Novacco, Francois Jacobs, Bruce Collins, River Night, Raphael Murphy, El Gibbs, Denise Wilson, Henryk Kay, Sirani McNeill, Kevin Boyce, Rachel Makepeace, Rev. Dr. Quentin James-Fook, Marie Bledsoe, Jarrod Sandell-Hay, Craig Wallace, Amberwren Long, Shaun Bickley, Remi Carolyne, Steven Yates, Rebecca Delacy, Megan Lampa, Robert Wise, Amanda Calwell-Smith, Shakira Hussein, Tanya Carroll, Nanda Peiris, Stevie Howson, Kin Ly, Jax Brown, Mandy Hay, Jo McCaffery, Loretta Kraus, Wayne Maitland, Larissa MacFarlane, Graham Banks, Robert Wise, Mark Kunach, Mark Wilder and Mark Thompson.

External providers and advisers:

Gerry (Auslan Interpreter), David (Auslan Interpreter), Helen (Captioner), Alex Cowell (Purpose Accounting), Travas Burns (ESV Business Advice and Accounting), Nathalie Ng (HWLE Lawyers), Jack England (HWLE Layers)

The meeting was held via Zoom. The Zoom link had been provided to members prior to the meeting

Apologies:

Pricilla Brice, Sundara Rengasamy, Cassandra Earea, Bernadette Cheesman, Nidhi Shekaran, Gail Tang-Demetriou, Julie Symons and Elias Winifred Palmer.

The meeting started at 6.10pm

Welcome - Daniel Flynn- Interim President and Chair

Daniel Flynn – Interim President and Chair welcomed members, gave a visual description

Uncle Paul Constable-Calcott - Member of PWDA provided Acknowledgement of Country

Daniel Flynn- Rules of Engagement and Housekeeping: Thank you, Uncle Paul, for that moving acknowledgement of country. I will now take a moment to go through some brief housekeeping for tonight's meeting and then hand over to PWDA Board Director Steph Travers who will outline the accessibility information for participants.

Please listen to this information so you know how we will be running the meeting. How to use the different Zoom functions and how to get technical help if you need it. This is not a public meeting. It is for current PWDA members. It is an important formal meeting so we ask everyone to respect how it is run. PWDA is committed to ensuring this remains a safe space for everyone, including participants and speakers. When interacting in this meeting, all comments and discussions should be respectful. Disagreements are fine but personal attacks, harassment or disruptive behaviour are not. If any issues come up during the meeting, PWDA will take fair and reasonable steps to keep the space safe and respectful for everyone. Examples of unacceptable behaviour include hate speech, slurs or discriminatory remarks, harassments, threat or targeting individuals, off topic or disruptive content, sharing confidential or private information, trolling, baiting or inciting conflict or ignoring moderator instructions. Thank you for contributing respectfully to this meeting and I will now pass over to Steph Travers to provide the accessibility overview.

Steph Travers- Secretary- Accessibility and engagement overview: Gave a visual description. Advised that meeting minutes will be being noted by Lyndsey Woodberry from

PWDA and that the meeting will also be recorded for internal record keeping only and will not be made public. Advised how to turn off video if preferred and advised we have Auslan interpreters and a captioner at this meeting. Advised how to use zoom functions and explained voting and motions and that voting will take place via zoom polls displayed on the screen. All motions will then need to be moved and seconded which can be done by pressing the raise hand icon and how to access the icon and reactions in the toolbar. Each vote will allow 1 minute with a 10 second warning given. How many yes, no and abstain votes will be announced and if the motion has been carried or defeated. If received votes are 50%/50%, the Chairperson, Daniel will have the casting vote as per constitution. The Chairperson Daniel will declare if a motion is carried or defeated once all the votes have been counted. Steph lastly explained the chat box, technical support options and introduced Tracie and Kath so members heard their voices.

Quorum- Daniel Flynn- Interim President

The chair noted there were at least 30 members present in person or attending as proxies. As such I declare the quorum for the meeting is present.

1. Apologies and Proxies

Acceptance of apologies and proxies. The following people have sent their apologies for the AGM:

Pricilla Brice, Sundara Rengasamy, Cassandra Earea, Bernadette Cheesman, Nidhi Shekaran, Gail Tang-Demetriou and Elias Winifred Palmer.

The chair noted there was one proxy vote from a member, this one proxy vote is directed. The first motion is to accept the apologies and proxies. Does anyone have any questions that they would like to ask in relation to motion number 1, acceptance of apologies and proxies? If so, please can you raise your hand at this time?

There were no questions in relation to the motion of accepting the apologies and proxies.

Motion 1: Acceptance of Apologies and Proxies

Moved Jarrod Sandell-Hay | Seconded Emily Hutchinson

Proxy Received

44 For | 0 Against | 1 Abstain

Motion carried.

1.1 Notice of Annual General Meeting

The Chair noted that the Notice of Annual General Meeting convening this meeting was sent to all members and would take this Notice of Meeting as read.

2. Minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting

The Chair announced the minutes of the 2024 AGM have been provided as part of the materials in relation to this meeting.

Motion 2.1: Confirmation of 2024 Minutes

Moved: Henryk Kay | Seconded: Kevin Morris

Proxy Received

32 For | 0 Against | 8 Abstain

Motion carried.

Matters arising

There are no matters arising

3. Presentation of PWDA 2023-24 Annual Report

3.1. President's Report

Daniel Flynn as Interim President and Chair presented the President's Report.

All members should have received a link to the PWDA 2024-25 Annual Report, this was shared via post or electronically depending on each member's communication preference. A copy, including Easy Read and audio formats, is now available to view and download from our website.

The Annual Report explores our work, the results we have achieved and examples of where we have made a positive difference to the lives of people with disability during 2024-25.

Some key highlights include:

- 21% increase in membership
- 27 PWDA Members Focus Groups, Consultations and Events
- 2004 clients supported through Individual Advocacy
- 67 reports position statements and submissions
- 85 media releases, statements and blog articles.

This President's report includes messaging from former PWDA President, Trinity Ford, and myself as the current Interim President.

This past year has been a big one for PWDA and not only in our public facing work but also in the vital work to make PWDA stronger, safer and more sustainable for the years ahead. This financial year was Trinity Ford's first as both PWDA Board Director and President. Eva Sifis continued as Co-Vice President alongside myself in that role, Kevyn Morris continued as Director and we welcomed newly appointed Director Steph Travers as Board secretary, Stuart Mawbey as Treasurer, Priscilla Brice, Peter Freckleton, Presley Chihuri and Alexandra Bignall. On behalf of the board I want to thank last year's outgoing directors Haidi Badawi, Arun Baramundi, Declan Lee and Marayke Jonkers and Suresh Rajan for their service and leadership. We are especially grateful to Marayke as President

and Suresh as Secretary for their long contribution to members and the broader community.

During this year, Peter Freckleton, Presley Chihuri and Trinity Ford also ceased as directors. We acknowledge their contributions and thank them for their service. It has been a year since the current Board took up this important work. We've worked with the community through the wake of the NDIS Review and subsequent reforms. A Federal Election campaign that largely ignored us and the resulting restructure of government with the support of our staff and members we are focused on strengthening how we work, clearer policies, better systems and a more organised approach to long term planning. We've also begun shaping our new strategic plan which will be codesigned with our members through the Strategic Directions Advisory Group. Work to date includes in person Board strategic planning day and a review of our vision, mission and values. We're excited to share and grateful to everyone who has already contributed. Our advocacy has remained active and present. We've contributed on income support, foundational supports, future of the NDIS, housing and more.

Trinity was honoured to speak at Parliament House in Canberra alongside ACOS, community groups and crossbench Parliamentarians on income support payments, a reminder that lived experience belongs at the centre of these debates. PWDA was recently funded as the national peak for LGBTIQ+ people with disability and we're proud to be collaborating with Inclusive Rainbow Voices and others to build that work. Trinity has noted that being able to combine support for their identity as a disabled translesbian filled her with immense pride and acknowledges Priscilla as a brilliant support in this area. We're fortunate to have their expertise and perspective shaping this important work. Trinity represented PWDA and Trans people at the United Nations 6th commission on the status of women, CSW69 in New York this year speaking as part of our collaboration with Women With Disabilities Australia. Using that platform to speak truth in a space where disabled voices are too often erased. More importantly more recently our delegate, Steph Travers, Alexandra Bignall and Acting CEO Megan Spindler-Smith represented PWDA at the 18th conference of the State parties where they supported the diversity of our

members and spoke on intersectional issues for First Nations and LGBTIQ+ people with disabilities.

We also want to pay our respects to members and people with disabilities who died this year. We remember disability advocate and long timer Gwenda Lee, who helped establish the physical Disability Council of South Australia. We remember PWDA member Peter Lane-Collett who passed away in January after bravely fighting COVID-19 in hospital and our members Jennifer Ashton and John Gordon. We also hold in our thoughts the many disabled people who have died this year from abuse, neglect, violence or exploitation. Often as a result of systemic failure and in segregated settings and institutional environments whose names are not always known to us. May their memories continue to call us to this work.

PWDA gives deep thanks to the Centre for Inclusive Design, CFID who in closing down last year selected our organisation to inherit their assets. This includes valuable inclusive design resources which we are platforming. We're also establishing an emerging leaders scholarship with a portion of the funds we inherited to carry forward part of CFID's mission. I stepped into the role of Interim President during this year and I do not take the responsibility lightly. The size and weight of the task ahead is not lost on me. It has been a privilege to lead this Board through an important and at times challenging period while the year has brought its share of complexities, my focus and that of the Board remains firmly on strengthening stability, accountability and progress across the organisation. PWDA is not slowing down. Thank you to everyone in our community for your energy, your ideas and your commitment. It has been an honour to serve as Co-Vice President and now as Interim President and I acknowledge Trinity's leadership as President over the year. The next motion is to approve and adopt the President's report.

Any Questions:

Craig Wallace- 2 areas for focus and attention. Have a think about how we live our values of Nothing without us. Screening incoming Board members and not having open elections. And screening questions coming in tonight. More opportunities for members to be heard. I

also think that there's a missed opportunity and a misalignment between member views about disability reform. So there are a number of us, possibly not all of us, who are really, really concerned about the way that the NDIS changes are shaping up and the fact that the NDIS changes are shaping up as really, really punitive already against people with disabilities and they don't people are losing their entire plans, they're losing equipment, personal care and support. I think there needs to be some necessary attention and greater voice on some of those issues and our concerns about how the NDIS cuts were playing out, I think a number of people were a bit concerned about the media release that suggested that we were happy with the ICAN assessment process. I see those assessments as being really intrusive, medical model and non rights based and inconsistent with the values that the organisation has held ever since we stepped into the NDIS space and began campaigning for it. So I offer these reflections not as criticisms of the Board's work, the organisational improvement work you have done over the last 12 months, tremendous effort that's required to hold the organisation together, but as two areas of focus that I think we might offer going forward, that is making sure there are many opportunities for members to be heard. It shouldn't just be tonight that we're talking about the issues and what the members feel, and also I think we need to ensure that with the disability reforms where they are not meeting our expectations that we're speaking up on behalf of the community and joining with some of the activists who are harking back to the original activists who founded PWDA

Jax: PWDA now being the national peak for LGBTQIA+ Disability. This came as a bit of a surprise for me. I want to know when and how this came about? Inclusive Rainbow voices is all about LGBTQIA+ People with Disabilities.

Megan Spindler-Smith: Thank-you for the question. My understanding is when we were provided our standard systemic advocacy funding as part of that there was the ask of also working towards building a national LGBTQIA+ cross disability peak and so that has been really the aim of what we've been trying to do is try and find a way forward with this. In relation to that we are working extremely closely with IRV on this. This is something that we are partnering very closely and finding ways to determine what is the best way so that

we can work with IRV to provide feedback to the government on how we do that and how we do it in a way that is determining who is actually best placed to do so. So it is not something that we're doing alone in any way, shape or form. In fact, it's an important partnership that we're working on. This is about how can we use the platform that we have access to currently to ensure that IRV is a key player in this space.

Shaun Bickley: Accepting or not accepting the presidents report, does that mean that we are accepting or not accepting the NDIS reforms stance or LGBTQIA+ Peak?

Megan Spindler-Smith: It is acceptance of the statement as it stands. Not agreement of what was said but acceptance of the statement.

Craig Wallace wants it noted in the Minutes that there is a disquiet about these decisions but still accepts the Presidents report.

Amberwren: Christian White Woman in their 60s and I agree with Jax. Were people in the community informed about this or did they find out about it later?

Daniel: We weren't consulted about whether we would like this job, we were simply given the task and we are ensuring we are working closely with IRV.

Amberwren: It is really frustrating that decisions are made for us and we are then told to make it work and come together. It is not your fault. It is an observation and concern.

Megan Spindler-Smith: This was included as part of our grant agreement with - as national peak.

Amberwren: Okay. But which body was that? Because I'm hearing from Jax and others that they are concerned (1) NDIS and also governing bodies are making decisions on our behalf without really consulting us and giving you everything after the fact that they have made the decision before rather than before and consulting with us going yes we're happy with that or we'd prefer that to go over there. Again, I am using this generically as possible because there are so many different facets to us and so many different - within our community, you know, we have a different ways of being which I totally accept and

respect. And I think what I'm trying to get at is it doesn't sound like - again, I find it really frustrating that decisions are made for us and we're supposed to be in a community and in a democracy where we are making our choices and coming forward with choices and going how can we work together with this to make it work, or what do you think here. They are just sort of throwing things at us and going, "Oh, well, it is just like this and, you know, deal with it." I get that's not your fault at all. There is no fault there. It is just an observation and it is a concern.

Megan Spindler-Smith: Thank you. And absolutely. So this was part of the DRO funding process for national peaks under - at the time it was with DSS. The one thing I will note is that in the plan it was not to necessarily be the peak alone, it was about how do we build that, how do we make that happen and how do we consult with the community. So the funding was provided. Now, I will be clear and say that I was not linked in with the communications outside of the building of the activity work plan.

Jarrold Sandler Hay: Maybe Megan can answer this? On projects like this we are hearing what the preferred process should be. My question is, has this always been the process? Or is it one of those situations where it just fell into our laps?

Megan Spindler-Smith: I can't speak to whether this has always been the case because the funding model has changed recently. However, one of the aims of what we are doing as part of this is providing feedback on how the process was so that it is actually done the right way moving forward. And that's why we're working so closely with IRV on that.

Kevyn Morris: Were we granted that or did we apply for that? Because I vaguely remember something in a meeting that we applied for it.

Megan Spindler-Smith: This was before my time as well. However, my understanding was that we were granted it and that there wasn't an application process and there definitely wasn't an open application process. But I would need to doublecheck that and I would have to take that on notice.

Kevyn Morris: That's all right. It was just it rang something in a I can't discuss Board stuff but it just rang a bell about last year, about there being a discussion on applying for it. If I'm wrong, please accept my apology.

Megan Spindler-Smith: Just to clarify, this was included just over two years ago. It wasn't something that did occur last year.

Kevyn Morris: The conversation started last year Megan.

Megan Spindler-Smith: I will take it on notice and come back.

Motion 3.1: Acceptance of President's Report

Proxy Received

Moved: Jeramy Hope | Seconded: Emily Hutchinson

1 For | 0 Against | 0 Abstain

27 For | 1 Against | 17 Abstain

Motion carried.

3.2: Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report was presented by Stuart Mawbey – Treasurer

PWDA's result for the 2024-25 financial year was a surplus of 1.17 million

This significant outcome enhances the organisation's reserves and includes an extraordinary \$980,000 donation of managed funds from the Centre for Inclusive Design total income from 10.6 million in the prior year to 11.1 million this year. Alongside the significant one off event PWDA also achieved an operating surplus of \$193,000 which reflects stronger fee for service and trainer income as well as consistent investment and interest returns.

The majority of PWDA's funding comes from government grants both federally as well as from New South Wales and the Queensland State Government. PWDA thanks all its funding agencies for its ongoing support.

PWDA's overall expenditure dropped slightly this year across seven expense categories. Most of those leasing costs and professional fees. Staffing remains PWDA's largest area of spending accounting for three quarters of its cost base. The team at PWDA responsible for accounting are a capable group of people making sure the responsibility of paying the bill and managing the budgets and keeping track of government grant and member money is performed skilfully. This ensures the advocacy goals of the organisation are met.

We've also faced risks and hazards. As the Board of a disabled organisation we need to change and adapt to circumstances which are often not ideal. The best way to do this is to always have the bigger picture in mind, as Craig mentioned. PWDA exists to advocate for disabled people, members especially in a systemic and individual manner, especially taking into consideration ours and others individual accessibility needs and knowing and owning ours and others' personal limitations. We achieve nothing by pulling in different directions for our own personal purposes. The new Board will face new challenges. It is not a job for the faint hearted.

At the end of the financial year the organisation has \$3.1 million in reserves which has been bolstered during the year by the strong overall result. The reserves represent 3 to 4 months of operating expenditure which provides a good buffer against unforeseen events and sound liquidity into the future. The new Board will have to look at best ways to invest with due diligence to achieve proposed initiatives such as the scholarships which I strongly support. An unqualified audit opinion was issued by our auditors ESV. This meant financially the organisation was given a clean bill of health.

I had a major health scare in October and was near death due to a massive loss of blood. Even though I had the absolute honour to be re-elected to the Board once again, I decided to turn down my offer of the voluntary Board position due to health. Thank you for your confidence but I apologise to the people who voted for me and the fact that I had to resign.

I will be available to the Board as a member and former Director of PWDA to assist in any way. Thank you, PWDA members.

Daniel Flynn: Thank-you Stuart. Any Questions- Please raise your hand.

Craig Wallace: Bringing you into PWDA and the Board was one of the best things we've ever done. Thank-you. A real vote of confidence for the work you've done.

Motion 3.2: Acceptance of Treasurer's Report

Moved: Craig Wallace | Seconded: Emily Hutchinson

Proxy Received

44 For | 0 Against | 4 Abstain

Motion carried.

3.3: Audited Financial Statements

Our Accountant Alex Cowell from Purpose Accounting who serves as our external independent financial controller to PWDA and Travas Burns from ESV attended the meeting. Are there any questions for them?

Motion 3.3: Acceptance of Audited Financial Statements

Moved: Jeramy Hope | Seconded: Emily Hutchinson

Proxy Received

41 For | 0 Against | 5 Abstain

Motion carried.

4. Appointment of Auditors

This motion is to appoint SDJA Audit Specialists as the auditors for the financial year 2025-26

STUART: I would just like to point out that due to the work of the finance and risk committee that we have changed auditors. You might like to explain that, Daniel. It makes sure that we have a little bit more arm's length when it comes to someone having the final say over the books.

Daniel: Our previous auditors are very closely aligned with our external financial controller. So, while we've been very satisfied with the work that they have done for us over a number of years, the Board and finance and risk committee felt that we would like to have a little more arm's length separation between our day today financial control and those CFO functions and the annual auditing that occurs

Motion 4.1: Appointment of Auditors

Moved: Jarrod Sandell-Hay | Seconded: Stuart Mawbey

Proxy Received

36 For | 1 Against | 4 Abstain

Motion carried.

5. Report from Returning Officer

The Chair informed the meeting that PWDA had engaged the services of Go Vote to independently conduct the election for 4 director positions on the PWDA Board. The returning officer at GoVote was Freyja Tasci. There were 12 candidates for 4 director roles. For any member wishing more information on preferential elections please refer to the link below.

[Proportional Representation Society of Australia Inc's PR Vote-counting Rules](#)

The Chair presented the Returning Officer's report on behalf of Returning Officer Freyja Tasci who was unable to attend this evening.

Freyja Tasci reports that there were received by the close of the polls 389 formal votes received online, by post or with telephone assistance. In relation to the position of Board directors the returning officer has reported the following 4 candidates were selected to be on the Board.

Jarrood Sandell-Hay

Wildaliz De Jesús Arocho

Jeramy Hope

Thalia-Rose Vanissum.

A copy of the returning officer's report was sent to all members and attached to the notice for the meeting of the AGM.

Any questions:

Craig Wallace: 1 question in relation to the candidates. Did the Board really screen the candidates?

Daniel: There was a little bit of checking against the skills matrix of where there may be gaps and compared them to the values and strategic pillars.

Craig Wallace: Any member who wants to run for the board should be fundamentally able to run.

Daniel: This will be noted as a comment. Thanks Craig.

Denise Wilson: In relation to Craigs point, I would like to say that every organisation has a due diligence to undertake for any board or staff member.

Shaun Bickley: I noticed one of the incoming Board members publicly advertises having worked as a regional Manager for Multicap. In July PWDA released a report to the working group that these violated international human rights norms including freedom of forced labour. I wanted to ask the incoming Director to clarify their position and if PWDA could address in the future by declaring perceived and actual conflicts of interest on the nominations forms.

Steph: I may have to take this on notice but it is my understanding that that Board member's work – history, he did declare some perceived conflicts of interest. And that these were checked by staff. As a member of the working group that also oversaw the process of the vetting of candidates, we set a minimum level of scoring quite low for this which was a score of 30 out of 50 from all the different pillars from the very complex application. Our constitution is quite explicit in that the directors are able to set the requirements for being a Director according to what we need at the time. So that's skills, background, diversity. That's entirely up to the Board of directors. And we're really conscious this is a \$12 million organisation now. It is very different to the \$4 to \$5 million turnover organisation that this org was when that constitution was drafted. However, that power is given to us by 8.4 in the constitution. But to my understanding that conflict was declared.

David Abello: There are a number of people who cant be members of the board if they have been bankrupt, they need a national police check and working with children check and these are sensible things.

Shaun Bickley: While I appreciate that the conflict or perceived conflict was declared, members were still voting without the knowledge that someone had been in management position at a company engaged in modern slavery in an organisation that is opposed to the modern slavery of disabled people and I think that's information that members should have. And I think that withholding that information when the Board has it is making disabled people vote with incomplete information and I don't think that's fair to us.

Daniel: Noted.

Amberwren: There are lots of good comments in the chat and I agree with Shuan that more information should have been given about the nominees re their backgrounds and beliefs that would have been very helpful.

Daniel: The board understands that there is more work that needs to be done in this area and we will certainly be continuing to massage this process next year and probably for multiple years into the future. But we will certainly take all of these comments on board. \

Steph: We use the skills matrix. These have been shared. 4 people were declined. We didn't go off resumes alone, we went off the pillars and made sure that people meet the standards to be on the board of a 12 million dollar organisation.

Daniel: Hopefully people can rest easy in that

Craig Wallace: I totally agree with excluding people who are necessary to be excluded by law. There is a vetting process and that's called an election and it is us, the members who vote. So therefore, there should be full disclosure. It is not the job of the board to tamper with the nominees and present who they want.

Daniel: We will take this as a comment Craig.

David Abello: I've been in the situation of being a president and receiving a report on a criminal. But there are levels of criminality and the board should then decide if its relevant.

Daniel: We take that as a comment again.

Stuart Mawbey: Others may be able to answer this question for me, what are the consequences if we don't accept the returning officers report?

Steph: Quorum wise: The board could still run as we have 4 returning members. But we may need to hold another election.

Daniel: There would also be a significant expense to the company as there is a fair degree of cost in the election process.

Craig Wallace: A compromise. I recognise not accepting returning report officer's report would potentially create chaos. I would only be prepared to vote for this on the basis that we agreed not to do this again, not to continue vetting and excluding candidates. So accept this result, this election which was done in a way that some of us aren't comfortable with, but we commit to a reset. Otherwise, I don't feel that morally in the tradition and history of PWDA that I can uphold an election that wasn't free, open, fair and fully decided by disabled people.

Daniel: If this resolution passes, we can see that this message has been received loud and clear.

Steph: Let the minutes reflect that a review process needs to take place.

Shaun Bickley: Two things. As far as the cost you have noted this is a \$12 million organisation. So I'm not a financial person but maybe thousands doesn't sound like a huge expenditure to a \$12 million organisation. Maybe the time involved would be more significant. But as far as the potential motion I think it would be important to include that people have mentioned both disabled people being excluded from participation but also transparency of information being kept from disabled people, if both of those elements are included people 6 months from now or 9 months from now could sit down to do a review process and they either weren't here or won't remember what was discussed. So I think those two elements are important to include in the notes.

Amberwren: Wayne had put in the chat that people could nominate their intention to be a board member in advance and receive mentoring in the lead up.

Motion 5.1: Acceptance and adoption of Returning Officer's Report.

Proxy Received

Moved: Emily Hutchinson Seconded: David Abello

26 For | 8 Against | 11 Abstain

Motion carried

Motion 5.2: Approval of the appointment of Wildaliz De Jesús Arocho as Board Director in accordance with the 2025 Returning Officers Report.

Proxy Received

Moved: Jeramy Hope | Seconded: Emily Hutchinson

37 For | 2 Against | 9 Abstain

Motion carried.

Motion 5.3: Approval of the appointment of Jeramy Hope as Board Director in accordance with the 2025 Returning Officers Report.

Proxy Received

Moved: David Abello | Seconded: Stuart Mawbey

30 For | 6 Against | 8 Abstain

Motion carried.

Motion 5.4: Approval of the appointment of Jarrod Sandell-Hay as Board Director in accordance with the 2025 Returning Officers Report.

Proxy Received

Moved: Craig Wallace | Seconded: Stuart Mawbey

37 For | 2 Against | 5 Abstain

Motion carried

Motion 5.5: Approval of the appointment of Tahlia-Rose Vanissum as Board Director in accordance with the 2025 Returning Officers Report.

Proxy Received

Moved: Stuart Mawbey | Seconded: Emily Hutchinson

36 For | 3 Against | 4 Abstain

Motion carried

The interpreters left the meeting at 8pm.

Closed captioning was still available.

Break 8:01-8:08pm

Steph: Due to the timing of the first section of this meeting running over, the Q&A Session will not run as we are overtime, however the questions sent earlier, or any questions emailed through will be answered.

6. Special Resolutions

Motion 6.1 Special Resolution [1] - Trinity Ford

Daniel: Before proceeding I will note that for the record that Trinity Ford has formally resigned as a Director of People with Disability Australia as of yesterday. As a result, this motion is no longer required and is therefore withdrawn from consideration at this meeting. No note will be taken on this motion. No vote will be taken on this motion. And it will not form part of the formal record of resolutions for the 2025 AGM.

Motion 6.2 Special Resolution [2] - Daniel Flynn - Does anyone have any questions:

Jarrold: Can you explain the motion?

Daniel: Trinity Ford and Daniel Flynn were given casual appointment to the Board. We then spent 3 months on the Board, we were then elected by the members. Trinity has resigned but Daniel's term is until next AGM. This resolution is asking for Daniel's right to serve an extended term.

Moved: Jeramy Hope | Seconded: Jarrod Sandall-Hay

Proxy Received

34 For | 2 Against | 4 Abstain

Motion Carried.

7. Other Business

7.1 Farewell of outgoing Board Members:

Daniel Flynn interim President

Trinity Ford

Stuart Mawbey

Eva Sifis

Kevyn Morris

I just want to convey my sincere thanks to each of them for their time on this Board and their contributions to this company and its purpose and I will absolutely welcome them back if they choose to serve again at any point in the future. I wish them well in their next journey in life.

7.2 PWDA member panel discussion

The guest speaker is Emma Benison MBA GAICD is an award-winning visionary leader, an advocate with over 20 years of experience, as a CEO, executive and nonexecutive Director and TEDx speaker. Emma is known for identifying and working in collaboration to disrupt out of date policies and systems to give rise to strategic transformation that empowers people and organisations to thrive. Emma is revered for her expertise to understand the impacts of inclusive workplace cultures and the powerful role of steward inclusion and diversity.

For decades Emma has been at the forefront of igniting change as an independent advocate with firsthand experience on working on national advocacy campaigns which have yielded major change including in areas of travel and disability leadership. Emma's consultancy experience is widespread including social policy and advocacy, leadership and organisational development, business transformation and the role of the arts. Emma's contributions have been recognised with the Leslie Hall award for lifetime achievement in disability leadership 2024 and the national Aspire award for community development and advocacy 2020. In 2017 whilst Emma was CEO of Blind Citizens Australia, the organisation received a national human rights award from the Australian Human Rights Commission for significant advocacy achievements. Emma has an MBA from Caplan business school and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Please join me in welcoming Emma.

Emma Benson gave a thought provoking talk on NDIS, the Royal Commission and the future of Disability Rights in Australia being governed with empathy and accountability.

Daniel: Thank-you to Emma. We will be more than happy to publish this online.

7.3 Questions

Noting that the questions have been postponed due to timing. As Steph mentioned earlier, please email Questions through and these will be answered and form part of the official minutes.

Craig Wallace: We practiced Civil disagreement and we need to have a discussion about what we want and where we can have that civil dialogue and how we balance voice with corporate service delivery. We are wanting to engage and move forward.

Daniel: We will take this as a comment and rest assured that the incoming board has heard this and will work towards

8. Close of meeting

No further business had been notified to the meeting, Daniel Flynn declared the meeting closed.

The meeting closed at 8:34pm.

Member Questions

Because the meeting ran over time due to important discussions, we could not hold the open question time scheduled at the end of the agenda. Members submitted additional Questions by emailing or calling PWDA. Answers to the Questions that were submitted to our board before the meeting are below:

Question 1: What budget do you have for social engagements?

Answer: PWDA doesn't have a standalone "social engagements" budget. Member engagement activities sit within our broader communications budget.

All spending in this area is tied to PWDA's strategic and communications goals and follows our normal financial oversight and approval processes.

It is important to note that PWDA's communications team is not a revenue-raising team, and therefore their budget is dependent on the support they are able to provide to our grant-funded areas.

Question 2: Are applicants for Advisory Groups actually selected on merit and is consideration made of the disability-related harms caused by continued rejection for such roles? Would a system that keeps each applicant anonymous during the selection process be considered, to improve fairness and reduce bias?

Answer: PWDA's advisory groups are designed to bring together a diverse range of lived experiences, perspectives, and expertise to inform the organisation's work. Selection is always based on merit, fit for purpose, and the need to maintain a safe and effective working environment for all participants.

While we appreciate the intent behind anonymous recruitment processes, in practice these can limit our ability to ensure that advisory groups remain safe, cohesive, and representative of our diverse membership. For that reason, the current process includes a review of applications to ensure appropriate participation and alignment with PWDA's values before appointments are confirmed.

PWDA remains committed to continuous improvement in accessibility, fairness, and inclusion within all recruitment and selection processes.

Question 3: What major issues will PWDA's new Board be advocating on over the next 12 months?

Answer: The PWDA Board will be working closely with our organisational team and members to understand and clarify what issues matter most to you. The last year has been a tough one for our community and there have been so many areas of focus that have pulled us in multiple directions. However, as a member-led organisation, it's essential that our advocacy agenda continues to reflect the priorities and lived experience of our community.

We do know however, that there are several major national reforms and pressures already having significant impact on people with disability. These will naturally be key areas of focus over the next 12 months, including:

1. The ongoing NDIS reforms and the introduction of Support Needs Assessments
2. The design and implementation of Foundational Supports, both targeted and general, including Thriving Kids
3. Strengthening emergency preparedness and inclusive disaster responses
4. Reforms to the Disability Discrimination Act
5. Progress toward a national Human Rights Act
6. Equity of employment and reforms to the DSP
7. Broader systemic issues affecting equality, safety, and inclusion for people with disability

Once we have engaged with our membership, we will refine this agenda and ensure our advocacy continues to be driven by the priorities, concerns, and aspirations of people with disability across Australia.

Question 4: I would be keen to understand why PWDA is now deciding which members can run for the Board rather than having free democratic and fair elections? Also why PWDA is not supporting members who are speaking out about highly problematic NDIS changes like the compulsory and intrusive assessments through events like the recent rally? I would also like to know why members can't just ask questions at the AGM without them being vetted?

Answer: On the first point - PWDA's Constitution sets the overall framework for Board elections, and the detailed process is governed through the organisation's policies, which the Board oversees. It's not the Board's role to bar otherwise eligible nominees; the aim is to ensure that nominations are considered in the context of succession planning, organisational continuity, and diversity of skills, experience, knowledge, and disability and geographic representation, and to meet our obligations under the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) and the ACNC Governance Standards to maintain a Board with the capability to govern responsibly and discharge directors' duties. To ensure fairness and informed voting, nominations must be lodged by the published deadline and be sufficiently complete; where materials are late or materially incomplete (despite reasonable adjustments and multiple lodgement options), they may not progress to ballot in that election cycle, and the nominee is invited to reapply in the following year. Once those eligibility and process requirements are met, it is the members who decide - through a fair and democratic election.

On the second point - PWDA continues to advocate strongly on NDIS reform and other national issues. As the national cross-disability peak body, we have a responsibility to work with government and help coordinate the efforts of other Disabled People's Organisations. This means we often operate at a system and policy level to represent all people with disability, not just one part of our community. That doesn't mean PWDA is

silent - it means our advocacy must be strategic, evidence-based, and aligned with our endorsed policy positions so that we can represent everyone fairly and maintain the organisation's credibility and influence.

Finally, on the AGM process - questions are gathered in advance so that we can prepare accurate, thoughtful answers and make the best use of limited time during the meeting. This isn't about censoring anyone. It's simply about ensuring fairness, accessibility, and efficiency so that everyone's questions receive clear and complete responses rather than rushed answers on the night.

Question 5: Why is the Board make-up still not representing people with disability from all states?

Answer: That's a really fair question. The reason we don't always have directors from every state and territory is simply because of how our Constitution sets out the election process. Our directors are elected by members nationally, rather than by state or territory, so the outcome depends on who nominates and who members vote for in any given year.

The only way to guarantee representation from each state and territory would be to amend the Constitution so that each has a designated seat on the Board, with eligibility for each seat limited to members from that jurisdiction. The elections themselves could still be run nationally, but those eligibility rules would ensure balanced geographic representation.

That's not how our current framework operates, but we're mindful of the importance of national representation and continue to look for ways to strengthen inclusion and engagement across all regions through our advisory groups and member engagement work, so that geographic diversity still informs how the Board makes its decisions.

Question 6: Who are the Board members? And what if anything has PWDA done to uphold the rights and interests of disabled people? Where has PWDA if ever defended the rights of an individual who has had the disabilities weaponised against them and if they have has this ensured the situation place organisation individual or agency now ensure the practice is no longer

allowed how many times if any did the service actually advocate for the client and not just observe? How many clients were better off from the engagement with a PWDA? how many clients self referred by another party not involved referred by party in disagreement referred by an authority?

Answer: PWDA provides both systemic and individual advocacy. Individual Advocacy is an important part of the frontline, on-the-ground work to support individuals with disability as a conduit and support in matters where their rights are not being upheld. Due to the need to maintain confidentiality, we cannot share individual stories however we can provide an overview of the great work that our Individual advocacy team leads.

All details regarding our Board members and publicly available systemic advocacy can be found on the PWDA website, including an overview and highlights included in our Annual Report.

8. Board Members: <https://pwd.org.au/about-us/our-board/>

9. Annual Report: <https://pwd.org.au/about-us/annual-reports/>

Where has PWDA defended the rights of an individual who has had the disabilities weaponised against them?

10. We have worked on hundreds of different cases where this has occurred in the past year. We use a trauma-informed lens to ensure that people understand their rights.

11. When our clients are discredited in this way, we support them through complaints processes to regain their choice and control.

12. PWDA maintains internal training and policies that keep these standards within the organisation.

Has PWDA ensured the practice (weaponizing disability) is no longer allowed?

13. PWDA does not have regulatory or enforcement powers to prohibit practices within external agencies.

14. We work to ensure that such practices are not supported or normalised within our own work, and systemically.

15. Our work focuses on prevention and accountability by providing human rights-based advocacy to strengthen and support this action.

How many times have advocates advocated for a client?

16. Advocacy is more than a one-off action, it is a process of supporting someone to exercise choice and control, access their rights, and achieve a goal.
17. Before taking a case on, advocates have structured conversations with the person, to confirm the best strategy to move forward with in supporting their issue.
18. Our Annual Report talks more about this process, and the outcomes. Please see the information about our Individual Advocacy Programs [on pages 26-42](#).

How many clients were better off after working with PWDA?

19. Our clients determine their own goals, which may involve preventing harm or responding to situations that are harming them.
20. Every client decides if PWDA is the right service to support them. Our services are free and voluntary.
21. See PWDA's [Annual Report](#) pages 12 and 13 for case numbers and satisfaction survey data.

How many clients are:

22. **Self-referred?** 43% of our clients are self-referred.
23. **Other referrals?** Any referral to PWDA from a third party must have the client's full, informed consent. We cannot accept or act on information about a person or their situation without their knowledge, consent, and active participation.

Additional questions received after the AGM

Question (Summary, some details removed to protect personal information).

A member wrote after the AGM to say they support the Board having a proper role in vetting candidates for Board elections under section 8.4 of the PWDA

Constitution. They are concerned that the suggestion made at the AGM – that all nominations should simply go to a member vote with no vetting – may not be consistent with section 8.4 and could allow factions or single-issue groups to “stack” the Board.

They noted that this could result in a Board that mainly represents the interests of one group of members, rather than the broad cross-section of people with disability that PWDA is required to represent as the national cross-disability DPO. In their view, some level of vetting is important not only to reduce the risk of board-stacking, but also to support diversity and representativeness on the Board, as well as succession planning and the preservation of institutional memory and knowledge.

They have asked us to clarify:

24. whether the Board agrees that section 8.4 of the Constitution permits and requires a considered approach to assessing nominations before they go to the ballot; and

25. whether the Board intends to continue applying section 8.4 in a way that reduces the risk of board-stacking, protects diversity and representativeness, and supports succession planning and institutional continuity.

Answer: PWDA has a long history of strong member democracy, where for many years any valid nomination from a member typically went straight onto the ballot. At the same time, we are now a national cross-disability DPO and a company limited by guarantee, governed by the Corporations Act and the ACNC Act, with much higher legal, governance and risk obligations than in our more humble beginnings.

Section 8.4 of the PWDA Constitution requires the Board to administer nominations and elections in a way that is valid, constitutional and lawful. Those obligations now sit alongside directors’ duties under the Corporations Act and the governance standards under the ACNC Act. Taken together, they do not support a “no checks at all” approach.

They require some level of considered assessment (“vetting”) before names go onto the ballot.

This vetting is not about the Board choosing who should be elected. Members remain the people who decide who sits on the Board. The Board’s role is to make sure that:

- 26. Nominations meet the constitutional and membership requirements
- 27. There are no clear conflicts that would make it impossible for a person to carry out their duties as a director
- 28. Nominees have, or with reasonable support and training can build, the minimum capacity needed to meet their legal and fiduciary duties under the Corporations Act and ACNC Act; and
- 29. The overall process supports diversity, representativeness, succession planning and institutional memory.

Having no vetting at all now creates real risks. It can open the door to board-stacking by factions or single-issue groups and can result in people being elected into high-risk governance roles without the minimum capability or support to meet their legal duties. If a Board knowingly allows that to occur without taking reasonable steps to manage the risk, there is an argument that the Board itself is not meeting its own obligations – which ultimately exposes PWDA and its members to harm.

We also recognise that many members want our nominations and elections processes to be more transparent and to stay as close as possible to the original spirit of open democratic participation. We agree that member trust depends on transparency and on processes that members can clearly understand and see.

To balance these issues, the Board will:

- 30. Continue to apply section 8.4 in a way that involves reasonable vetting of nominations, not to control outcomes, but to ensure nominations are valid, lawful and consistent with PWDA’s obligations under the Constitution, the Corporations Act and the ACNC Act

31. Maintain and strengthen safeguards against board-stacking and factional capture, so that the Board remains broadly representative of our diverse community
32. Improve transparency by clearly explaining the nomination and vetting process, including the criteria used, in our policies and member communications; and
33. Conduct a consultative process with members in the first half of 2026 to help shape and refine further changes to the nominations and elections process ahead of the 2026 Board elections.

Signed as a true and accurate record:



Jarrod Sandell-Hay

Interim President 2026

People with Disability Australia Ltd

Date: 8 October 2026