



physical disability
AUSTRALIA

“Nothing about us without us!”

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*PDA Newsletter
Summer, 2017*

Greetings!

Welcome to the Summer 2017 Physical Disability Australia (PDA) Newsletter! Since our last publication, a lot has happened at PDA:

- We have recruited a Director from Tasmania which brings the Board to its full complement of 8;
- We have held the 2016 AGM that ratified our new, modern Constitution;
- We have campaigned against the introduction of Australian Standard technical specifications for powered wheelchairs and mobility scooters; and
- We have begun work on becoming an ILC provider with the NDIS.

Details about these and other developments at PDA are in this Newsletter.

Make sure you follow us on Facebook (@physicaldisabilityau) and Twitter (@PDA_AU).

If you didn't get this Newsletter by email or post, the chances are your membership details are not up to date. Please head to the PDA website and complete the personal details form at www.pda.org.au/register-online

Warm Regards,

Simon Burchill
PDA Manager

“What will happen to my Health Care card when the Government cancels my Mobility Allowance?”

As many of you will be aware, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is supposed to cover participants' accessible travel costs and when you get your NDIS package (which should contain funds for transport costs), your Centrelink Mobility Allowance stops.

But does this also mean you lose your Health Care Card and the access to bulk billing and discounts on medications it provides?

It seems not.

The Centrelink website (humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/mobility-allowance) does not give a clear answer:

“You may still be eligible for a Health Care Card if your Mobility Allowance was stopped because you started as a participant in the National Disability Insurance Scheme.”

But other sites are confident current Health Care Card holders will keep them when they become NDIS participants. For example:

“You will not receive Mobility Allowance if you have a plan with the NDIS, but you will keep your Health Care Card...”

(www.everyaustraliancounts.com.au/faqs/will-ndis-affect-centrelink-payments)

If any member does lose their Health Care Card, please let PDA know and we will look into it.

Meet your Directors – Gabrielle Trenbath (WA)



Introduce yourself:

My name is Gabrielle and I'm in my second year with PDA as their WA director. I work full-time as a Nursing Assistant and currently completing a Graduate Certificate in Social Impact at the University of WA. I'm also on the Board of *Avivo: Live Life*

(www.avivo.org.au).

What do you like to do to relax?

Travelling, singing and reading are three passions but I also love going to see movies, checking out restaurants, cafés and bars with friends and family. Since I love reading, I am a bit of a writers' festival junkie and spending the weekend thinking and talking about books. I also try and go to the gym 4 times a week.

What is your favourite book / movie / music recording?

A Suitable Boy by Vikram Seth (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Suitable_Boy), just love it.

Who would you most like to have a conversation with?

Former US President Barack Obama, he'd be so interesting.

What is your history in the disability sector?

While I have Cerebral Palsy, I am still new to the sector. I got involved after doing *Leadership WA's* LeadAbility course in 2015 which led to board position with *Avivo* then later PDA.

I'm learning a lot but I am looking forward to contribute to the sector in the future.

What do you hope to accomplish with PDA?

I'm keen to work on PDA's social media and online presence.

Western Australia's State Election: Which Party has the Best Disability Policy?

by Gabrielle Trenbath

With the Western Australian election just around the corner it is time for members in the West to think about whose policies better cater for the needs of people with disabilities.

While PDA isn't going to tell you who to vote for, it is important for WA voters to be informed about what each party and candidate's disability policies are as these will impact on the services and supports you receive.

Recently, I went to a forum run by *Developmental Disability WA* (ddc.org.au) where Donna Faragher (Liberal MLC member for the East Metropolitan Region), Stephen Dawson (Labor MLC member for Mining and Pastoral Region) and Alison Xamon (Greens MLC Candidate) spoke about the issues.

Prior to a feisty Question and Answer session, each candidate outlined their thoughts on what they wanted to achieve if their party was successful in forming the next WA state government.



Donna Faragher spoke about the WA Liberal Government's increase in funding to the Disability Sector and emphasised that the bilateral agreement that has just been signed with the Commonwealth Government will deliver the

NDIS as seen in other states, except that it will be locally run.

Apart from respite services and the supported service sector in general, Ms Faragher declared the party was committed to their *Changing Places* initiative that seeks to deliver secure, clean facilities for people with disability who need space and assistance to use the bathroom when out and about in the community (disability.wa.gov.au/individuals-families-and-carers/for-individuals-families-and-carers/recreation-and-leisure-/changing-places) and the Disability Justice Centre (mhas.wa.gov.au/disability-justice-centres/what-is-the-disability-justice-centre).



While Stephen Dawson didn't indicate which NDIS scheme the WA Labor Party would support, he did say that the it was committed to an open and transparent review process that would explain to the public why they chose one system over the other.

Apart from the NDIS, Mr Dawson declared the party's priorities were housing and transport. He said the WA Labor Party want to change the *Criminal Law (Mentally Impaired Accused) Act 1996* and were committed to supporting systemic and individual advocacy.



Alison Xamon declared she recognised that meeting the needs of people with disabilities do not fit into neat boxes and that the WA Greens were committed to ensuring that policies that concern them (such as housing, transport, education and employment) were not placed silos, but looked at from a whole of government perspective.

She believes that government work in the disability space should fit into a Human Rights Framework and supports improving people with disabilities' participation in the community by government backing of advocacy.

Alison Xamon shares her WA Greens electoral ticket with Sam Jenkinson who currently heads up *People with Disability WA* (pwdwa.org).

Whichever party or candidate you decide to support, it is important that you are able to exercise your democratic rights. If you need help casting your vote in the upcoming election, make sure you contact the WA Electoral Commission's *iVote* program (www.elections.wa.gov.au/ivote), which assists people with disabilities to cast their votes.

PDA's Revised Constitution

In December last year, the PDA AGM ratified a revision of the organisation's Constitution. It is now a modern document that takes account of the 21st century ways of keeping records and doing business.

You can access the new Constitution (and other policy documents that have recently been approved) on the PDA website (www.pda.org.au/policies-and-guidelines).

Proposed Standards for Motorised Wheelchairs and Mobility Scooters

In November last year we became aware that *Standards Australia* were facilitating the development of an Australian Technical Specification for motorised wheelchairs and mobility scooters that would contain a list of requirements for these devices to be deemed suitable for use on public transport and 'road-related areas'.

PDA was initially dismayed that such a project was underway and has since started a campaign to ensure people with disability will not be denied access to the powered wheelchairs they need nor the freedom to use them on public transport, footpaths and other public spaces.

To safeguard members' interests, PDA has appointed SA Director Bruce Becker to the *Standards Australia* subcommittee responsible for the development of wheelchair standards. We are also in dialog

with *AustRoads*, the national road transport rules management body who commissioned the project, to ensure they are aware of its human rights implications.

You can read PDA's press release and correspondence with *AustRoads* on our 'Projects and Campaigns' page (www.pda.org.au/special-projects-and-campaigns).

Accessible Public Transport around Australia: Part 2 – Trains, Trams, Ferries and Buses (NSW, Victoria and Queensland)

Most members will be aware of the accessible public transport options in their own states, but do you know how these vary from state-to-state? This article will answer these questions for you.



New South Wales

The 'Transport for NSW' website is the main source of information for all things public transport in the state with details about how to get about on trains, buses, ferries and Sydney's relatively new Light Rail system. The website has a lot of information about accessible public transport options that is all linked to from the 'Accessible travel' page (www.transportnsw.info/en/travelling-with-us/using-public-transport/access/index.page).

Trains

The 'Accessible trains and stations' page (www.transportnsw.info/en/travelling-with-us/using-public-transport/access/trains.page) states that all Sydney trains are to some extent accessible. However, some intercity trains and some stations are not accessible.

Catching a train with a wheelchair or mobility scooter in Sydney is a complicated business as there is no consistent access position on the trains and all the ramps for boarding and disembarking are wielded by platform staff. This means when you arrive at the station you need to tell the staff where you are going so they can call ahead to alert their colleagues at your destination that you are coming.

The website advises travellers to use their 'Trip Planner' page (tp.transportnsw.info/nsw/XSLT_TRIP_REQUEST2?language=en) to determine which stations and services to use as no list of accessible stations is provided.

Busses

The 'Travel on accessible busses' page (www.transportnsw.info/en/travelling-with-us/using-public-transport/access/buses.page) contains information about how to board and disembark from accessible busses and the dimensions allowed for mobility aids. As with the page relating to trains, there is no information about how many busses are accessible nor which routes they service. Passengers are directed to the 'Trip Planner' page (above) to find the stops and routes that best meets their needs.

Ferries

The good news is: "All Sydney Ferry vessels are accessible to people using essential mobility aids, but several older-style wharves have steps that prevent access."

The 'Accessible ferries and wharves' page (www.transportnsw.info/en/travelling-with-us/using-public-transport/access/ferries.page) lists which wharves are accessible and has links to a ferry accessibility map and similar information to

the busses page about allowable dimensions and stability requirements.

Light Rail

As Sydney's light rail system is fairly new, it is fully compliant with the *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002* (DSAPT). This means "All light rail stops have either ramps or lifts to make it easier to access the network for people with disabilities, using a wheelchair or mobility device, people who are older and families with prams." Furthermore, "It is easy to get on and off light rail vehicles and there is a dedicated area on board each vehicle for a wheelchair, pram or other mobility device." (www.transportnsw.info/en/travelling-with-us/using-public-transport/access/light-rail.page).

Regional Travel

Unfortunately, there is no specific information about accessibility on NSW regional public transport services (www.transportnsw.info/en/travelling-with-us/regional.page).

Passengers will need to contact individual operators to check if stations, trains, buses and ferries are accessible.

Other Disability Relevant Information

The 'Transport for NSW' website has information on the concessions available for passengers with disabilities and their companions (www.transportnsw.info/en/tickets/eligibility-concessions/people-with-a-disability/disability.page).

There are also apps to download and install on your phone:



Abilio: An iOS app that generates trip plans that take into account elevation and gradients of ramps, numbers of steps, internal routing in stations, proximity to accessible parking, ground surfaces and more.



Metarove: An Android app that provides customisable trip plans with user selected features, including personal walking speed, maximum distance and an option to display

accessible journeys. It also provides real-time NSW public transport information.



Stop Announcer (NSW): An app available for both Android and iOS that provides visual and auditory announcements as customers arrive at bus stops, train stations, ferry wharves and light rail stops.

(www.transportnsw.info/en/travelling-with-us/keep-updated/apps/accessibility.page)

Victoria

Like its NSW counterpart *Public Transport Victoria* (PTV) has a website that gathers all the state's accessible travel information together (www.ptv.vic.gov.au/getting-around/accessible-transport). Information about general size restrictions for mobility aids is also provided (www.ptv.vic.gov.au/getting-around/accessible-transport/mobility-aids).

Trains

The good news is "All metropolitan train stations (except Heyington) are wheelchair-accessible" although some of the ramps at older stations are a bit steep.

The trains in Melbourne have only a driver to operate them. This means passengers with disabilities must move to the front end of the platform so the driver can see they are there, get out, and set up the ramp. Information about station staffing and access to toilets (which are sometimes locked) can be found on the 'Accessible trains' page (www.ptv.vic.gov.au/getting-around/accessible-transport/accessible-trains).

Buses



The 'Accessible buses' page (www.ptv.vic.gov.au/getting-around/accessible-transport/accessible-buses) declares that 80% of Melbourne's bus fleets

are wheelchair accessible and that nearly all bus routes on weekends are serviced exclusively by accessible vehicles.

Trams

Melbourne is famous for its tram network which has continuously operated for more than 130 years. Unfortunately its accessibility is quite limited as vintage vehicles and narrow middle-of-the-road stops still dominate the system. PTV's 'Accessible trams' page (www.ptv.vic.gov.au/getting-around/accessible-transport/accessible-trams) states that there are 130 wheelchair accessible vehicles in the fleet and 400 accessible tram stops that involve wide platforms in the middle of the street. Four routes are exclusively serviced by accessible vehicles and services on a further 7 routes are partially serviced the same way.



The above page also has links to the 'tram TRACKER' app for both Android and iOS phones that lets users check when the next accessible tram will arrive.

Regional Travel

As with Melbourne train stations, all regional train stations are also wheelchair accessible. The regional rail operator, *V/Line*, also has some accessible buses and passengers with disabilities should let the operator know of their requirements ahead of time.

The 'Accessible regional services page (www.ptv.vic.gov.au/getting-around/accessible-transport/accessible-regional-services) indicates that the bus services in 6 regional towns may or may not have accessible vehicles and stops so again, passengers are encouraged to contact the transport operators for more information

Other Disability Relevant Information

PTV runs an annual 'Try Before You Ride' event that brings all Victoria's accessible vehicles together so people with disabilities can test drive the various ramps, hoists and seating allocations. There is a video showing the 2015 event on the website

(www.ptv.vic.gov.au/getting-around/accessible-transport/try-before-you-ride).

People with disabilities who cannot use the *MiKi* electronic ticketing system can get free travel across the Melbourne public transport network. Detail on how to get a Free Travel Pass and information about other concessions are available on this hard-to-find page: (www.ptv.vic.gov.au/tickets/fares/free-travel-passes).

Queensland

Similar to NSW and Victoria, the Queensland Government has a website that has general information about accessible public transport (www.qld.gov.au/disability/out-and-about/public-transport). It has links to pages discussing train, bus and ferry accessibility, but better information is available from the operators' sites.

Trains

Queensland Rail's 'Access for all' website (www.queenslandrail.com.au/forcustomers/access) provides information about which stations are accessible and where to board trains with the assistance of the train guard. There are also links to the Station Upgrade Program and the various concession programs that people with disabilities may be able to take advantage of. There is also a page that helpfully presents accessibility information for all Brisbane's stations (www.queenslandrail.com.au/forcustomers/access/station-access-guide).

Buses

The good news is that every bus in the South East Queensland network is wheelchair accessible. Similarly all stops on the busway system (dedicated bus only roads) have platforms accessible by lifts. More information about bus services in Brisbane is available on the Council's website (www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/traffic-transport/public-transport/buses).

Ferries

Like the buses, all *CityCat* ferries that operate on the Brisbane River and Southern Moreton

Bay are accessible. Some smaller *CityHopper* ferries are also accessible, but this is not true of all terminals these boats use (www.qld.gov.au/disability/out-and-about/ferries).

Light Rail

The Gold Coast has a new Light Rail system that is fully accessible. Information about its accessibility features is available on its operator's website (ridetheg.com.au/%ef%bf%bcriding-the-g/mobility-access).

Regional Travel

As with other states, the accessibility of regional transport options in Queensland is patchy. The Department of Transport and Main Roads has a page detailing the timeline for making all Queensland public transport buses compliant with the DSAPT, but there is no link to operators so that passengers with disabilities can check if they are in a given city

or region (www.tmr.qld.gov.au/Travel-and-transport/Disability-access-and-mobility/Accessible-regional-bus-stops).

Similarly regional rail travel is not fully accessible either. Queensland Rail's website provides details on which services can accommodate passengers with disabilities (www.queenslandrailtravel.com.au/travelwithus/onboardexperiences/accessibility).

Other Disability Relevant Information

Public transport ticketing in Queensland is run by a separate entity, *Translink*. Its website provides information about disability related concessions including the Translink Access Pass that provides unlimited travel to passengers who are unable to use the GoCard electronic ticketing system for a nominal annual fee (translink.com.au/tickets-and-fares/ticket-types/disability).

Please update your membership details!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Town/Suburb: _____

State: _____ Postcode: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

I am a person with a physical disability

I am a supporter (without a physical disability)

Return forms to:

Physical Disability Australia

4/36 Holland Street

Toowong QLD 4066

