



physical disability
AUSTRALIA

“Nothing about us without us!”

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PDA Newsletter
Winter, 2019

Greetings!

Welcome to the Winter, 2019 Physical Disability Australia (PDA) Newsletter! Since our last publication, a lot has happened at PDA. We have:

- 2 new Associate Directors on the PDA Board;
- Been successful in applying for 2 grants from the Department of Social Services (DSS) and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS);
- Held the 2018 PDA Annual General Meeting;
- Made submissions to government regarding the Terms of Reference for the Royal Commission into Violence Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability; and
- Continued our campaign to have wheelchair-accessible toilets in NSW unlocked.

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 pda.org.au/membership/

Warm Regards,

Simon Burchill
PDA Manager

PDA believes **Self-Management** is the best way to maximise the benefits of your plan!

PDA's Disabled Peoples and Family Organisations (DPFO) Grant

In May this year, PDA's Board of Directors and staff were thrilled to receive news that the organisation had been successful with its application for a NDIS Information, Linkages and Capacity-building (ILC) program grant to help it build its capacity as a DPFO and assist its members to develop their knowledge and skills in the area of self-managing NDIS funded supports.

With this grant, PDA will be developing a new website that members and other NDIS participants can access to get resources and step-by-step instructions to walk them through the process of becoming self-managing participants.

PDA will also be looking to set-up a peer support network so that those of you who have the skills and knowledge to self-manage can mentor others.

You may be asking yourself: Why would I want to self-manage my supports?

ndis

THERE ARE 3 WAYS TO
MANAGE THE FUNDING
IN YOUR PLAN.

1. SELF-MANAGEMENT
2. PLAN MANAGEMENT
3. NDIA MANAGEMENT

You can choose one or a combination of the above.

The answer is that it allows you to exercise complete choice and control over:

- Who provides your personal supports –
 - A registered service provider;
 - An unregistered provider; and/or
 - Workers you have employed yourself;
- Where you get your capacity-building therapies;
- The exact make and model of your (approved) assistive technology items; and
- The tradespeople who implement your (approved) home modifications.

If you choose to employ support workers yourself, you get even more choice and control over:

- When they work; and
- How long they stay at work;

In addition to these benefits, you also get to significantly stretch your Core supports budget by not having to pay part of a service provider's costs of doing business.

To fully grasp this, you need only compare the *NDIS Price Guide* approved rate for an hour's personal support with the *Social Community Housing and Disability Services Award* specified pay rate for that same hour's support:

For example the NDIS Price Guide ([ndis.gov.au/providers/price-guides-and-information](https://www.ndis.gov.au/providers/price-guides-and-information)) allows a service provider to charge up to \$48.14 for each weekday daytime hour of "Assistance with self-care activities – Standard" while the SCHADS Award Pay Guide ([fairwork.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/872/social-community-home-care-and-disability-services-industry-award-ma000100-pay-guide.pdf.aspx](https://www.fairwork.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/872/social-community-home-care-and-disability-services-industry-award-ma000100-pay-guide.pdf.aspx)) states that only \$25.98 of that amount needs to be passed on to the person providing that assistance.

If you are self-managing you get to decide what most of the difference is spent on. You can:

- Spend it on more hours of support;
- Build up a bank of support hours for a time when you might need them; and/or
- Pay a bookkeeper or accountant to do all the administrative tasks that self-management involves.

One of the great things about this grant is that PDA will be working closely with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to develop and promote these resources. This is a good thing because the NDIA currently doesn't have a lot of resources about self-management. What they do have is on their website ([ndis.gov.au/participants/using-your-plan/self-management](https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/using-your-plan/self-management)).

If you are interested in self-managing your NDIS supports, be on the look-out for announcements as the website, resources and peer support opportunities are developed.

New Associate Directors

Matthew Lee is PDA's new Associate Director for WA. Matthew is the founder of a small disability service provider 'A New Kind of Care'



When asked what he hopes to achieve with PDA, Matthew responded: *I hope to add a fresh and supportive dynamic to our community, supporting the continuation of changes needed to ensure our country continues to evolve as it must if we are to secure equality for all.*

Paul Watson is PDA's new Associate Director for the Northern Territory. He is an Account Manager at a recruitment firm in Darwin.



When asked what he hopes to achieve with PDA, Paul responded: *It takes a determined structured force to bring about change and improvements and I would like to be a part of anything that can bring that to people with disability and those living with them.*

2017-18 PDA Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Annual Report

On 6 December last year PDA held its AGM by national teleconference. 11 members dialled into the meeting to hear about what the organisation had accomplished over the 2017-18 financial year and what its plans are for 2018-19 and beyond. The meeting also re-elected Talia Spooner-Stewart and Jonathan Shar to the Board of Directors for new three year terms representing ACT and NSW respectively.

If you would like to know more of the details, copies of the 2017-18 Annual Report are available from the PDA website (pda.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/2018-PDA-Annual-Report.pdf). If you would like a printed copy, please contact the PDA manager on 1800 732 674 or via email to manager@pda.org.au.

The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability

The announcement made by the Prime Minister, Scott Morrison on 5 April that a Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability would, finally, be established was met with relief by many in the disability sector. Along with others who had been calling for this enquiry for some time we were glad the Prime Minister eventually saw the need for it but also annoyed that it had taken so long. We were also delighted that 2 people with disability – Alastair McEwin and Rhonda Galbally were appointed commissioners. You can read a bit about their background in a recent blog post of ours (pda.org.au/2019/04/05/royal-commission-into-violence-abuse-neglect-and-exploitation-of-people-with-disability-announced-today/).

We were also suspicious that the Terms of Reference (ToR) would be set too narrowly. The government allowed only a short consultation time for members of the public to have their say on what should be included or excluded from the ToR via an online survey.

To try to get the best result from this, PDA recommended everyone to complete the ToR survey. We also provided details of what the survey questions were and some suggested

answers to these questions in another blog post (pda.org.au/2019/03/21/pdas-answers-to-the-royal-commission-terms-of-reference-survey/). We followed this up by writing directly to the government to express concern about the short consultation period and explain why it was important that the Royal Commission have the broadest possible investigative power and that no expense should be spared in making it accessible to anyone with a disability who wants to provide evidence or observe the hearings.

PDA will let members know when and where hearings will be held and how they can tell their stories when these details are released.

Stay tuned!

Meet your Directors – Tim Marks (TAS)



Introduce yourself:

Hi, I'm Tim Marks. As well as being the PDA director for Tasmania, I also volunteer on a number of committees including the local Red Cross, Paraquad Tasmania (paraquadtas.org.au/), and Limbs 4 Life (limbs4life.org.au/). I'm a left leg amputee and I live in Glenorchy, a suburb of Hobart.

What do you like to do to relax?

When I get time off, I love to go fishing and play 8 ball pool.

What is your favourite book / movie / music recording?

The movie *Dumb and Dumber* (imdb.com/title/tt0109686/), it's so funny!

What is your history in the disability sector?

I've been involved with the disability sector all my life after growing up with a disabled sister and working as a carer in the sector before losing my leg in 2010 due to blood clots.

What do you hope to accomplish with PDA?

As the Tasmanian Director, I hope to support PDA in encouraging people with disability to stick up for themselves and show that they can do anything they set their minds to.

Update on PDA's campaign to have Master Locksmith Access Key (MLAK) locks removed from wheelchair accessible public toilets in NSW

Since the last Newsletter, PDA has written to all 68 NSW local government councils that maintain wheelchair accessible toilets fitted with MLAK locks. So far, we received positive responses from 23 of them in which the local government authorities have agreed to ensure the facilities are left open during the daytime and whenever the general access toilets are open too.

When this happens, we have praised them on our social media channels and published their letter on our website (pda.org.au/projects-campaigns/).

Unfortunately, we also received a letter from the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council informing us that they (and up to 5 other councils in the North Coast area) had no intention of removing the MLAK locks because the locks stop people using the toilet for illicit purposes, reduce vandalism and that some of their residents with disabilities like them.

This is quite disappointing given the NSW Local Government Association has endorsed guidelines that state wheelchair-accessible toilets should be as freely open as the general facilities situated next to them.

So what is PDA going to do next?

Firstly, we will follow-up the 45 councils that have not responded yet to our letter.

And secondly, we will make inquiries with some public-interest legal centres to see if it is worthwhile lodging a complaint with the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board.



Stay tuned!

Building PDA's Capacity

As well as funds to develop our members' capacity, the ILC grant we obtained will also be used to build the organisation's capacity so that it remains both representative of Australians with physical disability and relevant to them.

To accomplish this we will be investing in a new database to store our information about members and recruiting a consultant to help recruit more members.

We will also be commissioning a business case to investigate whether or not it would be a good idea for PDA to become an official provider of support coordination and plan management services under the NDIS.

While PDA believes that self-management is the best way for people with disability to organise their supports, we understand that not everyone wants to do this.

Support Coordination and Plan Management are arrangements where the responsibilities of organising supports and paying bill are given to a third party.

If the business case shows that it is feasible for PDA to set itself up as a provider of these services, we will be able to generate an income that is independent of government grant processes that have become unreliable in recent years.

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

As the NDIS transitions to full scheme implementation across Australia, the newly established NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission will also be opening its doors in each jurisdiction to take over responsibility for provider registration, support worker screening, complaint management and reportable incident investigation. The Commission also has responsibilities in educating everyone involved in providing and receiving NDIS supports about the quality and safety standards that are in place.

This means that if you are a NDIS participant in every Australian State and Territory except WA and you have a complaint about a service provider or support worker, you will have the option of reporting it to an independent statutory body that has the power to investigate your concerns and if necessary take action against the service provider or support worker to ensure the supports they provide are of a high standard and in full alignment with the NDIS Code of Conduct. The NDIS Commission will open its doors in WA on 1 July 2020.

When does the NDIS Commission start?

The NDIS Commission starts on:

1 July 2018 in New South Wales and South Australia

1 July 2019 in the Australian Capital Territory, Northern Territory, Queensland, Tasmania and Victoria

1 July 2020 in Western Australia

Until the NDIS Commission is in place in each state or territory, NDIS participants, providers and workers are covered under their state or territory's existing quality and safeguards systems.



Helpfully, the NDIS Commission has recently published a *Participant Welcome Pack* that provides a lot of useful information about:

- The work of the NDIS Commission;
- How to contact them;
- How to choose high quality supports;
- The NDIS Code of Conduct;
- How to make a complaint; and
- Where you can get more help with regard to poor quality or unsafe supports.

If you feel unsafe or unhappy with your NDIS funded services

It's always okay to speak up



The *Participant Welcome Pack* is available in a range of formats on the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission website ([ndiscommission.gov.au/participants/support-for-participants/participantpack](https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/participants/support-for-participants/participantpack)).

You can also order a print copy from the Commission that also comes with a set of Code of Conduct postcards and 'Speak Up' bookmark (pictured left).

PDA's advice to the Department of Social Services (DSS) regarding the National Disability Strategy

At PDA, we know that there are many people with disability who are ineligible for NDIS funded support packages because they are over 65 years old, or have a disability that is not classified as permanent, severe and profound by the NDIA. This is why we continue to campaign for better service delivery to **all** people with disability from mainstream services (such as schools, hospitals, public transport systems, etc) and State, Territory and Local Governments.

This is where the National Disability Strategy (NDS) comes in. To put it simply, the NDS is the master plan that all levels of government are supposed to follow to meet the needs of Australians with Disability. The current version of the NDS (a summary document is available on the DSS website (dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05_2012/national_disability_strategy_2010_2020_summary.pdf)) is being reviewed and a range of consultation processes are underway so that people with a disability and their supporters can let the people working on the NDS what's important to them.

One of the consultation processes DSS has been using more and more these days is an online survey and they provided one for the NDS review recently. To help members think about what's important to them and complete the survey, PDA recently put a copy of the survey's questions (and some answer suggestions) on our website (pda.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/2020-NDS-Consultation-Questionnaire-PDA-Answers.pdf).

PDA's suggested answers acknowledged the great improvement that the NDIS had made to the lives of many people with disability who had not previously received government funded supports. Beyond the NDIS we also acknowledged the progress that was being made to make many community facilities and services accessible to people with disability.

In answer to the question: "*What are your ideas for specific areas or actions that would make a big difference to improving the lives of people with disability?*" We agreed that:

- State and Territory Governments need to fulfil their responsibilities to people with disability who are not NDIS Participants by meeting their reasonable and necessary needs;
- Human rights legislation needs to be strengthened so there is strict compliance with accessibility standards; and
- Strategies should be developed (with targets) so that people with disability play a larger and more visible role in all aspects of public life.

And in response to the question: "*Are there any things you think should be done better to support people with disability who are from specific groups?*" We pointed out that:

- People with disability over 65 have been unfairly excluded from receiving support from the NDIS. PDA believes the NDS should include measures to redress this neglect.

This, for PDA, is the biggest barrier to the full inclusion of people with disability in Australia – the fact that the Federal Government has decided to exclude older people from being NDIS participants. And while they claim that the needs of older would-be participants will be covered by existing state and territory based care and support systems, this is a poor second prize for people with disability who lost the birthday lottery.

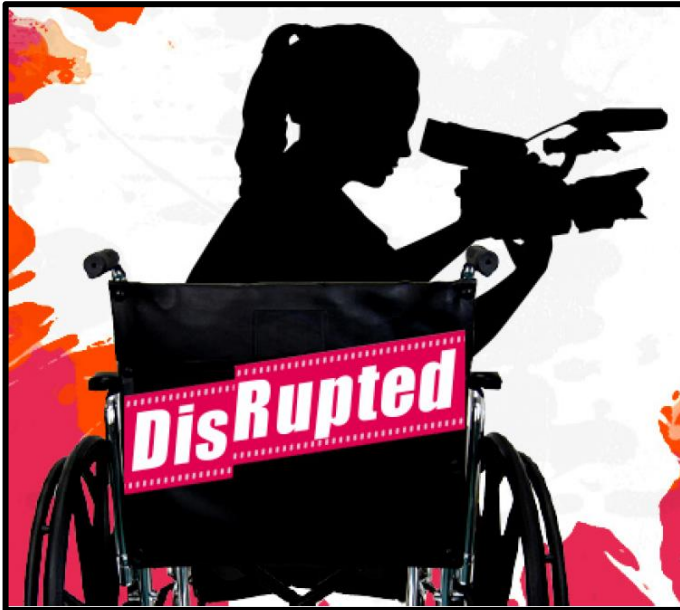
Finally, we provided advice with regard to what government priorities should be. Seven were suggested:

- a) Strengthen disability and carer-specific laws to guide action and improvements for people with disability;
- b) Fund and support local community and grassroots initiatives and trials to promote innovation and sharing ideas;
- c) Develop measurable goals and concrete targets and report against them, for example on employment;
- d) Fund disability advocacy organisations;
- e) Greater support for families and carers;
- f) Fund local support organisations; and
- g) Develop initiatives/activities that build on and complement the NDIS.

... and survey respondents were asked to rate these priorities on a scale from '*Not a Priority*' to '*Essential*'.

It should not be a surprise to find that PDA classified priority 'd' – Fund disability advocacy organisations as '*Essential*'. We also argued that it was '*Essential*' to provide '*Greater support to families and carers*', particularly because the NDIS won't meet every person with a disabilities' needs and that families and carers are the ones who will ultimately have to pick up the slack.

DisRupted – Films Made by Young People with Disability.



Following a call for submissions in October 2018, three short film ideas from young filmmakers with disability were funded for production by the ABC and Screen Australia and these films will be broadcast on the *ABC ME* channel and the *ABC ME* online service from

December 3 (International Day for People with Disability). According to an ABC press release the three films are:

- ***Rocky and Me*** – a dramatised telling of when eleven-year-old Stella gets her first wheelchair “Rocky” and with it a new sense of freedom;
- ***And Then Something Changed*** – the story of a happy-go-lucky eight-year-old Louis who has a form of dwarfism, and wakes up to what he thinks will be just another normal school day but for some strange reason the world around him just isn’t working; and
- ***The Legend of Burnout Barry*** – the tale of speed demon Josh “Wheely” Wilson who learns that there’s someone in town faster than him, setting him on a course to challenge the elusive and legendary Burnout Barry to a race.

More information about the films, their makers and the DisRupted project is available from the ABC website: abc.net.au/disrupted.



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

PO Box 345

Toowong QLD 4066

...Or complete the
online form at
[www.pda.org.au/
membership](http://www.pda.org.au/membership)