

NEWSLETTER - AUGUST 2022

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FROM THE PEN OF PDA’s PRESIDENT

Words from
Andrew Fairbairn

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Tuesday 9th August 2022

Following the end of Liz Reid’s successful 9 year reign as PDA President at the end of 2021, Andrew Fairbairn has ably stepped into the role, ensuring continued growth and development for PDA and ensuring that Australia’s physical disability community is represented, supported, heard and visible. Here, he shares his first six months in his position as President.



I bring you greetings from Whadjuk Noongar Boodjar. My home in Western Australia.

My name is Andrew. I am 53 years old and I am a left transtibial (below knee) amputee. My role at Physical Disability Australia (PDA) is that of President of the Board and WA State Director. I identify as a person with a disability.

I am 6 months into my Presidency and, believe me, I have had big shoes to fill coming into the role after Liz Reid AM. I thank her for her leadership and role modelling that has made my job so much easier.

My role is to oversee the Board Executive, made up of 2 Co-Vice Presidents and the Board Treasurer, as well as the Board, who are elected representatives from every State and Territory in Australia. I, along with the board, provide leadership and oversight of all areas of PDA’s legal, financial and employment governance, as well as setting the organisational strategic direction. Yes, it is a big job, but having a proactive board means that I am not needed to be all things to all people.

During my tenure I will be continuing the work of past Presidents, but adding my unique style and flavour to the organisation. I will make sure that PDA remains the peak body for people with physical disabilities and

that we garner recognition of that fact. It is important for PDA to be the “go to” for any, and all organisations, that want to know anything about physical disabilities. If you have any questions, queries, or concerns about anything physical disability, I urge you to reach out to us and let us know.

Currently PDA is working in various areas of the sector from Disability Employment to Government feedback through online forums, to Youth, and my personal favourite, maintaining connection with our community through a monthly online Social Hour.

We have a very robust Social Media presence that has earned us the position of Number 7 in the top *Aussie Disability Groups to Follow Blog* at www.careabout.com.au

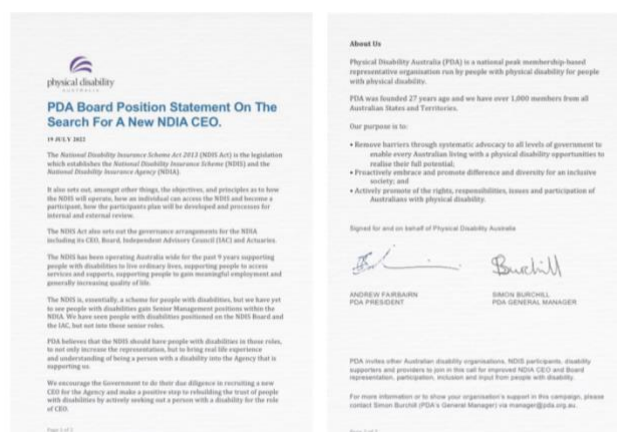
We will continue to seek opportunities to have our community’s voice heard at whatever level it needs to be, Federal, State and Local Government through to private and not for profit businesses. It is our position that nothing is designed, built, planned, discussed, or even thought of without consultation with us and with you, our community.

In the coming months I will be tasking the Board with looking at all of PDA’s policies and procedures to make sure we are ticking all the required governance boxes. It is imperative we do this so we can continue to grow as an organisation, represent you to the best of our abilities and to maintain and grow our relevance and position in the sector.

I would like to thank all the State Directors and Associates for the work you do, both for PDA and in your professional and personal lives. I couldn’t ask for a better team. Finally, I would like to thank the staff, General Manager, Simon, Communications and Engagement Manager, Natasha and our Finance guru Trish for all the work they do.

Andrew Fairbairn
PDA President/WA Director

Momentum building around PDA’s call for NDIA’s key leadership roles to be filled by people with disabilities



In June, PDA wrote to the Hon. Bill Shorten MP (Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme), highlighting our organisation’s concerns for the inadequate representation of people with disability in key leadership roles both within the NDIA and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

At the time the NDIA were undertaking the recruitment process to fill the position of CEO, which was soon to have the search for a replacement Chairperson added – following the resignation of Dr Denis Napthine from this role.

With this providing an opportune time for PDA to amplify its push for the NDIA (and indeed all disability agencies) to be led by Australians living with disability.

The importance and need for such key senior management roles to be prioritised and reserved for PWD was quickly recognised – creating a ground swell of support from fellow disabled peoples organisations, NDIS participants, people living with disability and other Australians with a supportive interest in our country’s disability landscape.

PDA invites and encourages everyone with a genuine, vested interest to join us in the push for legislation to be put in place to ensure that managerial and leadership roles within the NDIA are reserved exclusively for those for whom it represents.

For more information and to read PDA’s Position Statement (pda.org.au/2022/07/18/pda-in-response-to-the-search-for-a-new-ndia-ceo-calls-for-this-appointment-to-be-filled-by-a-person-with-actual-lived-experience-of-disability-and-practical-).

Our next webinar, “Acquiring Disability Later In Life”, will be held on Tuesday 9th August at 6:30pm AEST. It will provide helpful information, advice and personal stories around successfully transitioning to this new chapter of life.



With an estimated 4.4 million Australians living with disability, approximately 93.1% (or 4.1 million) of these were acquired sometime after birth.

Whether acquiring lifelong disability as the result of an injury, developing health or genetic condition, due to illness or medical complication, this move to a new way of life can be challenging and uncertain.

Finding information, support and ways to best live a new way of life can seem overwhelming.

From understanding your rights and entitlements, accessing resources and tools, and self acceptance, this webinar will give you an insight into the disability journey of three people who acquired disability later in life and continue to ensure that they live their best lives.



This FREE Webinar is available to both PDA Members and the wider public so feel free to invite others who may benefit from this helpful and worthwhile presentation.

To register for this Webinar, go to: us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_FxEVffunR3-ROuTqEfYYaw

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

We look forward to you joining this important and informative event.

Learn. Help. Win.

Watch our Webinars. Help us earn. Go in the draw to win cinema vouchers.



Go in the draw to win a Hoyts cinema gift card, learn and help PDA at the same time.

PDA can earn \$2,500 per webinar for 20 or more survey responses from each webinar. If all 5 webinars get 20+ survey responses that equates to \$12,500 which will go a long way to help PDA continue its work standing up for all Australian living with physical disability.

You can help PDA and go in our Hoyts' draw by simply watching a recording of one (or more) of our informative and thought-provoking webinars and then completing a survey.

To view, simply head across to the Physical Disability Australia YouTube channel (youtube.com/channel/UCMyTzhTbs2oLH-WZR18zX2Q/) or click on one of the webinars listed here:

- [Elle Steele's "Starting a Small Business in Australia"](#)
- ["NDIS Plan Self-Management"](#)
- [The NDIS Quality and Safety Commission](#)
- [You CAN Ask That](#)
- [EmployABLE: Equal Skills = Equal Opportunity = Equal Pay](#)

To take part in our Hoyts' draw, you'll need to complete our short survey once you have watched one of the above listed webinars.

You can access the survey by going to:
www.surveymonkey.com/r/2JV7MFB

Feel free to complete a survey for each webinar that you watch.

Feedback from these surveys will enable PDA to present future webinars of interest and importance to our Members and Australia's disability community.

We also encouraged you to subscribe to PDA's YouTube channel by clicking on the "subscribe" (alarm) icon above and **SIGNING UP FOR FREE PDA MEMBERSHIP** by going to:
pda.org.au/membership/

Entries for our Hoyt's gift cards close at 5pm on Friday 19th August 2022, with winners chosen at random to be announced and notified on Monday 21st August.

This competition is only open to Australian residents.

Introducing the newest additions to the PDA Board.

Mark Pietsch – PDA NSW Director

Mark has 12 years of experience in the Community Services space and it is his life's mission to speak up where others have fallen silent - either because they need help to find their voice, or they need someone to cheer them on.



Mark has a lot of practice when it comes to writing policies and interpreting legislation. His experience of having a disability and often doing activities out of the norm has led him to stray out of the boxes that others try to place him in. This has meant having to know the rules better than those trying to impose them and using that knowledge to put others and himself in a better position. That is what led Mark to his current role as a Support Coordinator, and to eventually start my his own company.

Mark has a fondness for technology and he owns several 3D printers and a laser cutter that he uses to teach people about micro-

enterprise, rapid prototyping and product iteration.

Mark has found running a business and living with a disability to be challenging, but also rewarding. Helping others with a disability to start their own businesses brings Mark a lot of joy. He loves to help people to use their full potential.

Having a movement disorder, Mark reckons he falls down a lot, but he always picks himself up and keeps going. This is the quality he likes the most about himself: perseverance and not giving up easily.

Sarah Styles – PDA QLD Associate Director

Sarah is a musician and composer with chronic illness who has worked in the community in various capacities within the arts sector - including programs run for seniors, children and the multicultural community.



She uses these platforms to assist people in finding and using their autonomy, identity and their voice while teaching the art of music. Sarah also achieves this through workshops and private sessions/music lessons.

She finds joy in working in the disabled community and with those who've experienced trauma.

Sarah founded *Wheelie Good Productions* in 2020 as she finds it important to break the moulds of the industry.

We thank Sarah and Mark for joining the PDA Board and for sharing their time, experience, expertise and commitment to supporting Australia's disability community.

PDA's Social Hours and Youth Network HangOuts continue to grow in popularity.

Our monthly online Socials were introduced at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic



as a way of safely bringing together our Members, providing support, friendship, information and reassurance at a time of uncertainty, fear and isolation.

They were very well received, particularly with the many lockdowns that followed and the need for showing caution to avoid potential infection. However, as restrictions have lifted and new “normals” have been created, the popularity of these events continues to grow and new faces are added to our regular attendees.

If you haven't yet joined one of these social get-togethers, we encourage you to give them a go. They're a lot of fun, full of laughs and a place that you can truly be you and feel part of a community that cares and understands.

Social Hours are run on the first Monday of every month at 6pm AEST and Youth Network HangOuts (for members aged 18 to 30) are run monthly on the third Thursday at 7pm AEST.

Register for these by going to:

Social Hour –

[us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYqc--qqjkjG903J2KoieI9ASVSig7b4mxr](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/903J2KoieI9ASVSig7b4mxr)

Youth Network HangOut –

[us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMrc-GqrDwpHdWVcSOD2mVq4XbwP9P2ZOv4](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/903J2KoieI9ASVSig7b4mxr)

If you don't already have a Zoom account, you can easily sign up for a FREE account by going to: zoom.us/join

Are you in need of support?

Having a tough time?
Need support?
You are not alone.

Lifeline
13 11 14
www.lifeline.org.au

Beyond Blue
1300 22 4636
www.beyondblue.org.au

Headspace
1800 650 890
www.headspace.org.au

physical disability AUSTRALIA

It's been a tough couple of years.

COVID, financial stress, health concerns, relationships and any other number of issues, have had a huge impact on all of us.

Now, more than ever, there is a very real need for everyone to be aware of their own mental health and wellbeing - and that of those around us.

Finding and giving support is incredibly important.

If you are feeling overwhelmed or in need of help in looking after yourself, it is important that you take steps to reach out for support. Whether this means speaking with a friend, family member, GP or colleague or getting in contact with a counselling service, it is important that you do this as soon as possible.

You are not alone!

If you need help urgently, Please call:

* [Lifeline](http://www.lifeline.org.au) on 13 11 14 (www.lifeline.org.au)

* [Beyond Blue](http://www.beyondblue.org.au) on 1300 22 4636 (www.beyondblue.org.au)

* [Headspace](http://www.headspace.org.au) on 1800 650 890 (www.headspace.org.au)

The NDIS also has an information pack available online designed to assist participants, their families and carers to look after their mental health and well-being. Containing information about available government and community services, resources and help lines, this resource provides help and tips around looking after

your mental health and well-being. Click here to download it

([ndis.gov.au/media/2401/download?attachment](https://www.ndis.gov.au/media/2401/download?attachment)).

If you're dealing with Financial distress, reach out to the [National Debt Helpline](https://www.ndis.gov.au/media/2401/download?attachment) on 1800 007 007 for free financial counselling and advice. A COVID-19 Financial Survival Guide ([ndh.org.au/covid19/](https://www.ndh.org.au/covid19/)) is also available to download and provides helpful information on emergency/government assistance, payment priorities, arranging housing and bill repayments and accessing your superannuation early.

However you reach out for help, support, understanding and a shoulder to lean on - just make sure that you do it - TODAY not tomorrow!



And remember, you are never alone!

Important Dates for the rest of 2021



Tuesday 9th August 6:30pm AEST

PDA Webinar “Acquiring Disability Later In Life”

Register at:

us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_FxEVffunR3-ROuTqEfYYaw

September – Date and registration details TBC

PDA Webinar “Support Workers: recruiting, setting boundaries and ensuring your needs are being met.”

October – Date and registration details TBC

PDA Webinar “Parenting as a PWD”

November – Date and registration details TBC

PDA Webinar “National Disability Research Partnership (NDRP)”

Saturday 19th November, 3:00pm AEDT

PDA Annual General Meeting

Saturday 3rd December

International Day of People with Disability [idpwd.com.au](https://www.idpwd.com.au)

December – Date and registration details TBC

PDA Online Christmas Event

Still getting this Newsletter by Post?



If you received this newsletter by post and have an email address, please update your details on the PDA Membership form by going to:

pda.org.au/membership/

In doing so you'll not only save PDA some much needed money, but also hear about email only opportunities, help us to go green and show greater consideration for the environment.

We also encourage all our Members to visit this link to update any changes to your contact details (whether email, address or telephone number) so that we can keep you in the loop regarding any important issues, membership opportunities or just to say “hi”.

If you have friends, family or colleagues that you think might benefit from joining PDA, please encourage them to sign up for our FREE membership by going to:

pda.org.au/membership/

We hope that you have enjoyed reading this newsletter!

Thanks for being part of the PDA community.