

PWdWA May Newsletter

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Message from our CEO – Brendan Cullinan

Welcome to our May Newsletter.

The Federal Government recently announced their budget for the next financial year, outlining their policy plans for the next 12 months. Unfortunately, the Federal Government did not listen to the disability advocacy sector and did not allocate additional funding for individual advocacy services despite a national campaign for an additional \$91 million. Individual disability advocacy organisations across Australia are struggling to respond to the demand for advocacy services, and many are operating under financial stress. The NDIS (National Disability Insurance Scheme) Review and the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability report both acknowledged the importance of individual disability advocacy services. It's not just a matter of importance, it's a matter of urgency for both the federal and state governments to commit to supporting the sustainability and growth of organisations in this vital sector. PWdWA will continue participating in campaigns calling for the government to increase funding.

PWdWA in Action

Systemic Advocacy: NDIS Roundtable with Minister Shorten

Minister Shorten invited PWdWA to an invite-only roundtable to discuss the Commonwealth Government's Disability Reform Agenda.

Life members Helen Errington and Jenny Au Young, board chair Nihal Iscel, co-deputy chair Mark Blowers, and members Samantha Jenkinson, Rita Kleinfield-Fowell, Drisana Levitzke-Gray, Danielle Loizou-Lake, and Grey Johnson joined our

CEO Brendan Cullinan, to engage with Minister Shorten and NDIA CEO Rebecca Falkingham in vital conversations surrounding the NDIS and disability reform.

The Minister then held a community engagement session to discuss the National Disability Insurance Scheme Amendment Bill (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No. 1), which was introduced to Parliament on March 27, 2024. If passed, it will make fundamental changes to how the NDIS operates. The open public forum allowed for broader input and diverse perspectives from the community.

PWdWA Individual Advocate Idil Sudi attended the open session and asked, “What is the government doing to address the increase in applications to the Administration Appeals Tribunal (AAT)?” Minister Shorten acknowledged there was an issue and that the government were working towards resolving it. Rebecca Falkingham stated that the NDIA now has 80 early intervention teams to assist advocates on matters involving the AAT.

PWdWA in Broome

In May, Grace and Lynne from our Empowered and Connected Project, Vanessa, our Communications Officer, Nicola from the Economic Participation Project, and Emily from ConnectGroups Support Groups Association WA Inc. visited Broome to meet with their members and community members. During a morning tea for organisations providing local support for people with disabilities, the team heard about the fantastic work being done and the areas of concern. Grace and Lynn also conducted an information session on Disability Support Pension applications. At the same time, Vanessa presented a workshop to local businesses on the benefits of creating an accessible environment for people with disabilities to volunteer. Thank you to everyone who attended.

PWdWA in Focus

Our New Website

We are thrilled to announce the launch of our new website, designed with a strong focus on accessibility. Dr Scott Hollier and the team at the Centre for Accessibility Australia have audited the website, and we'd love for you to take a look at

pwdwa.org. We would welcome your feedback, and if you find anything we can improve upon, please email Vanessa at vanessa@pwdwa.org

PWdWA is committed to making our online presence as accessible as possible, and we hope this new website is a big step in that direction. We hope you enjoy the new user-friendly design and find all the information you need easily.

Self Advocacy WA

Self Advocacy Western Australia (SAWA) is a PWdWA project that has provided peer support and promoted self-advocacy for individuals with intellectual disabilities in Western Australia.

One of SAWA's key initiatives has been the regular meetings, which enable members to share ideas and learn about various topics, including human rights, services and supports such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme, housing, health, and transportation. SAWA's mission is to empower individuals with intellectual disabilities to speak up, assert their rights, and actively participate in decision-making processes.

The group has also actively participated in attending local, state, and national forums to promote self-advocacy and raise awareness about disability-related issues.

SAWA secured additional funding and an extension of time from the Individual Capacity Building Program Grant Round 2019-20, allowing it to continue its capacity-building efforts until the end of June 2024. Sadly, the project is coming to an end. However, to ensure its sustainability into the future, SAWA will now become a peer support group under the auspices of ConnectGroups.

Earlier this month, the project team, including Project Officer Sharon Stanton and SAWA Chair Georgie George, hosted a farewell morning tea to celebrate the group's success.

Building Better Homes – National Building Code

People with Disability WA, Council of the Ageing WA, and Shelter WA have joined together for the Western Australian Building Better Homes Campaign to ensure the Western Australian Government adopts the Liveable Housing Design Standard

mandated in the revised National Construction Code. Implementing this standard is crucial in ensuring all Western Australians have access to suitable and accessible homes.

Accessibility in new homes benefits not only individuals with mobility accessibility requirements but also older people, parents with strollers, and visitors. It is disappointing that WA is one of the only two jurisdictions in Australia that has not committed to adopting the new Liveable Housing Design Standard. The Disability Royal Commission and the NDIS Independent Review have recommended that the WA Government sign up as soon as possible, and it's time to hold them accountable.

The key design features of a Liveable Housing Australia Silver Level home, such as level access entryways, step-free shower recess, wider door frames, and others, are essential for creating homes with greater accessibility and amenities.

You can sign the petition at <https://buildingbetterhomes.org.au/state/western-australia/>.

Speak Up: Increasing Individual Advocacy Funding

PWdWA joins other members of the Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA) in expressing our disappointment at the Federal Government's decision not to increase crucially needed additional funding for individual advocacy services across the country to ensure that everyone who needs an advocate can access one.

For now, we will join with other DANA members to keep the pressure on the Government to step up to the plate as they respond to the Disability Royal Commission and begin to implement the NDIS Review recommendations over the coming months.

Upcoming

PWdWA in Pinjarra and Waroona

PWdWA's Individual Advocate, Lisa, works out of Murray House Community Centre in Pinjarra and the Waroona Community Resource Centre on alternative Thursdays. Lisa would love to see you, and her roster for the next few weeks is as follows:

- Thursday 6th and 20th June – Pinjarra
- Thursday 30th May and 13th June – Waroona

PWdWA

Would you like your newsletters emailed rather than posted? Just let Vanessa know at vanessa@pwdwa.org.

- **Head Office:** 23/2 Delhi Street West Perth
- **Mandurah Office:** 22 Ormsby Terrace Mandurah – By Appointment Only
- **Pilbara:** 1800 193 331. Online appointments by arrangement at Pilbara Community Legal Services Karratha, Port Hedland, Roebourne, and Newman.
- **Waroona and Pinjarra:** 1800 193 331. By appointment only

PWdWA is funded by the Western Australian Department of Communities and the Australian Department of Social Services.

PWdWA is run BY and FOR people with disabilities and aims to be the voice for all people with disabilities in Western Australia.

End of Newsletter.