

PWdWA December 2024 Newsletter

Message from Interim CEO – Kat Johns

As we reach the end of the year, I want to express my deep gratitude for being part of an organisation led by and for people with disability. It is truly an honour to work alongside such dedicated members, staff and board directors.

I recognise that this time of year can be challenging for many, with issues like isolation, the hot weather, and the ongoing cost of living crisis, with housing inaccessibility, high unemployment in our community and education-related discrimination seeing people with disability becoming increasingly vulnerable. Despite these challenges, our community continues to show incredible resilience and strength.

Looking ahead, our priorities for the coming year include diversifying our funding sources and expanding our advisory and training services for businesses, government agencies, and community organisations. These services cover essential areas such as co-design, writing disability access plans, training, and workplace access and inclusion. We are continuing to work closely with our current funding bodies to ensure the continuation of quality, independent advocacy services.

Additionally, we are committed to rebuilding our systemic advocacy efforts to ensure equitable access to housing, employment, guardianship rights, and political and social equity.

Our team has been working tirelessly on NDIS appeals, a challenging but crucial area given the high demand for our services. We are concerned about the issues people with disability are facing in access to, or continuation, of NDIS funding. We have also sent out a media release around the royal commission report and urge governments to accept the recommendations.

I am also pleased to welcome seven new directors to our board, all of whom bring a wealth of skills and experience as leaders with disabilities. We are excited to engage more with our members in the new year, so please stay tuned for upcoming events.

PWdWA in Action

International Day for People with Disability

To celebrate the International Day of People with Disabilities (IDfPWD) on Monday, December 2nd, PWdWA invited access and inclusion officers from Local Government Areas and community service organisations to a lunch with some of our members.

Aligning with our organisation's vision of people with disabilities being empowered in an inclusive society that values human rights, our lunch, partly funded by a grant from the Department of Communities, aimed to foster collaboration, mutual understanding, and the exchange of best practices between access and inclusion officers and people with disabilities.

Focusing on the principles outlined in "WA for Everyone," the State Disability Strategy for 2020 to 2030, our Interim CEO Kat Johns and Board Chair Shazzy Tharby spoke about PWdWA's commitment to transformative change, equitable opportunities and meaningful participation for people with disabilities.

NDS lunch

On Tuesday, 3 December, PWdWA's interim CEO, Kat Johns and Engagement Manager Vanessa Jessett attended the National Disability Services annual IDfPWD lunch. PWdWA members and our Board Co-Deputy Chair Mark Bowers also attended the lunch.

A highlight of the event was hearing Kerry Allen and Melissa Northcott speak on this year's theme, "Amplifying the leadership of persons with disabilities for an inclusive and sustainable future." The Hon Don Punch, Minister for Disabilities, also spoke on increasing employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

PWdWA in Focus

Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Membership

PWdWA is proud to announce that we have become members of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Network.

The network aims to encourage inclusivity. People with hidden disabilities can choose to wear the sunflower to advise that they have a hidden disability, allowing them to discreetly share that they might need extra help or more time.

Christmas and New Year holiday hours

The PWdWA office will be closed from 4:30 p.m. on Friday, 20 December 2024, until 9:00 a.m. on Monday, 6 January 2025.

In case of a crisis during this time, please contact the following organisations:

For life-threatening emergencies, please call

- Police, Ambulance or Fire Brigade on **000**.

You can call for counselling and support services.

- Lifeline on **13 11 14**
- Crisis Care on **08 9223 1111**, or Country free call on **1800 199 008**.
- Beyond Blue on **1300 22 4636**
- National Debt Helpline on **1800 007 007**
- 1800 Respect National domestic, family and sexual violence counselling, information and support service on **1800 737 732**
- Entrypoint Perth Homelessness Services **1800 124 684**

Current Issues

National Redress Scheme

The National Redress Scheme is a program that provides support to people who experienced institutional child sexual abuse. The Scheme offers access to

counselling, a redress payment of up to \$150,000.00 and a direct personal response from the responsible institution. Applications are open until 30 June 2027.

You can learn more about the scheme on the [Homepage | National Redress Scheme](#).

Upcoming

PWdWA Conference Reference Group

PWdWA invites Western Australians with disability to express their interest in joining the State Conference Reference Group for our upcoming 2025 conference.

As with our previous conferences, State Conference 2025 will continue to focus on the perspectives, voices and input of people with disabilities and will be designed by people with disability for people with disability.

With the theme of "Participate and Contribute," aligning with the State Disability Strategy Plan, members of the Reference Group will play a crucial role in guiding the conference's direction.

Conference Reference Group members will need to participate in regular online meetings. To register your interest in joining our Conference Reference Group, please contact Vanessa at vanessa@pwdwa.org or call 08 6243 6948 before 31 December 2024.

PWdWA Outreach

Town	Hosted at	Dates
Merredin	Merredin Community Resource Centre	17 December
Moora	Amity Health Moora	2 December
Narrogin	Amity Health Narrogin	3 December
Pinjarra	Murray House Community Centre	5 December
Fremantle	St Pats Community Centre	18 December
Waroona	Waroona Community Resource Centre.	12 December

PWdWA

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

- **Metro:** (08)6243 6948
- **Mandurah Office:** 22 Ormsby Terrace Mandurah – 08 6243 6948. 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.
- **Wheatbelt:** 1800 193 331. By appointment only.

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

The newsletter ends here.