



# PWdWA Newsletter April 2022

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## **Message from our Chair - Tom Monks**

### **PWdWA Calls for Changes in Election Policy Commitments**

People With Disabilities WA (PWdWA) is encouraged by the Australian Labor Party's measures and initiatives provided in its platform to defend and fix the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and calls on the Coalition to outline and match these commitments beyond its policy to "fully fund" the NDIS.

While the NDIS has provided the opportunity for thousands of people with disability across Australia to receive support for the first time, there are continuing concerns with people struggling to gain access or having funding in existing plans indiscriminately reduced. This has led to a significant increase in people appealing at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

Advocacy organisations like PWdWA across Australia are stretched beyond their capacity to provide support, and while we are pleased to note Labor's commitment to double existing support for disability advocacy, the system needs to be urgently reviewed. PWdWA calls for changes to stop the waste and eliminate the stress and trauma that people are experiencing in dealing with the NDIS, including the wholesale outsourcing of matters to legal firms. Moreover, it is highly unjust for people with disability to undergo the appeals process against the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), which is

well resourced, causing a significant power imbalance. Changes to the NDIS must be informed by people with disability, and it is pleasing to note Labor's commitment to co-design changes and have more people with disability in leadership roles at the NDIA.

PWdWA calls for all parties to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities to have access to mainstream employment and eliminating income disparity, including segregated work environments that currently exist under Australian Disability Enterprises.

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## Current Issues

### Federal Election - Saturday 21 May 2022

#### Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) Information for People with Disability

The AEC can assist you in enrolling, voting and help you find more information. Accessible voting information, including Voting Options and Easy Read guides, can be found [Information for people with disability or mobility restrictions - Australian Electoral Commission \(funnelback.com\)](https://www.aec.gov.au/accessible-voting)

#### Application for Postal Voting

If you cannot attend a polling place in the upcoming Federal Election on 21 May 2022, you can apply for a postal vote at [Apply for a postal vote - Australian Electoral Commission \(aec.gov.au\)](https://www.aec.gov.au/apply-for-a-postal-vote). Applications close on **18 May 2022**.

Ballot papers must be completed and witnessed before or on Saturday, 21 May 2022.

### Disability Royal Commission – Impact of Omicron Issues Paper

The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability is currently seeking people to share their views on the impact of and responses to the Omicron wave of the COVID-19 pandemic for people with disability.

The issues paper asks 14 questions to help you respond. The paper is available in Easy Read, DOCX and PDF. It can be found in [The impact of and responses to the Omicron wave of the COVID-19 pandemic for people with disability Issues paper | Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability](https://www.rcv.gov.au/Issues-Paper). Responses are due by **29 April 2022**.

## **PWdWA Profile**

### **Shazzy Tharby – Board Member**

Shazzy was born in the UK and lived and worked in various countries before settling in Australia. Shazzy is biracial and multilingual. She has volunteered in the disability sector since 1996. Shazzy studied at Cambridge University and is now a Registered Nurse and a Credentialed Mental Health Nurse. She currently works as a Clinical Nurse Consultant and Counselling Psychotherapist in her private practice and is undertaking her Master's in Counselling and Psychotherapy.

Shazzy has lived experiences in many aspects of disability, including invisible disabilities like chronic fatigue syndrome and mental health. Shazzy is a wheelchair user, proudly autistic, ADHD and lives with various autoimmune and neurological conditions. Shazzy is focused on centring marginal and silenced voices through an intersectionality lens.

Shazzy has worked on various committees and co-design projects and currently sits on the Volunteering WA Disability Advisory group. Shazzy joined the board of PWdWA in 2021.

## **PWdWA in Action**

### **The Right of People with Disability to Vote**

PWdWA has joined with 64 other disability, legal, civil society organisations, and experts in an open letter to both parties calling for reform to current laws that stop people with disability from voting.

You can find more information on why we have joined in calling for these changes at [ALHR – Group of 65 organisations and experts publish an open letter calling for reform to laws that stop people with disability from voting](#). You can find a copy of the open letter sent on 21 April 2022 at the following link [OPEN LETTER : RIGHT TO VOTE \(alhr.org.au\)](#).

### **Systemic Advocacy Survey**

Did you know that when you complete a PWdWA survey, it directly informs our submissions and systemic advocacy?

Systemic advocacy is an important part of PWdWA's work. It is important for us to understand what areas of systemic advocacy you think we need to focus on.

PWdWA invites our members to have their say on our systemic advocacy work. This survey will help inform our priority areas for systemic advocacy and ensure your voice is heard when we are advocating for people with disabilities in WA.

If you need help with the survey, please contact Vanessa on 9420 7279. We can also arrange for the questions to be provided via email, SMS, Facebook messenger or other alternative forms of communication.

You can find the survey online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LBJHZ9W>

## Upcoming

### **PWdWA's Disability Royal Commission Information Session**

**Friday 29 April 2022 10:00 am – 12:00 pm**

This Information Session will explain the goals and scope of the Disability Royal Commission. Participants will learn how they can tell their story, what supports are available and who can help.

An advocate will be available after the presentation to provide general advice; if you require specific personal advice, please contact the duty advocate on 94207279 or [dutyadvocate@pwdwa.org](mailto:dutyadvocate@pwdwa.org) to make an appointment with the DRC advocate. You can register for this event through <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/disability-royal-commission-information-sessions-tickets-322951545767>. If you do not wish to use Eventbrite, please get in touch with Vanessa on 9420 7279 or [vanessa@pwdwa.org](mailto:vanessa@pwdwa.org).

PWdWA is making this information session a regular part of its online workshops. If you cannot attend this session but would like to know when the May registrations open, please contact Vanessa on 9420 7279 or [vanessa@pwdwa.org](mailto:vanessa@pwdwa.org).

### **PWdWA's Disability Support Pension Online Information Session**

**Friday 6 May 2022 10:00 am – 12:00 pm**

This session will benefit people about to apply for the Disability Support Pension (DSP). It will help you prepare and submit a strong application for DSP by understanding:

- If you are eligible to apply.
- The Centrelink DSP process.
- What information does Centrelink needs to assess in your application.
- What is good medical evidence, and how to get it from your health professionals.

- Things you need to know about the program of Support, Job Capacity Assessment and Disability Medical Assessment.

At the end of the session, you will have a good idea of how Centrelink will assess your application. We will also provide tools and links to additional resources to help you.

You can register for this session through

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/318571354497> or call Vanessa on 9420 7279 ext. 717 or email [vanessa@pwdwa.org](mailto:vanessa@pwdwa.org).

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## **PWdWA**

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

### **Free membership**

Being a member of People With disabilities WA (PWdWA) gives you the opportunity to be involved in shaping our organisation through our planning and evaluation processes. As a member, you can make sure the issues that matter to you are heard by being involved with our submissions and advocacy campaigns. Voting is restricted to full members aged 15 years and above.

Full Membership is available to persons living in Western Australia, with a disability, over the age of 15 years who are Australian citizens or permanent residents of Australia.