



# PWdWA Newsletter January 2022

## Message from our Chair – Tom Monks



I often get asked about my thoughts concerning Western Australia opening its border on 5 February, especially regarding the rapid rise of the COVID-19 new Omicron variant. Like many, my views are based on my own experience, and they will be different to others. Nevertheless, no matter where you sit on this issue, it is essential that we all be prepared.

Rather than rehashing the various positions and government mandates that come with this topic, I think it is essential to address and highlight the availability of our support within the sector and community for people with disabilities.

Firstly, PWdWA will continue to deliver its advocacy services throughout this period, with the team being well-versed in working from home and the office. The commitment and the flexibility of the PWdWA team, coupled with their experience, will provide our clients and members with access to advocacy without the need to leave their homes if required.

While we understand the increasing anxiety surrounding the transition to open borders amongst our community, we must continue to support each other as best we can. A simple call to our friends and loved ones can mean a world of difference. It is getting back to the basics of caring for people that can make a person's world just that little bit bigger.

My next tip is, if possible, to follow the government directions and mandate in getting yourself vaccinated and if you already have, please consider getting a booster shot. There are a number of venues and support options available to assist people to access vaccinations, which PWdWA will continue to promote.

The next issue is downloading the Service WA app. It is pleasing to see a number of information and support sessions to assist people with downloading the app being held by local governments and other agencies at various community venues across Perth. PWdWA will continue to monitor and promote these opportunities via our social media.

During this transition, if you feel lost or overwhelmed, you can always reach out to us or other organisations such as Lifeline, who can assist you.

Finally, please join us on PWdWA Facebook for up-to-date information on the latest news and available resources for our members and the community.

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## Current Issues



### Phase-out of Single-Use Plastics

The State government has commenced phasing out nine single-use plastic items.

Single-use plastic bowls, cups for cold beverages and hot foods, plates, cutlery, stirrers, straws, expanded polystyrene food containers, thick plastic bags and helium balloon releases will all be banned in Western Australia as of 1 January 2022.

A six-month transition period will allow businesses to use up supplies and adapt to the changes for all items, except for cups which will have an extended transition period to 1 October 2022, to allow time to source alternatives.

PWdWA CEO Brendan Cullinan is a member of the State government's Plastics Working Group which developed exemptions to ensure people that require single-use plastic straws to maintain their quality of life will receive a continued supply on request with food or beverage or for sale at select locations. Selected locations include pharmacies, local governments, libraries or visitor centres.

A community education program began this month to raise awareness of the single-use plastic ban and to support the community to adapt to the ban.

PWdWA would like to hear from any members who experience any problems accessing required plastic straws as per the exemptions.



You can find out more at Western Australia's Plan for Plastics Website. <https://www.wa.gov.au/service/environment/business-and-community-assistance/western-australias-plan-plastics> or by holding your phone, open in its camera setting, over the QR code.

## **New Disability Employment Support Model**

The Government is looking at creating a new Disability Employment Services (DES) program. We know there are many issues with the current program. It is important that people with disabilities have a say on what the new program looks like.

The Government has released a consultation paper. You can respond to the consultation paper by sending in a video recording, audio recording, or written response. You can choose for your response to remain private.

There are lots of questions. You can choose which questions you want to answer.

You can read the consultation paper <https://engage.dss.gov.au/new-disability-employment-support-model/new-disability-employment-support-model-consultation-paper/lick>. You can email your submission to [desconsultation@dss.gov.au](mailto:desconsultation@dss.gov.au).

If you want to provide feedback you need to send in your response by 1 February 2022.



## **COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Tests**

Western Australians are now able to purchase rapid antigen tests (RATs) after the State government removed the ban earlier this month. However, pharmacies and supermarkets are now struggling to secure stock for Western Australia due to the previous ban.

It is important to note that RATs are not as accurate as the Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) tests used at COVID-19 testing sites. The Western Australian government is yet to release guidelines on the use of the RAT kits.

ABC News has made a video on how to take the rapid home test you can find it on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m5BUYr-oY1U&t=3s>

## COVID-19 Booster Vaccine

Two doses of COVID-19 vaccine provide very good protection. A booster dose will make sure the protection from the first two doses is even stronger and longer-lasting and should help prevent the spread of the virus.

You are eligible for a COVID-19 booster dose if you:

- are 18 years and older, and
- had the second dose of your primary dose course of COVID-19 vaccination at least 4 months ago (from 31 January 2022 this will change to 3 months ago).

Booster doses are recommended and for some people and occupations mandatory. For further information go to <https://www.wa.gov.au/government/announcements/roll-wa-and-get-your-third-dose-now>. You can find a vaccine clinic here: <https://covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/booking/>

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## PWdWA Profile

### Danielle Loizou-Lake - Board Member



PWdWA would like to congratulate our board member Danielle Loizou - Lake on her appointment to the Ministerial Advisory Council on Disability for Hon. Don Punch MLA.

Danielle is the founder of Paper Planes Support Coordination, supporting people with disability and mental illness. The organisation hires people with lived experience and focuses on wellbeing and protective professional relationships.

With a background in health promotion and population health, Danielle's approach to improving our social systems includes purposeful partnerships, where people and communities together with experts and professionals work collaboratively.

Over the past 10 years, Danielle has worked with Not for Profit (NFP) organisations, peak bodies, advocacy groups and government agencies.

Danielle enjoys advocacy, strategic development and governance and along with being a PWdWA board member is currently a board or committee member to the Consumer Protection Committee - Department of Mines Petroleum and Industry Regulation and Sustainable Health Review, Rec 4 Steering Group – Department of Health WA.

## Tom Oliver – Board Member



PWdWA would like to congratulate our board member Tom Oliver on being a finalist for the 2022 Young Australian of the Year.

Tom is a TEDx Speaker and global leader on autistic individuals caught up in the justice system. Tom works as an autism consultant, where he helps to save autistic clients from imprisonment, instead obtaining non-custodial sentences with suitable therapy over imprisonment. Tom also works as a guest law lecturer at Curtin University.

Tom is undertaking a double degree in Law (Hons)/Biomedical Science, graduating in 2023, and he is determined to become a lawyer thereupon. He also has an NFP diploma in governance from the Australian Institute of Company Directors. He is the former Chairman of the Advisory Board at Spectrum Space – an NFP autism service provider.

In his spare time, Tom mentors fellow autistic youths across WA.

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## PWdWA in Action

### Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on the NDIS

We want to hear from you.

The Joint Standing Committee on the NDIS (the Committee) want to hear about how well the NDIS is being implemented.

They want to hear about:

- How the NDIS and other government services work together
- What supports are available in addition to the NDIS
- What supports should be available in addition to the NDIS, but aren't
- Why plan funding can be very different for people with similar needs

PWdWA is conducting a survey to help us write our submission. By answering the survey you can go in the draw to celebrate International Day of People with Disability with us on 3 December 2022.

If you would like Vanessa, our Communications Officer, to read the survey to you and scribe your answers, you can contact her on 9420 7279 ext. 717.

Brianna, our Systemic Advocacy Projects Manager, will soon be holding an online forum on the implementation of the NDIS, find further details in the article below.

Go to the following Survey Monkey link to have your say:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WLVHT8B>

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## Upcoming

### NDIS Implementation Inquiry – Online Forum

14 February 2022 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

**Registrations through Eventbrite or call Vanessa on 9420 7279. Registrations close on 7 February 2022.**

PWdWA is conducting this forum to provide information to people about the inquiry and help inform our submission.

Priority for this forum is given to people with a disability, with a limited number of spaces for carers. Support workers and service providers will be placed on a waitlist for attendance.

Please note the forum will be recorded by PWdWA to ensure the accuracy of the information included in any submission. Recordings will remain confidential, and any information used will be de-identified.

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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.

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