

People With disabilities WA October Newsletter

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Message from PWdWA Acting CEO - Andrea Surman

Welcome to our October newsletter. This month's most important news is the release of the Royal Commission's Final Report into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability. Over the coming weeks, PWdWA will analyse the report and its recommendations. We thank everyone who participated in this four and a half years-long process. The strength and determination shown by people with disability, their families, and supports in sharing their stories are commendable.

We want to remind everyone that services are available for those who may experience trauma or anxiety due to the report's release. The information on those services is available further down in our newsletter.

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of PWdWA is fast approaching, and we encourage all our members to attend and participate. This year, you have the option to join us either online or at City West Lotteries House. The meeting will have both Auslan Interpreters and Live Captioning.

PWdWA in Action

Annual General Meeting

PWdWA Annual General Meeting Registrations for the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of PWdWA have opened up. The AGM will commence at 5:30 pm on Wednesday, 8th November 2023, at City West Lotteries House. Members can also participate online if they wish to. You will be given that option when you register.

During the meeting, we will present the annual report and discuss important matters like budget, new initiatives, and membership growth. This is an excellent opportunity for you to meet other members and our team, learn more about our organisation, and give your valuable feedback. We rely on your participation and input for the success of PWdWA.

Registration is essential, and you can reserve your seat [through Eventbrite](#) or by contacting our Communications Officer Vanessa at 9420 7279 ext. 717 or via email at vanessa@pwdwa.org.

Disability Awareness Workshops

The town of Mandurah will host an international para-badminton event with over 300 national and international participants in October. To ensure that the participants receive the best possible experience, PWdWA, the City of Mandurah, and Visit Mandurah collaborated to organise Disability Awareness Training for staff members interacting with the athletes daily. PWdWA's lived experience Business Accessibility Empowerment Program's Youth Consultants Ashleigh, Eloise, Michael, and Zoe, along with the project team, presented a variety of topics, including disability awareness, unconscious bias, ways to support people with disability, and practical solutions to improve accessibility. Current Issues

Current Issues

Disability Royal Commission Final Sitting

The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability has released its final report. The report was made public on Friday, September 29, 2023, and contains 222 recommendations. The recommendations call for changes across health, guardianship, schooling, work, the justice system and housing. The Royal Commission heard evidence from more than 10,000 Australians through written submissions, private sessions and public hearings over four-and-a-half years.

The Final Report is available in [PDF, Word, and Easy Read](#) formats. You can also find a brief guide to the [Final Report in different formats](#), including [Auslan](#).

We have paraphrased two of the recommendations from the report regarding Advocacy. Recommendation 6.21: The Australian Government should provide additional funding for advocacy programs, including \$16.6 million per annum for the National Disability Advocacy Program and \$20.3 million per annum for the National Disability Insurance Scheme Appeals (NDIS) Program. These amounts should be indexed for inflation. Furthermore, starting July 1, 2026, stable funding for national disability advocacy programs should be ensured by the government.

Recommendation 10.5: The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) should create a program to connect NDIS participants in supported accommodation with an appropriate disability advocacy organisation. The program should be co-designed with disabled people's organisations, people with disability, disability representative organisations, including member-led First Nations Community Controlled Organisations, and peak bodies. It should promote advocacy, enhance awareness, improve advocacy referral processes, foster relationships, and encourage collaboration. The program should begin by January 2025.

Assistance

PWdWA encourages members experiencing trauma or anxiety as a result of the report's release and publicity to seek assistance from the following organisations:

- Blue Knot National Counselling and Referral Service 1800 421 468 — 9 am to 6 pm Monday to Friday and 9 am -5 pm Saturday and Sunday, including public holidays, by telephone and web chat.
- Lifeline 13 11 14 — 24/7 telephone for anyone experiencing a personal crisis or thinking about suicide
- Mensline 1300 789 978 — 24/7 telephone and online support and information service
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Crisis Support 13YARN on 13 92 76 — 24/7 telephone and online support and information service
- Qlife 1800 184 527 — free LGBTI peer support and referral from 3 pm to midnight every day
- Beyond Blue 1300 224 636 — free telephone and online counselling service 24/7 telephone and online support.

Voting

On 14 October 2023, Australians will be asked to vote Yes or No in a referendum to change Australia's Constitution. Voting in the referendum is compulsory.

You can find further information about the referendum, including where to vote, on the [Australian Electoral Commission \(AEC\) website](#). The AEC also has [accessibility information](#).

At the referendum, you will receive a ballot paper with the proposed amendment to the Constitution, followed by a question asking if you approve the proposed alteration. On the referendum ballot paper, you need to indicate your vote by clearly writing the following:

- YES in the box if you approve the proposed alteration OR
- NO in the box if you do not approve the proposed alteration.

The question you will be asked is:

“A Proposed Law: to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. Do you approve this proposed alteration?”

PWdWA in Focus

Karen Kobier - Advocacy Services Manager

Karen made a career change several years ago because she was concerned about the marginalisation and discrimination many people in our society face. She has worked for an Aboriginal organisation, assisting individuals from the Stolen Generations, and has specialised in Information and Referral, Individual Advocacy, and Project Management in the disability sector. She has also worked with individuals who have experienced trauma or been institutionalised. Karen has advised several government bodies, such as the National Centre for Action on Child Sexual Abuse, the Joint Standing Committee on the Implementation of the National Redress Scheme, the NSW Ageing and Disability Commission, and a forum on victims of crime. She has also participated in a National Forum on Inhumane,

Degrading and Cruel Treatment in Detention. Karen participates in advisory panels for research projects and recently co-authored a published journal article about reparations for people with dementia who have experienced abuse in care homes.

Karen enjoys spending time with her grown-up children and grandson in her free time. She lives with her two rescued dogs, a greyhound and a mixed-breed dog with a big personality. Karen coaches a women's soccer team, loves rock and roll dancing, and likes to unwind by making crochet projects. Karen has completed a Bachelor of Design (Communication), a Cert IV in Business Administration, and a Diploma of Community Services and is currently working towards a Bachelor of Social Science (Sociology).

Upcoming

Workshops

PWdWA will hold their Disability Support Pension, NDIS and Self Advocacy Workshops towards the end of October.

You can find out more about these sessions on our [Eventbrite page](#). or contact Grace on 9420 7279 or grace@pwdwa.org for more information.

Kalgoorlie

PWdWA Empowered and Connected Officer Grace Rosales and Communications Officer Vanessa Jessett will join Connect Groups to visit Kalgoorlie on 22 and 23 November. Grace and Vanessa look forward to connecting with our members and peer support networks.

PWdWA

Head Office: 23/2 Dehli 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.