



**People with Disability Australia Incorporated**

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# **Annual Report 2006-2007**

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**Copies of this document are available in alternate formats from:**

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## **Introducing People with Disability Australia**

People with Disability Australia is a national disability rights and advocacy organisation.

We provide representation for people with disability at the New South Wales, national and international levels. We also provide a range of disability rights services for people with disability and their associates, at either the New South Wales or national levels.

Individuals with disability and organisations of people with disability are our primary voting membership. We also have a large associate membership of people and organisations committed to the disability rights movement.

We have a cross-disability focus – membership is open to people with all types of disability. Our services are also available to people with all types of disability and their associates.

We are governed by a Board of Directors, drawn from across Australia, all of whom are people with disability. We employ a professional staff to manage the organisation and operate our various projects. A majority of our staff are also people with disability.

Our activities are supported by substantial grants of financial assistance from the Australian and New South Wales governments, as well as a growing number of corporate and individual donors. This financial assistance is acknowledged with great appreciation.

## **Our vision and values**

### **Our vision – what we are trying to achieve**

We have a vision of a socially just, accessible, and inclusive community, in which the human rights, citizenship, contribution, potential and diversity of all people with disability are respected and celebrated.

### **Our values – what we believe**

We believe that people with disability, irrespective of our age, gender, cultural or linguistic background, geographic location, sexuality, or the nature, origin, or degree of our disability:

- have a right to life, and to bodily integrity
- are entitled to a decent standard of living, an adequate income and to lead active and satisfying lives
- are people first, with human, legal and service user rights that must be recognised and respected
- are entitled to the full enjoyment of our citizenship rights and responsibilities
- are entitled to live free from prejudice, discrimination and vilification
- are entitled to social support and adjustments as a right, and not as the result of pity, charity or the exercise of social control
- contribute substantially to the intellectual, cultural, economic and social diversity and well-being of our community
- possess many skills and abilities, and have enormous potential for life-long growth and development
- are entitled to live in, and be a part of, the diversity of the community
- have the right to participate in the formulation of those policies and programs that affect our lives
- should be empowered to exercise our rights and responsibilities, without fear of retribution.

## **President's report**

The year 2006–2007 has been marked by continued activity and change as PWD responds to the opportunities and challenges presented to us by a constantly changing environment. We are effectively managing these changes and this highlights the underlying strength of the organisation – a strength and a capacity that has been acquired over years of work and commitment by our members.

The work of the Advocacy Unit continues unabated in group, individual and systemic advocacy. We have continued to develop capacity-building locally, through our support of, and cooperation with, the Aboriginal Disability Network NSW. Our regional capacity-building work has focused on the Pacific Disability Forum. Our international advocacy has involved our ongoing participation in the development of the international Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, culminating in adoption of the convention by the UN General Assembly in New York on 13 December 2006. When the convention was opened for signature by member states on 30 March 2007, PWD had played a key role in urging the Australian Government to be among the first signatories. We are now involved in encouraging both state and federal governments to progress the convention ratification process.

These activities confirm our position as a peak advocacy and disability rights organisation which seeks to make a difference.

The work of the National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline and the Complaints Resolution and Referral Service continues and will continue into the future because of our success in winning major new contracts with the Australian Government to run these services.

PWD continues to be a leading commentator on disability issues both locally and internationally. We promote regularly in the media and through disability networks issues of concern and relevance to people with a disability. Our responses and position statements have been distributed through all forms of media.

PWD hosted a number of events and these were greatly supported by members, peak state and federal disability organisations and other stakeholders in the disability sector. Among these were an International Day of People with Disability get-together for members, a celebration of the signing of the UN convention for members and guests on 30 March 2007, a hypothetical on the topic, 'What will life be like in 2057 if 80 per cent of people have a disability?' in early June, and a federal election forum on 28 June 2007. These events give members the opportunity to participate in activities of their organisation and they inform everyone about our work and our focus on particular issues.

The Board continues to build its capacity to effectively represent members by engaging in governance training through consultant advice. The Board took advantage of an opportunity to refine and improve ethical decision-making



processes by hosting a workshop for staff and directors conducted by the St James Ethics Centre.

This year was marked by the development of our strategic plan for 2007–2010. And our minds turn towards significant projects at hand such as the negotiation of a new enterprise bargaining agreement and the conduct of an organisational review, which, when completed, will position and shape the organisation to be even more an effective voice for and on behalf of its members.

I want to take this opportunity to recognise the efforts of the Board, staff and volunteers and thank them for their energy and commitment. I acknowledge Board members completing their terms and thank them for their contribution and I welcome warmly new members to the Board. I embrace with enthusiasm the opportunities that are ahead for PWD and look forward to meeting them with optimism and determination.

Robert Farley  
**President**

## **Co-Chief Executive Officers' report**

In 2006–2007, PWD continued to work towards a socially just, accessible and inclusive community for all people with disability. Our work ranged across local, national and international forums. PWD can be justifiably proud of its achievements during the course of the year. In particular, we can be very proud of our contribution to the development of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 2006.

Our members continue to play a vital role in PWD's work PWD does. In particular, they played an integral role in the drafting of a new strategic plan *Forward to Our Future 2007–2010*. PWD conducted a number of members' consultations, as well as phone/fax/email link-ups. PWD kept its members, and the wider community, informed of disability issues through its monthly *PWD e-bulletin*. PWD also produced a number of editions of the *LinkUp* newsletter. *LinkUp* is very much a members' production – within its pages we draw upon the lives and experiences of our members.

Advocacy continued to be a linchpin of our work – at individual, group and systemic levels. All three play equally important roles as we pursue our vision of an inclusive society. Our individual and group advocacy unit had carriage of matters across NSW, and conducted a number of outreach trips from Tibooburra in one corner of the state to Albury in the other. PWD is particularly committed to ensuring that people with disability in remote areas are provided with as much access as possible to wider community services.

Our systemic advocacy work continues to be as wide-ranging as ever in our pursuit to challenge and remove those barriers that prevent people with disability from participating in community life. The issues of people with disability living in institutions and boarding houses continued to be at the forefront of our lobbying efforts. This year, with the implementation of the NSW Government's Stronger Together plan for disability services, we continued to lobby against the proposed redevelopment of three NSW institutions – Lachlan, Grosvenor and Peat Island centres. We continue to call on the NSW Government to close, not redevelop these institutions, and we advocate for the right of people who reside in these institutions to live in the community. Another key issue of PWD's systemic work included lobbying for a renewed and enhanced Commonwealth State Territory Disability Agreement.

PWD continued to be represented at forums to discuss disability issues, such as the Department of Foreign Affairs Non-Government Organisation's Forum on Human Rights, and the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission workshop on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. On an international level, PWD sent a delegation to the Eight and final Ad Hoc Committee drafting the convention and to two meetings at the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific about the Biwako Millennium



Framework for Action. Attendance at such forums is integral to PWD's mandate of influencing consultations on human rights and disability policies.

PWD's consumer protection programs continued to play a large role in PWD operations. We were pleased to be successful in our tender to continue operating the National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline and the National Disability Complaints Resolution and Referral Service for a further two years.

Our relationships and partnerships with other disability organisations continue to play an integral role in our mandate of ensuring we provide support and information to all people with disability across Australia. In particular, we acknowledge our partnership with the Aboriginal Disability Network NSW, which became an incorporated association during the year and which continues to provide a powerful voice for Aboriginal people with disability in NSW. We also maintained executive membership of the Pacific Disability Forum, which opened its offices with a new executive officer in Suva with funding from NZAid.

PWD's most valuable assets are its staff and Board. We are extremely grateful to each and every staff member for their work in the past year – we are privileged to have a team of highly skilled and experienced people. We thank them for their passion and commitment to PWD's vision. We are also deeply indebted to the Board, who bring to PWD an enormous wealth of skills and experience.

Matthew Bowden and Therese Sands  
**Co-Chief Executive Officers**

## **Board of Directors**

Robert Farley	President, elected 18 Nov 2006
Faye Druett	Vice President, elected 18 Nov 2006
Timothy Hart	Secretary, elected 18 Nov 2006
Hazel Freed	Treasurer, elected 18 Nov 2006
Peter Cassar	Director
Tom Ferguson	Director
Sheila King	Director
Kristy Trajcevski	Director
Craig Wallace	Director
Joana d'Orey Novo	Director, elected 18 Nov 2006
Ebru Sumaktas	Director, elected 18 Nov 2006

## **Staff and volunteers**

### **Management and Support Services**

Alastair McEwin	Chief Executive Officer	
Gem Mathieu	Manager, Administration	
Lai Ha Wu	Chief Financial Officer	Until March 2007
Kati Haworth	Chief Financial Officer	From April 2007
Tharinda Datta	Accounts Officer	
Craig O'Brien	Administration Officer	Until March 2007
Susan Strasser	Administration Officer	
Julie Rosenberg	Administration Officer	

### **Advocacy**

Alanna Clohesy	Deputy Director (Advocacy) Manager, Information and Education	On leave
Matthew Bowden	Director, Individual & Group Advocacy	From May 2007
	Acting Deputy Director (Advocacy)	From June 2006
Therese Sands	Director, Systemic Advocacy & Capacity Building	From May 2007
	Senior Advocate	
Elizabeth Buchanan	Advocate	
Denise Beckwith	Advocate	
Susan Barnes	Advocate	
Dean Price	Advocate	From December 2006
Matthew Keeley	Senior Legal Officer	Until May 2007
Digby Hughes	Senior Advocate	
Therese Sands	Senior Advocate	

## Information and Education

Kathryn Knight	Manager, Information and Education	From July 2006
Allyson Campbell	Information and Liaison Officer	
Dean Price	Information and Liaison Officer	Until December 2006
Samantha French	Senior Education Officer	Until March 2007

## Consumer Protection

Stefanie Williams	Deputy Director
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## SADA (Sexual Assault in Disability and Aged Care) Project

Maria Attard	Senior Project Officer
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## National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline

Natalie Saunders	Manager	
Susan Baxter	Intake and Assessment Officer	
Michelle Maigre	Intake and Assessment Officer	
Mel Harrison	Intake and Assessment Officer	
Birgitta Laurent	Intake and Assessment Officer	
Von Covas	Intake and Assessment Officer	
Craig O'Brien	Intake and Assessment Office	From March 2007

## Complaints Resolution and Referral Service

PJ Humphreys	Manager	On leave April 07
Chris Rodd	Acting Manager	From April 2007
	Senior Complaints Resolution Officer	Until April 2007
John Engeler	Complaints Resolution Officer	Until Sept 2006
Dominic Moore	Complaints Resolution Officer	
Perihan Bozkurt	Complaints Resolution Officer	



**Volunteers**

Jan Cameron-Smith

Alan Sargeant

Until April 2007



## **How this report is organised**

PWD's growth and development over the past four years has been guided by the plans outlined in our *Strategic directions 2003–2006*. In this document, our work is divided into ten key result areas with specific objectives and outcomes for each area.

In this report, we address each of these key result areas to show our progress.

## **Key result area 1: Membership**

PWD is a membership-based organisation. We strive to be a voice for people with disability and, as such, we depend on the engagement of a large and diverse membership in our work to realise this goal. To maintain our position, we must constantly work to retain, develop and renew our membership.

### **Our membership objectives**

- to maintain and develop a distinct culture and identity as an organisation of and for all people with disability
- to promote solidarity between members with diverse experiences of disability, based on a social understanding of disability
- to encourage and support member activism on contemporary disability rights issues
- to consult members in the development of our public policy positions
- to retain, expand and diversify our membership base across Australia
- to provide opportunities for member-to-member contact in social activities
- to be accessible and responsive to members especially when they seek our assistance
- to keep our members informed about our work and achievements.

### **Our major achievements this year**

We continued to support and encourage our President, Directors and members to engage in public debate on disability issues and to come together for social occasions. We held a record number of members' events this year, including:

- a members' consultation before the Eighth Session of the Ad Hoc Committee for the development of the international Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (3 August 2006)
- a members' cocktail party at the Mercure Hotel, Sydney, following the 2006 Annual General Meeting (18 November 2006)
- a members' event for International Day for People with Disability at the offices of law firm Gilbert and Tobin (6 December 2006)
- a members' celebration of the opening for signing of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at PWD offices (30 March 2007)
- a members' mid-year event at Redfern Town Hall featuring a hypothetical 'What will life be like in 2057 if 80 per cent of people have a disability?' with members as panelists, host Andrew Buchanan (President of the Disability



Council of NSW) and special guest the Hon. Kristina Keneally, NSW Minister for Disability Services (2 June 2007)

- a members' federal election forum, with guest politicians Jan McLucas (Labor) and Rachel Siewert (Greens), and a Democrat spokesperson (28 June 2007).

Our President participated in the Eighth Session of the Ad Hoc Committee for the development of an International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability at the United Nations in New York (August 2006).

Our members also participated in a consultation for the Review of Commonwealth Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport facilitated by the NSW Disability Discrimination Legal Centre in September 2006. Many members contributed salient case studies of their experiences for inclusion in the review submission.

We kept our members informed about key issues in the sector, through our monthly electronic *PWD e-bulletin*.

We returned our members' newsletter, *LinkUp*, to regularly quarterly publication. Each issue in 2006–2007 addressed a special topic, and members were invited to contribute their stories. An innovation has been the appointment of a Director as guest editor for each issue. Topics covered were:

- community living
- PWD's 25th anniversary and the history of the organisation
- education
- employment.

In order to streamline membership administration, development of a new membership database was commenced.

## **Key result area 2: Information**

PWD is a major provider of disability rights and consumer information. Information can be a source of empowerment for people with disability and can build self-help capacity, support activism and bring about positive social change.

This information must be available in formats that are accessible to people with specific communication needs. As such, PWD aims to be a model of best practice in information accessibility.

### **Our information objectives**

- to be a leading provider of online information about disability rights and consumer issues
- to provide high quality accessible and culturally sensitive information about our services, projects and activities
- to develop and maintain a leading electronic and hard copy library in relation to disability rights issues
- to produce information products on disability rights issues for people with disability and their associates, and the community generally
- to provide effective general information advice and referral services for people with disability, their associates and the public in relation to disability rights issues
- to ensure effective internal access to organisational information.

### **Our achievements this year**

The major achievement in this area was the establishment of a regular production schedule for PWD's main communication tools: the electronic newsletter *PWD e-bulletin* and members' journal *LinkUp*.

- *PWD e-bulletin* was compiled and distributed monthly to members and over 350 other subscribers. It provided information on PWD activities, and news and issues from the broader disability rights movement and disability sector. Printed copies were disseminated to those without internet facilities in regular and large-print formats. Our subscription list for the bulletin continued to grow.
- *LinkUp* was re-established to a quarterly publication schedule. It featured personal stories of members as they related to disability rights issues. A new initiative involved one Director taking on the role of guest editor for each issue. Much positive feedback was received about the latest issues of this newsletter.

In addition, we started development of an independent website for the Sexual Assault in Disability and Aged Care Action Strategy.



We continued to provide information through the following channels to the community, members and staff:

- the PWD website: information on PWD activities, events and services; access to publications, positions papers and submissions; links to PWD satellite groups and organisations: Aboriginal Disability Network NSW, Disability Studies and Research Institute, Australian Network of University Housing Design, Home and Community Care/HIV projects, National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline, and Complaints Resolution and Referral Service
- *Inhouse news*, the PWD internal newsletter, was produced and disseminated fortnightly to Board and staff members as a means for sharing information about staff activities and organisational policies
- publications were available in alternative formats, including audio, large print, Braille and accessible electronic text, on request
- publications on PWD services were available in community languages.

## **Key result area 3: Education**

PWD is a major provider of disability awareness, values-based and rights-based education for people with disability and their associates, and for service providers. Awareness of disability issues can lead to positive change in community attitudes. Education can transmit new ideas and practical skills, enabling self-advocacy.

### **Our education objectives**

- to change community attitudes by raising awareness about the needs and rights of people with disability
- to be a catalyst for innovation and reform in specialist services by conducting educational events on strategic issues
- to improve the quality of specialist services by developing and promoting educational curricula around strategic issues
- to build resilience and self-help capacity of people with disability and their associates by providing advocacy skills training
- to improve responsiveness of generic services to the needs of people with disability through relevant training and education
- to develop and renew leadership of disability rights movement through leadership development and education
- to improve our operational capacity to deliver high quality educational events.

### **Our achievements this year**

#### Special education events

- UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities: In conjunction with the Disability Studies and Research Institute and the NSW Disability Discrimination Legal Centre, PWD facilitated an Expert Seminar on the draft text on international monitoring prior to the Eighth Session of the Ad Hoc Committee in July 2006.
- 'Are human rights enough? Can human rights deliver quality of life for people with disability?': Seminar presented by Professor Hans Reinders of Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam and panelists from the disability sector, organised by PWD in conjunction with the Centre for Developmental Disability Studies, November 2006.

#### Successful tenders

- to provide training to DADHC staff in disability and sexuality and responding to sexual assault in nine three-day training sessions across NSW. This project was conducted jointly with Family Planning NSW



- to develop training for the Speaking UP project, designed to assist adults with intellectual disability to participate in community decision making. The client for this project was Holroyd City Council, and the project was funded under the Western Sydney Area Assistance Scheme.

#### External education and training

- We continued to provide training to Joint Investigation and Response Teams of NSW Police detectives and Department of Community Services staff. These bi-monthly sessions covered effective communication with children and young people with disability.
- We delivered other one-off sessions in disability awareness training to organisations such as the Reserve Bank of Australia, shopping centres and hotels.

#### Internal training

- Regular monthly competency and professional briefing training seminars organised to support work of PWD staff.

## **Key result area 4: Advocacy**

People with disability are among the most marginalised in our community, and are frequently subject to discrimination, abuse and rejection. PWD responds to this vulnerability and disadvantage through its advocacy work.

Our work in individual and group advocacy aims to promote and protect the rights of individuals and groups of people with disability. Our work in systemic advocacy aims to promote change in the social structures and processes and result in exclusion, disadvantage, neglect and abuse of people with disability. Our work in legal advocacy aims to protect and promote the legal rights of people with disability at the individual and systemic levels.

### **Our advocacy objectives**

- to promote and protect the human, legal and service user rights of individuals and groups of people with disability and their associates, and ensure that their needs are met
- to promote fundamental positive innovation and systemic change in society that delivers enhanced accessibility, social justice, and inclusion for people with disability in all aspects of community life
- to promote and protect the legal rights of people with disability and their associates, and ensure their access to justice.

### **Our achievements this year**

#### **Individual and group advocacy**

We provided:

- over 1100 instances of advocacy and rights-related information, advice and referral services to people with disability and their associates – over 220 per cent of our annual target
- advocacy mentoring support to approximately 120 individuals and groups of people with disability and their associates with rights-related problems, building their self advocacy skills and personal capacity to resolve complaints and have their needs met
- intensive, short-term, issue-based individual and group advocacy assistance to over 300 people with disability and their associates with very serious rights-related complaints.

The main areas in which we provided support were:

- unmet need for specialist disability services, in particular accommodation, case management, respite, therapy, personal care and equipment
- unmet need for disability services in rural, regional and remote areas of NSW

- lack of culturally appropriate disability services
- tenancy complaints with social housing providers
- lack of support services for children with disability
- unmet need for disability services for people with a psychiatric impairment, acquired brain injury and other cognitive impairment.

Specific examples of the support we provided include:

- advocacy assistance to approximately 50 people living in large residential centres (institutions) who are to move to community living arrangements under stage 1 of the NSW Government's Devolution Program (supported with project funding from the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC))
- advocacy assistance to approximately 80 people with disability who live in licensed residential centres (boarding houses), mainly in Sydney's Inner West (supported with project funding from DADHC)
- development of outreach strategies to improve access to our services to people with disability and their associates from Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and other culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Successful outcomes show service utilisation rates at approximately 20 per cent for Indigenous people and 22 per cent for people from non-English speaking backgrounds
- outreach visits and face-to-face advocacy support to people in regional, rural and remote NSW including Albury, Bathurst, the Blue Mountains, Bogangar, Broken Hill, the Central Coast, Dubbo, Ivanhoe, Kingscliff, Lithgow, Menindee, Millthorpe, Newcastle, Orange, Portland, the Southern Highlands, Tibooburra, Tweed Heads, Wallerawang, White Cliffs, Wilcannia and Wollongong.

### **Systemic advocacy**

Our systemic advocacy program is focused on achieving major structural and systemic reform for problems affecting many people with disability and their associates as a class. Outlined below is a sample of our work.

Submissions made and public hearings contributed to:

- NSW Seniors Living State Environmental Planning Policy on universal housing design for seniors and people with disability
- Australian Communications Industry Forum on an industry guideline for the accessibility of payphones
- 2007 Review of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport

- Commonwealth Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous affairs on innovative methods for providing support and supported accommodation for younger people with disability in residential aged care
- NSW Parliament Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Reform inquiry into voter enrolment
- Standing Committee of Attorneys-General Draft Model Bill on the authorisation of sterilisation of children with intellectual disability
- NSW draft model Mental Health Bill 2006
- Senate Community Affairs Committee inquiry into the funding and operation of the Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement.

Committee representation:

- Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC) Community Participation Program Guidelines Stakeholder Group.
- DADHC Boarding House Expert Advisory Group
- Supported Living Forum – devolution and community living
- Touching Base Committee – access to the sex industry
- NSW Ombudsman’s Disability Roundtable
- Health Care Complaints Reference Group
- Sydney Olympic Park Access Forum
- Individual Advocacy Network NSW

Key projects:

- PWD continued to support the Australian Network for Universal Housing Design (ANUHD). On 8 November 2006, approximately 200 people attended a successful ANUHD National Forum at the Avillion Hotel, Sydney.
- On 2 August 2006, PWD hosted a housing roundtable for the UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, Mr Miloon Kothari. Mr Kothari visited Australia from 31 July to 15 August 2006 to examine and report on the Australian Government’s progress in ensuring housing rights and to identify practical solutions and good practices.
- PWD continued its participation in the final phase of the Women’s Report Card Project coordinated by Women’s Rights Action Network Australia. A resource kit was developed and a number of pilot workshops were held in rural and urban Victoria on advocacy and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.
- PWD continued to work with Women With Disabilities Australia towards ensuring that height-adjustable examination tables are available in general practices in Australia. This included national media coverage, meetings with



departmental heads and working with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

- PWD developed an election platform and conducted a federal election forum, which enabled representatives from the disability sector to hear and ask questions of participating politicians.

### **Legal advocacy**

Through its legal advocacy, PWD has increased awareness about the compatibility of disability discrimination, occupational health and safety, and disability service laws in the areas of employment, education, transport, disability service provision and criminal justice.

- We successfully campaigned, with Family Advocacy and the NSW Disability Discrimination Legal Centre (DDLC), for changes to the *Education Legislation Amendment Bill 2006* (NSW) when it was introduced into the Legislative Assembly on 27 October 2006.
- Through a test case, we held the NSW Government accountable for its allegedly incorrect assessment of a disability service's conformity with the NSW *Disability Services Act* and for the government's decision-making when funding an allegedly non-conforming service.
- We supported many disability and legal advocates in their work with people with disability in the justice system. We also made a submission to the NSW Department of Health's review of the forensic provisions of the *Mental Health Act 1990* and the *Mental Health (Criminal Procedure) Act 1990*.
- In collaboration with DDLC, we presented a submission to the Australian Fair Pay Commission on the new WorkChoices legislation and how the proposed Special Federal Minimum Wage may impact on people with disability.
- We raised awareness about the impact of four substantial amendments to the *Guardianship Act 1987* proposed by the NSW Guardianship Tribunal.
- We increased awareness of the importance of the amendments proposed for the *Disability Discrimination Act* (DDA) and of the importance of vigilance to ensure that DDA Standards and exemptions from them are not used to water down in any way the intent and effect of the DDA.

## **Key result area 5: Sector representation and coordination**

PWD is a peak representative organisation for people with disability. This role involves representing the interests of people with disability to government, industry, civil society and the media. As a peak body, PWD also plays an important role in coordinating groups and activities within the sector.

### **Our sector representation and coordination objectives**

- to be a leading public spokesperson and commentator on disability issues
- to represent the interests of people with disability and their associates on major policy and advisory committees of government and civil society
- to establish regular consultative arrangements with government ministers, portfolio spokespeople, departmental heads, other statutory officers, industry and civil society leaders in relation to disability rights issues
- to ensure that our representatives on external committees are well informed, supported and resourced
- to offer resources, support and coordination to the disability rights and advocacy sector to assist it to be an effective force for social change.

### **Our achievements this year**

- We issued a number of media releases and received significant media coverage on key issues of concern including developments with the UN convention on the rights and dignity of peoples with disability, the lack of height-adjustable examination beds in general practice facilities and boarding house reform in NSW.
- We monitored media reporting of disability issues, and intervened in public debate where necessary to promote and protect the interests of people with disability and their associates.
- We continued to seek regular consultation with key government ministers, portfolio spokespeople and other parliamentarians in relation to disability rights issues.
- We convened ongoing meetings with disability advocacy organisations to campaign against the proposed redevelopments of institutions in NSW that were announced as part of the NSW Government's Stronger Together plan for disability services.
- We continued to seek appointment to policy advisory committees of government and other agencies dealing with issues that fall within our strategic priorities. We participated in over 50 such committees, including:



- NSW Attorney General's Department Disability Advisory Council
- Program of Appliances for Disabled People State Advisory Committee (NSW Health)
- NSW Department of Juvenile Justice Disability Strategic Group
- NSW Department of Housing Non-Government Organisations Partners Reference Group
- Metro South West Regional Accommodation Committee (DADHC)
- Metro Residences Quality Review Group (DADHC)
- Community Participation Program Guidelines Stakeholders Group (DADHC)
- Disabilities Consultative Council (NSW Department of Education and Training)
- Coalition for Appropriate Supported Accommodation (NSW Society of St Vincent de Paul).
- We supported coalitions and inter-agencies focusing on key areas. Two major examples of this are the NSW Advocacy and Information Service Forum and the Australian Network for Universal Housing Design.
- We continued to participate in major cross-sector forums representing the interests of people with disability and their associates. This included participation of PWD nominees on the boards of the Australian Council of Social Service and the Council of Social Service of NSW. We met regularly with NSW peak disability organisations and developed productive relationships with bodies such as the NSW Ombudsman's Office.
- A number of our directors and members serve on the NSW Government's official advisory body on disability, the Disability Council of NSW.
- PWD directors and staff have also contributed management support and policy advice as board members of the NSW Disability Discrimination Legal Centre, Disability Studies and Research Institute and Newtown Neighbourhood Centre.

## **Key result area 6: Capacity-building partnerships**

PWD plays a significant role in assisting groups of people with disability who are particularly disadvantaged to develop the capacity for self-representation. This includes the development of systemic advocacy skills that enable these groups to more effectively 'work the system' to ensure that their needs are met. Current capacity-building partnerships include work with organisations of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders with disability, and with disabled peoples organisations in Pacific nations.

### **Our capacity-building objectives**

- to support the development of representative voices for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders at the NSW and national levels, and to assist them to develop corporate governance and systems advocacy capacity
- to support the development of representative voices for disabled people in the Pacific region and to assist them to develop corporate governance and systems advocacy capacity
- to support the development of representative voices for other especially disadvantaged population groups of people with disability, and assist them to develop corporate governance and systems advocacy capacity.

### **Our achievements this year**

#### **Aboriginal Disability Network NSW (ADN)**

Well known filmmaker, elder, founder and Chairperson of the ADN, Mr Lester Bostock, won the NSW Law and Justice Foundation 2006 Aboriginal Justice Award. PWD nominated Lester for this Award.

PWD provided active support to the ADN by facilitating and participating in the ADN Management Committee meetings.

This year the ADN has:

- employed a manager to oversee its operations and project work.
- commenced preliminary work on access of young Aboriginal people with disability to the Home and Community Care programs (a project funded by NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care)
- continued to provide advice to disability organisations about providing support to and including Aboriginal people with disability in their service delivery
- supported and advised the newly formed Indigenous Disability Network Queensland on its development.

## **Pacific Disability Forum**

As a member of the Executive Committee of the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF), PWD played a role in the recruitment of an executive officer for the forum.

The executive officer commenced in January 2007 and the PDF office opened in Suva, Fiji a few weeks later.

A General Meeting of the PDF was held in March 2007 at which a strategic plan was finalised and a new executive committee elected. PWD was re-elected to the executive committee.

The PDF continued to gain credibility in the Pacific region with consultations and meetings held with the Pacific Operations Centre of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat and the Regional Rights Resource Team.

## **Bilateral partnerships**

PWD worked in partnership with the Women's Coordinator of Morobe Disabled Agency and Chairperson of Disabled Peoples' International – Papua New Guinea to gain funding for the First National Leadership Training Seminar for Women with Disability (17–19 July 2006). Outcomes of the seminar included:

- formation of the PNG National Women with Disabilities Network
- development of an outcome statement presented in the PNG Parliament to Dame Carol Kidu, the Minister for Community Development
- the implementation of local-level plans by individual women with disability – self-help networks and income generation projects.

## **Disability inclusive development advocacy**

- Access for All – Disability Inclusive Development Practice seminar

PWD presented at this seminar in Melbourne to highlight the significant role of disabled peoples' organisations in development work and poverty reduction.

- Australian Disability and Development Consortium

PWD worked with Christian Blind Mission Australia, the Australian Council for International Development and the Australian International Health Institute to establish the Australian Disability and Development Consortium. The consortium was launched at Parliament House in Canberra in February 2007. The role of the ADDC is to act as an Australian focal point for advocacy and expertise on disability inclusive development.



## **Biwako Millennium Framework for Action**

In July 2006 and February 2007, PWD actively participated in meetings at the United Nations Economic and Social Council for Asia and the Pacific as part of the process of the five year review of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action (BMF). The BMF is a United Nations Asia-Pacific plan of action to progress the rights of people with disability in the Asia-Pacific region.

## **Key result area 7: Consumer protection**

PWD operates two major consumer protection services on behalf of the Australian Government: the National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline, and the Complaints Resolution and Referral Service (CRRS). Both services are key aspects of the Australian Government's quality assurance strategy for disability services.

### **Our consumer protection objectives**

- to promote greater awareness that will reduce the incidence and impact of abuse and neglect
- to ensure timely and appropriate referrals of allegations of abuse and neglect to appropriate agencies for investigation
- to manage and resolve complaints in an independent, impartial, transparent, timely and fair way and in accordance with the Disability Service Standards
- to promote greater awareness of best-practice complaint management
- to identify and pursue opportunities to provide specialist consumer protection services for people with disability and their associates in key target groups.

### **Our achievements this year**

PWD successfully re-tendered for the National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline and the CRRS and was awarded a two-year contract with the option to extend the contract for a further year.

### **Training and promotion**

The Hotline and CRRS undertook six promotional tours covering all states and territories to raise the profile of the services and to educate people with disability, service providers and family members about abuse and neglect, complaints handling and avenues of assistance.

The promotional tours included a mix of staff training at disability services, public information sessions, and meetings with local advocacy services in each state and territory.

The Hotline provided abuse and neglect training to staff at disability services. The purpose of this training was to provide a comprehensive overview on how to:

- identify abuse and neglect
- respond appropriately to abuse and neglect
- provide support to perpetrators who are themselves service-users
- undertake investigations and keep records.

The CRRS provided complaints-handling training to staff at disability employment services. The purpose of this training was to provide a comprehensive overview on types and examples of complaints, and how to identify and respond to complaints.

The Hotline and the CRRS developed a new abuse and neglect training presentation and a CRRS presentation targeted at service-users who do not have cognitive disability.

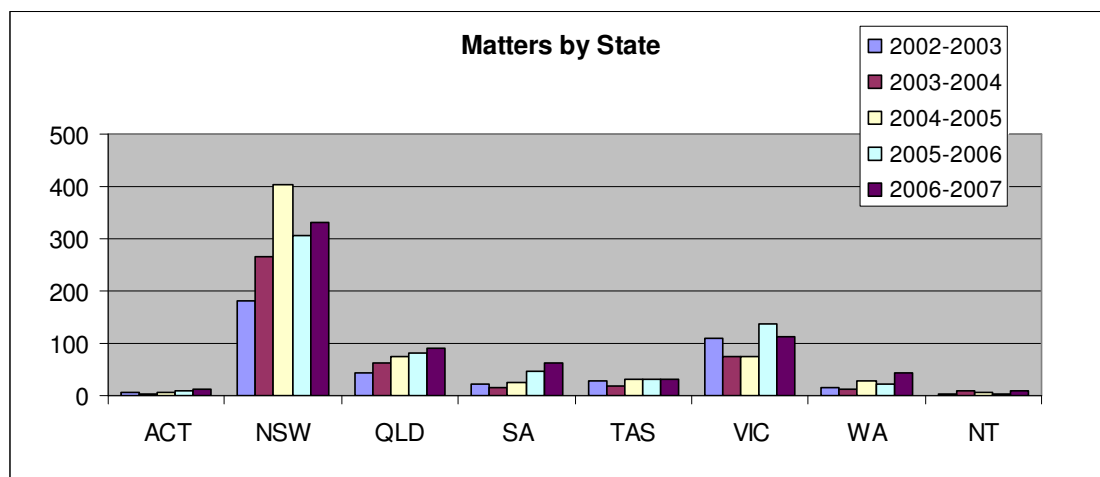
The CRRS presented at the ACE conference for disability employment services and the NSW Advocacy Forum.

### Hotline achievements

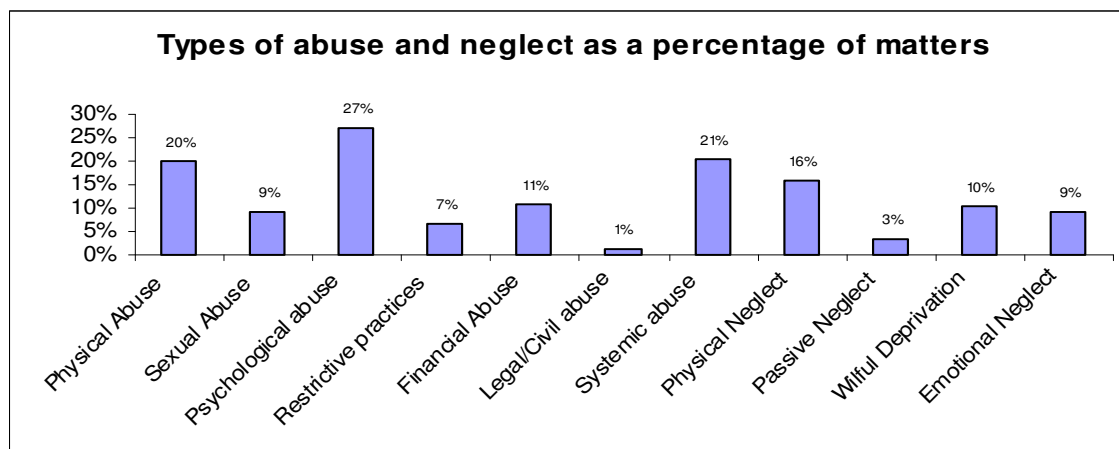
The Hotline dealt with a total of 719 matters, which was an increase on 2005–06.

The Hotline received 182 reports of matters in government-funded disability services and continued to work collaboratively with state governments on the effective referral and investigation of these matters. In line with this, the Hotline met with the NSW Ombudsman, Disability Services Queensland, Victorian Department of Human Services, Office of Health Review (WA), Disability ACT, Department for Families and Community Services (SA) and Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services.

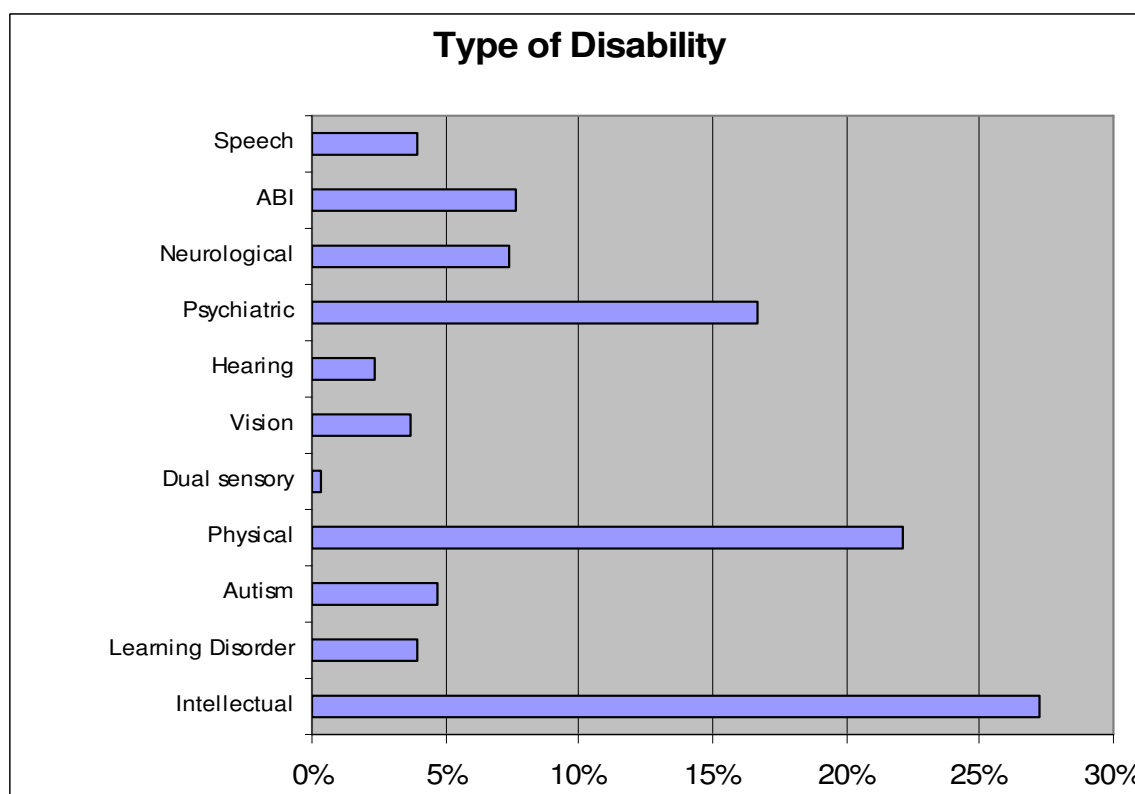
A breakdown of matters by state over the period shows that most matters were from New South Wales (46 per cent) followed by Victoria (16 per cent). Matters in every state except Victoria increased in the past year.



The following chart indicates the frequency of reports of types of abuse neglect as a percentage of all matters for the year. Of all matters, 27 per cent involved psychological abuse, 21 per cent systemic abuse and 20 per cent physical abuse.



Most subjects (27 per cent) identified as having intellectual disability, 22 per cent as having physical disability and 17 per cent as having psychiatric disability. Often subjects identified as having more than one disability type.



The Hotline received a substantial number of abuse and neglect matters (537) that occurred outside of government-funded disability services. The Hotline provided assistance with these reports by referring them to the relevant complaints handling body such as an ombudsman, child-protection agency or

health complaints commission. The Hotline also made referrals to support services such as advocacy and counselling services.

## CRRS achievements

### Major work completed by the CRRS

The CRRS:

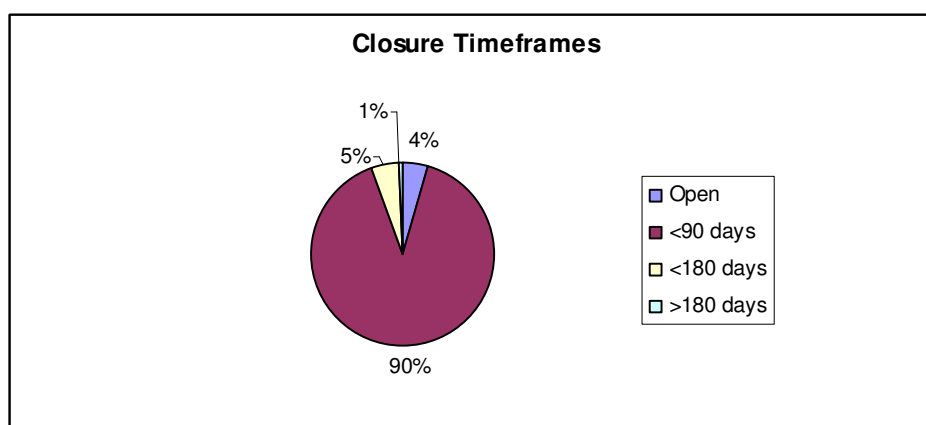
- received 655 new matters with 1029 complaints within these matters
- completed a redevelopment of its website ([www.crrs.org.au](http://www.crrs.org.au))
- participated in a review of Disability Employment Service Quality Assurance Procedure 18 (General Requirements for Bodies Operating Assessment and Certification of Disability Employment Services)
- participated in the review of the Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement handbooks for disability employment services.

### Matter statistics

The CRRS has received 655 matters over the 12-month period, with 1029 complaints within these matters. This is an increase of 85 per cent of total matters compared with the previous year, and an increase of 40 per cent of the total number of complaints.

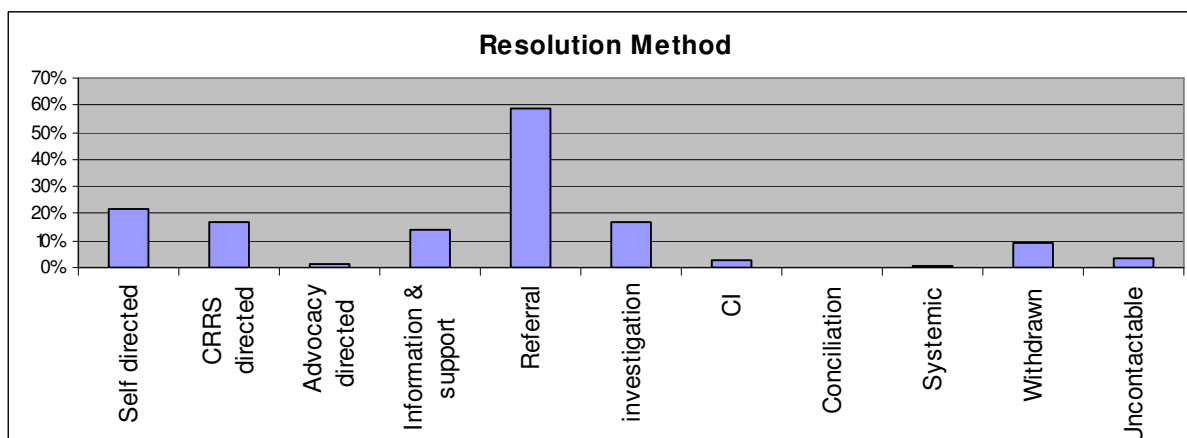
### Matters closed

The CRRS closed 96 per cent of all matters received during the year, with 90 per cent being closed within 90 days, five per cent being closed within 90 to 180 days and one per cent closed in greater than 180 days. Matters that exceeded the 90-day closure period were due to range of reasons including illness of complainants, delays in gaining consent to act on complaints, complainants closing and requesting matters be reopened and delays in services implementing CRRS recommendations.



### How the matters were addressed

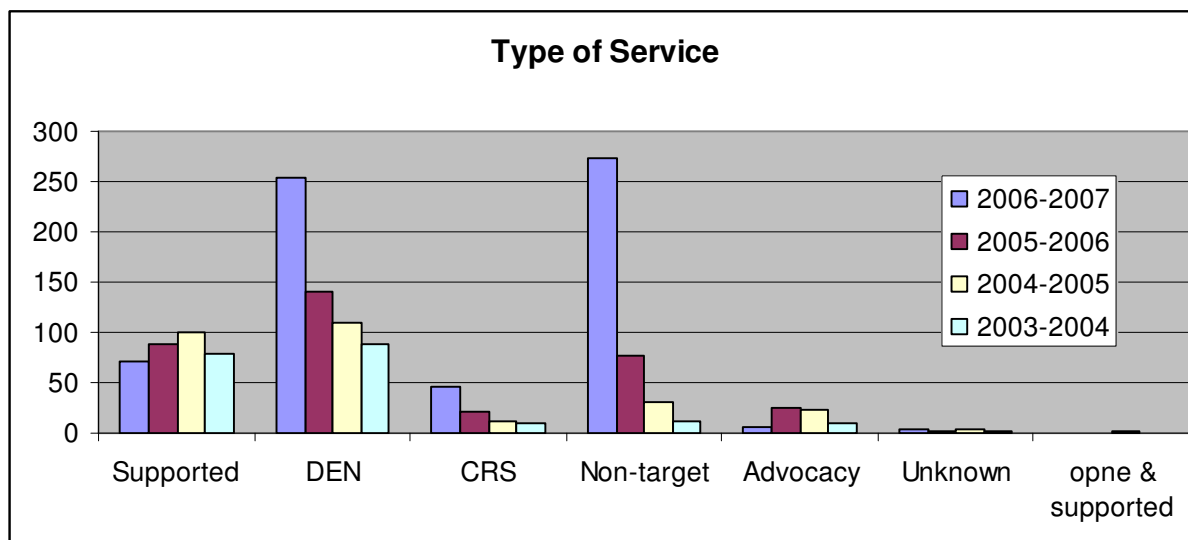
Most complaints (59 per cent) were addressed by referring the complainant to other agencies. Fourteen per cent of complainants were provided with information and support to resolve their complaint. Twenty-two per cent of matters were resolved by self-directed internal resolution and 17 per cent by CRRS-directed internal resolution. Investigations were pursued for 17 per cent matters and a total of three per cent of matters concerned continuous improvement by services.



### Types of service the matters were about

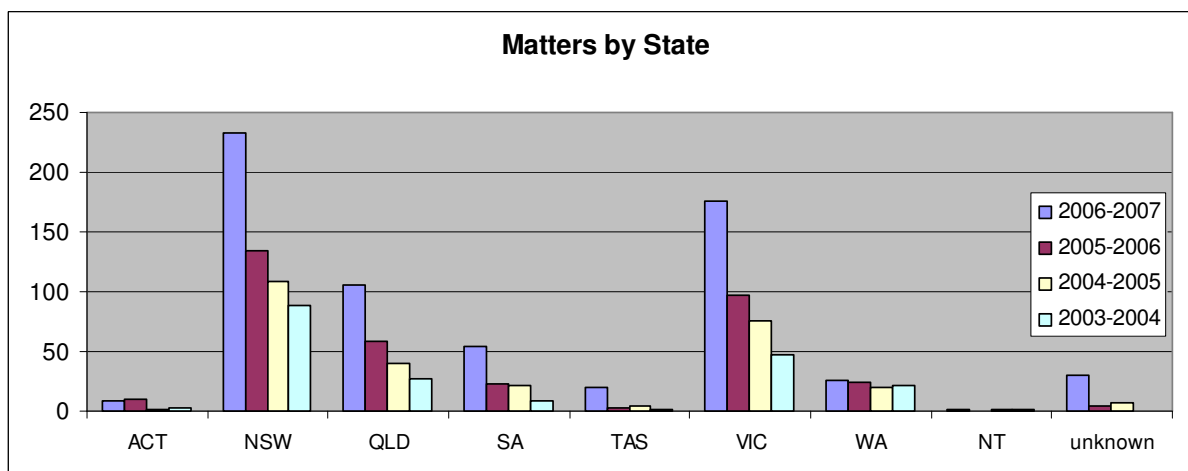
Complaints about supported employment services comprised 11 per cent of all matters, Disability Employment Network (DEN) services 39 per cent, vocational rehabilitation services seven per cent and advocacy services one per cent.

There were significant increases in complaints against DEN services, CRS Australia services and non-target matters. (Non-target matters include those regarding Job Network Providers, private employers and Centrelink.)



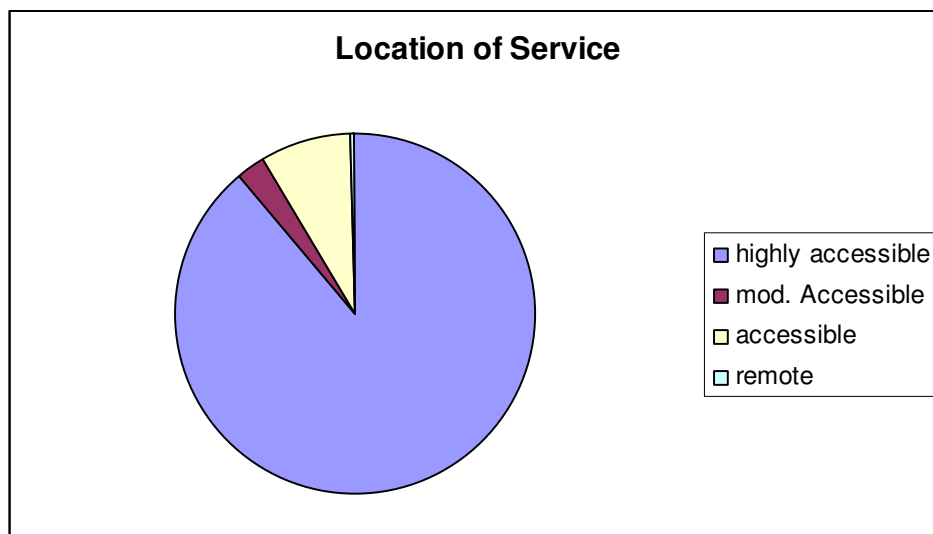
### Matters by state

Most complaints came from NSW (36 per cent), followed by 27 per cent from Victoria and 16 per cent from Queensland. The increase in matters in this financial year appears relatively uniform across the states, however, the number of complaints from Northern Territory and ACT remain small.



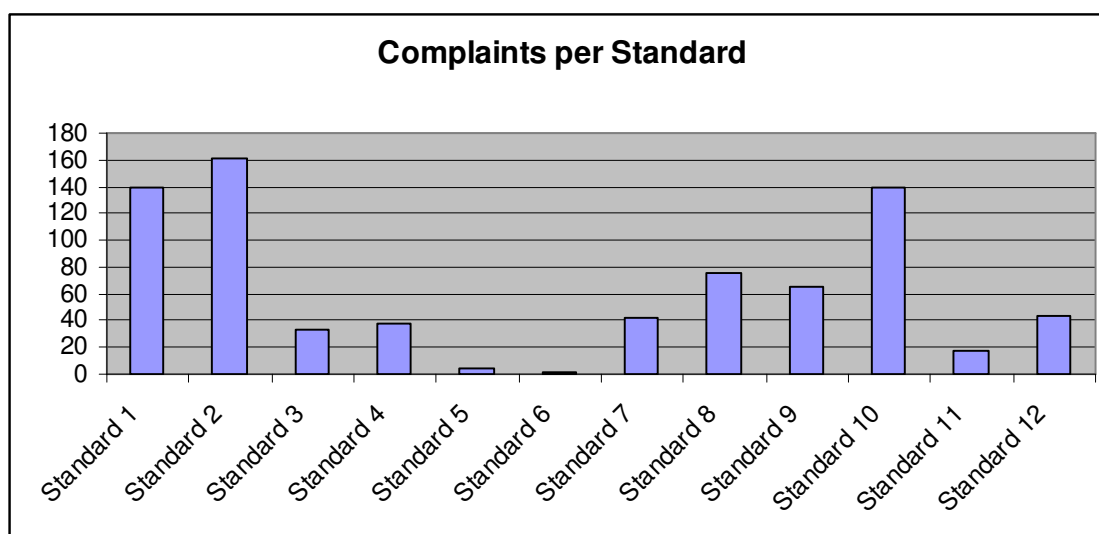
### Regions in which the services were located

Of the target matters 89 per cent of services were in 'highly accessible' regions, eight per cent in 'accessible' regions and three per cent in 'moderately accessible' regions. One matter concerned a service in a remote location.



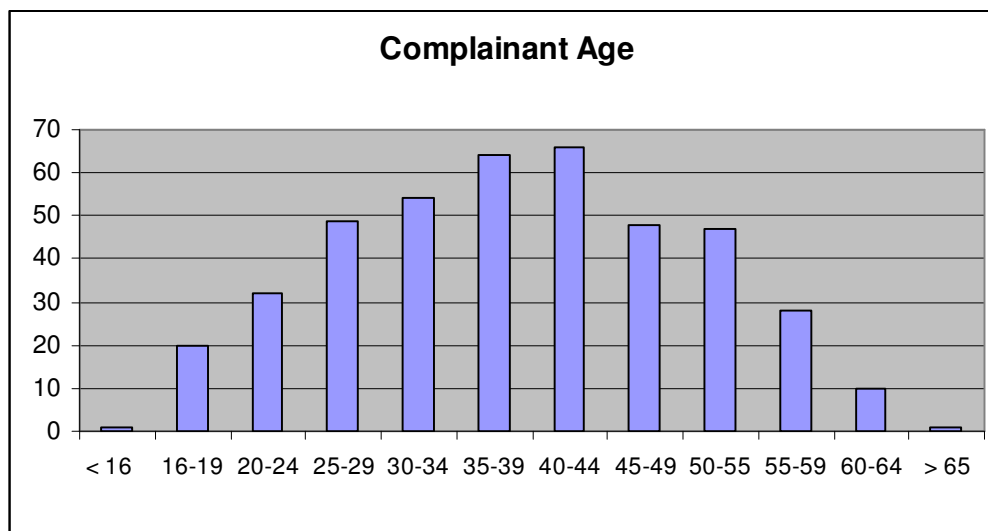
### What complaints were about

The most common complaints, mapped against the National Standards for Disability Services, concerned Standard 2 (21 per cent of complaints), Standard 1 and Standard 10 (18 per cent each) and Standard 8 (10 per cent).



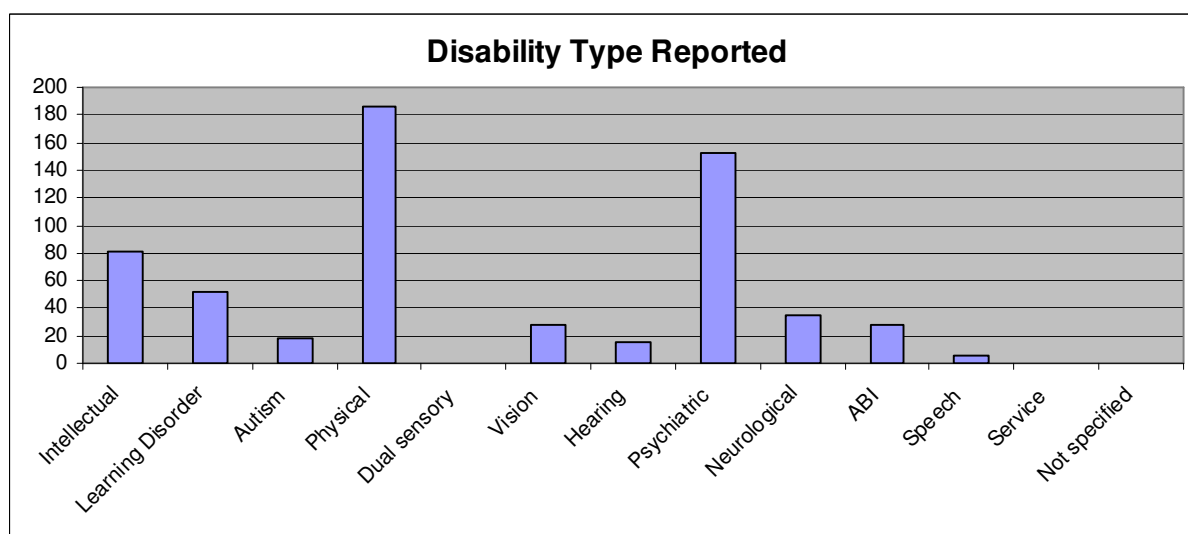
### Age of complainants

Most complainants were aged between 20 and 59. Thirty-three per cent did not report their age.



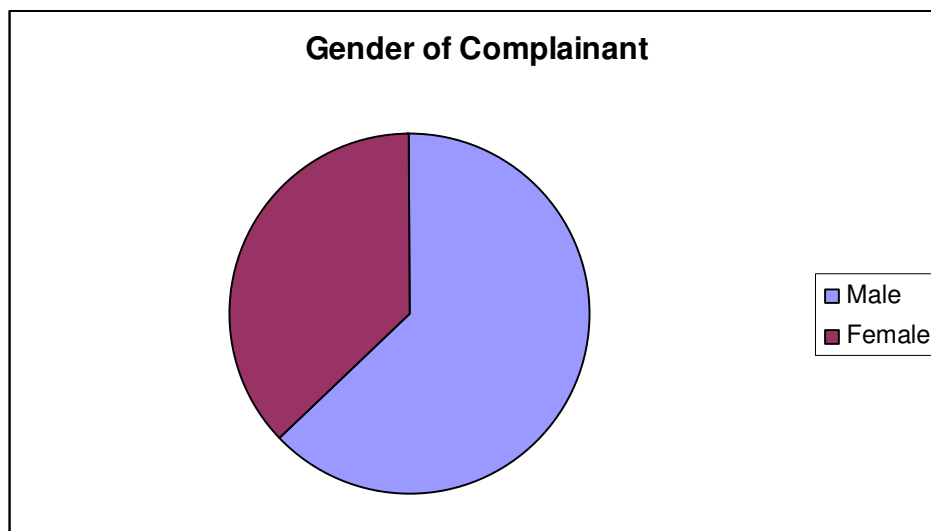
### Type of disability

Most complaints came from people with physical, psychiatric and intellectual disability – 31, 25 and 13 per cent respectively. This is consistent with previous years where most complaints were received from these disability groups.



### Gender of complainants

Fifty-nine per cent of complainants were men, and 39 per cent women. In the remainder of matters the complainant's sex was not disclosed, or the matter related to a continuous improvement request from a service.



### **Sexual Assault in Disability and Aged care Action Strategy (SADA) Project**

The SADA project completed its first year of a two year grant funded by Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs Office of Women. The aim of the project is to prevent and to effectively respond to sexual assault in disability and aged care residential settings.

Major achievements during this period include:

- SADA key stakeholder consultation

The first stage of the SADA project involved structured consultations with key stakeholders with the purpose of gauging the sectors level of understanding of the issues of sexual assault in residential settings and their ability to effectively prevent and manage such incidents.

Key stakeholders included: Department of Disability and Home Care (DADHC), Department of Health and Ageing, Aged Care Accreditation, NSW Victims Services, NSW Guardianship Tribunal, Aged Care Association Australia (ACAA), Aged and Community Services Australia, ACROD, People With Disability Australia.

- SADA NSW regional consultation

Forty-four consultations were conducted across the State with management and direct care workers from the disability and aged care residential sectors. The purpose of these consultations was to obtain views on the type and form of tools and resources that are useful and practical for frontline staff and to establish a qualitative baseline of the beliefs and attitudes of the various stakeholders to sexual assault within residential settings.



- SADA website [www.sadaproject.org](http://www.sadaproject.org)

A website was developed to provide information about prevention and response of sexual assault specific to the disability and aged care residential sectors.

- Information exchange

SADA was presented at various national and regional conferences held in the Sexual Assault, Aged and Disability sectors.

## **Key result area 8: Research**

Disability research continues to be dominated by medical and welfare models of disability, which locate the problem of disability in the individual and treat people with disability as subjects or objects of research. PWD plays a key role in promoting social-model research on disability that locates the problem of disability in an inaccessible and non-inclusive social environment. Social-model research also emphasises a partnership between researchers and people with disability in determining research priorities, and as participants in research. The principal means by which PWD pursues this area of work is through its contribution to the development of the Disability Studies and Research Institute.

### **Our research objectives**

- to contribute to the development of the Disability Studies and Research Institute
- to improve the availability and quality of Australian rights-based, ethical research based on a social model of disability
- to improve the participation of people with disability in disability research as equal partners, rather than as 'subjects' or 'objects' of research

### **Our achievements this year**

We continued to support the operations of the Disability Studies and Research Institute (DSaRI), which was established in 2002. DSaRI made significant progress in realising its organisational aims, and concluded the financial year in a robust position.

DSaRI commenced its move from PWD towards integration into the University of NSW. We are pleased to have assisted DSaRI to move towards independence and we look forward to maintaining an ongoing professional relationship into the future.

## **Key result area 9: Regional, national and international presence**

PWD has developed as a national representative organisation for people with disability with a role in the international disability rights movement, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region.

### **Our regional, national and international presence objectives**

- to become a major contributor and leader of the disability rights movement at the national level
- to become a major contributor and leader of the disability rights movement at the international level
- to ensure that our work at the nsw level continues to develop, and is not diminished by our expanded role at the national and international levels.

### **Our achievements in regional, national and international affairs**

PWD's contribution to national issues is discussed elsewhere in this report.

#### **Regional presence**

PWD contributed significantly to the following regional forums:

- Pacific Disability Forum; see the report under **Key result area 6** for information about PWD's work in this important forum.
- United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) ]

With other members of the Pacific Disability Forum, PWD participated in the UNESCAP Pacific sub-regional consultations on the review of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action in Nadi, Fiji, March 2007.

PWD participated in UNESCAP meetings on the BMF and other disability-related issues in July 2006 and February 2007.

#### **International presence**

PWD continued to play a key role in the development of the international Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

PWD participated in the Eighth and final session of the Ad Hoc Committee meeting on the Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, which met in New York, 14–25 August 2006, to debate and finalise issues in the draft text.



PWD then made representations and wrote to cabinet ministers and other politicians about the critical need to sign the convention once it was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2006.

## **Key result area 10: Governance and operations**

To realise its purpose as an organisation of and for people with disability, PwD must ensure that its governance rests in the hands of a diverse, skilled, committed, and continually renewing Board.

PwD cannot achieve its goals without effective organisational infrastructure. It must be well managed and resourced, and financially secure. It must make sure that its paid and volunteer staff are appropriately skilled and supported to carry out their work.

### **Our governance objectives**

- to ensure effective organisational governance by people with disability for people with disability
- to ensure that our Board is representative of our membership and constituency
- to ensure that our staff is well qualified for their work, are well supported, and engage in planned, continuous professional development
- to ensure that our workforce reflects both the diversity of our community and our commitment to affirmative action in the employment of staff with disability
- to ensure that our organisational infrastructure effectively supports our services and programs
- to ensure that our workplaces are healthy, safe, welcoming, and harmonious places to work and visit
- to plan effectively at all levels of organisational activity
- to continuously maintain and improve the quality of our services and projects, and our administrative and management functions
- to ensure that we are a financially secure organisation by building up capital assets and best practice management of financial and related risks.

### **Our achievements this year**

#### **Strategic plan development**

Significant energy and preparatory work were devoted to the development of our strategic plan *Forward to our future – Strategic directions 2007–2010*. This document will provide a framework and focus for the organisation's endeavours for the next three years.

Regular Board meetings were held to review and monitor progress of the plan's development.

### **Organisational technical infrastructure**

- The Management and Support Services Unit undertook a review of its information technology provisions (including hardware, software and technical support) and subsequently leased faster and more reliable computers. We also contracted ongoing onsite and remote maintenance and support, and were successful in securing a software donation from Microsoft.
- Electronic data storage formats across all units were reviewed, and purpose-built databases are being systematically rolled out to provide a tailored yet consistent platform for client data management. Mobile telecommunications were reviewed in order to provide staff with more equitable access.
- Substantial preparatory work was undertaken to introduce new payroll software to better integrate personnel and financial management. This was part of a wider, ongoing review of financial management systems intended to bring greater transparency and efficiency to financial and administrative operations.

### **Enterprise bargaining agreement**

Extensive work was undertaken towards a new enterprise bargaining agreement between PWD and staff. This process involved numerous meetings between staff, and between staff representatives and Board members. It is anticipated that negotiations will be finalised in the next financial year.

## **Treasurer's report**

I have just spent another challenging year as Treasurer of PWD. As this report, however, is for the financial year 06/07 and for part of that period Jan Daisley was Treasurer, I would like to thank Jan for her part in this and for leaving matters in good order.

There are many people who are responsible for managing the finances of PWD. I would like to thank the staff who do a magnificent job. My thanks go to the Finance Advisory Group which was active during 06/07. Members of this group were Heidi Forrest, Phillip French, Nola Buck and Lai Ha Wu. They all gave a lot of time and expertise to ensure that PWD continues to give excellent service to our members and clients and in the work we do for all people with disability.

Unfortunately our Finance Manager, Lai Ha Wu, left us in April '07. She had been with us at PWD for 12 years so this was a big loss. I understand that she is happy in her new job and we wish her well. Since then Kati Haworth, a finance consultant, has been working with us.

As you can see from the Auditors report, we posted an operational surplus of \$154,045 for 06/07, bringing our net position to a surplus of \$523,849. Our asset ratio for 06/07 was 1.94. One of the reasons for the surplus is that we were understaffed for some of the year, a decision necessitated by the uncertainties of funding for the Boarding House Project. Consequently some staff who resigned or took leave without pay were not replaced in 06/07. Total wages cost in 06/07 were \$132k less than the previous year as a result. .

There are other reasons for this surplus. Kati Haworth, our finance consultant, points out the surplus arising from adjustments to leave and redundancy provisions, annual corrections to expenses taken up in previous years. These provisions are a reflection of staff attrition. Additionally, there were adjustments to Fringe Benefits relating to GST input tax credits as well as accrual reversals which directly contributed to the bottom line surplus. Finally, Workers Compensation refunds in 06/07 significantly exceeded that of the previous year. This surplus for 06/07 will need to carry forward to cover anticipated increases in overhead expenditure in 07/08.

On behalf of the Board I would like to thank Lai Ha Wu and Kati Haworth for all the work they have done in keeping myself and the Board up to date on financial matters during the period of this report.

I acknowledge with great appreciation the financial assistance of our funding bodies and major donors this year:

- Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
- NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care
- Australian Government Attorney General's Department



- Australian Federation of Disability Organisations
- Australian Government Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination

We have been very pleased with the services of the auditor provided to us and now recommend to members that LBW & Partners be appointed as auditor for the 2007-2008 financial year.

I would like to wish the incoming Treasurer all the very best and hope he/she finds the position as satisfying and rewarding as I have found it to be.

Hazel Freed  
**Treasurer**  
31 October 2007



## **Financial Statements 2006-2007**