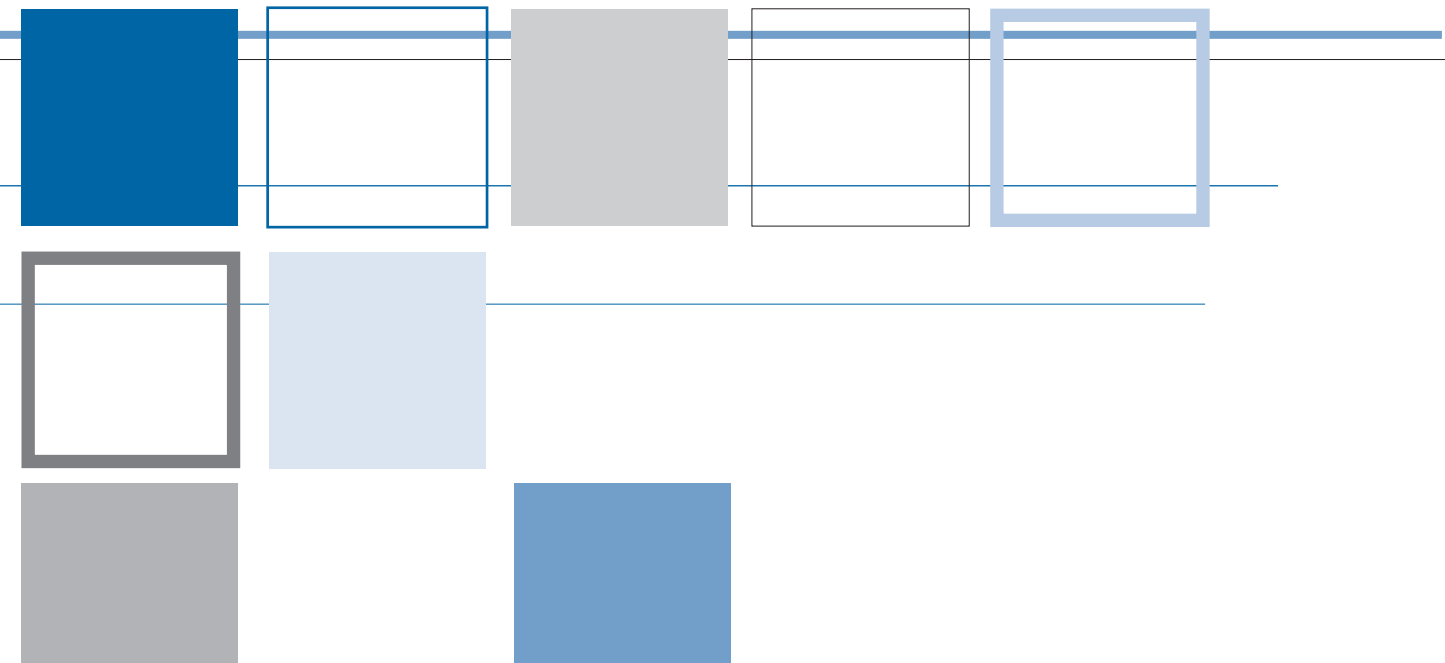




people with disability

Forward to Our Future Strategic Directions 2007–2010



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President's foreword

It is with great pleasure that I introduce the Strategic Directions 2007-2010 of People with Disability Australia Incorporated. This plan, titled 'Forward to Our Future', contains within it the way ahead for our organisation as it evolves and meets the challenges and recognises the opportunities that present in the coming years.

The proud history of People with Disability Australia is marked by milestones of progress and achievements in the disability rights and advocacy movement. We reflect on the important work helping bring about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and our continuing efforts to have the Convention ratified by our Government. We consider our work at a local, state and national level and regionally in Asia and the Pacific in helping foster social justice and enabling people with disability to live as fully participating members of their accessible, inclusive community.

Our tradition continues and our energies are undiminished as changing social and political environments highlight the constant need to safeguard rights won and advocate for advances in a society where people with disability may be disadvantaged, discriminated against, marginalised and abused.

We steadfastly remain a committed and passionate organisation for and of people with disability which proudly proclaims, vigilantly protects and passionately pursues the human rights of those in our community, and beyond, with disability.

The nine Key Result Areas of the Strategic Directions will provide the framework and the way ahead and focus our efforts on this important work.

The Strategic Directions 2007-2010 have been compiled as a result of input and work by Members of the organisation, the Board of Directors and Staff members and other stakeholders. I thank everyone involved for their time and thoughtful contribution.

Now that we have a blueprint called 'Forward to Our Future', it is our collective task to build on this and bring the plan to fruition. I commend this document to you.

Robert Farley
President

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Introducing People with Disability Australia

People with Disability Australia Incorporated is a national disability rights and advocacy organisation. We exist within the international human rights framework and engage in a number of activities, which include individual, group and systemic advocacy and representation, consumer protection, information, education and training.

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 were founded in 1980, in the lead up to the International Year of Disabled Persons (1981), to provide people with disability with a voice of our own. We have a fundamental commitment to self-help and self-representation for people with disability, by people with disability.

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.

We are part of an international network of disabled peoples organisations through Disabled Peoples International.

We are a non-political, non-profit, non-governmental organisation incorporated under the *Associations Incorporation Act, 1984* (NSW).

Our activities are supported by substantial grants of financial assistance from the Commonwealth 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 – 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 recognised, respected and celebrated.



Our purpose – how we will achieve our vision

Our purpose is to be a leading disability rights, advocacy and representative organisation of and for all people with disability, which strives for the realisation of our vision of a socially just, accessible, and inclusive community.



Our values – what we believe

We believe that people with disability, irrespective of our age, gender, cultural or linguistic background, religious beliefs, 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
- must be empowered to exercise our rights and responsibilities, without fear of retribution.

Our principles – the way we will go about our work

In realising our vision, purpose and core values, we will be guided by the following principles:

- We will be passionate, innovative and fearless in the promotion and defence of the rights and interests of people with disability.
- We will be accessible and responsive to our community, and inclusive of its diversity.
- We will actively facilitate and value the involvement of people with disability in our organisational governance and policy and program development.
- We will encourage, empower and support the civic participation of people with disability.
- We will be collaborative and supportive in our relationships within the disability rights movement as a whole, at the local, regional, state, national and international levels.
- We will be accountable for our activities to our members, to people with disability generally and to the public.
- We will always act with honesty and integrity.
- We will be resourceful and efficient in obtaining and managing the resources needed to undertake our work.
- We will recognise and value the contribution of our members, our Board, our staff and volunteers towards the achievement of our vision.

Key target groups

People with Disability Australia is a disability rights and advocacy organisation within the wider human rights framework. Our work addresses the discrimination, marginalisation, poverty and human rights abuses that people with disability experience. We work with all people with disability, with a focus on people with disability who are in vulnerable and marginalised situations:

- people with disability experiencing abuse and neglect
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability
- people with disability who are in institutions
- people with disability who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless
- people with disability who are incarcerated or at risk of incarceration
- people with disability living on income support
- refugees with disability and people with disability in immigration detention centres
- people with disability who access or are attempting to access disability employment services
- people with disability from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- women with disability
- children and young people with disability
- people with disability who live in regional, rural and remote areas
- people with disability who are unable to experience their sexuality or who do not have access to sexual health supports
- people with disability living in the Pacific region.

Key Result Areas

Our Strategic Directions 2007-2010 is divided into nine Key Result Areas, each of which is a major area of internal and external organisational activity. In each Key Result Area, we set out objectives, which are the goals we want to achieve during the period of this plan. In a much more detailed version of these Strategic Directions, developed for internal use, these objectives are supported by a number of strategies, which describe in detail how each objective will be achieved, as well as by a series of performance indicators, which will help us monitor progress.

Our Key Result Areas are:

- 1. Engaging members**
- 2. Communicating effectively**
- 3. Educating the community**
- 4. Advocacy**
- 5. Providing sector representation and coordination**
- 6. Building capacity with partners**
- 7. Protecting consumers**
- 8. Influencing national, regional and international mechanisms**
- 9. Building governance and organisational capacity**

Key Result Area 1: **Engaging members**

PWD is a membership-based organisation. Its legitimacy as a representative voice for people with disability depends on its large and diverse membership, and the degree of engagement members have with its work. Its sustainability and relevance over time also depends on a continuing process of membership retention, development, and renewal.

Objectives

1. Retain, expand, diversify and value our membership base across Australia
2. Encourage active involvement of our members in the organisation and in the human rights movement
3. Keep our members informed in appropriate ways about our work and achievements, and activities within the disability sector

Key Result Area 2: **Communicating effectively**

PWD is a major provider of disability rights and consumer information. Information can build resilience and self-help capacity, enabling people with disability to work the system to ensure their needs are met. Effective information dissemination also supports disability activism, and therefore positive social change for people with disability. It is also a key way of linking the experiences of people with disability, creating positive social identity, and reducing social isolation.

Information can be a source of empowerment for people with disability. However, if it is not available in formats accessible to people with specific communication needs, it can also be a source of disempowerment. For this reason PWD must aim to be a model of best practice in information accessibility. PWD must also ensure that its internal information systems effectively support its various services and activities, and that there is effective communication between staff, and between staff and directors.

Objectives

1. Be a leading communicator within the human rights community
2. Provide accessible and culturally sensitive information about our services, projects and activities
3. Provide effective information, advice and referral services for people with disability, their associates and the general public in relation to human rights issues
4. Manage internal communications effectively

Key Result Area 3: **Educating the community**

PWD is a major provider of disability awareness, values-based and rights-based education for people with disability and their associates and for specialist and generic service providers. Education is a key means to achieve social change. By raising awareness of disability concerns, it is often possible to change community attitudes, particularly where these are based on incorrect information and assumptions. Education is also a key way of transmitting new ideas, positive values and practical skills, and therefore of promoting positive change and innovation. It can also assist people with disability to develop their advocacy and self-help skills to work the system to ensure their needs and rights are addressed.

Objectives

1. Educate the general community and change attitudes by raising awareness about the needs and rights of people with disability
2. Provide training and education to empower people with disability in the areas of human rights and self advocacy
3. Market human rights based training to specialist services and mainstream organisations, and to develop this function as a viable business area
4. Organise seminars and other events for academic and specialist groups to further education and knowledge about human rights and disability issues

Key Result Area 4: **Advocacy**

People with disability remain among the most marginalised and disadvantaged members of our community. They are frequently subject to discrimination, abuse and neglect. PWD has a fundamental role in responding to this vulnerability and disadvantage through its advocacy functions. Our individual and group advocacy functions aim to promote and protect the rights of individuals and groups of people with disability, and ensure that their needs are met. Our systemic advocacy function aims to achieve fundamental positive change to social structures and processes that result in the marginalisation and disadvantage, exclusion, and neglect and abuse of people with disability. Our legal advocacy function aims to protect and promote the legal rights of people with disability at both the individual and systemic levels.

Objectives

1. 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
2. Promote innovation and systemic change in society that delivers accessibility, social justice, and inclusion for people with disability in all aspects of community life
3. Promote and protect the legal rights of people with disability and their associates, and ensure their access to justice

Key Result Area 5: **Providing sector representation and coordination**

PWD is a major peak representative organisation for people with disability. This involves representing the interests of people with disability within government, industry, civil society and in the media. As a peak body PWD also plays an important role in coordinating the sector of interest constituted by people with disability and their associates.

Objectives

1. Be a leading public spokesperson and commentator on the human rights of people with disability
2. Support the disability rights and advocacy sector to be an effective force for social change

Key Result Area 6: **Building capacity with partners**

PWD plays a significant role in assisting particularly disadvantaged population groups of people with disability 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. Major current capacity-building partnerships include work with organisations of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders with disability, and work with disabled peoples' organisations in Pacific nations.

Objectives

1. Support the development of representation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability at the NSW and national levels
2. Support the development of representation for people with disability in the Pacific region
3. Promote human rights for people with disability in development programs and practice

Key Result Area 7: **Protecting consumers**

PWD operates two major consumer protection services on behalf of the Australian Government: the National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline, and the National Disability Service Complaint Resolution and Referral Service. Both services are key aspects of the Australian Government's quality assurance strategy for disability services. PWD will continue to explore opportunities to develop disability consumer protection services in key areas.

Objectives

1. Promote greater awareness that will reduce the incidence and impact of abuse and neglect
2. Ensure timely and appropriate referrals of allegations of abuse and neglect to appropriate agencies for investigation
3. Manage and resolve complaints in an independent, impartial, transparent, timely and fair way and in accordance with the Disability Services Standards
4. Promote greater awareness of best practice complaint management
5. Identify and pursue opportunities to provide specialist consumer protection services for people with disability and their associates in key target groups

Key Result Area 8: **Influencing national, regional and international mechanisms**

PWD is a leading national representative organisation of and for people with disability, with a major role in the international disability rights movement, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. At the national, regional (Asia-Pacific) and international levels, PWD plays a significant role in key forums, meetings and processes in order to influence positive human rights outcomes of people with disability

Objectives

1. Influence and contribute effectively to human rights at the national level
2. Influence and contribute effectively to human rights at the regional level*
3. Influence and contribute effectively to human rights at the international level

* 'Regional' is defined here as the Asia-Pacific region

Key Result Area 9: **Building governance and organisational capacity**

PWD is an organisation of and for people with disability. To realise its purpose, PWD must ensure that organisational governance rests in the hands of a diverse, skilled, committed, and continually renewing Board, capable of managing the affairs of the organisation, and of representing the interests of Australians with disability.

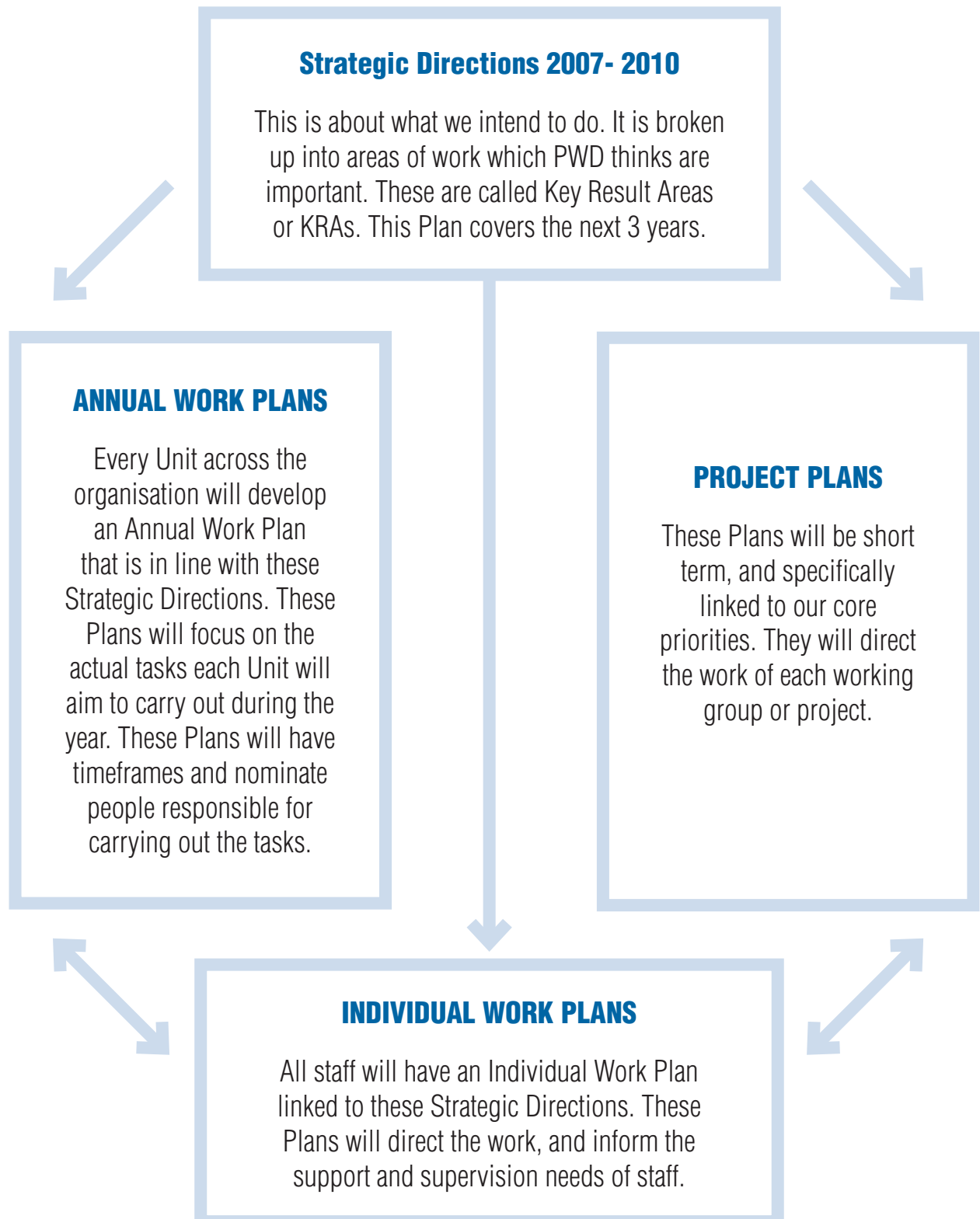
PWD cannot achieve its goals without effective organisational infrastructure. It must remain well managed and resourced, financially secure, and ensure that paid and volunteer staff are appropriately skilled and supported to carry out their work.

Objectives

1. Ensure effective organisational governance by people with disability, for people with disability
2. Ensure that our Board is representative of our membership and constituency
3. Ensure that our staff is well qualified for their work, well supported, and engage in planned, continuous, professional development
4. Ensure that our workforce reflects both the diversity of our community and our commitment to affirmative action in the employment of staff with disability
5. Ensure that our organisational infrastructure effectively supports our services and programs
6. Ensure that our workplaces are healthy, safe, welcoming, and harmonious places to work and visit
7. Plan effectively at all levels of organisational activity

8. Continuously maintain and improve the quality of our services and projects, and our administrative and management functions
9. Ensure that we are a financially secure organisation by building up capital assets and best practice management of financial and related risks
10. Ensure that our services and projects, and administrative and management functions are effectively supported by written policy and procedure
11. Ensure that we attract, utilise, educate and support volunteer staff and student and vocational interns
12. Ensure equitable access to our services and projects for disadvantaged population groups
13. Engage and participate in research that supports the objectives of the Strategic Plan

PWD's Planning Framework



Review and monitoring

Monitoring Progress

A sub committee of the Board including staff representatives will be established to monitor progress under the 9 Key Result Areas. Every six months, this Committee will report to the Board on this progress.

To monitor this progress, PWD will develop Annual Business Plans.

Board, management and team meetings will structure their agendas and workplans in line with the 9 Key Result Areas. Individual performance assessment processes will be referenced to these Strategic Directions.

The Board will report on progress against these Strategic Directions to its members via the Annual Report and other PWD publications.

Evaluation

At an Annual Planning Day, the Board will check whether the goals of the previous Annual Business Plans were achieved. Also at the Planning Day, PWD will evaluate the success of the Annual Business Plans in meeting the goals of these Strategic Directions.

The Board will then be able to direct the staff, and make resource allocation decisions for the following year, in line with the outcomes of the evaluation. In other words there will ideally be a link to the budget planning process.

Review

These Strategic Directions will be reviewed at the end of the 3 year period using the monitoring and evaluation reports collected over the life of these Strategic Directions. The results will assist in developing the next Strategic Directions.

