

People With Disabilities ACT Inc
(PWD ACT)

Policy and Procedures Manual
Part 2 – Membership and External Relations

March 2008

Table of Contents

- 1 Membership 3
 - 1.1 Categories of membership..... 3
 - 1.2 Eligibility for and rights of PWD ACT membership 3
 - 1.3 Membership application procedure 3
 - 1.4 Membership registration procedure 3
 - 1.5 Cessation of membership 4

- 2 Privacy 5
 - 2.1 Policy..... 5
 - 2.2 Procedure..... 5

- 3 External communication 6
 - 3.1 Methods for communicating with members and stakeholders 6
 - 3.2 Public affairs policy 6
 - 3.3 External comment policy 7

- 4 External representation 8
 - 4.1 Procedure for members representing PW DACT..... 8
 - 4.2 Procedure for staff representing PWD ACT 8
 - 4.3 External committee selection procedure 8

- 5 Consultation 10
 - 5.1 Policy..... 10
 - 5.2 Procedure for an issues based consultation 10
 - 5.3 Procedure for annual planning consultation..... 10
 - 5.4 Procedure for consulting with other advocacy organisations 11
 - 5.5 Feedback procedure..... 11

- 6 Sponsorship..... 12

- 7 Complaints 13
 - 7.1 Policy..... 13
 - 7.2 Procedure..... 13

1 Membership

1.1 Categories of membership

The members of an incorporated organisation are effectively its owners, and at the same time they are bound by its rules/constitution. PWD ACT has four categories of membership, each of which has different eligibility criteria and associated rights. They are:

- individual membership
- associate membership
- consumer organisation membership
- associate organisation membership.

1.2 Eligibility for and rights of PWD ACT membership

Individual membership

This is open to anyone who has a disability who is at least 18 years old and who agrees with the objectives of PWD ACT. Individual members can propose and second motions and have one vote at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Individual members can be elected to the Board or any committee.

Associate membership

This is open to anyone who does not have a disability who is at least 18 years old and who agrees with the objectives of PWD ACT. Associate members cannot move or second motions, or vote at any meeting. They may not be elected to any committee.

Consumer organisation membership

This is open to any organisation which agrees with PWD ACT objectives, and in which at least 75% are people who have a disability and at least 75% of the members of the Organisations management committee are people who have a disability. These members vote and participate in PWD ACT through a nominated representative. Proof of this nomination must be presented before the start of the meeting. They can move and second motions and have one vote at the AGM.

Associate organisation membership

This is open to any organization which is not controlled by people with a disability, but which agrees with PWD ACT objectives. These members cannot move or second motions, vote at meetings and they may not be elected to any committee. Otherwise they may participate in all other activities of PWD ACT.

1.3 Membership application procedure

Membership application forms are on the back of the PWD ACT brochure and can be downloaded from the PWD ACT website.

1.4 Membership registration procedure

As required under the Associations Incorporation Act 1991, PWD ACT keeps an up to date register of all members, which is available for inspection by PWD ACT at all reasonable times. It includes the name and address of each member of the organization, their category of membership and the dates at which membership commenced and ceased.

1.5 Cessation of membership

A person ceases to be a member of the organisation in the even of

- death;
- resignation;
- expulsion;
- failure to renew membership;
- ceasing to exist (if the member is a corporate or institutional member).

2 Privacy

2.1 Policy

In order to fulfil its systemic advocacy role PWD ACT may collect personal information (including sensitive and health information) from its members. PWD ACT will comply with the privacy obligations outlined in the Privacy Act 1988. In particular PWD ACT will:

- provide detailed information to members on their rights under the privacy legislation. (See Appendix A).
- ensure that personally identifying information, including photographs, is not used in advocacy work or for publicity, unless formal permission is given;
- protect members' privacy when they access PWD ACT services or visit PWD ACT premises;
- ensure personal information collected and retained is correct and up-to-date;
- ensure all information entered into the Consumer Skills Register Internet site is password protected and will not be obtainable for other users on the website.
- store personal information, either hard copy or electronic, securely;
- provide access to individuals to review personal information held about them on request; and
- ask any individuals seeking referral to engage the other agency personally, wherever possible, rather than passing personal information through PWD ACT.

2.2 Procedure

PWD ACT is highly conscious of the importance of privacy, and privacy conventions are embedded in the way it does business in a range of areas including the policy and procedure for communication – including internet protocols, membership, events management, consultation, and office procedure - particularly records management.

3 External communication

3.1 Methods for communicating with members and stakeholders

The following methods of communication are used by PWD ACT

- a PWD ACT email list
- via the PWD ACT website (www.PWDact.org.au)
- through a monthly bulletin
- through other peak organisations
- through People With Disabilities Australia
- mail outs to PWD ACT mail list
- feedback forms (See Appendix A)
- telephone
- internet special interest networks.

When communicating with members the following must be considered:

- the language used and whether the document is accessible (easy English)
- the need for providing the information in other formats (eg Braille, audio);
- the methods members use to access information;
- the relevance of the nature and content of the information for members;
- the cost of the communication method.

PWD ACT is fully committed to ensuring that its communication is widely accessible. However this commitment operates in an environment of limited resources, and it is not always possible for PWD ACT to fund fully accessible formats for communications.

The PWD ACT monthly bulletin

The bulletin is the mainstay of PWD ACT communication with members and stakeholders. It is an easy read, compact and timely way of keeping members and allies informed about advocacy work, issues and coming events. The EO is responsible for compiling the bulletin each month, in consultation with the President, and for distributing it.

The PWD ACT website

The website is also an important part of the PWD ACT external communication strategy.

3.2 Public affairs policy

The Board or any staff member of PWD ACT shall not approve or in any way support any public affairs action or activity that in any way brings PWD ACT's name into ill repute.

Therefore the EO and/or Board shall not:

- make, or knowingly allow to be made, any statements to the press or any other public media or in any public situation, that are derogatory or in any way damaging to PWD ACT;

- endanger PWD ACT's public image or credibility, particularly in ways that could hinder the achievement of PWD ACT outcomes; and
- engage personally or allow any staff to engage, in any public role or activity that is not consistent with the objectives or achievements of PWD ACT's outcomes.

Procedure for breach of public affairs policy

The President should be advised of any perceived breach of the public affairs policy. The President will decide on the appropriate course of action. In extreme cases this may invoke disciplinary provisions.

3.3 External comment policy

No Board member is authorised to speak on behalf of PWD ACT to the media, at a public forum, to Government or to any community organisation or business without the prior approval of the President of PWD ACT. If a Board Member wishes to speak publicly on a particular issue of concern to PWD ACT, the initial approach must come to the EO who will relay this information to the Executive for a decision on the matter.

External comment procedure

Media contact

- Any contact with PWD ACT made by the press or media should be referred to the President or the EO for comment unless previously arranged with the Executive or full Board.
 - The Board of PWD ACT has approved model statements on a range of standard topics, including wheel chair accessible taxis, accessible housing, employment, education. The EO is delegated to provide these statements to the media without seeking specific approval. See Appendix E – to be provided. The EO is responsible for ensuring that these statements are regularly reviewed by the Board and updated as required.
 - The Board may also delegate certain members to be spokesperson on a particular topic.
- When PWD ACT wishes to initiate media contact, a media plan will be developed and implemented by the Board as indicated below.

Public statements

- Public statements will be issued from PWD ACT with the entire Board nominating a spokesperson for contact purposes.
- In the case where several people are nominated as contact persons, PWD ACT will, at a Board meeting, consider the issue and agree the relevant comments that may be given so that consistent and correct information is provided.

Government contacts

Contact from Ministers or Departmental staff that directly relates to PWD ACT should be referred immediately to the EO or the President.

4 External representation

From time to time PWD ACT will be invited to sit on external committees and accepts this as part of its advocacy role where the committee is relevant to achieving the objectives of PWD ACT.

4.1 Procedure for members representing PW DACT

Members representing PWD ACT on an external committee must:

- sign the prepared external representation agreement (See Appendix C);
- disclose if there is payment for representation and the nature of payment method;
- agree that PWD ACT is paid a fee to administer the funds if paid through PWD ACT (to compensate for bank costs etc);
- conscientiously attend meetings of the committee to which they are appointed;
- liaise regularly with PWD ACT Board Members and the EO;
- remember they represent all people with disabilities across the ACT, not themselves.
- the representative must liaise with the EO who will provide details for peak disability contact persons;
- liaise with other members of the committee on issues of relevance;
- seek information and support from PWD ACT and to consult with other members of the community where appropriate;
- provide PWD ACT with copies of any documents or reports requiring consultation with people with physical disabilities;
- provide a written report to PWD ACT after each committee meeting and an annual report on the issue when requested for the Annual Report.

4.2 Procedure for staff representing PWD ACT

- Where staff members represent PWD ACT on external committees, the above rules also apply.
- Where there is a payment to be made for the staff member's representation, this is to be paid directly to PWD ACT unless the staff member takes the equivalent unpaid time off work to attend the event.

4.3 External committee selection procedure

Where PWD ACT receives an invitation to nominate a representative to a committee, working body, government or other community committee, the following will take place:

- The EO will email the information to all members of the Board. This will include background information on the project and as much information as possible.
- Where an individual wishes to nominate, a short background paper (no more than 1 page) providing up to date information on the background and experience of the person nominating for the position, including employment and voluntary activities, as well as contact details should be supplied to the EO for inclusion with the nomination.

- A closing date will be set by the EO for nominations to be received.
- The EO will notify the organisation responsible for calling for nominations and advise of the nomination, giving full detailed information supplied by the individual;
- The EO will inform PWD ACT of the nomination outcome;
- The EO will ensure that, costs associated with travel and accommodation (if required) are met by the requesting organisation or department, calling for nominations.
- All positions will be reviewed each year in order to ensure that the best person is representing PWD ACT on external committees.

5 Consultation

5.1 Policy

Consultation is fundamental to PWD ACT's systemic advocacy role. PWD ACT will consult with people with disabilities across the ACT, on a number of issues as they arise. In addition it will consult at least annually with people with disabilities to identify the issues of priority concern to them for inclusion in the PWD ACT annual planning process. As far as possible, within the resources available to it, PWD ACT will use communication methods which facilitate the best participation of members for these consultations.

PWD ACT will also consult with other advocacy organisations on a regular basis and will encourage ongoing feedback from members, colleagues and stakeholders in the disability sector.

5.2 Procedure for an issues based consultation

When a request for comment on an issues paper, or similar, is received by the EO the following procedures apply:

- the request is sent to Board members for comment and input, along with any other relevant material on the issue;
- Board members may be asked to distribute this information further, to gain the widest input possible;
- a draft paper is prepared as a result of comments received from Board members and others;
- the draft paper is circulated to all Board members and any other interested parties for comment;
- responses to the draft paper are compiled by the EO and the paper is adjusted in consultation with the President;
- the final paper is sent to the relevant body with a copy to Board members;
- a copy of final paper is filed in the PWD ACT office; and
- when feedback is received on the outcome of the issue, it is provided to Board members and other interested parties for their information.

5.3 Procedure for annual planning consultation

- At least six weeks prior to the Board's annual planning process, the Board may invite all members to participate in a consultation meeting to determine the highest priority needs for the sector.
- Participation may be via physical presence, email, phone, written submission or with the assistance of an aide. People will be asked whether they require any particular assistance to participate and where possible these needs will be accommodated by PWD ACT.
- The Board will give strong consideration in its annual business plan to the priorities identified by members;
- The Board will provide feedback to members on the plan and how it was developed;
- The Board will provide regular progress reports to members on the implementation

of the plan.

5.4 Procedure for consulting with other advocacy organisations

PWD ACT maintains close informal links with the other disability advocacy organisations in the ACT. As at March 2008 these were: ADACAS, Women with Disabilities, Advocacy for Inclusion and the Client Guardian Forum.

5.5 Feedback procedure

- PWD ACT encourages feedback via its monthly bulletin and will ensure that feedback forms are available at all of its activities.
- The EO will collate information from any feedback received and provide regular reports on external feedback to the Board.

6 Sponsorship

PWD ACT is committed to ensuring that its financial arrangements are carried out in an ethical manner. This may include entering into sponsorship alliances with corporations, foundations, individuals and/or other non-government organisations. It is recognised that, provided adequate safeguards are in place, such alliances can provide important financial and marketing support to support PWD ACT's mission and mandate.

Any sponsorship would be guided by these principles

- Sponsorship of any activity will not entitle any sponsor to influence any decision of PWD ACT.
- PWD ACT will not enter into sponsorship arrangement where the association with the prospective partner or acceptance of the sponsorship would jeopardise the financial, legal or moral integrity of PWD ACT or adversely impact upon PWD ACT's standing and reputation in the community.
- Any sponsorship alliances or partnerships must be consistent with existing PWD ACT policies.
- Any sponsorships must have significant financial commitment from the sponsor to help offset any costs associated with the activity.
- All sponsorship relationships must be identified and recorded for information
- Naming rights associated with any sponsorship must be approved by the Board.
- Sponsorship over \$500 will be embodied in written contractual agreements between PWD ACT and the sponsorship partner (See Appendix D).

7 Complaints

7.1 Policy

PWD ACT believes the better an organisation handles complaints, the higher the esteem in which that organisation is held by its stakeholders and the community generally. Accordingly, PWD ACT will maintain an effective complaint handling system to help resolve any dissatisfaction about PWD ACT's conduct, policies, procedures or services. PWD ACT will publicise methods of making a complaint and provide a complaint form for written complaints (See Appendix D). Complaints will be addressed expeditiously and information obtained through client feedback and complaints will be used to inform policy, operations and allocation of resources. PWD ACT will ensure that people with disabilities have adequate access to the complaints system.

7.2 Procedure

Receiving a complaint

- A complainant can make his or her complaint in any form he or she chooses, with the proviso that the issues in the complaint should be clearly articulated.
- Where the complaint is by telephone, a file note should be taken of the telephone conversation to form the basis of the complaint and additional information or documentation sought as appropriate.
- If an allegation is serious or complex, it is best to receive the complaint in written form.
- All complaints must be acknowledged in writing (whether by email or post) within 3 business days of receipt.
- Where the matter has been resolved within this period, the acknowledgment can include the resolution.
- Complainants who ask to remain anonymous should be forewarned about the extent to which can affect the capacity to resolve the matter. However, where a complainant requests that they remain anonymous, this anonymity should be protected.
- The complaint should be placed on a file as soon as it is received and this file should be kept in accordance with the records management procedure.

Handling a complaint

- Where the matter can be dealt with quickly and within the authority of the EO, this should be done.
- Where the situation is more complex, the EO should seek guidance from the President and the matter should be resolved as quickly as possible.
- Where the matter requires a change to the broader policy or approach of PWD ACT a short report and recommendations should be prepared for the Board's consideration.
- Where the matter cannot be resolved immediately, the complainant should be kept in formed of progress at regular intervals.

- The complainant should be informed of the outcome of the complaint.

Recording and reporting on complaints

- Accurate information on the nature of the complaint, the outcome of the complaint and any changes to PWD ACT policy or operations made in response to it should be recorded
- A short report should be provided to each Board meeting on the nature of any complaints received during the month
- Unless, as indicated above, the Board is required to give the matter more specific attention.

Appendix A



PWD ACT Feedback Form

PWD ACT welcomes your comments and feedback on the information, presentation and functionality of our services and website to ensure that your information needs are met.

I _____
Of _____ address

_____ e-mail

I have a

- Suggestion
- Idea
- Request for assistance/advice
- General comment

Please add extra details in the box below

I would like to receive a response

Thank you for taking the time contributing to a better service for people with disabilities in the ACT.



Privacy Policy and Disclosure Statement

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to outline how People with Disabilities ACT Inc. complies with our privacy obligations as required under the [Privacy Act 1988](#) and, in particular, the National Privacy Principles set out in that Act.

As an organisation, one of our principle concerns is the health and welfare of our members. A high level of trust and confidentiality is required to ensure the confidence of the members we service. We aim to ensure that:

- your privacy will be protected when accessing our services or visiting our premises;
- the personal information collected about you and retained in our records is correct and up-to-date; and
- you can access your personal information for review on request.

Collection, use and disclosure of personal information

We recognise that the personal information we collect may be of a highly sensitive nature. We have adopted the highest privacy compliance standards to ensure such information is protected.

We may collect personal information (including sensitive and health information) regarding yourself for the purpose of providing community advocacy and support services to our members. Personal information collected may generally include:

- your name, address, telephone number and e-mail address
- previous and current medical history, if directly relevant to the services you request of PWD ACT

We may collect personal information about you:

- directly from you;
- from some other person, organisation or agency on your behalf with your prior consent; or

- from your parents if you are aged under 16 years.

Personal information collected by us may be used or disclosed:

- for the primary purposes we advise you of at the time of collection of the information by us;
- as required or authorised by law;
- for secondary purposes which are directly related to the primary purpose of collection of the personal information such as for quality assurance, staff training and as may be required by our insurers.

All photos taken at PWD ACT public events will gain permission from the photographed person before release.

We do not use or disclose personal information about you for direct marketing purposes.

Security and storage of personal information

We will use all reasonable endeavours to ensure that personal and health information about you is protected from misuse, loss, unauthorised access, modification or disclosure, other than in accordance with this policy or the [Privacy Act 1988](#).

Your personal information will be stored either in hard copy or electronic form in our files and/or IT systems.

Gaining access to information we hold about you

We will, on written request, provide you with access to the personal information we hold about you.

Your request to obtain access to your information will be dealt with in a reasonable time. We may recover from you our reasonable costs of providing you with access (eg photocopying costs).

Keeping your personal information up to date

We take reasonable steps to ensure your personal information is accurate, complete and up to date whenever we collect or use it.

If you think any of the personal information we hold about you is inaccurate, incomplete or out of date, please contact us and we will correct the information.

Internet site privacy policies

We may collect contact information (such as e-mail addresses) from you and other

individuals via our internet site.

All information entered into our Consumer Skills Register Internet site will be password protected and will not be obtainable for other users on the website.

How to contact us

If you wish to provide any feedback to PWD ACT, please complete our evaluation form which is available on our web site www.PWDact.org.au. To find out more about how we deal with personal information, please contact:

The EO

Kylie Mahar
02 6290 1984
0437 877 356
PWD ACT@shout.org.au

Appendix C

External Representation Terms and Conditions Agreement

The following agreement must be signed by each person who represents PWD ACT on any external committee:

Representation on an external committee

Name of Committee

Name of nominated person _____

Address: _____

Will you receive a payment of any kind for representation to this committee? Yes No

If Yes, please disclose the nature and amount of payment

I have read the External Representation Policy which contains information on how best to represent PWD ACT on external committees and the reporting requirements.

I understand my responsibilities to report back on meeting events and outcomes after each meeting and agree to abide to all terms and conditions set by PWD ACT in this policy.

Date:

Date:

Signature:

Signature:

Appendix D

SPONSORSHIP CONTRACTS/LETTERS OF AGREEMENT GUIDELINES

Sponsorship contracts and letters of agreement must include the following clauses:

- **Description of the Sponsorship Alliance:** The contract will contain a comprehensive description of the item, project or event around which the sponsorship alliance is constructed, including a list of obligations for both parties. Obligations of the parties in market research or sponsorship analysis will be explicitly itemised in the contract.
- **Terms of Agreement:** The dates for commencement and conclusion of sponsorship alliances must be included in the contract.
- **Key Personnel:** The contract will include the names of the individuals from both parties primarily responsible for the sponsorship, and to whom issues regarding the contract are to be referred.
- **Limitations on and Approval of the Use of the PWD ACT's name:** The following clause limits the use of our name by the sponsor in its own internal and external promotion and advertising as per the negotiated arrangements: "*Neither party, in any situation, whether within or outside the parameters of the sponsorship, shall be deemed to be the spokesperson for, or the representative, of the other party.*" The use of the PWD ACT's word mark, logo or crest must be stipulated in all contracts and agreements.
- **Exclusivity:** PWD ACT may wish to offer outright or industry exclusivity to a sponsor or the sponsor may request such exclusivity within the sponsorship alliance. Where relevant, the following statement regarding exclusivity will be included in the contract: PWD ACT agrees that [name of sponsor] shall be the sole and exclusive sponsor of [name of initiative] for the term of this agreement."
- **Financial Terms and Schedule of Payments:** The total value and the payment schedule of the sponsorship agreement between the parties will be clearly identified in the contract.

Obligations of the Parties to Each Other: The obligations of the parties are dependent upon the form of the alliance and will be determined on an individual basis. Responsibility for any market research or program or evaluation duties, reporting, and approvals will be specified in the contract, along with specific criteria and methodologies for the evaluation of the sponsorship.

Time frame (if any)

Follow up (if required)

Name of person who took complaint

Date

Appendix E

PWD ACT Model Public Statements

To be provided