

QUEENSLANDERS WITH  
DISABILITY NETWORK

# ANNUAL REPORT

2020-2021



INFORM  
CONNECT  
LEAD  
INFLUENCE



## **Acknowledgment of Country**

We acknowledge the people who are the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which we gather.

We thank the peoples of the land past and present for their custodianship and for the opportunity to meet in this place. Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN) also acknowledges people with disability who have come before us and died in institutional settings, as well as those who are still trapped in institutions or silenced by institutional practices. We take on the responsibilities of being clear about the rights of ALL people with disability and, where necessary, speak in an informed and considered manner, for those who cannot speak for themselves.



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### VISION:

**People with disability are active and valued citizens**



#### Leadership

- 28 Group Convenors
- 14 Local NDIS Champions
- 20 Emerging Leaders
- 8 Peer Mentors
- 69 QDeNgage Consultants
- 25 Disability Inclusive Disaster Resilient (DIDR) Peer Leaders



#### Policy contributions

- 55 Committee and consultations
- 33 policy submissions



#### Community and stakeholder education

- 7 QDN lead and partnered events
- 28 conferences or forums
- 17 policy areas



#### Targeted Outreach

- 1193 enquiries
- 623 referrals
- 229 met NDIS access
- 196 plans approved



#### Social Media

- 519 posts
- 2631 followers of QDN page



#### Media Engagement

- 11 media releases
- 28 press and radio interviews



#### Communication

- 85 blogs
- 6 e-bulletins
- 12 fortnightly news

#### ATSIDNQ

- 97 new members
- 1313 total members
- 9 Yarning Circles
- 7 Champions
- 4645 contacts via face to face, emails, yarning circles, consultations
- 110 community service organisations engaged
- 47 social media posts



ATSIDNQ  
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander  
Disability Network of Queensland



#### Governance and operations

- Board governance and renewal strategic planning
- Quality Management System recertification to ISO 9001:2015



#### Power of Peers

- 27 groups
- 157 meetings
- 28 group convenors
- 1414 contacts at meetings
- 1969 members on closed Facebook groups



#### QDENNGAGE

- 38 engagements
- 13 Queensland locations
- 17 customers
- 369 opportunities for people with disability to engage



#### Disability Inclusive and Disaster Resilient Queensland

- Queensland and National Awards - Resilient Australia
- 2857 contacts with people with disability, community, disability and emergency sectors
- 25 Peer Leaders with disability trained in PCEP
- 281 people with disability introduced to PCEP through peer support
- 22 people with disability individually mentored in PCEP
- 47 people with disability made PCEP plans
- DIDRR framework and toolkit resources
- Person-Centred Emergency Prep



#### Membership

- 1240 Ordinary Members
- 54 Support Organisations
- 767 Supporters
- 1313 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Network



#### Awards

- 2020 Resilient Australia Award Community Category - Queensland
- 2020 Suncorp Resilient Australia National Community Award (National)
- IGEM 2020 International Women's Day Champion of Change Award



#### QDN lead and partnered events

- Covid Conversations
- Stand With Us advocacy campaign
- My Disability Matters
- Make Disability Count
- NDIS Reforms
- DIDRR



# PART 1 – INTRODUCTION

## About Us

Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN) is a Company Limited by Guarantee, governed by a Board of Directors, all people with disability, operating for 19 years.

QDN's vision is one of people with disability as active and valued citizens of Queensland.



### QDN believes that:

- people with disability have a right to belong and contribute as empowered, free citizens who are valued, present, participating and welcomed
- the place of people with disability in community is welcomed where they are genuinely given opportunities to contribute and participate.
- people with disability need to be in communities where their individuality, talents, and lived experiences are recognised
- people with disability are not afforded the same value, opportunities or access to community life, and inclusion is conditional and easily withdrawn
- many people with disability are excluded from the most basic experiences
- current exclusionary practices are unacceptable, must be challenged and affect the whole community
- responsibility to ensure that people with disability have a place and are resourced to belong in community is shared.

QDN receives funding from governments for activities engaging people with disability across the state-wide network, systemic advocacy, peer support, disability inclusive disaster risk reduction activities around person-centred emergency preparedness, targeted outreach to assist people with disability to access the NDIS, developing responses to policy, and driving social and economic changes on issues that align with our values.

#### QDN's work includes:

- informing people about important issues and collaborating for change
- connecting people with disability to peer support to enable people to get information, make connections, and build their knowledge and capacity
- leading and having a voice on key issues including disability policy and projects that help improve the lives of people with disability
- influencing change towards a more inclusive, accessible community where people with disability have equal rights.

#### QDN is a member driven organisation.

##### Our membership includes:

- Ordinary Members (people with disability) who have voting rights and eligibility to nominate for the Board of Directors
- Supporter and Support Organisation Members (do not have voting rights)
- Corporate Members (do not have voting rights)

## Our Motto

Nothing about us without us.

## Membership

Membership numbers 2020-21

- **1,240** Ordinary Members
- **1,313** members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Network who identify as Aboriginal people or Torres Strait Islanders
- **767** Supporters
- **54** Corporate Members

**TOTAL OF 3374**



# Our Strategic Direction

## Our Vision

People with disability are active and valued citizens of Queensland.



## Our Mission

We lead, inform, connect, and influence to empower people with disability to be fully included as citizens in the social and economic life of the community as per the rights recognised in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.

### Our Values

#### AUTHENTIC VOICE

We are with, and for, all people with disability and ensure those with limited or no voice are heard and valued.

#### RIGHTS

We believe in and model a human rights approach that recognises disability as a social issue.

#### COLLABORATIVE ACTION

We work together to learn from the collective experiences, values, and wisdom of people with disability.

#### RESPECT

We value human difference and diversity, and build mutual respect through openness and fellowship.

#### RESILIENCE

We are hopeful, even about the most complex challenges, and are here for the long term.

### Our Strategic Goals

**GOAL 1:** To promote and maintain active, vibrant local networks that inform our work and build local capacity.

**GOAL 2:** To enhance the leadership and influencing capability of people with a disability.

**GOAL 3:** To let people know about the lives of people with disability and have their experience and expertise valued and recognised.

**GOAL 4:** To influence governments and others to bring about full and equal participation, citizenship, and protection of rights for all.

**GOAL 5:** To grow an independently sustainable, effective, accountable, and rights based organisation that reflects our vision, mission, values, and principles.

# Chairperson's Report



## 2020-21

It is with pride and appreciation that I review the achievements of QDN's Board, members, and staff team in another challenging pandemic year.

I thank the Board for their leadership and stewardship, and CEO Paige Armstrong and our staff for their commitment and active support for our members and our work. Resulting in participation of our member network, peer leaders, emerging leaders, and our network of allies to build our growing QDN reputation to lead, inform and influence the Queensland community in a positive way.

Those contributions led to the:

- Stand With Us campaign getting a continuation of funding for independent disability advocacy
- My Disability Matters state election platform and advocacy toolkit
- NDIS Independent Assessments cancelled until next election at least
- Building Better Homes Campaign culminated on 30 April 2021, with a majority of Building Ministers around the nation agreeing to adopt a minimum 'silver' standard for the Liveable Housing Design Guidelines for new homes
- QDN continues to show leadership with people with disability leading critical conversations on COVID-19, digital skills, NDIS, and pioneering co-design and peer support activities in the Disability Inclusive and Disaster Resilient Queensland project. Peer support and connection has been essential to people with disability living safely and well in their local communities.
- QDN work during the COVID-19 pandemic ensuring that the needs and contributions of people with disability are actively sought by Governments and communities as they respond to the emergency. Specifically attracting funding to develop information and resources in health and housing regarding COVID-19.
- Input by people with disability through peer support and organisations has been critical to the Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) program and funding. This connection, knowledge, skills, and individual capacity within local communities is vital for people with disability.

This year, the Disability Royal Commission was extended until September 2023. This move acknowledges the importance of the Commission in ensuring that the experiences of people with disability are heard and understood so people can live lives free of violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation, across all the systems they interact with. This Commission is truly a once in a lifetime opportunity to raise the voices of people with disability and their families and illuminate their experiences to build better responses, systems, and safeguards for the future. I acknowledge the QDN members who have contributed to or made submissions and appeared at hearings of the Commission.

Engaging with the reform agenda around the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a significant vehicle for people to get the support they need to fully participate socially and economically. The Scheme exists because people with disability, their families, service providers and supporters came together. This must continue as through our active work we have been able to get changes to the planned NDIS reforms, particularly Independent Assessments that members told us were unsupported, unfair, and unwelcome intrusions into people's lives. The power of people is truly alive, and we must stay committed to continuing working together advocating for a co-designed and person-centred system.

I was also proud to launch QDN's inaugural Emerging Leaders program in March 2021 and the Nigel Webb Bursary to recognise our outgoing QDN Chairperson for his contributions. The program has a diverse



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group of 20 outstanding people with disability from across the state who come together to hear from leaders in the disability space and learn and practice together. I look forward to QDN continuing to grow and nurture this next generation of leaders.

The Board reviewed our strategic plan in November 2020 further developing and refining our mission statement and strategic goals to reflect our emphasis on developing leadership and increasing capacity based on the lived experience of people with disability. Changes to actions in our plans also focus on the depth and reach of our work and acknowledging cultural groups in our membership.

I am looking forward to QDN's continued high standard of leadership and governance in supporting people with disability to inform, connect, lead and influence change, and ensure there is truly nothing about us without us.

**Des Ryan**  
Chairperson  
QDN Board of Directors

# Chief Executive Officer's Report



## 2020-21

Thinking back over 2020-21, I feel a sense of wonder at QDN's capacity to adapt, grow and make change amidst incredibly challenging circumstances. These have been hard times for everyone and particularly for people with disability who have experienced additional impacts of isolation. I acknowledge the difficulty and challenge our members, their families and supporters have experienced.

The busyness of last year has continued without respite, and I am proud of how much we have achieved through working together even while physically apart. QDN has continued to respond not only to the pandemic, but to the overarching inclusion agenda and to policy and practice in health, housing, and transport, NDIS, the Disability Royal Commission and more.

COVID-19 brought many challenges and opportunities to adapt. QDN members and staff have actively collaborated with governments to ensure that people with disability have the information they need, and that their rights to services and supports are upheld.

QDN was able to hear the issues arising for people and respond when approached by government to develop user-friendly resources. This has included support and information around the COVID-19 vaccine rollout to 20 Level 3 Supported Accommodation Facilities; a resource, in partnership with Health Consumers Queensland, called Know Your Rights – getting the healthcare you need during COVID-19, and a series of easy read fact sheets for the Department of Housing that covered temporary changes to residential tenancy laws during COVID-19. QDN's advocacy around digital inclusion with GIVIT during the pandemic has led to funding for a new project in 2021-22 to address the pressing issue of gaps in digital access and inclusion.

Our Disability Action Week event, 'Mind the Gap: bridging the disability digital divide', was a virtual event, attended by over 100 people from across Queensland. Speakers and participants looked at innovative ways to close the digital divide for all people with disability, across all areas of their lives. It was held in partnership with the Community Services Industry Alliance (CSIA) and funded by the Queensland Government.

QDN contributed to the Building Better Homes campaign and celebrates its huge success with mandatory minimum Silver Level accessibility standards included in the National Construction Code. We congratulate the Queensland Government on its commitment to the new Code and appreciate the broad range of work we can do in housing for people with disability with funding from the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy.

Brisbane North Primary Health Network has funded QDN to develop mental health care pathways for people with an intellectual disability through evidence-based consultation and co-design, which will be a great resource when finalised and released. This work recognises QDN's ongoing advocacy around the health of people with intellectual disability – we have contributed to the recently released National Roadmap for Improving the Health of People with Intellectual Disability.



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Our Peer Support Groups have continued to grow and establish new face to face and virtual groups. Our Group Convenors participated in a health and wellbeing program around dealing with stressful COVID times. The Peer Support Groups have demonstrated their flexibility and adaptability during COVID, learning new skills and new technology, and transitioning between online and face to face meetings as restrictions are implemented and relaxed.

QDN has been pleased to partner with allies on several projects this year. This includes the Targeted Outreach program, in which QDN and our partners Queensland Council of Social Services (QCROSS), Aged and Disability Advocacy (ADA) Australia and the Queensland Government, are helping more eligible Queenslanders to join the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and experience the benefits. The project includes QDN's Local Champions who are people with lived experience working in their communities to connect people with disability, particularly those who are marginalised, to the Scheme, with great success. To date, the project, which includes Queensland Government Disability Connect and Outreach Team – Assessment and Referral Team (ART) working together with QDN and partners, has supported over 1700 people, of which over 1560 people have active NDIS plans valued at more than \$111.5 million, which is a positive outcome for the new NDIS participants and the broader Queensland disability sector and communities.



The Disability Inclusive Disaster Resilience Queensland project continued to deliver positive outcomes this year, with the move to Phase Two, to implement, evaluate and showcase Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DIDRR) in action at all levels – individual, disability and community service providers, and government and emergency services. The project is a partnership with the University of Sydney, Community Services Industry Alliance and Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy. QDN’s work has focused on supporting the individual preparedness of people with disability, and a peer-to-peer support approach to increasing emergency preparedness – a great example of collaboration and the power of peers. QDN has also worked in partnership with the University of Sydney to develop a COVID-19 specific Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness Tool, which went on to win the Resilient Australia Community Award Category Queensland Division, and was

Highly Commended at the National Resilient Australia Awards, a great recognition for this innovative, inclusive piece of work.

I sincerely thank the dedicated QDN members, peer leaders and QDeNgage consultants for your commitment, engagement, and willingness to provide support and connection to others, and to engage in policy issues to inform and influence our collective direction as COVID-19 continues to impact. To the team of wonderful staff at QDN, thank you for your hard work, your dedication, and for delivering many positive outcomes to the people we serve. I also thank QDN’s Board of Directors for your unflinching efforts in leading and governing QDN, to ensure it stands of, by and for people with disability and delivers on our goals, mission, and vision.

**Paige Armstrong**  
Chief Executive Officer

# Governance

## Board of Directors

Meet the QDN board of directors. A passionate and dedicated group of leaders.



**Des Ryan**  
Chairperson



**Sharon Boyce**  
Deputy Chair



**Jane Britt**  
Director (Chair Nominations  
and Performance)



**John MacPherson**  
Director



**Peter Tully**  
Director



**Peter Gurr**  
Director



**Gary Matthews**  
Director (Chair Audit and  
Compliance)



**Stacey Miller**  
Appointed Director



**Colleen Papadopolous**  
Company Secretary

## Our Five Strategic Goals

### GOAL 1

TO PROMOTE AND MAINTAIN ACTIVE, VIBRANT LOCAL NETWORKS THAT INFORM OUR WORK AND BUILD LOCAL CAPACITY

### GOAL 2

TO ENHANCE THE LEADERSHIP AND INFLUENCING CAPABILITY OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY



### GOAL 3

TO LET PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT THE LIVES OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY AND HAVE THEIR EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE VALUED AND RECOGNISED

### GOAL 4

TO INFLUENCE GOVERNMENTS AND OTHERS TO BRING ABOUT FULL AND EQUAL PARTICIPATION, CITIZENSHIP, AND PROTECTION OF RIGHTS FOR ALL

### GOAL 5

TO GROW AN INDEPENDENTLY SUSTAINABLE, EFFECTIVE, ACCOUNTABLE AND RIGHTS BASED ORGANISATION THAT REFLECTS OUR VISION, MISSION, VALUES, AND PRINCIPLES.

## GOAL 1

# TO PROMOTE AND MAINTAIN ACTIVE, VIBRANT LOCAL NETWORKS THAT INFORM OUR WORK AND BUILD LOCAL CAPACITY



QDN continues to promote, grow, and maintain a strong, active, vibrant member network in communities across Queensland. The network deeply informs our projects, activities, and systemic policy work.

A key element of QDN's work is connecting people with disability to share information, connect, influence, and build local leadership. QDN supports members with disability to come together in different ways and locations across Queensland.

The member network has been key to COVID-19 responses, both contributing to and drawing from the intelligence, information, support, and resources available. Much of its work has been moved online for a significant part of the year and members have adjusted well to the move, building their capacity to engage and connect in this way.

QDN's networks include the State-wide Member Network, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Network Queensland.

## State-wide Member Network

QDN's state-wide network is a network of people with disability who live in metropolitan, regional, rural, and remote locations across Queensland. It is a peer network and knowledge base by and for people with disability, exchanging information about important issues, and offering an opportunity for people to have a voice in a variety of ways around key systemic policy issues and experiences for better outcomes.

QDN members continue to identify the key policy areas that impact upon their lives, and in 2020-21 these areas have included COVID-19, the NDIS, Disability Royal Commission, digital connection and literacy, transport, housing, employment, health, and the power of peers.

QDN continues to actively recruit new members, and support and strengthen the voice of people with disability and the diversity of lived experiences to ensure Queensland is inclusive for all its citizens, and that everyone can have a voice and be heard.

**In 2020-21, the member network grew from 1781 to 1902.**

The state-wide member network's impact on individual and local capacity and on systemic policy issues in 2020-21 was significant.

Nationally we saw the contribution of the network to:

- campaign against the proposed and subsequently discarded NDIS reforms – almost 250 people contributed to the NDIS Reforms: Pause, Reset, Co-design online forum to hear about the proposed reforms, provide feedback and propose solutions
- the Building Better Homes campaign which saw the inclusion of mandatory Silver level standards in the National Construction Code.

At the state level, the Queensland election provided a great opportunity for members' individual and collaborative action including:

- contribution to the development of *My Disability Matters* – QDN's election platform and advocacy toolkit - which many members enthusiastically promoted in their electorates
- more than 100 members engaging election candidates through the online forum Make Disability Count

Over 250 people with disability, families and supporters rallied to support the successful Stand With Us campaign for funding for independent advocacy.

At a local community level, various groups have been actively involving themselves in building capacity in their communities, championing local and grassroots issues such as inclusive tourism, transport, and emergency preparedness.



## Peer Support Groups

In 2020-21, QDN worked with funding from the Information Linkages and Capacity Building grants for the Power of Peers project, which is now managed by Department of Social Services. Power of Peers included supporting existing and establishing Peer Support Groups, building capacity and leadership of the Group Convenors, and developing, designing, and implementing the inaugural Emerging Leaders program. In addition, an additional targeted COVID-19 grant was received through ILC funding for a COVID Wellbeing series for Group Convenors to support them in managing their own wellbeing and supporting Group members.

**QDN has 27 Peer Support Groups across the state who meet face to face and virtually. The following provides a summary of each of the groups and their work during 2020-2021. The Power of Peers project established seven (7) new groups this year. These new and existing Peer Support Groups are a critical mechanism for building the knowledge, skills, and capacity of people with disability at a local level.**



## Brisbane Peer Support Group

The Brisbane Peer Support Group is a vibrant group that brings together people with disability to talk about topics that are important to them. In this financial year the group invited guest speakers to talk about taxi regulations, housing shared equity, and also discussed the National Disability Insurance Scheme's proposed reforms and the impact of e-Scooters on the local community.

## Brisbane Hot Topics Peer Support Group

In 2020, the Brisbane and Gold Coast Hot Topics groups for people with an intellectual disability started regularly meeting online with self-advocacy groups for people with disability in Canada. During these online meetings, the Hot Topics and Canada groups planned an online event for International Day of People with Disability on 3 December 2020. Partnering with ASID, the Hot Topics groups hosted a two-hour webinar bringing over 50 people together to hear from people with an intellectual disability from Australia and Canada who shared their stories and concerns around keeping connected as a community during COVID-19. The full webinar is available on QDN's webpage. The Brisbane Hot Topics Peer Support Group is continuing to meet with the Canada group to work together on another event in 2021.

The Brisbane Hot Topics Peer Support Group also invited speakers to their meetings to learn more about topics like the COVID-19 vaccines, and the Queensland *Human Rights Act* and have been helping each other to start planning for an emergency or disaster.



### **Caboolture Peer Support Group**

The Caboolture Peer Support Group has been supporting each other during the COVID-19 situation and meeting in person when they can. The group has been working on digital stories to capture the vast insight and experiences of group members in this community. The group has also been learning more about planning for a disaster and emergencies, and how they and their families can be more prepared. The group is also interested in influencing change and has been discussing topics like the NDIS proposed reforms.

### **Cairns Peer Support Group**

The Cairns Peer Support Group has been busy creating a space where people with disability can have a voice. The group invited Paige Armstrong, QDN's CEO, to be part of this conversation to talk about peer network activities. The group has also hosted a Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction workshop working with people with disability to start thinking about preparation for an emergency.

### **Deception Bay Peer Support Group**

During this year long time group convenors and members Rebecca Bellis, Eileen Goodenough and Roger Read stepped down from leading the group. They were all instrumental in creating a group where people with disability felt connected, informed, and welcomed. The group has continued to be busy supporting each other to make a plan for an emergency or disaster, promoting the group in the local community, connecting with the Council, having BBQs at the local park, finding out about local services, supports and assistive technology, and being informed about campaigns like Make Renting Fair.



## Brisbane North Peer Support Group

The Brisbane North Peer Support Group, formerly the Fitzgibbon group, has moved its meetings to Nundah. As a group, members have been working with Councillor Allan to find ways to improve the accessibility and safety of a number of public transport areas around Nundah. After listening to the feedback from local community members with disability, the Transport for Brisbane Team have installed an extra panel of fencing at one bus stop and are looking to install a ramp at another loading zone. The group will continue to work with Council on other areas of concern to enhance the safety and accessibility of transport for all people.



## Gold Coast Peer Support Group

The Gold Coast Peer Support Group co-convenors Bev Best and Warwick Best, who helped set up this group, stepped down from the role this year. Bev and Warwick fostered a group that was inclusive and supported, helping people in the area better understand topics like accessing and utilising the NDIS. In May 2021, QDN invited people with disability on the Gold Coast to get together to talk about what they would like from this peer support group going

forward. Participants shared ideas on topics like accessibility, NDIS, health and wellbeing, and tourism. The group is also keen to get out and about on the Gold Coast, exploring more of what the coast has to offer for people with disability.

## Gold Coast Hot Topics Peer Support Group

The Gold Coast Hot Topics Group creates a space for people with an intellectual disability to come together to talk about topics that are important to them. The group has enjoyed being part of online discussions with similar groups in Canada as well as having a regular social gathering at a local restaurant. The group has also been discussing the importance of getting prepared for an emergency or disaster as well as being informed about the NDIS.



## Gympie Peer Support Group

In November 2020, people with disability came together to talk about forming a peer support group in the area. From this community conversation, the Gympie Peer Support Group has been meeting regularly to talk about topics that are important to them in their community. The group invited Gympie Mayor, Glen Hartwig, to join them

for a walk through the central Gympie high street, Mary Street. The group took the opportunity to talk with the Mayor about what is great about Mary Street for people with disability as well as some accessibility challenges. These include getting around shop signs on the footpath, accessing shops with steps, uneven pavement surfaces and access to pedestrian crossing buttons for people using wheelchairs. The Mayor noted the feedback and happily chatted with group members. The group will continue to work in the local community to bring about more awareness for people with disability.

### **Ipswich Peer Support Group**

The Ipswich Peer Support Group is an active group which meets monthly to discuss topics like self-managing NDIS plans, COVID-19 and what this means for members and consumer rights. The group has been part of informing the local Council's disability action plan; and have had Queensland Fire and Rescue join their discussion around making a plan for an emergency, and which services and supports in the community can help.

### **Mackay Peer Support Group**

The Mackay Peer Support Group has been focusing on the tools and resources around Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction. The group partnered with the Council to hold a session to help people with disability better understand what they need to know in an emergency, how to start planning, and where to find the right information at the right time on the Council's Emergency Dashboard.



### **Rockhampton Peer Support Group**

The Rockhampton Peer Support Group, which formed late in 2020, has been out and about in the community promoting the group and building awareness of people with disability in Rockhampton. The group is passionate about inclusive tourism and promoting the area as a great destination for people with disability to holiday.

### **Self-Management Peer Support Group**

The Self-Management Peer Support group is an online group for people with disability who plan or self-manage and for people with disability interested in finding out more about these options. This diverse group from across Queensland meet online once a month to share tips and experiences around self-managing their NDIS plans. The group is also creating a space where people requiring more assistance with their plan management can talk through aspects of the process to find solutions, share ideas, and build their capacity around plan management.

## Sunnybank Peer Support Group

The Sunnybank Peer Support Group transitioned to online meetings during COVID-19 and created a vibrant online community for people with disability. The group has welcomed speakers like Dinesh Palipana OAM and Queenslander of the Year, sharing his experiences as a doctor during a pandemic, and NBN Co talking about connecting to the NBN, which included tips and hints on using the internet. They have also discussed topics like self-managing NDIS plans, consumer rights, and accessing services and supports.

## Sunshine Coast Peer Support Group

The Sunshine Coast Peer Support Group has been working on developing a digital story on how to talk to people with disability in the community. The digital story will highlight what people with disability are doing on the Sunshine Coast and help to foster a more inclusive community. The group is also busy promoting the group and working with the local community to build awareness of the importance of peer support groups for people with disability on the Sunshine Coast.



## Tablelands Peer Support Group

In May 2021, QDN met with people with disability in Atherton to form the Tablelands Peer Support Group. Far North Queensland is subject to natural disasters, so the group focused their second meeting on better understanding person-centred emergency preparedness.

## Toowoomba Peer Support Group

The Toowoomba Peer Support Group has been meeting both face to face and online to ensure members can join the conversations even if they cannot attend in person. The group has been exploring topics like diversity and what it is like for each group member, social connectedness, and communication styles, as well as sharing stories and experiences about influencing change.

## Townsville Peer Support Group

The Townsville Peer Support Group has had a keen interest in emergency preparedness and working with people with disability and service providers to raise awareness of the importance of being prepared. The group also hosted information sessions for people with disability and key stakeholders on thinking about how you can get the right care, in the right place, at the right time during COVID-19 in Townsville.

## MAC Peer Support Group for over 65s

The MAC Peer Support Group is an online group for people with disability who are over 65 years old. The group has members from across Queensland, from Atherton and Cairns down to Brisbane and out past Toowoomba who meet monthly to talk about topics of interest for people over 65. The group invited guest speakers, like My Aged Care Navigators, to give them more information about this package, were part of online digital technology training to better understand mobile devices and started talking about planning for an emergency.

## Normanton Peer Support Group

The Normanton Peer Support Group is a group of people with disability who meet in the Gulf Country region of northwest Queensland. This group has a keen interest in accessing the NDIS, remote services and supports, transport and inclusive communities.

## QDN Y Peer Support Group for younger people with disability

The QDN Y Peer Support Group is a space for younger people with disability from across Queensland to meet online once a month to talk about topics of interest to them. The group has created an online space where younger people with disability can have a say and find out more about what is happening in their community. As part of their online meetings the group invited speakers to talk about climate change, Paralympics, accessible housing, NDIS plans, and NDIS quality and safeguards.



## Other Peer Support Groups

- QDN Facebook group
- Group Convenors Community of Practice
- QDN Women's Group
- Brisbane South Supported Accommodation Group

## COVID wellbeing series for Power of Peers Project

QDN Group Convenors have stepped up during the pandemic to support their members, family, networks, and community during this time. In 2021, QDN received some additional funding to develop and run a Wellbeing series for Group Convenors to help them develop strategies to support not only their own wellbeing, but to continue to provide this support to their group members. The wellbeing series run by an organisational psychologist, and held over zoom, provided group convenors with strategies around negative self-talk, managing stress, identifying when to prioritise your own wellbeing and take time out for yourself. The wellbeing series has been recorded and is available for QDN Peer Leaders in their online resource hub.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Network Queensland

Over the past twelve months, ATSIDNQ has been a part of a network that has had challenges, barriers and found great solutions in meeting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with a disability, their carers, families, community and providing support to non-Indigenous service providers. Fantastic relationships have been established through membership, networking with government and non-government agencies, and community groups.



ATSIDNQ has witnessed a lot of changes in the past year during this period of COVID-19. Changes in how we carry out business through community engagement, yarning groups, recruitment of Champions and Membership and address systemic issues through the Network. ATSIDNQ has readjusted the way we do business by connecting through mediums of social media, utilising teams, zoom and frequent telephone calls.

During these challenging times, ATSIDNQ has continued to operate to ensure the Network maintains the growth and support of existing members and potentially reach new members. New memberships for period 2020 / 21 were 96. The ATSIDNQ staff have engaged face to face with an estimated 2,000 people around Queensland this year. The Network has also supported 9 Yarning Group meetings, which have been successful in engaging participants across the Maryborough, Hervey Bay, Cairns and Brisbane North areas. The Yarning Groups have been a useful platform for information sharing and gathering feedback from members about issues of importance. During this period 3 new Champions were also recruited to represent ATSIDNQ.

The ATSIDNQ team also underwent some changes this year as senior project officer Bruce Simpson took leave to work for the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Engagement team at the Disability Royal Commission. Melissa Grundon took on the senior project role in late 2020 and has been joined by a number of ADA Australia Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander advocates and a new assistant project officer to continue to provide support and deliver key programs within ATSIDNQ.

ATSIDNQ continues to regularly connect in with members providing all communications, events, website, Facebook page and documents in accessible, culturally appropriate format. Members enjoy the Newsletters which shares personal stories, resources, training and NDIS information and support information. The newsletters were distributed via post and email as

requested by each member. Newsletters were also uploaded to the ATSIDNQ website, promoted via Facebook and distributed at a range of expos and cultural events across the state.

Great connections have been developed throughout the year with much needed robust conversations in exploring different ways to maneuver a membership body that maintains a strong, resourceful and a culturally safe platform. The Network is a collective voice that represents systemic advocacy, disability access, clearer NDIS pathways and is resourceful in needed supports. Strong membership voices provide great focus to stay on track of why the Network was established and what it signifies.



## GOAL 2

# TO ENHANCE THE LEADERSHIP AND INFLUENCING CAPABILITY OF PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

With this strategic goal, QDN focuses on the individual and collective capacity for leadership and influence of people with disability. This capacity building focus has shown up in many exciting ways this year.

New Peer Support Groups were formed under the Power of Peers project. Members continue to build their own capacity in Peer Support Groups to reach out to and engage with their local communities and each other. Group Convenors were supported to learn ways to maintain their own wellbeing, to continue their leadership in challenging times, and new Convenors were supported with training.

The Emerging Leaders program got off to a great start with a welcome workshop focused on transformational leadership and monthly virtual workshops offering a rich and diverse range of Queensland and Australian leaders with disability and the sector to give their leadership insights across a range of perspectives, with peer mentoring to follow each session. QDN's Board of Directors also established the Nigel Webb Bursary to give an emerging leader the opportunity to broaden their learning experience by traveling interstate.

The COVID conversation series was another opportunity for leadership by people with disability, offering an opportunity to hear information and respond with emerging issues and potential solutions.

QDN's work depends on the capacity of its members and a long-term strategy of building this capacity. These individual and group developmental activities continue to bear fruit in enhanced individual and collective leadership and influence. In the coming year, QDN will continue to build on this foundational work with the **development of a peer leadership framework to underpin our peer-centred approach.**



**QDeNgage leadership:**  
*“As a QDeNgage consultant, I feel liberated that I can share my skills and knowledge to be involved as a person with a disability in such transformational work”*

**Peer support groups:** *"We've worked on housing, policy issues, connecting with governments and councils. The peer support group has given all members an opportunity to talk about issues that matter to them"*

**Emerging leaders:** *"I want to achieve a public speaking role to give awareness to people out there whether they might be disabled or not, that they should be accepted in our communities."*

## Building Capacity of QDN Members, People with Disability and Leaders

Development of our members and leaders is a core part of QDN's business, building capacity for now and the future. This group of Peer Leaders includes people across a range of our project and policy work including Power of Peers – Group Convenors and Emerging Leaders, peer mentors working to support these projects, Targeted Outreach – Local Champions, Disability Inclusive Disaster Preparedness and Person-Centred Emergency Planning, QDeNgage, and our alumni of leaders who have worked on previous projects, all doing the work of building their own and their peers' capacity to lead and influence.

### Group Convenors

In 2020-21, QDN's 28 Group Convenors accessed 16 training, mentoring and monthly community of practice activities to further develop their leadership skills. QDN also welcomed a number of new Group Convenors who have been supported with induction and training in their roles, including

group facilitation, hosting meetings, and information about QDN including the Code of Conduct.

In October, Group Convenors came together for two days of leadership training. They explored topics such as transformational leadership, capturing digital stories, and recent changes to the NDIS. Convenors also meet monthly in a community of practice to reflect on challenges, share information, problem-solve, and support each other's learning and development.

Group Convenors have been supporting group members during COVID-19 and to support them, QDN secured funding from the NDIA for wellbeing sessions. Four online sessions were held covering topics such as identifying and managing stress and strategies for transferring these skills to other group members who may be struggling. QDN also recruited peer mentors to work with Group Convenors after each session.

### Local Champions

The 14 Targeted Outreach Project Local Champions are people with lived experience working in their communities to help people

with disability to learn about and consider accessing the NDIS and, if they decide to go ahead, connect them with the Targeted Outreach project team. They have met 12 times during 2020-2021.



## Emerging Leaders

On 3 December 2020, International Day of People with Disability, applications opened for the first QDN Emerging Leaders program. The program involves 20 emerging leaders who are people with diverse disability from across the state. The program is focused on building the future leadership of and by people with disability.

A welcome workshop in March was the start of this leadership journey, with topics including the nature of influence, how to be a leader as well as do the work of leadership, and U theory as a framework for social change. Participants learned about staying present in chaos, understanding change processes, looking after relationships and self as a leader, and crafted their own leadership questions.

Guest speakers in 2020-2021 have included Dr Chris Sarra, Director-General, Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnership,

Michael Hogan, Adjunct Professor to QUT School of Justice, Faculty of Law, Marg Rogers, CEO Community Resource Unit, Dr. Ben Gauntlett, Disability Discrimination Commissioner at the Australian Human Rights Commission, Professor Bruce Bonyhady, Executive Chair and Director of the Melbourne Disability Institute, Dr Lisa Stafford Fellow and Program Lead Centre for Justice QUT, and our QDN leaders including Nigel Webb, Des Ryan, Alex Baker, Sharon Boyce, Willie Prince, and Donna Best. The program will finish in November 2021.

Six peer mentors have been selected to work with the Emerging Leaders to reach their goals. Peer mentors meet with their Emerging Leaders mentees after each online workshop.

## Nigel Webb Bursary

In recognition of the contribution of Nigel Webb's extensive service, leadership, and contribution to



QDN, QDN's Board of Directors established the Nigel Webb Bursary for 2021. The Bursary is an initiative of the Board, with financial resources being allocated from QDN generated income. The Bursary is named in recognition of Nigel's contribution not only to QDN, but also more broadly to the Queensland disability sector. It was offered to people participating in the Emerging Leaders program to apply to be able to travel interstate to broaden their networks with nationally recognised leaders with disability. The Nigel Webb Bursary



recipient for 2021 was Jeni Lewington, who will carry out her activities for the bursary in 2021-2022 financial year.

### **Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction – Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness (PCEP)**

25 of QDN's peer leaders with disability from across the state participated and co-designed the PCEP Peer Leadership Program. The program provided these peer leaders with opportunity to develop their own individual emergency plans, connect other people with disability to emergency personnel, information, resources, lead person-centred emergency preparedness conversations individually and at the community level, and work together to influence change in their communities to ensure disaster planning is more inclusive of people with disability.

### **QDeNgage**

The activities of QDeNgage offer multiple opportunities for capacity building for individual consultants and the program. Engagements provide a forum for consultants to further develop their skills and capacity to be effective representatives

and offer their unique perspective in a useful way across a variety of topics, forums, and sectors.

To broaden and deepen our representation and capacity building activities, QDN is always looking for new consultants. In 2020-21, QDN offered several online forums for prospective consultants to understand what it means to be a QDeNgage consultant and lay the foundations for ongoing learning and development opportunities for people to take up this important role.

### **Other activities**

QDN has also set up a closed section of QDN's website to provide Peer Leaders with resources to support their development. The section enables access for participants to material from both the Emerging Leaders workshops and the Wellbeing Series.

The COVID Conversations series was also about building capacity of members – capacity to navigate our way through the pandemic, bolstered by information from experts, and capacity for giving feedback that clearly states the issue and focuses on solutions.

## Building Capacity through Information and Communication with Members



### Media Engagement

In 2020-21 QDN members, board and executive staff engaged in radio, print and TV interviews across a broad range of policy areas including covid vaccinations, advocacy, the NDIS, Disability Royal Commission, disability disaster planning, peer support, COVID-19, digital literacy, transport, and housing. QDN delivered

- 5 media releases
- 28 press and radio interviews



### Member Publications

#### e-Bulletin

The e-bulletin is an external publication distributed by email and print hard copy to over 2,000 members, supporters, and allies. The e-bulletin is a trusted source of accessible information about the key issues for people with disability, policy, trends and resources to members, supporters, and allies.

**QDN distributed 5 e-Bulletins to members**

#### General news and QDN News

QDN emails and publishes across multiple streams the very latest information relating to issues that affect people with disability on a fortnightly basis.

**QDN distributed 94 eblasts and QDN News**



### Social Media

QDN have significantly broadened our social media engagement. Our active media channels now include Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter.

**Across all channels in 2020-21 QDN has 5064 followers and made 316 posts**



### Website

Our website is the key channel for sharing information, news, events, and resources. Members actively engage with our dynamic website to access policy information and updates, and member and peer support group news. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the website has become a key source of information for people with disability and supporters for issues specifically impacting the disability sector.

**In 2020-2021 QDN's website had 78,519 views**



### Member Surveys

QDN undertook a number of surveys with members around key issues impacting upon their lives including NDIS, women's safety, employment, and general key issues.

**In 2020-2021, QDN received 393 responses to surveys**

## GOAL 3

# TO LET PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT THE LIVES OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY AND HAVE THEIR EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE VALUED AND RECOGNISED



QDN's work aims to build the capacity of systems, communities, and businesses to engage with people with disability. Influencing systemic change relies on the system and the system's users having capacity to work together. Over the life of the organisation, QDN has worked to build capacity in health, housing, emergency services, disaster preparedness, transport, and other systems to consider, invite, listen to, and respond to the system's impacts on the lives of people with disability.

Active participation in events and visibility across multiple sectors is another avenue for QDN to build capacity in systems, communities, and business to work with people with disability. QDN was involved in the following events in 2020-21:

## QDN led and partnership events

### COVID conversations

COVID Conversations were a series of expert discussions facilitated by QDN, in partnership with Health Consumers Queensland (HCQ) and Council on the Ageing Queensland (COTAQ), about what Queenslanders living with disability need to know during the pandemic. Break out rooms at each conversation gave people with disability an opportunity to express their experiences to those present and contribute to QDN's efforts to let people know about their lives and what was needed to support them during the pandemic.

Experts who were part of the discussions included people from the Queensland Department of Health, the Queensland Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors, the Australian Human Rights Commission, NDIA, NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, and the Every Australian Counts community.

**Total participants at COVID  
Conversations series: 329**



## My Disability Matters

QDN's election policy platform and advocacy toolkit for the 2020 Queensland state election was called *My Disability Matters* and the campaign was the biggest state election campaign QDN has ever run.

The reach of *My Disability Matters* in letting people know about the lives of people with disability and the issues that impact them was significant. There were 45 individual candidate responses to *My Disability Matters* and the five largest political parties in Queensland provided a formal response to QDN's policy platform. QDN was able to secure significant commitments before election day, including from the re-elected Palaszczuk Labor Government. We received a continued commitment to fund QDN as the peak disability organisation in Queensland and \$500,000 for a new project to be developed by QDN in partnership with Volunteering Queensland and GIVIT, giving Queenslanders with disability greater access to devices, data, and the digital skills they need to stay connected online.

Pre-election, QDN met with many candidates from multiple parties and post-election day, QDN sent introductory letters and congratulations to Government, Opposition leaders and new Ministers and Shadow Ministers in key portfolios.

- 8,928 people reached by *My Disability Matters* posts on Facebook
- 600 people viewed *My Disability Matters* on the QDN website
- 11 Peer Support Group meetings were held on *My Disability Matters*
- 296 people attended events hosted by QDN and our allies during the campaign
- 45 individual candidate responses to *My Disability Matters*

QDN partnered with eight **disability organisations for the Make Disability Count forum, attended by more than 100 people online, in which five candidates** from political parties engaged with participants around disability issues.

## Make Disability Count

QDN was proud to participate in a coalition of disability sector organisations to develop a shared seven-point election platform for the Queensland state election. The coalition consisted of QDN, ADA Australia – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Network of Queensland, Community Services Industry Alliance, Health Consumers Queensland, National Disability Services, Queensland Advocacy Incorporated, Queensland Alliance for Mental Health, and Queensland Collective for Inclusive Education. Pre-election, the coalition presented an online forum called *Make Disability Count*. **Over 200 people registered, and candidates from five political parties joined to answer questions on issues important to people with disability, their families and the organisations that support them.** Follow up emails were sent to all the parties to ask for their commitment to the collective platform.



More than 1500 people signed onto the campaign. The rally on 24 March 2021 in Brisbane and Rockhampton saw almost 250 people gather to show their support for Queensland Disability Advocacy. The day prior to the rally, Minister Craig Crawford announced the government's decision to extend advocacy funding, with \$8.1 million committed over the next two years. Key to this success was people with disability letting government know how essential access to advocacy services is in their lives.

## Stand With Us Advocacy campaign

Independent advocacy for people with disability is an essential way of people letting others know about their lives and needs. QDN joined with 14 other independent individual, citizen, and systemic disability advocacy organisations to form the Queensland Disability Advocacy Alliance (the Alliance) to ensure there was a continuation and commitment to funding Queensland disability advocacy.

The Alliance created and promoted the *Stand With Us* campaign to attempt to secure a commitment to funding beyond 30 June 2021. QDN was a key leader in the campaign, offering strategic direction, advice, design, and marketing.

## NDIS Reforms: Pause, Reset, Co-Design forum

During 2020-21, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) announced several reforms with significant potential impacts on service delivery and participant outcomes. In response, QDN undertook a range of work including member surveys, consultations with NDIA, and submissions to relevant inquiries. QDN also wrote to Minister Stuart Robert in his role as Minister for the NDIS, and subsequently sent a new letter to Minister Linda Reynolds on her appointment to the role.

In April, the Minister announced a pause on the reforms and QDN entered a partnership with six other organisations – National Disability Services, Community Services Industry Alliance, Queensland Advocacy Incorporated, Parent to Parent, ADA Australia, and Queensland Alliance for Mental Health.

**The NDIS Reforms: Pause, Reset, Co-design online forum on 19 May 2021 was attended by 247 people with disability, families, carers, and service providers giving feedback about the reforms and identifying solutions to deliver a world class NDIS. Minister Craig Crawford, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services opened the forum and gave his commitment to ensuring that the state's investment in the scheme continues to deliver for Queenslanders with disability, families, and the sector.**

The feedback from the forum highlighted the diversity of people with disability, and the importance of an individualised approach. The subsequent decision to abandon the proposed reforms was a huge victory for collaboration and for the voices of people with disability.

### **Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk**

**Reduction:** Over the last two years QDN has been a partner in the project 'Disability Inclusive and Disaster Resilient Queensland'. QDN members have supported disaster management systems to build their understanding of how to engage with people with disability in a meaningful way. Members have informed systems about the issues that affect their lives, worked with them to co-design responses, developed, tested, and promoted successful tools and trained people with disability in disaster planning so they can support others in the community to build preparedness.

### **QDeNgage:**

QDN's consultancy is a direct harvest of the external capacity building work of QDN. It connects businesses, government, and organisations to people with lived experience of disability who provide their expertise, feedback, and advice. The value added by the voices of people with disability is exhibited in every consultation, building the willingness and capacity of QDeNgage clients to consider, listen and work with people with disability in authentic and meaningful ways. This year, QDeNgage has worked with 17 organisations across multiple systems.

*We know that it is extremely important that the National Disability Strategy is primarily informed by people with disability, including their experiences and aspirations for the future. By partnering with QDN, people with disability could have meaningful and genuine input to the strategy, while being in a supported and trusted space (either online or face-to-face) with discussions led by people with disability. It also helped us to reach people with disability from multicultural backgrounds and those who were living in regional areas to facilitate their input into the strategy.*

*As an organisation, QDN were extremely effective and professional in being able to recruit people with disability, suggest ways that the consultation could be as accessible as possible, and facilitate the group.*

**Melanie Butcher, Director – Impact and Engagement @ the Social Deck**

**COVID-19 responses:** QDN's policy work around COVID-19 has been informed by bringing peer leaders together regularly in conversation to describe the impacts of systemic actions on people with disability and provide insights into what needs to be considered or done differently. Members have also been invited to inform the system through the COVID-19 conversations series, which provide an opportunity for people to highlight issues arising for people with disability, and are then shared with government and other organisations. This work has supported QDN to influence some of the ways the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments have managed COVID-19 responses.

Examples of this include:

- the invitation from Queensland Health to support the COVID-19 vaccination rollout in Level 3 accommodation facilities
- the inclusion of the Person-Centred Emergency Planning tool in the National Management and Operational Plan for People with Disability as an element of the Australian Health Sector Emergency Response Plan for Novel Coronavirus
- the value of the Know Your Rights resource to members and to Queensland Health in understanding the needs and rights of people with disability receiving hospital care during COVID-19.

## International Day of People with Disability event

*The Brisbane and Gold Coast Hot Topics groups for people with an intellectual disability started regularly meeting online in 2020 with self-advocacy groups for people with disability in Canada.*

*During these online meetings, the groups decided to co-host an event online on International Day of People with Disability, 3 December 2020.*

*QDN partnered with ASID to host a 2-hour webinar bringing over 50 participants together for people with an intellectual disability from all over Australia and Canada to share their stories and concerns around connection to community during COVID-19.*

## Gympie Group goes walking with the Mayor

*The Gympie Peer Support Group invited Gympie Mayor, Glen Hartwig, to join the Group in June 2021 for a walk through the central Gympie high street, Mary Street.*

*The group took the opportunity to talk with Mayor Hartwig about what is great about Mary Street for people with disability as well as where there are some accessibility challenges. These include shop signs on the footpath, shops with steps, uneven pavement surfaces and reaching pedestrian crossing buttons.*

*Mayor Hartwig noted the feedback and acknowledged Group Convenor Michael Condon's leadership in bringing the issues to his attention in such a creative, interactive way.*



## Conferences, forums, events

- Keynote speech at Think Tank – Housing access and support for people living with a disability
- Virtual Progress conference: Lessons learnt from the disability rights movement
- Premier’s International Women’s Day Reception
- Women’s Week Reception, Parliament House
- Queensland Health Reform Planning Group Virtual Workshop
- Queensland NDIS Community update - what’s new from 1 July 2020
- Aged Care Direction (No.8) – Queensland Health Briefings and information for aged care providers
- Department of Social Services – Scoping study on best practice engagement with people with disability conducted by The Social Deck
- Presentation on the NDIS Draft report from the Queensland Productivity Commission (Dr Karen Hooper) to providers
- Queensland Alliance for Mental Health member forum
- QShelter CEO & Senior Leaders Network Forum
- QCOSS - Post Budget breakfast
- QAI Annual General Meeting
- SUFY Function
- NDS – Members end of Year Event: 2020 in Review
- Queensland Health COVID-19 Vaccination Rollout Forum
- Second Action Plan for Housing 10 Year Plan
- AFDO Disability Justice Networking Forum
- Council of Homeless Persons Queensland Annual General Meeting
- Disability Advocacy Forum 2021 – NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
- Queensland Community Alliance Maroonprint Assembly with Deb Frecklington
- Queensland Community Services Peaks meeting - COVID-19
- Queensland Civil Society Summit
- QShelter CEO & Senior Leaders Network Forum
- Queensland Transition Advisory Forum
- Make Renting Fair Queensland Forum
- Queensland Community Peaks meetings
- QCOSS CEO’s Forum

## QDeNgage

In 2020-21 QDeNgage continued to assist businesses, organisations, services, and government to be more inclusive and accessible for the one in five Queenslanders who have a disability.

In line with QDN’s motto, ‘nothing about us without us’, QDeNgage’s approach is to ensure people with disability are engaged in the design, delivery, and evaluation of policy, programs and services so that they are inclusive for all Queenslanders.

Some examples of QDeNgage’s impact in 2020-21:

### Workability

QDeNgage consultants contributed to the Common Induction for NDIS Workforce Micro Credential, sharing key skills and attributes for Support Workers for self-managed NDIS participants.

## National Disability Strategy

QDeNgage participated in consultations to inform the National Disability Strategy 2021. Consultants offered responses to inform the overall strategy, community attitudes towards people with disability, the best way to engage people with disability, and how success of the strategy could be measured and reported.

## Communities, Housing and Digital Economy social housing

QDN collaborated with leaders of social housing policy and practice within the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy (DCHDE) to shape the Department's policies and processes through a better understanding of the needs of people with disability.

*"The workshop enabled participants from CHDE to get first-hand experience of working with QDN and highlighted the importance of co-design in working towards appropriate housing solutions for our customers with a disability. The ability for QDN to share lived experience with our staff was great in ensuring that this is considered as we move forward in planning and delivering our work. The value of gaining the end users perspective ensures good outcomes for customers.*

**Senior Occupational Therapist, DCHDE**

## Projects

### Targeted Outreach

QDN and our project partners Queensland Council of Social Services, Aged and Disability Advocacy (ADA) Australia and the Queensland Government are helping more eligible Queenslanders with disability join the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and experience the benefits of the scheme through the Targeted Outreach Project.

As part of the Targeted Outreach Project, Local Champions, who are people with lived experience, are working in their communities to help people with disability to:

- learn more about the NDIS
- decide if the NDIS is for them and how it can support them
- connect with the Targeted Outreach Project team, who can link them to free assistance to access the NDIS through the Assessment and Referral Team (ART).

The Targeted Outreach team have been engaging with community-based organisations to talk to them about the project, which has resulted in 1814 engagement activities across Queensland, with a total of 6800 contacts, including 3091 organisations and 5607 individuals.

#### This work has resulted in:

- **1193 enquiries from, and capacity building for people with disability**
- **623 referrals to ART**
- **229 met NDIS access**
- **196 plans approved**

## Disability Inclusive and Disaster Resilient Queensland

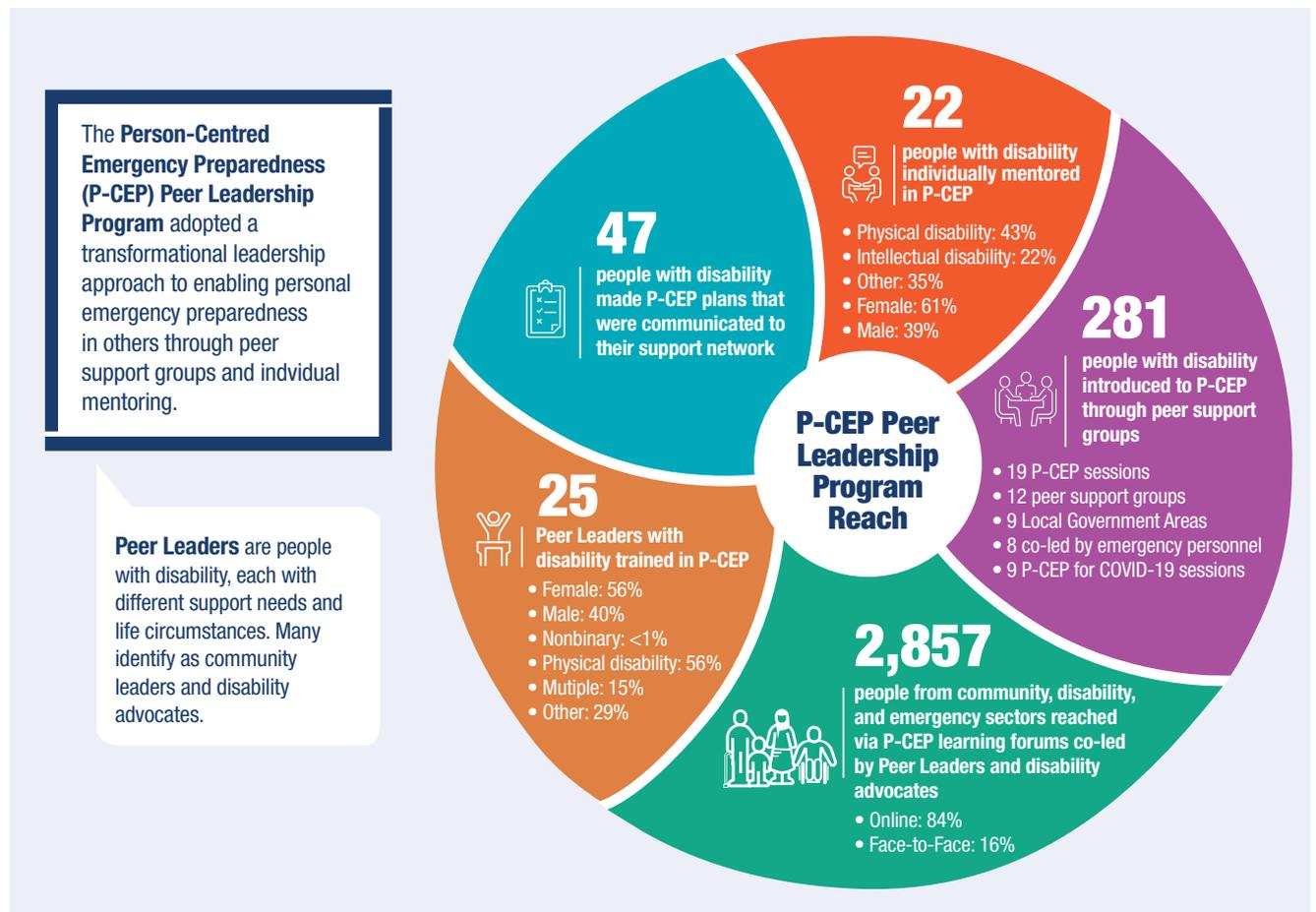
The ‘Disability Inclusive and Disaster Resilient Queensland’ project is a partnership between QDN, the University of Sydney, Community Services Industry Alliance (CSIA) and Queensland Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors.

Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DIDRR) means making sure that the needs and voices of people with disability are included in emergency management and disaster planning at all levels.

**QDN has worked with 3232 people** this year on Phase Two of the project, taking learnings from Phase One to implement, evaluate and showcase DIDRR in action at all levels – individual, disability and community service providers, and

government and emergency services.

QDN’s work in Phase Two focused on supporting the individual preparedness of people with disability, and a peer-to-peer support approach to increasing emergency preparedness. DIDRR Peer Leaders have been taking the collaboration to a deeper grass roots level, partnering with their peers to support individual disaster preparedness in their communities. Peer Leaders attended training in February 2020 and started work to co-design a resource to be able to lead conversations with others. As COVID-19 hit, building on the foundations of this work, QDN in partnership with University of Sydney, with funding from Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors, co-designed the Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness (PCEP) COVID-19 Resource that was released in April 2020.





It has been recognised both at a state and national level with the Community Award in the 2020 Resilient Australia Awards - Queensland Division and received Highly Commended at the National Award Ceremony in December 2020.

QDN continued with the PCEP Peer Leadership Program in 2020-2021 that has delivered on a range of important resources, including the Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness workbook for all hazards and natural disasters.

QDN peer leaders with disability:

- informed themselves and others about risks and preparedness steps
- connected people with disability to emergency personnel, information, and resources
- led person-centred emergency preparedness conversations at the individual and community level
- influenced change toward disability inclusive emergency planning with local councils.

Through the project QDN has delivered and contributed to:

- series of videos, infographics, posters, and other resources
- series of published case studies
- capacity development webinar series
- Peer leader training in P-CEP
- Peer led conversations in Peer Support Groups
- one on one planning support from peers
- published research and news articles
- multiple presentations.

## Housing

QDN was contracted to provide a range of services to assist the Department of Housing and Public Works, now the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy (DCHDE), to further refine components of its Queensland Housing Action Plan to ensure they are inclusive and responsive to the needs of people with diverse disabilities.

QDN developed 'Easy English' versions of communications for tenants as part of the Queensland Government's residential tenancies regulatory measure to respond to COVID-19, including the Residential Tenancies Practice Guide and other resources.

QDN worked with key stakeholders to provide independent information for people with disability who relocated to accommodation in Toowong and inner-city hotels/motels as part of the response to COVID-19, including proactively engaging with tenants who may be eligible for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Residents transitioned from this temporary accommodation in late December 2020 to a

range of accommodation options, and QDN worked with the accommodation support providers involved to deliver staff training and capacity building in relation to disability and the NDIS.

QDN is a member of the Residential Services Reference Group – formed to enable open communication between the DCHDE, service providers and stakeholders on emerging issues relevant to residential services. QDN also participates in meetings between DCHDE and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, which focus on NDIS participants and people with disability residing in residential services, and instances where owners/operator of services require referral to Regulatory Services.

QDN continues its ongoing liaison regarding COVID-19 impacts with homelessness and housing providers, and provision of disability awareness/NDIS information and capacity building sessions for community organisations.

## Digital Inclusion

QDN members highlight the digital divide as a significant systemic issue for people with disability, and QDN has continued to advocate across systems for recognition and consideration of this issue and for full digital inclusion for people with disability. Particularly during the pandemic, getting access to devices and data and knowing how to use them to access information, resources, healthcare, social connection, vaccination, and more is critical.

During Disability Action Week, QDN partnered with Community Services Industry Alliance (CSIA), supported by funding from

Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors to host “Mind the Gap: Bridging the Disability Digital Divide”. It was great to have almost 200 people registered for this event to hear from Queenslanders and national and international speakers about this issue and actions and solutions across the key areas of life to make an inclusive all abilities Queensland for everyone.

QDN has continued with its work with GIVIT, helping marginalised people with disability get some extra digital connection during COVID-19. GIVIT has been sourcing computers, telephones, and other devices from corporate organisations to help people with disability who are socially isolated to get connected. The re-elected Labor Government’s election commitment to provide \$500,000 in funding for a new project to be developed by QDN in partnership with Volunteering Queensland and GIVIT, giving Queenslanders with disability greater access to devices, data, and the digital skills they need to stay connected online is a welcome continuation of this critical work.

## EASY-Health

The EASY-Health Program is funded by the Information Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) Mainstream Capacity Building (MCB) in Health Grant round and is a partnership between Mater Medical Research Institute and QDN. The aim of this project is to conduct activities that will enable:

- people with disability to use and benefit from the same mainstream health services as everyone else
- improved access and utilisation of

mainstream health services where mainstream supports are available.

EASY-Health is a qualitative research pilot that works with people with intellectual or developmental disability (IDD), their carers, and health service staff to understand and enhance their experience in the healthcare setting. The program will use qualitative data to produce resources and education materials that will improve experience and outcomes for people with IDD accessing mainstream healthcare, and then evaluate this health service innovation.

QDN has recruited a project officer and participated in the first Advisory Committee meeting, assisting our two consumer representatives to attend and participate in the project advisory committee meeting. QDN continues to provide advice to the project as it moves to the next stages of research.

### **Brisbane North Primary Health Network – Mental Health Care Pathways**

Brisbane North Primary Health Network (PHN) has identified that many people experiencing a mental health condition are not receiving the right amount of service, in the right place and at the right time. There is a need to better understand and define the various range of services and supports available for people with a range of complex mental health conditions in Brisbane North, how they can access them, and how these services and supports work together to wrap around the person.

To facilitate the development of a system of care pathways, Metro North PHN has engaged five organisations, including QDN,

to develop, through consultation and co-design, an evidence-based, locally relevant, and jointly agreed care pathway for specific cohorts at risk.

QDN developed the mental health care pathways for people with an intellectual disability in Brisbane North and the pathway will be widely available to relevant stakeholders including local health consumers and health professionals. QDN also identified gaps in care pathways and provided information to the PHN about those gaps and opportunities for advocacy in closing them.

### **Hospital Discharge Project**

QDN was contracted by Queensland Health in August 2020 to provide independent advocacy, information support and guidance to patients and their families, carers, and relevant decision-makers in the COVID-19 environment, where people were being rapidly discharged from hospital to a range of short and medium term accommodation and support options.

QDN provided support with the complexity of issues that individuals with disability faced in relation to transitioning from hospital, navigating the different systems, and understanding and processing the appropriate next steps for them.

QDN's approach was to participate in and support cohesive planning, placing the person at the center of the process, maximising choice and control and informed decision-making.

This project highlighted the need for patients with disability to have access to independent advocacy and the support they need to

develop their knowledge and understanding of what support and housing is available to them, and to exercise meaningful choice and control.

### **Level Three Supported Accommodation Vaccination Project**

QDN was contracted by Queensland Health in February 2021 to provide independent support and guidance to people with disability residing in Level Three Supported Accommodation facilities, along with staff, in relation to the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination strategy. Both residents and staff were identified as priority cohorts in Phase 1a of the rollout, with in-reach vaccinations to be provided by the Commonwealth Government.

Key components of the project were to co-design resources with people with disability and owners, producing user friendly information covering the key questions, worries and concerns they had about vaccinations; and deliver pre-vaccination information sessions in 20 identified sites in Brisbane, Ipswich, and on the North and South Coasts.

QDN advocated consistently to ensure facilities were scheduled for their vaccinations and attended to provide support to residents at vaccination sessions. This project delivered a range of activities and supports through this project to 953 people, including residents and staff.

*“QDN visited our L3 supported accommodation facilities on several occasions in the lead up to our in-reach vaccination program. The team did a fantastic job in educating our residents about COVID-19 and the need for the vaccinations. This was done in clear language that our residents could relate to.*

*On the day of our vaccinations the team were again on-site providing support to our residents. They were fielding a whole gambit of questions and in near constant discussions on the risk’s vs the benefits of the vaccinations, and comforting those few scared of needles and health workers in general.*

*Overall, it was a very worthwhile program, and the entire team would welcome them back for future events.”*

**Facility owner**



## GOAL 4

# TO INFLUENCE GOVERNMENTS AND OTHERS TO BRING ABOUT FULL AND EQUAL PARTICIPATION, CITIZENSHIP, AND PROTECTION OF RIGHTS FOR ALL

### Policy Leadership by and for people with disability

QDN's members, supporters and allies play an essential role in the ecosystem of systemic and issue-based policy influence in Queensland. They provide critical information from lived experience and from the experiences of their grass roots networks to inform decision makers about the direct impacts of policy decisions in the day to day lives of people with disability.

During 2020-21, QDN made multiple contributions to policy hearings, inquiries, committees, consultations, and forums, and submitted 33 formal policy submissions and QDN was represented on 55 committees and consultations.

QDN's peer leaders and members provide feedback to inform policy representations and submissions. Peer leaders took part in a consultation with the NDIA on Independent Assessments, giving strong, clear feedback that the proposed reforms were not supported by people with disability. COVID Conversations gave members an opportunity to engage around COVID issues, learning and contributing their issues and ideas

for solutions. QDeNgage consultants had multiple opportunities to influence policy, including contributing to the consultations on the new National Disability Strategy.

QDN also engaged regularly with members of parliament, departmental representatives, and key decision makers about issues important to our members and the lives of people with disability. *The My Disability Matters* election platform and advocacy toolkit was enthusiastically shared and supported by members across Queensland, and this work and the *Make Disability Count* online forum engaged more candidates and invited more responses than any previous QDN election activity.



QDN members navigating transport

The impact of this policy leadership can be seen in several successful engagements this year. The Stand with Us campaign for independent advocacy funding, the *My Disability Matters* election platform and toolkit, advocacy around NDIS reform, and the Building Better Homes campaign all contributed to positive outcomes for people with disability, and QDN.



The details below give a sense of the breadth and depth of the reach of QDN across policy work in Queensland and nationally.

## Policy Submissions and Consultations

QDN's policy focus is driven by its members and the issues that most impact them. In 2020-21, COVID-19 has been an obvious and pressing focus for policy work, with QDN acting to positively influence the experience of the pandemic for people with disability, often within tight timeframes.

Other key policy areas for QDN in 2020-21 included the NDIS, Disability Royal Commission, advocacy, health, transport, housing, and digital access. Key campaigns to which QDN contributed included the campaign against the introduction of NDIS Independent Assessments and other reforms, the Make Renting Fair and Building

Better Homes campaigns, the Stand with Us disability advocacy funding campaign, and the Queensland state election campaign, for which QDN published and vigorously promoted My Disability Matters, a comprehensive election platform and advocacy kit.

QDN members and staff have done a great job of staying informed and responding to continuing and new policy issues and challenges in the pandemic environment. The focus is always impact – the impact on people's lives, and the impact of the voices of people with disability on policy development and implementation.



## COVID-19

### Submissions

- Regular briefings and feedback to ensure the Minister for Disability Services, Ministers O'Rourke and Crawford, had the latest information on what was happening on the ground for people with disability across a broad range of areas impacting upon their lives, including COVID-19
- Queensland Parliamentary Committee Inquiry - Economic Response to COVID-19
- Queensland Parliamentary Committee Inquiry - Health Response to COVID-19

### Committees/Consultations

- Human and Social Recovery Committee – COVID-19
- National Roundtable, Draft Management and Operational Plan for Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- National Roundtable on Health and Disability COVID Response

- Queensland Volunteering Action Partnership
- COVID-19 and health system reform and planning – Queensland Clinical Senate
- Clinical Excellence – Disability Advisory Committee
- People with disability and older persons COVID-19 Working Group
- COVID-19 IT Coordination Working Group
- Women and Children Health and Safety Working Party – COVID-19 and Domestic and Family Violence
- Disability Sector Working Group COVID-19
- COVID-19 Working Group – Disability Support in the Queensland Community, Queensland Health
- COVID-19 and Locked Doors, Gates and Windows discussions with Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors
- Long Stay Patient Discharge Project – COVID-19
- Queensland Community Services Peaks meeting about COVID-19 across a broad range of issues
- COVID-19 Testing Consumer Reference Members working group
- Interview: University of Sydney Policy Lab, Centre for Social Impact, Centre of Research Excellence in Disability and Health - Government's COVID-19 Disability Response
- COVID-19 Working Group - Residential Aged Care
- Queensland Health COVID-19 Vaccination Consumer Engagement Preparation
- Working Group: Pandemic Response Guidance: PPE in community health services and in-home care settings

- COVID-19 Disability Services Clinical Advisory Group
- Commonwealth Department of Health – National Roundtable on COVID-19 Disability and Health
- COVID-19 Test Online Booking and Triage Solution meeting
- Extra-ordinary Roundtable for Disability Vaccine Rollout



## **ndis** **NDIS**

### **Submissions**

- Inquiry into the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
- NDIA Improving outcomes for participants who require Supported Independent Living (SIL): Provider and Sector consultation paper
- QDN a co-signatory to QAI's open letter to Minister Robert on Independent Assessments
- Submission to NDIA Independent Assessment Consultation Papers
- Queensland Productivity Commission on NDIS market: Public Hearing Presentation and submission on draft report

- NDIS Joint Standing Committee Submission on Independent Assessments
- Access and Eligibility Policy with independent assessments
- Planning policy for personalised budgets and plan flexibility
- Supporting young children and their families early to reach their full potential
  - the ECEI Implementation Reset Project consultation report

### **Committees/Consultations**

- Sub-committee representative on Intellectual Disability to the Independent Advisory Committee (IAC) National Disability Insurance Agency
- Group convenors consultation session with the NDIA on Independent Assessment Consultation Papers
- Queensland Transition to NDIS for Mental Health (QTN) Core Working Group Meeting
- Individual meeting with Queensland Productivity Commissioner Dr Karen Hooper
- Survey to members on NDIS Independent Assessments and reforms



### **Disability Royal Commission**

#### **Submissions**

- Disability Royal Commission Rights and Attitudes Issues Paper
- Disability Royal Commission Emergency Planning and Response Issues Paper
- Disability Royal Commission Safeguards and Quality Issues Paper - Violence and abuse of people with disability at home
- Disability Royal Commission - Promoting Inclusion Issues Paper

### **Committees/consultations**

- AFDO Meeting on Disability Justice with the Disability Royal Commission



### **Transport**

#### **Submissions**

- Submission on DDA exemption application by Australasian Railways Association
- Australian Standards for the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 (Transport Standards)

### **Committees/Consultations**

- Queensland Rail Accessibility Reference Group
- Queensland Rail Central station upgrade project consultation
- Brisbane Metro accessibility working group



### **Justice**

#### **Submissions**

- Department of Justice and Attorney-General: Power of Attorney Register
- National Plan to Reduce Violence against women and their children

#### **Consultations/committees**

- Stakeholder Reference Group: disability and DFV communications project – The Social Deck
- Women and Children Health and Safety Consultation – Coercive control

## Housing

### Submissions

- Consultation Regulatory Impact Statement: Proposal to include minimum accessibility standards for housing in the National Construction Code

### Committees/consultations

- Department of Housing and Public Works – Residential Services Reference Group
- Section Action Plan for Housing 10 Year Plan
- Ministerial Housing Council
- Residential Tenancy Authority Stakeholder Working Group
- Make Renting Fair Queensland Alliance
- SDA Quality & Safeguards Reference Group, Summer Foundation
- Sustainable Built Environment National Research Centre – Liveable Social and Affordable Higher Density Housing

## Disability Policy

### Submissions

- QDN My Disability Matters State Election Policy Platform
- National Disability Employment Strategy (Employment Strategy)
- Disability Services and Other Legislation (Worker Screening) Amendment Bill 2020
- Commonwealth Department of Social Services – Improving Outcomes for People with Disability under the National Disability Strategy and the National Disability Insurance Scheme
- Senate Community Affairs Committee; Disability Support Pension

### Committees/consultations

- Queensland Disability Advisory Council
- Queensland Parliament, Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee Hearing: Disability Services and other legislation Worker Screening Amendment Bill
- Advisory Group: Implementing NDIS Worker Screening
- Queensland Fire and Emergency Services – Regional Director Townsville - DIDRR
- Disability Advocacy Network Australia
- Advocacy Matters election campaign meetings
- Survey on National Employment Strategy
- Webinar: New worker screening NDIS for plan and self-management

## Health

### Submissions

- Parliamentary Community Affairs Committee: Voluntary Assisted Dying
- Royal Commission into Quality and Safety in Aged Care
- Queensland Law Reform Commission – Voluntary Assisted Dying
- Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare: National safety and quality primary healthcare standards
- Commonwealth Government: 10-year Primary Health Care plan.

### Committees/consultations

- Commonwealth Department of Health – National Roundtable on Roadmap for Health and Intellectual Disability
- NIIS Re-entry Regulatory Impact Statement briefing

- Queensland Health COVID-19 Working Group – Disability
- Queensland Health COVID-19 Working Group – Residential Aged Care
- Halwyn Centre Multi-Agency Meeting
- Third Roundtable on the Health of People with Intellectual Disability
- Queensland Hospital Discharge and Housing Project Governance



## Discrimination and access

### Submissions

- Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010 (the Premises Standards)
- Commonwealth Government: Assistance Animals – a nationally consistent approach



## Influencing on key policy issues

### Make Renting Fair Queensland Alliance

QDN is a member of the Make Renting Fair in Queensland alliance, with over 50 other supporter organisations.

The campaign called on the State Government to make amendments to proposed new rental reform legislation to ensure that all Queensland families who rent have laws that are fair, safe, and certain around several key issues including evictions and ending tenancy, minor modifications, domestic and family violence safety measures, renting with pets.

### Building Better Homes

QDN was pleased to partner with the Building Better Homes campaign and delighted at the Commonwealth and State/Territory Ministers reaching agreement at the Building Ministers' meeting on 30 April 2021 to include mandatory minimum accessibility standards to Silver Level in the National Construction Code.

The Gold Standard was also included as a 'technical referral' meaning states and territories can decide to upgrade to Gold voluntarily. From September 2022, all new houses will be required to be built to the new standard. QDN will continue to advocate for a mandatory Gold Standard, however this is a critical reform. QDN members have been active contributors to the campaign, speaking and writing to members of parliament and doing media interviews. This is a wonderful achievement for people with disability, seniors, and all Australians.

### Power of Peaks

QDN is committed to and continues our work with the 14 community services peak bodies in Queensland to progress our shared agenda. The purpose of this sustained, powerful, and strong collaboration is to support communities and the services that serve them for a strong, thriving, connected Queensland.

In COVID-19 times, the collaboration has also been a means for gathering intelligence and sharing information about the impact of the pandemic on communities. The group has been meeting regularly for a COVID-19 Reflection and Learning meeting to share across each organisation key issues, learnings, and actions to inform response and recovery planning.

The Community Services Peaks group has also been a key engagement partner for the Targeted Outreach project, which has utilised the group to connect directly with grassroots services in communities for outreach to marginalised people who may be eligible for and benefit from access to the NDIS.



Mark Henley, Paige Armstrong, Minister O'Rourke and Geoff Rowe, Targeted Outreach 2020

## Engagement with Government

Connection and effective engagement with key figures in government and politics is an important part of maintaining and developing QDN's policy influence, particularly in an election year.

**In 2020-21, QDN engaged with the following Government, Departmental and political representatives:**

### Ministers and senior Government officials

In 2020-21, QDN has, on multiple occasions, met with Queensland Government Ministers and senior Government officials, including:

- Minister Coralee O'Rourke, Minister for Communities, Disability Services and Seniors
- Minister Craig Crawford, Minister for Seniors, Disability Services, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Partnerships
- Minister Mick De Brenni, Minister for Public Works
- Minister Mark Ryan, Minister for Police and Emergency Services
- Shadow Minister for Communities, Disability Services, Seniors, Shadow Minister for Multiculturalism and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnership, John-Paul Langbroek
- Deputy Opposition Leader David Janetzki, Shadow Treasurer, Shadow Minister for Investment and Trade
- Amy McMahon, Member for South Brisbane
- Michael Berkman, Member for Maiwar and Leader of the Queensland Greens
- Senator Larissa Waters
- Senator Jordon Steele-John
- Senator Anthony Chisholm
- Graham Perrett MP (Federal Shadow Minister for Education)
- Senior Advisor to the Minister for Health, Yvette D'Ath
- Senior Advisor to Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Women and the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Shannon Fentiman
- Queensland Clinical Senate Chairperson Dr Alex Markwell
- Director-General, Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors, Clare O'Connor
- Deputy-Director General, Disability Services, Katie Holmes



- Chief Digital Officer, Chris Fechner
- Deputy-Director General Department of Health, Bronwyn Nardi
- Deputy-Director General Department of Housing and Public Works, Trish Woolley
- First Assistant Secretary, COVID-19 Primary Care Response, Commonwealth Department of Health, Simon Cotterell
- Premier's International Women's Day Reception
- Women's Week Reception, Parliament House

These meetings and events have provided QDN with the opportunity to raise the issues important to our members and ensure that the voice of people with disability is heard at the highest levels of Government.

### **National Disability Insurance Scheme**

QDN continues to meet with representatives of the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguards Commission. QDN is represented by the CEO on the Intellectual Disability Reference Group, which is a subcommittee of the NDIA Independent Advisory Committee.

QDN has met multiple times across this year with the NDIA State Manager for Queensland, the Intergovernmental Relations State Manager, and the State Manager of NDIS Quality and Safety Commission.

## GOAL 5

# TO GROW AN INDEPENDENTLY SUSTAINABLE, EFFECTIVE, ACCOUNTABLE, AND RIGHTS-BASED ORGANISATION THAT REFLECTS OUR VISION, MISSION, VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

## Board of Directors

QDN's Board of Directors has changed this year, with several new leaders bringing their skills and enthusiasm to the work of the organisation, driven as always by the mission, vision and values and a commitment to QDN members and Queenslanders with disability.

The Board's stewardship and leadership has enabled QDN to continue to operate as an effective, sustainable, and accountable organisation. COVID-19 has of course continued to have significant impacts and QDN's comprehensive business continuity plan enabled the organisation to continue to deliver on QDN's contracts, maintain connection with members, and provide strong representation to State and Commonwealth Governments to inform planning and response to COVID-19 and deliver a range of resources and responses in the emerging policy environment.

QDN held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 17 October 2020 at Parliament House. Because of COVID-19 and the potential disruption in an outbreak, voting was held prior to the AGM. There was a 118% increase in the number of members voting

this year. Almost 80 people attended the AGM on the day - the largest attendance ever at an AGM. This reflects an active and engaged membership, and the work of the staff, Company Secretary, and Board Directors to achieve this great result.

The meeting included voting on a special resolution for QDN constitutional changes and the election of four elected directors and the extension of the term of Appointed Director.

The QDN Constitutional Changes were passed. The extension of the term of Appointed Director Stacy Miller was passed.

The four nominees who were successfully elected to QDN's Board of Directors were Jane Britt, John McPherson, Peter Tully, and Sharon Boyce.



QDN Board Directors at work

John McPherson and Sharon Boyce were re-elected returning Directors and Jane Britt and Peter Tully were newly elected. Des Ryan was elected Chairperson and Sharon Boyce elected Deputy Chair.

Outgoing Chairperson Nigel Webb was acknowledged for his exemplary leadership, commitment, and dedication to QDN over the past 11 years. Celebration and acknowledgement of his contributions formally occurred through the Board's establishment of the Nigel Webb Bursary to be provided to one Emerging Leader through an application process to further their leadership and development journey.

QDN's Board of Directors has undertaken the role of corporate governance with rigour and commitment in 2020-21, contributing their unique skills and expertise to position QDN now and for the future.

## Strategic Plan

QDN's Board of Directors held their annual board planning including strategic plan review in November 2020. Directors worked with focus to develop goals that accounted for all the new and continuing work of QDN, the changing environment, and to align these goals strategically and purposefully with QDN's vision, mission, values, and principles.

A change to the Mission statement was made to include a rights focus. It now reads "We lead, inform, connect and influence to empower people with disability to be fully included as citizens in the social and economic life of the community as per the rights recognised in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities".

A change was also made to Goal 3 of the plan. It now reads "To let people know about the lives of people with disability and have their experience and expertise valued and recognised". Several refinements and changes were also made to actions towards achieving the goals.

These changes and the Board's continued alignment with the vision, mission, values, and principles of the organisation will ensure QDN's strategic positioning into the future, and its capacity to remain sustainable and agile.

## Quality Management

QDN undertakes certification as a human service organisation to support meeting requirements for Quality Management, continuous quality improvement, and registration as an NDIS provider. This certification provides assurance to QDN's stakeholders that we operate safely and reliably. In 2020-21, QDN passed an external quality surveillance audit conducted by IHCA, and QDN has received verification as a NDIS Registered Organisation.

## Member and stakeholder engagement

During 2020-21, QDN conducted a website review to better meet the needs of its members and other audiences.

Stakeholder and user research was undertaken to better understand the goals and behaviours of QDN's target audience. Insights from this research have been used to build a user empathy map and two customer journey maps. These were used to inform the new site structure and content.

Website content was also re-written based on the customer journey map and empathy map research. Website accessibility features that improve user experience for people with a wide range of disability are under investigation. In the past two years website accessibility tools have advanced a great deal and QDN will take advantage of one of the latest available.

Clear feedback from stakeholders was that graphics/photos supporting a story, link or article make for a much more engaging experience. QDN will invest in QDN photo collateral of QDN members across a range of settings which will be used widely on our website and across other QDN external channels. The image of real people in action supports the tagline ‘nothing about us without us’.

In 2020-21, QDN also updated the new Customer Relationship Management system database, engaging with members and supporters over several months to ensure contact details and other data were accurate.

QDN also conducted the annual Member Survey, with 137 responses which inform the strategic planning, stewardship, policy and project work of the organisation and our continuous improvement activities.

## Board Development

QDN’s Board continued to meet regularly during the year, both as a full Board and as sub-committees responsible for Audit and Compliance, and Nominations and Performance.

## Board Members

NAME	POSITION	LOCATION	DIRECTOR SINCE
<b>Nigel Webb</b>	Chairperson	Brisbane	2012 – October 2020
<b>Des Ryan</b>	Chairperson	Rockhampton	2018 – Chair since October 2020
<b>Sharon Boyce</b>	Deputy Chairperson	Toowoomba	2013
<b>Jane Britt</b>	Director elected Chair, Nominations and Performance	Brisbane	2020
<b>John Macpherson</b>	Director elected	Brisbane	2012
<b>Peter Tully</b>	Director elected	Ipswich	2020
<b>Peter Gurr</b>	Director elected	Townsville	2015
<b>Gary Matthews</b>	Director elected Chair, Audit and Compliance Committee	Mackay	2018
<b>Stacy Miller</b>	Director appointed	Gold Coast	2019
<b>Colleen Papadopoulos</b>	Company Secretary	Brisbane	2015

## Staff

The following table provides a summary of QDN staff and their employment as at 30 June 2021.

NAME	POSITION	EMPLOYMENT
Louise Abson	Project Officer	Current
Paige Armstrong	Chief Executive Officer	Current
Kat Bhatena	Engagement officer	Current
Shelley Birrell	Projects Manager	Current
Kate Burton	Project Officer	Current
Amanda Cook	Executive Support and Project support	Finished in March 2021
Natalia Costa E Freitas	Finance and Administration Support Officer	Current
Elly Desmarchelier	Projects Lead – Policy, Advocacy & Engagement	Finished February 2021 and returned July 2021
Magdi El Hag	Policy Officer	Current
Jeremy Farley	Project Officer	Current
Danielle Flanagan	Engagement officer	Current
Joanne Galvin	Finance and Quality Officer	Current
Carla Galvin	Administration Support Officer	Current
Lisa Hateley	Engagement officer	Current
Simone Hockins	Project officer	Current
Sarah Houbolt	Project support officer	Completed three month contract in November 2020
Will Kerkhof	Business Development and Operations Manager	Current

NAME	POSITION	EMPLOYMENT
<b>Sharyn McManus</b>	Communications and Marketing Officer	Current
<b>Margaret Micale</b>	Member Services Administration Support Officer	Current
<b>Michelle Moss</b>	Director Policy and Strategic Engagement	Current
<b>Gina Muller</b>	Communications officer	Current
<b>Cassie Paton</b>	Project officer	Current
<b>Louise Pollard</b>	Project Officer	Current
<b>Miles Tollen</b>	Business and operations manager	Finished in October 2020
<b>Narell Rusich</b>	Executive Support and Project Officer	Current
<b>Olivia Spadina</b>	Engagement Manager	Current
<b>Ned Sparksman</b>	Project Officer	Current



QDN staff

## Consultants/contractors

Several consultants worked alongside QDN staff during 2020-21 and we thank them for their commitment to QDN's mission and producing quality work.

### Peer Mentors for COVID-19 Wellbeing and Emerging Leaders:

Michael Fisher  
Elisha Matthews  
Nigel Webb  
Karin Swift  
Harmonie Downes  
Will Proctor  
Peter Tully

### Contractors:

Janette Manley  
Angela Boyd – Pyxis Consulting  
Rebecca Wesson  
Karin Swift  
Mark McKeon  
Rebecca McElroy - Bright Films Productions  
Jen Barrkman - Jennifer Barrkman Consulting  
Elissa Farrow - About Your Transition  
Clare Locke - Clocke Design  
Jane Geltch and Fiona Malcolm - Purpose Partners  
Jo Basile - Hopping Mad Designs

## QDeNgage

QDeNgage connects businesses, government departments and organisations to people with lived experience of disability to provide their expertise, feedback, and advice.

In the initiative's second year, a full year of work during a pandemic, QDeNgage has managed to successfully deliver quality work for customers including:

- Logan City Council
- Gold Coast City Council
- Brisbane City Council
- Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy
- Department of Transport and Main Roads
- Residential Tenancy Authority
- Queensland Productivity Commission
- Community Service Industry Alliance
- National Injury Insurance Scheme Queensland
- Queensland Health
- Translink
- CheckUp
- WorkUp
- The Social Deck
- Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors
- QCOSS
- Mercy Community Support

This year, QDeNgage has facilitated 38 engagements, and engaged 369 opportunities for people with disability as QDeNgage Consultants to deliver on this work in varying capacities – as consumer representatives, guest speakers and co-designers.



## PART 3 – FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

### Income

**QDN's total income for the 2020-2021 financial year was \$3,066,712 (2019-2020: \$2,327,560).**

This was primarily comprised of:

\$445,934	QDN Core Business
\$1,099,000	Targeted Outreach, COVID-19 Projects
\$160,000	Queensland Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy Projects
\$175,587	Queensland Health Projects
\$690,750	Department of Social Services – Power of Peers and Community Inclusion Capacity Building
\$50,000	Commonwealth Cash Flow Boost Funding
\$5,135	Gambling Community Benefit Fund & other grants
\$440,306	Other income from projects, QDeNgage and investments

### Expenditure

QDN's total expenditure for the 2020-2021 financial year was \$2,899,569 (2019/20: \$2254,709).

### Surplus

QDN generated an operating surplus of \$167,143 for the 2020-2021 financial year, principally as a result of Commonwealth COVID-19 cash flow boost funding and successful QDeNgage activities.



Australian Government

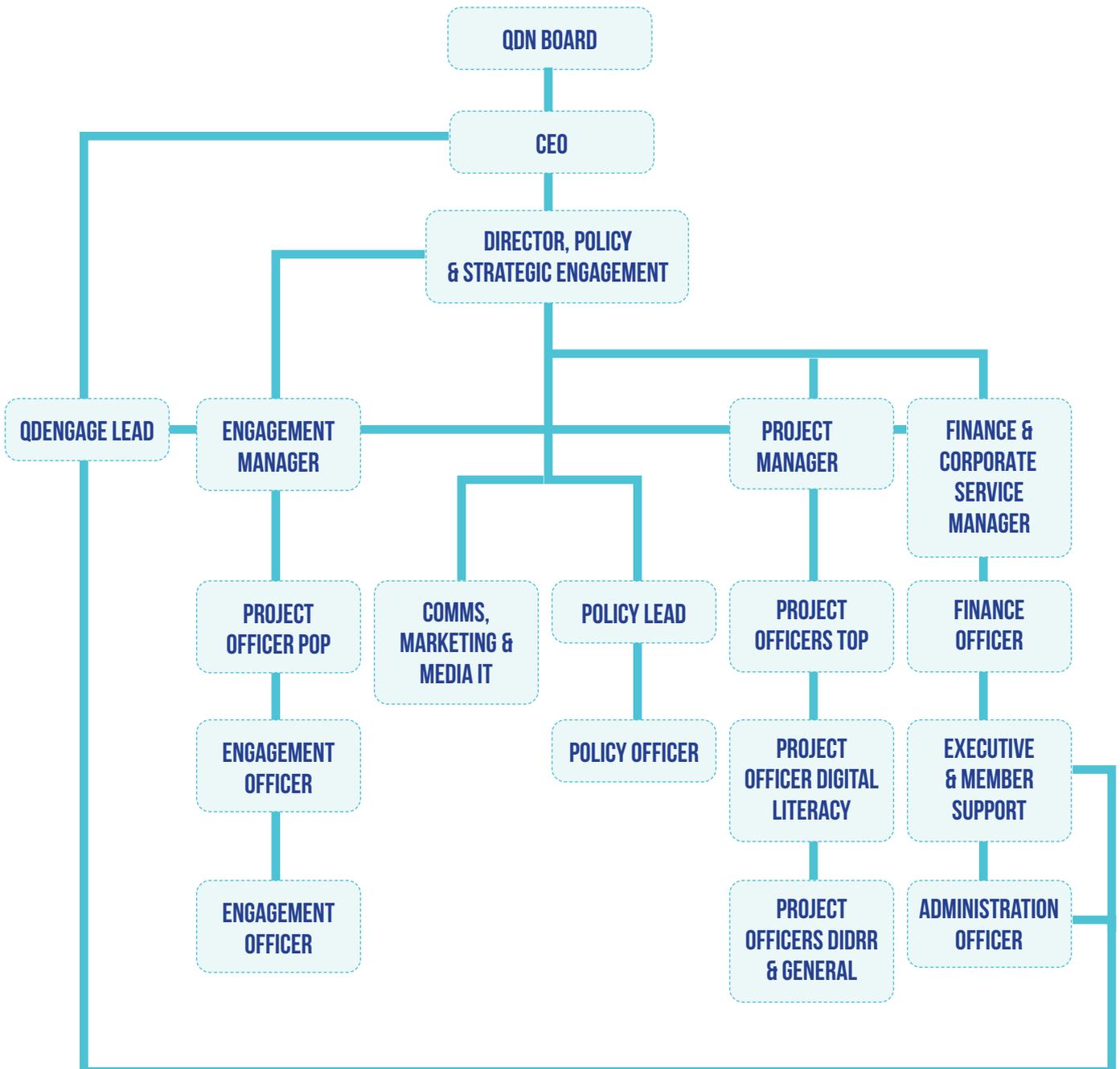


Queensland Government



# PART 4 – APPENDIX

## QDN Organisational Chart





**QDN** NOTHING ABOUT US  
WITHOUT US  
QUEENSLANDERS WITH DISABILITY NETWORK

GROUND FLOOR  
338 TURBOT STREET  
SPRING HILL QLD 4000  
PHONE: 07 3252 8566  
LOCAL CALL FROM LANDLINE: 1300 363 783  
EMAIL [QDN@QDN.ORG.AU](mailto:QDN@QDN.ORG.AU)  
[QDN.ORG.AU](http://QDN.ORG.AU)