

2023 2024

ANNUAL REPORT



QDN
QUEENSLANDERS WITH DISABILITY NETWORK
NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US



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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QDN ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

VISION:

People with disability are active and valued citizens



Leadership

- 36 Group Convenors
- 20 Emerging Leaders
- 156 Peer Leaders
- 130 QDeNgage consultants
- 7 Digital Champions
- 16 Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DIDRR) Peer Leaders
- 27 member forums



Policy Contributions

- 39 policy submissions including:
- 74 committees and consultations
- 25 presentations



Community and Stakeholder Education and Policy

- 40 Eventbrite listings
- 40 QDN policy events and forums
- 39 Digital Inclusion events
- 29 DIDRR events
- Zoom meetings with over 3,700 participants



Web presence

- 22,139 total clicks/visits
- 941,892 total impressions



QBloggers

- 4 meetings
- 5 blog posts written
- 7 QBloggers actively involved



Membership

- 1638 Ordinary Members
- 80 Support Organisations
- 898 Supporters



Media Engagement

- 38 mentions of QDN on TV, radio, and online stories in the media
- 14 issues that matter to people with disability discussed
- 6,133,000 people have seen or heard QDN's members' issues
- 27% of the Australian public have heard or seen the issues we talked about



Communication

- 28 e-blasts
- 26 e-news editions



Governance and Operations

- Board planning day
- Staff planning days
- Staff training workshop (digital security)
- Recertification Quality Audit April 2023



Power of Peers

- 31 peer support groups
- 240 peer support groups meetings
- 1,700 contacts at meetings



- 118 projects
- 30 customers
- 787 payments to consultants



Social Media

- 410 posts across social media
- 4617 Facebook followers
- 1409 LinkedIn followers
- 635 Instagram followers
- 136 YouTube subscribers



Information and Referrals

- 3,008 people supported through information and referrals, including
- 542 (Jul - Sep 23)
- 554 (Oct - Dec 23)
- 982 (Jan - Mar 24)
- 930 (Apr - Jun 24)



Disability Inclusive and Disaster Resilient Queensland

- 16 DIDRR and interstate Person-Centred Emergency Planning (P-CEP) Peer Leaders
- 879 participants attended 86 workshops to develop emergency plans tailored to their individual support needs using the P-CEP framework.
- 160 participants in 4 Building Inclusive and Disaster Resilient Communities community forums
- 67 P-CEP Peer Leaders throughout Australia completed a capacity-building course



AAA Digital Inclusion

- 7 Digital Champions
- 773 devices donated to participants
- 120 workshops held
- 1364 instances of individual support



QDN led and partnered events

- Access Ignites: 2023 Disability Action Week Forum
- After the Disability Royal Commission and NDIS Review Forum
- Game Changers Report launch
- Partnering for Inclusive Housing with Queenslanders with Disability 2024-2027 launch
- International Women's Day - Investing in Queensland Women with Disability



CARE SUPPORT SERVICES

N17

INSPIRE HUB

inspire



QDN

1300 363 763
QDN@QDN.ORG.AU
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QDN

QUEENSLANDERS WITH DISABILITY NETWORK
NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US





PART 1: INTRODUCTION

WHO WE ARE

Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN) is a state-wide organisation by and for people with diverse disability, dedicated to advancing disability rights and advocacy. Now in its 22nd year, QDN continues to serve as a powerful advocate for systemic change, rooted in the principle that there should be ‘nothing about us without us’. Our work is focused on ensuring that the voices of people with disability are not just heard but lead the way in shaping the policies and practices that affect their lives.

QDN is a vibrant and active network of people with lived experiences of disability who are committed to making meaningful change across Queensland. Our organisation is built around a strong network of people with disability, including 32 peer support groups that inform, connect, lead, and influence change. These groups play a crucial role in ensuring that the needs, aspirations, and rights of people with disability are understood and prioritised in decision-making processes.

We believe that people with disability should contribute their unique perspectives and insights to the decisions that shape the lives of all Queenslanders. Our mission is to foster a culture of inclusion where the individuality, talents, and lived experiences of people with disability are not only recognised but celebrated. We work collaboratively with communities, services, businesses, industry, and government to lead and influence change that aligns with our vision of a more inclusive and accessible Queensland.

As a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee, QDN is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of elected directors—all of whom are people with disability—and up to two appointed directors who bring additional expertise to our leadership team. Our work is driven by a diverse and dynamic network of influencers, decision-makers, spokespeople, consultants, group members, and peer leaders who are passionate about creating a society where people with disability are fully included and valued.

QDN is committed to addressing the widespread lack of opportunities and inaccessibility that many people with disability face. We engage in a range of activities across our state-wide network, focusing on systemic advocacy, peer support, disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction, digital inclusion, employment, policy response development, and driving social and economic changes that resonate with our core values. Through these efforts, QDN continues to make significant strides towards a society where people with disability are empowered to live full and meaningful lives.

QDN acknowledges the following government agencies for funding received by QDN in 2023-2024, for delivery of work during this financial year.

Commonwealth Government

- Department of Social Services
- Department of Health and Aged Care
- Department of Industry, Science, and Resources

Queensland Government

- Department of Transport and Main Roads
- Department of Housing
- Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services
- Queensland Health
- Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts
- Queensland Reconstruction Authority

We are grateful for the funding of the above agencies, and for the opportunities this presents us to uphold our motto that there should be 'nothing about us without us'.

QDN also generates income from fee for service activities and QDeNgage consultancy activities.

QDN's work includes

- Informing people about important issues and collaborating for change
- Connecting people together for peer-to-peer support
- Providing ways for people with disability to have a voice in disability policy
- Projects that help improve the lives of people with disability

QDN is a member-led organisation. There are three membership categories:

- Ordinary Members (people with disability)
- Supporters
- Support Organisations



OUR DIRECTION

Our strategic direction and goals are shaped by four pillars

INFORM
CONNECT
LEAD
INFLUENCE



Our Vision

People with disability are active and valued citizens of Queensland.

Our Mission

Empowering people with disability to be fully included as citizens in the social and economic life of the community.



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. We have grown in member numbers, continually adding to the strength of our voice.



CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT



This year has been significant for QDN in so many different ways, with lots of positive change as well as areas that have required our strength, collaboration and voice to speak up about key issues and the impacts they will have on us as Queenslanders with disability.

I want to start by acknowledging the tireless effort of the QDN Board in carrying out the mission and vision of the organisation to our members and the broader disability community. Our work together has been truly commendable. Despite the challenges faced throughout the year, we have displayed unwavering dedication and commitment to upholding the rights of people with disability in Queensland. I also want to acknowledge the sad and unexpected passing of our Deputy Chairperson, Gary Matthews in June this year. Gary's dedication to the rights of people with disability has had a lasting impact on QDN, and his legacy will always be remembered.

Similarly, I acknowledge the importance of our state-wide member network. They have the opportunity to access valuable information, connect with fellow individuals with disabilities, share their perspectives on various matters, cultivate leadership opportunities and skills, and utilise their unique experiences to bring about positive changes.

The members of QDN bring a diversity of life experiences, knowledge, skills and expertise and channel this into efforts to make a difference in people's lives, in our communities and nationally. Our diverse backgrounds and experiences enrich our organisation, allowing us to learn from each other and gain a wider perspective. By sharing their unique stories and insights, they help to foster a more inclusive and understanding community. Additionally, the resilience and determination of our members serve as an important message for others and their leadership to drive forward positive change. Overall, the members' contributions play a crucial role in shaping QDN into a supportive and impactful community.

We hold firm to the belief that decisions should not be made without the direct involvement of those affected. By combining our voices, we strive to lead and drive meaningful change for ourselves and our communities.

Our forums and events served as vital platforms for the disability community to come together, share experiences, and discuss important issues. These gatherings

provide opportunities for individuals to network, access valuable information, and engage in discussions that are crucial to our community.

As you read through this annual report, you will see the breadth of activities that our Board, our peer leaders, our staff and our members have led. It is an incredible achievement that takes the work and actions of many. The Game Changers Report that Urbis and QDN released on 3 June 2024 is a great example of this work. Employment is an important issue for our members and people with disability and their families. After the foundations of having a place to call home, having a job, access to health and transport are fundamental to living our lives. Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games and the legacy they leave are an important opportunity for all of Queensland to shift the dial and change the game. Game Changers Report gives a great roadmap and clear recommendations of what we can do to harness this opportunity and deliver better employment outcomes for Queenslanders with disability and a strong legacy for the future.

I also want to acknowledge this has been a tough year for people with disability in Queensland due to significant changes and the disability reforms that we find ourselves embarking on. Added to this, the rising cost of living, housing pressures, challenges in accessing health care and transport needs and uncertainty surrounding the 'NDIS Back on Track Bill' has added more pressure to our community.

I want to take the opportunity to thank Michelle Moss in her role as CEO and her leadership over the past one and

half years, to the leadership team and to QDN staff for your work and efforts to deliver quality projects, policy and engagement with our members and the broader sector. QDN's work spans so many areas and it is a dynamic environment. Thank you also to our members and our peer leaders including my fellow Board Directors for your advocacy, actions and ability to champion the change that needs to happen and work together as we try to create a more inclusive Queensland for everyone. I look forward to our work together over the next year.

Dr Sharon Boyce
Chairperson

*By combining
our voices, we strive to
lead and drive meaningful
change for ourselves and
our communities.*



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT



2023-2024 has been a year of great achievements for QDN and our members. However, this year has also been shaped by considerable challenges and systemic changes that have impacted the lives of people with disability across Queensland.

Within our community we have faced uncertainty around the NDIS and waiting for the outcomes of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (the Disability Royal Commission). The 'NDIS Back on Track Bill' brings significant reforms that will affect how NDIS participants are assessed and how their plans are managed and who can access the scheme. As a recommendation of the NDIS Review, we have begun work here in Queensland to identify what is needed in Foundational Supports to make sure that the ecosystem of services and supports deliver for people with disability. It is critical that this work going forward ensures that people will not fall through the gaps and that our mainstream services deliver inclusive, accessible, timely, quality services for Queenslanders with disability and their families.

The Disability Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability has culminated in a comprehensive Final Report, containing 222 recommendations. These were informed by

thousands of submissions, including many from our own members, highlighting the ongoing challenges faced by people with disability. QDN will continue to be a key player in advancing these recommendations and advocating for systemic change.

QDN is committed to ensuring our members are well-prepared during this time of significant disability reform and QDN will continue to ensure people with disability are front and centre, and that the voice and representation of people with disability is strong throughout this transition.

QDN played a pivotal role in supporting the Queensland Parliament Community Support and Services Committee (CSSC) who undertook a Parliamentary Inquiry into the Provision and Regulation of Supported Accommodation in Queensland. We attended 21 supported accommodation facilities and engaged with over 500 residents to ensure that people had information about the inquiry, what it meant and how they could have a voice. QDN supported 132 people to make an individual submission to the committee.



Thank you to the residents who engaged with us, we acknowledge your strength and your contributions to this inquiry. We also acknowledge the members of the Parliamentary Committee (CSSC), the Public Advocate John Chesterman for his report, QAI who worked with us on this project and the Level 3 providers and the staff. This extensive work enabled QDN to support people in Level 3 Supported Accommodation.

Housing has continued to be a key part of QDN's work this year including work as part of the Rental Reforms including the Make Rent Fair campaign, and QDN's collaboration with the Real Estate Institute of Queensland (REIQ) around minor modifications in rental properties. QDN was pleased to see legislative changes that will make a difference for people with disability across a range of different areas. It gives me such pride that our network has grown significantly this year, reaching 1,638 ordinary members, 80 support organisations and 898 supporters. This growth reflects the strong engagement and connection fostered by QDN among Queenslanders with disability. Our media presence has also expanded, with 38 insertions in local news outlets and discussions on critical disability-related issues reaching an audience of 6,133,000 people.

A notable achievement was the publication of the Voice of Queenslanders with Disability Report 2024 in collaboration with Griffith

University. This report in its second year offers invaluable insights from Queenslanders with disability, their families, carers, and organisational representatives, helping to shape our advocacy and policy work.

Through the QDN Emerging Leaders program, we continue to grow and empower the next generation of leaders within the disability community. The increasing number of applications reflects the increasing recognition of this program's value in developing leadership skills and fostering positive change.

QDN continues as the executive peak for the Disability Peaks and Representatives Program who delivers peak body services to Queenslanders with disability, their families and carers as well as disability providers. The Disability Peak organisations have worked collaboratively to deliver information and support to people with disability as well as providing feedback and advice on matters impacting people with disability. The group has been an important network to help shape the disability reforms and represent what is important to Queensland. The Peaks have also engaged with Queensland Independent Disability Advocacy Network across these priorities.

Our 32 peer support groups play a crucial role in informing, connecting, leading, and influencing change within our community. We are a diverse and dynamic network of decision-



makers, spokespeople, consultants, and peer leaders, all united in our commitment to driving positive change during this time.

The unwavering dedication of QDN's members, staff, and board members to advancing our organisation's mission and vision is truly commendable and a reason to be remembered. A big thank you to the Board, to Sharon Boyce in her role as Chairperson, to our committee Chairpersons, Dr Talitha Kingsmill and Des Ryan and to our Deputy Chairperson, Gary Matthews whose unexpected passing in June 2024 was deeply saddening. Gary's tireless work and passion for the rights of people with disability have left an indelible mark on QDN. His legacy will continue to resonate with our staff, members, not just in Mackay but in the wider community for years to come. I also want to acknowledge the work of our supporters, allies and colleagues across disability, community, government and industry. Working together is an important part of making change

happen and partnerships around shared visions and a shared purpose is at the core of getting good work done and good outcomes.

As we move forward, QDN will continue to strengthen our collective voice, broaden our influence, and make a meaningful impact on the lives of Queenslanders with disability. Together, we are a powerful force for change, and I am confident that our efforts will lead to a more inclusive and equitable future.

Michelle Moss
Chief Executive Officer



GOVERNANCE

Board of Directors as of 30 June 2024



Dr Sharon Boyce
Chairperson



Dr Talitha Kingsmill
Chair Nominations & Performance



Stacy Miller
Appointed Director



Des Ryan
Chair Audit & Compliance



Peter Tully
Director



Nerine Williams
Director

Company Secretary



Mark McKeon

Directors who left the Board in 2023/24:

- Jane Britt – Retired at 2023 AGM
- Gary Matthews – Passed away June 2024

Acknowledgement of Service to QDN Board of Directors

Remembering Gary Matthews



In June 2024, we experienced a profound loss with the passing of Gary Matthews, QDN's Deputy Chairperson and an extraordinary advocate for inclusion and accessibility

in Queensland. Gary's commitment to the disability community was unwavering, and his impact on the lives of many was significant.

Gary was more than just a leader; he was a regional facilitator for Mackay, a group convenor, and a dedicated QDN member for over 15 years. His journey with QDN took a new turn when he joined our Board of Directors in March 2018. Throughout his time with us, Gary's work and passion became well-known, leaving a lasting legacy in several key projects. He played a pivotal role in initiatives like NDIS Ready to Go in 2014, advancing digital inclusion, assisting people with disability in accessing the NDIS, and pioneering disability-inclusive disaster planning.

Gary's influence extended far beyond these projects. His dedication was crucial to our work in the Going for Gold initiative, where he co-designed housing strategies and plans that helped shape and inform state policy and legislation. His contributions were not just about strategic development; they were about ensuring that people with disability were at the forefront of these conversations, actively shaping the outcomes that affected their lives.

Gary will be remembered for his humility,

humanity, and humour. He embodied the principles of social justice, constantly advocating for a world where people with disability not only had a seat at the table but were genuinely heard and respected. His leadership was not just about making decisions; it was about empowering others to have a voice and ensuring that their voices were amplified.

To Gary, we extend our deepest gratitude. Your energy, advocacy, leadership, and above all, your friendship and support, have left an indelible mark on QDN and the broader disability community. Your passing has left a significant void in our lives, and you will be greatly missed. But your legacy will live on in the work we continue to do in your honour.

Acknowledging Jane Britt's service to the QDN Board



Jane Britt's service on the Board has been marked by her unwavering dedication and exceptional contributions, particularly in the realms of policy and governance. Throughout her tenure, which

concluded in 2023, Jane brought a wealth of knowledge and experience that significantly shaped the direction and impact of QDN. Jane served as Chairperson of the Nominations and Performance Committee from October 2022. Her policy insights were not only deeply informed by her lived experience but also by her sharp analytical skills, which

she consistently applied to advocate for meaningful and sustainable change. Jane played a pivotal role in developing and refining policies that ensured the voices of people with disabilities were at the forefront of our decisions, making a lasting impact on our work.

In addition to her policy contributions, her strategic approach to governance helped steer the Board through various issues, ensuring that we maintained the highest standards of accountability and transparency. Jane's leadership in this area was instrumental in strengthening our governance framework, allowing the organisation to operate more effectively. As she retired from the Board in 2023, Jane left behind a legacy of excellence in both policy and governance, and her influence will continue to guide the Board's work in the years to come. We extend our deepest gratitude for her remarkable service and wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

Wendy Lovelace's Legacy



QDN acknowledged the passing of QDN Life Member Wendy Lovelace (AM) at the 2023 AGM. As an ongoing part of Wendy's legacy, other stakeholders have also acknowledged Wendy and her

contributions. A memorial plaque has been installed at the Bulimba Ferry Terminal in honor and recognition of her tireless work and advocacy. Wendy, who was a longtime resident of Bulimba, played a pivotal role in championing accessible ferry terminals and ferries, along with countless other achievements in the field of accessibility. This plaque serves as a lasting tribute to her dedication to creating a more inclusive

community, reflecting the impact of her work in the very place she called home.

In addition to this memorial, Wendy Lovelace has been posthumously awarded membership in the General Division of the Order of Australia. This prestigious honour commemorates her significant contributions to community health and disability advocacy. Wendy, who sadly passed away in 2022, was a passionate advocate for disability rights and inclusion, and her legacy continues to inspire those who strive for a more accessible and equitable society. As a long-term member of QDN and a leader in the disability community, Wendy's work has left an enduring mark on Queensland and beyond.

To further honour Wendy's memory, QDN gathered for an industry networking lunch, where we reflected on her contributions and shared a commitment to continue her work. We are deeply grateful to all who attended, including guest speakers Dr. John McPherson, Dr. Kelly Bertolaccini, and Malcolm Middleton, as well as members of the Lovelace family. Wendy was not only a QDN member and disability leader but also an architect who passionately advocated for universal design and a more inclusive and accessible Queensland. Her influence will continue to guide and inspire our efforts for years to come.







PART 2: AN OVERVIEW OF OUR YEAR

The 2023-2024 year for QDN has been marked by significant achievements across leadership, policy contributions, community engagement, and the strengthening of our network and influence.

Leadership

Our commitment to empowering people with disability is evident in our expansive leadership initiatives. This year, 36 Group Convenors, 20 Emerging Leaders, 156 Peer Leaders, 130 QDeNgage Consultants, 7 Digital Champions, and 16 DIDRR Peer Leaders have actively contributed to our mission. These leaders have been instrumental in driving change and representing the voices of people with disability across various platforms.

Policy Contributions

QDN has made substantial contributions to policy development, with 39 policy submissions over the year. We have actively participated as a member of 74 committees, engaged in 54 consultations and delivered 25 presentations, ensuring that the perspectives of people with disability are front and centre in policy discussions. Our submissions have spanned critical areas, including the NDIS, the Disability Royal Commission, healthcare, rental affordability, supported accommodation, and disaster resilience.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

QDN has successfully connected with our community through various events and digital platforms. Our Zoom meetings attracted over 3,700 participants, and we hosted multiple policy events, digital inclusion activities, and DIDRR workshops. Our web presence has also expanded, with a notable increase in total clicks, visits, and impressions, reflecting our growing influence and reach.

Social Media and Media Engagement

Our social media presence continues to grow, with significant increases in followers across platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn. The issues that QDN addresses in its advocacy have reached millions of Australians through media coverage, ensuring that the voices and concerns of people with disability are heard widely.

Governance and Operations

Our governance and operations were strengthened with a Board planning day, staff planning days, and a strong commitment to sound governance throughout the year. These activities have ensured that QDN remains an effective, accountable, and rights-based organisation.

Power of Peers

The power of peer support was evident in our 32 peer support groups, which held 240 meetings and engaged with 1,700 contacts. These groups play a crucial role in connecting members and advocating for change at the grassroots level.

QDeNgage

QDeNgage has experienced significant growth, with over 130 consultants now part of our network. These consultants have been involved in 118 projects, providing valuable insights and expertise to various organisations across Queensland.

Disability Inclusive and Disaster Resilient Queensland

Our DIDRR initiatives have been impactful, with 879 participants attending 86 workshops to develop emergency plans tailored to their needs. We also held 4 Building Inclusive and Disaster Resilient Communities forums, further strengthening our community's resilience.

AAA Digital Inclusion Project

Our Digital Inclusion efforts have been a cornerstone of our work, with Digital Champions leading workshops and providing individual support to participants. This project has been instrumental in bridging the digital divide for people with disability.

All Abilities Project

The All Abilities JobMatch project is a collaborative initiative led by QDN, in partnership with Life Without Barriers and uLaunch, a disability employment services provider. The project is designed to increase the number of employers in the community services sector who employ people with disabilities at all levels of their organisations.

Membership Growth

QDN's membership has continued to grow, reflecting our expanding influence and the trust placed in us by the community. We supported over 3,000 people through information and referrals, addressing critical issues and providing essential support.

Conclusion

QDN's 2023-2024 year has been one of growth, empowerment, and impact. We have strengthened our leadership, made significant policy contributions, expanded our community engagement, and continued to advocate for the rights and inclusion of people with disability in all aspects of life. As we look ahead, we remain committed to our vision of a Queensland where people with disability are active and valued citizens.

OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

QDN's strategy is informed by the foundations of **INFORM, CONNECT, LEAD, INFLUENCE**. Out of these foundations comes our five strategic goals. We hope you enjoy reading about QDN's work under these five goals in 2023-24.



GOAL 1 - INFORM

Promote and maintain active, vibrant local networks that inform our work and build local capacity.



GOAL 2 - CONNECT

To enhance the leadership and influencing capability of people with disability.



GOAL 3 - LEAD

To let people know about the lives of people with disability and how to best engage with us.



GOAL 4 - INFLUENCE

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



GOAL 5 - GROW OUR NETWORK

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



GOAL 1: INFORM

INFORM speaks to QDN’s strategic goal of informing members and the wider world through policy papers, research activities, QDeNgage consultant activities, peer to peer support, and our media and communications activities.

Policy

QDN actively engages in policy review and development across a wide range of areas impacting people with disability wherever we can meaningfully contribute. We achieve this through reports from member engagement forums, participation in advisory groups and committees, appearances before inquiries and hearings, as well as through formal submissions and letters.

In 2023-24, QDN formally contributed on multiple policy issues at state and national levels:

- NDIS Home and Living Submission to the NDIS Review
- NDIS Participant Journey and Intersection with Mainstream Services
- Rental affordability
- Disability Services and Inclusion Bill
- Draft Walkable Strategy
- Intellectual Disability Health Capability Framework
- Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill
- Disability Employment Centre of Excellence Options Paper
- Enduring Power of Attorney Laws - Elder Abuse
- Aviation Green Paper
- Public Advocate supported decision making publication
- Draft National Road Transport Technology Strategy and 2024-27 National
- Connected and Automated Vehicle (CAV) Action Plan
- Coercive Control communications and engagement strategy
- Victims Commissioner and Sexual Violence Case Review Board
- Disability Royal Commission consultation
- Supported Accommodation Inquiry
- Guideline - Reasonable adjustments for people with disability
- NDIS participant experience in rural, regional and remote Australia Inquiry
- Joint submission: Criminal Code (Decriminalising Sex Work) and Other
- Legislation Amendment Bill 2024
- Anti-Discrimination Bill
- Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Bill
- Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation and Other Legislation Bill 2024
- Queensland Cancer Strategy consultation survey
- National Strategic Framework for Chronic Conditions
- NDIS Provider and Worker Registration Taskforce



- Public Trustee Fees and Charges Reform
- Draft Guidelines for Access and Inclusion in Residential Development
- Qld Community Safety Bill
- Getting the NDIS Back on Track
- Consultation on Draft Statewide Oral Health Services Plan
- Draft National Autism Strategy
- 2023–24 Severe Weather Season Review
- Public consultation on automated vehicle safety reforms
- Joint Standing Committee on the NDIS — General Issues Inquiry





POLICY SPOTLIGHT

Disability Royal Commission

During the Disability Royal Commission, QDN made over 10 submissions covering various critical areas such as health, education, rights and attitudes, safeguards and quality, and more. These submissions were informed by the lived experience, knowledge, and expertise of QDN members.

Following the release of the Disability Royal Commission's final report on 29 September 2023, QDN facilitated four member forums in November and December 2023 to discuss and provide feedback on the report's recommendations, particularly those related to housing, health, and employment. A total of 87 members participated in these forums, sharing valuable feedback, insights, and ideas on which recommendations they believed should be prioritised.

QDN has been actively working in collaboration with its members, government agencies, organisations, and advocates to respond to the recommendations that matter most to its members.



NDIS Review

On Friday, 30 June 2023, the Australian Government NDIS Review team released an initial report titled *What We Have Heard*. This report summarised the feedback received from various stakeholders and raised key questions, inviting solution-focused input from the community.

The NDIS Independent Review Panel subsequently made a final report to the Disability Reform Ministers' Meeting on 7 December 2023. In response to the review, QDN made submissions on several critical areas, including:

- Home and Living
- Access to the NDIS
- The Participant Journey
- Disaster Inclusive Risk Reduction
- Platform Providers
- A response to the *What We Have Heard* report, addressing solutions for Queensland and Australia at large.

On 25 March 2024, QDN held a member NDIS Review forum that covered recommendations related to provider registration, Foundational Supports, and Housing and Living Supports. This forum provided an opportunity for QDN members to discuss these important topics and share their perspectives.

A total of 27 members participated in the forum, offering valuable feedback, insights, and ideas. Members strongly emphasised the crucial importance of co-design and consultation, highlighting the value of lived experience of disability. They stressed the need to maintain choice and control across all aspects of the NDIS and expressed a lack of trust in the system. Concerns were also raised that changes to the NDIS could lead to worse outcomes for participants.



Foundational Supports

In response to the NDIS Review, National Cabinet agreed to jointly design and commission a national Foundational Supports Service System, which will be delivered through existing government service settings such as childcare, schools, and healthcare, and phased in over time. The Queensland Government, led by the Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services (DCSSDS), is developing a high-level future Foundational Supports design for Queensland.

To support this initiative, DCSSDS engaged the Queensland Treasury Corporation to collaborate with them and the sector to gather targeted early input into the design of the disability Foundational Supports in Queensland. As part of this project, QDN was engaged to conduct consultations with people with disability, their families, and peak disability organisations.

QDN successfully engaged a total of 52 people across six workshops: three conducted face-to-face and three held online.

Housing

In 2023-2024, QDN has continued to play a vital role in shaping housing policy to better meet the needs of people with disability across Queensland. One of the key areas of focus has been advocating for improvements in Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA). QDN has actively contributed to discussions about the design and delivery of SDA, ensuring that the perspectives and lived experiences of people with disability are considered in policy decisions. By working closely with housing providers, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), and other key stakeholders, QDN has helped drive positive changes aimed at improving the accessibility, quality, and availability of SDA housing across the state.

In addition to SDA, QDN has been deeply involved in advocating for broader reforms within the rental market, particularly focusing on improving security of tenure for tenants with disability. Through consultations and partnerships with organisations like the Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA), QDN has sought to address the challenges people with disability face in finding and maintaining stable rental housing. This work has included advocating for legislative changes that give tenants with disability greater protection and flexibility, particularly around long-term leases and the ability to make necessary home modifications to improve accessibility.

QDN collaborated with REIQ around changes to minor modifications in private rentals. QDN and REIQ engaged with people with disability and other key stakeholders to identify a framework for people seeking minor modifications in their private rentals to deliver safety and independence.

For many individuals with disability, accessing safe and accessible housing has been a longstanding challenge, particularly when it comes to making necessary modifications in rental homes.

Furthermore, QDN has been instrumental in advocating for more inclusive mainstream housing policy. By engaging with government agencies, industry bodies, and community organisations, QDN has highlighted the importance of universal design principles in new housing developments. The aim is to ensure that all new housing stock is built to be accessible, adaptable, and inclusive of people with disabilities, rather than relying solely on specialised housing. This policy work is part of QDN’s broader vision to create a housing market in Queensland that enables all individuals, regardless of their ability, to find homes that suit their needs and support their independence. Through ongoing collaboration and advocacy, QDN is working towards a future where housing options are diverse, accessible, and equitable for all Queenslanders.

In 2024, QDN has been hosting collaborative workshops and a roundtable that brought together key stakeholders, including QDN’s Housing Champions—people with disability and lived experience in social and community housing—alongside Community Housing, Supported Accommodation, and disability providers, as well as representatives from the Department of Housing and the NDIA. These gatherings have focused on discussing the development of the *My Housing Options* Toolkit.

My Housing Options is a resource initially developed by QDN in 2018 to help people with disability think about their housing needs, explore available housing and living options, consider their choices, and plan for their future. The updated Toolkit is designed to support community housing, supported accommodation, and other frontline workers in having person-centred conversations with people with disability using the *My Housing Options* resource.

Additionally, *Partnering for Inclusive Housing with Queenslanders with Disability 2024-2027* is a new inclusive housing plan co-designed with QDN that outlines innovative approaches to addressing housing barriers and expanding housing options for people with disability. The plan is grounded in four housing principles essential for inclusive communities: rights, choice, control, and inclusion.



Game Changes Report: Brisbane 2032

QDN proudly launched its the Game Changers report on June 3, 2024, in collaboration with Urbis. This groundbreaking report aims to ignite a transformative shift in employment opportunities for people with disability in Queensland, using the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games as a powerful catalyst for change. The report provides a comprehensive analysis of the current employment landscape for individuals with disability, pinpointing key barriers while offering strategic recommendations to enhance and shape the employment ecosystem leading up to, during, and after the Games.

The Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games represent a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to close the employment gap and foster meaningful, long-term career pathways for people with disabilities across the state. The Game Changers report envisions leveraging the global stage and unprecedented infrastructure development associated with the Games to drive inclusive employment practices and create a lasting legacy of equality in the workforce. By engaging businesses, governments, and communities, the report emphasises the importance of positioning people with disabilities as integral to the success of Queensland's economy both now and in the future.

The report also draws from invaluable lessons learned from other major global events, identifying opportunities to replicate and expand successful initiatives. These lessons, combined with the unique context of Brisbane 2032, offer a clear roadmap for how Queensland can maximise the positive impact of the Games on employment outcomes for people with disability. With a focus on sustainability, accessibility, and inclusion, the report presents a vision for a future where employment for people with disability is not just an afterthought, but a central pillar of economic planning and development.

Game Changers serves as a call to action for businesses, policymakers, and community leaders to work together in building an inclusive employment legacy from the Brisbane 2032 Games. By following the strategic recommendations outlined in the report, Queensland can lead the way in creating an employment environment that values and leverages the skills, talents, and contributions of people with disability.

This collaborative effort between QDN and Urbis represents a pivotal step toward ensuring that the Brisbane 2032 Games leave behind not just sporting memories but a lasting legacy of inclusivity and opportunity for people with disabilities across Queensland.



Supported Accommodation

In 2023, the Queensland Public Advocate released a report on supported accommodation, focusing specifically on Level 3 residential services in Queensland and the regulation of these services. The report also includes an examination of Level 1 and Level 2 residential services, as well as other shared living arrangements.

One of the key recommendations of the report was to conduct a Parliamentary Inquiry into the providers and conditions of supported accommodation in Queensland. This recommendation was tabled with the Queensland Parliament on September 12, 2023. The Queensland Government accepted the Public Advocate's recommendation, and the Inquiry was referred to the Community Support and Services Committee (CSSC).

In December 2023, QDN was engaged by the Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works to provide information and support to residents in 21 Level 3 facilities across the state concerning the ongoing Inquiry into Supported Accommodation. Following this engagement, QDN conducted follow-up visits to Level 3 supported accommodation facilities across Queensland in June and July 2024. During these visits, QDN shared details from the report on the Inquiry into Supported Accommodation with the residents, ensuring they were informed and engaged in the process. We attended 21 locations and engaged with 500 residents. QDN supported 132 residents to make an individual submission to the CSSC.

QDN Position Paper on the Economic Security of Women with disability

Women with disability face numerous barriers to economic participation, including discrimination, lack of accessibility, limited education and training opportunities, inadequate support services, negative societal attitudes, family and domestic violence, lack of affordable and accessible housing, overrepresentation in the child safety system, and other social issues.

QDN's position paper, *Breaking the Glass Ceiling and Smashing the Legacy of Low Expectations*, aims to comprehensively address these multifaceted challenges. The paper advocates for the rights of women with disability and provides recommendations for the Queensland Government, businesses, universities, and the community sector to effectively address these issues.

The position paper was informed by extensive consultations with women with disability, including a significant in-person consultation held at Parliament House in Brisbane and a state-wide online consultation. These sessions provided a platform for women with disability across Queensland to share their lived experiences, challenges, and insights, which were integral in shaping the recommendations and advocacy strategies outlined in the paper.

Launch of Microbusiness videos

In November 2023, then-Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Seniors and Disability Services, Craig Crawford MP, launched a series of videos highlighting people with disability who have successfully started their own microbusinesses. These videos, created in collaboration with QDN and the Department of Child Safety, Seniors, and Disability Services, showcase the opportunities that owning and operating a microbusiness can provide for people with disability. By featuring personal stories, the videos illustrate how everyone’s microbusiness has enhanced their life by offering greater independence, choice, and control. QDN has been instrumental in supporting this initiative, advocating for inclusive employment opportunities and helping to demonstrate how microbusiness ownership can be a meaningful alternative to traditional employment for people with disability.

In addition to the videos, QDN partnered with the department to develop fact sheets designed to assist individuals interested in starting their own microbusiness. These resources explain the benefits of microbusiness ownership, provide practical guidance on where to begin, and direct people to additional information and support. The fact sheets, along with the videos featuring Clay, Freya, Gabe, and Tracy, highlight how microbusinesses, built around a person’s strengths and interests, can offer flexibility and autonomy. Through its involvement in this project, QDN continues to champion greater economic participation for people with disability by equipping them with the tools and information needed to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities.



Research

QDN continues to contribute to and utilise evidence-based responses to issues that impact people with disability. This is critical to ensuring information and issues are discussed, understood, and responded to in ways that work. QDN actively seeks to support and partner in research activities that promote the wellbeing, rights, and voices of people with disability. QDN has undertaken a range of work with universities to inform the research agenda nationally and especially the National Disability Research agenda including:

The Queensland Disability Research Network

The Queensland Disability Research Network's (QDRN) purpose is to unite Queensland disability researchers and promote cross-sectoral collaboration concerning disability research. QDRN works with industry partners and state-wide peak disability organisations to ensure relevance and research processes that include effective, meaningful co-design. QDRN highlights the excellent and impactful disability research that happens in Queensland, and links with the National Disability Research Partnership in a way that represents the interests of Queensland. QDRN Members' Foundation Commitment is to the long-term goal of improving the lives, social and economic participation of people with disability, by working together in sustainable, collaborative research partnerships. QDN has been working with QDRN and is a partner in this work.

The National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health

The official opening of the National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health (the Centre) on Friday 13 October 2023 marks a significant milestone in advancing health equity for people with intellectual disabilities across Australia. The launch of the Centre brings together key stakeholders, including health professionals, researchers, advocates

and people with lived experience of intellectual disability, to collaborate on reducing health disparities. This collective effort aims to create a more inclusive healthcare system that meets the unique needs of individuals with intellectual disability. The Centre's establishment serves as an example of for innovation and collaboration, offering hope for improved health outcomes and a future where accessible and person-centred healthcare is a reality for all.

QDN is honoured to be a part of the consortium for the Centre, which is a transformative initiative, reinforcing its commitment to ensuring better health equity for Queenslanders with intellectual disability. In partnership with core members of the consortium, led by University of New South Wales (UNSW), QDN is working to confront these challenges and drive systemic changes that will lead to improved health outcomes. The Centre operates on an innovative model of shared governance, actively involving people with intellectual disability, their families, and advocates in the decision-making process. By combining the advocacy, clinical, and research experience of its members, the Centre is dedicated to creating a more inclusive healthcare system.

Donna Best, QDN Peer Leader and group convenor of Brisbane Hot Topics, has played an instrumental role in QDN's involvement with the Centre. Her leadership and expertise have been crucial in shaping QDN's contributions, especially in areas related to peer leadership, accessibility, and community-driven approaches to disability inclusion. Donna has been appointed to the National Council for the Centre of Excellence which is the overall governance body for the Centre. Donna's unwavering passion for creating a more equitable society for people with intellectual disability aligns seamlessly with the Centre's mission. Her involvement ensures that QDN's work within the consortium is not only impactful but also transformative, advocating for greater inclusion and accessibility at every level of the project.



Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction

QDN's partnerships in action have made significant contributions, including to the National DIDRR Framework and Toolkit for Collaborative Action, led by research with Associate Professor Michelle Villeneuve, Deputy Director of the Centre for Disability Research and Policy at the University of Sydney.

Additionally, we collaborated on the Homelessness Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction Project, launching the P-CEP Homelessness Outreach Guide and video resources featuring QDN members. Furthermore, 10 Get Disaster Smart peer-led online workshops were delivered to 67 people with disability over a 10-week period, teaching participants how to use emergency information online with guest presenters from the Bureau of Meteorology, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, and Brisbane City Council.

We worked with the Centre for Disability Research and Policy at the University of Sydney, Community Services Industry Alliance (CSIA), and the Queensland Department of Communities, Housing, and Digital Economy. As part of this work, we have developed a range of resources co-designed with people with disability. These resources empower people with disability to make their own plans in case disaster strikes.

National Disability Research Partnership

QDN co-hosted consultations to inform the 10-year research agenda for the new National Disability Research Partnership (NDRP). QDN was able to connect people with disability who had been impacted by flooding disasters to the consultations, a cohort the NDRP was keen to reach.



During 2023-2024, QDeNGage has experienced significant growth, welcoming new members into the consultant pool, which now exceeds 130 consultants across Queensland.

QDeNGage has delivered on many projects across the year which have covered many different areas that matter to people with disability. QDN has engaged with local councils, local and state government, and businesses across Queensland spanning 118 projects in total.

Some highlights of QDeNGage's work and projects have included:

- Through co-design with Volunteering Queensland and the Queensland Government, QDeNGage has developed several valuable resources. These include Successfully Engaging Volunteers with Disability, which draws from the experiences of volunteers with disability.
- QDN partnered with Department of Premiers and Cabinet to produce the Accessible Events Guide and Checklist through engagement with people with disability to inform and co-design the important elements and key things that need to be considered when developing an accessible and inclusive event.

QDeNGage firmly believes that co-design is a powerful driver of change within the disability sector, promoting inclusivity and equal opportunities in all areas of life. The organisation offers a wide range of services, including co-design, disability inclusion reviews, product and experience testing, disability awareness and inclusion training, facilitation of engagement activities, development of disability action plans, service design, and speaker engagements.

The growth of the QDeNgage team and improvements in systems have resulted in high customer satisfaction and quality work on an increasing number of projects during 2023-2024.

Looking ahead to the Brisbane 2032 Olympics and Paralympic Games, QDeNgage is excited to collaborate with existing and new clients from various organisations and departments as Queensland strives to create an inclusive environment for all. QDeNgage takes pride in the work of its consultants and is committed to continuing its growth and enhancing its services.

“QDeNgage is a strong advocate for the practices of co-design and consultation, and they understand the principles behind those practices very well. Inclusion is an underlying theme in all QDeNgage’s activities, and their collaboration with the Council is always very well considered, reflecting the advice and concerns of people with disability.”

Brisbane City Council

“The QDeNgage team was instrumental in supporting our Accessible Autonomous Vehicle project. They provided nine participants with a range of disability, a crucial element for our research. Their professionalism was evident throughout the entire process, as they were not only polite and friendly but also made every participant feel completely at home. This created a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere that greatly benefited our study.

The service provided by the QDeNgage team was exceptional. Their organisational skills ensured that the entire process was seamless and efficient. The team’s ability to manage and coordinate such a diverse group of participants with varying needs is a testament to their expertise and dedication. This allowed our team to focus on the core aspects of our research, freeing up valuable time and resources.

Furthermore, the quality of their service was duly noted, and I have already recommended QDeNgage to my colleagues as their first stop for organising participants. The QDeNgage team’s contributions were excellent, providing insights and feedback that were crucial to the success of our project. The ease with which they handled the logistics and their professionalism throughout the engagement were greatly appreciated.

The QDeNgage team has demonstrated exceptional service, expertise, and organisational skills, and we look forward to future collaborations with them. I highly commend their work and wholeheartedly recommend their services to anyone in need of high-quality participant recruitment and management in the accessibility or disability space.”

Queensland University of Technology

2
Thought about it
but not yet acted

3
Wanted to get
involved

4
Acted on it



WORKSHOP SCHEDULE
Friday 9th June
10:00 - 11:00 Introduction
11:00 - 12:00 WHAT
12:00 - 1:00 Lunch
1:00 - 2:00 Introduction
2:00 - 3:00 WHAT
3:00 - 4:00 Introduction
4:00 - 5:00 WHAT

Management of Health
Communication
Assistive Technology
Who I do it with

Assistance Animals
What I do it with
Positive Technology

1. I need help to get to the places I want to go
2. I need help to get to the places I want to go
3. I need help to get to the places I want to go
4. I need help to get to the places I want to go

1 min
2 mins
TME

My health conditions are
I need help to get to the places I want to go
I need help to get to the places I want to go
I need help to get to the places I want to go

Positive Technology
Assistance Animals
Who I do it with
Management of Health
Communication
Assistive Technology

FY 2023-2024 Overview



118
Projects



30
Customers



Number of Consultants
allocated on engagements

221
individuals, including
non-members

Number of Consultants engaged

787

Number of enquiries to become
QDeNgage Consultants

29

Number of New QDeNgage
Consultants

21

Total number of QDeNgage
Consultants

130

QDeNgage: Driving Accessibility and Inclusion

At QDeNgage, we work with organisations to help make services, products, and workplaces more accessible and inclusive for everyone. Many businesses and government entities seek to understand how they can be more inclusive of customers and employees with disability, aiming to deliver quality, accessible services and products. QDeNgage connects these organisations with specialist consultants who bring both professional expertise and lived experience of disability to provide practical business solutions.

Our consultants, who are QDN members, are engaged by organisations to develop strategies and implement plans that foster a culture of inclusivity.

Our services include:

- Disability inclusion reviews
- Customer consultation and focus groups
- Product and experience testing
- Disability Awareness and Inclusion Training
- Policy development
- Disability action plans
- Service design

Through these services, QDeNgage supports organisations to improve their accessibility standards and inclusion and be leaders in creating environments where everyone can participate fully and equally. Whether it's through conducting disability inclusion reviews, facilitating customer consultation, or providing disability awareness and inclusion training, QDeNgage is at the forefront of driving positive change in the accessibility space.

Media and Communications

Media Engagement

During 2023-2024, QDN's media and communications played a pivotal role in empowering people with disability through the dissemination of information. Radio, print, and TV outlets leveraged the expertise of the QDN Board of Directors, executive staff, and members to create journalistic pieces on crucial community topics such as housing, employment, transport, and changes to the NDIS. This effort was part of our ongoing commitment to improving communication channels and promoting inclusivity. As a result, over 6,133,000 people across Australia were exposed to issues that matter most to our members, with frequent media stories highlighting health, renting, transport, and the NDIS. This year our media took a more targeted approach of focusing on Queensland media and issues that could assist us with change.

Co-Design Campaigns

The See Me. Hear Me. Respect Me. campaign was launched through a collaborative co-design process between Queensland Health and QDN members, ensuring that the voices and experiences of people with disability were at the forefront. This campaign aimed to improve health outcomes by advocating for the need for healthcare providers and the broader community to truly hear, see, and respect individuals with disability. The campaign quickly gained traction, going viral and reaching hundreds of thousands of Queenslanders. Its message was amplified through extensive coverage by major media outlets, including ABC News 24, ABC Radio, and ABC online and TV. The campaign's significance was underscored by its official launch at Parliament by Minister Shannon Fentiman, Minister for Health and Ambulance Services, highlighting its role in driving systemic change within the healthcare system.

QDN e-News

QDN's e-News, a bi-monthly online publication, was designed to provide easily accessible information that impacts the lives of people with disability. During 2023-2024, over 2,500 members, supporters, and allies received 16 editions of the newsletter in both written and video formats. These editions covered news, policy updates, trends, events, and resources, with additional eBlasts focused on the Disability Royal Commission, NDIS Review, and opportunities for members to voice their concerns on important topics.

Social Media

Over the past 12 months, QDN's social media presence has solidified, establishing itself as the peak body for people with disability in Queensland across platforms like Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube. Facebook and LinkedIn, in particular, have become key pathways for online interaction, with follower counts reaching 4,612 and 1,336, respectively, during this period.

Website

During 2023-2024, QDN's website featured key reports on topics such as the economic security of women with disability in Queensland and the development of an inclusive employment legacy for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, through the Game Changers report. Another significant publication was the Voice of Queenslanders with Disability Report 2024, which provided insights gathered from Queenslanders with disability, their families, carers, and organisational representatives. User engagement on the website continued to increase, with visitors accessing policy information, updates, and news from member and peer support groups.

QBloggers

QBloggers is a story-based initiative that allows members to share their life stories, experiences, and views in both written and audiovisual formats on topics that matter to people with disability. This initiative plays a crucial role in shaping future policy and advocacy work. QBloggers have access to resources like writing tips, suggested topics, and guidelines to inspire and support their content creation. The group currently consists of members who produce blog content centred around QDN's key policy areas.







GOAL 2: CONNECT

QDN supports connection with and between members and the wider community through peer support groups, issue-based engagement forums, leadership summits, local champions sharing their expertise, and the activities of a growing number of peer support groups and communities of practice.

Peer Support Groups

QDN is built around a strong network of 32 peer support groups that inform, connect, lead, and influence change. These groups play a crucial role in ensuring that the needs, aspirations, and rights of people with disability are understood and prioritised in decision-making processes.

Our peer support groups are at the heart of our work to connect and empower people with disability across Queensland. These groups provide safe spaces for individuals to come together and discuss matters that are important to them. By offering a supportive environment, the groups encourage members to share their lived experiences, exchange information, and build connections with others in their local communities or around shared topics or issues:

"I love being around like-minded people and sharing issues that are unique to our community as queer people with disability. I know I am in a safe environment among my peers, where I won't be judged".

Name withheld, member of QDN's LGBTQIA+ peer support group

CONNECT speaks to QDN's goal of connecting through engagement with our state-wide network of members and supporters.

In addition to fostering personal connections, these peer support groups are instrumental in leading and influencing change within local communities. We believe it is important to empower people with the skills they need to act as active citizens in their own lives and communities and to support others to become leaders as well. These groups provide a platform for people with disability to voice their opinions on significant issues such as housing, transport, education, employment, and human rights. The groups are led by individuals with disability who are part of the local community, ensuring that discussions are grounded in real experiences and that the voices of people with disability are at the forefront of advocacy efforts.

These groups cover a wide range of topics, including navigating the NDIS, addressing local issues and activities, and discussing key issues affecting people with disability. They also focus on supporting each other in achieving personal goals, whether those goals relate to improving accessibility, securing employment, or enhancing community participation.

QDN's peer support groups are located all around Queensland, ensuring that people from various regions have access to these vital resources. For those who do not have a group nearby or find it challenging to attend in person, QDN offers the option to join some groups online. This flexibility ensures that everyone can participate and benefit from the support and advocacy that QDN provides, regardless of their location or circumstances.

Peer support group activities under the four goals include:

Lead

Leadership of, by and for people with disability is at the core of QDN's peer support groups. The pathways to leadership across the peer support groups has been significantly enhanced by the involvement of Emerging Leaders. Many of the 2023 graduates have taken on the role of group convenor, with others expressing interest in stepping up to leadership positions. This transition of leadership roles has strengthened the groups, as the Emerging Leaders bring new energy and perspectives. Alumni of the Emerging Leaders program are also contributing to various projects across QDN, demonstrating the effectiveness of the program in cultivating future leaders. These leaders are critical in guiding the groups and ensuring that they continue to thrive and make an impact in their communities.

Inform

Peer support groups play a crucial role in informing and empowering their members on key issues such as the NDIS, accessibility, and inclusion within their communities. Through regular meetings and open discussions, members share their experiences, challenges, and successes, creating a rich environment for learning and mutual support. These groups often become a vital source of information, helping individuals navigate complex systems like the NDIS by sharing practical advice, resources, and insights gained from personal experiences. Additionally, peer support groups serve as a platform for raising awareness about accessibility and inclusion, advocating for changes that benefit the broader community. By working together, these groups amplify the voices of their members, ensuring that their needs and rights are recognised and addressed at both local and state levels.

Connect

The goal of Connect is central to QDN's mission, focusing on building strong relationships within its statewide network of members and supporters. By empowering people with disability to become active citizens and leaders, we foster connections through peer support groups, engagement forums, leadership summits, and local champions. This year, we expanded our peer support groups to 32, adding new groups in Hervey Bay, Redland Bay, and Capricornia. These groups are vital hubs for members to connect over shared interests and goals. QDN has also strengthened connections through participation in Queensland's largest disability expo and by hosting town hall style meetings in regional areas, along with increased media promotion, further raising awareness of their work and the importance of peer support.

Influence

To enhance the influence of peer support groups, QDN has developed new tools to capture stories from individuals and groups about what matters to them in their local communities. These stories are then used to create resources that highlight local issues, which groups can discuss with their representatives. This approach has allowed peer support groups to have more meaningful conversations with local council and government representatives, ensuring that the needs and concerns of people with disability are addressed. Additionally, many members of peer support groups have participated in marketing campaigns, further extending their influence and reach.

“This year with the support of QDN, we applied for a Queensland Government Working with Women Grant and held 2 forums across the state, including one at Parliament House to create a QDN Position Paper on increasing the economic opportunities for women with disability. This took our capacity to lead and influence to the next level.”

Online Women’s Group Convenor

QDN Peer Leadership Day, October 2023

The QDN Peer Leadership Day in October 2023 brought together 80 QDN members from across Queensland for a day of connection, learning, and leadership development. This event provided a unique opportunity for members to share their experiences, build their capacity, and strengthen their knowledge on critical issues impacting people with disability. Through interactive sessions, workshops, and discussions, participants explored topics such as advocacy, accessibility, and the NDIS, all while fostering a strong sense of community and mutual support. The day highlighted the power of peer networks and the importance of leadership within the disability community, reinforcing the collective commitment to creating a more inclusive and equitable Queensland.



Peer Support Group Locations

Brisbane

The Brisbane peer support group operated in a hybrid format, allowing members to attend both online and in person. The group has been active in exploring Brisbane with a focus on community accessibility and inclusion, with visits to City Hall and Roma Street Parklands, followed by social catch-ups at local cafes. These activities have helped strengthen connections among members.

Brisbane Hot Topics

This group celebrated 25 years of meetings, growing from a small group of self-advocates who are people with intellectual disability to a well-established network. They continue to connect with peers internationally and provide valuable insights to projects across sectors.

Caboolture

This group has kept Matt McCracken's legacy alive by remaining active in discussions on important issues like proposed NDIS changes and enjoying social events where more community connections are formed.

Cairns

Despite challenges such as summer floods, the Cairns group remains resilient, engaging in local events and representing QDN in the community.

Cairns Yarning Circle

The group is mainly focused on providing support for First Nations people with disability. The group is seeking a new venue after the closure of their previous meeting place.

Capricornia

Previously known as Rockhampton, this group has expanded its reach across Central Queensland and recently held a successful town hall-style meeting.

Christine Court

This group, held in a Level 3 supported accommodation facility, continues to grow and contribute to QDN's policy discussions.

Deception Bay

This group is active in their local community, using leadership skills to engage with dignitaries and speakers.

Gladstone

With a new convenor who is also an Emerging Leader, the group is focused on building influence through community engagement.

Gold Coast

The Gold Coast group continues to build capacity and knowledge among its members by engaging in a variety of community-based activities. These experiences serve as practical opportunities for members to expand their understanding and reflect on how such environments can be made more accessible and inclusive. During meetings, the group discusses these experiences, analysing accessibility features and identifying areas for improvement, thereby enhancing their collective knowledge and empowering each other to advocate for better access and inclusion in community settings.

Gold Coast Hot Topics

Recently relocated to the Southport library, this group for people with intellectual disability has seen new members join and is actively promoting their activities.

GRADS (Griffith University)

Co-designed with the Student Representative Council, this group is expanding to cover all six campuses, with a mix of in-person and online meetings.



Gympie

The Gympie group is actively engaged with the local council and has received support from the community in making local venues more accessible.

Hervey Bay

Led by a 2022 Emerging Leader, this group meets at the Urangan Treehouse Community Wellness Centre and is actively promoting their work in the community.

Ipswich

This group was one of the first peer support groups that formed and continues to engage monthly and connect in the community.

LGBTQIA+

This group is planning to lead and influence through participation in the 2024 Pride Festival March, aiming to raise awareness about disability issues.

MAC (My Aged Care)

The group is for older people with disability who are not eligible for the NDIS and continues to meet around issues that impact on older persons and is looking to expand its reach through targeted strategies for engagement.

Online Women's Group

This group focuses on what matters to women with disability. This year, the group celebrated International Women's Day with events focused on economic security for women with disability, launching a position paper in collaboration with the Queensland Government through a successful grant.

QDN Online

This active online group continues to inform QDN and peers about disability issues across Queensland.

QDN Y

Representing the youth voice within QDN, this group is focused on promoting issues important to young people with disability across the state.

Redlands

A new group committed to leading, connecting, informing, and influencing change in the Bayside community.

Self-Management

This group is focused on the implications of NDIS changes and has been actively involved in supporting QDN's submissions to the parliamentary committee.

Sunshine Coast

After years of online meetings, this group is now meeting in person again and engaging with local representatives on issues like NDIS and elder abuse.

Tablelands

Meeting at the Mareeba Library, the local convenor is building capacity through training and development opportunities.

Toowoomba

With a new convenor from the 2023 Emerging Leader Graduates, this group is actively engaging with local service providers and stakeholders.

Townsville

The Townsville group is increasing its engagement with the local community and recently hosted a successful town hall-style meeting.

Unique Parents

This passionate group of parents with disability continues to advocate for parental rights and share their experiences to influence change.



Group Convenors Community of Practice

Peer support group convenors continue to meet regularly for training days and workshops. These connections and peer support between convenors helps them to lead, connect, influence and inform in terms of what their groups want to know more about or want to change in their local communities.

Peer Leaders

QDN's Peer Leaders are instrumental in the organisation's network, demonstrating leadership in their communities and influencing a wide range of issues. Their role is critical, as they bring grassroots experiences, voice and the networks to the forefront, informing national discussions with the lived experiences of people with disability. The number of Peer Leaders continues to grow, with many participating in leadership and staff training events, such as the Art of Hosting and Harvesting Conversations That Matter. These leaders meet monthly with senior management and the chairperson to provide feedback on key issues, ensuring that the voices of their communities are heard and acted upon.

P-CEP Peer Leadership

This year QDN continued to facilitate an interstate online P-CEP Peer Leadership Program. P-CEP is about an individual taking personal responsibility to create their own plan to ensure their safety before, during and after an emergency. 67 P-CEP Peer Leaders throughout Australia completed an online program to build their resilience and capability to become P-CEP Peer Leaders in their communities.

Engagement forums

Disability Action Week Webinar: "Access Ignites: It's Good Business"

In December 2023, QDN held this webinar which marked the opening forum for Disability Action Week (25 November - 2 December 2023). The webinar highlighted the importance of inclusion and accessibility in the business world. The event featured presentations from then Minister for Child Safety, Seniors, and Disability Services, Honourable Craig Crawford MP, Honourable Di Farmer MP Minister for Employment, Small Business, Training and Skills Development, and Youth Justice and key speaker Julie Saunders, Director of Urbis, who discussed the potential for accessibility in the lead-up to the Brisbane 2032 Games.

The webinar explored how the talents of people with disability as both business owners and employees drive business success. It showcased the commercial advantages of workforce diversity and accessibility.

MyMedicare Information Session

In February 2024, QDN held an online information session about MyMedicare, featuring guest speaker Angela How from Brisbane South PHN. MyMedicare is a new patient registration system for Australians with a valid Medicare or DVA Veteran Card. It allows patients to nominate a regular care team, enabling better, more personalised care, including longer telehealth appointments and enhanced support for people living in residential aged care. Angela provided insights on MyMedicare, explaining how it works, its benefits, and how to register.

NDIS Review QDN Member Forum

In March QDN held an online forum to discuss the NDIS Review and its recommendations. This forum provided an opportunity for members to share their thoughts and feedback, which helped shape QDN's response to the review. The session included discussions on what needs to be considered, especially in the design of foundational supports.

Disability Royal Commission - Forum

QDN held a series of four online forums focused on the key areas of the Disability Royal Commission which included education, housing, health and employment following the release of the Disability Royal Commission Final Report. This forum provided an opportunity to discuss the key elements of the report and share feedback.

Getting the NDIS Back on Track Bill QDN Member Forum

In May 2024, QDN held a member forum to discuss the Getting the NDIS Back on Track Bill. This was an opportunity for members to share their thoughts and feedback, which informed QDN's submission to the bill.

Building Inclusive and Disaster Resilient Communities - forums

The Building Inclusive Disaster Resilient Communities (BIDRC) initiative, led by QDN, held four community action forums that brought together people with disability, carers, service providers, emergency services, local councils, and state government to develop actions that use local community assets to ensure inclusion and reduce disaster risk for people with disability. These forums, attended by 101 participants in Somerset, Lockyer Valley, Livingstone, and Southern Downs—all regions impacted by the 2020 Black Summer Bushfires—fostered significant engagement. One attendee remarked,

"One of the things that stood out to me was the amount of engagement and discussion... that people with disability that came along felt safe to really put their opinions forward. And I think being in a space with people with disability, also the program led by people with disability, it felt obviously very inclusive for them."









LEAD expresses QDN’s goal of enhancing the leadership and influence of people with a disability. This goal has been well met this year through the activities of Peer Leaders, the Emerging Leaders program, an international leadership summit and a co-hosted event at an international conference.

Peer Leaders

Peer Leaders continue to strengthen their leadership by participating in monthly meetings and collaboratively coming together. These meetings provide an opportunity for Peer Leaders to receive organisational updates and share critical insights from their activities with members in the regions. Topics discussed include transport accessibility, housing challenges, the rising cost of living, and issues impacting daily life. Peer Leaders have also had valuable engagements with government, contributing to discussions that directly shape the future of disability services and support systems.

In 2023-2024, Peer Leaders have contributed to a range of significant discussions that reflect the needs and concerns of people with disability. Some key contributions include:

- 1. NDIS Review Consultation:** Peer Leaders actively participated in NDIS Review consultations, providing lived experience feedback on how the scheme can better support participants, improve service delivery, and address systemic issues.
- 2. Policy Advocacy:** Peer Leaders have been central in voicing concerns on critical issues like housing accessibility, transport, and the increasing cost of living, influencing QDN’s submissions and advocacy work at both state and national levels.

3. Engagement with Queensland Government:

Peer Leaders have been part of consultations with the Queensland Government on various reforms.

4. Community Engagement and Peer Support:

Through their local peer groups, Peer Leaders have been essential in building community networks, supporting peers, and sharing crucial information about disability services, particularly during periods of reform and review.

QDN Emerging Leaders Program

The 2023 Emerging Leaders graduated in November 2023, having completed a program designed to equip them with the skills and knowledge needed to lead within QDN and their local communities. The success of the program is evident in the number of applications received for the 2024 cohort, with over 80 applicants. This year’s leaders are already taking up leadership roles within QDN, including Group Convenors, QDeNgage Consultants, and other P-CEP initiatives. Their enthusiasm for leadership and self-advocacy is contagious, and their engagement with guest speakers, staff, and peers has been outstanding. As they work on passion projects, implementing their new skills to grow their networks and influence, the future of self-

advocacy within QDN looks bright. The success of the program has led to the creation of additional leadership opportunities through the new Influencing Change Program.

Nigel Webb Emerging Leaders Bursary – Lara McCrea

Nigel Webb, a long-serving member of the QDN Board of Directors and Chairperson for nine years, made significant contributions to the organisation and the broader disability sector. In recognition of his dedicated service, QDN's Board of Directors established a bursary which has operated for two years and was awarded to a 2023 Emerging Leader. This bursary provides an opportunity for the recipient to network and learn from leaders with disability in other states. The recipient for 2023, Lara McCrea, will explore the disability arts in Melbourne, whilst connecting with resident artists and accessible arts programs. Through this experience, Lara will gain valuable insights and knowledge that she will share with QDN members, contributing to the growth of leadership and capacity in Queensland. This passion of Lara's was recognised while completing her Emerging Leaders project. With this bursary Lara hopes to make a difference through a passion of hers whilst using her recently developed leadership and mentoring skills.

This exchange of learning will enhance awareness and understanding of disability arts within the QDN community, fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment.

Matt McCracken Bursary – Angie Keegan

The Matt McCracken Bursary was established to honour the late Matt McCracken, a QDN Board Director, Peer Leader, and advocate for human rights. The bursary aims to continue Matt's legacy by providing learning and personal development opportunities for members in the Caboolture district. The inaugural recipient, Angie Keegan, is a disability advocate, Peer Leader, and 2022 Emerging Leader. Angie plans to use the bursary to create a locally produced podcast titled *Is Everybody Here?* focused on informing and influencing change for people with disability in the Caboolture region. The podcast is named after an annual event Matt McCracken held in his beloved Caboolture community. The podcast will feature profiles of prominent locals with disability, interviews, community updates, and other local initiatives, aiming to raise awareness and promote inclusion.

Get Ready, Plan Ahead workshops

Get Ready, Plan Ahead workshops were held across Queensland communities, including Brisbane, Burdekin and Charters Towers, Goondiwindi, Gympie, Sunshine Coast, Logan, Somerset, Scenic Rim, Lockyer Valley, Livingstone, and Southern Downs. A total of 879 participants attended 86 workshops to develop emergency plans tailored to their individual support needs using the P-CEP framework. These workshops provided people with disability the opportunity to meet and learn from the lived experiences of peer facilitators and other attendees.

“What I liked about the (Get Ready, Plan Ahead) workshops the most is it’s for people with disability. And delivered by people with disability because we can understand them, they can understand us.”





GOAL 4: INFLUENCE

INFLUENCE encompasses QDN's strategic goal of influencing through representation to key points of influence, state and national alliances, membership of local, state and national committees, and governance structures and practices that reflect QDN's values.

Governance structure and practice that reflects QDN's values

QDN's motto of nothing about us without us, and its values, are expressed in QDN's governance and structures in several ways:

- QDN is governed by people with disability
- QDN is an employer of people with disability
- QDN's work supports the capacity of people with disability to inform, lead, connect and influence
- QDN has developed its position of influence in the sector and successfully sought funding for its executive peak body status

In January 2023, QDN's Board of Directors held a planning day to ensure QDN's strategic direction and work meets the organisations' 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.

Representation to key points of influence

QDN continues to grow its leadership and influence as an organisation of, by and for people with disability. QDN is a respected and in-demand voice for people with disability and is engaged in representation to key points of influence from the local to the national level, across a breadth of issues, reflecting the concerns and interests of members. This representation includes meetings and briefings with Queensland Government Ministers and senior government officials, particularly this year with the Departments of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services; Health; Communities, Housing and Digital Economy; Employment and Small Business; and Justice and Attorney General; the Queensland Human Rights Commissioner, Chief Digital Officer, and Public Advocate.



Key Committee representation

In Queensland and nationally, QDN is represented on multiple committees, including:

- Accessible Taxi Services Working Group
- Behavioural Emergency Response Team (BERT) Interagency Partnership
- Brisbane 2032 Technical Advisory Panel
- Brisbane District Human Social Recovery Committee
- Build to Rent Project Steering Group
- Building Digital Equity Network
- Committee for Brisbane
- Commonwealth Disability and Health Sector Consultation Committee
- Community Housing Disability Network
- Community Support and Services Committee
- Crisis Reform Project Focus Group
- Disability and Health Sector Consultation Committee
- Disability Focus Group for Brisbane North Local Area Needs Assessment
- Health and Disability Interface Advisory Group
- Homes for Queenslanders Community Education and Engagement Working Group
- Intellectual Disability Reference Group Subcommittee of the Independent Advisory Council, National Disability Insurance Agency
- Jameson Trauma Institute Working Group
- National Advocacy Collective
- National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health
- NDIA – Independent Advisory Council – Research and Evaluation Advisory Panel – NDIS Wellbeing Index Steering Group
- Personal Mobility Device Reference Advisory Group
- Personal Mobility Device Parking Working Group
- Premier’s Leaders Forum

- Procurement Ministerial Advisory Council
- QCOSS Community Services CEO Network
- Queensland Disability Advisory Council
- Queensland Equal and Together Alliance
- Queensland Peaks Network
- Queensland Walking Alliance
- QUT Centre for Justice Stopping Gender Violence Advisory Board
- Roadmap Implementation Governance Group – Commonwealth Health National
- Roadmap Intellectual Disability
- Social Recovery Reference Group
- Supported Accommodation Providers Association Steering Committee
- Spinal Cord Injury Consumer Advisory Group

Member forums

Between 2023 and 2024 QDN has delivered 27 member forums including:

- Disability Royal Commission member forums that covered housing, health, employment, and education
- QDN Peer Leader sessions
- Member information session about the 2023 Referendum
- Disability Action Week forum
- MyMedicare information session
- NDIS Review Member forum
- Disability and Age Care Sector Review: Inspiring change through better outcomes forum
- NDIS Bill member forum
- Foundational Supports workshops

Forums, briefings and consultations

- 2024-25 Queensland Budget Day Briefing
- After the Disability Royal Commission and NDIS Review Forum
- Arts and Disability Roundtable – Brisbane 2032 Games
- Australasian Society for Intellectual Disability (ASID) Conference
- Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic

- Games Accessibility and Inclusion Program Workshops
- Building Digital Equity in Queensland Forum and Hub Showcase
- Building Digital Equity Program
- Centre for Universal Design Australia Symposium
- Consultation - Putting Queensland Kids First
- Disability and Age Care Sector Review: Inspiring change through better outcomes Forum
- Disability and Digital Citizenship Workshop
- Disability Reform Queensland Stakeholder Roundtable
- Disability Reform Summit: Griffith University
- Elder Abuse Forum
- Global Approaches to Poverty Reduction Forum
- Inclusive Futures Disability Reform Summit
- Independent Advisory Council of the NDIS
- Minister for Education Roundtable
- National Disability Services Cairns Regional and Remote Conference
- National Housing Conference
- Not now, Not ever - Help End Domestic and Family Violence Breakfast
- Online Plenary: Disability Inclusive Emergency Planning and Disaster Management
- Premiers Housing Roundtable
- Presentation Community Affairs Legislation Committee: Inquiry into NDIS Bill
- QShelter CEO and Senior Leaders Forum
- Queensland Alliance for Mental Health CEO forum
- Queensland Alliance or Mental Health Members Forum
- Queensland Cancer Strategy Webinar
- Queensland Criminal Justice and People with Intellectual and Cognitive Disability Forum
- Queensland Leaders Forum
- Queensland Mental Health Commission Stakeholder Meeting
- Queensland University of Technology
- Digital Inclusion Research Forum
- Real Estate Institute of Queensland Policy Forum
- Regional Local Councils Candidates Forum
- Roundtable consultation on draft Anti-Discrimination Bill
- Social Recovery Reference Group Conference
- South East Queensland Local Councils Candidates Forum
- Stakeholder design forum to help shape Queensland's domestic and family violence and coercive control communication program
- Tenant Engagement and Participation Forum
- Towards Excellence in Public Policy Health forum
- Workforce Diversity Project Workshop

Speaking engagements

QDN members and staff have become sought after speakers and have presented at a wide variety of events this year:

- 2023 Buy Queensland Supplier Awards
- Afternoon tea at Government House for International Day of Volunteers 2023
- ASID Conference- 22nd-24th November
- Brisbane Disability Connection Expo
- Building digital equity: Co-design and Best Practice Online Accessibility
- Centre for Universal Design Australia Symposium
- CEO and Leaders Lunch and Forum – Q Shelter
- Government House Afternoon Tea for National Palliative Care Week
- International Women's Day – Investing in Queensland Women with Disability
- Launch of the National Centre of Excellence for Intellectual Disability and Health
- Our Place: A First Nations Housing and Homelessness Action Plan launch
- Partnering for Inclusive Housing with Queenslanders with disability 2024-2027 launch

- Premiers Cabinet Christmas Party
- Premiers Housing Roundtable
- Presentation – Social Recovery Reference Group
- Presentation at NDS Regional and Remote Conference on Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction and QDN’s work as peer leaders
- Presentation at the Disability and Age Care Sector Review: Inspiring change through better outcomes forum
- Presentation to Committee for Brisbane Equity Sub-Committee with regards to Inclusion and accessibility for business sector and industry bodies
- Presentation to Parliamentary Inquiry into Supported Accommodation
- Presentation to Redlands City Council Community Resilience for times of Disaster
- Presentation with Donna Best at the Public Hearing for the Criminal Code (Decriminalising Sex Work) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024
- QCOSS Budget Breakfast
- QDN Game Changers Report launch
- QDN, Public Advocate, Human Rights Commissioner and QAI working together to hold a forum in 2024 with regards to DRC and NDIS Review.
- Representation at National Housing Conference including people with disability
- Representation including people with intellectual disability at the National Centre of Excellence Intellectual Disability Health
- Two-day National Housing Conference
- World Down Syndrome Day at Government House

NDIS Review

QDN hosted a range of engagement opportunities to feed directly into the NDIS review both through peer support groups, a home and living forum co-hosted with QShelter, an online forum on the Participant Journey, and a forum for ILC grant recipients.

The policy team has also spoken directly to many members both in person, and via phone calls and emails to inform the submissions provided to the review. Currently, we have provided the following submissions: Access to the NDIS, The Participant Journey, and Home and Living. The policy team is continuing engagement with members in response to the interim report by the NDIS Review team. The policy team submitted a final response prior to the cut-off date for submissions on 25 August, 2023, with the final report to be released in October 2023. QDN, through our Peaks contract, has also been asked to undertake a report of the potential implications on the Queensland government of the final report recommendations in preparation for the Disability Reform Ministerial Council, which I will provide to the Department.

Supported Accommodation Providers Association (SAPA) - Engagement Work 2023

SAPA President and vice president approached QDN to undertake a body of work in 21 supported accommodation level 3 facilities (boarding house) to engage with residents to get their feedback on the services they receive and how they have input in the services and support as a tenant of the facility. Five locations, including Townsville, have been completed. This has been a fee for service work. It is important as first-time external organisations have been working within the Level 3s in this way, which demonstrates the level of trust and relationship that QDN has developed with SAPA over the years.

Secondly, the Public Advocate has tabled his report in parliament this week which identifies a number of features and changes in the supported accommodation sector that requires us to review the adequacy of our current regulatory requirements. The

Conference Presenters

Acknowledgement of Country



Image description: A man in a red and black striped polo shirt with a glimpse of a wheelchair back behind his shoulders. He is wearing square shaped glasses and smiling slightly and warmly.

Uncle Willie Prince

Willie Prince, known as Uncle Willie, was born on Wakka Wakka country in Cherbourg and has cultural and spiritual connection to the Kalkadnjon clan group in Mount Isa. Uncle Willie experienced multiple hospital admissions in his early life and was removed from family and culture at age two and placed in the Royal Children's Hospital. He was later transferred to Xavier Home for Crippled Children and he left there when he was 16. Uncle Willie worked for the State Library Queensland for 33 years and had a distinguished career in disability sport, representing Queensland 16 times. He carried the Paralympic torch in 2000 and in 2018 carried the Queen's baton for the Commonwealth Games. Uncle Willie is a voice and advocate for people with disability, particularly Aboriginal people with a disability.

Masters of Ceremonies



Image description: A woman with dark hair, wearing a blue top, sitting and smiling.

Kairi Swift
Kairi Swift has had an extensive career in the disability, advocacy and social policy areas where she is committed to people with disability living valued lives in the community. In June 2021, Kairi was appointed as an Industry Fellow in the Merzboes Health Institute Queensland, Griffith University. Kairi works as a policy consultant and is the President of Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) and a Board Member of Community Resource the Australian Government and WWDA at the Commission on the Status of Women 57 held at the United Nations, New York, providing high level, strategic advice on women with disability and violence and presenting at various side events. Kairi has also led teams alongside the Australian Human Rights Commission and been a keynote speaker for WWDA in Indonesia and South Korea on gender and disability and the elimination of violence. Kairi currently works as an independent consultant providing strategic high level advice, policy analysis and giving input on a range of key

report makes one recommendation – that a parliamentary inquiry be held into the provision and regulation of supported accommodation in Queensland - and suggests 29 questions that such an inquiry might engage, which the Queensland government has accepted the recommendation to hold a parliamentary enquiry. One of the key bodies of work that will need to happen within this enquiry is mechanisms to support residents to have a voice and contribute.

2024: Phase 1 of this work has been completed with QDN engaging with over 500 residents of 22 level facilities across the South East and in Townsville. A team of contractors were engaged, and policy team staff worked together to deliver of this important body of work in very short time frames. The engagement with residents was very positive, and QDN’s approach was honed to work with residents to provide fun, interactive information sessions followed by second and sometimes third visits to support residents who wanted to make an individual submission to the Parliamentary Committee.

QDN supported 132 individual residents to make individual submissions. This is an excellent reflection of the quality approach of engagement undertaken by QDN. QDN has also made an organisational submission to the inquiry. QDN will start discussions with the Department of Housing with regard to phase 2.

Department of Housing - Conscious/Unconscious Bias Training - August 2023

QDN completed four co-design sessions with our co-design consultants and developed a strong workshop that has key information that is important from the lived perspective of people with disability. Workshop delivery has commenced, and feedback to date has been positive.

December – 2023: QDN finished this contract with the Department with the delivery of the outline module that is based upon the in-person online sessions that were co-designed and co-delivered with QDN housing champions. The video was launched during Disability Action Week.

Following on from this as a separate paid activity, QDN was invited to present to the Regional Directors at their workshop and to hold six sessions on embedding this learning into day-to-day practice with 120 senior managers from across the state.

Disability Action Week Events (online and in-person)

The DAW online event was attended by 210 attendees, with 414 attendees registering, with the theme of Access ignites: it’s good busines. There was a panel discussion of micro-business owners and employment issues that impact people with disability. The Micro-business Resources Launch happened at Queensland Parliament and was attended by Government ministers and was launched by Minister Crawford. Several microbusiness videos, factsheets, and information were launched at the event and resources were handed out.

Launch of Volunteering QLD/QDN Volunteer

QDN and Volunteering QLD launched the volunteering handbook Successfully Engaging Volunteers with Disability. Many stakeholders have received the resources, and we will continue to promote them to our members and other stakeholders.

Partnering for inclusive disability housing: action plan 2024-2027

The Homes for Queenslanders housing plan was released by the Premier and Housing Minister on 12 February 2024. This plan included a small section with regards to the disability housing plan that QDN co-designed with the Department and other key stakeholders. The plan at this stage contains a range of key initiatives that QDN has been advocating for a number of years and hopefully will be seen in the final plan.

Voices of Queenslanders 2023 Survey and Report

The first Voice of Queenslanders with Disability report released in June 2023 provides insights gathered from a sample of 291 Queenslanders with disability, 117 family/carers and 34 organisational representatives who engaged with the research survey. Queenslanders shared authentically and transparently with us about what is going well and what is challenging across many aspects of their lives. Queenslanders told us that for some, life was getting better, with more stable income, employment, and secure housing. Conversely, Queenslanders also told us that for some, life was getting worse, with challenges to health, income, and supports. This report has been used as part of our work in 2023/2024 as a data source to shape our policy and project work.

See Me. Hear Me. Respect Me. Campaign

In partnership with Queensland Health (QH), QDN facilitated two stages of focus groups, co-designed to improve communication and respect between healthcare professionals and people with disabilities. We began with three hybrid focus groups, ensuring a diverse demographic split. Attendees included people from various cultural backgrounds,

First Nations people, parents of children with disability, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, people who are experiencing homelessness, and those for whom English is not their first language. We also aimed for a wide range of disabilities to ensure inclusive representation. In Stage 2, the focus groups delved deeper into potential solutions. Each group consistently identified two key points: people with disabilities must be heard and respected before any health campaign could be effective. Every group emphasised that a health campaign without meaningful involvement of people with disabilities would not succeed.

As these conversations unfolded, trust between QDN members and Queensland Health grew rapidly. It became clear to everyone involved that co-design was the way forward. The energy in the room reflected a collective realisation—a light bulb moment—that this collaboration was the path to real, impactful change. The See Me. Hear Me. Respect Me. campaign was designed to address the core concerns raised during the focus groups. It sought to raise awareness of the importance of recognising, respecting, and listening to people with disabilities in healthcare settings.

Launch of Disability Housing Plan - Partnering for Inclusive Housing

On June 13 2024, Minister Scanlon and Minister Mullen launched the Partnering Inclusive Housing Disability plan which QDN has co-designed with housing champions, key sector representatives across housing, disability and industry. This work began 2 years ago. It has required a significant amount of strategic engagement and advocacy to get this plan to launch. We are pleased to see it is out there and we can start working on the great strategies that have been co-designed with the sector and the important role of people with disability in its implementation.

Wendy Lovelace Industry Lunch

On Friday 21 June 2024, we hosted the Wendy Lovelace Industry lunch, which was attended by 42 people. For this special occasion there were three speakers; John Macpherson, Kelly Bertolini from Griffith University, who sat with Wendy on the Ministerial Transport Advisory Group and undertook extensive work in the universal design, along with Malcolm Middleton, who is a Board Member of Queensland Walks and former Queensland Government Architect and worked closely with Wendy.

State and National Alliances

QDN works collaboratively in Queensland and increasingly across Australia to advocate for issues that impact people with disability, forming alliances for projects, campaigns and issues-based engagement.

Our alliances include:

- Council to Homeless Persons Queensland homelessness alliance
- Disability Advocacy Network Australia
- Health/Disability Non-Government Organisation Partnership
- Jamieson Trauma Institute - partnership to progress legacy project around health and well-being
- Making Rent Fair Alliance
- National Community Housing Alliance
- Queensland Walking Alliance
- Queensland Disability Advocacy Alliance
- QCOSS Community Services Network
- Queensland Peaks Network

Queensland Volunteering Action Partnership

QDN also actively engages with and supports organisations that share the values and goals of QDN, attending events and forums to demonstrate that support. This year, these have included:

- Angelman Syndrome Australia Annual Conference
- QAMH Members meeting
- QCOSS Budget Breakfast
- Queensland Volunteering Awards QDN has also been a guest at a variety of public launches and events this year:
- Griffith University Table at Committee for Brisbane event - Roll, stroll, ride and glide: How to make Brisbane 2032 the most accessible Games yet.
- NAIDOC Week Dinner as guest of Minister Crawford
- Premier's White Ribbon Day Breakfast
- Premier's Christmas Reception
- Path to Treaty Lunch hosted by Premier and Minister Crawford
- Queensland Care Consortium Launch with Minister Farmer
- R U OK? Day Community Bushwalk - Government





GOAL 5: GROWING OUR NETWORK



Growing our network is critical to our continued success as a voice for people with disability in Queensland. This means not just reaching members and growing membership, but also growing our network of influence for change and getting our messages out to the community.

This year we have had great success growing our network and amplifying the voice of members on disparate issues such as the NDIS review, disaster preparedness and e-scooters, and many others. Our voice on social and other media continues to grow, as more people and agencies become aware of what QDN does and the people and issues it represents. The compilation and publication of the Voice of Queenslanders with Disability report was a remarkable moment in the history of the voices of people with disability and QDN.

Vale

In the year 2023-2024, the disability community in Queensland suffered the loss of several remarkable leaders, passionate advocates, and devoted members of QDN. We honour and remember each of them for their invaluable contributions towards creating a more inclusive and equitable Queensland for everyone.



THREE

PART 3: FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Income

QDN's total revenue for the 2023/24 financial year was

\$3,922,434
(2022/23: \$3,853,420)

comprising:

Grant funding from Queensland Government departments

\$1,795,319
(2022/23: \$1,639,611)

Grant funding from Australian Government departments

\$1,361,732
(2022/23: \$1,553,630)

QDeNgage fees and other project revenue

\$601,320 (
2022/23: \$546,012)

Investment and other income

\$164,063
(2022/23: \$114,167)

Expenses

QDN's total expenses for the 2023/24 financial year were \$3,889,712 (2022/23: \$3,817,185).

Surplus

QDN generated an operating surplus for the 2023/24 financial year of \$32,722 (2022/23: \$36,235).



Australian Government



Queensland
Government

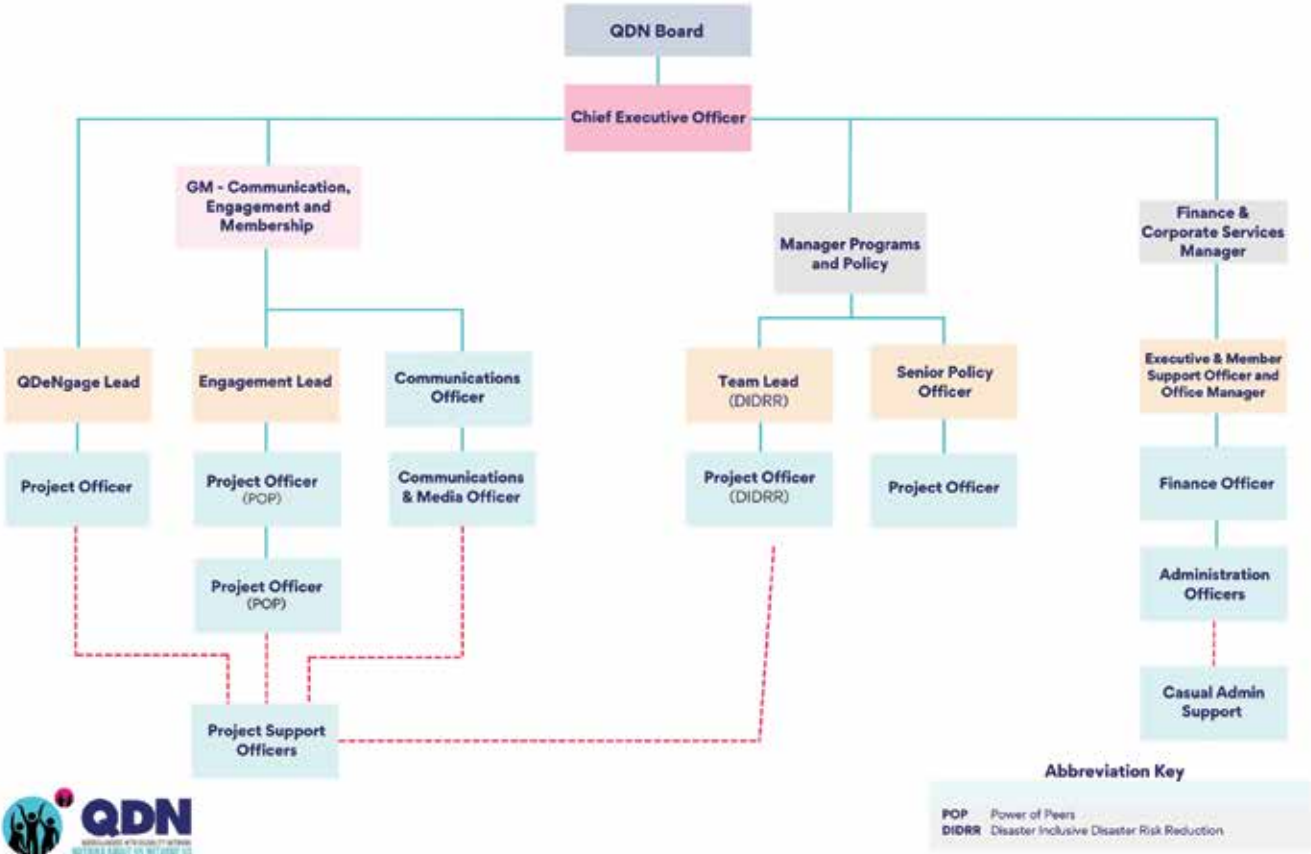
Celebrating
10 Years of
Self Advocacy
in Queensland.



PART 4: APPENDIX

FOUR

QDN Organisational Chart





COMPUTERS

A DRIVE COMPUTERS

BRONCOS QUEENSLAND

QDN
QUEENSLANDERS WITH DISABILITY
NOTHING ABOUT IT

