

## Answers to Questions on Notice

### Bastien Wallace, Senior Policy Officer, People With Disability Australia (PWDA)

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY:** There have been submissions from other stakeholders, namely the Human Rights Law Centre, that have effectively deemed the NSW Electoral Commission's definition of accessible as cause for concern. When we talk about accessibility, it's probably important that everybody is on the same page. I wanted to get your thoughts on that. Is there a definition that the Electoral Commission could look to that's, if not universally accepted, generally accepted by peak agencies and advocacy organisations?

On the matter of a universally accepted definition of accessibility, PWDA draws on the United Nations, Economic and Social Affairs, Accessibility and Development: Mainstreaming disability in the post-2015 development agenda, last accessed 11 November 2024,

[https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/accessibility\\_and\\_development.pdf](https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/accessibility_and_development.pdf) P5

“...Accessibility is a precondition for an inclusive society for all, and may be defined as the provision of flexibility to accommodate each user’s needs and preferences.<sup>1</sup> This publication proposes that accessibility be not only a means and a goal of inclusive development but also an enabler of an improved, participative economic and social environment for all members of society....”

And at P18 “...Based on lessons learned and experience, accessibility is best promoted by applying the principle of universal design and by combining both top-down and bottom-up approaches...”

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY:** There has been some discussion in the hearings around the most recent council elections and the fact that two councils outsourced it to a private provider, namely Fairfield and Liverpool. Have you had any feedback from your members about the experience at those two elections, about whether—as I would presume—inconsistency arose between the options they were presenting and the options that the Electoral Commission was presenting, and about whether it was easier, more difficult or the same with Fairfield, Liverpool and the other LGAs?

On the matter of answering the question related to our member’s experience of voting in the Fairfield and Liverpool LGAs which used a private provider, PWDA has had to go out to our members for specific feedback. This take’s time, and we anticipate an answer by next week, when I will attend the Equal Access to Democracy meeting. If any difference was noticed I will share that information.