

Election of Board Directors 2022

Candidate Profiles

17 Candidates for 7 positions

Listed in alphabetical order

Andrew Fairbairn



Andrew is a 53-year-old male and is a left below knee amputee of 8 years. Prior to Andrew's amputation and joining the physical disability community, Andrew was working in the disability sector in Perth, Western Australia. He worked for Limbs 4 Life, the peak body for amputees in Australia, as a project coordinator. Andrew believes that having worked in the disability sector as both abled and disabled, gives him a unique skill set as he can see issues that face people with disabilities from both sides. Andrew holds a BA Jazz from WAAPA, a Cert IV in Classical Music from the VCA, and a Cert IV as an Assistive Technology Mentor from Rocky Bay.

Andrew's work history has helped him to be very diverse in his views and opinions. He has had years of experience working with people with Intellectual Disabilities as he has a 32-year-old son who was diagnosed with ID at 4 years old. He assists people with disabilities to navigate pathways for funding, assistive technologies, education and Government Departments.

Andrew is proud to give back to the community. He does that as:

- President and WA State Director of Physical Disability Australia.
- WA Representative on the Limbs 4 Life National Amputee Advisory Council.
- Board Director of the Western Australian Youth Jazz Orchestra.

Andrew's expertise lies in Assistive Technologies, Communication and Leadership. He believes that having lived experience of being both an abled bodied and disabled person is something that is highly valued on a board.

Candidate location: Girrawheen, WA.

Arun Baramundi



Aaron Baramundi is a young National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participant, a public sector manager and a qualified epidemiologist with a strong background in health policy research, governance, advocacy.

He volunteers spare time on the management committee of Diversity ACT, and on the lived experience advisory committee of the Mental Health Community Coalition ACT (peak body for the community mental health sector). He was a founding chair of the Department of Health's Cultural and Linguistic Diversity (CaLD)

network.

Aaron was born in Victoria and currently lives in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT).

Candidate location: Wanniasa, ACT.

Christopher Meaney



Chris is a member of the Charcot Marie Tooth community - a man with a physical disability living on Dharawal Land. Chris has worked in a variety of settings with significant focus on the NDIS, as well in government roles seeking to advance rights and representation of disabled people in the community. He is a fan of taking his privileged platform and using it to amplify people who aren't given enough time at the table.

Chris has significant experience in the NDIS from rollout while being a support worker through to running training programs at large Hospitals for staff to understand the NDIS. He has a rudimentary understanding of the Access Standards having worked in a position seeking to ensure better access and inclusion for young disabled people.

Chris has 4 years of project management experience, a significant professional and personal network in the disability sector and community and has spent the last 9 months working in a role focusing on disability policy requiring him to draft submissions to parliament.

Chris would like to:

- start moving towards an increase in the life expectancy of people with cognitive disabilities in this country. The significant gap in life expectancy is an utter disgrace and must be closed.
- Advocate for a better employment experience for disabled people. Closing the gaps in employment representation (people with disability are twice as likely to be unemployed than non-disabled people) and advocate for better payments for those not working.
- Improve the NDIS.

Candidate location: Sutherland, NSW.

Dion Pretorius



Dion is a first generation Australian, a strategic communicator, a data and analytics tragic, an amateur artist and a terrible singer.

In this time of challenge and opportunity, Dion is seeking nomination for the PWDA Board so he can help address the prejudice, neglect, marginalisation and abuse that people with disability face in Australia. He wants to help change the way disability is understood and supported, and help strengthen and spread the voices of those with lived experience and celebrate their contributions to our community.

As a member of the LGBTIQ+ community, and coming from a CALD background, he says this patchwork of experience is what makes him who he is. It is what inspires him to strive everyday to make a positive difference in the world.

Dion has spent more than a decade in the not-for-profit sector helping for-purpose

organisations grow. As a leader in government, not-for-profits and in the private sector, he has:

- supported better outcomes in mental health, science and research;
- helped secure millions of dollars for important medical research;
- led a progressive web and social media team at ACT Health during the pandemic; and
- developed programs to support stronger minority voices.

Dion is also engaged to be married next year, and spends weekends with his partner renovating their home, hiking around Canberra, and tending to their veggie patch.

As a former board member and volunteer for other organisations, Dion hopes to dedicate his time to supporting the important work of PWDA.

Candidate location: Canberra, ACT.

Donna Allan



Remote disabled individuals are disenfranchised due to lack of essential services and face greater hurdles to overcome to obtain support services. They face large prohibitive costs that have to be overcome to access essential services. Donna knew of a family who had to move into a town so they could obtain some support services. Having access to internet & mobile services which are reliable are crucial for achieving a quality of life that metropolitan based individuals take for granted. Functional working internet & mobile services enable communication & connection with other individuals. Connection with the "outside world " and others is crucial to obtaining services as everything is online; we live in an online world. Services that operate to reasonable standard create possibilities & opportunities such remote employment working opportunities, education, access to telehealth. Having reliable mobile connection enables a connection to community; Disabled individuals already face expensive prohibitive costs & additional hurdles to overcome to go about their daily living.

The cost of installing an off grid reliable Internet/ mobile technology is cost prohibitive cost when you are on a low income and have additional living costs due a disability.

Donna would like to create a sense of community & create networks for remotely living disabled individuals enabling these individuals to have a voice that is heard by government /policy makers.

Candidate location: Duckinwilla, QLD.

Haidi Badawi



Haidi is a woman with mental and physical disabilities coming from a diversely linguistic background and cultural. She has 22 years of experience in leadership and learning. In the last Five years, Haidi has been actively participating in Five management boards Women with disabilities Victoria Australia, (GTAC- Gene Technology Access Centre Melbourne University, women Economic forum (Chairperson of Australian STEAM Education), Chairperson of Creative women Australia, University High School council and Status of Women United Nation).

Haidi is am a member of Australian institute of Company Directors trained on Governance, Finance, and various board directorship courses since 2018.

She is also a member of disability leadership institute Australia, trained on various disability advocacy courses and modules.

On top of Haidi's science bachelor's degree, she completed a Master of Educational Management and Leadership and a graduate Diploma of teaching and learning. She had been a PhD candidature Genetics with Melbourne University.

In conclusion, Haidi pledges to help PWDA in establishing a great network with various decision makers to enable influencing their decisions in relation to PWD issues with disability in Australia. She pledges and believes in her ability to create very successful collaboration opportunities with decision makers at other communities and boards group to encourage the collective voice to stand and represent the Australian PWD and explore more avenues and solutions to achieve the best outcomes for PWDA.

Finally, Haidi would like to say, "it will not be for me without me".

Candidate location: Melbourne, VIC.

Kevin Boyce



Kevin is married, has three adult children and a guide dog.

After completing a trade, Kevin started working in the building industry and then changed to the industrial stand by power industry. Subsequently Kevin looked for a new industry after his marriage to a rural dairy farmers daughter and undertook further studies and a career in the Rural dairy Industry.

Kevin studied and was awarded the Graduate Diploma in Community Engagement via his leadership plus fellowship of which Kevin was sponsored by the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) of Victoria. Kevin's accident was not covered by any insurance so, the TAC used his disability cost experience to better understand their insurance costs outcomes and Kevin have been part of the Service Standard review for DHS Victoria.

Kevin has had previous Board experience with PWDA and is currently the community member of three Melbourne Hospital Boards helping them with their `Disability Access Action plans `development. Kevin is a peer support advocate for Guide Dogs Victoria and in

the past has advocated for Bear In Mind, an acquired brain injury organisation. Kevin is also an Abilities Hero member.

Kevin says that “the future under the NDIS` organisations like PWDA should start promoting what People With a DISABILITY CAN DO and not what they can not do. We can not change what happened yesterday but what we do today can shape tomorrow!”

Candidate location: Panmure, VIC.

Marayke Jonkers



Marayke Jonkers is a Paralympian who is passionate about creating a world where people can fulfill their full potential. As part of the Australian Paralympic Swimming Team, Marayke, over a period of 20 years won three medals at the Sydney 2000, Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008 Paralympic games.

Marayke possesses a university degree from the University of the Sunshine Coast and a Bachelor of social science (Community work) including disability studies/gender and public health, Bachelor of arts (Communications), public relations and journalism. Marayke possesses a strong focus on public relations campaigns that highlight social issues and investigates how people with disability can be better represented in the media. Marayke is also the founder of Sporting Dreams and is currently its President. Marayke is also a previous Board member of the Sunshine Coast Sports Federation, the Queensland government Q150 and commemorative events (including Queensland day, multicultural awareness week, Australia Day etc).

Marayke possesses experience and expertise within the disability employment sector including implementing a pilot project for University graduates with disability, writing literature and consulting. She was the ambassador for the National Injury Insurance Scheme Queensland which was part of the team that brought the legislation before Parliament. Additionally, Marayke has also worked in various roles which involved working with governments, liaising with people with disabilities and working on government projects within the disability sector which included advocating for people with disabilities. These are just some of Marayke's achievements.

Candidate location: Maroochydore, QLD.

Michelle Hyde



Michelle is a strong woman who has experienced significant adversity and some privilege in her life. She has a degree in agricultural science, a PhD in veterinary science as well as teaching and business qualifications.

Michelle was the first person in her family to attend university. Michelle has worked as a writer, editor, trainer and communicator for many years. She is currently studying a Diploma of Life coaching and Aboriginal languages (Gamilaraay) and works full time at the NHMRC in indigenous Health Advice. Michelle has strong ties to the Indigenous community and has Gamilaraay ancestry through her father's family. Michelle has worked as a

teacher, researcher and administrator in the vocational education area and in academia. She is a member of the LGBTQTI+ community and the disabled community and has experienced the impact of intergenerational family disfunction and displacement.

Michelle's lived experience includes mental illness – first hand and as a carer for family. Michelle has experienced a late stage cancer diagnosis and aggressive cancer treatment that has left significant challenges. Her area of expertise is teaching, mentoring, coaching, training and advocacy. Michelle has some Board experience (Birchgrove Community Association) and also familiarity with Governance issues through her university and public service work. She believes that change is best facilitated through 'being in the tent' and sharing stories. Michelle always strives for a strengths based approach and her passion is assisting people (all of us!) to find their path to their best lives, and supporting them to achieve this.

Candidate location: Canberra, ACT.

Nicole Lee



Nicole is an advocate for the prevention of violence against women and is a strong advocate in the FDV sector. She has had extensive experience on boards and has a strong history of governance and fundraising. Nicole understands policy and contemporary issues and is a regular panel member on the current affairs programs; The Drum, Sky News, ABC Morning Breakfast, 7 News, SBS, and radio. She brings an intersectional policy voice to the table with her experience of FDV gendered, and Mental Health spaces and her own lived experience as a violence prevention advocate.

Nicole was appointed four years ago to the Victim Survivors' Advisory Council for the Victorian Government and also holds a position on the board of Safe Steps, and the Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council (VMIAC). She also has a solid understanding of governance and risk and holds a position on the governance and risk subcommittee at Safe Steps. Nicole is a strong voice for disabled women and abuse survivors. Nicole is also working towards linking the disability and mental health sectors to better support an understanding of what suicide prevention, and mental health supports look like for disabled people. This involves many hours of unpaid work speaking to the media, and advocating to politicians in Canberra face to face to ensure disabled people are protected during this time of uncertainty with the Covid-19 pandemic.

Candidate location: Mernda, VIC.

Paul Klotz



Paul Klotz spent 30 plus years in Senior Management roles (Information Technology & Telecommunications Industry) before his multiple mental health and physical disabilities meant a change in lifestyle / health break for next 5 plus years. He now dedicates his time to advocacy and mentoring roles (using his extensive commercial and lived experience) to helping others craft a better informed and contented approach to life. He also raises awareness in his local community through community and regional projects, as well as interviews on ABC radio and Channel 7.

Paul is a Director and Treasurer for Phoenix House, founding member of the Adult led Survivor College (National Centre for action on Child Sexual Abuse), Mentor at Marcus Mission, Lived Experience speaker with Roses in the Ocean, Consumer Advisory Committee for Musculoskeletal Australia, member of Lived Experience Australia and Queenslanders with Disability Network.

Currently supported by NDIS (member of the Participant First Engagement Initiative) and previously worked as a support worker and Service Delivery Manager for a large NDIS Service Provider.

Paul enjoys cooking with produce from his garden, photography, writing and simply wants to make a difference in other people's lives, sooner than was available for himself.

Paul is a strong voice to advocate for others, using his lived and living experience as a survivor of childhood sexual abuse, mental health and suicide, multiple cancer, heart, and stroke conditions, as well as neurological and physical disabilities to break down stigma and stereotyping and raise awareness to facilitate sustainable change.

Candidate location: Branyan, QLD.

Peter Cook



Peter became an incomplete quadriplegic following a fall in 2015. His biography, titled "*My Life, My Choice*" details his life, business career and personal achievements. His injury came on the eve of Peter retiring. He has endured the mental strain that the injury placed, but has committed himself to rehabilitation to reduce the level of support required into the future.

He is committed to reinvesting time in representing older disabled Australians.

He enjoyed a successful career in the private and public sector, graduating through the motor, finance and banking industries, before joining the Queensland government in a senior executive role. His expertise in the public sector extended from asset and facility management, procurement and contract management. He eventually turned to contracting in high risk, high-value procurement and contract management.

Peter's experience at consulting with the highest level of government has given him a thorough knowledge of processes within the bureaucracy.

In his private life, Peter and his partner purchased a 110-year-old residence and converted the property to a host-based tourism accommodation service. Peter accepted the challenge of consulting broadly to develop a standard specific to the hosted accommodation industry; a standard that was globally marketable in such a competitive environment. He became the state president of the peak body, and eventually the national Chairman of the bed-and-breakfast and farm stay niche market of tourism.

Peter has consulted nationally through the tourism industry on accommodation standards and industry expectations.

Peter resides at Elanora, Queensland on the traditional country of the Yugambah people.

Candidate location: Elanora, QLD.

Rachael Sowden



During much of Rachael's adult life she has lived in rural and remote NSW, even having a baby on the highway 105km before the hospital. She has four Gamilaroi children who are all adults now.

Rachael has autism ptsd psychosocial disabilities and a chronic illness as well as having survived a brain tumour.

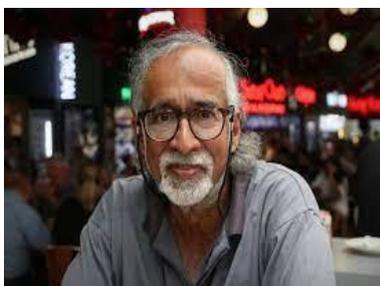
Part of her autistic nature has lead her to advocacy for people in her communities who she can see don't have their voices heard, standing up and telling story's to help others understand the lack of access often faced by vulnerable people with disabilities.

Rachael has been a member of the NSW disability council, currently sits on the nsw carers council, is a board member of advocacy law alliance, and was previously the spokesperson for the state P&C in NSW. Rachael enjoys speaking up and can keep a room captivated she chaired and given keynote speeches at the 12&13 National Disability summit. She has also presented at many Educational conferences on student welfare and parent engagement.

In her spare time she manages her ndis plan and two of her young adults as they learn to navigate it for themselves.

Candidate location: Uralla, NSW.

Suresh Rajan



Suresh Rajan has been involved in the advocacy space for well over thirty years. He has been the President and/or Board Member of the following organisations, among others:

- National Ethnic Disability Alliance
- Ethnic Disability Advocacy Centre
- Ethnic Communities Council of WA
- Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia
- Chair of the Disability Sub Committee of FECCA
- Treasurer of People with Disabilities Australia
- Treasurer of Attitude Foundation
- Lifeline WA
- Anti-Racism Steering Committee

- NDIA CaLD Strategy Group

Suresh is an accountant by profession and brings the skills of a financial background to the PWDA Board. He has been the Treasurer at PWDA for the last two years after having held that position many years ago. He has been a financial planner dealing with client money for many years.

Suresh is well known in media circles and has run many radio programs across diverse stations. He used to be the host of a radio program called “Ethnicability” addressing issues of ethnicity and disability.

In recent years Suresh has been advocating for many people across Australia who have been impacted by our health systems. He has been the family spokesperson for the family of Aishwarya who died at Perth Children’s Hospital last year.

Suresh identifies as a PWD. Some years ago, he was impacted by Cancer. The radiotherapy and Chemotherapy treatment that he underwent has resulted in hearing loss. In addition, he has had to deal with the removal of organs that impact on his life.

Candidate location: Perth, WA.

Tim Morrissey



Tim Morrissey is a photographer and disability advocate with Down Syndrome. “I want to provide Board members with my ideas and, also, I have expertise in advocacy, and I love advocating for people with disability,” he says. Tim also wants to support and to help people with disability and to give them a voice. Tim is also keen to learn what he can do to assist the community as a Board director. Tim wants to make sure that people with disability have the right supports in place to make people’s lives better. Tim has experience supporting younger people with disability in particular. He also wants to make sure that people with disability know what their rights are.

Tim is a good listener and wants to contribute his ideas and provide advice as a Board member on the important issues that affect people with disability and that need to be fixed.

Tim said he “wants to give the Board 100%”.

Tim was awarded the 2017 Tweed Shire Access and Inclusion Awards Certificate of Merit for his commitment to the community. He hopes his photography can encourage people to become more welcoming to people with disabilities.

Candidate location: Kingscliff, NSW.

Zhila Hasanloo



Dr Zhila Hasanloo is a woman with visual impairment from a Persian background. She completed her PhD in Education (focusing on disability rights) at The University of Sydney, been a member of several Boards and worked in the Department of Education and the Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association. In 2016, Zhila established a non-profit organisation, Ability Beyond Boundaries which aims to raise disability awareness focusing on Persian community. She is passionate about working with diverse communities, to share experiences and collectively improve the

lives of people with disability. She is also passionate about empowering people with a disability to develop reciprocal understandings and collaboration with mainstream communities.

Zhila would like to increase PWDA's level of representation and interactions with culturally and linguistically diverse communities and improve these community-level understandings of disability in Australia. On a personal level, she'd strive to further her grasp of contemporary developments in the sector, as well as leadership and organisational governance skills.

Zhila has extensive advocacy experience for her own rights and those of others, in a personal and organisational capacity. She has lived experience of visual impairment, as well as having experience of caring for close family with disability. Her study and professional experience has always been focused on disability. As part of her role with NSW Department of Education, she was part of a team working on developing policies for young children with disability in preschool settings. Zhila's knowledge of the NDIS is also strong.

Candidate location: Auburn, NSW.

Zoe Malski



Zoe is autistic she was born in Hong Kong, came to Western Australia when she was 15 and is now 30 years old. Zoe has two kids, one with an intellectual disability and a daughter who is neurodiverse. Zoe has been through a lot of ups and downs. Her passion is to make a difference focusing around people with disabilities and those with mental health challenges.

Candidate location: Canning Vale, WA.