



PROGRAM HANDBOOK

“ The Observership Program is in my opinion an outstanding way for the future directors of all levels of Australian business to gain experience in what to do and indeed what not to do around the board table.”

David Gonski AC (Patron, The Observership Program)

SYDNEY 2026





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ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

The Observership Program acknowledges Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past, present and emerging. We also accept the invitation in the Uluru Statement from the Heart to walk together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

The Observership Program is committed to ensuring user experience and accessibility for people with disability. We will continue to evolve and improve the accessibility of our Program by listening and learning from people with lived experience of disability.



“The Program is a way to connect talented emerging leaders and the not-for-profit community in a structured and meaningful way.”

Jonathan Gavshon, Founder and Chair,
The Observership Program

WELCOME

CONGRATULATIONS WELCOME TO THE 2026 OBSERVERSHIP PROGRAM.

Congratulations on being selected for The Observership Program and welcome to a community of emerging leaders who are shaping Australia’s future through more diverse and representative boardrooms. Through your involvement in the Program, you’ll gain firsthand board experience and develop practical governance capabilities that will open pathways to future leadership roles and allow you to make meaningful contributions to Australian boardrooms.

This guide has been developed to provide information to help you prepare for the journey that awaits and to ensure that your experience is rewarding and enriching.

We trust the year ahead will be an exciting and rewarding journey.

JONATHAN GAVSHON
Founder and Chair

CATHY ROBINSON
CEO

PROGRAM DETAILS

Since 2014, The Observership Program has connected talented and accomplished individuals from diverse backgrounds with boards seeking fresh perspectives and contemporary skills. Through structured 12-month placements, the Program cultivates emerging leaders while enabling boards to benefit from next-generation thinking.

More than 1,700 Observers have gained valuable boardroom experience across 410 organisations throughout Australia. Starting in Sydney, the Program expanded to Victoria in 2017 and Brisbane in 2022.



GENERAL INFORMATION

THE PROGRAM RUNS FEBRUARY – DECEMBER 2026

Participation in The Program requires you to attend all training sessions, board and subcommittee meetings. You are an ambassador for The Observership Program and failure to demonstrate adequate commitment jeopardises opportunities for future candidates.

Please confirm all board meeting and other key dates directly with your organisation and diarise meetings accordingly.

Please notify your employer of your participation in The Program to ensure their support when leaving the office early to attend training sessions or board meetings.

Your placement as an Observer will conclude at the beginning of December 2026 or with your attendance at your organisation's final board meeting for 2026. At the conclusion of The Program, The Observership Program will liaise with each organisation regarding the placement of a new Observer for 2027, so any further involvement with your organisation will be based on mutual agreement and outside of the formal Program.

BOARD LIAISON

Each participating board is asked to identify a Board Liaison/contact who is responsible for being the point of contact for the Observer and for The Observership Program. If your board has not identified one for you before your first board meeting, please contact us.

Please contact your Board Liaison with any questions about serving as an Observer on the board, including details for board meetings, board expectations of their Observer, behaviour in meetings and board culture. For further information about effective engagement with your Board Liaison, please refer to The Observership Program Information Pack email.

“The Observership Program is a fantastic opportunity to learn about the role and responsibilities of an NFP Board member, plus an excellent training course and chances to network with extremely interesting and well-connected people.”

Alvaro Rodas Fernandez, Sydney Observer

PREPARATION FOR PROGRAM COMMENCEMENT

Prior to your first board meeting or The Observership Program's first session, whichever occurs earlier, please make sure you have completed the following:

1. Police Check: Provided your proof of identity documents, uploaded your consent form and completed the online form following notification received from The Program Team.
2. Familiarised yourself with the confidentiality terms of The Program.
3. Diarised all board meetings and training sessions for the year.
4. Informed your Board Chair and/or Board Liaison of any conflicts regarding board meetings.
5. Informed The Program of any conflicts regarding the training sessions.

If a board meeting and training session are scheduled for the same time, please inform your Program contact and your board contact. In case of this conflict, while the final decision will be yours to make the Program recommends attending the board meeting.





FOR OBSERVERS EXPECTATION AND ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT:

- High level training for not-for-profit and government board directors delivered by partners including the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) and The Ethics Centre as part of a program that includes networking sessions with high profile guest speakers and alumni.
- A year-long program to build your experience and confidence in serving on a not-for-profit board.
- Access to experienced board directors from both the not-for-profit and for-profit sectors.
- Possible involvement in a strategic project or board subcommittee.
- Networking opportunities with fellow Observers and alumni in The Program. The Observership Program will connect you with the previous year's Observer on your organisation's board.
- A rewarding professional development experience that facilitates your contribution to society in a meaningful way.

HANDY HINTS:

- Discussions that occur at board meetings are confidential. It is essential that Observers understand and respect this confidentiality. As part of your application to The Observership Program you accepted a confidentiality agreement and it is essential that you abide by the terms of this agreement.
- Please handle your role with sensitivity and only speak if either the Chair invites you to contribute or if it becomes clear that your opinion is welcome in general boardroom discussion. We encourage you to check in with the Chair or your board contact person prior to your first board meeting to discuss expectations, content and delivery of your contributions.
- Your presence at board meetings is at the discretion of the Chair. There are certain circumstances where it will not be appropriate for you to attend or participate in a board meeting or discussion. We have agreed with each Chair that in extreme cases, the Observer may be asked to leave. Please handle this request sensitively.
- We encourage you to ask the Chair or board secretary to minute that you are attending each meeting by invitation in the capacity of Observer.
- Do NOT vote in any voting matters even if asked to do so by the Chair.
- Make it clear in all dealings that you are an Observer. For example, it is recommended that when contributing to discussions you highlight your role in the following way: "In my capacity as Observer, I think that..."
- While being offered a formal board position at the conclusion of the Program can happen, it is not a pre-requisite for a host organisation to participate in the Program and should not be an expectation of Observers.
- Our training course is designed to provide an overview of the key topics relevant to board governance, as part of a combined experience of the theory and practice of board directorship. AICD runs more in-depth courses for those interested.

Establishing open and direct communication early on with your Board Liaison/contact is the key to a successful Observership. Take responsibility for asking questions, clarifying expectations on both sides and in the event of any issues arising or advice needed, please contact your Program Director.

“ I feel that the knowledge and experience gained throughout The Observership Program is already being put to good use at work as well as in my new role as a board director. In general, my understanding of the role of Directors is now a lot clearer as well as the role and responsibility of ARIA and the way it's run as an organisation.”

Emily Crews, Sydney Observer

PLEASE CONTACT US IF:

- You are having trouble fulfilling your obligations to attend training and/or board meetings
- There is anything untoward, including inappropriate behaviour that occurs at your meetings that is cause for concern
- You are being asked to excuse yourself from meetings on a frequent basis
- You are not receiving a full set of materials
- You have any general concerns about your participation

We will treat the matter with utmost confidentiality and contact the organisation on your behalf to resolve these matters if appropriate.

FEEDBACK

Throughout the year we will be conducting feedback via online surveys, during the training sessions and/or by calling you directly. We appreciate your provision of any feedback requested in the specified time. Your feedback is critical for the future success of the Program. We will do the same with the participating organisations.

We also encourage you to contact us directly with any specific feedback or questions that you have at any time throughout the year.



TRAINING OVERVIEW

The training program is a combination of formal education session provided in partnership with our strategic partners, the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) and The Ethics Centre, that encompassing key subject areas important for not-for-profit governance alongside networking session with high guest speakers and alumni.

“The Observership Program is a unique opportunity for young people to experience the complexity of governing a not-for-profit organisation whilst also offering the opportunity to utilise the skills and enthusiasm of the Program participants. It’s a real win/win.”

Phil Butler, Sector Leader, Not-for-Profit, AICD

KEY DETAILS

The training program consists of eleven sessions throughout the year, including the launch event.

In-person CBD sessions run from 6:00pm to 8:30pm (arrival from 5:30pm), while online sessions are 90 minutes, starting at 6:00pm.

Training sessions encompass key subject areas essential for not-for-profit governance, including:

- Directors’ duties and responsibilities;
- Finance;
- Strategy;
- Risk; and
- Ethics

Guest speakers with significant experience on not-for-profit and for-profit boards are invited to share personal and professional insights with Observers at training sessions.

All sessions are **MANDATORY**. A Certificate of Attendance will be provided to those Observers who complete the training program in full.

If under extenuating circumstances, you are unable to attend any of the sessions please contact us. This includes arriving late or leaving early. Access to the training venues after hours can be restricted so latecomers will not always be able to enter easily.

We will send you details of all training sessions and notify you of any changes. Special events will be communicated separately.

“It is the theoretical, tailored training component, added to the practical experience of sitting on a board as an observer for a year that makes The Observership Program unique in this country.”

Cathy Robinson CEO,
The Observership Program

OUR TRAINING PARTNER (AICD)

AICD develops the content and materials for The Observership Program training sessions and provides expert facilitators.

AICD's purpose is to strengthen society through world class governance and to be the independent and trusted voice of governance.

Where available, links to webinars and other course materials will be distributed via AICD's database.

AICD contributes to The Observership Program as a Strategic Partner.

AICD's principal activities include:

- Education;
- Conducting professional development programs and events for boards and directors;
- Producing publications on director and governance issues; and
- Developing and promoting policies on issues of interest to directors.

The AICD has more than 51,000 members. Members include directors from such diverse organisations as ASX-listed companies, government bodies, not-for-profit organisations, public sector entities, family-owned/private companies and entrepreneurial ventures.

To find out more about the AICD, visit www.aicd.com.au



Naomi Edwards FAICD, Chair, AICD

OUR TRAINING PARTNER (THE ETHICS CENTRE)

The Ethics Centre is proud to contribute to The Observership Program as a Strategic Partner and a provider of specialist ethics training for the Observer cohort. The Ethics Centre is a non-profit organisation founded 30 years ago to raise the ethical standards of Australian business. The organisation has grown to encompass a broad spectrum of activities including consulting, education and training, counselling, thought leadership and major events. They've provided ethics tools and training to the military, primary schools, trade unions and non-profits. Many of Australia's largest companies have called on The Ethics Centre for specialist advice and insights.

For the past decade The Ethics Centre has presented the popular IQ2 debate series and the internationally renowned Festival of Dangerous Ideas. The Ethics Centre operates Ethi-call – a free helpline available to anyone struggling with an ethical dilemma – and they recently launched a new corporate membership program, The Ethics Alliance. To find out more about The Ethics Centre, visit www.ethics.org.au.

TRAINING TIMETABLE SYDNEY 2026

Online sessions will be held from 6.00pm - 7.30pm. Face to Face training sessions will be held from 5.30pm arrival for a 6.00pm start and concludes at 8.30pm, unless otherwise advised.

DATE	SESSION	LOCATION	GUEST SPEAKER/ FACILITATOR
TUESDAY 17 FEBRUARY	2026 Program Launch Event	Art Gallery of New South Wales	David Gonski AC
WEDNESDAY 11 MARCH	2026 Observer Induction Session	In Person, Sydney CBD (TBC)	Cathy Robinson, CEO and Rachel Exton, Program Lead, NSW and Brisbane, The Observership Program
WEDNESDAY 25 MARCH	AICD Duties and Responsibilities for NFP Directors	Online	AICD Facilitator (TBC)
WEDNESDAY 8 APRIL	AICD Finance for NFP Directors	Online	AICD Facilitator (TBC)
WEDNESDAY 22 APRIL	AICD Strategy for NFP Directors	Online	AICD Facilitator (TBC)
WEDNESDAY 6 MAY	AICD Risk for NFP Directors	Online	AICD Facilitator (TBC)
WEDNESDAY 20 MAY	AICD Q & A Session	In Person, UBS Offices, Level 16, 1 Chifley Tower, Sydney	Panel of Directors
THURSDAY 10 JUNE	Ethics in Governance	Online	Dr Simon Longstaff AO, Executive Director, The Ethics Centre
WEDNESDAY 19 AUGUST (TBC)	Theory of Change and Leadership Session	In Person, UBS Offices, Level 16, 1 Chifley Tower, Sydney	Elise Sernik and Barbara Barkley, Leadership Space
WEDNESDAY 28 OCTOBER	Next Steps to Board Directorship and Networking	In Person, UBS Offices, Level 16, 1 Chifley Tower, Sydney	Panel of Alumni
WEDNESDAY 2 DECEMBER	End of Year Networking event with Guest Speaker	In Person, UBS Offices, Level 16, 1 Chifley Tower, Sydney	(TBC)

NOTE: *Please note dates are subject to change.

THANK YOU

The Observership Program relies on the generosity and support of our network for every aspect of our work: current and former Observers; company directors, philanthropists, foundations, businesses, not-for-profit organisations and social enterprises who share our commitment to create a passionate, motivated and diverse community of future leaders.

Thank you for making our work possible.

PROGRAM ALUMNI

Andrew Ah Toy
Guillaume Babilie
James Baudzus
Tomaj Bayat
Jacqueline Brewer
Mathew Camilleri
Gabrielle Cardwell
Melissa Chan
Sonya Clarke
Emily Crews
Helen Dai
Andrew Da Silva
Paul Devlin
Evrihki Diinis
Rob Dunderdale
Mary Fifta
Dr Tom Gole
Peter Graf
Anshika Grover
Szofi De Haan
Rob Haggett
Phil Hughes
Tina Kazmer
Anatoly Kirievsky
Tom Levi
Aimee Lindfield
Whitney Merchant
Kym Middleton
Ben Neumann
Andrew Olsen
Andia Petropoulos
Emma Pollard
Zane Pratt
Josh Preece
Shira Raber
Hema Raman
Sophie Robertson
Alvaro Rodas Fernandez
Gemma Ryan
Kushlani Sitsabesan
Sharanya Srikanth
Sophie Stern
James Stewart
Caroline Thompson
Nick Tubb
Soli Valliappan

Arthur Wang
Deuan White
(First People's Consultant)
Bill Wong

COMPANY DIRECTORS; PHILANTHROPISTS; SOCIAL ENTERPRISES | GUEST SPEAKERS & PANELLISTS

Tim Beresford
Lisa Chung AM
Lisa Cotton
Alison Deans
Kate Dundas
Jonathan Gavshon
Marina Go
David Gonski AC
Dr Simon Longstaff OAM
Laurence Marshbaum OAM
Louise McElvogue
David Pumphrey
Katrina Rathie
Suzie Riddell
Rebecca Russell
Brian Schwartz AM
The late Peter Shorthouse
Joseph Skrzynski AO
Jeremy Tobias
Leanne Wallace

NOT-FOR-PROFITS; BUSINESSES; GOVERNMENT | HOSTING PROGRAM TRAINING & EVENTS

Ronny Andrade Parra
Nikita Bennett
Arnold Bloch Leibler
Art Gallery of New South Wales
BCG
Belvoir St Theatre
Crestone Wealth Management
K&L Gates
PwC
Social Ventures Australia
UBS

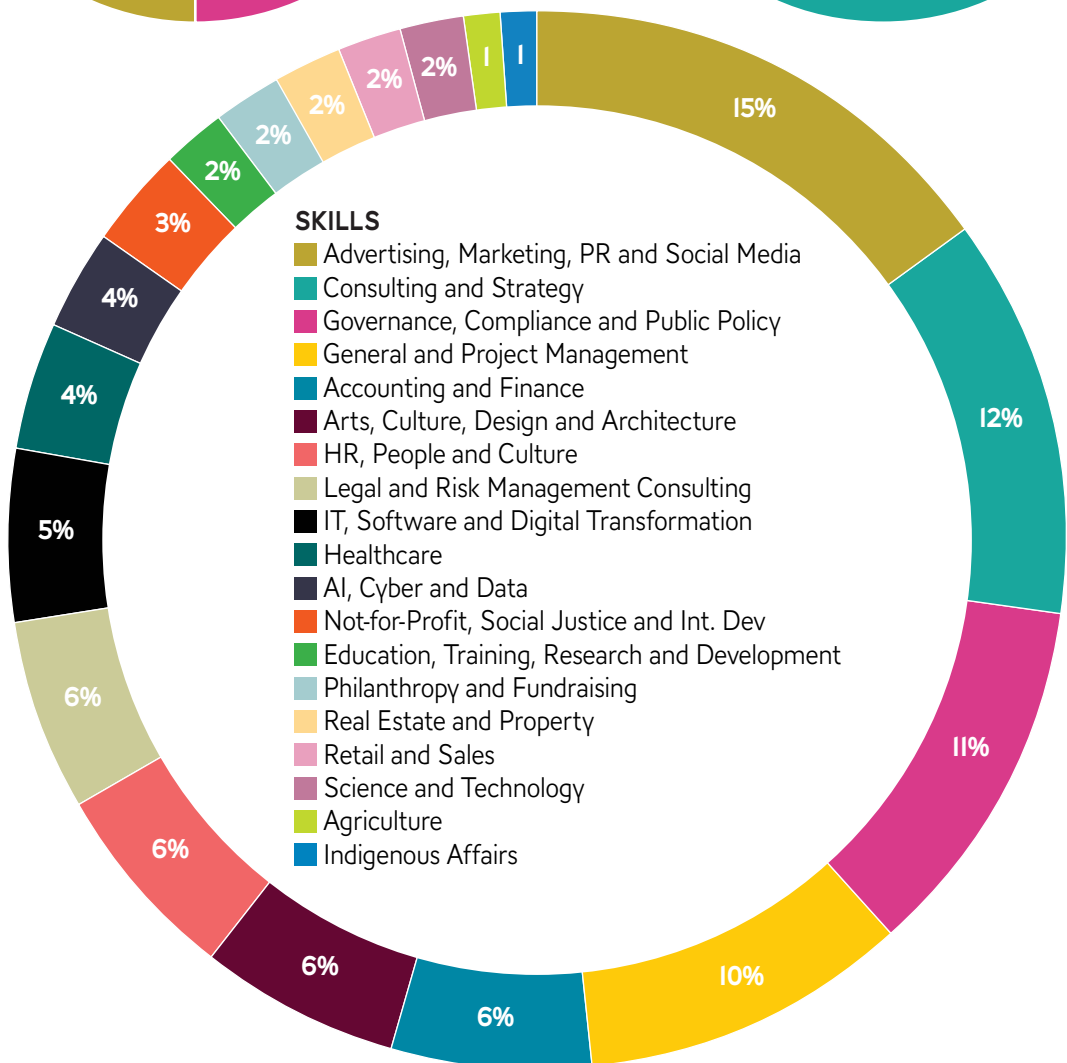
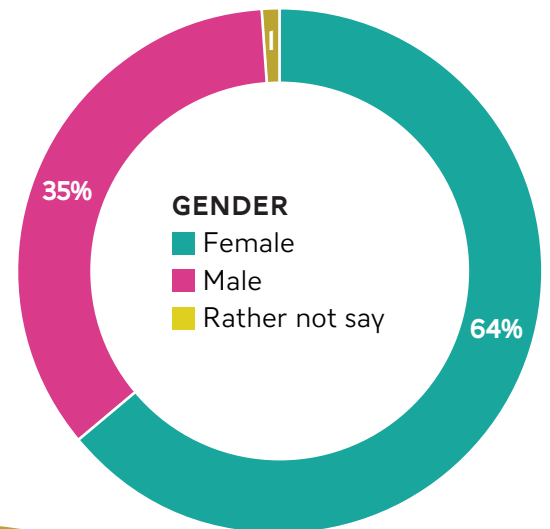
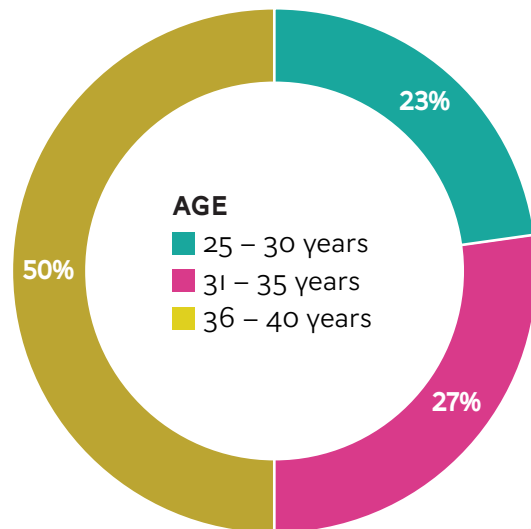
VIDEO CONTRIBUTORS

Lucy Duncan
Jacob Gabriel
Moana Leilua
Wambui Migwe
Tahj Richardson
Chris Sequeira
Callum Steele



2026 OBSERVERSHIP PROGRAM – A SNAPSHOT

THERE ARE 124 OBSERVERS PARTICIPATING IN THE PROGRAM.
A BREAKDOWN OF THE PROFILE OF THE COHORT IS BELOW.



STRATEGIC PARTNERS

AUSTRALIAN
INSTITUTE
of COMPANY
DIRECTORS



SOCIAL
IMPACT
HUB



FIRST NATIONS DIRECTOR SCHOLARSHIP 2026

This program offers First Nations leaders and directors the opportunity to enrich their understanding of organisational governance as they shape the future from the boardroom. It is a partnership between the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD), the Australian Indigenous Governance Institute (AIGI) and The Observership Program, funded by the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA).

CORPORATE PARTNERS



SCENTRE
GROUP

Owner and Operator of Westfield in Australia and New Zealand



PHILANTHROPIC PARTNERS

We gratefully acknowledge philanthropic funding for The Program's Pathways to Board Directorship Initiative to assist people with disabilities into board roles.



PARTICIPATING BOARDS

THERE ARE 100 HOST BOARDS PARTICIPATING IN THE 2026 PROGRAM.





OBSERVER PROFILES



SINA AGHAMOFID REACH OUT

Sina is a passionate advocate with extensive experience in the mental health space. He has worked with organisations including KPMG, ReachOut, Headspace, Movember, and Oxygen. Contributing to policy, parliamentary panels, and national initiatives on mental health and wellbeing. Recognised as Young Citizen of the Year by the Hills Shire Council. Sina is committed to social justice, youth empowerment, and creating meaningful impact. He holds a Law degree from Macquarie University and brings his curiosity and creativity to everything from cooking and exploring cultures to traveling and connecting with people.



ALVI AHMED ONE & ALL HUB

Alvi has a passion for transforming data and strategy into impact. He currently works for Australia's leading LGBTQIA+ youth charity, Minus18, as the Strategy & Operations Business Partner, bringing prior experience from finance roles at Out for Australia and the Commonwealth Bank of Australia. Alvi recently led Queer Youth Now: The National Survey of LGBTQIA+ Youth Voice in Australia, amplifying the voices of over 2,700 young people to inform and enhance youth programs nationwide. Alvi is a graduate of the Victorian Government's LGBTIQ Leadership Program, holds a Bachelor of Accounting and is a member of CPA Australia.



NIKHIL ANAND THE JUNCTION WORKS

Nikhil is a strategy and technology leader at IAG with a strong track record in delivering large scale transformation across insurance and banking. A passionate advocate for disability inclusion, he has built specialist disability homes and supports a not-for-profit disability provider as on their community advisory committee. Nikhil combines his consulting expertise with a deep sense of purpose, mentoring emerging leaders and supporting community programs. Outside work, he enjoys spending time outdoors with his family.



ALLISSA ARNOLD CONNECTABILITY

Allissa is a Newcastle-based policy and governance professional with 15 years' experience leading transformational initiatives in the NSW public sector. She recently completed a Bachelor of Business with Distinction and was admitted to the International Golden Key Honour Society, reflecting her commitment to lifelong learning. Through her role with the Mentor Support Network Committee, she applies her expertise in program design, fundraising and evaluation to improve education access for disadvantaged students. Allissa brings a regional lens, lived experience and deep curiosity to community-focused boards, with a passion for inclusive governance and systems that deliver lasting social impact.



ALYCIA ASHCROFT WHEELCHAIR SPORTS NSW/ACT

Alycia is a Manager in the Community Recovery Program Division at the NSW Reconstruction Authority, where she leads strategic initiatives supporting disaster-impacted communities. She has developed and delivered multi-million dollar programs, led cross-sector collaborations, and contributed to policy reform. Her not-for-profit involvement includes volunteering with Surf Life Saving Australia, Australian Red Cross and working at Victoria Law Foundation. She is passionate about equity, community-led reform, social justice and the environment. Outside of work, she enjoys ocean swims, snorkeling, community events, creating art, and supporting her local surf club.



MARTINE BALLANTYNE SCHOOL AID

Martine leads strategic relationship programs at PwC Australia, leveraging marketing to drive business growth. Her experience spans media, health tech, government, non-profit, and consumer goods. Passionate about social impact, Martine launched Australia's first doctor-led Type 2 diabetes remission program, managed a community-focused lottery portfolio, and led impactful campaigns at Barnardos Australia. She actively volunteers with Wayside Chapel, 10x10, Sydney Festival, and ABCN, reflecting her belief in community empowerment and helping individuals achieve their potential. Martine holds postgraduate qualifications and is driven by the power of connecting purpose to strategy to achieve social outcomes.



DANIEL BAREL UNITED ISRAEL APPEAL

Daniel holds a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Sydney and is a lawyer at a major ASX-listed company. He is passionate about giving back and has volunteered in the Jewish community for many years, facilitating leadership seminars for students and youth movements. Daniel has held senior positions in a key community organisation, overseeing portfolios that support communal safety and continuity. In his spare time, he enjoys playing touch football, hosting social events, studying Jewish theology and immersing himself in jazz music. He is guided by dedication to community, connection, and continuity.



NECHAMA BASSERABIE NSW JEWISH BOARD OF DEPUTIES

Nechama is currently an Assistant Director at the Attorney-General's Department. Prior to that she spent four years at the Department of the Prime Minister & Cabinet where she worked on reforms to address bullying, harassment and assault in the Commonwealth parliamentary workplace, including the establishment of Australia's first legislated independent parliamentary complaints mechanism. Nechama holds a Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Art Theory from the University of New South Wales and a Masters of Law from the London School of Economics. Nechama loves to swim in the ocean at every opportunity and is a big dog lover.



HITEN BAWA SHAUN PARKER & COMPANY

Hiten is a Sydney based Access Consultant, with a professional background in art and architecture. Deaf with bilateral cochlear implants, he brings a unique perspective to both his consulting work and creative practice, blending lived experience with technical insight. He holds a Master of Architecture and a Diploma of Access Consultancy. Hiten's multidisciplinary art, exploring migration, identity and access, has been exhibited in South Africa, Japan, Spain and Australia; and his work is held in the J.P. Morgan Chase's Art collection. He serves on the board of Multicultural Arts Victoria and enjoys reading, cycling and attending festivals.



NICOLE BEECROFT JANNAWI FAMILY CENTRE

Nicole is ANZ GTM Director - AI Business Process ANZ at Microsoft, renowned for driving growth, transformation, and innovation. She has led high performance teams and championed diversity through mentoring and programs such as Women Rising. Nicole holds a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Sydney. Outside of work, she enjoys playing sports, reading and raising her two daughters. Nicole is passionate about empowering individuals to be and achieve their best.



AIRLIE BENSON MANDELBAUM HOUSE

Airlie is a dedicated professional currently working at EY within Core Business Services, bringing strong organisational and communication skills to support executive operations. Passionate about community engagement, she has actively contributed to YouthHEAR, Kids Giving Back, and previously Project NexGen, championing youth development and social impact initiatives. With a deep commitment to volunteering, Airlie channels her energy into giving back and fostering meaningful connections. Outside of work, she enjoys creative pursuits and cultural exploration, combining her professional expertise with a personal mission to make a positive difference in the communities she serves.



ANNA BEZUGLOVA WOMEN'S PLANS FOUNDATION

Anna is a Member Relationship Partner at the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD), dedicated to delivering exceptional service and meaningful engagement to directors and senior leaders. Through her role, she helps foster strong relationships that support the ongoing development of Australia's governance community. Anna also cohosts the What's In It For You podcast, where she elevates important conversations on policy and governance for future generations. Passionate about empowering others, she mentors young women to build confidence and leadership capabilities. Outside work, Anna enjoys dance, attending art exhibitions, and storytelling.



ELLOISE BRADY DETOUR HOUSE

Elloise is a philanthropy, funding, and social impact professional with experience across not-for-profit and government sectors. She is committed to a more equitable and inclusive world, with a focus on demonstrating impact in for-purpose settings. At the Australian Museum, she leads the development of a social impact framework and management of grant revenue. Elloise holds a Master of Applied Anthropology and Participatory Development and a Master of Culture, Health and Medicine from the Australian National University, a Graduate Certificate in Social Impact from UNSW, and a Bachelor of Social Science from Macquarie University.



LYDIA BRUNTON UNICEF

Lydia is an ESG Analyst at UBS in Global Research, specialising in the financial and strategic impacts of climate risk and broad sustainability issues. With a background spanning investment research and energy consulting, she brings expertise across a wide range of material ESG issues including decarbonisation, biodiversity, and human rights risk. Lydia is deeply motivated by intergenerational equity and long-term resilience, and believes effective governance requires both analytical rigour and empathetic leadership. She has contributed to not-for-profit and community initiatives through pro bono sustainability projects and university outreach. Outside of work, she enjoys mentoring and staying active through sport.



EMILY BURKE FORESTVILLE MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Emily is a Manager at Social Ventures Australia, where she advises not-for-profit and government clients on strategy, outcomes measurement, and operating model transformation. Her work spans the mental health, financial inclusion, and early childhood sectors. She has previously worked at the Boston Consulting Group and led strategy and partnerships at a social enterprise delivering humanitarian cash transfers with NGOs. Emily holds a Master of Laws and a Master of Public Policy from the University of Oxford, where she was a Rhodes Scholar. Outside of work, she enjoys cooking, meditation retreats, and spending time with her young children.



MICHAEL CHAITOW BUS STOP FILMS

Michael is a strategist, campaigner, and communications specialist with 15 years' experience across politics, advocacy, and community on three continents. He has led fundraising drives, media campaigns, and shaped strategies for social change organisations. Skilled in strategic insight, sharp writing, and political acumen, Michael helps movements grow and governments listen. His work has been featured on Channel 10, ABC News, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Guardian*, *Bloomberg*, and others.



ALEX CHENG SYDNEY THEATRE COMPANY

Alex is a Consultant at Social Ventures Australia, advising not-for-profits, philanthropy, and government on strategy and social impact. He is the Co-Founder of Careers in Colour, a national not-for-profit advancing culturally diverse leadership, and previously scaled Australia's largest LGBTQ+ mentoring program as Mentoring Director at Out for Australia. Alex represented Australia at the World Economic Forum in Davos and helped launch South West Sydney's first queer safe space. He is passionate about building inclusive systems, civic participation, and community-led change, and enjoys writing, travel, and exploring the intersection of identity, policy, and public life.



MELISA CHILIMANZI OPERA AUSTRALIA

Melisa is a Senior Operational Resilience Manager at Commonwealth Bank of Australia, with a decade of experience in risk management, strategy, and product leadership. She has a proven track record of driving significant risk maturity improvements and leading award-winning regulatory implementations. Beyond her corporate impact, Melisa is a passionate community advocate, founding #RelyingOnScience, a platform teaching science through baking. A former Great Australian Bake-Off contestant, Melisa also uses food to drive social change and foster cultural understanding, inclusion and overall well-being. She also leads worship at her church, blending her professional acumen with diverse personal interests.



POW CHUNG ART GALLERY OF NSW – AUDIENCE & ENGAGEMENT SUB COMMITTEE

Pow is the Global Head of Retail Marketing at ResMed, with 15+ years of experience across fashion, consumer electronics, and MedTech. She leads strategy and brand experience across global markets, with a focus on inclusive, human-centred design. Originally from Hong Kong and now based in Sydney, Pow brings a bicultural lens to leadership and mentors women and underrepresented professionals. She holds a degree in Creative Media and has a strong personal interest in arts and culture, particularly installation art. Outside of work, she enjoys sports, coffee, anything cat-related, and finding great places to eat.



SALLY COGGIOLA GROUNDSWELL FOUNDATION

Sally is passionate about empowering communities to solve social and environmental challenges. For over fifteen years she's led projects engaging business, government, schools, farmers, athletes, women and other community groups that put people at the heart of progress on climate change. Sally is the Community Engagement and Advocacy Director at Environmental Leadership Australia. She previously was Director of Organising with the Australian Youth Climate Coalition, Australia's largest youth-run organisation, Outreach Manager at WWF Australia, and Campaign Director at Suncrowd, helping communities organise bulk buys for solar panels and batteries. Sally is an ocean swimmer, avid-reader and loves cooking.



TELINA COURT HEAPS DECENT

Telina is a youth worker and music artist with extensive experience delivering music-based programs across youth justice, residential rehabilitation, community drop-in, and school settings. Through The Street University and Heaps Decent, she supports at-risk young people to use music for self-expression, emotional regulation, and identity development, fostering confidence and self-worth. Telina holds a Certificate III in Music from TAFE Ultimo and is studying a Certificate IV in Community Services. While qualifications only tell part of the story, lived experience has strongly shaped her practice. She is also an active hip-hop artist, inspiring and amplifying unheard voices.



SAM DASHWOOD SUPPORT ACT

Samantha is an experienced arts administrator and educator passionate about creating meaningful, accessible arts experiences. With a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Dance) from QUT and a background in ballet, contemporary dance and Pilates, Sam brings a holistic approach to arts education. As Head of Open Programs & Learning at Sydney Dance Company, she has pioneered numerous programs including training for professionals, offerings with a focus on inclusion, and overseeing the largest open dance class program in Australia. Her work is grounded in fostering curiosity, creativity and personal growth. Outside of work, she enjoys ocean swimming, cooking, and reading.



LAUREN DELLA MARTA CO-CURIOUS

With over 10 years of experience in the international development sector, Lauren is a fundraising professional driven by making a positive impact in the lives of others. She holds a Bachelor of Media (Communications and Journalism) from UNSW Sydney and now secures major philanthropic income for the university's societal impact research and education initiatives. She previously worked at Skateistan, an international non-for-profit where she implemented a global monitoring, evaluation, and learning system for youth sport for development programs across diverse cultural contexts. She volunteers as a Surf Lifesaver at Bondi Beach, and her favourite things include surfing and winning Scrabble.



CASSIE DESSEIN BIRRAHLEE PRESCHOOL LANE COVE LTD

Cassie accelerates business growth and scalability for tech startups and scaleups across the US, Australia, and Asia, with experience spanning early-stage ventures to global public companies. At i835i, ANZ Bank's innovation and venture capital partner, she developed startup propositions and corporate partnerships. She holds a BA in Psychology and French from Vanderbilt University. Outside of work, Cassie is a volunteer host parent for international high school exchange students, performs with a choir, and creates functional ceramics in her home studio. She is also an avid reader and frequent traveller.



SACHIN DHINGRA YHA AUSTRALIA

Sachin is a senior investment professional with over a decade of experience in corporate finance and real assets, specialising in unlisted equity and debt strategies. Sachin has led major institutional investments and partnerships throughout Australia and Asia with a particular focus on complex and operating real estate, including accommodation hotels and disability housing. A CFA Charterholder, Sachin is passionate about equity in education and housing. Outside work, he enjoys exploring new sports and cities, especially in search of uniquely local food.



BECKY DUNKEL MACCABI NSW

Becky is a solicitor at the NSW Crown Solicitor's Office, with a current focus on family law, including child protection, adoptions and care proceedings. Becky previously worked in the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department in the areas of constitutional law and the recent Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism reforms. Becky holds a Bachelor of Law (Honours) and a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in History.



MATT EASTMAN SPELD

Matt is a proud public school Deputy Principal (Inclusion & Support) committed to promoting equity across his work and through his personal activism. He has held leadership roles on numerous education committees, associations, and union leadership roles. He serves his community as a NSW Justice of the Peace. He holds three Master of Education degrees in educational leadership, educational psychology and special education, and is currently completing an MBA. Outside work, Matt enjoys family time, rock climbing, attempting to write children's picture books, and walks with his cavoodle Chester.



LAURA EDWARDS AUSTRALIAN RECORDING INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Laura is a Senior Streaming Partnerships Manager at Universal Music Australia, where she has spent six years guiding digital strategy on artist projects. She combines creativity, platform expertise and data-driven insight to deliver impactful campaigns for domestic and international artists. Whilst studying a Bachelor of Music at Australian Institute of Music, Laura began her career in the music industry working as an audio engineer in live sound, before gaining early experience in artist management. With both technical and strategic skills, she is passionate about helping artists develop their careers and share their music.



CLODIA ELDER PERFORMANCE SPACE

Clodia is Artistic Operations Director at Bangarra Dance Theatre, one of Australia's leading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander performing arts companies. A former professional dancer and QUT graduate, she now leads key areas including Touring, Company Management, Community Engagement, Performance Health, Education, and Accessibility. Known for her people-first leadership and deep commitment to meaningful cultural relationships, Clodia has produced work across stage, film, and oral history. She is also a marriage celebrant and supports local community initiatives such as the Newport Yoga Centre. Passionate about creative impact, she continues to tour nationally, championing First Nations stories on global stages.



HAMISH FIBBINS FAMILY PLANNING NSW

Hamish is a for-purpose leader with extensive experience collaborating with government and non-profit organisations to shape health services. As Director of Translational Research at Mindgardens Neuroscience Network - a partnership between UNSW, SESLHD, NeuRA, and the Black Dog Institute - he oversees programs improving outcomes for people with complex mental health needs through cross-sector collaboration. Holding a PhD in Psychiatry and a Bachelor of Exercise Physiology from UNSW, Hamish specializes in bridging research and clinical practice. Outside work, he enjoys ocean swimming, reading, and hiking in the Blue Mountains.



JOSH FISCHL AUSTRALIAN JEWISH FUNDERS

Josh is a strategy and operations professional with experience at KPMG delivering large-scale transformations across financial services, mining, and government. He is the co-founder and chair of Choice Foundations, A Weekend Away, supporting young adults living with disability, and the founder and former president of StartUp Link UTS, growing the society to over 500 members. Passionate about governance, social impact, and community development, he combines professional expertise with lived experience to drive meaningful outcomes.



ADRIAN FONG SHAUN PARKER & COMPANY

Adrian is a senior executive with experience in commercial strategy, operational management and technology within the Australian property and retail landscape. Adrian is currently Acting CTO at Scentre Group leading Product, Architecture, Procurement, and Program Management. Adrian previously held leadership roles in customer experience and advertising, creating value through the Westfield Membership program and establishing the BrandSpace digital advertising business. Adrian holds a Bachelor of Business Administration and Bachelor of Laws from Macquarie University. As a father of two young daughters, one of whom has special needs, Adrian is committed to supporting inclusion and opportunities for all members of the community.



JAKE GOLDBERG HAKOAH

Jake is an accomplished real estate professional and business analyst with proven expertise in asset management and strategic operations. As General Manager at Dakota Group, he oversees commercial office assets in NSW, driving occupancy growth and maximising asset value through strategic capex projects. Previously at Mirvac Group, Jake leased over 13,000 sqm, managed cash flow and forecasting, and led large-scale capital initiatives. He excels in stakeholder engagement, process optimisation, and project leadership across the property and financial services sectors. Jake is recognised for innovative business solutions and advanced financial modeling, dedicated to operational excellence and sustainable growth.



SHAMEELA GONZALEZ CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

Shameela is a cybersecurity and privacy leader who regularly advises boards and executives on digital risk, innovation, and governance. She has driven high-impact initiatives, including brokering a platinum sponsorship with the Australian Women in Security Network to advance women in tech. Passionate about protecting vulnerable Australians, she has led public advocacy on scams awareness through podcasts, blogs, and media engagements. Outside her corporate role, Shameela mentors women in STEM and supports families navigating autism diagnoses.



MARC GRAYSON ABORIGINAL HOSTELS LIMITED (AHL)

Marc is an experienced education and transformation leader with over eight years in senior management roles within the training and resources sector. Holding a Master of Education and an Executive MBA, Marc combines strategic insight with operational expertise to drive organisational change and governance excellence. A proud Gomeri man, he brings a unique perspective on diversity and inclusion to his work. A Fellow of the Australian Institute of Training and Development, Marc is passionate about innovation, workforce capability, and aligning learning with business outcomes. He also brings board-level experience and has completed the AICD Foundations of Directorship course.



COLE HA JUSTICE AND EQUITY CENTRE LIMITED AND SALAAM FOUNDATION

Cole is a Policy Officer at the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, where he develops policies and cost-recovery frameworks to strengthen Australia's circular economy. He has led cross-departmental stakeholder engagement, prepared ministerial briefs, and delivered improvements through data-driven policy analysis. Previously, Cole worked with Life Without Barriers in the not-for-profit sector, contributing to programs that supported people with disability. He is passionate about inclusive policy, sustainability, and good governance. Beyond work, Cole enjoys skiing and photography.



SHAMUS HART SHARING PLACES

Shamus is a Sydney-based UX strategist and neurodiversity advocate. As a UX designer and strategist with Swissre, Frog, and HOYT, Shamus blends research, service design, and lived autistic experience to translate inclusion into clear systems, not vibes. His consultancy focuses on building measurable supports that help neurodivergent talent thrive. Shamus is currently drafting two books to reframe autism beyond deficit narratives.



FI HERRON INDEPENDENT LIVING VILLAGES

Fiona is an Organisational Development Lead at CommBank, with almost two decades of experience spanning HR generalist and specialist roles. She has been involved in award-winning initiatives in graduate experience and accessibility and has driven strategic change in DEI and recognition. Fiona serves on the council of Enable, CommBank's Disability Employee Network, and is passionate about universal design and human-centred approaches. She is a Hidden Disability Sunflower advocate and green sunflower wearer.



KATE HOBMAN THE WARRIOR WOMAN FOUNDATION

Kate specialises in operations and governance, alongside expertise in strategic project management and stakeholder engagement in government and higher education sectors. She holds a Bachelor of Arts (University of Sydney and University of East Anglia (UK)) and a Master of Art Administration (UNSW). Kate's career has been shaped by building high-performing teams and delivering impactful outcomes, such as leading Sydney Open 2022's volunteer program and establishing a gift administration team for a major university campaign. Amongst the chaos of life with her husband, two children, a dog and a cat, she enjoys travelling, Japanese stationery and regency romance novels.



GRACE HOGAN SEXUAL HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING ACT INC

Grace is the Communications and Partnerships Manager at Hepatitis Australia, where she leads national initiatives in stakeholder engagement, media strategy, and member collaboration. Her achievements include coordinating World Hepatitis Day activities, organising national forums and summits, and advancing inclusive health communications. Grace previously owned and directed 6th Position Dance Studio in Canberra, fostering community through adult dance programs. She holds First Class Honours in Sociology and Anthropology from the University of Western Australia and has completed leadership development through the Australian Graduate School of Management at UNSW.



KERRI HOLLOWAY JEWISH CARE

Keri (Kez) is a Senior Manager at Aurora Education Foundation. With over a decade of experience working with vulnerable women and children, she has held leadership roles in family violence services and community development projects, both nationally and internationally. Keri is deeply passionate about trauma-informed care and its role in creating safe, empowering environments for healing and growth. Outside of work, Keri enjoys exploring the world with her three wild and wonderful children.



GEORGIA HONDROS THE FUNDING NETWORK AUSTRALIA LTD

Georgia is a Relationship Manager with extensive experience in the financial services industry, specifically Group Life Insurance and Business Banking. Georgia has an enthusiasm for understanding business needs and working with leaders to improve efficiencies, processes and outcomes for clients. Georgia has previously worked at TAL Life Limited where she held roles across several product, investment and relationship management teams. Georgia holds a Bachelor of Commerce (Finance) and Science (Psychology) from UNSW. Georgia has also undertaken post graduate studies completing a Graduate Diploma of Financial Planning from Kaplan Professional.



SARAH IEMMA COMMUNITY BROADCASTING ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

Sarah is a strategic consultant that uses human-centered design to guide top-tier organisations through customer experience and digital transformation programs. She excels at bridging executive strategy with community needs, delivering sustainable solutions that create measurable impact. Sarah has early career experience in UK Local Government which ignited her passion for solving complex social issues. An active member of Bondi Surf Lifesaving Club, she serves as a Patrol Vice Captain and previously led the 'Swim Sisters' program supporting Muslim women from Western Sydney to develop ocean swimming confidence.



EZRA ISRAEL MONTEFIORE HOME

Ezra works in senior leadership roles across residential aged care and has played a vital role in launching Community Health Supports 24/7 emergency medical response services. He previously founded and successfully sold MediPlus Academy, a nationally accredited first aid training organisation, and has volunteered with Hatzolah Sydney and NSW Ambulance as a community first responder. Ezra is also a Chazzan singer, performing at community events and celebrations. He is passionate about community service, leadership, and using his skills to make a meaningful difference.



SAMUEL JACKSON ARTS LAW CENTRE

Samuel is an employment and industrial relations lawyer at Allens, advising senior leaders, executives, and boards on governance, workplace culture, and risk. A University Medalist and Valedictorian, he holds First Class Honours degrees in Law and Music from UNSW. A classically trained pianist and composer, he remains actively engaged in the arts as a performer, patron, and advocate. Samuel also serves as Vice Patrol Captain at Coogee Surf Life Saving Club and is passionate about mentoring junior lifesavers. He brings a contemporary, cross-sector perspective to leadership, grounded in community engagement, cultural insight, and creative collaboration.



JASMINE JANSEN FAMILY PLANNING NSW

Jasmine is a medical doctor, training in Paediatrics, currently working within the Sydney Children's Hospital Network. She has clinical experience across a range of tertiary, regional, and rural settings across NSW, and is passionate about gender equity, health literacy, and accessible, intersectional healthcare. Jasmine has also completed a Master of Public Health, and is a Conjoint Associate Lecturer at UNSW, with years of experience in advocacy, teaching, research, and medical leadership. Outside of her clinical work and study, she enjoys ocean swims, running, and art.



NATASHA JAYARATNE CUFA

Natasha is a dedicated social change practitioner. Natasha has extensive experience advising not-for-profit, corporate and government bodies on initiatives to advance meaningful reconciliation with First Nations people. During her time at Reconciliation Australia, Natasha established the parameters for the RAP framework, which was designed to guide organisations with their approach to reconciliation from the beginning stages as they matured in their understanding of First Nations cultures, and histories. Recently, Natasha has applied her corporate knowledge and skills to lead the environmental sustainability program at Gilbert + Tobin. Natasha holds a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Human Rights.



MICHAEL JEFFERIES SALAAM SUPER

Michael is a Sydney-based senior corporate legal counsel who has been recognised as a 30 Under 30 winner in commercial law and the Australian legal profession's 'Rising Star of the Year'. He is also a non-executive director of Batyr and previously held director roles with the United Nations Association of Australia and University of the Sunshine Coast (UniSC). Michael studied Law and Commerce at UniSC and recently completed an MBA at the Australian Graduate School of Management (UNSW). He is an avid reader and enjoys running, tennis, the arts, and playing the piano.



ANASTASSIA JUVENTIN JCA INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

Anastassia is an investment and governance professional experienced in multi-asset portfolio construction, private markets, and responsible investment. She recently served as Chief Investment Officer at a capital advisory firm in Sydney and previously held senior roles across superannuation and wealth management, leading asset allocation, investment research and ESG integration initiatives. She has contributed to several investment committees and advisory boards across corporate and purpose-driven organisations and is committed to values-aligned capital deployment. Anastassia holds a Master of Commerce in Economics and Finance and is active in industry education and mentoring through professional networks.



LAUREN KARA-GEORGE BETTER FOUNDATION

Lauren is senior leader with experience across education, social services, health and development. She brings a person-centered approach. As Head of Partnerships and Philanthropy at Foodbank NSW/ACT she leads a highly skilled team working to secure social impact within food insecurity. She is currently part of the 2025 Common Purpose American Express Leadership Academy alongside 74 future executive leaders to develop leadership skills. Lauren is a passionate member of the fundraising community, mentoring early career talented professionals and presenting at conferences.



LISE KAY WOMEN'S PLANS FOUNDATION

Lise is VP, Marketing & Corporate Communications for data centre company, AirTrunk. She has also overseen the company's social impact and customer success functions. Since joining AirTrunk when it was an ambitious start-up, Lise transformed it into one of the most recognised brands in the industry and APAC region. AirTrunk was recently acquired in the largest ever data centre deal, A\$24 billion. Alongside raising AirTrunk's global profile, Lise is committed to making a meaningful impact, spearheading the creation of AirTrunk's ground-breaking social impact program and ensuring robust governance of the program as a member of its oversight committee.



LIORA KEMPLER MONTEFIORE HOME

Liora is a psychologist who specialises in sleep, depression and anxiety and perinatal sleep. Liora graduated with a Bachelor of Advanced Science (Psychology) from the University of New South Wales in 2010 and a Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Sydney in 2017. She designed a sleep intervention to help expectant mothers manage their sleep during this period. Liora has presented at conferences across Australia and in Europe and more recently, qualified as a psychology supervisor. Liora also enjoys dancing, fitness, scuba diving, travelling and relaxing on the beach while her four children and husband build sandcastles.



HARRISON KENNEDY AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM FOUNDATION

Harrison is the co-founder and CEO of ReFresh. A former international fashion model for brands like Louis Vuitton, Saint Laurent, and Tiffany and Co, he moved into entrepreneurship and built Really Mental, a Gen Z mental wellness platform funded and later acquired by Amazon, reaching more than 25 million people. Drawing on his background in media, behavioural psychology, and early-stage ventures, Harrison founded ReRefresh to fix a major gap in workplaces, the lack of real time emotional visibility. His mission is to make wellbeing measurable, actionable, and core to organisational performance and compliance.



SIENNA KLOPF DETOUR HOUSE

Sienna is the Business Manager for Microsoft ANZs Corporate Affairs team, where she drives strategic initiatives and operational programs that support the region's broader business and social impact goals. Sienna brings a wealth of experience from both the public and private sectors, with a strong background in communications, program management, government relations, and strategic planning. A proud Bundjalung and Gumbaynggirr woman, Sienna is deeply committed to embedding equity and representation into inclusive strategies that create meaningful change. Outside of work, she finds joy in mentoring young people, travelling, and spending meaningful time with family and friends.



ADAM KNOBEL THINK + DO TANK FOUNDATION

Adam is a senior non-profit leader with deep experience in communications, organisational strategy, and advocacy. He is Deputy CEO at Australian Progress and was part of the leadership team for the Australian Marriage Equality campaign. Adam has held executive roles at FARE Australia and led communications for the Voice referendum. He is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and holds a Masters of Professional Writing. A passionate advocate for social justice, equity and systems change, Adam is also a long-time mentor in the sector and in his spare time a regular attendee of theatre and arts events.



CELESTE KOCABAY BIRRAHLEE PRESCHOOL LANE COVE LTD

Celeste is an accomplished executive, entrepreneur, and community advocate with over 15 years' experience leading strategic, operational, and people functions in high-growth organisations. As Head of Faculty Services at Curio Group, she oversees Australia's largest facilitator network, driving operational excellence, governance, and cultural alignment. Founder of Soar Active, a socially conscious activewear label for teenage girls, Celeste champions diversity, equity, and inclusion, raising the profiles of young women in sport. A dedicated volunteer with Mission Australia, Project Displaced, and the Asylum Seekers Centre, she combines business acumen with a strong commitment to social impact, youth empowerment, and community engagement.



SAN KOH BATYR

Professionally, San is a Chartered Accountant who helps clients strategically navigate challenging transitions to deliver better stakeholder outcomes. She specialises in corporate insolvency, restructuring, and turnaround through board and shareholder restructures, and advises on turnaround strategy, finance optimisation, and stakeholder management. At work and outside, San launched mentoring programs as DEI initiatives, piloted AI programs for streamlined efficiencies, and organised national conferences and client events (with help). She has also been invited to speak at universities, on podcasts, and for professional associations, and as Secretary of the Haymarket Chamber, San advocates for the growth of the Haymarket community.



JOSH KRECHMAN COMMUNITY HEALTH SUPPORT (CHS) NSW

Josh is a Senior Associate in dispute resolution at Clayton Utz, where he advises clients on complex litigation and regulatory matters. He has acted in high-profile class actions, regulatory investigations, and inquiries, including the Financial Services Royal Commission. Josh is deeply committed to community service, contributing over 40 hours annually to pro bono legal work supporting victims of crime and not-for-profit organisations. He has a lifelong passion for volunteering, including youth leadership and international first aid work. Outside of work, Josh enjoys spending time with his wife and two young sons, watching Collingwood, and running.



ELIAS LATTOUF STARLIGHT CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION

Elias is the Head of Accelerated Growth at Google Australia, with extensive experience in marketing, media, and sales. His work sees him engage with hundreds of SMBs and NFPs to support growth in the sector. Passionate about community impact, Elias provides pro bono consulting to Western Sydney businesses and founded Google's first Arabs@ resource group in APAC. Elias holds a Bachelor of Communications from Western Sydney University and has completed executive education at INSEAD. He is a proud father of two and an average golfer.



BRIAN LAU BLACK DOG INSTITUTE

Brian is a director and business executive with extensive experience in investment banking, capital raising and investing. He is skilled in helping companies develop strategic plans, raise capital and manage risks. Brian has spent 15 years working for UBS, Deutsche Bank and HSBC. He also founded an independent consulting business helping small SMEs grow and solve operational problems. Brian holds a Master of Finance and Bachelor of Commerce degree from the University of NSW. He is passionate about breaking down cultural barriers in mental health and normalising conversations around wellbeing. He is also an avid squash player and enjoys skiing.



JASON LAWRENCE SALAAM SUPER

Jason is the Director of Education & Organisational Development at South Western Sydney Local Health District. His role is focused on leading education teams to provide clinical and non-clinical teaching and to move the dial on important issues such as diversity and inclusion, culture and leadership development. Jason has joined NSW Health after 12 years in the consulting space, supporting a number of Public Sector and NFP clients across a range of people consulting projects. He is an avid reader, plays a number of instruments (poorly) and loves to spend time with his family.



VERONICA LESENCO HAYES THEATRE

Veronica is an engaged young professional currently working in the Legislature. Previously Veronica has worked as a legislative drafter writing laws for New South Wales including amendments to regulations and regulations for the staged repeal of statutory rules. She has a Bachelor of Arts (English major/Gender Studies minor) and a Bachelor of Laws. Veronica is passionate about connecting communities and creative industries. This has led her to volunteer for organisations including the National Justice Project. Veronica has had an extensive career as a dancer and performer both in Sydney and New York. Veronica migrated to Australia at the age of four and has a profound understanding of the experience of first-generation Australians.



ARON LEWIN HAKOAH

Aron is an experienced operations and strategy leader, most recently serving as Head of Operations at Jayride, where he helped scale the business from early-stage startup to publicly listed company. He holds an MBA from AGSM and has worked closely with founders and boards to deliver strategic initiatives across high-growth environments. Through his MBA, Aron supported First Nations-led business development and remains passionate about purpose-driven organisations. He is actively involved in the Jewish community and enjoys mentoring emerging leaders. Outside of work, Aron enjoys traveling, yoga, sailing, and exploring the latest technology and innovation.



GARY LI THE OBSERVERSHIP PROGRAM

Gary is a Vice President at Macquarie Capital, specialising in strategic equity transactions and complex corporate advisory. He has advised leading Australian companies on landmark deals. Beyond his professional role, Gary is actively engaged in the not-for-profit sector, volunteering with Angel Flight. He also serves as an Ambassador for the Macquarie Group Art Collection, promoting emerging Australian artists. Gary's personal interests include tennis, squash, and exploring arts and culture.



ADAM LODGE MACCABI NSW

Adam is a Flexible Workspace Consultant passionate about being at the forefront of changing how people work. With extensive senior leadership experience leading teams, he also founded his own consultancy to support landlords and organisations entering the flexible workspace sector. Having lived and worked in both the UK and Australia, Adam brings a global perspective, adaptability, and entrepreneurial drive to his work. He is committed to sharing his expertise with not-for-profit initiatives and contributing to positive social outcomes. A family man, Adam is husband to Jenna and proud dad to Isabelle, with a love for travel and adventure.



LAKSHMI LOGATHASSAN REFUGEE ADVICE AND CASEWORK SERVICE [RACS]

Lakshmi is a commercial, project, and strategy consultant with expertise in infrastructure projects and government policy and public administration. Lakshmi is committed to helping organisations unlock value for money outcomes across the investment lifecycle of major projects. She has previously worked at the NSW Premiers Department in commercial transactions. She has experience in the non-profit sector, especially in the areas of digital education and health infrastructure. She holds a Bachelor of Laws / Bachelor of International Studies from Western Sydney University and a Master of Political Economy from the University of Sydney. She enjoys gardening, bushwalking and music.



NIOKA MAQUINAD CCA NEW SOUTH WALES LTD

With over 14 years' experience in people and culture roles, including 12 in finance, Nioka is a trusted HR leader known for building resilient, values-led workplaces. As Head of Human Resources at Yarra Capital Management, a leading Australian fund manager, Nioka aligns people strategy with business outcomes while fostering purpose-driven cultures. Their career spans both public and private sectors, including the Reserve Bank of Australia, where they upheld strong fiduciary values and public service principles. Nioka holds a Master of Human Resource Management and Industrial Relations from the University of Sydney and believes people are the foundation of sustainable success.



VANESSA MARAFIOTI SALAAM FINANCE

Vanessa is Strategic Finance Manager at Bridge Housing, a not-for-profit providing social and affordable housing across Sydney. In her role, she leads financial transactions to secure capital for housing projects. She has 6+ years' experience in debt and capital advisory, having structured and arranged over \$2 billion in financing across infrastructure, energy transition and natural resources in Australia and Europe. Previously, she worked in infrastructure capital advisory at Deloitte in London. Vanessa holds a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Sydney and is a CFA Charterholder. In her spare time, she enjoys playing tennis, hiking and learning the piano.



SHARANYA MATHANARAJAN MACQUARIE GROUP FOUNDATION

Sharanya is a senior manager at Macquarie Group with over 14 years of experience in data strategy, analytics, and organisational change. She has led complex, high-impact projects across diverse global settings, delivering data transformation and insights across sectors. Passionate about social impact, Sharanya is actively involved in community initiatives supporting refugees and asylum seekers and has held leadership roles in DEI and women's networks. She is committed to fostering equity, inclusion, and opportunity through both her professional and volunteer work. Outside of work, she performs improv comedy and sings in a community choir.



ROSE MCCLINTOCK THE BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

Rose is a strategy consultant who advises public and private sector healthcare organisations. She is passionate about helping organisations deliver real impact, by developing strategies and operating models that improve performance, support better decision-making, and strengthen accountability. Rose began her career in law before moving into CEO & Board search and succession planning in the US. She holds Bachelors of Arts and Laws from the Australian National University and an MBA from London Business School. Rose enjoys ocean swimming, cooking for friends, and is a voracious reader.



ADITI MCMANUS CURE CANCER

Aditi is the Head of Government Affairs at Varian, a medtech company focused on cancer care. Aditi has extensive experience in government relations and policy development. Aditi is passionate about human rights and social equity. Aditi received the inaugural Scope Global Young Achievers Award in recognition of her volunteer work in Sri Lanka and as a future change maker. Aditi holds a Master of Human Rights, Bachelor of Social Work (Honours) and Bachelor of Arts from the University of Sydney. Aditi enjoys spending time with her two young children, baking and upcycling used furniture in her spare time.



ADITI MEDHEKAR THE BREAD & BUTTER PROJECT

Aditi is a people and culture specialist with over 20 years of experience in HR strategy, organisational transformation, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). She leads the Experienced Professionals Program at CareerSeekers, helping refugees and asylum seekers re-enter the Australian workforce. With leadership roles across banking, professional services, technology shared services, she's known for aligning people and strategy to create lasting impact. Holding an MBA and trained as an organisational coach, she's passionate about driving equity-driven change. Outside of work, Aditi is actively involved in not-for-profit causes and enjoys classical Indian dance, wine, history, and travel.



HARRIET MELLISH CEREBRAL PALSY ALLIANCE

Harriet is General Manager, Global Innovation Networks at AgriFutures Australia, where she leads programs including evokeAG, the Southern Hemisphere's largest agrifood innovation event, and growAG, a global innovation platform connecting investors, researchers, and entrepreneurs. She brings over a decade of leadership across commercial, agriculture, retail, strategy, and transformation, including large-scale restructures, digital innovation, and operations. Her lived experience of acquired disability has strengthened her commitment to equity and inclusion, reflected in her regional community engagement and research involvement. Alongside her corporate career, Harriet operates a livestock operation in regional NSW alongside her husband.



FUNGAI MUTSIWA PERFORMING LINES

Fungai is the founder of AfriKaleidoscope, an Afrocentric cultural platform centred on accessible knowledge-sharing and authentic representation of African identity through exhibitions, storytelling, and community engagement. He is also the creator of the BlackFor30 podcast and the Conscious Collective newsletter, projects amplifying African voices and challenging dominant narratives. He brings a critical, people-focused approach to cultural work. His not-for-profit involvement includes serving on the Executive Committee of The Inclusion Circle and volunteering with the African Australian Advocacy Centre. He is passionate about reclaiming narrative power, Afrocentric philosophies, and using art and media as conduits for change.



ISABELLA NAHON SYDNEY JEWISH MUSEUM

Isabella is a social impact professional with experience in policy, program design, and stakeholder engagement across university and not-for-profit sectors. She works at the University of Sydney's National Centre for Cultural Competence and will soon become Program Manager at the Dor Foundation, focusing on racial and religious prejudice, including antisemitism. Isabella holds a Bachelor of Social Work (Honours) and a Bachelor of Social Research and Policy from UNSW. Passionate about inclusive leadership and systems change. She enjoys baking, pottery, travel, and finds her happy place in Kruger National Park.





SARAH NGUYEN BELVOIR ST THEATRE

Sarah is a people-first HR leader and executive coach who builds inclusive, values-driven cultures in startups and scale-ups. She brings an authentic approach to leadership and is an advocate for ethics, social justice, and being a conscious, engaged citizen. Sarah volunteers as an Ethics Teacher at her local public school and has experience with climate, health advocacy, and community NFPs. She holds a Bachelor of Business in HR Management and Industrial Relations from Western Sydney University. Passionate about sustainability, diverse communities, and nourishing food, Sarah believes in the power of integrity, curiosity, and human connection to shape a better world.



TESS O'BRIEN THINK + DO TANK FOUNDATION

Tess is a strategy consultant who supports not-for-profit and public sector clients to enhance their organisational performance and deepen the impact of their programs to improve outcomes for society's most vulnerable people. As a Director at Nous Group, Tess leads strategic analyses, organisational reviews and programmatic evaluations. Tess leverages her not-for-profit work experience in Cambodia and East Africa, and her experience working for Bloomberg Philanthropies. Tess holds a Masters in Public Policy from Harvard Kennedy School and a Bachelor of International and Global Studies from the University of Sydney.



SHERLY ORNER WOLPER JEWISH HOSPITAL

Sherly is a management consultant at Korn Ferry, partnering with clients to tackle complex organisational challenges. She has deep experience in driving transformation through leadership, performance, and development strategies. Using behavioural science and talent analytics, she helps clients make better decisions, manage risk, and build resilient businesses in the face of change. Over the past 10 years, Sherly has advised global, ASX-listed and private organisations across every sector in the economy. She holds a Bachelor of Accounting and Financial Services and is an ICF Associate Certified Coach (ACC).



REMINGTON OWEN MANDELBAUM HOUSE

Remington is an experienced educator, musician, and ensemble director with a passion for arts education, leadership, and community engagement. At Emanuel School, he leads music programs and wellbeing initiatives, directs diverse ensembles, and produces large-scale performances and outreach programs connecting students with real-world opportunities. His work extends beyond education to include professional music-making, composition, recording, and event coordination. He holds a Bachelor of Music (Honours) from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and is completing an MBA at UNSW's AGSM, strengthening his leadership in education and the arts.



ABHISHEK PAUDEL INTERRELATE

Abhishek is a Senior Policy and Projects Officer at the NSW Department of Communities and Justice, where he leads strategic projects, including the development of domestic and family violence services. He has a strong background in program management, strategy, and policy recommendations. Previously, he helped deliver mental health programs at Central and Eastern Sydney Primary Health Network and was a Youth Advocate at Headspace Bankstown, demonstrating his commitment to community development and mental health. A strong communicator and collaborator, he seeks to apply his experience in public policy to create sustainable and equitable community projects.



CHRIS PAVLOU STARLIGHT CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION

Christopher is a commercial and purpose-driven leader in driving growth at Canva. He has led go-to-market initiatives across the technology and education sectors in the UK and Australia. Previously, Director of Marketing at VC-backed EdTech company Up Learn, he helped expand access to underserved learners. Christopher is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and a supporter of Giving What We Can. His community involvement includes volunteering with Save the Children, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, and as a youth sports coach. He is passionate about equitable opportunities and long-term impacts.



NATHANAEL PEACOCK NORTHCOTT

Nathanael is a writer and communications professional living in Western Sydney. Nathanael has been a freelance journalist for 15 years, and worked in communications, media and advertising for 10 years. He has a physical disability, and advocates for disability support in workplaces - because everyone deserves to work and feel fulfilled in their workplace.



ANTHONY PENKLIS GOOD RETURN

Anthony is an Associate Director in the EY Parthenon Transactions team. Anthony combines his commercial nature, accounting background and intellectual curiosity to solve real problems and understand the drivers of everything he sees. Anthony is an avid cinephile, die-hard supporter of the South Sydney Rabbitohs and an aspiring chef and runner.



ANDREW PFEIFFER INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AUSTRALIA ACT

Andrew is a data expert in the Australian Public Sector and a visionary advocate for the full participation of neurodivergent people in society. He received a Public Service Medal for co-founding the Public Sector Neurodiversity Community of Practice. He spearheaded a successful campaign to include a neurodiversity question in the Australian Public Service Employee Census, aiming to ensure neurodivergent people are represented in the sector. The Minister for Social Services appointed Andrew to the National Autism Strategy Oversight Council. Andrews TEDx talk about neurodiversity has over 20,000 views. Andrew enjoys wearing novelty suits as an ice-breaker.



GEMMA POL DOCUMENTARY AUSTRALIA

Gemma is a Wiradyuri, Ngemba and Paakantji woman and the CEO of Common Ground First Nations, a 100% First Nations-led not-for-profit working to change systems through storytelling. She also serves as a Non-Executive Director at Firesticks, supporting Indigenous-led land and fire care. Her work spans strategic communications, governance, fundraising and impact evaluation, with a focus on cultural integrity and community leadership. She has led national campaigns, secured major partnerships and contributed to climate justice and education reform. Gemma is passionate about language revitalisation, caring for Country and creating spaces for First Nations knowledge and futures to thrive.



CHARLES POULSEN BATYR

I have been in the technology industry for more than 20 years working for small and large technology firms. In my current role, I am the national director for Microsoft Australia's healthcare & human services business. I lead a team who supports healthcare providers, insurers, and human services organisations to utilise new technologies to solve their business problems and achieve their business objectives. I like to give back by volunteering my time to support meaningful initiatives and technology startups.



MAATHU RANJAN AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF COMPANY DIRECTORS

Maathu is a senior public servant, actuary, and Sir Roland Wilson Scholar at ANU's Crawford School of Public Policy. She has held leadership roles across the Australian Public Service and brings expertise in economics, data analytics, and evidence-based policy. Maathu has served on the Board of the Actuaries Institute and is President-elect for 2027. An award-winning researcher, she holds appointments at the University of Oxford, the Australian National University, and the University of New South Wales. She is passionate about inclusive systems and the use of rigorous evidence to drive strategic decision-making and long-term social impact.



PAUL REDFERN KARITANE

Paul is Chief Operating Officer at Big Picture Medical, where he leads multidisciplinary teams unifying healthcare systems globally to improve patient outcomes. With expertise spanning healthcare technology, sustainable finance, and fintech, he brings strategic vision and operational excellence to purpose-driven organisations. Previously holding leadership positions at Bright and Tyro, Paul excels at scaling businesses through complexity. He contributes to the startup ecosystem as a Techstars mentor, is an Expert in Residence with Young Change Agents supporting youth entrepreneurship, and advisor to Violet on end-of-life care technology. A Macquarie University graduate, Paul enjoys family time, reading, and fitness.



MARK ROBINSON CONNECTABILITY

Mark is an accomplished executive leader with a proven track record in designing and delivering innovative technology solutions across complex, high-impact systems. Currently serving as the Acting GM, Product and Portfolio within Technology at Scentre Group, Mark is responsible for the integrated physical and digital experiences across the Westfield portfolio in Australia and New Zealand, which welcomes over 500 million customer visits annually. Outside of work he is active in his local community, coaching and mentoring football players through summer and winter competitions. He also enjoys cooking and is rarely found without dough rising, resting or baking at home.



SEBASTIAN ROSIEN TOY LIBRARIES

Sebastian is a social impact leader with two decades of experience in education technology and digital transformation. Currently COO at OurFutures Institute, he scales evidence-based programs addressing youth mental health across Australian schools. Previously, as CPO at Valentre Institute, he delivered scalable learning solutions addressing global educational inequalities, and his work with LEGO advanced STEAM education worldwide. His commitment to accessible education extends to volunteer work in Thailand and at Sydney Story Factory. A recipient of Australia's Global Talent visa in education, Sebastian holds an MSc in Digital Education from the University of Edinburgh.



HANNAH ROSMARIN JCA EXECUTIVE

Hannah is a leadership and performance consultant driven by a passion for enabling individuals and organisations to realise their full potential. As a registered Organisational Psychologist, she blends commercial acumen with a deep understanding of human behaviour to drive transformational change and enhance organisational effectiveness. Hannah's expertise spans leadership and organisational development, culture transformation, and key talent assessment and solutions. She has shaped outcomes for clients across finance, technology, energy, education, and government sectors. Hannah holds a Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) and a Master of Organisational Psychology.



DARYA RUBENSTEIN MOUNT SINAI

Darya is a fundraiser, strategic sales leader, and community builder with a decade of experience across the not-for-profit and tech sectors. She currently serves as Executive Director of Australian Friends of United Hatzalah, where she leads national fundraising and engagement efforts. When she's not working, you'll find her reading on her Kindle, cooking for friends and family, or exploring new places.



INBAR RUBIN AUSTRALIAN JEWISH FERTILITY NETWORK

Inbar is a dynamic Chief Product Officer with a proven track record of driving innovation across a wide range of industries. With deep expertise in product management, agile coaching, and leadership consulting, Inbar has spearheaded high-impact product delivery and digital transformation initiatives for both start-ups and established enterprises. Committed to empowering others, she has successfully trained and coached teams and leaders to achieve high performance while fostering inclusive, outcome-driven environments that prioritise continuous learning and strategic impact. Passionate about nurturing future leaders, Inbar actively mentors emerging talent, guiding them to excel and shape the future of their industries.



RICHARD SCHMID OPERA AUSTRALIA

Richard is a strategic marketing leader with over 15 years' experience in campaign development, brand partnerships, customer experience and commercial delivery across the retail and property sectors. As Head of Marketing - Digital Engagement at Scentre Group, he leads digital enhancement programs including Westfield Membership. Richard is a passionate advocate for diversity and inclusion, as part of Scentre Groups LGBTI+ Working Group, contributing to the organisation's Gold recognition in the Australian Workplace Equality Index. He also volunteers with Bach Akademie Australia, supporting its marketing and social media strategy, driven by his lifelong passion for music and the arts.



EL SETTLE KARITANE

El has worked in the Chief of Staff office for Microsoft ANZ for the last 4 years, where she drives operational excellence and business management rigour. Prior to joining Microsoft, El spent 16 years in London as a Chief of Staff and Operations Lead for leading financial institutions, overseeing complex projects and building high-performing teams across global markets. El is a passionate advocate for people and is committed to elevating diverse voices and perspectives within the workplace and beyond. When not putting negotiation skills to the test with three young children, El enjoys sunrise walks and playing tennis.



YVONNE SEWANKAMBO STELLA

Yvonne is a children's author and communications director at Sedgwick Communications with 12 years' experience in publishing, education, media and not-for-profit sectors. She is committed to using storytelling and communications to drive positive social change, particularly for vulnerable or underrepresented groups. Her picture book, *My Superhero Voice*, was created for the National Office for Child Safety's 'One Talk at a Time' campaign, to help CALD adults start conversations with their children about child sexual abuse. Yvonne is also Amplify Black Women's volunteer Grants and Partnerships Lead, and in the inaugural Girls For Girls Global Diaspora Cohort.



FAIZA SHAKORI REFUGEE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

Faiza is a strategic community advocate with extensive experience in stakeholder engagement, diversity, and inclusion, particularly within multicultural and refugee communities. She is committed to bridging the gap between the not-for-profit and corporate sectors to drive social impact and inclusive policy development. She has led initiatives that amplify marginalized voices and foster collaboration across diverse stakeholders. Faiza holds a Bachelor of Economics and a Master of Human Resources Management from leading Australian universities. In her spare time, she enjoys mentoring and engaging with community initiatives.



LAUREN SHARKEY COURAGE TO CARE

Lauren is an experienced communications and stakeholder engagement professional with over 15 years of experience working in innovation systems across agriculture, medical research, and not-for-profits. During this time, she has worked with public, private and not-for-profit organisations. Committed to creating meaningful impact, Lauren works with diverse stakeholders to drive innovative solutions that create lasting change for businesses, communities, and the environment.



MIKAELA SILBERBACH YOUTH HEAR

Mikaela is a senior partnerships leader working at the intersection of youth, education, and technology. Currently at Year13, she has led award-winning campaigns addressing social justice, mental health, and future pathways for Gen Z. With experience across tech, media, and purpose-driven organisations, Mikaela has collaborated with brands, government, and not-for-profits to drive impact at scale. She works closely with partners to promote gender equality in STEM and is passionate about creating inclusive environments for young people. Outside of work, Mikaela enjoys traveling, yoga, and engaging in conversations around leadership and social change.



NAZ SIMLER FORESTVILLE MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Naz is a commercial leader focused on operational excellence that deepens partner relationships, delivers financial outcomes and builds capability. Naz is known for her authentic and grounded approach to leadership which has enabled her to build meaningful connections and trusted relationships across the organisation. She leads with humility and genuine curiosity, always seeking to understand before acting. These traits are reflected in the strong and lasting relationships she has built right across the business. Naz takes pride in bringing clarity to complexity, translating challenging issues into simple actionable solutions that drive successful outcomes.



LAUREN SMITH IOXIO PHILANTHROPY

Lauren, a proud Kamilaroi woman from NSW, was born on Awabakal Country, raised on Wonnarua Country, and now resides on Awabakal Country. With over 13 years in Retail Store Operations leadership, she fosters authentic connections between corporate businesses and Indigenous communities. For three years, Lauren has served on the Woolworths Group First Nations Advisory Board, advising on Indigenous cultural awareness. Passionate about empowering Indigenous peoples, she is dedicated to personal and community development. Lauren holds a Postgraduate Degree in Leadership and an MBA from UNSW. She enjoys travelling, sports, and spending time with family and friends.



NICK SMITH AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA (ACO)

Nicholas is the Founder & Director of N.Smith Gallery, a leading contemporary art gallery in Sydney representing 26 artists. Under his leadership, the gallery has facilitated more than 500 institutional loans and 80 acquisitions annually, placing significant works into public collections while fostering the careers of early-career arts workers through a team of six staff. Nicholas has served on the Queensland Symphony Orchestras Future Fund Advisory Board and is committed to strengthening cultural leadership and governance. Beyond visual arts, he has a strong passion for music and broader cultural engagement, with a focus on creating inclusive, sustainable cultural ecosystems.



RINA SOETANTO SALAAM FOUNDATION

Rina is a Director at the National Disability Insurance Agency, leading strategic policy reforms affecting 700,000+ Australians with disability. Previously, an Executive Manager at Quantum, she delivered 35+ transformative projects to help public and private organisations in healthcare and social services sectors make data-driven decisions. She cares deeply about improving services and outcomes for patients and vulnerable populations and is recognised in the 2024 Women Leading Tech Award for social impact. She holds a PhD in Genomics and Bachelor of Science (Advanced) with First Class Honours from the Australian National University. She enjoys reading and exploring Sydney with her family.



AMY SPIRA THE EMANUEL SCHOOL

Amy is an award-winning legal and governance professional with a track record of leading teams through complex transformations to deliver purpose and values-aligned outcomes. She has significant experience leading major strategic projects and has developed her corporate governance expertise in an advisory capacity and as an ASX-listed Company Secretary. Amy champions access and opportunity for others, volunteering to support marginalised communities and mentoring promising young women. Amy has been recognised as ACC Corporate Lawyer of the Year (2019), Australasian Lawyer In-House Leader (2020), on the GC Powerlist Rising Stars Australia (2022) and as a Mindr Woman of Influence (2023).



MELISSA STEWART THE INCLUSION CIRCLE

Melissa is an experienced Communication Manager at the NSW Department of Education, a human rights advocate and published author. She has over decade of communication and media experience across public sector and non-government organisations. Melissa recently coordinated the communication for the recent flood response where over 100 schools were non-operational. She led the development of new channels for Skills NSW, including a new social channel, stakeholder newsletter and program branding to uplift the department's skills portfolio. Melissa has been on a strata building committee and was Vice President of Bond University's African Associate bridging the African diaspora on campus.



BELLA STREET PHONOGRAPHIC PERFORMANCE COMPANY OF AUSTRALIA

Bella is a lawyer and a lifelong arts enthusiast, currently providing legal and commercial support at Sony Music across recorded music operations, live events, talent management and merchandise. She is a musician and has performed in bands and theatre groups, volunteered at the Arts Law Centre of Australia, and supported arts initiatives like Sydney Fringe and Secret Garden. Passionate about community, the environment, and creative industries, Bella has spent her career and personal life supporting and engaging with the arts and cultural communities that inspire her.



ALEX TOMOANA CARERS NSW

Alex is a dynamic product leader with global expertise in Financial Services and Digital technologies. She's passionate about making finances simple and secure. Recently, Alex led Travel and Dining strategies for Commonwealth Bank, helping Australians access affordable experiences and manage high living costs. At Cash App and Afterpay, she drove customer strategy, launching solutions to combat money laundering and terrorism financing. Alex holds a Bachelor of Business in Digital Business and Management from QUT. Off the clock, you'll find her discovering the best foods, planning her next adventure, or soaking up fresh ideas on a nature walk.



PETA-LEE TRUSCOTT BRIDGE HOUSING

Peta-Lee is a First Nations HR Specialist whose career is strongly influenced by her Gomeri heritage. Having navigated her own path to higher education and employment, Peta-Lee has built her career improving employment experiences, pathways, and outcomes for First Nations people. She currently leads First Nations employment initiatives at SBS. With experience across the for-purpose sector, Peta-Lee is passionate about using her lived and professional experience to influence change and contribute to values-driven organisations. Outside of work, she's an avid reader and podcast listener who loves catching the sunrise at her local beach with coffee.



SURBHI VERMA IGEN FOUNDATION

Surbhi is a strategic partnerships leader at Google with over a decade of experience driving digital transformation across global markets. She specializes in translating complex visions into actionable outcomes and has a proven track record of managing high-impact projects for major retail and finance partners. Beyond her professional role, Surbhi is a mentor for Google for Startups and The Warrior Women. At Google, she is a founding member and Chapter Lead of the IGN ERG, an organization advocating for Googlers in AUNZ from the Indian subcontinent. Surbhi is passionate about helping organizations leverage AI to drive meaningful growth and enjoys coaching and community building.



LUKE VESPA AUSTRALIAN RECORDING INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Luke is a Senior Partnerships Manager in the Australian music industry with over a decade of experience in stakeholder management, strategic business development and digital innovation. He currently leads partnerships with global technology platforms and media streaming services, delivering commercial growth and platform strategy for a leading media organisation. In 2022, Luke was named one of The Music Network's 30 Under 30 for his industry impact. Outside of work, Luke is a father, a passionate soccer fan, and lifelong supporter of the arts, with a strong interest in music, cultural storytelling, and emerging technology.



LOUISE VILLAR HEAPS DECENT

Louise is a Creative Producer and Arts Philanthropy Specialist at the Biennale of Sydney, where she leads high-profile fundraising campaigns and curates innovative donor engagement initiatives. She brings expertise in donor relations, campaign strategy, and system improvements that strengthen philanthropic outcomes. With experience across the not-for-profit arts and culture sector, Louise is committed to fostering equitable, inclusive cultural environments. Passionate about social justice and community engagement, she is dedicated to values-driven practice and making meaningful contributions to the arts and culture sector. Louise enjoys philosophy, sharing Filipino food with friends, and approaching life with playfulness and curiosity.



EMMA WALLACE THE BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

Emma is a Senior Lecturer in Speech Pathology at the University of Sydney with more than ten years' leadership across tertiary education, public hospitals and professional associations. Through her integrated program of research, clinical practice, teaching and community engagement, she strives to improve health outcomes and quality of life for Australians living with disability. Emma has secured national grants, published widely and mentors emerging clinicians. Emma holds a BSc (Speech Pathology) from Trinity College Dublin and a PhD from the University of Canterbury, New Zealand. Outside work she is an avid traveller and recreational runner.



RAYMOND WAN CARRIAGEWORKS

Raymond is a software engineer at Vivienne Court Trading, having worked there since completing a Bachelor of Computer Science and Physics at the University of New South Wales. He enjoys designing and building complex systems that allow organisations to realise the full potential of data and improve their workflows. Outside of work he enjoys training Judo every week at a local club, sipping a glass of wine with a book and the occasional boardgames session with friends.



NICOLE WEBB ARTS LAW CENTRE

Nicole is a senior communications professional with 15 years' experience in corporate affairs, stakeholder engagement and media relations, primarily within financial services. Brought up in a working class, immigrant family background, she values inclusion and opportunities to help level the playing field for current and future generations. She has volunteered with the LEAPS mentoring program to support high school students during a critical development period. At Commonwealth Bank, she has led external communications for the Next Chapter program, supporting victim-survivors of domestic and financial abuse. Outside of work, ballet helps to keep her humble, while building discipline and resilience.



REBEKAH WILLIAMS BELL SHAKESPEARE

Rebekah (Bek) is a proud Dughutti and Gomerioi woman with deep ties to her ancestral Country of Bellbrook beneath Barralbarayi (Sugar Loaf Mountain). Guided by the strong women in her family, she honours the legacy of those who came before her. As Manager of First Nations Engagement & Partnerships at SBS, Bek leads initiatives that amplify First Nations voices, embed cultural integrity, and foster meaningful partnerships. She holds a Graduate Certificate in Professional Studies (First Nations Social Justice) and is passionate about driving inclusion, governance, and strategic change to create lasting impact for First Nations communities.



STEF WITH THE INCLUSION CIRCLE

Stephane is a Principal Solution Engineer with extensive experience in marketing, data, and AI technologies across the not-for-profit sector in the Asia-Pacific region. He is committed to helping organisations harness digital transformation to strengthen community engagement and scale their impact. Stephane has led enablement and transformation initiatives across NGOs and enjoys contributing his expertise in data, governance, and technology for social good. He is also an active surf life saver and founder of Bronze Ready, an initiative supporting new members preparing for their Bronze Medallion. Outside of work, he enjoys art, design, and time with his young family.



PAULINE WONG GOOD RETURN

Pauline is a Corporate Finance professional at Commonwealth Bank of Australia, where she supports major clients through complex financing transactions and strategic growth initiatives. With 15 years of experience across Australia and Hong Kong, she brings a thoughtful, collaborative approach to leadership and stakeholder engagement. Pauline has held roles at PwC and ANZ and is passionate about inclusive governance and purpose-led organisations. She is an animal lover and has fostered ten rescue kittens through the RSPCA. Outside of work, she enjoys reading, travelling and finds balance through yoga and kayaking.



TIFFANY WU TOGETHER FOR HUMANITY

Tiffany is an Investment Banking Vice President with extensive experience in Technology, Media, Entertainment and Telco M&A in Australia. She specialises in strategic advice and execution on corporate transactions, helping close 7 M&A transactions with a deal value of \$1bn and \$6bn in equity raisings. She is also a Macquarie Voice Champion, MacCap DEI Committee Member and was a Banking and Financial Services Oath Young Ambassador. Tiffany holds a Bachelor of Commerce (Finance) and Bachelor of Laws from the University of Sydney. She is a fervent film, football and F1 fan and proud owner of 2 rescue kittens.



ROBERT YIN REALISE BUSINESS

Robert is a passionate IT leader with extensive experience in customer success. Currently serving as a Cloud Solution Architecture Manager at Microsoft with previous experiences within the broadcasting and legal sector, He holds a Bachelor of Engineering and a Diploma in Engineering Practice from the University of Technology, Sydney as well as numerous industry certifications and accreditations. Robert is passionate about Diversity and Inclusion and is an advocate of equal opportunity employment. He leads the Intersectionality program at Microsoft, which aims to highlight the overlap and similarities between the different societal groups to remove divisiveness and fostering allyship.



ANNELISE YOUNG SALAAM SUPER

Annelise is an experienced Australian diplomat serving as Consul General to New Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna. She is also Australia's Permanent Representative to the Pacific Community, the region's development organisation. She has previously served as a diplomat in Jakarta, as an adviser to two Foreign Ministers, and as a Director within DFAT. In 2017 she took leave to work as Newcrest Mining's Indonesian Country Manager. Ms Young holds a BA/LLB (Hons I) from Sydney University and a Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice from the ANU. She speaks French and Indonesian and is married with two children.



NURIA ZAMORA SOLANO LOU'S PLACE

Nuria is a centre manager with extensive operations experience in multidisciplinary, international, and practice-changing research. Nuria is committed to improving research delivery to enable better real-world translation and healthier outcomes for diverse, underserved communities. She currently works at the NHMRC Clinical Trials Centre in Sydney. Nuria holds a Master of Orthoptics and a Bachelor of Medical Science from The University of Sydney. Dedicated to social justice and women's rights, Nuria actively volunteers at Lou's Place, supporting women in need through cooking, advocacy and fundraising. She enjoys travelling, running, drawing, and has recently taken up the challenge of learning to surf.



ELAINE ZHUANG HILLS MONTESSORI SOCIETY

Elaine is a global transformation executive with over 15 years of experience driving enterprise value creation. Her background spans top-tier consulting like McKinsey, C-suite leadership at Juna Hotels in China, and large-scale enterprise transformation at NBN Australia. A catalyst for change, Elaine is known for integrating data, technology, people, and processes to drive scalable, sustainable impact. A recognised thought leader and keynote speaker, she frequently shares insights on digital transformation and inclusive leadership. She holds an MBA with Honors from the University of California, Berkeley. Outside of work, she enjoys Qi Gong and improvisational cooking.



DENISE ZLOTOWSKI THE OBSERVERSHIP PROGRAM

Denise is Head of Strategic & Digital Fundraising at the Australian Conservation Foundation, leading transformative fundraising strategies and digital growth. She has held senior roles in the not-for-profit sector, including Head of Digital Transformation at ACF and leadership positions at Starlight Children's Foundation, where she launched the multimillion-dollar, award-winning Super Swim Challenge. Denise sits on the board of Living Ocean, a marine conservation charity on Sydney's Northern Beaches, and volunteers with Reefcare, a bush regeneration group restoring Long Reef. Outside work, she's a passionate surfer, plays guitar and sings.



STEPHANIE ZUGHBI LITTLE DREAMERS

Stephanie is a lawyer and government adviser with broad public policy experience. She has worked as an Adviser at the Net Zero Economy Authority and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and as a Solicitor at Allens. Over the course of her career, she has held roles at the OECD, a Federal Ministers Office, the Refugee Advice and Casework Service and the Gulf Region Advocacy Centre in Texas. In her spare time, Stephanie enjoys studying languages, playing tennis and hiking.

The Program is a wonderful opportunity for personal development as participation exposes you to a diverse community of NFP leaders who are regularly making decisions that have a broader impact on society. The knowledge and skills that you pick up as an Observer can't be taught in a classroom. By observing boards in action, you will learn how to be a better leader, a better listener and have a broader array of skills through which to apply when making decisions in any sector. The formal training program is comprehensive in nature and when applied alongside the practical observing of a board, is the perfect catalyst for a person to want to make a difference in whatever leadership role they are pursuing.”

Kate Stewart, Observer, joined FareShare following her Observership

We received approval from the Victorian Government to appoint Anna Pitt, our 2019 Board Observer to the Victorian Opera Board. Anna stayed on our Marketing Committee in 2020 after her official Observership ended and she has continued to attend Board meetings as an Observer since that time. Based on her skills and contribution, we decided earlier this year to propose her to the government as a full Board member. We are delighted that her appointment was approved and are excited to welcome her to the Board. We have been very happy with the quality of our Observers since joining the Program in 2017.”

Grant Powell, Board Director, Victorian Opera



FOR HOST BOARDS

We are delighted to be working with you for the 2026 Program. This information is intended as a helpful summary of what's involved for a board participating in the Program. It also offers ways of maximising the value of participation for organisations and extending learning and development for Observers based on the experiences of boards participating in the Program over a number of years. We hope you find it useful.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

- Observers are carefully matched with organisations based on their skills and interests for a 12-month placement.
- The Observership begins with the first board meeting of 2025 and finishes with the last.
- While Observers sign the Program's confidentiality agreement, organisations may also request these terms or require their own confidentiality agreements.
- All Observers undergo a Police Check, and are advised that organisations may require additional screening such as Working with Children Checks.
- During the Observership year, organisations facilitate Observers attending all board and any relevant subcommittee meetings as non-voting members so they can both contribute and learn about fundamental principles and functions of boards, the role of board members, the decision-making process and governance priorities.
- Where board meetings move between cities and or countries and board members are supported to attend these meetings in-person, we request that Observer attendance is facilitated and supported by the host organisations.
- Observers participate in a training program alongside their board Observership. AICD facilitates four sessions and The Ethics Centre, one session. Further training sessions are facilitated by The Program and feature keynote speakers. Opportunities for networking among Observers and peer-to-peer learning are provided via the In Person sessions. All training sessions are mandatory. Please refer to page 10 for an outline of the training program.
- For a copy of the Board Participation agreement, please contact Rachel Exton.

HINTS FOR ENGAGING OBSERVERS

Here are some example of best practice and ways boards and Observers can maximise contribution and governance learning throughout the Observership year.

- The Chair/Board Liaison meets their Observer prior to the first Board meeting to induct the Observer into the organisation and the operations of the board;
 - If a board induction pack is available, do share with the Observer. A formal or informal induction, advising on both your board culture and expectations of your Observer's participation in meetings prior to the first board meeting is essential for learning and engagement;
 - Please discuss areas of potential contribution either prior to, or in the early stages of the Observership to set expectations and lay the foundations for the best possible Observership experience for all parties;
 - Joining a sub-committee and/or special strategic project at the beginning of the year provides an opportunity for the Observer to engage with meaningful work undertaken by the board and supports their engagement with and contribution to the organisation.

- It is at the board's discretion to solicit input from the Observers during meetings. All Observers are briefed to contribute once invited to do so on the terms provided by the organisation. These could include:
 - As and when invited to do so by the Chair;
 - As and when the Observer feels they have something to offer;
 - Some boards set aside time at the end of the meeting for the Observer to reflect on discussions and to share perspectives.

THE PROGRAM STIPULATES THAT:

- Board minutes note that Observers are present in the capacity as Observers and not as directors. When a vote is taken, please make clear that Observers do not vote;
- Where a training session clashes with a board meeting, Observers are advised to prioritise Board meetings;
- Feedback calls with Observers take place early in the Program cycle to check everything is on track;
- A call will be scheduled with the Board Liaison for feedback on your Observer and to ascertain ongoing participation of your board in the next year's Program;
- Board Liaisons are asked to contact the Program if any issues arise, including any non-attendance other than due to extenuating circumstances for which an apology is received.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION:

- Participate in developing the next generation of leaders in the non-profit sector;
- Inject a younger, diverse perspective into the boardroom;
- Looking at the year ahead, strategically select an Observer with a particular skill set eg: new technology, data analytics, digital marketing/communications, social media, law, finance, government policy etc. to assist with specific areas of board work;
- Engage through the "matching process" with a diverse pool of emerging leaders with a view to addressing any areas of board underrepresentation;
- Involve your Observer in a hands-on strategic project to deliver concrete benefits to the organisation;
- Invite your Observer to contribute in areas relating to their skill set through subcommittee involvement;
- Strengthen your board renewal strategy with no ongoing commitment to retain the Observer at the end of the 12-month Program;
- Retain the option to invite your Observer to join the board at the end of the 12-month period and/or invite them to stay on in an advisory or voluntary capacity;
- Recruit from the Program's 1,400 "board ready" alumni pool who are actively seeking ongoing and meaningful engagement with the Not-for-Profit sector;
- Use the Program as a tool to develop the organisation's own leadership stream by encouraging emerging leaders from within the organisation to apply to be placed with other not-for-profit boards.

Please contact:

PROGRAM LEAD, NSW AND BRISBANE

RACHEL EXTON

Email: Rachel.exton@observership.com.au



LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY AS AN OBSERVER

Each organisation has been encouraged to review its directors' and offices' insurance, including potential coverage of you as an Observer.

The Program has sought legal advice on the potential liability associated with serving as an Observer and whether this role could be considered akin to the role of a shadow director under the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) (the Act).

SHADOW DIRECTORS

In the ordinary course, a director is a person who has been formally appointed to act as a director of a company or a body. However, the definition of a director under the Act extends to a shadow director.

A person who is not validly appointed as a director will be a shadow director if they either act in the position of a director or if the directors are accustomed to act in accordance with that person's instructions or wishes. A person is not a shadow director merely because the directors act on advice given by the person in the proper performance of functions attaching to the person's professional capacity, or the person's business relationship with the directors or the company.

When determining whether a person is a shadow director, regard should be had to a variety of factors including whether:

- (a) there is a causal connection between the instruction or the wish of the person and the directors acting on it, though it is not sufficient if the act that was specified in the instruction is something the directors would do irrespective of the instruction;
- (b) there is "habitual compliance over a period of time"; and
- (c) the directors collectively are accustomed to act on the person's instructions or wishes.

ARE OBSERVERS SHADOW DIRECTORS?

In the course of the 12 month Observership Program, Observers are not appointed to act as In the course of their 12 month Observership, participants are not appointed to act as directors of the companies or bodies that they are paired with.

Given that an Observer has no voting rights and only attends board or committee meetings to observe the workings of a board as a learning experience, it is unlikely that an Observer will be found to be acting as a director of the partnership, company or body.

Additionally, the word accustomed implies that there must be a pattern of conforming to the wishes of the person, rather than a single instance.

Given that the extent of the Observer's relationship with the board will be confined to a 12 month period, it would appear unlikely that the Observer would be able to exert a pattern of influence such that the directors who are formally appointed to the Board would be in the habit of complying with the wishes of the Observer. Accordingly, we have received legal advice stating that in the absence of any additional facts, an Observer would not be considered to be a shadow director and thereby exposed to any liability that follows from being a director under the Act.

OUR GOVERNANCE

The Observership Program is a company limited by guarantee with an independent board and is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for Profit Commission (ACNC).

BOARD DIRECTORS: Jonathan Gavshon (Founder and Chair), Alison Deans, Conor Foley (2017 Observer), Dennis Goldner AM, Ronny Andrade Parra and Joseph Skrzynski AO.

David Gonski AC, Jillian Segal AO and Peter Joseph AM are the Program Patrons.

The board of The Observership Program hosts Observers each year.

Finance, Risk and Audit Committee: Conor Foley (Chair), Dennis Goldner AM, Phil Hughes (2018 Observer), Jennifer Matson (2024 Observer).

Accessibility Advisory Committee: Ronny Andrade Parra (Chair), Ibrahim Elsoukmani, Kim Groizard, Kei Ho, Kin Ly



CONTACT US

SYDNEY

**RACHEL EXTON, PROGRAM LEAD,
NSW AND BRISBANE**

Email: rachel.exton@observership.com.au

Phone: +61 2 9241 6874

Mobile: 0447 592 515

VICTORIA

CATHERINE REISER (DIRECTOR)

Email: catherine.reiser@observership.com.au

Mobile: 0400 454 250

**DANNI ZHANG, OPERATIONS LEAD
(MATERNITY COVER)**

Email: danni.zhang@observership.com.au

PHOTOGRAPHER Giselle Haber: 2017 – 2023 Sydney Program Launch



“ The Benevolent Society is delighted to be participating for the second year in the Board Observership program. Applicants to the program are high calibre and well matched to the organisation, such that it was very difficult to select from those we interviewed. The program delivers great benefit to us as an organisation in identifying candidates who offer great energy, fresh perspectives and a range of expertise to apply to specific projects and our activities generally. In return, The Benevolent Society aims to provide the board observer with a rich and engaging board experience sitting at the table with seasoned directors who have a wide range of experience and expertise and in-depth learning about our sector and its challenges. In this way, we are helping to develop board directors of the future.”

Lisa Chung, Former Chair, The Benevolent Society – Participating Not-For-Profit in 2016 – 2025

“ I feel that the knowledge and experience gained throughout the Observership Program is already being put to good use at work as well as in my new role as a Board Director. In general, my understanding of the role of Directors is now a lot clearer as well as the role and responsibility of ARIA and the way its run as an organisation.”

Emily Crews, Former Observer

“ AICD’s training throughout the year teaches Observers core governance principles you can apply immediately. It’s a crucial part of the overall experience, giving you both practical skills and a kind of best-practice framework to compare and contrast with your real life board experience.”

George Downing, Former Observer

