



YACWA 2022 Board Election Pack

YACWA works for its members. Our membership comprises young people, individual advocates and organisations working to support young people and the youth sector in WA.

Our Board is made up of dedicated members working to fulfil YACWA's strategic objectives, detailed in [YACWA's Strategic Plan](#).

As a member, your input is essential in ensuring YACWA Board represents the best interests of the organisation, young people and the youth sector.

For this election there are 8 nominees and two vacancies. Two current Board Members, Sharon Gough and Katherine Browne are re-nominating for another term.

The nominating members are:

- Jordan Wright
- Emma Gibbens
- Sharon Gough
- Sachin Khairnar
- Toby Blyth
- Omar Ali MacIntyre
- Shannen Vallesi
- Katherine Browne

How to vote

YACWA's Board elections follow a proportional voting system-single transferable vote model, where candidates are ranked from highest (1) to lowest (7) in order of preference.

Each eligible voting member will receive an email at their nominated membership contact email with personalised link that directs to the OpaVote voting portal.

Who can vote

Each organisational member and individual member (including Life Members, free members 25 or under and fee-paying members) receive a single vote in this election.

If an organisational member representative is also an individual member, they are entitled to cast two votes.

Associate members, non-members and members registering after the commencement of the election are unable to vote.

Voting closes on **Thursday 24 November at 11.59pm.**

More details about this process can be found in the [YACWA Constitution](#).

Election results

The results of the Board election will be announced at YACWA's Annual General Meeting on **Thursday 1 December** at Perth City Farm.

Further questions

If you have any further questions, please get in touch with yacwa@yacwa.org.au or call us on 9227 5440.

Please read through the nominees' biographies below before casting your vote.

JORDAN WRIGHT

Please provide a brief bio outlining who you are and any relevant roles, training, education and previous governance or committee experience.

As the youngest Councilor in the City of Wanneroo, I continue to be a voice and advocate for all things youth. I am growing my experience and portfolio in governance as I am currently undertaking my company directors' course with AICD as a member but also sit on 2 local school boards. With the council, I sit on the Audit and Risk Committee and hold multiple chair and deputy chair roles. I have held many past committee experiences including working on youth mental health campaigns as Chairperson, the former school representative for the faculty of business and law at Edith Cowan University and sitting as a committee member for Skai International Perth.

From everything you know about being on a board, YACWA and the youth sector, how would you make a contribution to the Board?

To ensure an organisation is meeting the needs of its stakeholders it is critical and vital that the board has the right strategy and vision to ensure that its stakeholder's priorities are being heard and met at a board level. I would contribute to the board governance experience, and a wide range of networks to help the organisation succeed in its vision and help young people in business, hospitality, tourism and local government. I am passionate, open-minded and ready to help organisations into their next phase of delivering their vision and achieving their mission.

YACWA has two sub-committees that support risk, finance, governance and organisational sustainability. Please provide examples of your knowledge and/or experience of these governance challenges.

As technology and expectations change post-COVID it is critical for organisations to have intergenerational equity, strong security and good governance models that can help ensure an organisation is flexible and safe. Areas I have expertise would be technology and customer service models ensuring there are no gaps or risks when collecting or storing data.

EMMA GIBBENS

Please provide a brief bio outlining who you are and any relevant roles, training, education and previous governance or committee experience.

I've worked in community and culture change for over 14 years. Starting out by working on the Obama campaign when I was 17 years old, as a young person in a leadership role I have a deep appreciation for the challenges and why youth voice is so important. That belief has followed me over my career and I always volunteered for youth, including being a Board Director for San Francisco NFP Youth Leadership Institute which provides grants for young people to enact what they want to change. Here in WA I volunteered on the committee for Leading Youth Forward and have spearheaded various youth projects like curating the inaugural TEDxYouth@Perth.

From everything you know about being on a board, YACWA and the youth sector, how would you make a contribution to the Board?

On a board, and in really every capacity, I provide a strong strategic lens. This includes my ability to dial in to what is important, sort through collective desires and find the middle ground, and how to facilitate action towards the shared goal. My professional experience across government, infrastructure, corporate and not for profit enables me to provide sound advice on how to navigate situations. In addition to these skills, my energy and strong communication skills make me a strong voice to advocate for YACWA in my network.

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I run my own business and have addressed all of these qualities for our business, building on previous experience running a small NFP. Specifically for risk, I also have direct experience in PR and crisis communications and how to mitigate risk through communications.

SHARON GOUGH

Please provide a brief bio outlining who you are and any relevant roles, training, education and previous governance or committee experience.

My name is Sharon Gough, I have 19 years' experience in the Community Services Sector. My work has focused heavily on program development, service design and advocacy in response to the needs of vulnerable young people. My career achievements can be attributed to the analytical and innovative approach I bring to my work, with the key focus of improving life outcomes for people at disadvantage. I am a 2017 Churchill Fellow and received the YACWA's Significant Contribution to Youth Work Award 2018. I have been an active member of the YACWA Board and Chair of the Finance Committee for 3 years. I am dedicated to the work of YACWA as our Youth Peak and welcome the opportunity to provide ongoing strategic support and continuity to the Board.

My background is in Education and Youth Work, and I hold qualifications in Management (Community Services). I have experience across Government and Non-Government Sectors within both State and National initiatives. My previous roles have contributed to the WA Education Departments Participation Strategy and the Commonwealth Governments Youth Attainment and Transitions agenda. I moved into the homelessness sector nine years ago as Operations Manager at Indigo Junction. Indigo Junction is a place-based low threshold homelessness provider based in Midland. Today I hold the position of Chief Executive Officer and bring a sound understanding of Youth Work and complex service delivery to the position. I provide oversight to the Indigo Junction Executive Management and support 63 full and part time staff who make up our dedicated multidisciplinary team.

From everything you know about being on a board, YACWA and the youth sector, how would you make a contribution to the Board?

Indigo Junction is a small organisation focused on supporting young people experiencing significant disadvantage. We work in partnership with young people to inform policy, service design and practice and have achieved considerable outcomes with young people who are typically hard to hear, reach and engage. I bring context and experience relating to this work as well as an enthusiasm for change, sector capacity building and improving outcomes. I bring continuity to the YACWA Board through a period of organisational change and growth.

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I am the CEO of Indigo Junction and work with an engaged and dynamic Board. I have experience in high level governance, risk management and finance. I have been the Chair of the YACWA Finance Committee during my last term on the YACWA Board.

SACHIN KHAIRNAR

Please provide a brief bio outlining who you are and any relevant roles, training, education and previous governance or committee experience.

- More than five years of experience managing health promotion programs, three years as a board member of Worlink WA, 14 years in community services, broader public health and medical provision.
- Recent experience of managing capacity and demand of \$4 million portfolio (30 staff) for all services at Palmerston Association – Great Southern.
- Chair of the Regional Alcohol and Other Drugs Management group – 3 years
- Past roles overseas have also included a doctor / surgeon, and a Team Leader in a health company leading 30 doctors.
- Currently employed as ‘Principal Consultant’ at Department of Education (Road Safety and Drug Education branch)
- Formal education:
 - Master of Public Health, Edith Cowan University, WA, 2013 - 2014
 - Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery, Maharashtra University of Health Science, India, 2002 – 2007

From everything you know about being on a board, YACWA and the youth sector, how would you make a contribution to the Board?

Support the organisation and the CEO by:

- Providing risk management and sustainability approach
- Establishing sustainable systems to build capacity of the organisation and the community to advocate for young people’s needs
- Playing a key role in setting the organisations strategic vision (Where are we now, where do we want to go and How do we go there)
- Encouraging and establishing systems of a balanced approach of applying evidence-based practice and promoting innovation.

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As a Board member of Worlink WA, I have

- Provided leadership and governance to the organisation as whole

- Contributed to the development, review and performance monitoring of the organisation's strategic plan
- Assisted in identifying organisational and program risks and opportunities – A particular example includes assisting Worklink to identify risk involved with an initiative proposed by the CEO. As a result, the initiative was re-assessed and launched after the risk was mitigated.

At Palmerston:

- Three years of experience of contributing to Palmerston's risk management committee.
- As a Chair of the AOD Management group, I have established systems which includes leveraging on community strengths (both stakeholder and community members) and access to streamlined funds and expertise. Although, this experience is not directly linked with boards members expertise, however, it highlights strengths of aligning systemic links between ground level initiatives and high-level state government approaches.

TOBY BLYTH

Please provide a brief bio outlining who you are and any relevant roles, training, education and previous governance or committee experience.

As a young person from regional WA, I am passionate about getting the best for young people and advocating for their needs.

Since October 2021, I have been a member of the Scouts WA Board. This appointment came about after many years volunteering for the organisation, including in several governance roles. I also served 12 months as the Rover Scout representative on their Nominations Committee.

I am dedicated to supporting young people to have the opportunities in life that allow them to be the best version of themselves. This dedication has shaped my involvement with Scouts WA, and my work life. I currently work in disability support, where I assist a number of young people to access education, work opportunities, and their community. Before that I worked with the City of Bunbury, where I worked closely with their Youth Advisory Council to develop programs and events that supported the local community.

From everything you know about being on a board, YACWA and the youth sector, how would you make a contribution to the Board?

In my time on the Scouts WA Board, I have attended the Australian Institute of Company Directors - Foundations of Directorship course. This course provided an overview of finance, governance, strategy, and risk. The learning of these

workshops I was able to take away and have by far improved my role as a Board Director.

While working for the City of Bunbury I was working in their Community Development team and worked closely with the Cities Youth Advisory Council. The Community Development team, along with the Cities YAC, developed programs and events that focused on the needs of young people in the community, especially as a regional city. Many of the issues that we addressed were about accessing services and showing what services were available in the area. Helping young people access services, support, and opportunities is a focus of mine, and is a passion I would bring to the YACWA Board.

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As mentioned previously, I have attended the AICD's - Foundation of Directorship course, which provided me with the skills I have needed to be an active member of the Scouts WA Board. I have sat on the Nominations sub-committee, who look at nominating members for Life Membership, and Civil awards. I also spent some time on the Scouts WA Governance Review sub-committee, as they started the process of reviewing their organisational Governance structure. On multiple occasions I have had an in-depth involvement in the reviewing and development of Strategic plans, this involvement has varied from involvement as a Board director or Senior Manager, along with the development of operational plans as an operational member of an organisation. This involvement has provided me with a strong understanding of the ways in which an organisation sets its strategic horizons, and works towards achieving those goals.

OMAR ALI MACLNTYRE

Please provide a brief bio outlining who you are and any relevant roles, training, education and previous governance or committee experience.

Originally born in Canberra, I moved to Perth on my own to undertake tertiary studies after graduating from college in Egypt. My Pathway to University wasn't as clear-cut as I had initially hoped for and I found myself needing to complete a bridging course by securing a Diploma in Business. I am the first person to graduate from university in my immediate family and managed to do so while living largely self-sufficiently.

Like most students, I slogged it by working extensively across the Hospitality and Retail sector to supplement my studies and support my rent while also juggling other extracurricular commitments. For as long as I can remember, I have always been very passionate about my community's engagement and representation. Throughout the course of my studies, I was twice elected to

serve on the UWA Guild Board of Directors (2019-2021). I worked assiduously to advocate and promote the rights of students. The Board worked cohesively to design broad-based policy which helped deliver real outcomes for students and provide urgent relief during COVID.

In addition to serving on the Guild, I have also been engaged formally with Not-for-Profits like the UN Youth WA Division, Australia-China Youth Association and currently volunteer every Saturday for Swim For Refugees and occasionally with my Local Surf Life Saving Club.

From everything you know about being on a board, YACWA and the youth sector, how would you make a contribution to the Board?

My overriding goal is to work constructively with the current Board to ensure YACWA is able to reaffirm and consolidate its position as the principal advocate for Young people living in Western Australia.

I am hoping to resume my master's in public policy, and I am naturally interested in leveraging my skills in this area to help evaluate, scrutinize Policy in this space, as well as prosecuting new ideas that into the mainstream debate.

The Board can play an important role in shaping and guiding the strategic direction of the organization in a way which ensures it operates consistent with the ongoing and emerging problems young people face. I am especially keen to see inroads being made in tackling housing and food insecurity, advancing services to people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, challenging Toxic Masculinity, and greater advocacy for International Students facing exploitation in the workplace.

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I suppose the board should strive to balance these needs in a way which is proportionate to their outcomes. Governance provides the critical regulatory infrastructure that will ensure YACWA remains liquid, sustainable and risk averse. So, in practice, all of these challenges are inextricably linked

I did sit on the Strategic Resources and Risk Committee during my tenure at UWA Guild. We canvassed new reforms that provided better oversight into the organizations management and engagement with external parties.

During these periods I also played a leading role in introducing new welfare policies, namely the Graduation Gown Assistance Program which eliminated the cost of gown hire for students from Low SES background or those experiencing unforeseen financial emergencies. We were able to convince the supplier to participate in the program, thus nullifying the cost to the Guild.

Additionally, I also played an instrumental and founding role in establishing the Universities first Student Radio which operates to this day. My primary focus is in project/policy development and implementation.

SHANNEN VALLESI

Please provide a brief bio outlining who you are and any relevant roles, training, education and previous governance or committee experience.

I am a Research Associate and PhD candidate at the Institute for Health Research, University of Notre Dame. My PhD explores the impact of chronic homelessness on health needs, outcomes, and access to care. I am passionate about research that has real world impact, thus the voices of people experiencing homelessness are embedded within my research from the outset. I led the 50 Lives 50 Homes Housing First program evaluation, collaborating with YACWA and other youth services to determine critical differences and recommendations for young people experiencing/at risk of homelessness; this built off YACWA's Youth Homelessness Action Plan. My role involves extensive governance, budgeting and reporting responsibilities to multiple different organisations and government bodies.

I am the Terms and Policy Officer on the Students and Young Professionals in Public Health Committee (PHAA) and have previously served on multiple University of Western Australia committees (including student, alumni and health and safety committees).

From everything you know about being on a board, YACWA and the youth sector, how would you make a contribution to the Board?

I am a passionate advocate for reducing barriers to service and support access for marginalised groups. Underpinning my robust evidence-base and knowledge of key issues facing young people (across homelessness, health, and community sectors) is a solutions-driven focus. My work cannot have impact without aligning to the sector and end-user needs.

My vast knowledge of Housing First principles, evaluations, and fidelity complements YACWA's commitment to the development of a Youth Housing First Framework. I have experience of managing multiple large, national projects (including budget and reporting compliance, risk management, conflict resolution), writing policy submissions, and working with different levels of government to implement change.

While I have not had the opportunity to serve on a Board yet, I have served on 7 different committees including 3 as a student/young person representative. Additionally, I will apply for the Emerging Leaders in Governance Program (opening tomorrow) to increase my capacity in Board leadership.

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Academia is a traditionally very insecure workplace, as someone who has been on “soft-funding” throughout their entire career and who manages a team of 7 staff on this type of funding, I know the importance of ensuring proper governance and risk management processes are in place. At any given time, my team is involved in around 15-25 different consultancy/research projects. Each of these projects have specific reporting requirements, timeframes, stakeholders to liaise with, budgets to comply with, often have governance/steering committees to report to and differing contractual obligations to be met. Additionally, working for a large national organisation there are multiple governance and policy processes that need to be complied with.

As such, part of my role is to ensure the sustainability of the team which includes monitoring budgets, project deliverables and exploring additional funding opportunities (including applying for large competitive grants, or engaging in research consultancies with community organisations).

KATHERINE BROWNE

Please provide a brief bio outlining who you are and any relevant roles, training, education and previous governance or committee experience.

My career has been built on working to improve the lives of children and young people, and giving them a voice in the decisions and systems affecting their lives. This has included direct service delivery and case practice in local council and child protection, and over the past 10 years, working in advocacy pushing for change in our legal, service and support systems to improve child and youth outcomes - as Manager of Policy with the Commissioner for Children and Young People, and State Coordinator with CREATE Foundation.

I have a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology, am an alumni of Leadership WA, have served on the YACWA Board for 6 years, and was previously a Board member of the Child and Family Youth Agency Alliance (CYFAA), Committee member for the Alliance for Children at Risk, and a member of the Ministerial Advisory Council of Child Protection.

From everything you know about being on a board, YACWA and the youth sector how, would you make a contribution to the Board?

I am the current Vice-Chair of the YACWA Board, and the longest standing member currently on the Board. Over the past 6 years on the Board, I've gained significant knowledge about the organisational and Board history, and the challenges, priorities and risks for YACWA. I have served as Secretary, Treasurer, and Vice Chair, am deeply committed to the work of YACWA – evident through my active contributions on the Board.

My past contributions include chairing sub-committees, supporting CEO recruitment and development, leading a Child Safe Organisation audit, developing processes regarding life membership and board nominations, drafting constitutional changes, supporting the development of strategic and business planning, assisting the CEO and Chair on strategic initiatives, reviewing advocacy work, and more generally, promoting YACWA's important role and work.

I feel I still have a lot to contribute to the Board, and would love to be able to continue to do so.

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Through my professional and Board roles, I have strong understanding and experience working across a range of governance areas – including managing organisational finances and sourcing funding opportunities; risk management and considerations at both an organisational level and in direct work with children and young people; supporting organisational governance through the development and review of processes, policies and practices; becoming a Child Safe Organisation; as well as promoting organisational diversity and inclusivity – including leading LGBTQIA+ inclusion initiatives and supporting Reconciliation Action Planning, and Disability Inclusion Planning in my professional roles.

I have chaired YACWA finance and organisational sustainability sub-committees – overseeing and supporting organisational finances, budget review and audit processes, service agreement renegotiations, organisational structure changes, new funding applications, and overseeing compliance with contract requirements. I have also been involved in a range of governance work for YACWA, including reviewing constitutional changes, risk management, other priority setting, and policy development and review.