

## Youth Action Annual General Meeting 2023

### Board Nominee Profiles

28<sup>th</sup> November 2023

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**Name:**

Bridie O'Kelly

**Member Category:** Young Person Member**Nominating For:** Ordinary Board Member**Length of term:** 1 year**About me**

Hi, I'm Bridie! I am an enterprising young team leader who is deeply curious about the world around me. As a journalism and social political science student with an inherent devotion to promote equity, I have a deep passion to cover stories that tell the narratives of people who don't have the platform to do so – opening the doors to positive discourse and helping chart the course of human history. Active civic participation has nurtured my ability as an innovative, meta thinker to navigate the complexities of the Transformative Age.

**Why I am nominating for the Youth Action Board?**

As someone who is fervent about fostering a generation of zealous and ambitious pioneers, having the opportunity to engage with like-minded civic leaders who represent the diversity needed in the decision-making sphere would be a truly invaluable experience. It has been a turbulent time to come of age. Although young people are frequently labeled as apathetic or disengaged from politics, scenes from climate rallies and the outpouring of support for mental health awareness in recent years show just how outdated this stereotype is. As such, being a member of the Youth Action Board would be a fulfilling role to advocate for positive change on issues affecting young people, fostering a society where all NSW young people are supported, engaged and valued. By adopting a rights-based lens to focus on programs, policy and advocacy, all of which are informed by a data and evidence-based approach, meaningful outcomes can be achieved.

**My connection to young people / youth work / the youth sector:**

As someone who is deeply passionate about social justice, storytelling and the young pioneers of our generation, my passion for elevating the voices of young people from politically marginalised backgrounds is an enduring challenge that I am passionate about. My association with UN Youth Australia has enabled strong connections with young people. My role as a facilitator engages with delegates through peer-to-peer education, exploring global issues through rich discussion and debate. This relationship has been enhanced by being a National Education Committee Member and as last year's Report Writer which engaged with the UN Youth Australia Representative to assist with writing and editing content for the Youth Representative Report. As a young carer, I am familiar with how the analytical framework of intersectionality contributes to young people's experiences and forms a significant part of their identity. As such, I will take a compassionate approach to dealing with various concerns in the youth sector.

**What skills and experience would I bring to the Youth Action Board?**

I will be bringing experience gained from my membership to Youth Action's Western Sydney Outburst Network. This has sparked collaboration with Sydney Morning Herald's election coverage of young people who shared how meaningful policy on climate change, housing affordability, education and integrity in politics influenced their vote. This was a genuinely empowering experience. Further collaboration on the NSW Election Forum facilitated an invigorating discussion that elevated the voices of young people. As an elected General Councillor and more recently, Assistant General Secretary, on the University of Technology Sydney's peak governing body, the SRC, I have borne witness to the extraordinary feats and achievements spearheaded by young people. My active desire for positive development in student life has been demonstrated through my involvement in social justice projects and collectives. At a local government level, my membership to Blacktown City Council's Youth Advisory Committee has stimulated positive interpersonal relationships and collaboration. As a former Youth Ambassador, being actively involved in organising and hosting events like the Unleash the



Future MMIXX NSW Youth Council Conference broadened my horizons into the myriad of issues facing young people. My involvement in the coordination of events has taught me that a leader is somebody who lifts while they climb and consistently endeavours to maximise the efforts of others.

**Name:** Elizabeth Brooks

**Member Category:** Individual Member

**Nominating For:** Ordinary Board Member

**Length of term:** 2 years

### **About me**

I have over 30 years experience in education where I have held particular responsibility for adolescent wellbeing liaising with students, families, teachers and professionals external to school. I currently hold the position of Deputy Principal and am a member of networks such as the International Alliance of Girls' Schools, the Independent Schools Association and Eastern Suburbs School Leaders for Youth.



### **Why I am nominating for the Youth Action Board?**

I have a commitment to providing young people opportunity to have a voice and am interested in extending this beyond my own school and education sector. I have enjoyed the opportunity to be in dialogue and decision making with young people in my own school about issues such as gender and cultural inclusion and have the privilege of being in community with First Nations young people and their families, as well as working with teachers in responding to the neurodiverse needs of students alongside support for young people navigating their schooling with mental health challenge. I feel my experience in school may be of benefit to the Board whilst hoping to extend my own experience by engaging in broader perspectives. I have been wanting to grow my leadership by being part of a Board and I feel this is an organisation suited to my experience.

### **My connection to young people / youth work / the youth sector:**

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As a secondary school teacher for over 30 years with approximately 15 years leadership experience as a leader - Head of Student Pastoral Care and now 8 years as Deputy Principal. I am responsible for student leadership and ensuring the provision of avenues for students to have voice about issues that concern them or to pursue initiatives they propose.

**What skills and experience would I bring to the Youth Action Board?**

I am a good communicator and am committed to shaping opportunities to ensure marginalized voices are heard. I am experienced in strategic planning with a developed ability to discern priorities and ensure actions are linked to the vision of the organisation.



**Name:** Flynn O'Hallahan

**Member Category:** Young Person

**Nominating For:** Ordinary Board Member

**Length of term:** 3 years



### **About me**

My name is Flynn, I'm 19, and I study a Bachelor of Communication full-time while working as a student union representative. I was born in Aotearoa New Zealand, but have called Australia home for as long as I can remember. I grew up on the lands of the Darumbal people in Central Queensland, far from any major cities. Here I studied High School via distance education, while at the same time battling with mental health issues, some that have still followed me today. It was there that my fiery passion for youth was sparked by the intense resilience of young people in regional and rural areas. I very quickly realised growing up that youth are disadvantaged, especially those in regional and rural areas. Going forward, I'm hoping to help change that by ensuring all youth, no matter their age, gender, culture, or location have access to the same resources and support

### **Why I am nominating for the Youth Action Board?**

I've recently moved from regional QLD to regional NSW, in Armidale. What I've seen in my time here is that it's much the same. Youth are held back from reaching their full potential. Youth Action has a vision of working 'towards a society where all NSW young people are supported, engaged, valued, and have their rights realised'. I want to help realise that vision. Furthermore, I want to ensure that vision does not just stop in Sydney. I have a connection to regional and rural areas, and I want to see them provided with the same support, engagement, value and rights as those in a city. It is exponentially harder for youth to access support in regional areas, especially those from the LGBTIQ+ community, those with a

disability, those from diverse communities, and the list goes on. I want to be apart of the process that helps change that.

### **My connection to young people / youth work / the youth sector:**

My main connection to young people is that I am a young person. However, it goes deeper than that. While I've only recently moved to NSW, I've been very much involved with the youth sector in QLD. I've always had the passion of supporting other youth, and while it may sound cliché, it started with being school captain in high school. Especially studying via distance with students spread out across such a wide area, they needed the support I could offer. I've always been there to volunteer locally and help out where I could. I was elected to the position of Youth Minister for the Environment, which expanded on my connection to the sector, allowing me to communicate concerns with politicians and work alongside them. I currently represent student interests and provide a voice for uni students as a student union representative as well.

### **What skills and experience would I bring to the Youth Action Board?**

Through my work as Youth Minister for the Environment, I managed a portfolio of 11 other young people, mostly high school age. I facilitated their own professional development while ensuring they were confidently able to write legislation relevant to their assigned positions. My main experience relevant to the board stems from my work as a student union representative. I have experience with boards through being an ordinary member of the College of Business Board, which is responsible for managing the University Business Faculty of over 15 000 students and staff. I have experience heading up committees and sub-committees, predominantly those concerned with policy and sustainability. With a union re-structure slated for next year, it is possible I'll be appointed as Vice-President, furthering the experience gained in that field. Communication and representation is my passion, two areas that can be carried over easily with this position.



**Name:** Hayley Rose

**Member Category:** Individual Member

**Nominating For:** Deputy Chair, Ordinary Board Member

**Length of term:** 3 years



### **About me**

I have worked in the youth and community sectors for 25 years in a variety of roles. I love my job and being around young people, they inspire and amaze me every day. I am Mum of four young adults, three I gave birth to and one I accidentally adopted - as she would say "a foster fail!" I have lived in Sydney for 10 years but prior to that I lived and worked in Darwin, Canberra, Central Queensland and Melbourne. When people ask me what my hobbies are my usual answer is that I am a collector of 'Rad Humans' - I love people and have endless curiosity about what motivates, fulfills and makes them tick. I am passionate in my support for the disenfranchised. My morals and values I have written next to my desk and they include be curious, show up, give a crap, do what I say I will.

### **Why I am nominating for the Youth Action Board?**

As a fierce advocate of young people, especially those disenfranchised and those that have been let down by adults and systems I echo the vision of youth action – that young people are supported, engaged, valued, and have their rights realised. I believe the contribution to society that young people offer is overlooked and undervalued. I am interested in being on the youth action board for a second time as I see it as an opportunity to amplify the voices, value and needs of young people and those who work in the youth sector at a state platform. I work day to day with young people and work to effect change individually, the board position allows me the platform to collaborate to effect change at a higher level.

**My connection to young people / youth work / the youth sector:**

Over the 25 years I have worked in the youth and community sector, I have worked in NGO's, local and state government and are currently employed by the Department of Education as a Student Support Officer in a high school. I recently received a beautiful letter from a young person who I had worked with who said that I had been "a weird combination of mentor, mother, sister, friend and teacher" - I think this is an excellent definition of youth work! Young people make everyday I go to work worthwhile, funny, important and meaningful.

**What skills and experience would I bring to the Youth Action Board?**

Through my professional experience I have an excellent knowledge of the youth sector here in NSW. Further to this, I work day to day with 1200 young people in the 'captive' environment of a high school, meaning that despite being 6000 years old I am not entirely disconnected from young people and their needs and voice. I have good interpersonal skills and my position on the board over the past two years has provided me with working insight into Youth Action and how the board is able to support the organisations operation and function. I would be honoured to hold a position on the board for a further term.

**Name:** Jodie Darge

**Member Category:** Organisational Representative Member

**Nominating For:** Deputy Chair, Ordinary Board Member

**Length of term:** 3 years



### **About me**

I am passionate about amplifying the voices of young people to create system change based on equity, innovation and social justice. With a strong commitment to rights-based approaches, equality of opportunity and evidenced outcomes, I started my career as a frontline practitioner in the youth sector, moving to strategy, executive and Board roles in the charity and Government sectors. Having Chaired a Board of Directors in the UK and currently sitting as a Director of a charity in Australia, I bring extensive Governance experience. I have worked across a range of sectors, including sexual health, safeguarding; early intervention; child protection; domestic and sexual violence; substance misuse; poverty; mental health and youth homelessness. Driven by purpose, I am focussed on ensuring our most vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people can thrive despite the challenges they face, and I welcome the opportunity to add value to the Board of Youth Action.

### **Why I am nominating for the Youth Action Board?**

I believe that all young people deserve the right to access opportunities to thrive, despite their background, age, gender, sexual orientation, neurodiversity, trauma, ability or disadvantages they may face. To ensure that all young people have their rights realised we need to embed equity-based approaches, including the provision of additional resources, support and opportunities to young people who face additional challenges. I am a fierce advocate for systems change and my work is

centred on amplifying the voices of young people. I am energetic, determined and look forward to the opportunity to celebrate and serve young people. I believe that peaks have a unique role in nurturing innovation, challenging structures that are ineffective, and ensuring that the future is one where young people, sector organisations, Government, peaks, philanthropy and business collaborate to re-imagine a future where all young people in NSW are supported, engaged, valued and have their rights realised.

**My connection to young people / youth work / the youth sector:**

I currently work in a youth organisation, supporting young people 12-24 to thrive. We support young people who are falling through the gaps of main stream services by providing programs in education, employment, housing and early intervention. I work directly with our 'Rising Collective' which involves groups of young people engaging and participating in co-design, development, evaluation and campaigning for our strategy, programs and policies. I advocate for young people through presenting at or engaging in meetings at Parliament House and/or with politicians, while also providing opportunities for young people's voices to be centred, heard and valued. My employment has been connected to young people and in the youth sector for 25 years, supporting young people facing homelessness, drug and alcohol dependency, risk of radicalisation, child protection and domestic and sexual violence. This has been across charity and Government and has included direct delivery, policy, strategy, funding, participation and celebration.

**What skills and experience would I bring to the Youth Action Board?**

I Chaired the Board of Directors for a charity who work with young people in the UK for 10 years. I am currently a Director of a charity in Australia who work internationally with women to alleviate poverty. I am currently a charity CEO responsible for the Board of Directors including recruiting, inductions, training, legislation, AGM's and policy. I hold a Diploma in Governance (Australia 2021). I have worked across the private, Government and charity sector in Australia and the UK. I have extensive operational and strategic experience in supporting young people, creating programs and strategy, managing finances/grants, youth engagement and



working in partnership with politicians and stakeholders. I am committed to young people thriving, I value professional development, I acknowledge the authority of lived experience, I believe that listening, compassion and curiosity are essential, I know change is possible, and everyone has a story that needs to be heard.

**Name:** John Daniel Lewis

**Member Category:** Young Person Member

**Nominating For:** Ordinary Board Member

**Length of term:** 3 years



### **About me**

I am an early-career professional with a diverse background in Risk Assurance Consulting, Government Health, Recruitment, Higher Education Research, and Renewable Technology Sales. I have contributed to a wide range of projects across these sectors, with a focus on systems improvement and interdisciplinary collaboration. My passion for community engagement is evident through my extensive volunteer work, where I serve on multiple high-impact committees and contribute to critical research to foster meaningful change. For these efforts, I was awarded Western Sydney University's Vice Chancellor's award in Engagement and Sustainability for 2022. I bring a unique blend of skills and experiences that equip me to drive impactful initiatives and contribute to Youth Action's success.

### **Why I am nominating for the Youth Action Board?**

I am drawn to Youth Action NSW's commitment to empowering young people, youth workers and youth services. The organisation's focus on marginalised communities and its rights-based, data-informed approach aligns strongly with my professional experiences but also seems to be the most efficacious way to drive systemic change. I am particularly impressed by Youth Action's dedication to creating space for young voices directly into its governance, as currently a third of sitting board members are young people. The organisation demonstrates a genuine commitment to listening to and valuing youth perspectives. I see an opportunity to leverage my skills to further enhance the impactful work that Youth Action is already doing for young people and youth services across NSW.

### **My connection to young people / youth work / the youth sector:**



My connection to the youth sector is through my volunteering and professional experiences. I have contributed to research in areas such as adolescent health and education, and have served as an advisor on community and youth focused strategies. As a young first generation immigrant, I have lived experiences of discrimination and hardship, this fuels my belief that a robust youth work sector and empowered young population are essential for societal wellbeing. My professional and personal experiences have equipped me with a understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities that young people face.

### **What skills and experience would I bring to the Youth Action Board?**

As an early-career professional with a diverse background in Risk Assurance Consulting, Government Health, Recruitment, Higher Education Research, and Renewable Technology Sales, I bring a unique blend of skills and experiences to Youth Action's board. My focus on professional excellence and interdisciplinary collaboration is supplemented by my extensive community engagement efforts. I serve on the Parramatta CBD Provost Committee for community engagement and the WSU Engagement and Advancement Advisory Committee. I've been honored with multiple scholarships, including the Rotary Youth Leadership Award, GoGlobal New Colombo mobility grant which was an immersive cultural experience to learn about innovation in India and the 21C Partnership Exchange Hub Scholarship working with academics to co-create and transform the student experience, culminating in Western Sydney University's Vice Chancellor's award in Engagement and Sustainability for 2022. These experiences equip me to contribute meaningfully to Youth Action's mission and governance.

**Name:** Leticia Quince

**Member Category:** Individual Member

**Nominating For:** Deputy Chair, Ordinary Board Member

**Length of term:** 2 years



### **About me**

Yiradhu Marang 'Good Day', my name is Leticia Quince and I am a proud Wiradjuri Torres Strait Islander Yinaa 'woman'. I am now 26 years old, mum of a beautiful 9.5-month-old whilst being a dedicated and hardworking business owner of a First Nations Design Agency and First Nations Artist. My journey, growing up in foster care and facing adversity, has shaped me into a resilient individual with strong leadership qualities. I am deeply passionate about championing young people's rights, perspectives, and experiences to support continual improvement to supports and services and community growth and reconciliation. Beyond this, my dedication extends to various critical areas that I have had lived experience, advocated within and/or supported young people within including out-of-home care, LGBTQI+ issues, disability rights, mental health, youth justice, youth homelessness, and child protection. I want to help ensure youth voices and lives are always at the forefront of all decisions and actions.

### **Why I am nominating for the Youth Action Board?**

I started my journey and connection with Youth Action as a young person participating in multiple surveys, reports, and consultations from 18 years of age. I have always held a passion for young people breaking the stigma, using their resilience, strength and experience to shape their own future. I connected with Youth Action because it's one of the platforms where I felt I was respected, my voice was being heard and I was seeing action. I have had the pleasure to be the Deputy Chairperson of the Youth Action Board

since my appointment in October 2021 as a young person at 24. I would be honoured to continue within my role as Deputy Chair or as an individual member to be a voice from diverse experiences, identities and expertise in the Youth sector for I take pride in my responsibilities and commitments. As reflected throughout my aspiration and motivation to be a part of the Youth Action Board, it is rooted in both my personal experiences and my commitment to advocating for change and progress within the youth sector. I value my journey with Youth Action as I feel it is a place where young people's voices, lives and futures sit at the core of their everyday work on their ground.

### **My connection to young people / youth work / the youth sector:**

My involvement in the youth sector has been extensive with over 8.5 years of experience. Prior to starting my own business, I was a caseworker supporting young people at-risk or experiencing homelessness from 2016 to early 2019 for an NGO. Subsequently, I transitioned into a role as a Youth Development Coach (YDC), where I guided and mentored young people aged 15-21 as they transitioned from out-of-home care to independent living. I was honoured to be a part of so many young people's journeys to support them towards achieving their goals and aspirations. These experiences represent just a fraction of my dedicated work for upholding the rights and participation of young people. I hold invaluable on-the-ground experience in Western NSW, providing a regional perspective on pertinent issues prior to relocating to the Central Coast. I am grateful for the recognition of my dedication as Winner of the AbSec Child and Family Awards 2020 as Young Person of the Year and 7 News Young Achievers Awards Indigenous Achievement Award in 2021.

### **What skills and experience would I bring to the Youth Action Board?**

My skill set is multifaceted, including my previous long-term active roles as a youth ambassador for AbSec (2014-2021), young consultant for the Department of Communities and Justice (2015-2022) and Chairperson Dubbo City Youth Council (Jan 2015-Dec 2016). These positions have been

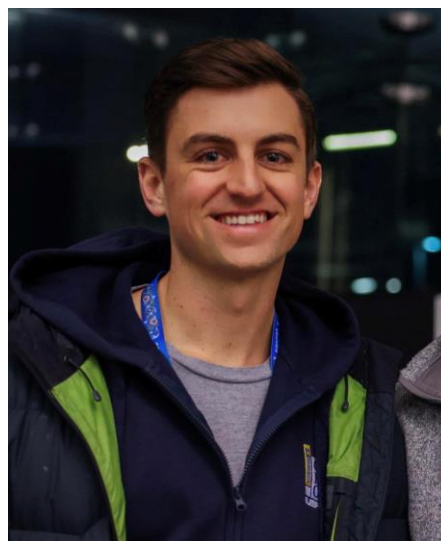
instrumental in my mission to advocate for systemic change and amplify the voices of children and young people, especially in out-of-home care. In addition to my community involvement, I have experience as an MC and speaking on panel discussions reflecting my public speaking capabilities. Lastly, I am a proud business Owner & Creative Director of Yirra Miya and Leticia Anne Designs. Furthermore, I bring a First Nations cultural lens and insight into working with, collaborating and empowering Aboriginal people and communities. My experience as a business owner has equipped me with invaluable knowledge in finance, business planning, project management (leading 4 employees and 5 contractors in my team), branding and marketing, and facilitating workshops and programs.

**Name:** Louis Hearnden

**Member Category:** Individual Member

**Nominating For:** Ordinary Board Member

**Length of term:** 3 years



### **About me**

Louis is a youth and not-for-profit sector specialist with 8 years of experience working to engage and empower young people and support those doing it tough. Louis first engaged with Youth Action networks when he was Case Worker of 4 years working across crisis, medium term and transitional youth housing programs. Louis has experience leading Youth & Community Development portfolios with Sutherland Shire and Georges River Council's and is the current Chair of Orana Inc in southern Sydney, an organisation that exists to empower people to have a voice, foster inclusion and celebrate community. Louis is the current Manager of statewide Member & Youth Engagement at St Vincent de Paul Society NSW. He is passionate about working with young people across NSW to build the power to make change.

### **Why I am nominating for the Youth Action Board?**

Youth Action is such a powerful vehicle for positive change for young people, youth workers and youth services. I believe that there's nothing more powerful than people with a common purpose, and as a board member of Youth Action I want to use my gained skills and experience to live out the vision of building a society where all NSW young people are supported, engaged, valued and have their rights realised. With a change of government in NSW comes new opportunity for the sector, and I want to assist in amplifying the voices of young people, the youth sector and those doing it tough to achieve real and tangible outcomes.

### **My connection to young people / youth work / the youth sector:**

I have been involved in the youth sector since 2015. My career began as a Case Worker with Project Youth working within crisis, medium-term and transitional youth housing programs, as well as outreach and drop-in programs. I then worked as the Youth Development Officer at Georges River Council and following that the Community Development Advisor – Youth, Child & Family at Sutherland Shire Council. At both Council's I steered the Youth Advisory Committees, led on the development of Council's youth strategy and implemented Youth Week programs. I also chaired the Sutherland Shire Youth Interagency and St George Youth Interagency meetings. Since 2021 I have been working with Vinnies NSW, firstly as Senior Youth Engagement Coordinator and for the last 12 months as Manager – Member and Youth Engagement.

**What skills and experience would I bring to the Youth Action Board?**

I have significant youth sector, board, and governance experience, having been on the board of Orana Inc. for 5 years, the last 3 of those as Chair. I have been involved in strategic planning and development across multiple organisations, and been accountable for delivering on them, and measuring impacts and outcomes of these strategies. I believe that I have a good balance of not-for-profit frontline, managerial and governance experience that I hope can contribute to the overall work of Youth Action as a board member.



**Name:** Lucy Carroll

**Member Category:** Individual Member

**Nominating For:** Ordinary Board Member

**Length of term:** 2 years



### **About me**

I am the Assistant Principal Solicitor at Marrickville Legal Centre and have been a practising solicitor for approximately 5 years now, primarily in the areas of employment law, civil law and domestic violence.

### **Why I am nominating for the Youth Action Board?**

I am interested in nominating for the Youth Action Board as I supervise Marrickville Legal Centre's Youth Legal Service and a lot of the work I have done has been with Young People. I acknowledge that Young People are disproportionately impacted by our legal system and often unable to access information to prevent or mitigate the impact that interactions with the legal system has.

### **My connection to young people / youth work / the youth sector:**

I have worked with Young People directly and through Marrickville Legal Centre's Youth Legal Service for the last 3 years. I find that Young People are often treated 'less than' based on their age, particularly in relation to their employment conditions. I am incredibly passionate about ensuring that Young People understand their rights and are empowered to advocate for themselves.

### **What skills and experience would I bring to the Youth Action Board?**

As a practising solicitor and manager of a Community Legal Centre, I feel that I hold relevant skills such as strategic planning, service delivery and communication strategies to assist Youth Action in furthering its initiatives.

**Name:** Michelle Comito

**Member Category:** Organisational  
Representative Member

**Nominating For:** Ordinary Board Member

**Length of term:** 2 years

### **About me**

I have been working in the youth, family and community sector for 19 years with various experience across multiple different programs such as homelessness, drugs and alcohol, family support, juvenile justice, youth advocacy and youth centres. My work has spanned across regions from Western Sydney, South West Sydney, Northern Sydney and regional towns both down south and north of NSW. This has given me widespread knowledge around young people and community needs. I am currently an Executive officer for a small organisation that delivers youth specialist homelessness services as well as other community connection services and affordable housing. Over the years I worked both on the frontline, middle management and at a governance level. I have experience developing and working on organisational strategic plans both from an operational and board level. Through any role I have had I had the opportunity to be innovative, and share my passion for empowering young people. I am passionate about support the youth services sector and developing passionate, professional and skilled youth workers to provide the best possible support to young people now and in the future. I believe young people play a unique role in society and it is our role as a community to nurture that and provide the platforms to help them shine, find hope and overcome challenges to grow.



### **Why I am nominating for the Youth Action Board?**

I am interested to join the Youth Action Board because I believe their work and mission and want to play a role in supporting the impactful work they do for young people and youth services. I see Youth Action as the mouth piece to young people and youth services voices. To help them be heard and specifically heard in the right places to see change for the good. As a young person myself growing up in NSW and now an adult professional in the youth sector I want to give back to Youth Action to show appreciation for the impact they have made and to help provide support of growth into the future. I believe my skills and experience could be an asset to the YA Board and I am now in a position to provide the time and space to share what I have and be apart of a dynamic organisation and team of board members to collectively work together.

### **My connection to young people / youth work / the youth sector:**

As a young person myself growing up in the Blue Mountains I experienced and observed the importance to have young people be heard and how much that can make a difference. This led me to get into the youth and community sector where I have now been working for the past 19 years. Working across multiple organisations, services and areas of NSW I feel I have experienced and seen a lot in the youth sector from changes of sector programs, funding, reforms and innovation. My connection is currently through my work and through my volunteering in youth support. However it is more than that, I am connected through my passion to see young people resilient and empowered.

### **What skills and experience would I bring to the Youth Action Board?**

I hold the following qualifications: Bachelor of Community Welfare majoring in youth Diploma of Leadership and Management Diploma of Events Other skills: - I hold extensive networks in the youth sector across regions. - Governance skills with developing policy and procedures, strategic plans, risk management plans, outcomes measurement and stakeholder plans. - Public speaking. I have presented at many events, conferences, webinars and MC'd festivals.

**Name:** Mijica Lus

**Member Category:** Young Person Member

**Nominating For:** Ordinary Board Member

**Length of term:** 1 year

### **About me**

Hi I'm Mij, I am a youth champion for the ACT/NSW Region, and I am motivated to support youths who have a refugee or migrant background to thrive. I currently work at my local University as a Careers Advisor and in my community as a Youth Champion. I am an active advocate for climate justice, gender equality, multiculturalism, LGBTQI+, Migrants and Refugees, Food Security and Equity.



### **Why I am nominating for the Youth Action Board?**

Hi I'm Mij, I am a youth champion for the ACT/NSW Region, and I am motivated to support youths who have a refugee or migrant background to thrive. Choosing to call Australia home is a decision that can be costly financially, mentally and socially but it is a decision I myself as a young person made when I came here from the Pacific Islands. Australia for me was a land of opportunity to learn better and be a better person for my community. I am interested to nominate myself for the board to support other young people to ensure that they know they are seen, heard and advocated for. I have been involved in youth advisory board in my local community of Ryde (NSW) and Yerrabi (ACT) and national organizations for Youth such as the Y Australia and Australian Red Cross to represent youth voice. I am 25 and I would like the opportunity to serve 1 year before I hand the baton on to another person to equally do more for our young people.

### **My connection to young people / youth work / the youth sector:**

I am interested to nominate myself for the board to support other young people to ensure that they know they are seen, heard and advocated for. I have been involved in youth advisory board in my local community of Ryde (NSW) and Yerrabi (ACT) and national organizations for Youth such as the Y Australia and Australian Red Cross to represent youth voice. I work as a Youth Careers Advisor at my local University and Youth worker at my local hospital to advocate for young people, their careers, welfare and inclusion at the decision-making table. I volunteer at my local library as an afterschool tutor to teach refugee and migrant teenagers the English language and support households by volunteering at my local community pantries to ensure they have enough food for the working week. I am passionate about young people, youth work and the sector to ensure the volume of its voice is seen, heard and respected. As a young person I know I have a long way to go but I would like to be there for other young people, so we all walk together for a Greater Australia.

### **What skills and experience would I bring to the Youth Action Board?**

I am interested to nominate myself for the board to support other young people to ensure that they know they are seen, heard and advocated for. I have been involved in youth advisory board in my local community of Ryde (NSW) and Yerrabi (ACT) and national organizations for Youth such as the Y Australia and Australian Red Cross to represent youth voice. I work as a Youth Careers Advisor at my local University and Youth worker at my local hospital to advocate for young people, their careers, welfare and inclusion at the decision-making table. I volunteer at my local library as an afterschool tutor to teach refugee and migrant teenagers the English language and support households by volunteering at my local community pantries to ensure they have enough food for the working week.



**Name:** Nayonika Bhattacharya

**Member Category:** Young Person Member

**Nominating For:** Chair, Deputy Chair,  
Ordinary Board Member

**Length of term:** 3 years



### **About me**

Nayonika (she/they) is a person who looks at life with a glass-half-full mindset. She has leveraged the diversity of her lived experience as a young, migrant, queer, disabled woman. Nayonika is a firm believer in the power of incremental change. She actively engages with the community, striving to empower young individuals to share their unique narratives with the world. As the NSW National Representative for the Multicultural Youth Australian Network and Ambassador for the Institute for Peace and Economics, she connects young people from diverse backgrounds with opportunities and platforms to amplify their voices. They believe in the power of passing the mic on so people can tell us their own stories and ask for deliverable change that suits their needs. Beyond this, she is a creative person who enjoys meeting people worldwide while learning to salsa dance and writing a recipe book from her adventures around the beautiful lands she has had the privilege of residing on and visiting.

### **Why I am nominating for the Youth Action Board?**

I am deeply motivated to apply for a Board of Director position with an organisation dedicated to enhancing the lives of young people through multifaceted approaches. The reason is two-fold. Firstly, I am passionately committed to the empowerment and well-being of the youth. Today's young generation faces various challenges, from academic pressures to mental health issues and economic uncertainties. I firmly believe that supporting and guiding young people during these crucial formative years can profoundly impact their futures and society. Contributing at the board level would enable me to harness my skills and experiences to shape



strategic initiatives that make a genuine difference. Secondly, I see the potential for innovation and positive change in an organisation that embraces diverse approaches. By serving on the Board, I would have the opportunity to collaborate with other dedicated professionals, each bringing their unique expertise and perspectives to the table. This collective wisdom, combined with my own background, can lead to creative and practical solutions for young people's challenges. In conclusion, my desire to apply for this Board of Director position stems from a deep-seated commitment to youth empowerment and a belief in the power of diverse approaches to drive positive change. I am eager to contribute my skills, knowledge, and dedication to advance the organisation's mission. I am excited to use my lived experience and industry knowledge to shape an organisation that could significantly impact a young people's life experiences.

#### **My connection to young people / youth work / the youth sector:**

My extensive and diverse range of roles has allowed me to develop a strong and multifaceted connection to young people, youth work, and the youth sector. These roles have also helped me hone a wide array of skills and strengths that I have addressed below - Formerly, as the President of the UNSW Student Representative Council, my leadership in this role demonstrates my ability to advocate for and represent the interests of students, a demographic closely aligned with young people. I've developed effective communication and problem-solving skills, and the capacity to organise and lead teams. My current role as the State Representative of MYAN NSW and Youth Steering Committee Member for the Australian Federal Government highlights my commitment to multicultural and youth issues. It showcases my networking, public speaking, advocacy skills, and ability to bridge diverse communities. These opportunities have strengthened my capacity to connect with and support young individuals facing similar challenges, particularly in the context of the government's impact on young people's lives. Beyond this, as a Policy Writer at the National Environmental Law Association, I've honed my ability to engage with complex issues, conduct research, and write effectively. These skills are crucial for educating and engaging young people on environmental matters and other policy areas they are

passionate about. Finally, as a Paralegal in Family law, I possess legal expertise that can be invaluable when working with young people involved in family-related legal matters. This role showcases my strong analytical and problem-solving skills. But it has also given me the patience to work with kindness and support people experiencing difficult situations. In summary, my combination of leadership, advocacy, policy development, community engagement, cultural competency, and legal expertise equips me to significantly impact young people's lives through various channels. It underscores my dedication to the youth sector.

### **What skills and experience would I bring to the Youth Action Board?**

The skills and strengths I've developed through my diverse roles make me exceptionally well-suited for the Board Chair, Deputy Chair or Ordinary Board member position. These roles demand strong leadership, effective communication, strategic thinking, and the ability to foster collaboration, all of which I've demonstrated in the following ways: As the former President of the UNSW Student Representative Council, my leadership experience has honed my ability to facilitate productive discussions, mediate conflicts, and guide diverse individuals towards a common goal. These leadership and organisational skills are vital for chairing board meetings. As the State Representative of MYAN NSW, I've developed a strong capacity for networking and building relationships. This skill is invaluable for fostering partnerships within the board and with external stakeholders, helping advance the organisation's mission. Being a Youth Steering Committee Member for the Australian Federal Government has allowed me to shape policies at the national level, demonstrating my strategic thinking and ability to make informed, data-driven decisions, which is vital for a board chair or deputy chair. As a Policy writer at the National Environmental Law Association, my ability to research, analyse, and communicate complex issues is crucial for understanding the implications of decisions made by the board and ensuring that all members are well informed. As a former International Student Ambassador at the City of Sydney, I've honed my cultural competency and practical communication skills. This is essential for fostering inclusivity and ensuring all voices are heard within the board, especially in diverse settings. My lived experience as an Advisor at the Black Dog Institute and

as a Lived Experience Advisor at the Sydney Brain and Mind Centre provides me with an empathetic and compassionate nature and the ability to offer unique insights into mental health matters. These are invaluable for fostering a supportive and understanding board environment. My experience as a Community Ambassador for Multicultural Hockey NSW illustrates my ability to build bridges within communities, demonstrating my capacity to create a sense of unity and shared purpose among board members and the organisation's broader community. My involvement as a Youth Advisor at the Nighttime Industry Association demonstrates my commitment to the social well-being of young people, particularly in the context of nightlife, a perspective crucial for an organisation focusing on youth. Finally, as a Paralegal in Family law, my legal expertise, analytical thinking, and problem-solving skills are assets for understanding and addressing legal matters that may come before the board. My diverse background has equipped me with many skills and strengths, from leadership and strategic thinking to effective communication and empathy. These attributes make me an ideal candidate for a Board Chair or Deputy Chair role, where I can leverage my experiences to guide the organisation effectively and ensure that all voices are heard and valued.

**Name:** Patrick O'Meara

**Member Category:** Organisation representative Member

**Nominating For:** Ordinary Board Member

**Length of term:** 3 years



### **About me**

My Name is Patrick O'Meara (PJ), and I am the Community Project Officer - Youth (CPO-Youth) for Camden Council. Both Camden Council and I have been supporters of Youth Action for many years. Camden Council is currently the fastest growing Local Government Area in NSW and with 29.5% of our population being aged under the age of 20 we are currently facing both unique and exciting challenges when supporting local young people. Through my position at Camden Council, I have been responsible for implementing and developing the award-winning Julia Reserve Youth & Community Centre in Oran Park. In addition, I am responsible for developing and implementing the award-winning Camden Youth Strategy (2022-2026). Both Camden Council and I are passionate about being leaders when it comes to supporting young people and wish to support Youth Action as the peak organisation representing young people and youth services in NSW.

### **Why I am nominating for the Youth Action Board?**

I am interested in nominating for this opportunity as I am passionate about the valuable work that youth action does. As the peak organisation representing young people and youth services in NSW it is essential that young people's voices are heard, and young people feel represented by decision makers. As a member of the youth action board, I will be able to ensure this is the case for not only the young people of Camden but across NSW. I am particularly passionate about ensuring youth action continues using a rights-based lens to achieve meaningful outcomes for the young people of NSW. I am passionate about ensuring particular focus

is paid to at risk young people and young people from marginalised groups. I am also an ally and advocate of youth action's inspiring work in ensuring the principle of self-determination of First Nations communities is at the forefront of the conversation.

### **My connection to young people / youth work / the youth sector:**

As the CPO -Youth for Camden Council, I am responsible for ensuring the young people of Camden are represented and feel connected to their local community. I am the chair of the Camden Youth Network and am responsible for advocating and supporting local organisations across Macarthur. I have worked supporting young people across Western Sydney for over 10 years. I am responsible for implementing and developing the Julia Reserve Community Centre co-located model of service delivery in Oran Park. This model supports 12 local services to operate from the facility to provide wrap around support for the region's young people. In addition to this I have written and am responsible for the implementation of the Camden Youth Strategy (2022-2026) which saw consultation with almost 1500 young people. Both projects were awarded youth work awards in 2022 and Julia Reserve was awarded the Zest award in 2023 for outstanding community partnership.

### **What skills and experience would I bring to the Youth Action Board?**

I am the current chair of Camden Council's Health & Safety committee, which provides me with multifaceted skills within the Risk Management field. Additionally, I have a vast amount of experience developing and evaluating programs and strategies for young people, as demonstrated through the development of both the Camden Youth Strategy and the Julia Reserve Youth Centre. I have extensive experience and skills in elevating the voices of young people and utilising population level statistics to advocate to various levels of Government. I am well equipped in developing and preparing official reports that advocate for the needs of young people. My evaluation and research skills, stem from my Psychology degree and many years working within community development. If successful in my application, I will not only bring these skills/experiences to the role, but will also endeavour to be an extremely valuable, engaged, and active member of the youth action board.

**Name:** Penny Lamaro

**Member Category:** Organisation representative member

**Nominating For:** Chair

**Length of term:** 3 years



### **About me**

I grew up in Sydney but have spent the majority of my working life in remote and regional Australia as a contract musterer and horse trainer. I came to Youth Work a little over a decade ago and it really felt like I was exactly where I was supposed to be. Youth Work allowed me to use all the unique skills I had gathered having worked in law, hospitality, in animal training and in agriculture. I continue to carry the richness that youth work has given me into my leadership positions in community organisations today.

### **Why I am nominating for the Youth Action Board?**

I have enjoyed my time supporting the work of Youth Action and I'm keen to continue to help where I can be of best use to the team. Youth Action has always been the peak who punched well above it's weight. This is a product of the commitment and dedication of our whole team and I have been so proud to be part of that. Realising a society where young people are supported, heard and valued is a goal I am always working towards, whether on the Board of Youth Action or through my work in the community.

### **My connection to young people / youth work / the youth sector:**

Although I am not working on the front lines as a generalist youth worker anymore, I have remained committed to improving the outcomes and engagement of young people in NSW through program delivery, service development and direct advocacy.

### **What skills and experience would I bring to the Youth Action Board?**





I have served on the Board as a member for many years now and I am current Chair. With the support of the Board I am seeking another term as Chair while the organisation embeds the changes we have so recently made to the structure and composition of the organisation. My experience in senior leadership in the community sector has been helpful to support Youth Action's operational positioning, my legal skills have been helpful to the Board in navigating good governance and my passion for improving outcomes for young people has kept young people on the agenda for both the work of the organisation and the agenda of the Board.

**Name:** Sandy Killick

**Member Category:** Individual Member

**Nominating For:** Ordinary Board Member

**Length of term:** 3 years



### **About me**

Sandy Killick (B.Ed, M.Ed, MLLR) is a social scientist and community educator with consultancy experience in education, health, human rights and gender analysis sectors. She has gender policy and research experience with NSW Premier & Cabinet Office for Women. She was a community liaison officer with the NSW Ombudsman Child Protection Team, and an education consultant with the Association of Independent Schools and NSW Board of Studies. Sandy established and managed the employment service at the Asylum Seekers Centre (Sydney). In the past, Sandy volunteered as a Primary Ethics facilitator supporting the development of primary student's critical thinking skills. She was the National Convenor for the Women's Electoral Lobby, most recently delivering non partisan voter education sessions to women and young people before the 2013, 2016 and 2019 federal elections. Sandy is also a social entrepreneur establishing Democracy Matters, a non partisan democracy education service In 2020. She is an expert in working with values following two years of working with Common Cause Australia (advisory/workshop facilitation).

### **Why I am nominating for the Youth Action Board?**

I wish to bring my education, democracy and systems change expertise to Youth Action to deepen the impact of the current YA team and members, and build on the considerable achievements of YA to date. Youth Action's vision of a society where NSW young people are supported, engaged and valued aligns with my current focus which is to equip early voters with the skills and confidence to participate in democratic processes between

elections. I've known about Youth Action's work since 2000 when I awarded a Churchill Fellowship to research ways of overcoming systemic discrimination against young people and women which included a one month placement with the UN High for Commission for Human Rights. Since that time I have looked for opportunities to build the capacity of young people and the organisations they intersect with, to realise the Convention on the Rights of the Child outcomes. Joining the YA board would allow me to channel my social justice and strategic thinking expertise in a consistent and focused way to flip the discrimination and barriers experienced by young people.

### **My connection to young people / youth work / the youth sector:**

I have a profound respect for the wisdom, creativity and lived experience of young people as a result of my secondary PDHPE teaching, as a Primary Ethics facilitator, as a mentor to young women through the Women's Electoral Lobby and as a same sex parent to two deep thinking kids - 20 and 16 years of age. Early voters are one of three target groups for Democracy Matters, the social enterprise I established in 2020. I approached Kate Munro in 2021 to offer civics education to the youth sector, particularly Western Sydney as a I grew up in Blacktown. I am consulting on a long term project to the Torres Strait Island Regional Council on realising regional self determination.

### **What skills and experience would I bring to the Youth Action Board?**

My social policy and research expertise makes it possible for me to step back and scan the 'policy landscape' to see strategic opportunities and alignments to amplify the work of the YA CEO, staff, Board and partner organisations. I have 15 years experience as a volunteer non executive board member and lobbyist for two community driven NGOs, including a national level. I am part of the Governance Institute of Australia network and would bring a NFP governance lens to my work as a YA Board member. One of my super powers is building collaborative networks by aligning through purpose, vision and values. I have existing relationships with Creating Chances, Western Sydney Community Forum and the Western Sydney Leadership Dialogue. I deliver professional ethics training to councillors and managers for Local Government NSW, so I have reach



across NSW. Finally, since 2014 I have undertaken training as a systems change worker and have completed a Social Leadership Australia program, transformational scenario planning workshops (Stockholm/Copenhagen/London 2017), the inaugural Women's Environmental Leadership Australia program and more recently a professional coaching qualification with the NeuroLeadership Institute to help leaders grow into their roles. I wish to understand Youth Action's vision and strategy in a more direct way to target the insights I might bring to the existing Board so that current and future generations of young people can wake up each day in a more welcoming, sustainable, equitable and democratic NSW. Thank you for considering my application.

**Name:** Todd Pinkerton

**Member Category:** Individual Member

**Nominating For:** Treasurer

**Length of term:** 3 years



### **About me**

G'day I'm Todd. I've been the Treasurer and on the board of Youth Action since 2019. In that time, I've got to work with some incredible young people and youth workers to make sure Youth Action has the resources it needs to deliver its strategic vision. I first joined the board because I am passionate about ensuring that young people have their rights protected and realised. I got my first taste of advocacy as a young person myself and have never looked back, having pursued a career as a campaigner for rights and justice for working people, such as in my current role as the Director of Campaigns for Unions NSW – the peak body for the working people in NSW. I have also previously worked as an Advisor on a range of policy issues in both state and federal parliaments.

### **Why I am nominating for the Youth Action Board?**

After the past four years on the board, I feel like I still have so much more to give in ensuring that Youth Action remains financially strong and able to achieve our strategic vision of a society that sees young people supported, engaged, valued, and their rights realised. After the uncertainty of the COVID-19 years, Youth Action is emerging stronger than ever financially. This is critical to ensuring Youth Action can fund and resource the programs it believes will support young people and youth workers. As Treasurer I have always strived to get the balance right – when we prioritize getting a return on assets or reducing costs it must always be to ensure we have the funds needed to be the peak body young people and youth workers need us to be. If re-elected, I wish to continue this work – providing solid support to the CEO and Board in all matters financial.

**My connection to young people / youth work / the youth sector:**

As serving board member and treasurer over the last four years, I have had a chance to work with some incredible young people and youth workers. Not having come from the sector myself, and it's now been a few years since I could last be described as a young person, Youth Action has been a welcoming and educating space for me on the present challenges and issues facing young people. Through my time on the board, I have developed a connection to the incredible work undertaken every day in supporting young people. This connection has impacted my own work as I develop programs and resources to engage young people on their industrial rights and conditions as well as campaigning against laws that discriminate or disproportionately affect young workers such as youth wages, unpaid placements, and wage theft

**What skills and experience would I bring to the Youth Action Board?**

Having served as Treasurer since 2019, I feel that I have sufficient skills to continue in the role. In the past few years, I have advised and supported the CEO and General Manager on a range of financial matters from improving the return on our term deposits, reducing administrative costs, developing our budgets, supporting our yearly audits, and being responsible for the organisation's financial management. My commitment to the organisation and to the role of treasurer is also reflected in that in four years I have never missed a single general board meeting, making sure to always be available to provide the board financial update, answer questions, and follow up on questions on notice. Additionally, I am well-versed in financial management and my responsibilities as a board member having completed the AICD Governance Foundations for Not-For-Profit Directors Course and I hold a Masters in Economics from the University of Sydney.