



people with  
disabilities  
western  
australia

MARCH 21, 2025

# PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES WESTERN AUSTRALIA STATE CONFERENCE 2025

## DRAFT PROGRAM

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Ngala kaaditj Whadjuk moort keyen kaadak nidja boodja

WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE WADJUK NOONGAR PEOPLE AS THE ORIGINAL CUSTODIANS OF THE LAND OUR CONFERENCE IS BEING HELD ON. PWDWA ACKNOWLEDGES THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS OF COUNTRY THROUGHOUT WESTERN AUSTRALIA AND RECOGNISES THEIR CONTINUING CONNECTION TO LAND, WATERS AND COMMUNITY. WE PAY OUR RESPECTS TO THEM AND THEIR CULTURES; AND TO ELDERS PAST, PRESENT AND EMERGING

## People With disabilities Western Australia State Conference 2025

### Thursday 19 June 2025 – Day One

Time	Format
<b>Conference MC</b>	<p><b>Michael Keady</b></p> <p>Michael Keady, known as Mike the Nerd Therapist, is a mental health counsellor, school wellbeing specialist, and advocate for disability inclusion. As a person with disabilities, he creates accessible, engaging therapy spaces using pop culture, gaming, and storytelling. Founder of Pop Culture Competence, Mike trains therapists, educators, and parents on using anime, video games, and sci-fi to connect with neurodivergent individuals. His work has been widely recognized, including a feature interview with Particle. With his warmth, humour, and dynamic presence, Mike is an exceptional MC. His ability to energize a room and connect with audiences ensures this year's State Disability Conference will be both inspiring and inclusive.</p>
<b>9:30am – 11:00am- Opening Plenary</b>	
9:30am – 9:45am	<p><b>Welcome to Country from Uncle Vaughn</b>  <b>Recognition of Lived Experience</b></p>
9:45am – 10:00am	<p><b>Opening Address</b>  <b>Speaker: Shazzy Tharby</b> <i>PWdWA Chair</i></p>
10:00am – 10:30am	<p><b>Keynote Speaker: Dr John Byrne AM</b> <i>Western Australian Commissioner for Equal Opportunity</i></p>
10:30am – 10:45am	<p><b>Address: Mike Rowe</b> <i>Director General, Western Australia Department of Communities</i></p>
10:45am – 11:15am	Morning Tea

11:15am – 1:00pm - Concurrent Session One		
Time	Education and Young People	Disability and Workforce
11:20am – 11:55pm	<b>Vanessa Jessett</b> <b>Making a Plan for a Good Life</b> Assisting people with intellectual or cognitive disability and how to think about their goals and ways they can work towards them. Looking at their strengths, thinking about a good life, speaking up and advocating	<b>Nicola Brown</b> <b>Economic Participation Project</b> Achievements and outcomes of the Economic Participation Project. This project has seen 120 young people trained and employed by PWdWA to carry out 140 accessibility audits of businesses throughout Perth, Peel and Wheatbelt regions.
11:55pm – 12:15pm	<b>Maxine Drake</b> Standing Up for Students with Disabilities	<b>Joe Fitch</b> Levelling up in the Game of Life and Careers: The Power of Networking
12:15pm – 12:35pm	<b>Kerry Morrison</b> Empowered Futures – High School and Beyond	<b>Disability Employment Australia</b> Updated Disability Employment Program and impacts for people with disabilities in WA
12:35pm – 12:55pm	<b>Courtney Rosato</b> Disability Inclusion in Schools: Developing student centred Individual Education Plans and implementing with fidelity	<b>Taye Williams</b> The Challenging Journey for a Person with Disability to Create His Own Meaningful Employment.
1:00pm – 2:00pm	Lunch	

## 2:00pm– 3:00pm – Panel Session

### Passion meets Leadership: Inspiring change through action

Hear from a panel of disabled leaders on the different ways you can be a leader with disability. We'll discuss leadership styles, including leading by influence and the experiences of leaders with disabilities. Attendees will join in an activity to ask questions of panel members and identify the goals and actions they can take themselves. There will be opportunity for attendees to connect with like-minded individuals and take action beyond the session. The panel will include Samantha Jenkinson, Kat Johns, Claire Anderson and Danielle Laizou-Lake. Session format will have panel members each sharing their leadership style and a strategy or skill they use or think is essential for leadership followed by question and answer with audience.

3:00pm – 3:30pm

Afternoon Tea

## 3:30pm – 5:00pm – Concurrent Session Two

Time	Community Participation	Empowering PwD
3:35pm – 3:55pm	<b>Esther Bliss</b> Volunteering – It's not all scones and raffles	<b>Rita Kleinfeld-Fowell</b> Empowering Leadership: People with Disability Leading Change Across Sectors
3:55pm – 4:15pm	<b>Hannah McPierzie</b> See the ability, support the disability	<b>Kate Heaslip</b> What if you Can?
4:15pm – 4:35pm	<b>Rhiannon Hudson</b> When Help is a Distant Dream: The Real-World Impact of Limited Disability Services in Rural Areas and the Crucial Role of Disability Advocacy, Authentic Service Provision, and Lived Experience	<b>Amanda Muir</b> The power of peer support to help inform and empower those within the disability sector.
4:35pm – 4:55pm	<b>Mary Brown</b> Pathways to possibilities: How Financial counselling can ease stress and support your goals	<b>Mallika Macleod</b> Peer support for homeschooled young people entering the adult world

5:00pm – 6:00pm	Networking Drinks with Live Entertainment	
End of Day One		

**People With disabilities Western Australia State Conference 2025**

**Friday 20 June 2025 – Day Two**

Time	Format
<b>9:30am – 10:30am – Opening Session</b>	
9:30am – 9:45am	<b>Acknowledgement of Country - Recognition of Lived Experience</b> <b>Speaker: Kat Johns, CEO, People with disabilities WA</b> <b>Presentation: From 1981 to Today and Beyond – Our History and Future</b>
9:45am – 10:30am	<b>Keynote: Isabella Choate</b> <b>Presentation: Listening to Children &amp; Young People about what school should be like</b>
10:30am – 11:00am	Morning Tea
<b>11:00am – 12:00pm – Advocacy in Action at People with disabilities WA</b>	
11:00am – 12:00pm	<b>Amanda Ellis</b> <b>Session: The 7 Levels of Why – Root-Cause Analysis for Disability Advocacy</b> In this interactive session, participants will explore key issues from the State Disability Strategy 2020-2030, focusing on Inclusive Education, Jobs and Economic Participation, and Leadership. Through group exercises, we'll use "5-Whys" and "7 Levels of Why" analysis to uncover the root causes of problems, moving beyond symptoms to identify actionable solutions. Participants will gain tools to become effective advocates, driving change with practical recommendations for policymakers and government bodies.
	<b>Karen Kobier</b> <b>Session: PWdWA Advocacy Team</b> In this session, the PWdWA Individual Advocacy Manager and their dedicated team will provide an in-depth overview of how advocates can support you, offering valuable insights into the services they provide. They will also discuss some of the most common challenges and issues they frequently address, providing a better understanding of the advocacy process. The session will conclude with an open Q&A, where you can ask questions and gain further clarity on how advocacy can benefit you
<b>12:00pm – 1:00pm – Lightning Round Presentations</b>	

Time	Format
<i>Join us for an engaging lightning round of short, fast-paced presentations featuring PhD students and other presenters. These sessions will highlight key areas of interest, offering valuable insights in a dynamic and informative format.</i>	
1:00pm – 2:00pm	Lunch
<b>2:00pm – 3:00pm - Closing Session</b>	
<i>Enjoy a showcase of vibrant dance performances, lively entertainment, and joyful celebrations, creating an atmosphere full of energy and excitement</i>	
<b>3:00pm - End of Conference</b>	