



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
Conference MC	Michael Keady <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>
9:30am –11:00am- Opening Plenary	
9:30am – 9:45am	Welcome to Country from Uncle Vaughn Recognition of Lived Experience
9:45am – 10:00am	Opening Address Speaker: Shazzy Tharby <i>PWdWA Chair</i>
10:00am – 10:30am	Keynote Speaker: Dr John Byrne AM <i>Western Australian Commissioner for Equal Opportunity</i>
10:30am - 10:45am	Address: Mike Rowe <i>Director General, Western Australia Department of Communities</i>
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	Vanessa Jessett Making a Plan for a Good Life 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	Nicola Brown Economic Participation Project 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	Maxine Drake Standing Up for Students with Disabilities	Joe Fitch Levelling up in the Game of Life and Careers: The Power of Networking
12:15pm – 12:35pm	Kerry Morrison Empowered Futures – High School and Beyond	Disability Employment Australia Updated Disability Employment Program and impacts for people with disabilities in WA
12:35pm – 12:55pm	Courtney Rosato Disability Inclusion in Schools: Developing student centred Individual Education Plans and implementing with fidelity	Taye Williams 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 Loizou-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	Esther Bliss Volunteering – It's not all scones and raffles	Rita Kleinfeld-Fowell Empowering Leadership: People with Disability Leading Change Across Sectors
3:55pm – 4:15pm	Hannah McPierzie See the ability, support the disability	Kate Heaslip What if you Can?
4:15pm – 4:35pm	Rhiannon Hudson 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	Amanda Muir The power of peer support to help inform and empower those within the disability sector.
4:35pm – 4:55pm	Mary Brown Pathways to possibilities: How Financial counselling can ease stress and support your goals	Mallika Macleod 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
9:30am – 10:30am – Opening Session	
9:30am – 9:45am	Acknowledgement of Country - Recognition of Lived Experience Speaker: Kat Johns, CEO, People with disabilities WA Presentation: From 1981 to Today and Beyond – Our History and Future
9:45am – 10:30am	Keynote: Isabella Choate Presentation: Listening to Children & Young People
10:30am – 11:00am	Morning Tea
11:00am – 12:00pm – Advocacy in Action at People with disabilities WA	
11:00am – 12:00pm	Amanda Ellis Session: The 7 Levels of Why – Root-Cause Analysis for Disability Advocacy 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.
	Karen Kobier Session: PWdWA Advocacy Team 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
12:00pm – 1:00pm – Lightning Round Presentations	

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
2:00pm – 3:00pm - Closing Session	
<i>Enjoy a showcase of vibrant dance performances, lively entertainment, and joyful celebrations, creating an atmosphere full of energy and excitement</i>	
3:00pm - End of Conference	