

Queensland Disability Conference 2024

Imagining Possibilities:
Shaping an Inclusive Queensland

Online Program

Acknowledgement of Country

We would like to respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which this event is taking place. We would also like to pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Introduction

Welcome to the 2024 Queensland Disability Conference, proudly hosted by the Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, and Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN). We are delighted to have you join us for this important event, now in its second year, as we unite to champion inclusion and accessibility for all Queenslanders.

This year, our theme 'Imagining Possibilities: Shaping an Inclusive Queensland', reflects the significance of collaboration during these times of transformation. The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (Disability Royal Commission or DRC), and the Independent Review of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) highlight the critical need for collective action and shared responsibility to drive the reforms that will shape a more inclusive future. The Queensland Disability Reform Framework, released on 31 July 2024 along with the Queensland Government's response to the DRC, provides a cohesive approach to disability reform in the context of the DRC and NDIS Review.

The Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games present a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create a legacy for our state to set the benchmark for inclusive events around the globe.

The Queensland Government plays a pivotal role in implementing disability reforms as part of *'Queensland's Disability Plan 2022-2027: Together, a better Queensland'* and is committed to delivering an inclusive and accessible Games.

The Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services and QDN invite you to engage in meaningful conversations, build connections, and share your ideas and energy to imagine what's possible, so we can lay the foundations for a more inclusive Queensland. Throughout the day, QDN members play a key part in this event as MCs, speakers, panellists and table hosts, highlighting the talents, skills, and leadership of people with disability.

We hope you find the conference enriching and leave inspired to continue the vital work of fostering an inclusive Queensland.

Event Overview

At this conference, people with lived experience of disability and other leaders across government, community, and business are invited to contribute their ideas about how we can each play our part to build on the work already done to deliver outcomes and change for the future, in line with Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031 and Queensland's Disability Plan.

There are four keynote speakers and four panel sessions that will focus on key areas of shaping an inclusive Queensland now and into the future, including the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Panel sessions will begin by hearing from leaders working towards inclusion in Queensland, facilitated by people with disability, and conclude with table conversations hosted by people with disability.

Minister's Address

The Honourable Charis Mullen MP, Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs.

Panel 1: Shaping possibilities for the future - Disability Reforms

Exploring the plan for Queensland disability reforms and how this will make a difference now and into the future:

- Elizabeth Bianchi - Senior Executive Director, Strategic Policy and Legislation - Seniors and Disability Services, Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services
- Geoff Rowe - Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia
- Luke Mansfield - Group Manager, Disability Reforms and Royal Commission, Department of Social Services
- Dr Sharon Boyce - Chair, Queensland Disability Advisory Council and QDN Board
- Facilitator: Michelle Moss, CEO, QDN

Panel 2: Shaping an inclusive future - First Nations

Exploring preparations for 2032 and how we can leverage these changes to shape and deliver an inclusive future for First Nations people with disability in Queensland:

- Uncle Paul Calcott - Co Vice-Chair, Mob4Mob
- Melanie Siulai - Coordinator of Advocacy Services, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Network Queensland (ATSIDNQ)
- David Harmer - Acting Deputy CEO, Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council (QAIHC)
- Facilitator: Semah Mokak-Wischki, First Nations and Disability Advocate

Keynote Panel: Imagining the possibilities of 2032 - laying the foundations

Exploring the possibilities for an inclusive 2032 and beyond, and what we need to focus on for people with disability to leave a strong legacy of change for future Queensland:

- Emma Thomas - Interim CEO, Games Venue and Legacy Delivery Authority
- Ruth Mackenzie - Artistic Director, Adelaide Festival
- Wayne Gerard - Founder and CEO, Partner Ventures
- Michael Dobbie-Bridges - Paralympian and Strategic Advisor, Disability, APM
- Facilitator: Dr Sharon Boyce, Chair, QDN Board

Panel 3: Research and data to shape an inclusive Queensland

Exploring how research and data can push the boundaries of what is possible, leading to innovation to drive change now and into the future:

- Dr Kelsey Chapman - Research Fellow, The Dignity Project, Inclusive Futures: Reimagining Disability, Griffith University
- Kevin Cocks AM GAICD - Executive General Manager, Accessible Transport Network, Office of the Director-General, Department of Transport and Main Roads

- Dr Talitha Kingsmill – Research Fellow, Griffith University / Research Lead, Queensland Disability Research Network
- Professor Julian Trollor – Director, National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health and Donna Best – Member of National Council for National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health
- Facilitator: Nerine Williams, Director, QDN Board

Panel 4: Shaping inclusive disability and mainstream systems

Exploring the challenges around reforms for disability services, mainstream services and for people with disability and families, and what key ingredients are needed to successfully deliver real change into the future:

- Joanne Jessop – Group CEO, Multicap Ltd.
- Angela Masson – Deputy Director-General, Housing and Homelessness Services, Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works
- Ainsley Robertson – Family member, Community Resource Unit (CRU)
- Facilitator: Peter Tully, Director, QDN Board

Conference Agenda

Friday 16 August 2024, 9:30am - 4:30pm	
Time	Activity
9:30am	Acknowledgement of Country: Uncle Willie Prince
9:40am	Conference opening: MCs Karin Swift and Allycia Staples
9:45am	Minister’s address: The Honourable Charis Mullen MP, Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs
10:00am	<p>Panel 1: Shaping the possibilities for the future – Disability Reforms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elizabeth Bianchi – Senior Executive Director, Strategic Policy and Legislation – Seniors and Disability Services, Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services • Geoff Rowe – CEO, Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia • Luke Mansfield – Group Manager, Disability Reforms and Royal Commission, Department of Social Services • Dr Sharon Boyce – Chair, Queensland Disability Advisory Council and Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN) Board <p>Facilitator: Michelle Moss, CEO, QDN</p>
10:40am	<p>Panel 2: Shaping an inclusive future - First Nations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncle Paul Calcott – Co Vice-Chair, Mob4Mob • Melanie Siulai – Coordinator of Advocacy Services, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Network Queensland (ATSIDNQ) • David Harmer – Acting Deputy CEO, Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council (QAIHC) <p>Facilitator: Semah Mokak-Wischki, First Nations and Disability Advocate</p>
11:15am	Table conversations

Friday 16 August 2024, 9:30am - 4:30pm

Time	Activity
11:25am	Morning tea
11:45am	<p>Keynote Panel: Imagining the possibilities of 2032 – laying the foundations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emma Thomas – Interim CEO, Games Venue and Legacy Delivery Authority • Ruth Mackenzie – Artistic Director, Adelaide Festival • Wayne Gerard – Founder and CEO, Partner Ventures • Michael Dobbie-Bridges – Paralympian and Strategic Advisor, Disability, APM <p>Facilitator: Dr Sharon Boyce, Chair, QDN Board</p>
12:45pm	Lunch: includes two screenings of the Bus Stop Film 'We'll Always Have Dance'
1:45pm	<p>Panel 3: Research and data to shape an inclusive Queensland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Kelsey Chapman – Research Fellow, The Dignity Project, Inclusive Futures: Reimagining Disability, Griffith University • Kevin Cocks AM GAICD – Executive General Manager, Accessible Transport Network, Office of the Director-General, Department of Transport and Main Roads • Dr Talitha Kingsmill – Research Fellow, Griffith University / Research Lead, Queensland Disability Research Network • Professor Julian Trollor – Director, National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health and Donna Best – Member of National Council for National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health <p>Facilitator: Nerine Williams, Director, QDN Board</p>
2:35pm	Table conversations
2:50pm	TedX talk: Video of Donna Best and Kathy Ellem celebrating 40 years of self-advocacy in Queensland
3:05pm	Afternoon tea
3:25pm	<p>Panel 4: Shaping inclusive disability and mainstream systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joanne Jessop – Group CEO, Multicap Ltd. • Angela Masson – Deputy Director-General, Housing and Homelessness Services, Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works • Ainsley Robertson – Family member, Community Resource Unit (CRU) <p>Facilitator: Peter Tully, Director, QDN Board</p>
4:00pm	Table conversations
4:15pm	Summary remarks from the Honourable Charis Mullen MP, Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs
4:20pm	Thanks and close
4:30pm	Finish

Conference Presenters

Acknowledgement of Country



Image description: A man in a red and black striped polo shirt, with a glimpse of a wheelchair back behind his shoulders. He is wearing square shaped glasses and smiling slightly and warmly.

Uncle Willie Prince

Wilfred Prince, known as Uncle Willie, was born on Wakka Wakka country in Cherbourg and has cultural and spiritual connection to the Kalkadoon clan group in Mount Isa. Uncle Willie experienced multiple hospital admissions in his early life and was removed from family and culture at age two and placed in the Royal Children's Hospital. He was later transferred to Xavier Home for Crippled Children and he left there when he was 16. Uncle Willie worked for the State Library Queensland for 33 years and had a distinguished career in disability sport, representing Queensland 16 times. He carried the Paralympic torch in 2000 and in 2018 carried the Queen's baton for the Commonwealth Games. Uncle Willie is a voice and advocate for people with disability, particularly Aboriginal people with a disability.

Masters of Ceremonies



Image description: A woman in a wheelchair with dark hair, glasses and with a smiling, friendly face. She is wearing a green dress with brightly coloured beads around her neck. The background is white.

Karin Swift

Karin Swift has had an extensive career in the disability, advocacy and social policy space where she is committed to people with disability living valued lives in the community. In June 2023, Karin was appointed as an Industry Fellow in the Menzies Health Institute Queensland, Griffith University. Karin works as a policy consultant and is the President of Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) and a Board Member of Community Resource Unit. Karin has an extensive background in governance roles for other non-government organisations. Karin has represented the Australian Government and WWDA at the Commission on the Status of Women 57 held at the United Nations, New York, providing high level, strategic advice on women with disability and violence and presenting at various side events. Karin has also led training alongside the Australian Human Rights Commission and been a keynote speaker for WWDA in Indonesia and South Korea on gender and disability and the elimination of violence. Karin currently works as an independent consultant providing strategic high-level advice, policy analysis and giving presentations to a diverse range of audiences on a range of key disability social policy issues.



Image description: A young woman with dark hair tied back in a ponytail. She is wearing a black, short sleeved polo shirt with a colourful logo on the left-hand side. She is smiling and has a determined look on her face, looking directly at the camera.

Allycia Staples

Allycia Staples is a passionate, creative disability advocate, and a founding member of Loud & Clear Advocacy group. Allycia served on Inclusion Australia's 'Our Voice' Committee, was a QDN Emerging Leader in 2022 and served on the organising committee for the National Youth Summit hosted by Children and Young People with Disability Australia. Allycia is a performing artist and founding member of the Sunshine Troupe and the Aha Ensemble, and has performed in numerous productions locally, interstate and overseas. She has participated in prestigious residencies and was a finalist with Queensland Young Achievers. Her creative practice is steeped in her advocacy – she sees the stage and screen as important vehicles for bringing messages of inclusion and diversity.

Speakers



Image description: A woman with straight brown hair sitting behind her ears and above her shoulders. She is looking directly at the camera with a happy face, big smile and is wearing glasses. She has a blue dress on with a dragonfly brooch attached to the right and a watch on her wrist. She is outside, leaning against a silver railing with a blurred image of grass and trees in the background.

The Honourable Charis Mullen MP

As a Minister in the Miles Government, Ms Mullen has carriage across three portfolio areas – child safety, seniors and disability services, and multicultural affairs. Before entering Parliament in 2017, the Minister spent more than two decades in the public and private sector providing strategic advice and support in government affairs, public policy and advocacy, stakeholder engagement and communication strategy. Ms Mullen has also held positions on a number of boards, including government and superannuation. Ms Mullen was drawn to public office through the ideals of equality, opportunity, fairness and reform. Ms Mullen represents the electorate of Jordan near Springfield where she and her husband are happily raising their two daughters.

Speakers



Image description: A woman with short dark brown hair. She is wearing a black top under a black jacket. She has a gold chain around her neck and earrings. She is looking directly at the camera with a happy face and big smile. There is a light grey wall behind her.

Emma Thomas

Emma Thomas is an experienced executive leader, with more than 30 years' working within large public and private sector organisations. Known for operating efficiently and delivering outcomes through complexity and ambiguity, Emma has established a reputation for going above and beyond to support and galvanise her team for high performance. Emma's current role—interim Chief Executive Officer of the Games Venue and Legacy Delivery Authority (GVLDA)—sees her lead a newly established organisation with a focus on delivering new and upgraded venues that will be used during the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and ready for the benefit of communities well beyond the Games. In addition, GVLDA will monitor the delivery of villages, develop a Transport and Mobility Strategy, and maximise the opportunity of hosting the Games through a range of programs focused on: Legacy, Sustainability, First Nations, Accessibility and Inclusion, and Procurement and Supply Chain. Emma's extensive experience has shaped her personal and professional values. Leading with honesty, courage and kindness, Emma aims to influence every organisation and team she is a part of to achieve outcomes with a shared vision and purpose.



Image description: A woman with short grey hair and a smiling friendly face. She is wearing a black jumper with buttons and a black jacket with white dots. She is standing in front of a white brick wall.

Ruth Mackenzie

Ruth Mackenzie brings over 40 years of experience in the arts world, with a particular focus on international festivals. Having served as director of prestigious festivals such as the Holland Festival, Manchester International Festival, and Chichester Festival, Ruth has a wealth of expertise. She led the official cultural program for the 2012 London Olympics and served as Artistic Director for the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris. Her contributions extend to founding roles, including General Director for the inaugural Manchester International Festival and Dramaturg for the Vienna Festival. Ruth has also directed Scottish Opera and helmed major theatres in Nottingham and Chichester. Ruth is a Trustee for Serpentine Galleries and a Board Director of Adelaide UNESCO City of Music.



Image description: A man with dark hair and a beard. He is wearing a blue and white check shirt and grey jacket.

Wayne Gerard

Wayne Gerard is the founder and CEO of Prtrnr (pronounced Partner) an investment and advisory firm focused on climate tech and health tech. He started his career as an Army Officer, serving 10 years before joining Boeing. Over the last 20 years, Wayne has founded and led multiple businesses, including RedEye which was acquired by United States of America industrial technology giant Fortive in December 2023. Wayne has served on numerous public and private boards and advisory bodies and he was the Queensland Chief Entrepreneur in 2021-2022. He is an Adjunct Professor in business and entrepreneurship at Queensland University of Technology, Chair of Klean Technologies and is on the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Legacy Committee.



Image description: A man with dark hair and a smiling face. He is wearing a white shirt, light blue tie and a navy jacket. Behind him are green leaves.

Michael Dobbie-Bridges

Michael Dobbie-Bridges (Dobbie) is a former Paralympian who represented Australia at the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Games and six World Team Cups. He has played an integral role in the establishment of the Queensland Wheelchair Football League and until recently was the Chair of Sporting Wheelies and Disabled Association. He has held leading positions across many Government portfolios including as Chief of Staff for the Assistant Minister for Social Services and Disability Services in the Turnbull Government. Michael is now a strategic advisor at APM, the largest global human services company where he works directly with the CEO to provide greater opportunities and services to people with disability.

Panellists



Image description: A woman with mid length blonde hair and a smiling face. She is wearing a dark top and dark framed glasses. The background is white.

Elizabeth Bianchi

Elizabeth has been working in the Queensland Public Service for nearly 20 years in a variety of roles within a social policy context, including her current role as the Senior Executive Director, Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services. Prior to joining the Queensland Public Service, Elizabeth was employed as a solicitor in private practice. During her time in the public service, Elizabeth has led a number of key social policy and legislative reform projects, across a range of portfolios, including disability services, child protection, community services, and domestic and family violence prevention.



Image description: A man with short white hair, a beard and glasses. He is wearing a paisley shirt with a grey jacket and a decorative pin on the jacket lapel. The background is white.

Geoff Rowe

Geoff Rowe is the CEO at Aged & Disability Advocacy Australia, a Queensland based advocacy and human rights service. Geoff's career spans more than 40 years and includes senior and executive roles in the Queensland Government and the Not for Profit sectors. Geoff is currently Chairperson of the Queensland Public Trustee Advisory and Monitoring Board, and member of the Queensland Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board. Geoff is a Churchill Fellow having been awarded the prestigious Paul Tys Churchill Fellowship to examine world's best practice in preventing and responding to elder abuse in aged care and the community. Geoff traveled to the United Kingdom, Canada, United States of America and New Zealand to complete his fellowship. He has a strong interest in human rights, social justice and inclusion.



Image description: A man with short dark hair, a dark beard and glasses. He is smiling slightly. He has a blue shirt on and a dark jacket. Behind him is a blue backdrop.

Luke Mansfield

Luke Mansfield is a Senior Executive Officer in the Australian Government with lead responsibility for implementation of Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-31 across government, the establishment of additional community-based disability supports across Australia, development of the National Autism Strategy, and implementation of the Commonwealth's response to the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability. Luke holds an Executive Masters of Business Administration in International Leadership, and is the primary carer of a person with psychosocial disability.



Image description: A woman with short curly hair and a big smile. She is sitting in a wheelchair. She is wearing a black top under an orange and black flower dress and has a long gold chain around her neck. She is sitting outside in front of green trees.

Dr Sharon Boyce

Dr Sharon Boyce is an educator, author, speaker and disability advocate, focused on disability awareness across Queensland. She is passionate and committed to social justice – empowering people with disability and supporting real living independence. In addition to her role as QDN Chairperson, Sharon is the Chair of the Queensland Disability Advisory Council (Queensland Government) and Advisor to the Queensland Minister for Seniors and Disability Services. She is an appointed member of the National Disability Insurance Scheme Independent Advisory Council Board, an Executive Director of the Physical Disability Australia Board, and advisor to the Toowoomba Regional Council's Access Committee. She is the Director of the Australian Institute of Inclusive Education and Research, Director of the Disability Training Institute and Chief Executive Officer and Director of Aus Inclusion Pty Ltd. In 2020 she was awarded a Doctor of Letters for her research in education inclusion and dyslexia, and she is currently completing a Doctor of Philosophy. Among the awards she has received are the Queensland Regional Achiever Award in 2012 for her work in awareness, raising and creating inclusive communities across Australia, a Human Rights Award in 2008 for her contribution to creating inclusion across the community, and a Disability Action Week Award in 2003 for her work writing an accessible children's story book.



Image description: A man with wavy brown hair and a beard. He is wearing a yellow shirt and holding a thick brown stick in his right hand. He is sitting in front of a red wall.

Uncle Paul Calcott

Uncle Paul Constable Calcott is recognised as a Community Elder with working knowledge of disability and sits on the Murri Court on the Sunshine Coast. Uncle Paul is a renowned Australian artist who has lived with a degenerative disability after he contracted polio when he was 18 months old. As a proud Wiradjuri man growing up with disability and a member of the LGBTQIA+ community, he has first-hand experience of how intersectionality can lead to marginalisation and discrimination. A long-time advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with disability, Paul is passionate about supporting Australia's First Peoples living with disability who are LGBTQIA+. He advocates for more culturally appropriate programs and activities for people with disability, and facilitates a local art group of First Peoples artists living with disability using traditional art and storytelling to raise awareness around issues such as health, social isolation, economic participation and resilience building. In 2019, his art group held an exhibition at the United Nations in Geneva called 'Culture is Inclusion'. In 2017 spoke at the United Nations Headquarters in New York regarding LGBTQIA+ First Nations Peoples living with disability and the intersectionality between them.



Image description: A woman with long curly dark hair tied back. She is wearing a cream jacket and a multi-coloured scarf around her neck. She has drop down earrings. She is looking directly at the camera with a happy face and big smile. She is standing outside with a building and trees in the background.

Melanie Siulai

Melanie Siulai was born and raised on Awabakal Country in Newcastle and is a proud descendant of the Biripi and Kamilaroi people of New South Wales. She currently lives and works on Yugambah/Yagara Country, and serves as the Coordinator for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Network Of Queensland, which includes the Side by Side First Peoples Advocacy statewide program. Melanie has over 16 years of experience working in various settings from Aboriginal Organisations to government departments. She is committed to advocating for our First Nations people and communities. As a strong community advocate, her passion lies in improving the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability and building the capacity of our communities in Queensland. Melanie is dedicated to getting up, standing up, and showing up for our people with disability, ensuring they receive the support and resources they need. As a proud mother of six children, who have been a continuing source of strength and inspiration, Melanie and her family continue to be involved in the community, supporting, and caring for one another, and striving to create a better future for all.



David Harmer

David Harmer, QAIHC's Acting Chief Executive Officer, is an experienced senior executive with broad portfolio experience in health, state development, transport and local government. David led COVID-19 policy responses for older Queenslanders, Queenslanders with disabilities and culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Queensland. He has expertise in health and social policy, particularly aged care and disability policy, legislation design and implementation.

Image description: A man with no hair, wearing thick black rimmed glasses. He is wearing a white shirt and a black jacket. He is in front of a blurred timber paneled wall.



Dr Kelsey Chapman

Dr Kelsey Chapman is a distinguished health researcher holding a PhD in Rehabilitation Therapies from Griffith University. As the Dignity Project and Inclusive Futures Research Fellow at Griffith University, Dr Chapman led the Voice of Queenslanders with Disability survey and report, which examined what life is like for Queenslanders with disability and their support networks. Her work is characterised by the use of citizen science and co-design approaches. Dr Chapman is committed to enhancing social inclusion and equitable health outcomes for people with disability and is dedicated to bridging research and practice for impact. Her track record includes securing over \$1.3 million in research funding as well as writing high impact journal articles and *The Conversation* articles.

Image description: A woman with long brown hair falling around her face. She is wearing a white shirt and is smiling warmly and looking into the camera. She appears to be sitting in front of a yellow blurred wall in a room in a house.



Image description: A man wearing a blue collar shirt with a dark jacket. He is looking to the right of the camera. Behind him is a white wall.

Kevin Cocks AM GAICD

Kevin Cocks is a recognised leader in the human rights and disability field and is experienced in engaging, negotiating, influencing and shaping views from the community to the international level. As the Executive General Manager of Accessible Transport Network he actively advises and supports the Department of Transport and Main Roads and partners to facilitate cultural change and deliver the vision of 'creating a single integrated network accessible to everyone'. Kevin also held the maximum term of seven-year position at the Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland, where he made significant progress in realigning the organisation to one focused on the vision for a fair and inclusive Queensland. In 2019 Kevin was bestowed the honour of the title Doctor of the University (DUniv) at Griffith University and was recognised as one of Australia's leading advocates for people with a disability and a former Anti-Discrimination Commissioner of Queensland. In 2018 he was awarded an Honorary Doctor of the University of Southern Queensland for his lifelong commitment to human rights and for his work in the community as an advocate for people with disability. Kevin was also awarded a member of the Order of Australia for service to people with disabilities in 2010 and the Australian Human Rights medal by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission in 2005.



Image description: A woman with light golden coloured hair, gold earrings, wearing a dark collared shirt. She is smiling warmly and looking directly at the camera.

Dr Talitha Kingsmill

Dr Talitha Kingsmill is a QDN Board Director and Chair of the Nominations and Performance Committee. Talitha is the Research Lead for the Queensland Disability Research Network and a Research Fellow at Griffith University Inclusive Futures: Reimagining Disability research alliance. She has 25 years' experience across the private and public sectors in education, leadership, consultancy, research, law, digital citizenship, regulatory compliance, policy development and disability inclusion. She is a passionate advocate for equitable, accessible opportunities for all. Talitha's lived and professional experience provides rich insights to the confronting and very real challenges and obstacles for people living with impairment and disability. Talitha has received an Australian Council for Educational Leaders Research in Educational Leadership and Management Award (2017), an Australian Catholic University Higher Degree Research Award (2012) and ACU Top Graduate Award - Graduate Diploma in Education (Secondary) and Graduate Certificate (RE).



Image description: A man with short dark grey hair and glasses. He is smiling warmly into the camera. He is wearing an open neck white shirt underneath a blue jacket. He is in a garden with green shrubs and a large tree trunk with many branches.

Professor Julian Trollor

Professor Julian Trollor is a neuropsychiatrist, NHMRC Leadership Fellow, and Director of the National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health at the University of New South Wales (UNSW Sydney). He previously held UNSW's inaugural Chair of Intellectual Disability Mental Health (UNSW Sydney) and was head of the related Department of Developmental Disability Neuropsychiatry (3DN). Julian and the Centre work to improve health policy, practice and supports for people with an intellectual or developmental disability. The team leads educational resource development, health promotion, consultancy, advocacy and contributions to policy and legislation. The team also conducts high quality research of translational benefit to people with disability and the disability and health sectors.



Image description: A woman with light brown hair falling around her face. She is looking directly at the camera with a smiling face. She is wearing a red dress underneath an open black jumper. She is in front of a cream wall.

Donna Best

Donna Best has been an active leader in Queensland's self-advocacy movement for the last four decades, participating in the first ever Queensland self-advocacy meeting in 1984. Donna has championed the rights of people with intellectual and dual disability, and supported others to have a voice, a say, and be listened to. She is a strong advocate, standing alongside others. She has had a leading role in establishing and maintaining QDN Hot Topics groups as welcoming meeting places, peer support and learning exchange for people with intellectual and dual disability. Donna has also held governance roles over the past decades with Queensland Advocacy Incorporated and contributed to the formation of organisations and groups such as Speaking Up For You.



Image description: A woman with wavy brown hair around her face. She has a big smile. She is wearing a navy coat. She is in front of a blurred background of green shrubs and trees.

Joanne Jessop

Joanne Jessop has been the CEO of Multicap since 2006, and Group CEO since 2021. Joanne has extensive senior management experience in non-profit and public sector health care, and in government services. She is a Director of Bric Housing and Ability First Australia, the Chair of Open Minds Australia Limited, and a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Joanne is passionate about providing high quality human services outcomes, and improved opportunities for vulnerable people, especially those living with disability.



Image description: A woman with long dark hair pulled back behind her ears. She is wearing a short sleeved black and white dress with a zip at the front. She has gold drop earrings and a big smile. She appears to be in front of a blurred image of an outdoor area with a steel lattice divider.

Angela Masson

Angela Masson is an experienced senior executive with a strong background in leadership within regulatory bodies and a proven track record in driving strategic outcomes. Angela is committed to enhancing operational frontline services that ensure effective delivery of housing and homelessness solutions across Queensland, as well as bringing a wealth of experience and dedication in service delivery to advance the welfare of our community. Her career highlights include spearheading transformative programs that improve service accessibility and quality, navigating complex regulatory landscapes, leading large scale commercial ventures and fostering collaborative partnerships across sectors. Angela is passionate about leveraging innovative solutions to address homelessness and the multiple service delivery models delivered by the Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works. Angela's leadership ethos is rooted in integrity, inclusivity, connectivity and a steadfast commitment to social equity.



Image description: A woman with dark hair pulled back and pearl earrings. She is looking directly at the camera with a big smile. She is standing outside with green bushes and a tree trunk in the background.

Ainsley Robertson

Ainsley Robertson has navigated the education system as the parent of two neurodivergent children. She has experienced the ups and downs of the school years with her 16-year-old son who is autistic and non-speaking, and her 19-year-old daughter who is dyslexic and has ADHD. Ainsley currently works at Community Resource Unit as a facilitator of the Families for Inclusive Education project. Ainsley has over 20 years' experience as a primary school teacher, has worked as an education advisor (learning disabilities) and as a specialist teacher (literacy and numeracy) supporting students and families. Ainsley is currently enrolled as a Master of Education student (Inclusive Education) at Queensland University of Technology. She has a keen interest in disability advocacy and parent-to-parent peer support.



Image description: A woman with short straight blonde hair and blue eyes. She is standing and has her arms crossed. Her dress is bright blue and has long sleeves, pin tucking and a button at the collar. Behind her is a white brick wall. She has an open bright smile.

Michelle Moss

Michelle Moss CEO of QDN has worked in the human services sectors for over 30 years, across disability, health, and women's services including sexual assault and domestic violence services. Michelle has worked in direct support work, counselling, behaviour support, consumer and community engagement, and social policy. Michelle is a strong advocate with a commitment to the voice of people with disability who use services driving and influencing public policy and being active players in the planning, design, delivery and evaluation of services. Michelle has experience working across the key advocacy areas of transport, housing and health that impact people with disability in Queensland.



Image description: A woman with short wavy dark hair with a streak of purple in her hair. She has a big smile and is wearing red rimmed glasses. She has gold hoop earrings in her ears and a black collared shirt. In the background you can see green trees.

Nerine Williams

Nerine Williams is a proudly Autistic, multiple disabled advocate who experiences physical, cognitive, and sensory challenges. Nerine is an assistive technology (AT) enthusiast and has collaborated with Western Australia-based organisation AT Chat on several projects. Nerine's non-linear career has been centred on education and stakeholder consultation and has spanned the fields of human resources, information systems, governance, and leadership. Nerine has lived experience of navigating the education, employment, NDIS, and health sectors as a person with disability. Nerine founded a Brisbane support group for people with Functional Neurological Disorder and is now working with members to build a Queensland-wide community. Nerine has a particular talent for connecting people with resources and each other to get better outcomes. She is keen to learn about other people's experiences to better understand the challenges faced by people with disability and to help make informed decisions that best represent the priorities and needs of QDN members and their families. She is passionate about accessibility for all Queenslanders, particularly in the areas of education, employment, and healthcare.



Image description: A man with dark hair wearing a blue short sleeved polo shirt with the words 'QDN Queenslanders with Disability Network' on the upper left of the shirt. He is sitting in a wheelchair. He has a friendly, open smile.

Peter Tully

Peter Tully is a member of QDN's Board of Directors, and brings a range of skills, expertise and connections to his role. He has a strong commitment to community engagement, advocacy and empowering individuals and communities to be the leaders in their own lives. Peter is a Life Member of QDN. His roles at QDN have included Regional Facilitator, Ready to Go Peer Facilitator, Housing Champion, Getting on the NDIS Grid, Peer to Peer advocacy, Bright Sparks, Changing Lives Changing Communities, Digital Inclusion and currently in Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction. Peter played a leadership role with the Every Australian Counts Campaign and is a member of the Intellectual Disability Reference Group - Home and Living to the Independent Advisory Council NDIA. Peter was a Baton bearer for the 2018 Commonwealth Games Queen's Baton Relay. He is a leader in his local community of Ipswich and works collaboratively with governments, Members of Parliament and service providers to ensure Ipswich is an inclusive and welcoming city for all.

Performers and Artists

Bus Stop Films

Bus Stops Films has been in operation since 2009, teaching adults with disability and others from marginalised communities, film studies. They use filmmaking and the film industry to change community attitudes globally around the rights and contribution to society of and by people with disability. The film screening today is 'We'll Always Have Dance' – 12 minutes. A documentary on the lives and challenges of five dancers with the Queensland Ballet with interviews conducted by bus stop film students. The students were fortunate to observe what happens behind the scenes in the dressing rooms and to learn some dance steps.

Interview Cast: Olivia Hargroder, Robert Pate, Allycia Staples, Sascha Doyle, Keegan Jones, Brodie Reeby, Martha Goddard.

TedX Talk - Self advocacy and why we need it

This 12-minute talk between Dr Kathy Ellem and Donna Best celebrates 40 years of self-advocacy in Queensland. It delves into the progress that has been made by the disability advocacy movement in Queensland, Australia since the 1980s, as well as the work yet to be done. This talk was given at a TedX event using the TedX conference format but independently organised by a local community.



Dr Kathy Ellem

Dr Kathy Ellem is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work at The University of Queensland, Australia. She is a supporter of QDN. Kathy's primary research expertise is participatory research methodologies (including narrative, digital and arts-based research), with people with impaired cognitive capacity.

Image description: A woman with long blonde hair falling around her face.

Artwork on Arrival

Uncle Paul Calcott is a Wiradjuri artist now living on Karbi Karbi country. He is an urban artist living with a disability, supporting other First Nations artists living with disability. His paintings reflect his life as an urban gay Aboriginal man living with a disability. He supports other artists living with disability to tell their story of resilience and strength via the traditional symbols and styles passed down by their ancestors over thousands of years.

Monte Lupo

Speakers' gifts are made by talented ceramicists with disability at Monte Lupo Arts. Monte Lupo offers beautiful handmade ceramic and textile artworks and homewares, and provides employment opportunities for people living with disability.

Monte Lupo's employee artists manage each step of the production process, preparing the clay, glazing and painting. Each detail is unique to the finished product and a testament to the hard work of their team members. Many of the artists have received national and international recognition for their work, and Monte Lupo is regularly featured in exhibitions across Australia, in addition to holding their own exhibitions. Monte Lupo is operated by disability support provider Multicap.

