

**PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS INC.
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2015**

Nominee Profiles

Jane Atkinson (Lived experience in parenting a child with special needs)

Jane is mum to 2 young boys and became a Kalparrin member in 2008 when her son was born and she began the journey no mother imagines their life will become. She has benefited from many Kalparrin activities, such as family fun days and mums' camps and appreciated the important role Kalparrin plays within members' lives.

Jane has a varied experience of WA Health, initially as a pharmacist at RPH, more recently as a senior policy officer and project officer and finally as a consumer through her child. Friends describe her as a practical, down to earth person with a sense of adventure. She loves to travel and spend her spare time playing tennis and volunteering for Kalparrin Families online group.

As a region leader she has the privilege of organising events where people can connect and I get to watch friendships and support networks grow. It would be an honour to serve on Kalparrin's Board; I bring my experience as a program manager and policy writer, while remaining first and foremost, a parent of a SN child.

Jenny Downs (Independent special needs sector representative)

Jenny Downs is a paediatric physiotherapist working in Perth, London and Sydney and has been a researcher since completing her PhD in 2003.

She now has 10 years of research experience in relation to childhood disability and is currently a Senior Research Fellow at the Telethon Kids Institute. Her research involves children affected with common and rare childhood conditions including Down syndrome, Rett syndrome, the CDKL5 Disorder, the MECP2 Duplication Syndrome, Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy and Early Onset Scoliosis.

Her work increases our understanding of their natural history: from the early years following diagnosis through childhood growth and development, and subsequently through transition to adult life. Another aspect of her research is the development of robust outcome measures in relation to functional abilities and physical activity.

She is currently working on the development of a measure for quality of life for children with intellectual disability. Jenny has juggled her PhD and now research work with raising two daughters who are now young adults.

Marani Hutton (Key Influencer)

Marani Hutton, Physiotherapist, currently works as the Area Allied Health Advisor for SMHS and is involved in strategic workforce planning, HR, leadership, change management, professional development and education and training strategies to support Allied Health and Health Science professionals as well as service planning

during reconfiguration of an unprecedented capital works program. With a background in training & education, OSH and Aboriginal health, Marani has lead a number of internally and externally funded projects for WA Health.

Marani represents SMHS on a number of disability portfolios including membership to the Department of Health (DOH) Disability Health Network, supporting the 'My Way' trial at Cockburn Kwinana and leads the Disability Liaison Officer project at Fiona Stanley Hospital (now up to phase 3).

Deputy Chair of the WA Health Northern and Remote Country Governing Council (2012-2015), and Board member of the Curtin School of Physiotherapy Advisory Board, Marani has held Board roles requiring governance, leadership and strategic planning.

Marani has spent the past 25 years working for WA Health and has experience in general private practice and self-employment in training and education. 14 years were spent working for the WA Country Health Service across the remote North West Kimberley region servicing both adults and paediatric clients. She moved to Perth with her family in 2005.

Marani has a 12 year old nephew with cerebral palsy, epilepsy and autism who lives regionally. She brings to the table lived experience as a carer providing 24/7 lived in care and understands the complexity of challenges that face families caring for children with special needs. Marani is particularly interested in supporting rural, remote and regional families and appreciates the need for support, love and acceptance.

Bronwyn Kerr (Independent special needs sector representative)

Bronwyn Kerr is the Legal Manager at Atlas Iron Limited. Bronwyn has over 9 years' experience in a corporate law firm and as in-house counsel with a focus on commercial and resources law. In addition to being admitted to practice law in Western Australia, Bronwyn holds a diploma in Applied Finance and Investment from the Financial Services Institute of Australia and has completed the requirements of a Graduate Diploma in Applied Corporate Governance from Chartered Secretaries Australia. Bronwyn grew up in Perth and is pleased to have the opportunity to support Western Australian families by working with Kalparrin.

Shawn Pearson (Accounting or financial experience)

Shawn Pearson is the Business Development and Carbon Strategy Manager at CITIC Pacific Mining. Shawn has over 15 years' experience in business development and commercial management working with PricewaterhouseCoopers as well as with resource, defence contracting and infrastructure services companies. Shawn is a Certified Practising Accountant. Shawn has been closely involved in not-for-profit organisations for the past 10 years' holding various positions supporting the sector including Board and advisor appointments. Shawn is the Chair of the Chamber of Minerals and Energy's Carbon Price and Energy Efficiency Reference Group, and

represents CITIC Pacific Mining on various industry groups and committees in the resource sector in WA.

Leanne Bridges (Lived experience in parenting a child with special needs or key influencer)

Leanne has been a member of Kalparrin for over 10 years. Her daughter has an intellectual disability and her diagnosis led Leanne in the direction she has been following every day since. During this time she has held various positions at Kalparrin, on the board, as an office volunteer and a staff member. She was a parent representative, Secretary and Vice Chair on the board, volunteered in the office helping with the organisation of mother's weekend amongst other tasks and as a staff member was both Events Coordinator and a Family Support Officer. Her new career is now as a Support Coordinator with a service provider in Midland helping families in the NDIS Trial Site coordinate the supports within their NDIS plans. This involves connecting people with support workers to assist them in reaching their goals, liaising with service providers, researching information on the services available and give assistance using her lived experience and local knowledge to connect them with their community. She also volunteers her time to give talks to families and service providers about her experience as a mother of a child with special needs and as a support coordinator.

For Leanne becoming a member of the Kalparrin 'family' was life changing and she is passionate about Kalparrin and the incredibly important role it plays in people's lives. She left Kalparrin as a staff member to pursue her career but would like to stay connected to this warm, supportive and empathic organisation so she can help families on their journey in the same way the amazing people brought her to this organisation 10 years ago.

Robert Geerson (Key Influencer)

Rob is a Father of 2 young boys. His professional life has been in Information Technology where he has worked for the Finance industry in both Perth and Sydney. More recently he has taken to running his own small business which gives him the flexibility to work around his family's needs. Rob's first exposure with Kalparrin was in 2008 when his youngest son was admitted to PMH with meningitis. The family endured a 3 month stay at PMH and although his son survived his medical emergency he was left with a brain injury from his illness. Since that life changing moment Rob reduced his work commitments to become the primary carer for both of his young boys. Through the years of ongoing therapy and medical appointments, he understands the strains and in many cases isolation faced by families with SN children. His passions include AFL football where in 2014 he launched and coached a team of over 45 special needs children to give them the opportunity to play sport within a community based club. He hopes his experience as a father of a SN child and his passion for a more inclusive society will be of use to the wider Kalparrin community.