



**shaping  
the future  
together**

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# ACHIEVING WITH AUTISM

Abacus Learning Centre is the epitome of a grass roots organisation that was built for the people, by the people.

Starting with an inspired vision to provide one of Australia's first centre-based early intervention services, a group of parents and supporters made this dream a reality in 2008.

Since then, hundreds of families have travelled from all-over Melbourne to access crucial early intervention for their children and have experienced the benefits of Abacus programs, which are based on extensive clinical experience and research.

The team focus on improving a child's ability to effectively learn in social and educational settings. Ensuring every child has fun and is motivated is a key element of each one of the tailored programs that meets the needs of both the individual student and their families.

The introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has seen demand for autism services grow considerably and to help meet this demand, the Board would like to build on the established reputation of the centre and grow the organisation sustainably.

Working with the Management team, the volunteer Directors help to drive the strategic objectives and are ambassadors for Abacus. Each Director brings a unique skillset and through their networks they create opportunities that help ensure our registered charity has both community and philanthropic support.

The Abacus Board are primarily responsible for governing, overseeing the affairs of, and making important decisions for the organisation and its members.

The current Directors hope you will consider joining them, bringing your knowledge and leadership skills to our community and helping us continue to achieve with autism.

# BECOMING A VOLUNTEER DIRECTOR

Serving on a board is a wonderful way to support a cause that you care about.

Each year, individuals dedicate their time and expertise to shape the future of a for-purpose organisation through board service.

Individuals who serve on a board have the opportunity to develop and grow as leaders, cultivate new skills and expand their network.

The current Board of Directors is comprised of a collaborative group of talented professionals who are committed to helping Abacus achieve its mission.

Opportunities exist for people with the passion, skills, enthusiasm and time to make-a-difference to this amazing life-changing charity.



## Requirements of the Role

- Attend approximately six board meetings a year and one strategic planning day – and associated preparation including reading board papers
- Participate in teleconference meetings for management, financial reporting and general compliance issues if they arise between meetings
- Volunteer to provide support and expertise to the organisation and CEO where Director skills and expertise might be of assistance
- Help promote the organisation to key stakeholders at fundraisers, networking opportunities and other related events
- Set, promote and monitor the tone of the organisation's culture, strategy and direction
- Read and understand the Abacus Constitution, Code of Conduct and Child Safe & Vulnerable Persons Policy
- Provide a valid Director ID, Working with Children Check (WWCC) and complete a Responsible Persons' Declaration and NDIS Worker Screening Check prior to being appointed to the Abacus Board of Directors
- Disclose any potential conflict of interest by acknowledging likely conflicts (in writing) and withdrawing from any related discussion or decisions, (and ensuring these steps are noted in the minutes of the meeting)
- Be honest, act in good faith and do not use their role or information obtained as a Board member dishonestly.



## Competencies / Skills

- Knowledge of a director's responsibilities – includes an understanding of the role as well as the legal, ethical and financial responsibilities
- Strategic expertise – the ability to review strategy through constructive questioning and suggestion and contribute to the effective decision making of the board
- Accounting and finance – the ability to read and comprehend the company's accounts, financial material presented to the board, financial reporting requirements and some understanding of corporate finance
- Legal – the board's responsibility involves overseeing compliance with numerous laws as well as understanding the individual director's legal duties and responsibilities
- Risk Management – experience in managing areas of major risk management to the organisation
- Managing people and achieving change – experience in current management thinking on employment, branding, engagement, strategic vision and stakeholder communication
- Industry knowledge – experience in similar organisations or industries.



## Personal Attributes

- Meaningful engagement and personal commitment to our mission, vision and values – a director needs to be an active contributor with genuine interest in the organisation
- Work co-operatively - diverse viewpoints are actively encouraged, but it is important that board members know how to reach consensus on key issues and develop creative solutions
- Analytical and curious – a director must be able to function as an effective team member but also must have the curiosity to ask questions and persist in robust discussions with management and fellow board members where necessary
- Emotional intelligence – as well as self-awareness and self-management, a director needs to demonstrate empathy manifested through strong interpersonal skills. A director must work well in a group, listen, be tactful yet able to communicate a clear and succinct viewpoint
- Commercial judgement and instinct – a director needs to demonstrate good business instinct and acumen, and be able to assess complex information
- Integrity – fulfilling a director's duties and responsibilities, acting ethically and with appropriate independence
- Sense of humour - voluntary service is important but it should also be fun. The ability to use humour appropriately, especially in the boardroom, helps bring our members together. A laugh at the right times helps everyone take a balanced more objective approach to decision-making.

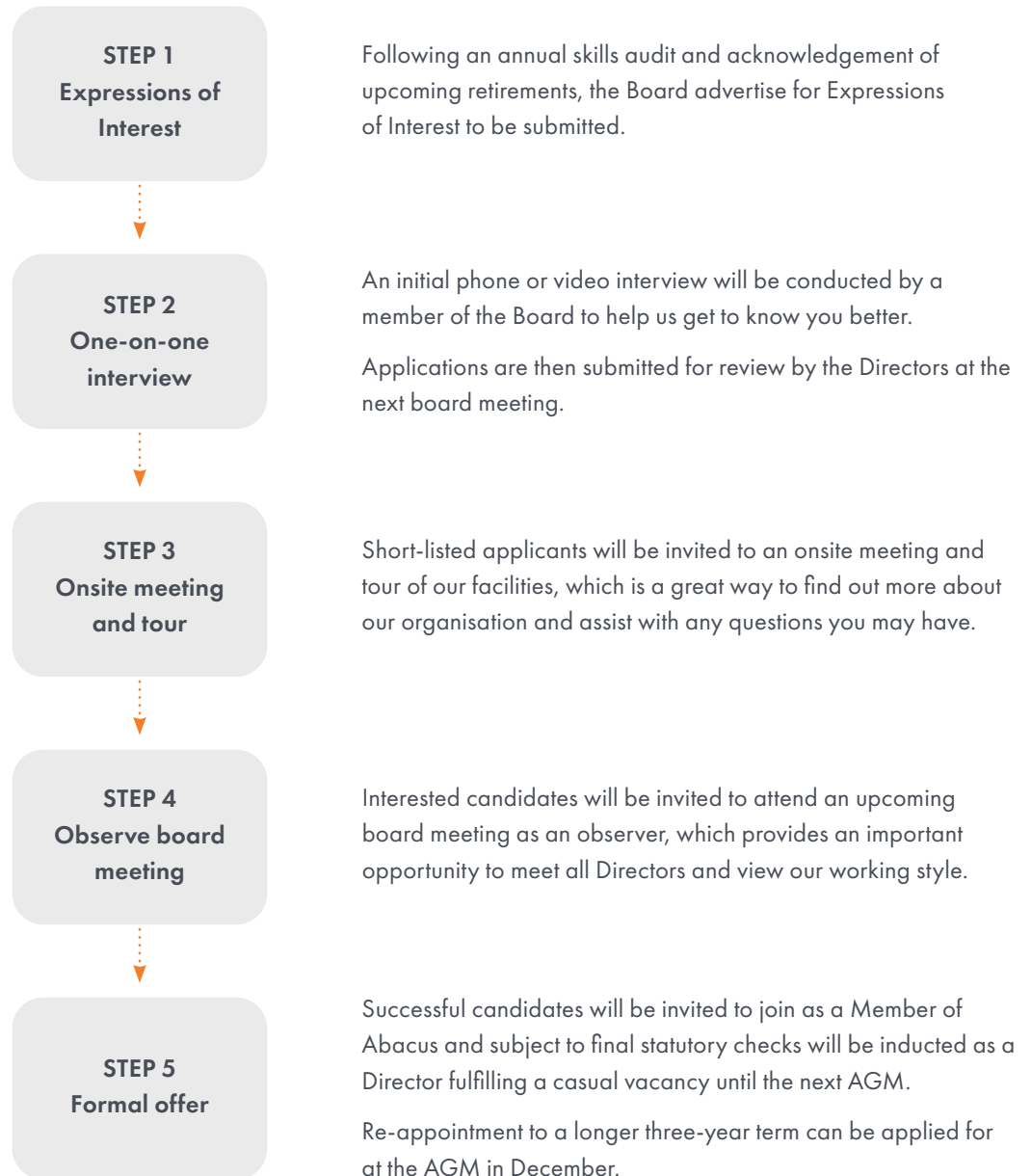
# SELECTION PROCESS

Boards who share common beliefs and qualities are able to lead creatively and effectively.

Ideally members of a board should:

- share a passion for and commitment to the organisation's mission
- are willing to roll up their sleeves when necessary to help
- have strong ties to their communities
- are diverse in age, gender, race, religion, occupation, skills, and background, and
- understand how charities work and are willing to support efforts to raise money.

Our approach to board recruitment involves a series of meetings and conversations to help you understand what the board is looking for in a new member and how you can utilise your experience to help advance our social impact.





## How to Apply

### Expressions of Interest can be submitted by:

Responding to an advertisement on one of the board vacancy websites

OR

Submitting an EOI via our online form on the Abacus website

<https://www.abacuslearning.org.au/board-of-directors-contact-form/>

Your Expression of Interest should include:

- Why you are interested in this vacancy
- What skills/experience could you bring to the position
- Any service on previous/current Boards/Committees

A copy of your Board CV should also be attached to the application.



## Further Reading

### Abacus Website

<https://www.abacuslearning.org.au>

### ACNC Guide for Charity Board Members

<https://www.acnc.gov.au/tools/guides/governance-for-good-acncs-guide-for-charity-board-members>

### Working with Children and NDIS Worker Screening Check

<https://www.service.vic.gov.au/find-services/work-and-volunteering>

### Director Identification Number

<https://www.abrs.gov.au/director-identification-number>



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Registered NDIS Provider