

There are six candidates, three of whom are Young Women aged 30 or under, standing for the three Board positions.

Candidates were asked address the following areas:

- Experience with financial management and oversight
- Experience with housing or property development
- Understanding of the responsibilities of directors

Each candidate was approved by the YWCA Australia Board to stand for election. All appointments are subject to background checks.

The candidates are listed in alphabetical order by their first name.

Ashleigh Harradine (Young Woman) NSW

Ashleigh is a passionate advocate for gender equality and DE&I. Additionally, with over five years of experience in financial statement audit at EY Sydney, she has expertise in risk management, regulatory compliance, and financial analysis.

Her leadership style is deeply rooted in her commitment to DE&I. She was recently awarded the Lynne Sutherland Emerging Leader award at the 2024 EY Oceania CEO Awards, highlighting her impactful advocacy for women and the LGBTQIA+ community.

Ashleigh's vision for her role on the YWCA Board of Directors is to leverage both her professional experience and personal passion to further the organisation's mission of achieving gender equality and empowering young women and gender-diverse individuals. She is excited about the opportunity to strategically contribute and is eager to make a meaningful difference in the community.

Trips to Bunnings to adopt new plants, and baking sourdough for friends are regular weekend activities for Ashleigh.

Claudia Riseborough (Young Woman) VIC

Claudia is a queer woman, feminist economist, and Associate Director in EY's Strategy and Transactions division. She has over eight years' experience in advising governments and NFPs on economic and social policy and leading funding bids, particularly in family violence, gender equality, social housing, and justice reform.

Claudia employs a gendered lens and continuously challenges traditional economic practice that often upholds intersecting inequalities. Her skills in financial sustainability, strategic policy development and systems change, and measuring and communicating impact would be an asset to the Board of YWCA Australia.

In 2017, Claudia supported the Chief Merger Officer, Verity Hawkins, as a consultant advising on the YWCA National Merger. Ever since, she has admired the intersectional feminist work of the organisation and keeps a copy of *The Dauntless Bunch* on her bookcase.

Claudia spent her teens navigating the complex service system for the LGBTIQ+ community. With her own experience of living openly as a lesbian from such an early age, Claudia is mindful of the financial repercussions and the isolation that can occur for queer people.

Claudia is an intersectional feminist who believes in holistic, inclusive, community-led, and culturally appropriate support services. When she is not swimming in Excel spreadsheets, Claudia enjoys rock-climbing and snuggling her two rescue cats – Skippy and Sappho.

Claudia Robinson (Young Woman) NSW

Claudia is a passionate lawyer with a strong commitment to social justice, gender equality, and human rights. As a proud young woman of Ngāpuhi Māori descent, she brings a unique cultural perspective to her work where she provides free legal advice and representation to marginalised communities including women, First Nations peoples, and those experiencing homelessness.

Claudia is based in Warrawong, NSW. Claudia is a strong advocate for intersectional feminism and is committed to creating fairer pathways to equality for young women and gender-diverse people. With her experience in advocacy and legal practice, Claudia is excited about the opportunity to contribute to the YWCA's work in advancing gender equity and housing security.

She believes in the power of young women's leadership and is keen to use her skills to support that mission. Outside of work, you'll find her enjoying fencing, mixed martial arts, or archery.

Melanie Fernandez NSW

Melanie Fernandez is a prominent feminist advocate and activist with over a decade of experience leading membership-based and not-for-profit organisations. Currently, she's the Interim Co-CEO of Chief Executive Women and previously served as Deputy CEO at the NSW Council of Social Service. She's also a mum raising two young boys.

With a wealth of Board Director experience, Melanie has held key positions with the Women's Electoral Lobby Australia (as Chair), Rape and Domestic Violence Service Australia, and Reproductive Choice Australia. She's dedicated to empowering young women and fostering intergenerational learning at YWCA. While chairing WEL NSW, she successfully converted the Board to 50% women under 30.

A committed advocate for gender equality, Melanie has led delegations at several UN Commission on the Status of Women sessions. Her expertise includes strategy development, transformational change, and financial management. Driven by her father's journey as a refugee, she champions intersectional feminism and coalition building, successfully advocating for paid parental leave, affordable childcare, and women's health and financial security.

Shanna Souter NSW

Shanna is an executive with 25 years of experience across the property and infrastructure sectors and a transformative leader that uses her technical knowledge, strategic vision, pragmatism and collaborative approach to achieve results.

Currently the CFO of AVJennings, Shanna has also worked with Mirvac across internal audit, portfolio and business operations, and as the General Manager of Finance and Operations, building her technical skillsets and interpersonal skills when engaging with a broad range of stakeholder groups. She has been a member of the Property Council of NSW's Diversity Committee and mentoring program and has experience as a Non-Executive Director.

Shanna values transformation and challenging the status quo, and leading proactively in the name of continuous improvement. She hopes to utilise her skills and experiences to create meaningful change with the YWCA Board.

Yang Xu NSW

As an underrepresented female leader in the banking sector, Yang is passionate about championing female representation in critical decision-making roles. With over 14yrs experience as a risk manager, she boasts extensive expertise in leadership, audit and finance having won various accolades for her insights and mentorship. Currently, she is the director in charge of personal banking, business banking, and wealth management in Macquarie Group's Internal Audit team. She is a Chartered Accountant and has experience in the evaluation of highly regulated consumer products, the protection of vulnerable customers and managing global fiduciary businesses.

Yang's personal experiences witnessing the challenges faced by ethnic and vulnerable women have ignited her passion for women's rights and security which is directly aligned to YWCA's YeS 2026 mission.

Together with her husband (an avid property developer), Yang dreams of making Sydney properties more affordable and accessible for their 4-year-old and the future generations to come.