**The Observership Program**

**2026 Application Form**

Applications open: **Monday 30 June 2025 (9:00am) – Sunday 3 August 2025 (11:59pm)**

## **WELCOME**

Thank you for your interest in The Observership Program. This application form has been designed to help us understand your background, skills, and motivations for participating in our program.

Throughout this form, we ask for information about your professional experience, skills, and various aspects of your personal identity and background. These questions help us match candidates with host boards according to the preferences our boards have identified. Additionally, your responses will help us fulfil our mission and measure our progress in creating more diverse boardrooms across Australia. We value your time in providing this information and assure you that all responses are treated confidentially.

**Before you begin:**

* Review our [Program Handbook](https://www.observership.com.au/questions/when-will-the-2020-observership-applications-begin/)
* Watch our [Application Tips Video](https://vimeo.com/842687261/22c261a00c?share=copy)
* Check the [FAQs](https://www.observership.com.au/faqs/)

## **Application guidelines:**

* **Employer Support:** Please share our Observer Requirements Summary with your employer to ensure they understand your commitment to the program. **Click here**
* **Interview Availability:** Candidates advancing to the matching stage must be available for board interviews between October 1 and December 20, 2025.
* **Board Meeting Schedule:** Throughout the 2026 program year (January-December), participating boards meet 4-11 times annually. Meetings may be scheduled during mornings, lunchtimes, or evenings, majority are face to face and attending these meetings is a core part of your learning.
* **Application Time:** This application requires thoughtful consideration. We recommend setting aside at least 2 hours to craft quality responses that showcase your potential.
* **Save Your Work:** We strongly recommend drafting your responses in a separate Word document before submission. Once submitted, you cannot view or edit your application. While you can save progress on our platform before final submission, a separate backup provides additional security.
* **Application Fee:** A $50 non-refundable processing fee applies to all applications unless you have an exemption or coupon code. This fee covers administrative costs associated with your application. Payment instructions are provided at the end of this form.
* **Complete Application:** Please respond to all questions in the application form. Incomplete applications may impact your consideration for the program.

**Application Process Timeline:**

Thank you for your application. Please note that our review process takes time, and we appreciate your patience. You will receive confirmation of your application receipt by **August 7**, along with any requests for additional information if needed. The full timeline of the application process is detailed below. We look forward to being in touch soon.

* Application period: June 30 - August 3, 2025
* Notification of application receipt: 7 August 2025
* Application review: August 4 - September 1, 2025
* Notification of application status: September 3, 2025
* Observership Program interviews (if selected): September 4 – October 10, 2025
* Notification of application status: October 13, 2025
* Board interviews (if selected): October 14 – December 20, 2025
* Notification of application status: December 22, 2025

## **APPLICATION CHECKLIST**

**Please note**: A well-crafted, board-focused CV significantly enhances your chances of success and is part of the application review. Please follow our CV guidelines **here:**

Please ensure you have the following ready before completing this form:

* Headshot (high resolution, black and white, business attire)
* Board-ready CV (maximum 2 pages in PDF format)
* Time to thoughtfully complete the essay questions (approximately 60-90 minutes)
* Confirmation of employer support for your participation
* Confirmation of your availability for the entire program year. Please note board meetings and some training sessions require in-person attendance.

## **SECTION 1: PERSONAL INFORMATION**

### **Contact Details**

**Email address:** [*This will be used for all program communications*]

**Mobile number:**

**First name:**

**Last name:**

**Preferred first name (for name badge):**

### **Current Employment**

**Job title:**

**Employer:**

**Industry sector:** [Select one from the dropdown list]

**Industry Sector:** *Please select one sector from the following menu:*

* Accounting
* Advertising and Media
* Architecture
* Arts and Culture
* Banking and Financial Services
* Community Services and Development
* Consulting and Strategy
* Construction
* Data and Software
* Design
* Digital Marketing and Social Media
* Disability
* Education and Training
* Engineering
* Fundraising
* General Management
* Government/Policy
* HR and Recruitment
* Insurance
* IT
* Legal
* Logistics
* Manufacturing
* Marketing and Communications
* Medical and Healthcare
* Mining and Resources
* Not- For-Profit
* Philanthropy
* Project Management
* Real Estate and Property
* Sales
* Science and Technology
* Self Employed
* Other:

### **Location & Program**

**Which Program would you like to apply for: State:** [NSW/VIC/QLD/Other]

**Home address:**

* Street:
* Suburb:
* State:
* Postcode:

## **SECTION 2: AVAILABILITY AND COMMITMENT**

Please confirm your availability and commitment to engage in all aspects of the Program. Both host boards and the Program invest substantial resources in each participant throughout the selection process and The Observership Program. Candidates must be available for:

* Make yourself available for interview/s during selection process (September - December 2025): Yes or No
* Observership year | January – December 2026: Yes or No
* Board meetings throughout 2026: Yes or No
* Daytime meetings (as scheduled by your host board): Yes or No
* Evening meetings (as scheduled by your board): Yes or No
* Mandatory training sessions (11 sessions in 2026); Yes or No

**Commitment Note:** We understand that circumstances can change, but this program requires consistent participation throughout the year. Please reconsider applying if you are:

* Currently applying for positions interstate/overseas
* Exploring other development programs with overlapping schedules
* Anticipating significant commitments that would limit your participation (relocating, extensive travel, significant life changes)

## **SECTION 3: EXPERIENCE AND BACKGROUND**

### **Education**

**Highest qualification:**

**Institution:**

**Year completed:**

**Other qualifications:**

**Are you the first in your family to attend university?** Yes or No

### **Professional Experience**

*Note: Please provide complete information in your CV. This section captures key highlights only.*

**Previous board experience (if any):**

* Organisation:
* Role:
* Duration:

**Areas of professional expertise:** [Select your top three]

1. Primary expertise:
2. Secondary expertise:
3. Tertiary expertise:

**Professional expertise**

* Accounting
* Advertising and Media
* Architecture
* Arts and Culture
* Banking and Financial Services
* Community Services and Development
* Consulting and Strategy
* Construction
* Data and Software
* Design
* Digital Marketing and Social Media
* Disability
* Education and Training
* Engineering
* Fundraising
* General Management
* Government/Policy
* HR and Recruitment
* Insurance
* IT
* Legal
* Logistics
* Manufacturing
* Marketing and Communications
* Medical and Healthcare
* Mining and Resources
* Not- For-Profit
* Philanthropy
* Project Management
* Real Estate and Property
* Sales
* Science and Technology
* Self Employed
* Other:

### **Voluntary Experience**

**Have you had any voluntary involvement in the not-for-profit or community sector outside of your workplace?** Yes/No

If yes, please briefly describe: [Max 100 words]

**Are you associated with an NFP that might be interested in participating in our program as a host board?** Yes/No

If Yes: provide details:

## **SECTION 4: ESSAY QUESTIONS**

*These questions help us understand your motivations, experiences and potential contribution to a board. Please be concise and specific in your responses.*

**1. Why would you like to participate in The Observership Program? Please describe your specific goals for participating, including whether you aspire to become a board director in the future.** (Max 150 words)

**2. Drawing on your professional and lived experience, please tell us what you think you can learn from and contribute to a Not-For-Profit or government appointed board.** (Max 250 words)

**3. Please tell us of an instance either at work or within your community, where you have identified an issue and on your own initiative successfully taken action to either lead or effect change. Please do not include examples that fall within your job description.** (Max 250 words)

**4. What social change have you actively engaged in and why?** (Max 250 words)

**5. Please describe the significant personal achievement of which you are most proud and explain why.** (Max 200 words)

## **SECTION 5: DIVERSITY INFORMATION**

*This information helps us in our matching process and enables us to track our impact. All questions are optional and will be handled confidentially.*

### **Gender and Identity**

**Date of birth:**

**Citizenship Status:**

* Australian Citizen
* Permanent Resident
* Temporary Visa
* Other

**Gender:**

* Female
* Male
* Non-binary
* Prefer to self-describe: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Prefer not to say

**Pronouns:**

* She/Her
* He/Him
* They/Them
* Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Linked In account:**

### **Cultural Background**

**Do you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?**

* No
* Yes, Aboriginal
* Yes, Torres Strait Islander
* Yes, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
* Prefer not to say

**Do you identify as culturally and linguistically diverse?** Yes, No, Prefer not to say

If yes, this includes:

* Born overseas
* Parents born overseas
* Speak a language other than English at home

**Cultural heritage:** Select all that apply.

* Indigenous Australian or Torres Strait Islander
* Australian
* African
* Asian
* Eastern European
* Indian
* Middle Eastern
* New Zealander
* North American
* Northern European
* South American
* Southern European
* United Kingdom
* Western European
* Prefer not to answer
* Other, please specify

### **Accessibility and Adjustments**

*The Observership Program is committed to creating an inclusive experience for all participants. Sharing information about adjustment needs helps us design accessible experiences.*

*Many participants benefit from adjustments including those they may not traditionally classify as "disability accommodations". Here are some examples: wheelchair access, advance materials, flexible scheduling, digital participation options, sensory space, support animal and specific communication preferences.*

*By understanding everyone's needs early in the process, we can:*

* *Ensure host boards are prepared with accessible meeting spaces and materials*
* *Design training sessions that work for all learning styles and needs*
* *Create a more comfortable, effective experience for everyone involved*

*Any information shared is confidential, implemented only with your input and used solely to enhance your experience and the Program's accessibility.*

**Do you identify as a person with disability?** Yes, No, Prefer not to say

**Are you eligible for NDIS?** Yes, No, Prefer not to say

**Please advise any accessibility adjustments or accommodations that will support your full participation in the Program:**

## **SECTION 6: SECTOR INTERESTS**

**Which sectors are you most interested in?** [Select all that apply]

* Animal Welfare
* Arts and Culture \*\*
* Agribusiness
* Business, Professional Associations and Unions
* Disability
* Education and Research
* Employment, Development and Housing
* Environment
* Health
* Indigenous
* International Development
* JCA Organisations – For Sydney Program ONLY
* Law, Advocacy and Politics
* Philanthropic Bodies
* Social and Community Services
* Sport and Recreation
* Other (Please specify other sectors of interest)

*If you selected Arts and Culture:* *Please tell us about your connection to this sector. This could include professional experience, personal interest, volunteer involvement, audience attendance or any engagement with the arts and culture sector. You don't need to be a professional.* (Max 150 words)

**Are there any sectors you would prefer NOT to be placed with?** [Select all that apply]

* Arts and Culture
* Agribusiness
* Business, Professional Associations and Unions
* Disability
* Education and Research
* Employment, Development and Housing
* Environment and Animal Welfare
* Health
* Indigenous
* International Development
* JCA Organisations – For Sydney Program ONLY
* Law, Advocacy and Politics
* Philanthropic Bodies
* Religion
* Social and Community Services
* Sport and Recreation
* Other (Please specify other sector )

**Are there any organisations where you may have a conflict of interest?**

**Please note:**

*While we ask about sectors of interest, the matching process is driven by board requirements and preferences. The primary focus of the Program is providing governance experience. All participating boards offer valuable learning opportunities regardless of their size or sector. Candidates who are open to diverse board placements are likely to gain the most from the Program. However, your interests will be taken into consideration.*

## **SECTION 7: REFERENCE AND DISCLOSURES**

### **Professional Reference**

Please provide one professional reference we may contact if you are matched with a board. You will be advised if a reference check is required.

**First name:**

**Last name:**

**Position:**

**Relationship to you:**

**Email:**

**Phone:**

### **Program Discovery**

**How did you learn about The Observership Program?**

* AICD
* ARIA / PPCA
* JCA
* Asian Leadership Project
* Australian Disability Network (AusDN)
* South West Region network
* Corporate Partner (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Previous Participant (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Social Media
* Word of Mouth (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## **SECTION 8: REQUIRED DOCUMENTS AND BIO**

### **Professional Bio**

Please provide a **third-person biography** (maximum 100 words) highlighting your current role, key achievements, not-for-profit involvement, and personal interests. If selected for the Program, this bio will appear in the 2026 Handbook and related publications. [See bio examples](https://www.observership.com.au/bio-guide).

### **Required Uploads**

**Professional Photo:** [Upload] *Requirements: Black and white headshot in business attire. See* [*headshot guidelines*](https://www.observership.com.au/headshot-guide)*.*

**Board-Ready CV:** [Upload] *Requirements: Maximum 2 pages, PDF format. See* [*CV guidelines*](https://www.observership.com.au/cv-guide)*.*

## **SECTION 9: APPLICATION FEE**

A non-refundable application processing fee of $50 applies to all applications unless exempted.

**Payment method:**

* Credit Card
* Partner Coupon Code: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## **TERMS & CONDITIONS**

* I confirm that all information provided is accurate and complete
* I have reviewed and accept the [Terms and Conditions](https://www.observership.com.au/terms)
* I understand that providing false information may disqualify my application

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_