

Candidate Statement (Ordinary Director Role, 2025 AASW Elections)

Candidate: Michael Elwan

Membership: Accredited Social Worker (AASW #681846)

I am nominating for an Ordinary Director position on the AASW Board because I believe in the Association's vital role in setting professional benchmarks, safeguarding ethics, and leading national conversations on social justice. My personal and professional journey has equipped me with a unique combination of lived experience, governance leadership, academic rigour, and cultural humility that I believe will contribute to the Board's ability to guide the profession with integrity and vision.

I was born in Alexandria, Egypt, and migrated to Australia in my late twenties. My early life was shaped by caregiving responsibilities for my father, who became blind after a stroke, and later by the profound loss of my mother to suicide. These experiences instilled in me both empathy and determination, as well as a first-hand awareness of systemic inequities and cultural barriers in health and social services. As a man from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) background, I bring to the Board both a lived understanding of marginalisation and a vision for how our profession can lead in transforming systems to be more inclusive and responsive.

Academically, I have pursued a broad and deep education to support my work as a social worker and governance leader. My qualifications include a Bachelor of Business (Accounting), an MBA with Distinction, a Graduate Certificate in Mental Health, a Master of Social Work, a Diploma in Psychology, and two MicroMasters in Leadership and Organisational Psychology. I am currently a PhD candidate at Charles Sturt University researching lived experience leadership in mental health. These studies provide me with strong financial literacy, advanced critical thinking, and the ability to integrate professional practice with governance and policy contexts.

Professionally, I have held senior roles in major community organisations. At Richmond Wellbeing (now RichMind WA), I was General Manager of Outreach Services, overseeing 10 large services, 75 staff, and more than 1,600 consumers annually. At Uniting WA, I served as the first Contracts Manager, responsible for governance and compliance across contracts spanning disability, youth, family, and mental health. These roles demanded independent

judgment, accountability, and the capacity to analyse complex proposals – all key responsibilities of a Director under the Corporations Act and the ACNC Governance Standards.

Currently, I am the Founder and Director of [Lived Experience Solutions \(LEXs\)](#), a social enterprise offering counselling, consultancy, supervision, and training. Through LEXs, I integrate lived experience, cultural humility, and professional practice to build workforce capability and support systemic transformation. Leading this enterprise has enhanced my governance, risk management, and financial oversight skills – essential qualities for contributing to the sustainability and accountability of the AASW.

I am also engaged nationally and at state level in governance and advisory roles. I am a member of the WA Mental Health Commission's Lived Experience Advisory Group, the Manna Institute's LEAG, and both the WA State Committee and National Lived Experience Advisory Panel of Suicide Prevention Australia. I also serve on the Board of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (**AHPRA**) and am the National Writer-in-Residence for the ALIVE National Centre for Mental Health Research Translation. These appointments demonstrate my ability to collaborate constructively, focus strategically, and contribute at the highest levels of governance.

Alongside governance, I contribute actively to the profession's visibility and influence. I have presented at major conferences, including the 2024 WA Mental Health Conference, where I spoke about building a pipeline of lived-experience leaders, and the 2025 National Suicide Prevention Conference on intergenerational dialogue in CaLD families. I also maintain an active professional presence on LinkedIn, where I share reflections with over 4,000 followers on mental health, cultural diversity, and leadership, modelling constructive communication and representing the values of social work publicly.

If elected to the Board, my priorities will be to:

1. Strengthen cultural responsiveness and inclusivity within AASW, ensuring that CaLD practitioners and communities are fully recognised in our policies and practices.
2. Reinforce the profession's leadership role in mental health and suicide prevention nationally, highlighting the ethical, systemic, and human rights contributions of social work.
3. Support strong governance, financial sustainability, and accountability of the Association, ensuring decisions are legally sound and strategically focused.

It would be an honour to serve as an AASW Director. I bring to the Board a blend of lived experience, cultural awareness, professional expertise, governance leadership, and academic depth. I am committed to working collaboratively with fellow Directors and members to ensure that our Association continues to thrive, representing social workers with integrity and vision while advancing social justice and wellbeing for all Australians.

Michael Elwan

Founder & Director | Lived Experience Solutions (LEXs)

PhD Candidate (Mental Health)

BCom (Accounting) | MBA (Distinction) | MBusLead

MOrgPsych | GradCertMentHlth | DipPsych

Accredited Social Worker (AASW)

 0411 198 607 |  www.lexs.com.au |  [LinkedIn Profile](#)