

What is the Participant Advisory Group?

The PAG is made up of members who are currently or have been our participants. We are looking to add more members to our PAG. To learn more about our PAG visit our website or click [here](#).

Meetings are held quarterly and are an opportunity to contribute your perspective and share your experiences at Forrest Personnel. You can also phone 1800 224 548 to find out more about our PAG.



A Good News Story Meet Joshua

We are thrilled to share the success story of Joshua, who joined Forrest Personnel at our Margaret River site in August 2023. From the start, Joshua impressed our consultants with his immaculate manners and gentle personality. Joshua was recovering from burn-out from a

previous role as a kitchenhand in aged care. Together, we identified his goals and aspirations for future work. Although he was eager to enhance his employability skills, Joshua felt unsure about entering the customer-facing world of hospitality due to a lack of confidence.

A perfect opportunity arose at the [Margaret River Fudge Factory](#), offering a position that involved fudge production, customer service, and coffee making. Our team worked closely with Joshua, providing support throughout the application process. Despite challenges due to a change in ownership, our persistence paid off, and Joshua was offered the position!

This role not only builds on Joshua's kitchen experience but also provides valuable new skills, including operating the cash register, customer service, and becoming a barista. These skills are particularly valuable in a tourist town like Margaret River.

Joshua's 'sweet' success story is a testament to his fine qualities and our team's commitment to matching the right participant with the right employer.

MEET THE PAG MEMBER

Rowan Parry

Hi I am Rowan Parry & I am a Dyslexic, Bi-Polar, middle aged man who also suffers from Darier's Disease (Google it!), Degenerative Arthritis of the Spine & other joints.

After a full knee replacement in 2015 I was having trouble finding any work that would take me on.

Chris from Forrest Personnel in Busselton got me an interview with Coles Busselton as a Part-Time Checkout operator. At Busselton Coles I had a great support team around me, so was able to cope with the work & my conditions. However, when COVID hit in 2020 I had moved to Bunbury Coles where I didn't have a lot of support. When I realised I was not coping, I remembered how much Forrest Personnel

had helped me develop coping mechanisms so I sought them out. With my back degenerating further it was not possible for me to return to work. Thanks to Forrest Personnel's amazing Psychosocial Support Program and the work my wife Julie put in with Kerry and others I now find myself on a Disability Pension & my wife Julie is now receiving a Carer's Allowance.

Thanks to Forrest Personnel for allowing me to continue in PAG, even though I am no longer a participant in the programs. Talking with other PAG members about planned trips and enjoyable things helps with my mental health so I consider PAG as being a valuable tool in my acceptance of my limitations and finding things that I can do to make life more enjoyable.



Healthy Communication Tips from Emily Edgerton- Warburton

Positive human regard and reciprocity are important in human friendship, communities and for relationships to grow. There are strategies we all have the power to use.

1. Emotional awareness. Connect with how you feel and be aware of this when seeking to connect with other people. Ask others how they are feeling before connecting with them and be mindful during your interactions.
2. Mirror, Validate and Empathise:
 - To mirror, copy what you hear, in a neutral tone, using the exact words, don't add or take anything, don't use sarcasm or add your own flourishes.
 - To validate, ask if what you heard was correct and if there is further information. If there is further information, mirror this as well.
 - To empathise, try to identify the feeling / emotion and check if you have this right.
3. In a healthy situation, you can ask the other person to Mirror, Validate and Empathise with you!
4. It is inappropriate to mirror, validate and empathise with someone who is verbally attacking or abusing you. They need professional assistance and need to be reported to an external authority. You can assist by journalling what they have said, in bullet points, with a date, time and witnesses, if any, and providing this to the authorities.
5. Use 'I' statements. Don't blame or criticise the other person, saying YOU... (did this) YOU.... (made me feel). Stick with how you feel and name your feelings. Remember your thoughts, feelings and emotions are YOURS. I feel.... I sense....
6. If you feel that your values are being compromised, a good framework to use is;
Connect with your senses.
Then say: I (feel, see, hear) that you are / have been (name the behaviour)
and I am willing to (name what you are willing to do)
but I am not willing to (name what you are not willing to do).



If you have any need to further understand these concepts, there is a wonderful machine called Google where key words can be entered for an abundance of helpful information! .

WINGS WITHOUT BARRIERS

.....HAYDEN'S STORY

Remember when we were kids, that we were told we can be whatever we wanted to be? It's so ironic and naive now when I think about it. I come from generations of pilots from my great grandfather fighting in WWII to my Papa flying to clients for Parnell Transport and I cannot fly for the Royal Flying Doctor Service because CASA won't medically clear myself just because I'm Autistic.

But let's take a step back and let me tell who I am. I'm based out of Esperance on the South Eastern Coast of WA and I've been a participant of Forrest Personnel since I was 17. I've started from pushing trolleys until mid-2020 (the cursed year, damn you COVID!!) for Forrest Personnel to detailing farm machinery for Farmers Centre Esperance to my current job as an Airport Operations Assistant for the Shire of Esperance for the past year.

Working as autistic employee isn't easy. I've had to deal from other coworkers scheming to get myself fired to having support workers not supporting me and being pro boss to ableism in the workplace and not willing to consider my needs and my workstyle. I think its important to hire neurodiverse but they should be inclusive, sustainable and welcoming. Not a "shareholder hire".

This why I've been working on Wings Without Barriers for the past two years. To educate the public about the autistic community, promote true inclusion and push for true change. Not the "OMG, Let's talk about all the negative traits and stereotype the autistic community for a month and move on" type of inclusion. To open pathways for autistic pilots so they can be medically certified for their commercial pilots' license. I've spoken to schools and community groups about being autistic and unofficially became the first autistic pilot to fly around Australia solo last year.

I fly for fun in my spare time and done so for the past seven years and owned my current aircraft which I flew around aus for two years and love every second of it. Aviation has been in my life on and off for about 20 years and its thanks to my Papa (my Mum's Dad) for getting me into it. I even record my flights sometimes into vlogs and share my adventures onto YouTube (quick little plug, check Wings Without Barriers out and follow me on Facebook and Instagram. *wink wink nudge nudge*). Aviation is a way for me to escape the carp I have to deal with and look down on the world. I can choose where I want to go and no one can stop me and explore off the beaten track.

So what's my goal for the PAG? To ensure that participants are genuinely supported, have systems in place to protect them from workplaces that are using the participant as a shareholder hire and give Forrest Personnel feedback to allow them to become better and more inclusive to the neurodiverse.

