

LEADERSHIP VICTORIA

LEADERSHIP FOR AN INCLUSIVE,
EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY



2023 Williamson Community Leadership Program participants at the Closing Immersive in Marysville, Victoria.

WILLIAMSON COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

The Williamson Community Leadership Program is a unique, immersive, 10-month long program for experienced leaders. For 35 years, the program has brought together a diverse group of leaders from business, government, not-for-profit, academia and philanthropy.

Often described as life-changing, the Williamson Community Leadership Program expands the way leaders see the world and transforms the way they exercise leadership. It pushes them to experiment – continually challenging how and why they lead – while building a trusted, life-long network. Program graduates, or Williamson Fellows, join our Alumni community of almost 7,000 leaders from across sectors, industries, backgrounds, identities and life experiences.



SCHOLARSHIPS

SUPPORTING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER LEADERS



Photo Source: Debbie Shiell (WCLP '23)

Leadership Victoria recognises that we live and work on the traditional lands and waters of First Nations peoples across Victoria, and that these were never ceded. We recognise that connection to Culture, Country and Community is a right for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, along with self-determination and cultural safety.

We are committed to Reconciliation. This includes seeking guidance from First Nations Alumni in LV's work, privileging First Nations knowledge and experience in our activities, and using our programs and networks to advance First Nations rights and recognition.

Scholarships provide life-changing opportunities to emerging and established leaders from marginalised communities, who may not otherwise be able to access personal and professional development programs.

One special type of scholarship was set up six years ago by a group of 2018 Williamson Community Leadership Program (WCLP) Fellows, who formed the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarship Advisory Committee, committed to funding and promoting participation in the WCLP and other LV programs by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders. The efforts of these committed WCLP '18 leaders has ensured strong participation by First Nations leaders in the WCLP in recent years.

Their efforts also catalysed the contribution of an annual scholarship by the Eastern Health Foundation as part of their RAP commitments, supporting an additional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leader to undertake the WCLP.



"Prior to LV, I never wanted to take on an executive role in a board or a committee. I was happy to be non-executive. I've learned that it's not about being that orator and having a great speech, it's about how you need to corral people ... to bring them along, to have them take ownership of any adaptive challenges as well."

MATTHEW EVERITT

2021 Williamson Fellow
Founder, Dreamtime Art Creative Consultancy
Scholarship Recipient





“Scholarships that create opportunities for First Nations leaders to access the Williamson Community Leadership Program are a genuine and substantive effort towards Reconciliation. We see the leaders flourish, and also contribute so much to the program, while forging long-lasting, trusted connections with a wide range of leaders. We truly appreciate everyone who contributes to the scholarships, and encourage others to join the effort.”

KATHERINE ELLIS

2007 Williamson Fellow
CEO, Leadership Victoria

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

JACQUELINE WATKINS

2021 Williamson Fellow
First Nations Engagement Lead,
Consumer Action Law Centre

MATTHEW EVERITT

2021 Williamson Fellow
Founder, Dreamtime Art Creative Consultancy

LEIGH SAUNDERS

2023 Williamson Fellow
Co-CEO, Aborigines Advancement League

JOE MURFET

2023 Williamson Fellow
Manager - Aboriginal Partnerships and
Engagement,
Victorian Govt Department of Transport

ISOBEL MORPHY-WALSH

2024 Williamson Participant
Healing Foundation Youth Advisory Group Member



Photo Source: Debbie Shiell (WCLP '23)

SUPPORT THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Scholarships for LV programs create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders to build their leadership capability, and position them to access and influence LV's wide, trusted network of leaders, organisations, stakeholders and communities.

Scholarships also create benefits far beyond the individual leader - as each scholarship recipient deeply considers and transforms their own leadership impact, their experiences enrich the program for all participants. We are very grateful to everyone who contributes tax-deductible donations to scholarship funds.

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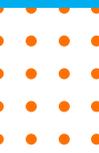
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT US

 www.leadershipvictoria.org

 +61 3 9070 9893

 info@leadershipvictoria.org

LEADERSHIP STORY: A CHANGED WORLDVIEW



Among several ‘aha’ moments during the Williamson Community Leadership Program, one stood out for Jacquie Watkins, a descendant of Jingili/Mudburra people of Elliott in the Northern Territory, who was born on Larrakia Nation, Darwin, and raised on Arrernte lands, at Mparntwe (Alice Springs).

In the past, the Aboriginal advocate would enter meetings with a solution. The program taught her about adaptive leadership, which takes a closer look at what happened and how first.

“Rather than just power in with solutions, you find out why and how this happened and what the environment is, working with all concerned for a better outcome,” Jacquie explains. “That’s a technique that I use now every day in whatever I do.”

Williamson was life changing for Jacquie, who has always been a strong advocate for her people in education, health, and family violence. She was the West Metro Dhelk Dja Regional Coordinator for the Victorian Government’s Aboriginal family violence program, Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way, and is now the First Nations Engagement Lead with the Consumer Action Law Centre.

“Rather than just power in with solutions, you find out why and how this happened and what the environment is, working with all concerned for a better outcome. That’s a technique that I use now every day in whatever I do.”

Before the program, Jacquie didn’t see herself as a leader and hoped it would strengthen her leadership skills and teach her about her strengths and weaknesses.

But it was so much more. She went from “what on earth am I doing here?” to having the confidence to think, “OK I know that I’m a leader and my leadership skills are very important for the community.”

Jacquie has since accepted Board positions with Koondee Woonga-gat Toor-rong and the Kirrip Aboriginal corporation in Melton South, but still finds time for Ikebana (Japanese flower arranging) and macrame.

She says the program also taught her the importance of targeting her focus and “delving into myself” to understand more about how she is shaped by her history and culture. “I’ve completely changed the way I look at things,” she says. “The outcomes are so much better.”

JACQUELINE WATKINS

2021 Williamson Fellow
First Nations Engagement Lead
Consumer Action Law Centre



LEADERSHIP STORY: LEADING WITH AUTHENTICITY

“The Williamson Community Leadership Program is not a program that you can just do and come out the other end as a cookie cutter leader.”

Joe Murfet is a Jingili-Mudburra man who was born and raised on Larrakia Country in the Northern Territory and has been living and working on Wurundjeri Country since 2004. He is also a decade long public servant in the Victorian Government, and currently the Manager of First Peoples Partnerships and Engagement at the Department of Transport and Planning and was looking for a new experience when he decided to undertake the Williamson Community Leadership Program. For Joe, WCLP was not “not a program that you can just do it and come out the other end as a cookie cutter leader”, but a journey.

During his time in WCLP, what was clear to Joe was a “really strong sense of responsibility for putting First Peoples first, a sense of giving back to a community that has been so good to me, but also that real gratitude and remembering where you came from and who you are”. Joe explains that his drive to lead, and ultimately his leadership purpose, arise from his various layers of identity; he describes his leadership as a reflection of the different parts of community and family that he is involved in.

Prior to the program, Joe believed he knew what good leadership looked like, often modelling himself after leaders that he looked up to. He described this as a “habit of trying to emulate what I liked in that person and picking out those leadership traits”, believing that if it worked for them, it would also work for him.



However, during WCLP he quickly realised this was not the case, finding it “confirmed that my way, more often than not, is enough” without having to emulate or replicate anyone else. Reflecting on the program, Joe describes the importance of being immersed in the WCLP community “because you can see difference points of view, hear different stories, and not only the challenges but also you learn about what works well and you think differently about how to operate in your part of the world.”

WCLP has been a year of reflection, and as part of his leadership purpose, Joe is considering different ways to bring a First Peoples perspective and add value to different parts of the community outside of his government base.

As a Williamson Fellow, Joe will continue to advocate for Traditional Owner engagement and opportunities in all areas of WCLP, starting with continuing his Collective work on Reconciliation as well as being involved in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarships Committee.

JOE MURFET

2023 Williamson Fellow
Manager - Aboriginal Partnerships and Engagement,
Victorian Govt Department of Transport

