



**2019-20**  
**Leaders for  
Geelong**  
Yearbook



# Acknowledgement

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The Committee for Geelong acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's First Nations people and the Traditional Custodians of the land and waterways. We pay our respects to the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners of this land, their Elders past, present and emerging.

## Government Partner



## Major Partners



## Scholarship & Grant Providers

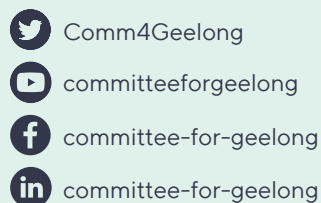


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# Committee for Geelong Chair and CEO Message

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**The 2019- 20 Leaders for Geelong Graduates completed their program during a time of significant global upheaval. Undeterred, the 31 participants committed to their community projects and held onto their desire to generate social impact.**

Leadership during times of crisis requires a flexible and agile response. It also requires strong resilience.

In early 2020, Committee for Geelong Members and Leaders for Geelong Alumni heard the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK CVO MC speak about leadership in times of crisis. Sir Peter described the need for calm leadership and provided recommendations to attendees. Little did we know at that time what was ahead of us.

The 2019-20 Leaders for Geelong Graduates completed their program during a time of significant global upheaval. Undeterred, the 31 participants committed to their community projects and held onto their desire to generate social impact.

The Leaders for Geelong Program is designed to build regional leadership capability and networks; it embraces diversity, and brings together people from across the corporate, government and not-for-profit sectors. Since 2006, the Committee for Geelong has provided various leadership learning opportunities to over 450 individuals. The 2019-20 graduates join an impressive alumni, with one thing in common: a desire to help design Geelong's future with a focus on both economic and social prosperity and opportunity.

We acknowledge and admire the resilience the 2019-20 Leaders for Geelong graduates demonstrated during 2020 and give recognition to the participants' employer organisations and family and friends who supported them.

We would like to use this opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of our valued Committee for Geelong members, organisations and stakeholders who assisted us during 2020.

We also thank the Victorian Government and the Minister for Regional Development the Hon. Marie-Anne Thomas through Regional Development Victoria for their ongoing financial assistance. This assistance ensures we are able to keep the program cost-effective for our community and continue delivering to the high standard we expect.

We are also grateful to our Leadership Portfolio sponsors, who not only provide financial support but also assist with Leaders for Geelong recruitment. The sponsors are:

- Victorian Regional Channels Authority
- WorkSafe
- Agriculture Victoria
- Bisinella
- Geelong Connected communities
- Kane Constructions
- The Hugh Williamson Foundation
- Victorian Regional Women's Network

To the Leadership Portfolio Team, Vicki Strachan and previous team members, Janelle Meyes (2019) and Margaret Foulkes (2020), we appreciate all of the work that you've provided both in the organisation and delivery of the 2019-20 Leaders for Geelong Program.

When reading through the comments in the Yearbook from graduates, it demonstrates their exponential personal growth as a result of the program, as well as a richness in relationships with their peers. They have developed resilience all the while being exposed to issues that the region faces and recognising the importance of collaboration to make change.

***Jennifer Cromarty, CEO and Clive Pugh, Chair***



# Leadership Portfolio Team Message

Now in its 15th year, the Leaders for Geelong community leadership program is proud to work with some of the brightest and most capable regional leaders. The 2019-20 Leaders for Geelong Program participants have also experienced the challenges of COVID-19, where their leadership skills were tested in unexpected ways.

While the Geelong region is an incredibly resilient community, many complex challenges remain that requires leadership through authenticity, resilience and adaptability.

During 2020, COVID-19 significantly impacted this cohort, and while they attempted to complete their community projects of regional significance, two projects were replaced, challenges arose such as home schooling, working from home and communicating while apart. They successfully adapted, worked together and presented their projects at a virtual event by year's end. More than 300 people registered to watch the presentation in December and the virtual presentation significantly increased accessibility and reach of the event. We congratulate the group on their achievement.

The 2020 Community Projects were:

- **Accessible and Inclusive Geelong:** Development of an implementation framework and plan for Accessible and Inclusive Geelong Feasibility Study (Deakin University)
- **Active Geelong:** Creation of an Active Events Guide (Active Geelong)
- **Alumni Mentoring Program:** Development of a mentoring program framework for implementation (Northern Futures)
- **Healthy Geelong:** Investigation of non-auditory impacts of the construction and traffic noise in Geelong and recognise environmental noise as a health risk (Deakin University)

- **Loneliness in Geelong:** Research contributing factors to loneliness to inform recommendations to address loneliness in the Geelong community, particularly in young adults (Barwon Health)
- **Promoting Djilang:** Contribute to the local awareness of Djilang by embedding Wadawurrung cultural heritage within the Greater Geelong region (Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation)

A lot of time goes into the planning and implementation of the program and we are tremendously grateful to the project champions and to local organisations and business leaders who donate their time to educate and share their stories so openly with our participants. These collaborative, generous and long standing partnerships contribute to the rich offering of the program.

The Leaders for Geelong program could not take place without the generous support of our portfolio sponsors.

We would also like to thank our highly experienced facilitators for supporting this program with their expertise, dynamic learning, and insights. Thank you for the support you have provided to the Leadership Portfolio Team throughout the program. A full list of seminars and events are detailed in this yearbook.

The richness of Committee for Geelong leadership programs continue to be in the relationships forged by the participants, the reflections on their personal development and the leadership learnings generously shared by our city-region's leaders. These revered individuals donate their time because they believe in giving back to our community and supporting the future generation of leaders, for which the Leadership Portfolio team is also very grateful.



**While the Geelong region is an incredibly resilient community, many complex challenges remain that requires leadership through, resilience and adaptability.**

Finally, we are delighted to welcome the 2019-20 graduates into our respected alumni network that comprises over 450 individuals. This group of outstanding alumni bring together wisdom, passion, commitment, and intellect that will benefit the city-region. Our call to you is to harness this opportunity and work together for a more connected and inclusive society.

## ***Leadership Portfolio Team***



**We have all become more resilient, determined and energised to make a positive impact in our community.**

# Ambassadors' Statement

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The 2019-20 Leaders for Geelong participants have demonstrated unwavering commitment over the last two years.

The program kicked off in 2019 with an opening residential, where over two days the group heard the stories and learnings from leaders in the Geelong community, and importantly where bonds began to form between program participants as we learnt about one another; what drove us, our vulnerabilities and our aspirations, both personally and for the Geelong community.

Throughout the first year, the group met at least monthly as we continued to hear from a number of leaders from the Geelong region including CEOs, experts in a variety of fields, correctional officers, councillors, politicians, educators and leadership subject matter experts. Learnings included how to be vulnerable and authentic, how to have difficult conversations, increasing our self-awareness through understanding our behaviours, and how great leaders provide support and bring the best out in one another. The site visits were a real highlight for the cohort as we got to see first-hand the wonderful work being done in the community.

In 2020, the group was faced with the unprecedented challenges of a pandemic, which significantly changed the second year of the program. The group pulled together, harnessing learnings from the first year of the program. The project year is usually a challenge enough, and the impacts of COVID-19 provided an additional curveball for the groups. Some projects were impacted more than others and two of the six groups had new projects assigned as the original projects were not deemed viable in the new environment we were operating in.

Given the environment in which they were produced, we are all extremely proud of the projects delivered.

They include:

- Accessible and Inclusive Geelong working with Deakin University on implementing recommendations to ensure everyone can have a great experience in Geelong;
- Active Geelong, which developed an active events guide;
- Alumni Mentoring Program, which created a blueprint for the development of a mentoring program at Northern Futures;
- Healthy Geelong, which looked into the impact of construction noise on health;
- Loneliness in Geelong, which researched the state of loneliness in Geelong with Barwon Health; and
- Promoting Djilang, which increased awareness and recognition of Wadawurrung Traditional Owners in the region.

Whilst we have all experienced different journeys over the two years that we have been part of the Leaders for Geelong program, we have all become more resilient, determined and energised to make a positive impact in our community.

***2019-20 Ambassadors Dina Dasic and Adam Fratantaro***

# Accessible and Inclusive Geelong

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**The Accessible and Inclusive Geelong Project Team has worked with Deakin University and Network co-leader of HOME, Professor Richard Tucker, to begin development of an implementation plan as recommended in the 'Accessible and Inclusive Geelong Feasibility Study'.**

This study envisions a city designed so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people, regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.

The Project Team adopted the following staged approach:

- Understand the Feasibility Study and its recommendations;
- Undertake stakeholder mapping and engagement to identify those organisations and individuals who can support implementation;
- Conduct an environmental scan; and
- Develop an implementation plan that has the commitment of a local agency/ agencies.

The Project Team commenced initial consultation with key stakeholders to gain insights and develop awareness or existing knowledge of any commitment to the recommendations.

The plan was for these consultations to inform the work to develop an implementation strategy and gain commitment from agencies, to support implementation of one or more priority areas. Unfortunately, COVID-19 limited the Project Team's ability to conduct quality engagement with organisations working within the disability and inclusion space. Therefore, this Project was placed on hold until January 2021.

*L-r: Lachlan Hodgson, Shona Casey-Eland, Kellie Marsland, Aimee Chambers, Adam Fratantaro*







## Shona Casey-Eland

*Chief Executive Officer,  
YMCA Geelong*

The Leaders for Geelong Program has provided an opportunity to reflect on my leadership attitudes and focus on areas of improvement that will contribute to being a better person, leader and community member.

I had invested a lot of time in the success of the Y and was looking for a program that could contribute to personal growth and provide opportunities to forge networks within the Geelong Region. The Leaders for Geelong program certainly did both.

The program provided some amazing opportunities to hear first-hand from inspiring community leaders and the leadership coaches and mentors. The lessons and leadership principles from the sessions have absolutely been transferrable to my role at the Y and life. I think I live by the gem of wisdom from facilitator, Jem Fuller, "Control, Influence and Accept" CIA principle and this assists in leading my team with a clear purpose and passion to achieve community impact.

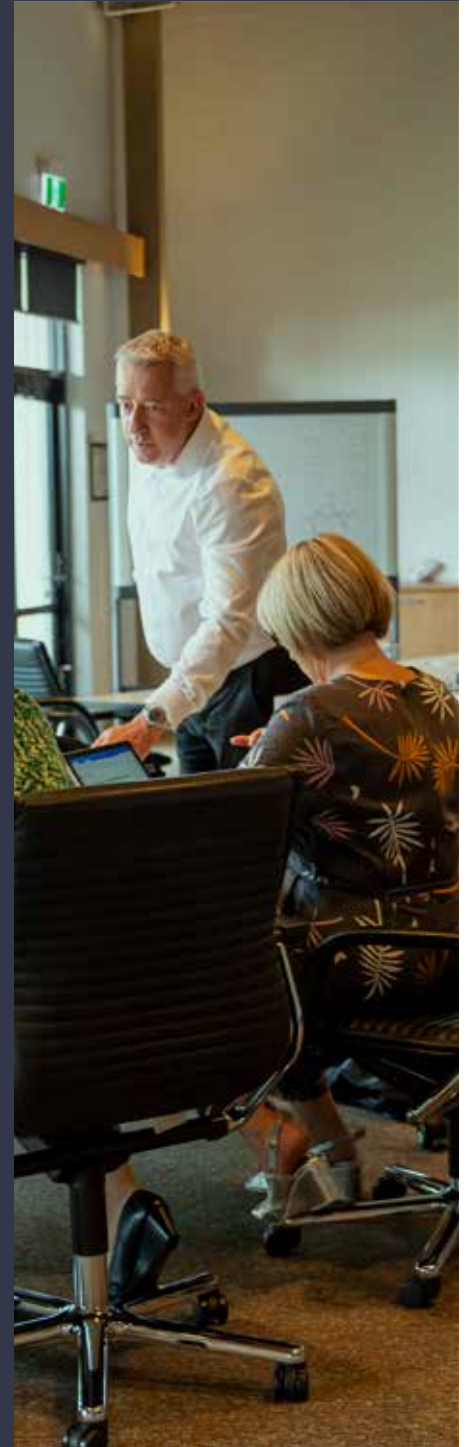


## Aimee Chambers

*Product Owner - Recovery,  
WorkSafe Victoria*

Relocating to the Greater Geelong area with WorkSafe in early 2018, I soon realised that I wanted to learn more about my new community. Exposure to the culture, industry, social and economic fabric of the region, combined with establishing a diverse professional network and building on my own leadership skills through Leaders for Geelong, was the perfect opportunity for me.

I was privileged to meet and connect with a wonderful group of committed local leaders, from whom I learnt as much about myself as I did about the region through the Leaders for Geelong Program experience. The last two years has helped me to embed my authentic leadership skills, and enabled me to question and build on others, particularly when it comes to prioritising my time and effort and ensuring that I can be at my best in all of my roles in life.







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## Adam Fratantaro

***Project Coordinator –  
Reconnect Program  
Diversitat***

The Leaders for Geelong Program has allowed me to increase my understanding of the issues facing Geelong, build upon my leadership skills and knowledge, and most importantly allowed me to connect with a great network of people. This program has given me the confidence to back myself and my leadership abilities.

In working on our team project with COVID-19 having a major impact, I learnt to be flexible in my thinking and to explore all options but to be realistic with what we could deliver.

Through involvement in the Leaders for Geelong program I am now more actively involved on the Norlane Community Centre Board, and I look forward to continuing to make a contribution to the Geelong community.



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## Lachlan Hodgson

***General Manager Services &  
Customer Engagement,  
Leisure Networks***

Through my experience of the Leaders for Geelong program, the importance of 'community' has only been strengthened and the need for strong authentic leadership, has proven to be paramount.

There is no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact on our cohort of leaders, however, as it has been in the broader community, the pandemic provided an opportunity for all of us to put into practice what we had learnt during the first year of the program. Leadership qualities such as empathy, resilience, support, patience and a willingness to step up when others were struggling, all shone through during a time of uncertainty.

It has been an incredibly rewarding two years and the Leaders for Geelong program highlighted and educated me on the many fantastic initiatives and priorities within the greater Geelong area. It has been inspiring to see and hear from leaders across multiple industries, that we want and must keep having a positive impact.

I leave the program with a greater understanding of myself, a greater understanding of the community in which I work in and an unwavering drive to want to improve both in the years to come.



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## Kellie Marsland

***Team Leader - Jobactive, Gforce  
Employment Solutions***

The Leaders for Geelong program allowed me to build my confidence as a leader, and allowed me to trust my instincts and ensure my voice is heard.

I have gained a better understanding of Geelong as a region, including my part in advocating for the things I am passionate about.

The participants I have met during this program have also been a valuable resource for me personally and professionally for tackling difficult situations in the workplace and juggling personal life events such as a wedding and pregnancy over the duration of our time together.

I will continue to use the skills I have obtained from this course into my future career and am very glad that I was involved in the Leaders for Geelong program.

# Active Geelong

## The Active Geelong project set out to produce an Active Events Guide, which could then be used by event organisers to incorporate an exercise or physical activity component into their event.

The event guide needed to be able to satisfy the needs of corporate event planners as well as community event planners, covering areas such as transport and parking, venue selection and food and drink while also providing some information around the benefits of incorporating exercise or physical activity into an event.

Throughout these discussions and research, it was identified that an insert containing a sample exercise program would also assist event organisers by providing a basic exercise program that could be easily incorporated during a break in the event.

As noted in the project scope, consideration was given to incorporating a working from home component given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic however was ultimately not included in this guide. As the research was being completed it became apparent that the differences in an event that is attended as opposed to a virtual event were too dissimilar to sit in one guide without compromising the initial intent.

Regular contact was maintained with the project champion throughout to ensure that the project was aligning with the needs and expectations of Active Geelong. These meetings consisted of a combination of Zoom and face to face depending on the restrictions in place at the time. The project champion was able to provide guidance around content and also provide links to resources and information that was utilised in putting the guide together.

There was a significant discussion around the format of the guide and how this should be presented and what event planners would like to see in a guide such as this. As such, a survey was sent to several event planners to gauge their interest and the information and topics, they would like to see in such a guide.



Research was undertaken into the benefits of adopting exercise into an event, doing this provided an evidence base which we were then able to summarise and incorporate into the guide. The Active Geelong website was a starting point in this, and our project champion also provided several links to aid in this research. A search online provided a number of additional resources and information to corroborate the direction the guide was going.



L-r: Andre Smaniotto, Shane Risk, Anna Fitzgerald, Tim Brown, James Law



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## Timothy Brown

*Production Specialist,  
Viva Energy Australia*

The Leaders for Geelong Program has been a fantastic experience and through it I have enjoyed meeting many inspiring local community members. It has exposed me to some of the challenges facing the greater Geelong community and the amazing people working towards a better Geelong.

After listening to the many inspiring leadership stories, the styles of authenticity and inclusiveness have resonated with me and I look forward to applying these learnings at work, home and throughout the community.

The Leaders for Geelong Program has allowed me to work collaboratively with like-minded people and make great friends along the way. I feel that I am now a better connected, focused and active participant in my local community.



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## Anna Fitzgerald

*Business Banking Manager,  
ANZ Bank*

The Leaders for Geelong Program has provided me a fantastic and unique experience. After moving to Geelong in 2017, I was ready to broaden my professional network and knowledge of Geelong. This program has delivered on those expectations and more by pushing me outside my comfort zone and continually challenging me.

I have developed personally and professionally beyond my expectations. Completing the project during a pandemic has taught me a lot about myself as a leader. Without the support and encouragement of the group, completing the projects would have been unmanageable.

I feel very fortunate to have completed this program, having also developed very strong friendships and the confidence to take the next steps in my leadership journey.



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## James Law

*Principal Practitioner, Dept of  
Justice & Community Safety*

The 2019-20 Leaders for Geelong Program has shown me the benefits and value of authentic leadership and how, when implemented, can contribute to a much more positive working environment. It has also broadened my views on leadership and I feel better placed for the challenges of managing my team on a day-to-day basis, as well as being part of the regional leadership team.

The Leaders for Geelong Program has provided me with a much broader insight into the Geelong community, and the organisations that operate within it and the contributions they make to Geelong. I feel I am now much more aware of the issues and challenges within Geelong and have a better understanding of the underlying issues.







## Shane Risk

*Assistant Director, Australian Bureau of Statistics*

What a fantastic journey it has been over the two years of our Leaders for Geelong Program.

I have learnt so much about my leadership style and the continued importance of working as part of a team. Being able to work with my project group was fantastic. I was very fortunate to have a great team and working closely with them was a highlight of the program.

The program has given me the opportunity to understand Geelong better and, as a passionate Geelong person, this is important to me. I am looking forward to continuing to make a positive difference to my team at work and the greater Geelong community as a result of the leadership skills I have developed through the Leaders for Geelong Program.



## Andre Smaniotto

*General Manager - Food & Beverage, Geelong Football Club*

The Leaders for Geelong program has provided me with an amazing opportunity to explore and experience leadership across our region. It has demonstrated that leadership comes in many ways and highlighted the importance of having different leadership styles and experience different situations.

The program has enhanced my understanding and thoughts around my personal leadership style and the positive impact I can have, not just within the Geelong Football Club but also the broader community. I have also met some amazing people and developed many new friendships.







# Alumni Mentoring Program

**Mentoring may be thought of as a 'mutually beneficial relationship involving a more experienced person helping a less experienced person to identify and achieve their goals.'**

Mentoring relationships may develop spontaneously or be facilitated through a formal program. Mentoring helps individuals achieve their personal aspirations and goals and it can provide clear benefits for both mentors and mentees, as well as the region. Many clients of Northern Futures derive from families living in survival mode and their priorities, values and behaviours have been shaped

by the many voices of people speaking into their lives that also live in challenging life situations. This mindset and behaviour prevents people looking to the future with a positive outlook or fitting into some work environments. Assigning the Committee for Geelong alumni to Northern Futures' clients as mentors would provide mentees with a new perspective and an encouraging voice from someone who has navigated the world of work. It would also enable leaders across Geelong to understand what local disadvantage is, not by seeing statistics, but by walking beside people living it daily. Alumni from the Committee for Geelong who have previously completed one of the leadership programs will benefit from the Mentoring Program by gaining greater understanding of the barriers facing some of Geelong's most vulnerable community members. The professional relationships will break down stereotypes and shine a light on the benefits of social cohesion which in turn will benefit local commerce by enhancing business diversity and provide support to those experiencing challenges within the Northern Region of Geelong.



*L-r: Tim Head, Scott McKenzie, Michael Parker, Dina Dasic, Mat Smith*





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## Dina Dasic

**Head of Business Development –  
Healthcare Programs & Services,  
GMHBA**

It has been a great privilege and phenomenal opportunity to be part of the Leaders for Geelong Program.

The two-year program has taught me a lot about myself and my leadership style. The importance of being authentic and at peace with our imperfections, and that vulnerabilities should not be hidden, but shared. I have also learned that true strength is the courage to ask for help. The program helped me identify my areas of passion where I want to help make impact in the Geelong community.

The program has expanded my perspective on leadership, highlighted the most important aspects of leadership, and set me on a path to be able to have greater impact in both my personal and professional life.



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## Tim Head

**Business and Commercial  
Manager, CSIRO**

We all live and work in a remarkable part of Australia, but inhabit it in different ways. For many of us, interaction with our hometown of Geelong is superficial, but to genuinely lead in the community requires understanding and insight. Leaders for Geelong has not only exposed me to some of the machinations of the city and region, but through that exposure has provided insight into its fabric, colour, diversity, strengths and challenges. Working and learning with the group of outstanding individuals that the program brings together was a privilege and I am now richer for it. The honesty, trust and respect that the program promotes within and amongst the participants is outstanding.



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## Scott McKenzie

**Service Delivery Transformation  
Command, Victoria Police**

As a new arrival to Geelong (2017), the Leaders for Geelong Program afforded me invaluable insight into what defines the Geelong Region. Information and awareness of many community-led projects inspired me and enhanced my ability to lead within my own organisation.

Being able to listen to other organisational leaders and how their individual leadership journeys led to the Leaders for Geelong Program was insightful, and I quickly identified that shared stories and experiences was a valuable component to the program.

As a result of my participation, I now not only have a broader understanding and appreciation for the Geelong community, but feel more confident to lead within my own organisation and work with others to achieve community-led outcomes.





## Michael Parker

**General Manager,  
Read the Play Inc.**

The Leaders for Geelong Program has broadened my networks and has provided me with a great opportunity to explore and experience leadership across our region.

It has been a privilege to work alongside a committed group of leaders in developing the Alumni Mentoring Project with Northern Futures and I look forward to seeing the impact of this and all the other projects in the years to come.

Sharing the many leadership development opportunities that is offered throughout the Leaders for Geelong Program has fuelled significant personal and professional growth and I look forward to using this experience to create a positive impact in our community into the future.



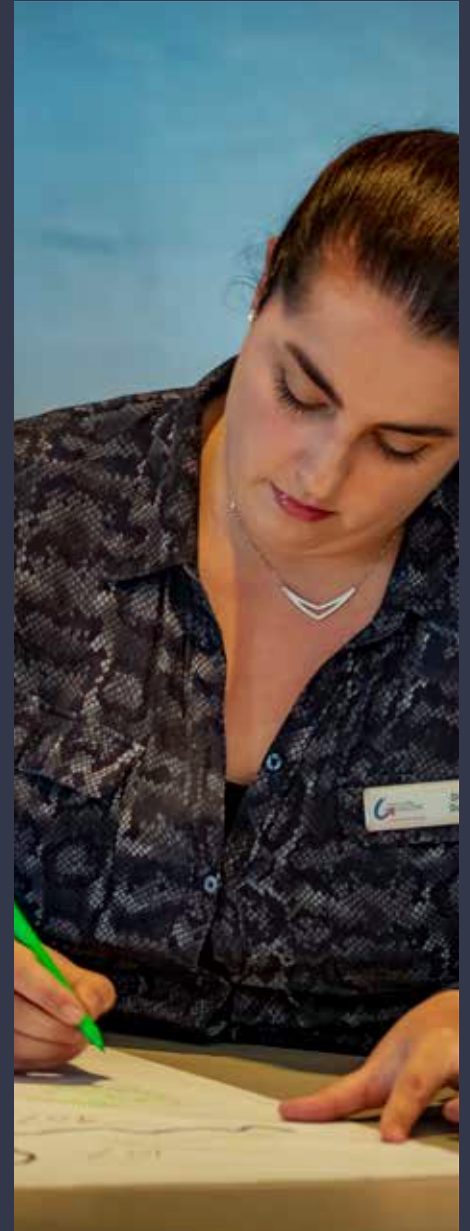
## Mathew Dale Smith

**Manager, DevLink Developments  
Director, Vic Beach Geelong**

This program has given me an opportunity to see outside my pre-existing bubble and explore the finer details of the place that I call home. It has provided an amazing insight into the organisations working tirelessly to help those in need and highlighted opportunities to grow as a community.

It has helped me to better understand that real leadership is authentic and not always found where you might expect it.

I am grateful to have met an amazing group of people throughout this journey and look forward to seeing what everyone achieves in the future not only individually, but as a group.





# Healthy Geelong

## Geelong is Australia's fastest growing regional city.

In supporting the growth and prosperity of Central Geelong and its surrounding suburbs we must protect and preserve what makes workplaces and homes healthy environments. A deep understanding of the impacts of such urban expansion would help support the development of preventative health measures including improvement to policies and regulations along with mitigation measures as a means of reducing risks, costs and likely strain on the local health system.

Deakin University is committed to further their understanding of the impact of Geelong's sustained growth on its community by investigating the effects of environmental noise on health and wellbeing. A pilot study was undertaken to test and confirm the assessment methodology in laboratory conditions by monitoring subjects' responses (both physical and psychological) to brief noise exposure. This pre-experimental research

will help establish a quasi and/or true experimental research framework whose outputs will contribute to the bank of evidence to support policy-making.

The 2019-20 Leaders for Geelong project team has contributed to initial phases of the research of Deakin University which seeks to investigate and raise awareness of the non-auditory impacts of construction and traffic noise locally.

The objectives of the project included:

- Fostering research to support improved knowledge regarding the non-auditory health impacts of construction/traffic noise i.e.
  - Supporting the completion of a pre-experimental research involving testing of participants exposed to noise.
  - Evaluating and reporting on the pilot findings to establish quasi and/or true experimental research framework
- For policymakers to recognise and support ongoing monitoring of environmental noise as a health risk in Geelong



*L-r: Tataina Hunnam, Bruce Beynon, Johanna Theilemann, Sam Gallagher, Kaisee Chwalko*



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## Bruce Beynon

*Service Desk Team Leader,  
The Gordon*

I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to participate in the 2019-20 Leaders for Geelong Program. We were given valuable tools to highlight our behavioural preferences, which included natural strengths and opportunities for development. The Program has given me confidence for my leadership journey, and broadened my awareness of fantastic services supporting the Geelong community.

The second year tested our resilience. We applied our learnings and dealt with challenges to successfully deliver a meaningful project. It was a great opportunity to work alongside such a talented group of leaders. One of the key learnings for the project was to establish and maintain effective communication. Leaders for Geelong is a fantastic program, you get out what you put in.

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## Kaisee Chwalko

*National Head of Technical Audit,  
Moore Australia*

The Leaders for Geelong Program has provided a fantastic opportunity to learn so much about Geelong and our community, while hearing from some fantastic leaders whose insight was outstanding. Throughout the two years, I have learned so much about differing leadership styles, experiences and communication techniques.

Being able to work with a team of leaders during a pandemic that threw curveballs every day taught me a great deal about managing pressures and challenges outside of our control.

The experience as a whole has broadened my thinking, experience, knowledge and network, but the thing the Leaders for Geelong Program has provided me with the most, is the friendship of some absolutely amazing leaders.







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## Sam Gallagher

**Senior Site Manager,  
Kane Construction**

The Leaders for Geelong Program has provided me with a great opportunity to experience the various roles of industry leadership across our region.

It has showed me that leadership comes in many different forms throughout many varying workplaces. The Program has enhanced my thoughts around my personal leadership style especially the importance of listening to others and giving them the opportunity to become involved in the day-to-day decisions I make on site. I also learned the importance of communication and the value of having difficult conversations.

It has expanded my understanding of some of the issues across the region and the importance of community, local government, and industries to identify and work together to resolve issues in the region.



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## Titaina Potdevin Hunnam

**Consultant**

The Leaders for Geelong Program has been part of a personal journey in reconnecting with my core values as well as being involved in what I believe in. The Program presented the unique opportunity for immersion in various corporate and social settings within the community and highlighted that great achievement can be done through honest and fearless passion. In the midst of all the noise we are being faced with on a regular basis from society, family, education, books, movies, friends, and situations, I learned that the true quest is a self-committed pursuit in resonance with ones' core beliefs and core values.



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## Johanna Theilemann

**Assistant Group Manager,  
Principal Engineer,  
Water Technology**

The past two years of the Leaders for Geelong Program has been full of self-reflection in understanding who I am as a leader, and who I would like to be. This has enabled me to have a better understanding of my value in leadership within my own organisation.

The program opened my eyes to leadership across Geelong and enabled me to engage with a diverse range of professionals within the region. The challenges of completing the Leaders for Geelong Program amidst a global pandemic has reaffirmed my value of compassionate and supported leadership.

I leave this program more confident in who I am and what I stand for as a leader, and feel fortunate to have the support and friendship of my peers in continuing my leadership journey.





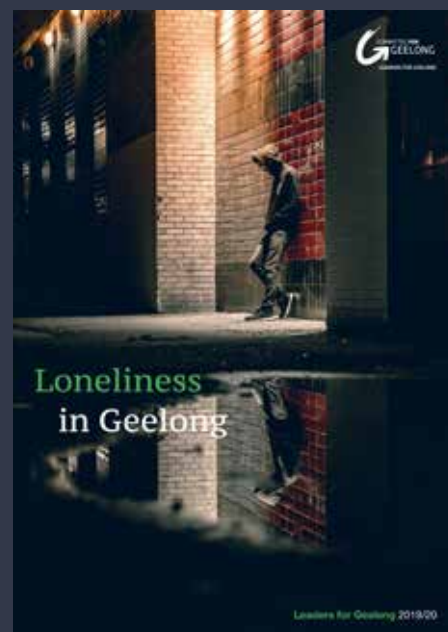


# Loneliness in Geelong

**To understand relevant contributing factors to loneliness and its impact on physical and mental health, to inform recommendations to address loneliness in the Geelong community, specifically young adults (18–24 years), so as to better target existing services and develop relevant information for dissemination.**

The key goals and objectives for this project were to:

- Develop a better understanding of both the prevalence and the impact of loneliness in the Geelong region based on existing data sources and using a strength-based approach.
- Collate a list of existing services available in the Geelong region that may be appropriate to address loneliness. Identify any gaps in service coverage and propose solutions. Identify opportunities for collaboration between service providers.
- Develop material to promote education and awareness of loneliness in the public realm for example, possible targets could include workplaces, schools, universities, Barwon Health, City of Greater Geelong, Geelong Cats etc.
- Identify a pathway to extend the impact of this project beyond its life time by embedding the work in community and research organisations who can continue to implement our findings.
- Disseminate our findings across key stakeholders including a report of actionable findings to Barwon Health.



*L-r: Marie O'Dell, Robert Hodgson, Bree McLennan, Rebecca, Lester, Luke Kelly*



## Robert Hodgson

***Director - Hodgson Group, Gull Airport Service***

The Leaders for Geelong Program has helped open my eyes to some of the challenges facing Geelong, and the many innovative steps being taken to meet them. The varied speakers and presenters who shared their stories with us highlighted the importance of honesty and openness, as a leader, and the strength that is found in being vulnerable. This, I will always hold close.

2020 was a challenging year for me professionally and personally, and the opportunity to work on the Loneliness in Geelong project in a team of exceptional local leaders could not have been more timely. It was exciting and refreshing, and I am proud of the work we did and the difference I know we will make to our region.



## Luke Kelly

***Senior Project Manager – TMX (company formerly named TM Insight)***

The Leaders for Geelong Program has been a positive and timely experience both professionally and personally. The program helped me navigate numerous professional changes and challenging life events, including a global pandemic! It offered fantastic networking opportunities and invaluable insights from local organisations and inspiring leaders.

The first year encouraged me to focus and reflect, as an individual and a leader. It taught me to be more mindful and self-compassionate. As a leader, it is important to not only provide support, but honest constructive feedback to others. Additionally, the power of vulnerability, empathy and creating a psychologically safe space to promote trust and growth is important.

The second year involved collaborating with a supportive and talented team, who each offered their own unique strengths to the group project, proving (to paraphrase = a fellow peers synopsis) 'the whole really is greater than the sum of its parts'.



## Rebecca Lester

***Director of the Centre for Regional and Rural Futures at Deakin University***

My role is to lead the centre to partner with industry and communities to address real-world challenges. My personal learning has centred on my ability to contribute to the Geelong community. I have been surprised by my peers' perception of me as a competent, quiet, and kind leader and I draw strength from their insight to consolidate those qualities.

Institutionally, I have learned to be bolder. I have discovered reputational capital, and the confidence of my managers places me in a position where I can implement change and drive innovation. This provides great opportunity, personally, for my team and for the communities and partners with whom we partner. I have enjoyed the Leaders for Geelong program and thank them for their hard work, support and for the opportunity.



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## Bree McLennan

### *Data Science Specialist, Transport Accident Commission*

The Leaders for Geelong Program has been a fantastic learning experience. Through meeting many wonderful and accomplished leaders across the region, I quickly realised that leadership is a choice and not just a title. It's a learnable skill developed through practice, which drives action toward a common goal, and it transforms people and the world around us.

The Program demonstrated that leadership comes in all forms and that it is important to consider and include diverse leadership styles and experiences when working toward common goals. Working on the Loneliness in Geelong Project highlighted the importance of cohesive teamwork, cultivating resilience and acknowledging and supporting each other's strengths. All of these elements were integral to the success of our project and will remain important as we continue our contributions in creating a better, healthier, more connected and inclusive Geelong community.



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## Marie O'Dell

### *Executive Manager People and Business Operations, Geelong Regional Library Corporation*

It has been humbling to share a two-year journey with fellow participants, with joy and hardship along the way, remembering that we are all human beings doing our best in given circumstances. I have personally learnt to be present with others wherever they are on their journey, and build a safe place for growth and reflection.

Whilst working on a project in our second year, I have been impressed at the diverse skills and experience the team brought together. As a leader, this is about harnessing this creativity and collaboration so 'the whole is greater than the sum of its parts'.

I feel better equipped moving forward to contribute to my community in Geelong and look forward to identifying opportunities where I can make a difference.





# Promoting Djilang

**The 'Promoting Djilang' project's focus was to identify opportunities within the wider Geelong community to celebrate and acknowledge the Wadawurrung cultural heritage within the region.**

Acknowledging, promoting and celebrating Geelong's Wadawurrung Aboriginal Traditional Owners enriches the community as a whole. Connecting motivated local businesses with Traditional Owners through identified opportunities of mutual benefit and publicly celebrating our shared history was the focus of this project.

This project was completed for the 2019-2020 Leaders for Geelong program, as proposed by the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation.

Case studies were undertaken of international and local good practice examples, to explore what has been done, and learn from the opportunities already implemented. There is shared value for both Traditional Owners and the broader community in continually improving recognition of Traditional Owners in the region.

Identifying opportunities with local businesses, the project team set about establishing connections to promote the local Traditional Owners, through acknowledgement in signage, artwork, commercial opportunity and verbal recognition on public transport.

The Djilang region is unique in its cultural history. Every initiative, idea and piece of work matters and when realised becomes an important additional connection and/or partnership with Traditional Owners.



*L-r: Mairead O'Sullivan, John O'Shannassy, Emma Miller-Olsen, Nicholas Ellul, Nikki Gilbertson, Simon White*





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## Nicholas Ellul

### *Marine Operations Manager, Victorian Regional Channel Authority*

I have been floored by the selfless dedication of the organisations the Leaders for Geelong Program has exposed us to, especially in the community services sector. Seeing committed people of all backgrounds and positions work together to achieve community outcomes has been deeply moving.

On an individual level, I have greatly enjoyed interacting with our cohort. In person, hearing from many inspiring individuals on their leadership journeys, and remotely once COVID-restrictions were imposed and we worked to deliver our project.

The Leaders for Geelong Program has connected me to the Geelong community in a way I would not have imagined two years ago and I look forward to working, playing and living in Geelong well into the future.



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## Nikki Gilbertson

### *Aged Services Manager – genU*

I am so truly thankful that I was privileged to have been accepted in to the 2019-20 Leaders for Geelong Program. The friendships, contacts, and experiences as part of this program are unparalleled.

Leaders for Geelong challenged me to have a greater level of understanding of my values, strengths and weaknesses, which allows me to continue on my leadership journey to becoming a better leader, wife, mother and community member.

Undertaking the Promoting Djilang Community Project during a global pandemic provided me the fortuity to work alongside some of the most inspiring emerging leaders in Geelong. We could not have delivered our project without strong teamwork, support and team resilience. It is a project that I will be forever proud of and advocacy work that I aim to continue into the future.



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## Emma Miller-Olsen

### *Operations Manager, Barwon South West Department of Transport*

The Leaders for Geelong Program enhanced my skills and increased my knowledge of inspiring community-based organisations in the region. I have been awarded the Victorian Professional Engineer of the Year and my desire to focus and contribute to the success of the region has been a driver for connecting to the program.

Relationships formed working on the Djilang Project during a global pandemic contributed to the success of the team delivering improved recognition for Wadawurrung Traditional Owners. Regionally we need to do more.

Access to key leaders from diverse backgrounds has been a highlight and provided a valuable insight into the challenges and opportunities encountered regionally. My husband completed the program in 2009/2010 and it is a privilege to join him as a Leaders for Geelong Alumnus.





## John O'Shannassy

*Director, Josco Civil*

The Leaders for Geelong Program was an enjoyable and rewarding experience that I'm glad I undertook. It has given me a better understanding of the diverse range of community organisations within Geelong and their associated challenges, motivations, achievements, and visions for the future.

I embraced being outside my comfort zone in a professional environment, challenged myself to learn, to participate, to become a better leader and I have already implemented some newly-learned behaviours within my organisation. It was great making new friendships and the second year project gave me flashbacks of my university days delivering a challenging but rewarding group project.



## Mairead O'Sullivan

*Manager Healthy Communities, Barwon Health*

Challenging and inspiring is how I would describe my experience in the Leaders for Geelong Program.

Hearing from a wide range of community leaders on the issues in our region and the way in which the speakers were so willing to share their leadership journeys and what they have learnt was thought-provoking. To me, it highlighted the importance of people and communication in leadership and helped me to reflect on my own leadership style.

I valued the opportunity to work on the Promoting Djilang Community Project with passionate team members who desired to make a difference. The Project provided an opportunity to reflect on what I can do both personally and professionally to increase awareness and recognition of the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners across our region.



## Simon White

**BEng (Hons), MBA, MAICD**

*Director, Solve Consulting International*

The Leaders for Geelong Program was a great opportunity for me to build a stronger local connection with Geelong (having moved to Geelong from Melbourne some 5 years ago), and to also grow my leadership skills.

The Program provided me with insights into aspects of Geelong's fabric and heritage that I was not familiar with, particularly in regard to its approach to social justice and economy. I have met some inspiring people over the two years – both fellow students as well as guest speakers and learnt a lot about the wider region.

For me though, it was the opportunity to look within that was most useful – to take some time away from my normal role, and to be challenged about my personal leadership. As a consultant and the owner of a small business, it is not always easy to invest time in your personal development. The Program allowed me to spend that time on myself and to grow as a leader.





# Program Events

Date	Topic	Speakers
Wed 6 Feb 2019	<b>Meet and Greet</b>	Janelle Meyes, Former Leadership Portfolio Manager
Wed 20 Feb 2019	<b>Annual Leadership Breakfast</b>	Lord Mayor Sally Capp, City of Melbourne
Wed 20 Feb 2019	<b>Opening Residential Day One</b>	Jennifer Cromarty, CEO at Committee for Geelong (My Leadership Learnings) Brad Clark, MD @ Better Communities Consulting (Syndicate Activity) Damien O'Malley, Senior Consultant @ OMC Group (PRISM Profile)
Thurs 21 Feb 2019	<b>Opening Residential Day Two</b>	Kylie Warne, Chair @ Barwon Regional Partnership Bernadette Uzelac, CEO, Chamber of Commerce (Clever and Creative Geelong: Panel Discussion) Cr Bruce Harwood, Mayor of Greater Geelong (Clever and Creative Geelong) Leaders for Geelong Alumni Panel: Anne-Louise Dawes, Jason Wilde, Tom Lynch, Beth Davis (Learnings and Reflections) Elaine Carbines, CEO @ G21 (Clever and Creative Geelong: Presentation and Q&A)
Wed 13 Mar 2019	<b>Education and Training Seminar</b>	Charlie Scudamore, Vice Principal @ Geelong Grammar School (Geelong Grammar School Philosophy and Tour) Bryan Timms, Manager @ Geelong Industry Trade Training Centre (Geelong Industry Trade Training Centre Overview and Tour) Phil Honeywell, Principal @ Newcomb Secondary College (P-Tech Concept & Tour) Carley Brennan, Skilling the Bay Manager (The Gordon: Opportunity for All)
Thurs 21 Mar 2019	<b>Leadership Coaching</b>	Jem Fuller, Founder @ Leaders in Life (What is your Why?) Chad Foulkes, Director @ Liminal by Design (Sense Making Discussion)
Tues 30 Apr 2019	<b>Innovation and Growth Seminar</b>	Leanne Collins, Director @ Geelong Tech School (Geelong Tech School: Overview & Tour) Penny Hamilton, General Manager @ David Hamilton Property Group (Pivot City Innovation District: Presentation and Tour) Tim Ellis, Manager of Economic Development and Events @ CoGG Christine Silvestroni, Coordinator of Economic Development @ CoGG (Geelong - UNESCO City of Design Presentation) Andrew Jones, Co-Founder at g2 Innovation (Innovation Leadership Workshop)
Tues 7 May 2019	<b>Evening Seminar</b>	Damien O'Malley, OMC Consulting (PRISM - EQ Mental Toughness) Chad Foulkes, Director at Liminal by Design (Sense Making Discussion)
Wed 22 May 2019	<b>Law and Order Seminar</b>	Michael Gorman (Karreenga Tour) Superintendent Craig Gillard (Tour of Geelong Police Station) Magistrate Ann McGarvie (Tour of Magistrate's Court)
Thurs 30 May 2019	<b>Evening Seminar</b>	Kean Selway, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer ("Leadership Learnings" Presentation) Chad Foulkes, Director at Liminal by Design (Sense Making Session)

# Program Events

Date	Topic	Speakers
Fri 7 Jun 2019	<b>Discussion with the Governor-General</b>	The Hon. Sir Peter Cosgrove AK CVO MC and Lady Cosgrove (Q&A Session)
Tues 18 Jun 2019	<b>Diversity and Inclusion Seminar</b>	Lyn Morgan, EO @ Northern Futures (Bridges out of Poverty Framework) Julie Graham, Executive General Manager – Ability @ genU (genU: Presentation) Mike McKinstry, CEO @ genU (genU: Strategic Direction) Georgie Knight, Business Enterprises Manager @ genU (genU: Inclusive Workplaces) Dr Bree Gorman, Manager Diversity and inclusion @ Deakin University (Inclusive Leadership Workshop)
Tues 25 Jun 2019	<b>Evening Event</b>	Dan Simmonds, Chair @ Committee for Geelong (Committee for Geelong: Role and Strategic Direction) Chad Foulkes, Director @ Liminal by Design (Sense Making Session)
Wed 17 Jul 2019	<b>Mid-Year Review and “Seeing is Believing”</b>	Paige Williams @ Paige Williams Pty Ltd (Personal Leadership Development Plan: Deep Dive 1) Sheridan Salmon, General Manager: Marketing and Fundraising and Cynthia Scherer, Grants and Impact Manager @ Give Where You Live Foundation (“Seeing is Believing” Tour) Chris Evans (The Paddock, Leopold) Keith Fagg (Samaritan House) Kaylene Reeves (The Aviary)
Fri 2 Aug 2019	<b>Arts/Culture Seminar</b>	Jason Smith, Director and CEO @ Geelong Gallery (Leadership: Encompassing the Moon) Kate Brereton, Director Development and Marketing @ GPAC and Pat Clements, Project Manager @ Kane Constructions (LfG 17/18) (GPAC Tour and Future) Alice Nash, Executive Producer and Co-CEO @ Back to Back Theatre (Back to Back Theatre Presentation) Indian Ink Theatre Company (Guru of Chai)
Fri 16 Aug 2019	<b>Energy and Environment Seminar</b>	Thys Heyns, General Manager @ Viva Energy (Welcome to the Geelong Refinery – An overview of Viva Energy and the Refinery) Jo Powell, Community Manager @ Viva Energy (Community and Communications) Dawn Conway, Environment Lead @ Viva Energy (Environmental Impact and Initiative) Matt Hudson, Continuous Improvement Coach @ Viva Energy (Commercial Role of the Refinery, How the refinery works and site tour) Corrina Eccles, Cultural Education Coordinator @ Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (Tour on Country)
Tues 27 Aug 2019	<b>Evening Event</b>	Paige Williams @ Paige Williams Pty Ltd (Deep Dive 2) Chad Foulkes, Director @ Liminal by Design (Sense Making Session)

# Program Events

Date	Topic	Speakers
Tues 3 Sept 2019	<b>Health and Wellbeing Seminar</b>	Damian Armour, CEO @ Epworth Hospital and Fiona Harrington, BDM @ Epworth Hospital (The Epworth Story and Tour) David Meade, Director Clinical Support @ Barwon Health (The Health of Geelong) Nicci Wall @ This is My Reality (Mental Health - Lived Experience) Renee Owen, Program Manager Aboriginal Health @ Barwon Health and Libby Lesock, Aboriginal Policy and Projects Officer @ Barwon Health (Local Aboriginal Health: Issues, challenges and opportunities for change) Cr. Pat Murnane, Executive Board Support @ Active Geelong (Active Geelong)
Wed 11 Sept 2019	<b>Evening Event</b>	Chad Foulkes, Director @ Liminal by Design (Sense Making) Damien O'Malley @ OMC Group (PRISM - Career)
Tues 15 Oct 2019	<b>Transport and Infrastructure Seminar</b>	Justin Giddings, CEO @ Avalon Airport (Avalon and the Future) Dave Moreland, Facility Manager at Avalon Airport (17/18 LfG) (Airport Tour, including International Terminal) Tour of Geelong Port on the "George Molland" Victorian Regional Channels Authority (VRCA) Presentation
Thurs 24 Oct 2019	<b>Evening Event</b>	Brett Winter, CEO @ Geelong Port (The Role of the Geelong Port & My Personal Leadership Learnings) Chad Foulkes, Director @ Liminal by Design (Sense Making Discussion)
Thurs 14 Nov 2019	<b>Influencing the Agenda Seminar</b>	Elise Potter, Editor @ Geelong Advertiser (Challenges & Opportunities of Regional Media: Presentation) Davina Montgomery, Editor @ Geelong Business News Rob McLennan News Director @ Geelong Broadcasters Mitchell Dye, Radio Presenter @ Pulse (The Changing Media Landscape: Panel Discussion) Jen Cromarty, CEO @ Committee for Geelong (The Role of the Lobbyist) Jacqui Bennett, Founder of Humans in Geelong (Influencing via a Social Enterprise)
Tues 19 Nov 2019	<b>Evening Event</b>	Jem Fuller, Founder of JemFuller.com ("Managing Egos" Workshop) Chad Foulkes, Director @ Liminal by Design (Sense Making Discussion)
Tues 10 Dec 2019	<b>Day Event</b>	Chad Foulkes, Director @ Liminal by Design (Session 1 and Session 2)
Mon 2 Dec 2019	<b>Leaders Meeting Leaders: Canberra Delegation</b>	Deputy Mayor Kylie Grzybek - City of Greater Geelong (Welcome to Canberra) Mr Craig Ritchie, CEO @ Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) (Tour and Presentation) Museum of Australian Democracy (Tour and Presentation) Mural Hall @ Parliament House (Fed Cats Dinner)



# Program Events

Date	Topic	Speakers
Tues 3 Dec 2019	<b>Leaders Meeting Leaders: Canberra Delegation</b>	Meeting the people protesting the Murray Darling Basin Plan. Tim Bryant, Clerk Assistant (Committees) (Tour of Parliament House and Parliament Processes) Richard Marles MP (Leading for Geelong in Canberra) Peter Khalil MP (Leading from the Opposition) Question Time in House of Representatives Helen Haines MP (Leading as an Independent) Senator Sarah Henderson (Leading for Geelong in Canberra) Dinner with Cal Bruton, Master Coach Sport, Education and Employment
Wed 12 Feb 2020	<b>Transition to Projects</b>	Damien O'Malley @ OMC - Group (Transition to Projects)
Thurs 5 Mar 2020	<b>Courageous Conversations and Draft Scope Presentation</b>	Paige Williams, PhD (Courageous Conversations) Chad Foulkes @ Liminal By Design (Draft Scope Presentation)
Thurs 21 May 2020	<b>Project Scope Reboot</b>	Damien O'Malley @ OMC- Group (Project Scope Reboot, PRISM Profiles)
Thurs 16 Jul 2020	<b>Governance Panel</b>	Catherine Bell, Bell Training Group Jennifer Cromarty, CEO, Committee for Geelong Richard Bisinella, Director, Bisinella Developments Kerri Erler, Director, Regional Operations-Barwon South West Region, Regional Development Victoria Peter Mannion, CEO, Victorian Regional Channel Authorities
Wed 19 Aug 2020	<b>Project Implementation</b>	Kevin Bennett @ KB Business Solutions (Project Management) Todd Murphy @ Future Boy (Graphic Design Process and Q&A)
Wed 23 Sept 2020	<b>Project Review Update</b>	Damien O'Malley (Overview of Growth Mindset and Mental Toughness)
Wed 4 Nov 2020	<b>Presenting to a Virtual Audience</b>	Sam Chidgey, SC Productions (Tips and Tricks for Recording your Presentation) Roxie Bennett, Plan It Roxie (Presenting to an Audience and Pitching your Project)
Tues 24 Nov 2020	<b>Leadership Coaching</b>	Kylie Paatsch, The Fearless Way (A Coaching Approach)
Wed 16 Dec 2020	<b>Closing Residential</b>	Paige Williams @ Paige Williams Pty Ltd (My Leadership in Action) Damien O'Malley, O'Malley Consulting (2020 Project Review) Robert Re, Leadership at Work (Review, Renew and Improve) 9 Dec 2020 Virtual Presentation Event (299 registrations) Thur 18 March 2021 19/20 LfG Graduation Dinner &@ GMHBA Stadium







# Thank you

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**The Committee for Geelong thanks the partners that have joined us for another successful year of leadership programs. We look forward to continuing the rewarding partnership of supporting emerging leaders in the Geelong city-region.**

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Find out more about the Leaders for Geelong program  
<https://committeeforgeelong.com.au/leaders-for-geelong/>

