



Alpine Valleys
Community Leadership

2021 Year Book

inspiring tomorrow's
leaders today



Thankyou to Our Partners

Alpine Valleys Community Leadership gratefully acknowledges the contributions of our partners. Their valuable support truly makes a difference in developing our region's leaders.



ACRE
 ABC Rural
 Albury City Council
 Albury Wodonga Health
 Alpine Valleys Dairy Pathways Project
 Alpine Health
 Australian Industry Group
 Bushfire Recovery Victoria
 Benalla Health
 Cathy McGowan AO
 Cloth Baby
 Commission for LGBTIQ+ Communities
 Community Action for The Chalet Group

Department of Education and Training
 Department of Justice and Community Safety
 Dilin Duwa Centre for Indigenous Business Leadership
 Dr Helen Haines MP
 First People's Assembly of Victoria
 George Kerferd Hotel
 Indigo Shire Council
 Joel Fitzgibbon MP
 Justin Clancy MP
 Lake Hume Resort
 Lightwood Constructions
 Mission Engage Youth Program

North East Catchment Management Authority
 North East Victoria Regional Executive Forum
 Renee Paola Graphic Design
 Regional Change Agency
 Regional Development Australia
 Rob Harris
 Senator Janet Rice
 Seven Women
 ShareTree
 Susan Benedyka
 The Best Practice Network
 The Big Issue
 The Courier
 The Victorian Multicultural Commission

Tim McCurdy MP
 Tomorrow Today Foundation
 Totally Renewable Yackandandah (TRY)
 Twin Prism Consulting
 Upper Hume Primary Care Partnership
 Upper Murray Development Board
 Upper Murray Landcare Network
 Victorian Cross Border Commission
 Victoria Police
 Wall to Wall Festival
 Wang Central
 Wodonga City Council

Welcome to AVCL 2021

This year, AVCL Board, staff and program participants demonstrated flexibility, collaboration and agility, embracing the continuing challenges with willingness and grace.

Now celebrating over 470 Alumni embedded throughout the North-East and beyond, the Alpine Valleys Community Leadership Annual Program has a proud reputation of developing accidental and emerging leaders, through a 'learning by doing' approach.

This year we are surveying our Alumni to understand and build a picture of the impact of their leadership contributions in their own communities and workplaces. We are always delighted to hear of the ripple effects of building leadership capacity; how investment in a person's development generates outcomes in their community.

Some of our Alumni have stepped up into community leadership roles to contribute to recovery following the Black Summer bushfires; others have trained in mentoring and building the capacity of community members in order to lead, and are putting this into practice in their communities and with current Annual Program participants. Many of our Alumni have continued or stepped up into leadership roles in their local sporting associations, community groups, health services, hall committees and school councils; and a number of Alumni have become the CEOs of local organisations, and some are our local, State and Federal representatives. We look forward to learning more about the impact of our Alumni in our region, and being able to showcase the diversity of the community leadership ripple effect.

In response to the emergencies and challenges experienced in our region, we have continued to review and renew our Annual Program, with an increased focus on leadership in a crisis, adaptive leadership and project management in a community setting.

The AVCL Board continues to ensure the organisation is well governed, with a plan in place for future sustainability, including business development to generate additional resources which are invested straight back into North East Victoria and the border region of NSW.

The success of AVCL has always depended on our funders and supporters. We acknowledge and thank you all for your support, insights and expertise in strengthening our communities through active community leadership and look forward to our continued successes in 2022.



Together we have all practised what we teach: leadership

AVCL Board and Staff	04
The 2021 AVCL Program	10
The 2021 Graduates	16
Community Projects	26
Workshops	30
AVCLP Alumni	32

2020 - 2021

Board & Staff



Anthony Griffiths
Chair



Colin Elliot
Deputy Chair



Linda Griffiths-Brown
Deputy Chair



Katie Warner
Treasurer



Roberta Baker
Board Member
Resigned October 2020



Maria Berry
Board Member



Leon Carter
Deputy Chair



Shane Crispin
Board Member
Resigned October 2020



Judy Charlton
Board Member



Robyn Farley
Board Member
Resigned October 2020



Michelle Hudson
Board Member
Resigned October 2020



David Kidd
Board Member



Suzanne Vilé
Board Member



Jacqui Bramwell
Executive Officer



Karlie Langdon
Program Manager



Madeline Hines
Executive Assistant



Katie Head
Project Coordinator
January - October 2021



Billie Robertson
Data Project Officer



AVCLP

Patron's Message

Leadership is not about making friends, it's about doing the right thing and may require exceptional tolerance and tenacity to see the responsibility through! There is a tension between doing what is popular and doing what is right.

An example of this is being played out amongst leaders both near and far, through the continued challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. Some aims and objectives of a leadership role are based around keeping people safe and healthy; this is a key responsibility of an elected government leader and is paramount in a pandemic situation. In this scenario, all other aims and objectives are of secondary importance, and the fall-out from this can create a negative impact, and therefore be quite unpopular amongst those that are disadvantaged or regarded as being "the losers."

Even with the best advice from health professionals to manage the Covid-19 pandemic, it is understandable as to how the government's mandated rules are unacceptable to those who are "the losers." The media aggravates the tensions on both sides, between "the losers" and the leaders, and ultimately puts huge pressure on the leaders - the decision makers - to cater to those that are negatively afflicted. The vitriol is all pervading. The leaders are the target of that vitriol.

However, successful leaders must continue to pursue the aims and objectives and do what is right, come what may. They must abide by the ten, two letter word mantra "If it is to be it is up to me".

John Brown AO

AVCL Values

Excellence

In the development and delivery of our activities

Agility

Being proactive and relevant to the changing needs of our communities

Innovation

Fostering creative ideas and identifying opportunities to strengthen our communities

Collaboration

Building relationships and partnerships that deliver mutual benefit and value

Integrity

Displaying transparency and accountability to our stakeholders

Respect

Conducting our relationships with honesty, trust and compassion



Our Vision

Vibrant and sustainable communities through local leadership

Our Mission

Grow the leadership capacity and voice of people and communities



Strategic Plan

2020 - 2022

Three pillars underpin our Strategic Plan:

01

Leadership Development

Deliver high quality and dynamic programs to enhance leadership learning and capacity within our community.

02

Sustainability

Maintain our visibility and our strong reputation.

03

Active Community Leadership

Act as a key regional resource for community leadership and a conduit for leadership thinking.

Chairperson's Report



Every year has its unique challenges, but this year has had more than most, with AVCL and the wider community facing the ongoing impacts of Covid-19 and Bushfires. But like all challenges, the way people step up to meet them is both remarkable and inspiring.

As an organisation, AVCL has responded productively to these circumstances, pivoting and modifying our approach to ensure we could best meet the needs of our communities.

For AVCL, this has meant adapting the Annual Program, in addition to developing a Disaster Recovery and Climate Change Adaption Leadership program, a program with the Wangaratta LGBTIQA community and another with the Albury Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council.

AVCL has also undertaken workshops with a range of stakeholders in the bushfire recovery space, with these workshops to continue in 2022.

Our Annual Program cohort has faced many Covid-19 related challenges, including the disruptions of snap lockdowns, ever changing venue capacity limits and travel restrictions, however participants have shown the leadership and resilience that AVCLP is all about. Each has stepped up and supported one another to take it all in their stride. Given the year they have had, a special congratulations to this group of graduates for what they have achieved.

All of the fantastic results we were able to achieve this year, are due to a wide range of support, contributions and sheer hard work. On behalf of AVCL, I would like to thank:

- The Victorian State Government for their continued funding support,
- The employers who support their employees with time and funding to undertake our programs,
- Our philanthropic partners who provide funds to allow a wider range of community members to undertake our programs
- The many "in-kind" contributors such as presenters, venue providers and other supporters.

I would like to personally thank all AVCL Board Members, who so freely volunteer their time and skills to the organisation, for their support and hard work throughout the year.

I would also particularly like to acknowledge and thank the small band of AVCL staff, who continually strive for and achieve outstanding results in what have been very trying circumstances. Their dedication, agility, resilience and flexibility has ensured that AVCL has continued to thrive, in spite of the trying conditions of 2021.

Anthony Griffiths

Executive Officer's Report



2021 has been my first full year as AVCL's Executive Officer, and during this time I have followed the Annual Program cohort and the work of our Program Manager, Karlie Langdon, with great interest. As our region, along with the rest of the nation and the world, continues to deal with the impact of Covid-19, it has been heartening to watch the progress of our Annual Program participants.

I would particularly like to thank Karlie for her exceptional work in pivoting the delivery of the Annual Program from an in person to online modality, with often very little notice to develop alternative plans.

To our cohort: I have watched all 24 of you demonstrate adaptive leadership as lockdown restrictions impacted program days and retreats. I have observed your progression from the program launch in February, during opening retreat, at the Melbourne study tour, and your midyear retreat at Lake Hume Resort. Your support for each other, your individual and collective resilience to embrace change and make the best of the evolving situation for yourselves, your workplaces and your communities, is a practical demonstration of your leadership development. I have heard your insightful questions of guest presenters and witnessed your teamwork to address challenges and consider issues through diverse lenses.

Congratulations on what you have already achieved, and I look forward to watching your continued development in the years to come.

For the first time, our Annual Program included a Community Projects component, supported by seed funding generously contributed by the Kyamba and Hugh Williamson Foundations. This new aspect of the program proved to be both interesting and challenging, as participants developed and strengthened their skills through every aspect of the Projects process. We are extremely proud of the outcomes that have been achieved through each Community Project.

In addition to our Annual Program, in 2021 AVCL developed and delivered three new leadership programs: M-Incubator, an initiative in partnership with the Albury Wodonga Ethnic

Communities Council (AWECC). A Wangaratta LGBTIQ+ Leadership Program, building the capacity of local leaders in the space, with funding provided by the GIVE Wangaratta endowment fund, other philanthropics, businesses and community. And a Disaster Recovery and Climate Change Adaption Program, supported by North East Catchment Management Authority (NECMA) through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program and Victorian Government, The Gardiner Dairy Foundation and Central Hume PCP; this program focused on developing leadership skills and strengthening capacity to work with rural communities in leading change, particularly as it relates to disaster recovery and climate change. AVCL also developed and delivered a series of workshops in communities across the region to support, foster and build capacity in community leadership in Bushfire Recovery, with funding support provided by the Commonwealth Government and Victorian State Government for these programs across the North-East of Victoria.

In addition to these new programs, AVCL has also continued to cultivate both new and existing relationships with organisations including: the Border Trust, Red Cross, NECMA, Gardiner Dairy Foundation, Central Hume Primary Care Partnership, and the Community Recovery Committees in Alpine and Towong Shires.

AVCL grows from strength to strength and the calibre of our Annual Program participants is proof of this. I wish you all the very best in your next leadership initiatives.

Jacqui Bramwell

Annual Program Manager's Report

The Covid-19 pandemic is transforming how we think about our communities and workplaces presenting us with many challenges, however it has also provided the Board and team at AVCL an opportunity to chart a path that empowers and awakens in others, the desire to be of service, leading communities in ways that unite, build resilience and impact.



Adaptive Leadership is a fundamental leadership capacity and our 2021 cohort have demonstrated adaptability, flexibility, persistence, resilience and dedication to their leadership journey throughout the last 10 months of their program experience.

Their program commenced in February, with a successful launch event, sponsored by CSU and GOTAFE, where our new participants were introduced to our valued sponsors and stakeholders.

With initial introductions now had, the cohort gathered for their two-day Opening Retreat in Beechworth, a week later. It was by morning tea that notice came through of Victoria entering a snap lockdown at midnight, forcing participants home early and without their much anticipated "sleep over." Luckily, we were back at the George Kerferd Hotel one week later for day two of the Retreat, where the group came together to learn more about each other and to form teams, which would serve as their leadership and community project team for the year.

These teams the relationships built provided another level of support to participants through the ever-changing landscape that continues to be shaped by Covid-19.

2021 has been the first year our program was guided by a common learning and development framework, that was established through a collaborative effort between all Victorian Regional Leadership Programs. The framework acts as a guide for the development, delivery, and evaluation of our Annual Program, with a focus upon achieving quality and consistency across the State.

The framework combines three key elements, regional priorities, community projects and leadership fundamentals, which in combination, will build adaptive leadership capabilities to contribute to regional community development.

In addition, we rolled out a new Community Projects component providing an opportunity for participants to undertake a community focused project and engage in a learning format that is both active and experiential, in alignment with the Ovens Murray Regional Partnership Priorities.

The five leadership and project teams have been working in partnership with community organisations to deliver their projects, amid the constraints of remote and virtual program days and in person contact.

Although this year has been challenging, the opportunities to develop a sense of Belonging, Being and Becoming have been many.

Program days have been filled with quality guest speakers who have all given up their time to share their wisdom, knowledge and leadership gifts with our valued cohort.

A highlight has been the About Me presentations, demonstrating that telling stories is one of the most powerful means that leaders have to influence, teach, and inspire. By forging connections among people, and between people and ideas, stories we hold in common are an important part of the ties that bind.

The story of this year's 2021 cohort, is one of strength and connectedness, compassion and understanding.

It had a beginning, full of expectation and wonder, a middle of fatigue and uncertainty but an ending of hope. I look forward to seeing and hearing about the stories that our graduates will write in their communities and the waves of change they will facilitate, and wish them all the very best with their hopes and visions for the future.

Karlie Langdon

2021 Program Days

Don't underestimate the power of a small group of committed people to change the world.

In fact, it is the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead

1. Event Launch

Thursday 4th February 2021
Wangaratta Regional Study Centre
Sponsor: CSU & GOTAFE

- Participants came together for the first time as a group, as part of an inaugural Annual Program Launch event. Due to restrictions, the event maintained a limited number of attendees, but ensured key stakeholders, sponsors and supporters were able to meet with the new cohort and celebrate the start of their leadership journey.

2. Opening Retreat

Friday 12th and Friday 19th of February 2021
George Kerferd Hotel, Beechworth
Sponsor: Victorian State Government

- Setting the Scene:** Overview of the Leadership Program, getting to know each other, understanding temperaments, the value of networking, questioning etiquette, Introduction to reflection tools, understanding self and others, teams and group processes, Community Projects overview, introduction to the AVCLP journey.

3. Regional Economy

Friday 26th of February 2021
Brown Brothers Winery, Milawa
Sponsor: Brown Brothers Family Wine Group

- Speaker: Amanda McClaren**, Chairperson at (RDA) Hume Regional Development Australia: *Understanding your region and the opportunities and challenges presented*
- Speaker: Karlie Langdon**, Alpine Valleys Community Leadership, Program Manager: *Ovens Murray Regional Partnerships: Understanding our regional priorities*
- Speaker: Barry Sullivan**, Chair, North East Victoria Regional Executive Forum and AVCLP Honorary Graduate 2017: *Achieving business goals and developing robust strategies*
- Speaker: Matt Nelson**, Regional Director Hume, Regional Development Victoria: *Responding to change and embracing challenges as opportunities to innovate and improve*
- Tour: Brown Brothers Cellar Door**, Product Knowledge
- Speaker: Dean Carroll**, Chief Executive Officer, Brown Family Wine Group: *Innovative approaches to business, tourism and the economy*

4. Project Management Workshop

Friday 12th of March 2021

Wang Central, Wangaratta

Sponsor: Victorian State Government



Project Management Workshop

Facilitator: Kevin Bennett, TXM Lean Solutions

Workshop: Introducing participants to the processes, methods, principals, skills and knowledge that are necessary to undertake a community project.

5. Melbourne Study Tour

Monday 22nd and Tuesday 23rd of March 2021

Melbourne Metropole, Brunswick

Sponsor: Victorian State Government



Speaker: Steph Woollard, Chief Executive Officer and Founder, Seven Women: *Creating change through ethical social enterprises*

Speaker: Ro Allen, Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ Communities, Equality Branch, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing: *Championing the rights of LGBTIQ+ Victorians*

Speaker: Dr Judy Tang, Commissioner for the Victorian Multicultural Commission: *Working towards a more inclusive and welcoming Victoria*

Speaker: Father James Grant, Chaplain at Crown Casino and Founder Mission Engage Youth Program: *Encouraging and motivating change*

Speaker: Marcus Stewart, Co-Chair, First People's Assembly of Victoria: *Being the voice for Aboriginal communities in the Victorian Treaty process*

Speaker: Clive Rust, APM, Commander for Eastern Region, Victoria Police: *The leadership role Police play in regional communities*

Speaker: Steven Farrugia, Chief Executive Officer, Share Tree: *Engaging culture & leading with gratitude*

Speakers: Netta Shmerling and guest Trevor, Program Coordinator and Guest Speaker, The Big Issue Classroom: *Addressing critical social issues*



6. Community Projects Day #1

Friday 16th of April 2021

Happy Valley Hall, Rosewhite

Sponsor: Victorian State Government



Session 1: Teams discuss and review their concepts and presentations

Session 2: Leadership Teams Project Presentations, whole group questioning and feedback

Session 3: Project planning tools, templates and reporting requirements

7. Healthy Connected Communities

Friday 30th of April 2021

Benalla Health, Benalla

Sponsor: Victorian State Government



Speaker: Heather Betts, Operational Director Healthy Communities, Benalla Health: *Services and programs that promote Health & Wellbeing in Benalla*

Speaker: Roxanne DeMasson, Chair, Wall to Wall Festival Committee: *The power of developing working relationships with community and business*

Speaker: Rosie Koop, Executive Officer, Tomorrow Today Foundation: *How the gift of giving can contribute to meeting identified gaps in a community*

Speaker: Dr Kathleen Brasher, Executive Officer, Upper Hume Primary Care Partnerships: *The implications of population ageing and how we create age friendly communities*



8. Leadership in a Crisis & Ethics

Friday 14th of May 2021

The Pavilion, Bright

Sponsor: Victorian State Government & Thamarurr Youth Indigenous Corporation



Speaker: Nick Shaw, Chief Executive Officer, Alpine Health: *Catering for a community's health needs during and post crisis*

Speaker: Diarmuid Kelly, Community Recovery Facilitator, Bushfire Recovery Victoria: *Understanding Government responses to crisis*

Speaker: Stewart Krelzheim, CFA District 23, Operations Manager: *Healing from Crisis*

Speaker: Simone Dole, Youth Coordinator, Thamarurr Youth Indigenous Corporation: *Creating opportunity for indigenous young people to thrive*

Speaker: Pauline Williams, Regional Emergency Management Inspector (REMI), Hume Region, Victoria Police: *Adapting well in the face of adversity*

9. Justice

Friday 28th of May 2021

Online

Sponsor: Victorian State Government



Speaker: Matt Pfahlert, Co-Founder, Australian Centre for Rural Entrepreneurship (ACRE): *Changing a historic town icon into a thriving community space through effective engagement*

Speaker: Gary Croton, Mental Health-addictions Nurse, Albury Wodonga Health: *Leadership in Systems Development- co-occurring mental health-substance use issues*

Speaker: Kristy Herschell, General Manager, Community Services, Department of Justice and Community Safety, Hume Region: *Leading a State Government Department through change*

10. Mid-Year Retreat

Friday 2nd and Saturday 3rd of July 2021

Lake Hume Resort, Lake Hume Village

Sponsor: Victorian State Government



Looking back, looking forward: the Program so far, team challenge, understanding the hero's journey and leadership of you, goal setting, resilience strategies, getting the most from the rest of the Program, half year personal evaluations, giving and receiving positive and negative feedback.



11. Agriculture and Climate

Friday 30th of July 2021

Upper Murray Events Centre, Corryong

Sponsor: Towong Shire Council



Speaker: Cr Andrew Whitehead, Towong Shire Council: *Building the Upper Murray Events Centre*

Speaker: Patrick Glass, Alpine Valleys Dairy Pathways Project Steering Committee Member: *The Dairy Industry and Climate Change*

Speaker: Narelle Martin, Founder & Director, Regional Change Agency: *Expanding the conversation on Climate Change*

Speaker: Lachlan Campbell, Catchment Coordinator, Regional Agricultural Landcare Facilitator, NECMA: *The psychology of adapting to climate change in Northeast Victoria*

Speaker Panel: Emma Avery, Founder Cloth Baby and Director EA Sustainability; **Lyn Coulston**, Secretary of the Upper Murray Landcare Network and Secretary Northeast Blackberry Action Group: *Creating and designing initiatives towards sustainability in community*

12. Community Projects Day #2

Friday 6th of August 2021

Online

Sponsor: Victorian State Government



Session 1: Rob Carolane, Founder, Twin Prism Consulting: *Governance 101*

Session 2: Susan Benedyka, Managing Director, Regional Development Company: *Vision & Strategy*

Session 3: Community Project Team Updates

Project teams provide an update to the wider cohort on the progress of their project, and share their learnings, challenges and successes to date



13. Education and Industry

Friday 20th of August 2021

Felltimber Community Centre, West Wodonga

Sponsor: Victorian State Government

➤ **Speaker: Bernie Boulton**, Area Executive Director, Ovens Murray, North-Eastern Victoria Region, Department of Education and Training: *Meeting the education needs of regional students and families*

Speaker: Susan Benedyka, Managing Director, Regional Development Company: *Empowering regional communities through higher education*

Speaker: Jim Dannock, Regional Manager, Hume & Riverina, Australian Industry Group: *Understanding regional industry growth, trends and challenges*

Speaker Panel: Brendon Collins OAM: Director, Lightwood Constructions; **Angela Larkin**: Economic Development Officer, Albury City Council: *Leading industries on the Border*

14. Virtual Federal Parliament Day

Wednesday 25th of August 2021

Online

Sponsor: Parliament of Australia

➤ **Session One:** Welcome & Presentation from Parliamentary Education Office

Session Two: **Dr Helen Haines MP**, Independent Federal Member for Indi

Session Three: **Senator Janet Rice**, Senator for Victoria, Deputy Australia Greens Whip

Session Four: **Joel Fitzgibbon MP**, Labor Member for Hunter

Session Five: The role of Media in Politics and Community - Panel Discussion: **Rob Harris**, National affairs editor for The Sydney Morning Herald and The Age; **Warwick Long**, Australian journalist and radio broadcaster, Presenter of ABC Victorian Country Hour for ABC Rural and **Eugene Duffy**, Editor, The Courier.

15. Tiers of Government

Friday 10th of September 2021

Online

Sponsor: Victorian State Government

➤ **Speaker: Luke Wilson**, Victoria's Cross Border Commissioner, Regional Development Victoria: *Identifying and advocating for change along Victoria's borders*

Speakers: Tim McCurdy MP, Member for Ovens Valley, The National Party, Parliament of Victoria; **Justin Clancy MP**, Member for Albury, Liberal Party, Parliament of NSW: *Being a voice for our region in State Government*

Speaker: Cathy McGowan AO, First Community Independent MP: *Leadership and activism, disrupting and being courageous*

Speaker: Cr Jenny O'Connor, Mayor, Indigo Shire: *The important role of being a leader of the community*

16. Community Leadership in Action

Friday 17th of September 2021

Online

Sponsor: Victorian State Government

➤ **Speaker: Leigh Rhode**, Chief Executive Officer, Gateway Health: *Engagement, advocacy and influence*

Speaker: Captain David Jacobson, Chair, Community Action for The Chalet Group: *Be sure you're right – and then go ahead*

Speaker: Matthew-Charles Jones, Deputy President & Co-founder of Totally Renewable Yackandandah (TRY): *Working with community to achieve a vision*

Speaker: Dr Michelle Evans, Associate Professor of Leadership, Faculty of Business and Economics, University of Melbourne & Director, Dilin Duwa Centre for Indigenous Business Leadership: *Sovereignty, education and the place of Indigenous business leaders in Australia*





17. Community Projects Day #3

Friday 1st of October 2021

Hybrid delivery of Online and Remote Leadership Team Gatherings

Sponsor: Victorian State Government



Session 1: Teams to provide cohort with update on progress, challenges and closing out of projects

Session 2: Team sessions to undertake closure reports and graduation presentations

18. Final Retreat

Friday 15th and Saturday 16th of October 2021

George Kerferd Hotel, Beechworth

Sponsor: Victorian State Government



Facilitators: Karlie Langdon and Susan Benedyka

Participants came together to close out the program. Understanding Coaching and Mentoring, Visioning, Defining Community Leadership, Mindfulness, Leadership post Program, Reviewing the journey and Adjourning the Program.

19. Graduation

Wednesday 10th of November 2021

Sponsor: Victorian State Government



Participants and their loved ones, along with sponsors, scholarship funders, Alumni and the wider AVCL community, gathered online for a virtual celebration of the 2021 Annual Program. Attendees of the events were able to share in the journey of the 2021 cohort, and learn more about the achievements of this years Community Projects. Hampers with regional goods were delivered to Graduates to enjoy during the evening.

Introducing the 2021 AVCLP Graduates



Justin Armstrong

Marketing
Soil Restoration Farming
Baranduda
Sponsor: Australian Alpine Valleys
Agribusiness Forum

I was excited to be accepted into the Program as I had heard it was one of the best. After attending many conferences and listening to leaders present, I thought it was my turn to step up to the plate and look at how I could hone my leadership skills.

At the opening retreat, I was a little nervous, but once it was over, I felt connected to a good bunch of people that showed resilience, even after the first day hiccup of a Covid-19 disruption.

Throughout this AVCLP journey I have been truly inspired from learning through peoples "about me" and their resilience through adversity. I have become better in active listening and feedback processes. I would say my main challenges would be understanding people that I may not have been drawn to at other times, and I have definitely grown by this experience.

As our time in the Program comes to an end, I am looking forward to building better, stronger networking connections with the cohort.

I have grown and seen a few changes in myself over the AVCLP year. I am better at listening and hearing what people have to say and I take more notes as people speak to grasp a better understanding of their topics. I notice these strengths now as mine and my wife's business grows as an online entity and these come to life. It has been a positive and fulfilling year and has shown people's resilience to changes in these unpredictable times.



Tamara Barton

Beef Farmer
Self Employed
Tallangatta
Sponsor: Agriculture Victoria Young
Farmer Scholarship

Before I commenced the program I was very excited about what I could learn to help me grow in my community. I was unsure of myself and felt very nervous coming into the program. After the opening retreat I was excited about the year ahead, the connections I could make, and the information I could learn and take back to make a difference in my community.

My key learnings so far include the insight I have had to get a greater understanding of our region's social, economic and environmental challenges. Also developing connections with my team members. I found it hard at the start to have the confidence to use my voice, but the program has helped me develop the skills I need to speak up and interact with other cohort members. I am looking forward to building more connections and skills as the rest of the year progresses.

Significant changes I have noticed within myself during the program is having the confidence to voice what I have to say and learning to really listen to others. Now the program is coming to an end, I feel grateful that I was given the opportunity to learn great leadership skills and expand my knowledge of community issues and how I can make a difference. I look forward to using this new knowledge and these skills to help in my volunteer roles in my community in the future.



Laura Benson

Senior Transport Planner, Regional
Transport Integration
Department of Transport
Charleroi
Sponsor: Department of Transport

Prior to commencing the program, I expected to be surrounded by people who represented what I thought 'people who excel in leadership' would be; bold, confident, outspoken. During the opening retreat, however, I met a group of people who were from all walks of life, and who were just like me. Collectively, we were welcomed into an environment that celebrates and embraces people's differences and creates a safe space to grow and learn about ourselves and others around us.

The format of the program enables learning in so many directions. Firstly, the program days connect us with local leaders and innovators across all disciplines within the region; secondly, we are required to deliver a community project and undertake all aspects of project management and planning; and finally, we need to work closely and cohesively with our project teams.

Each aspect has taught me so much about my region, myself, and how I operate with, and impact on, others.

I have learned to cherish the differences in others and recognise the value we can all add as individual parts to a greater whole. I will be sad to leave the regular catch ups with the cohort, but excited to see what opportunities open up as a result of completing the course.

AVCLP teaches us that we can achieve change, do the things we didn't think we could and be the people we want to be.



Pahal Man Bhattarai

Carer

**Westmont Aged Care Services
Wodonga**

**Sponsor: The Hugh Williamson
Foundation**

When I saw applications were open on Facebook, I quickly submitted my application. Later on I got an email saying that I was selected for interview - it was a very exciting moment. When I was informed I was successful in gaining a place in the program, I was very unsure how I got selected when I saw the profiles of the other participants they were all of a very high calibre and very skilful and intelligent. I didn't want to compare myself too much to others though, as gaining a place in the program helped me to feel very satisfied in what I am doing and sharing with my community.

I found it hard to see changes in myself and in my development, however I am learning to ask others for their feedback. The highlights for me have been new friendships, meeting with all different people from around the region, and working with others. This program has helped me to identify who I was and where I am in my life.

Reflecting upon my journey, I can see that I have grown myself and also increased my network amongst my peers. The program was very broad in terms of the range of topics and themes covered. Some of the program days were not related to me or my area of interest, so I do admit that I was challenged on those days. I don't have a "huge dream" but I am now more easily able to support and connect with my migrant community.



Anthony Cheesman

Senior Business Analyst

**Department of Environment, Land,
Water and Planning (DELWP)**

Wodonga

Sponsor: DELWP

I came into the AVCLP program quite unsure of what to expect and quite apprehensive about the commitment; I had also just moved into a new position prior to the program. In speaking to several program Alumni, who spoke highly of the course, I was looking forward to learning more. Although the opening retreat was interrupted by the first of several Covid-19 lockdowns, Karlie and the team were able to quickly adapt to the changing circumstances.

I've been enjoying working on our Community Project and am lucky to be working with a group of people who are committed and passionate. The time commitment has been quite challenging – don't underestimate the amount of time and effort you will need to dedicate to this program. I have enjoyed listening to excellent speakers, both from a leadership perspective and simply having the opportunity to hear about their background, work and life experiences. The sessions about governance, strategy and project management have been valuable, providing excellent insight and context.

I am a quiet, and private person, so it is likely that others may not have noticed any change. However what has changed is the way I mentally approach, assess and process situations and challenges, I now believe my approach is more considered and well rounded. The program has given me more insight and experience in working outside of a formal 'command and control' environment, which will improve my effectiveness as a leader and manager in the future.



Pete Christison

Teacher

**15 Mile Creek Outdoor School
Whitfield**

**Sponsor: CFA & 15 Mile Creek
Outdoor School**

I was very interested in finding out more about the broader North East region, its industries and people, its challenges and opportunities. I was, of course, looking forward to meeting our cohort and being introduced to the people who were going to join the journey, and I was curious about what I was going to learn about myself too.

I'm more aware of the community and the variety of people, workplaces and community projects that are out there. My career so far has centred on education and it's interesting to find out so much more about the different sections of our area. I'll be more interested in the question "So what do you do" from now on and be able to relate to a much wider variety of ideas and experiences.

I've enjoyed building my confidence and knowledge during the course. A challenge that has become an opportunity is focusing on my communication style and how to enable clear, respectful and professional communication. I've also found I'm looking at my community through a different lens and that's been inspiring. As my awareness grows I'm appreciating the amazing work that so many people do in our communities. Professionally I've stepped up into an acting Principal role which has been demanding and rewarding through Covid-19 lockdowns, and it has allowed me to develop my own leadership style which has been timely and rewarding.



Bonnie Clark

Youth Services and Partnerships
Coordinator
Mansfield Shire Council
Mansfield
Sponsor: Mansfield Shire Council

The program excited me because I was ready to stretch myself as a leader and develop my personal leadership style. The opening retreat was excellent, I learned a lot about myself in just those first two days. I was also really looking forward to meeting new people and growing my networks.

I have been able to learn so much about the wonderful diversity across the North East. So many talented people doing some really great stuff in a lot of different industries. The relationships I have built with people have been the absolute highlight. The biggest challenge has been the Community Project. Although my team are amazing, the time commitment for the project has been considerable.

The biggest take away I will get from this program is the relationships I built with other participants. I look forward to staying up to date with the wonderful things this group of great people will go on to do.



Natalie Flay

Business Support Assistant
AGL
Mount Beauty
Sponsor: AGL Hydro

At the beginning of the program I felt extremely tentative. I was outside of my comfort zone and unsure of where the journey would take me. I certainly started the program on the high end of the scale of being an introvert! I was well aware of my Imposter Syndrome at this time, staying quiet and keeping my thoughts and ideas to myself.

Halfway through the program I can already see the difference in myself, I am starting to feel comfortable with the cohort, and my personal learnings have been abundant and varied. I am finding my voice within a group, where I was previously silent. As the year rounds out, I'm looking forward to learning more from a governance perspective as the stabiliser in me needs to know I am doing processes correctly.

The program has given me the opportunity to see who I can be! I have found I am more confident within my own professional role, contributing more often and realising that what I bring to the table is being heard and respected.

As the program draws to an end, I truly hope it will be the beginning of something new for my career and community involvement.



Hayley Hollis

Program Manager
Department of Environment, Land,
Water and Planning (DELWP)
King Valley
Sponsor: DELWP

Initially I was excited to experience the program I had heard others speak so highly of. I was looking forward to growing my skills and networks and learning more about the opportunities and challenges in our region.

As part of the program I've enjoyed getting to know people in the context of growth and self-development. We have established friendships and professional networks with each other, witnessed a diversity of leadership experience and styles and heard first-hand about some of the opportunities and challenges faced by leaders across the region.

AVCLP has equipped me with a better understanding of my own strengths and style as a leader and this knowledge has given me confidence to lean into leadership in my workplace and community. Where to from here? I will continue to challenge myself, apply my learning and stay connected to the 2021 cohort as we've been on this leadership journey together and it doesn't stop with the completion of the course.



Sally Hughes

Landcare Officer
Corowa District Landcare
Corowa
Sponsors: June Canavan Foundation
& Regional Change Agency

I was excited about embarking on a leadership journey which I anticipated would be challenging and rewarding. I was unsure if I was worthy to participate. I felt excited and nervous leading up to the program and I felt a lot better after the opening retreat, as I made connections with people and could see how supportive Karlie and Jacqui were. I believed that this program would help me on my personal and professional journey.

The key learnings for me have been getting a better understanding of myself- my strengths and weaknesses! The most challenging aspects have been the group project, as our group has a variety of personality types and styles. I have made some wonderful connections with a number of people in the group. I have really enjoyed getting to know my fellow participants and I am learning to understand myself and others better.

The program has opened up my eyes to the broader socio-economic picture of our region. I also feel more confident to step out of my comfort zone and take on leadership roles in my community. I feel disappointed that we missed out on the trip to Canberra due to Covid-19, because my next step is campaigning for the 2021 local election.

I found learning about personality very helpful; good old Johari's window- lots to unpack there! I will endeavour to inspire the next generation of leaders in my own community to be the best they can be through my leadership roles - whatever they may be!



Andrew Jones

Animal Health Officer/ Senior
Program Officer
Agriculture Victoria
Tarraringee
Sponsor: Coles CFA Scholarship

When I started this program, I was excited about the opportunity to network with a variety of people. I was unsure about what the program days would consist of and how this would help me, but after the opening retreat it was reassuring to know how the program would proceed.

I am really looking forward to continuing to build on some of the relationships we have formed throughout the program. The start/stop aspect of Covid-19 interruptions was challenging for our group project but we continued to tackle this positively as a team. There have been some good speakers who have discussed numerous topics that had challenged my learning and improved my understanding.

The 360-writing review part of the program was a good chance to receive some feedback from the peers in our group. A significant part of the program for me was the reflection at midyear retreat. It gave me an opportunity to review what I wanted at the start of the program and I realised that having completed half of the program, my goals had changed.



Pia Kennedy

Development Officer (Tourism)
Alpine Shire Council
Porepunkah
Sponsor: Alpine Shire Council

I was humbled by the opportunity to participate in a program I had heard so many wonderful stories about. The opening retreat certainly confirmed my expectations of the program. It was so nice to be surrounded by motivated, like minded people, keen to make the world a better place. It was inspiring and nurturing to be able to spend time in my own self-development.

Through the program I have gained a much greater understanding of the different industries in our region. The opportunity to learn from industry and community leaders has been invaluable. Hearing their stories and how they adapt to adversity, challenges and at times overwhelming workloads has been inspiring.

Participating in the program has given me the confidence that I have the skills and personality to make a difference. It's extended my empathy and understanding of minority groups in our society and their daily challenges. I will walk away from the program with the drive, knowledge, networks and support to keep advocating with the goal to have a positive effect on my community and the region.



Peter Kenyon

Food Systems Strategist

Self-employed

Beechworth

Sponsor: Telstra Regional & Rural

AVCL's reputation is what attracted me to the program. I knew of the diversity of speakers on offer and their widely differing fields and the active and diverse presenters who would stimulate my better understanding of our region. I knew several people who had participated and it seemed that the annual program reflected a well-crafted means of strengthening the resilience and capacity in our communities. It became apparent that many local leaders, quietly working away in their fields, had also completed the program and that the value of this program to our region is unfathomable.

The Program has enabled a depth of learning and experience and the program days introduced ideas and personalities sharing incredible insights and deeply personal leadership stories. I now more clearly see them as imperfect people like me, having a go and stepping up. While Covid-19 has been an ongoing challenge, it has offered us further insights into how good leaders cope with difficult circumstances. They have demonstrated to us flexibility, generosity and grace.

My approach to my current community work has matured. I trust myself more and appreciate that leaders are not fully-formed, perfect individuals, just people who are prepared to take things on and draw strength from their families and networks. The networking opportunities in the group, from alumni and beyond, community, business, social and political leaders have also been invaluable and being involved in the program, I have gleaned such a breadth of experience and shared wisdom.



Lee Manning

Veterinary Officer

Agriculture Victoria, Department of Jobs, Precincts and Resources

Benalla

Sponsors: Change Our Game Scholarship, Victorian State Government

I was excited to gain a 'Change Our Game Scholarship', supporting women in leadership roles in sport. AVCLP ticked so many boxes for me! After supporting volunteers through the greatest stresses we'd ever encountered in 2020, I was keen to make the most of the AVCLP in 2021.

I have learned that leadership is about building a foundation of trust and confidence, the culture of a team makes or breaks it; a leaders clear intent supports teamwork and communication is everything!

Our AVCLP project has shown me how a great team can operate! We're sharing the load, working to our strengths, and stretching ourselves when we have the capacity to do so.

AVCLP has increased my awareness of regional priorities and community challenges. It's inspired me to 'pay forward' my knowledge through mentoring. I'm actively progressing my synthetic hockey field project in Benalla, aiming to link in education, business and industry for the largest possible community benefit.

The AVCLP is an amazingly positive, and supportive experiential learning environment, with mentoring by inspiring leaders from every part of our community, from government Directors to volunteers of small community groups doing amazing things. Many are within our own cohort, quietly making a tremendous difference.

The AVCLP journey is one of finding yourself and how you can best serve your community now and into the future. I'm so glad that I said to my busy self, "Just do it!"



Olivia Noto

WayOut Wodonga Project Worker

Gateway Health

Howlong

Sponsors: June Canavan Foundation and Gateway Health

I was thrilled to receive scholarships that enabled me to participate in this prestigious leadership program. I anticipated that it would be an enriching learning opportunity and that I'd increase my local networks with speakers and fellow participants alike.

At the opening retreat, I gained a better understanding of the community project component. The process we followed to choose our own groups was interesting and this immediately marked the program as unique to me. My initial reaction to sharing my personal story was one of hesitancy until I realised the incredible opportunity it presented, motivating me to share experiences that I haven't shared publicly before. Willingly leaving my comfort zone became a key driver for me to get the most out of this program.

As the cohort continues to develop deeper connections with each other, I look forward to continuing to share the incredible in-house expertise.

As a direct consequence of sharing a challenging personal story and doing the work required to enable this, I feel like I've come out of this a calmer person who is able to be mindfully present for much longer periods than before commencing this life-changing program. "Post-traumatic growth" is a concept I feel that is applicable to my experience, and AVCLP has provided the perfect avenue to explore and unpack experiences in ways I hadn't yet. It speaks to the power of personal story telling, and reminds us all, that everyone has a story, many stories, and that shapes who we are.



Melinda Pentreath

Self Employed

**Melodramas Performing Arts Studio
Benalla**

**Sponsor: AVCLP Alumni
Scholarship Fund**

Coming from a challenging year and the effects and impacts Covid-19 was having on me personally and in our community, I was very excited to be embarking on this journey. I felt nervous and unsure of what to expect at opening retreat; uncertain about some of the challenges I may face.

I have really enjoyed the wonderful speakers and their messages of struggles, hardships and having the strength to rise above and the importance to reach out for help. To be true to your own authenticity and strive to be the best version of yourself.

I would love to have more time to learn about other members of the cohort. Covid-19 has been a challenge as I miss the face to face interaction. Some of my favourite days have been working in small groups with different people and acknowledging the similarities in our lives. The knowledge learned from some of the cohort has been invaluable.

I'm not sure what the future holds with all the uncertainty around Covid-19, as it heavily impacts my business. The most rewarding part of the program are the new, lifelong friendships formed and the amazing presenters that have shared their truths.

I value time spent with the entire cohort and would have loved to have the opportunity to spend more time with them. I would love to further my knowledge and studies in to the future and hopefully I have some new skills that I will be able to implement from the program.



Edith Peters

Farm Manager

**Peters Willowbend
Tallandoon**

Sponsor: Gardiner Dairy Foundation

Coming into the program I was unsure what to expect. Alumni had said it was incredible but would not go into detail - presumably due to the Chatham House Rule. I was incredibly curious and excited. I wanted to increase my decision making and communication skills and increase my understanding of value adding opportunities.

Through our hands on group project, I began to notice my own decision making and challenged myself to have more difficult conversations. Also, a number of speakers iterated the point of starting before you're ready. A fellow participant on the program recommended the book Opening the Door of your Heart by Ajahn Brahm. Personally, I am better able to appreciate what I have done and continue to do. I am really looking forward to celebrating with my project group our achievement in delivering a Financial Freedom workshop, as our Community Project.

It has been rewarding to hear that Mount Beauty Secondary College may pick the Financial Freedom program as a permanent part of their curriculum. Over the last couple of months, I have been involved with the Alpine Valley Dairy's Climate Futures Workshops. I have contributed to the Towong Shire Agriculture Strategy. Through the Agriculture Strategy I have connected with an individual who has strong connections to many dairy producers creating products on farm. We plan to do a tour over the summer.



Helen Sellar

Therapeutic Specialist

**Australian Childhood Foundation
Beechworth**

Sponsor: Into Our Hands Foundation

I feel as though I have 'moved' in AVCLP circles for many years now and have been looking for the right time to undertake the program myself. I was super excited to be selected in the 2021 cohort and was eager to meet the other participants and engage in the program days and workshops. Hearing from past participants about the wonderful range of guest speakers and experiences had me feeling that it was going to be a great year, full of learning and growth. The opening retreat was fun, and getting to know the group was a relief, everyone brings something unique and fabulous.

The key learnings from my AVCLP journey to date have been broad. I have heard from guest speakers in fields and industries completely foreign to me and this has both captured my interest as well as challenged me. I feel my knowledge of the region and local communities has expanded and I have had my interest sparked at a number of new topics and ideas. I look forward to more of this over the final few program days.

I really have gained great knowledge, experiences, insights and friendships from my involvement in the AVCLP program this year. There certainly have been challenges. Our small leadership team has experienced its fair share of setbacks, however, we have developed and used skills throughout this that we perhaps wouldn't have otherwise. I have valued the generosity and contributions of the program co-ordinators and the participants alike and have pushed myself outside of my comfort zone on many occasion.



Tegan Sharwood

**Area Chief Ranger Western Alps
Parks Victoria
Mansfield
Sponsor: Parks Victoria**

I came to AVCL as a blank canvas with very little knowledge or experience of North East Victoria. I was really keen to tap into the diverse community of AVCL participants, speakers and alumni and learn as much about the region as I could.

The program has given me access to a variety of different perspectives and ideas that have enabled me to rapidly develop an understanding of many key challenges and opportunities that are present within North East Victoria.

Through my experiences with AVCL, I've been able to broaden my thinking in my professional role and take a community-perspective approach to acting on some of the challenges that have presented themselves. I've developed some excellent connections with different industry representatives and gained a respect for the diversity of challenges present in North East Victoria, as well as the innovators and passionate people who are tackling them.



Jennifer Sleep

**Executive Officer
Uniting Goulburn Murray Region
Wangaratta
Sponsor: Uniting (Vic.Tas) Ltd**

I was curious to start this program with a whole bunch of strangers from the region. I was curious about the new possibilities, new connections and new friendships that I would make with these strangers.

My key learning from the program stems from the wise words at the very beginning and reiterated throughout the program – If it has to be, it's up to me!

I need to be part of building the culture of change I can't wait for someone to do it for me or have those 'would of, could of, should of' moments.

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to make valuable connections and networks within my community and have found our community project to be the most rewarding part of the program.

Although this is the first "community" leadership program I have undertaken, I have also previously completed two other leadership programs in the course of my career; so I have not seen so much change in the way of professional growth.



Julia Vesval

**Marketing Consultant
City of Wodonga
Beechworth
Sponsor: Quercus Beechworth**

With a recent career change into Community Development, I was beyond excited to be accepted into the program! The opening retreat has been an eye opener for me. The discovery work that is done during these two days, on yourself and with others, really shapes the rest of the course dynamics. I left feeling daunted by the huge task ahead but absolutely committed to the program and my new team!

AVCLP has helped me realise that I can enact change and be a leader in my community; put simply, to believe in myself. One of the guest speakers on our Melbourne Study Tour gave me a fresh perspective on seizing opportunities when they present themselves, and it led me to become chair of a local board.

As I look forward, I intend to make the most of the time left to utilise the cohort's brain trust and the collective knowledge of twenty three other bright professionals. They've certainly propelled my thinking forward!

AVCLP certainly pushes you out of your comfort zone! The deep feeling of belonging and the innate sense of trust that the cohort environment brings you is unique. I've had so many 'ah ha' learning moments, both from guest speakers and fellow participants. I am ready for the next step of my leadership journey. I will be forever grateful for the experience and I look forward to giving back by mentoring the cohorts that will experience AVCLP after me.



Maria Wadley

**Divisional Manager Park Lane
Nursery
Merriwa Industries
Wangaratta
Sponsor: Merriwa Industries**

I was excited about the opportunity to stretch myself, which was definitely the thing I was most unsure about, and to learn more about myself, and how others operate in different situations and capacities. I felt so nervous and anxious coming into the program I was so certain that everyone would realise that I didn't belong.

After opening retreat I began to feel like maybe I do belong, maybe I can do this. I have felt a consistent (although sometimes bumpy) improvement as the program has progressed.

My key learnings so far have been that leadership styles are as different as each individual, and that once you figure out who you are and what is important, you will develop strength and confidence in your own leadership style.

The most challenging aspects for me have been stepping up and finding a voice. I'm hoping that as I continue to grow and develop, I will be more confident to take on roles within the community.

The most significant changes for me in this journey so far have been about perception, about myself and my strengths and capabilities, and about others as leaders and how they lead while being human and imperfect. Having the opportunity to be exposed to so many amazing people in our local and broader community has given me insight into what I think makes a great leader, and to ask myself if I have those qualities – turns out I have more than I thought.



Gemma Whitehead

**Coordinator's Assistant
Corryong Neighbourhood Centre
Corryong
Sponsor: Towong Shire, Bushfire
Forum Funding & Upper Murray
Development Board Scholarship**

At the beginning of the program, I had imposter syndrome. I felt intimidated by the other participants and the several years of experience that they had. However, I was eager to learn from my peers and the guest speakers that we were exposed to. After opening retreat, I was excited to get started on our community project and get to know the thought-provoking people in the cohort.

I've learnt a lot about the importance of being an authentic leader, taking care of myself and remaining true to my values. I'm most looking forward to seeing how the other leadership groups go with the delivery of their community projects. Covid-19 has been a challenge, we've had to be flexible and change our plans at the last minute. I wish that I had not let imposter syndrome get in the way of connecting with other participants earlier in the program.

My self confidence and ability to talk to larger groups has improved significantly. I'm feeling a little sad now that the program is coming to an end, the year has gone so quickly and due to Covid-19 disruptions, I feel like I could have benefited even more from the program.



Allison Winters

**Project Officer & Registered Nurse
Northeast Health Wangaratta
Wangaratta
Sponsor: Northeast Health
Wangaratta**

Before the program started, I was excited to meet the other participants and learn more about their industries, but mainly I was really looking forward to bringing new learnings back to my community and work leadership role. I was very nervous and anxious as the program started, and felt the all-too-commonly experienced 'imposter syndrome'.

This program has had a profound impact on my personal and professional life, but it has also had great impact on my community involvement. Since starting the program I've established a not-for-profit organisation and charity, had the confidence to lead a board of directors, and the contacts with other community leaders in the program to further build skills and knowledge to excel in this role.

My life changed after the first program day – literally. I rediscovered my value and made the decision to leave a role where I was incredibly unhappy. Through this program, I have gained confidence and self-awareness and, most importantly, recognised the value of myself, and what I bring to a role or team. It has slowly, but surely, increased my confidence and ability to lead a community group and make big changes in my personal and professional life.

I will be utilising the learnings from this program throughout various parts of my life, but I also expect to take on further education and professional development in community leadership, and this program has given me the confidence to continue this journey.



Capacity.

The ability to build your capacity so that new situations, although they are unfamiliar and perhaps stressful, are dealt with because of the work you have done on yourself.

A recollection of words
presented by Pauline Williams



AVCLP Honorary Graduate

Each recipient has:

- Significantly advanced the development of community leadership within the region and/or
- Made significant contributions to the community through demonstration of exceptional leadership
- Contributed outstanding service to the Alpine Valleys Community Leadership Program

Susan Benedyka | 2019

A long-time supporter who played an instrumental role in the Opening, Mid-Year and Final Retreats and the AVCL Board.

Barry Sullivan | 2017

A Board member from 1999-2007. His presentations about leadership in business have left a positive lasting impression on our participants.

Graham Nickless | 2016

Widely regarded as the catalyst for the creation of the AVCLP with his vision, strategic thinking, love of the region and persistent advocacy.

Anne Shaw | 2016

AVCLP's Executive Officer from 2001-2008. Anne is recognised as an integral part of AVCLP's long-term success.

Martin Carlson OAM | 2015

A long-time supporter and sponsor of Community Leadership Programs across Victoria, including AVCLP.

Nerida Kerr | 2014

A founding Board member instrumental in developing the governance of the organisation, and seeking ongoing funding.

Neil Clydsdale | 2014

A graduate of the first AVCLP Program and long-serving Board member, a passionate advocate in Upper Murray.

Bernard Young | 2013

Instrumental in successfully gaining funding and support for the Program to be able continue in its early years.

David Roff | 2012

A Board member from 2003-2010, Chairing AVCLP from 2006-2010, David increased the Programs profile and sustainability.

Community Projects

As part of our 2021 Annual Program, we introduced a new Community Projects component, providing an opportunity for participants to undertake a community focused project and engage in a learning format that is both active and experiential. Participants are able to develop new skills, grow their capabilities, broaden their networks and create an impact within their community.

Supported by mentors heralding from our Annual Program Alumni, each Community Project focused on achieving measurable outcomes that provide benefits to the region, in alignment with the Ovens Murray Regional Partnership Strategic Plan.

Project teams undertook project management training, and then worked together to thoughtfully develop project concepts, scopes, timelines, budgets and risk assessments. Upon acceptance of their Community Project by AVCL, each team then undertook the work on their project over the course of the Annual Program, providing regular reporting throughout the process, and concluding with a closure report and presentation at Graduation.

Our 2021 Community Projects were supported through seed funding generously contributed by the Hugh Williamson Foundation and the Kyamba Foundation.

Special thanks to our Mentors for contributing their time, advice and resources: Tammy Smith, Mim McGowan, Caz Sammon, Suzanne Vile, Narelle Martin, Tammy Atkins and Sue Gold.



Ready, Set, Life

Team Acorn: Olivia Noto, Julia Vesval, Justin Armstrong, Edith Peters, Natalie Flay

Overview: Team Acorn's Community Project focused on delivering an interactive workshop to develop the financial literacy skills of young people, to assist them in their transition to adulthood and enable them to make informed decisions about the next steps of their journey. The aim of the project was to empower and connect our future leaders.

Outcomes: Team Acorn engaged with Mount Beauty Secondary School, and arranged the facilitation of a financial literacy skills workshop for a group of Year 10 students. The workshop was delivered by The Mandala Project in August 2021. The success of the workshop was such that there is now scope for further workshops to be delivered, with planning underway for delivery to take place in Term 1 of 2022.



Small Change, Big Impact

Chrysalis: Maria Wadley, Laura Benson, Hayley Hollis, Lee Manning, Bonnie Clark

Overview: Chrysalis utilised a process of storytelling and capacity building to inform the development of a 12-month calendar which shares stories of everyday regional people who do small things that collectively reduce our footprint on the earth. The process of gathering information strengthened relationships and connections between people and their community, with a focus on diversity and inclusion. The final product will celebrate individual action and inspire regional people to reduce their carbon footprint to address climate change.

Outcomes: Chrysalis were able to connect with a range of individuals across North East Victoria, learning more about their sustainability efforts and how small efforts can create a large impact. Using the initial seed funding providing, Chrysalis engaged a graphic designer to develop a reusable monthly calendar featuring these stories, and were able to produce hard copy calendars, on enviro-friendly paper, to be distributed across the North-East. The digital version of the calendar will also be available via the AVCL website.



"Passion and Commitment is Leadership. Conviction, Courage and actively seeking the knowledge. Follow the path you believe"

Patrick Glass, Dairy Industry and Climate Change



Diversity and Inclusion Mural

JASPA: Sally Hughes, Allison Winters, Anthony Cheesman, Pete Christison, Jennifer Sleep

Overview: The goal of this project is to create a vibrant mural in Wangaratta with a theme of diversity and inclusion, cultivated through a process of youth consultation and engagement. Consultation with young people is a key part of the process, helping to draw out ideas and create conversations that contribute to the development of the theme of the mural. These themes will be interpreted by a carefully selected artist and translated into an image for the mural.

Outcomes: Jaspa were able to collaborate with Yarrunga Primary School, with an appropriate space for the mural being identified on one of the school buildings. Through a consultative and inclusive process, team Jaspa engaged with local artist, Chris Henderson, to undertake a two staged approach to develop and paint the mural; it is anticipated to be completed in December. Jaspa were also successful in obtaining additional funding through the Bendigo Bank Wangaratta and AlayaCare, ensuring the project was able to be completed in full.

Bringing Communities Together

The Quintets: Andrew Jones, Pahal Man Bhattarai, Peter Kenyon, Pia Kennedy, Tamara Barton

Overview: Originally, The Quintets had planned to host and publicise an event at the 2021 Wangaratta Show aimed at encouraging and supporting the diverse volunteer organisations within the Rural City of Wangaratta to set up information stalls and connect with the public for the purpose of telling their stories, sharing information and attracting new volunteers. However, with the uncertainty of the show going ahead, the team looked to pivot to a new idea.

The Quintets aligned themselves to collaborate with the Grit and Resilience Project, to produce a guide that can assist local community groups to develop and host their own community gathering. Gatherings and events in the communities will strengthen connection, improve mental health and reduce suicide.

Outcomes: Working with the Grit and Resilience Project, the Quintets are currently developing a comprehensive manual that will be an integral part the Grit and Resilience program community lead initiative for communities to have more community events. Supported by The Rural City of Wangaratta, the guidelines will ensure community groups are best placed to develop and host a successful event.

Unspoken Words

Ohana: Tegan Sharwood, Gemma Whitehead, Helen Sellar, Melinda Pentreath

Overview: Ohana's Community Project originally focused on gathering the stories and experiences of people in Corryong. Under the advice of AVCL, they then pivoted to profiling graduates of the AWECC M-Incubator program, understanding the stories of the multicultural community members of Albury Wodonga. After frequent setbacks due to Covid-19 and timelines, Ohana have re-developed a project sharing their own journey of challenges, delivering a community project outcome and working with a remote team during times of frequent and uncontrolled change.

Outcomes: Ohana have developed a presentation and resource outlining key learnings related to working in a team, the project management experience and trying to develop and deliver project scopes during Covid-19 that will be presented at the 2021 Graduation. They hope by telling their story, others will relate and learn from the experience when facing the challenges of delivering projects in community.

inspiring tomorrow's leaders **today**



I refuse to believe that you cannot be both compassionate and strong. We each hold power in our words, actions and our daily acts of kindness.

Jacinda Ardern (abridged)



2021 AVCL Workshops

Disaster Recovery Community Leadership Workshops

In July 2020, AVCL received funding for the purpose of delivering leadership training workshops to community members in disaster and fire-affected areas, working with trauma impacted communities and learning from other leaders who have experienced disasters.

The funding comes from the \$86 million Community Recovery Package announced by the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments under the jointly funded Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements in response to the Black Summer Bushfires.

AVCL has utilised the funding to engage with a range of stakeholders through place-based discussions to develop workshops which meet community recovery leadership needs in the shires of Towong, Alpine, Indigo and Mansfield and the cities of Wangaratta and Wodonga.

Due to Covid-19 related restrictions, the delivery of some of these workshops has now been extended out to June 2022; further information is provided below as to some of the workshops that have already been delivered.

Mentoring Skills Workshop - AVCL Alumni

A bespoke mentoring workshop facilitated by Jill Briggs, Affectus was developed and delivered to 13 AVCL Alumni to build their mentoring skills, with participants provided with opportunities to take up mentoring roles in various AVCL programs and initiatives. The workshop was received well by all participants.

- ③ The workshops are based on local and regional information and draw upon the expertise and experience of individuals and organisations.



Youth Leadership Workshops - Moving from Recovery to Reimagining

AVCL engaged Jeremy Scrivens of the Emotional Economy Company to deliver two back-to-back interactive 2-hour workshops at the Alpine Youth Leadership Camp. 14 youth leaders from across the region had the opportunity to discuss and learn about how to approach change through leadership. Key Topics included: appreciative inquiry, reframing the topic and designing a Summit room.

Community Leadership in Preparedness Workshops

AVCL has partnered with the Shire of Towong and the Community Recovery Committees to facilitate a series of workshops in Towong to enable local communities to develop their own Community Emergency Response Plans, and how these plans will be managed by the community moving forward. AVCL partnered with Red Cross to develop a process to enable community leaders to work with emergency response organisations, to gather the information and learnings from their bushfire experience, in order to create a simple local preparedness plan. This approach will also roll out in Mansfield and Alpine Shires. The workshops are based on local and regional information and draw upon the expertise and experience of individuals and organisations. The outcome will be a simple plan developed by each community that outlines what the community can manage and control of in an emergency situation, complementing and feeding into municipal level emergency/disaster management plans from a community perspective.



Disaster Recovery & Climate Change Adaption Program

AVCL commenced the delivery of a Disaster Recovery & Climate Change Adaption Program in June 2021. The program was supported by North East Catchment Management Authority (NECMA) through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program and Victorian Government, The Gardiner Dairy Foundation and Central Hume PCP, and Bushfire Recovery Victoria.

Spanning a total of eight days across a duration of seven months, this pilot program aimed to equip participants with a strong understanding of how to shape their own leadership narrative, the impacts of climate change predictions for NE Victoria on the wider community, agriculture, and the environment, and an awareness of local innovation.

Participants undertook a series of program days that included site visits and hands-on experiential learning. Key areas of focus included: understanding myself and my role as a leader, understanding the context I am leading in: taking a systems view of leadership, leading in a crisis, how to have meaningful conversations about climate change, and learning about what others in the North East and Border regions are doing to support disaster recovery and climate change adaptation.

AWECC M-Incubator Program

In 2020, AVCL partnered with Albury Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council (AWECC) to deliver a leadership program for 20 emerging leaders from the many different cultural groups in the Border region. The aim of the program was to build the leadership capacity of key people to drive the development of community projects for the long-term sustainability of their communities. Features of the program included grassroots participation, mentoring, and enhanced collaboration across different ethnic groups, demographics, religions and organisations.

The program was successfully completed in May 2021, with a Graduation ceremony where graduates were addressed by Member for Indi and AVCLP Alumni Dr Helen Haines MP, Mayor of Wodonga Cr Kevin Poulton and Mayor of Albury Cr Kevin Mack.

Wangaratta LGBTIQA+ Leadership Program

Pitch Up Wangaratta was a unique fundraising event held in November 2019, sponsored by The Funding Network in conjunction with the Into Our Hands Foundation. The purpose of the event was to enable community groups to "pitch" about their project, with a view to securing funding to enable actualisation. Driven by a desire to broaden the capacity of our local LGBTIQA+ community, Alpine Valleys Community Leadership was successful in securing funding for the purpose of providing an enhanced leadership training program for the LGBTIQA+ community in the Wangaratta region.

The Wangaratta LGBTIQA+ Leadership Program was delivered in March 2021, with participants undertaking two days of workshops that included core topics of: Developing your vision and mission, developing your key message, strategic planning, basic governance, running effective meetings, grant writing, event management, developing partnerships, managing volunteers and team building.

2021 AVCLP Alumni

The first Alpine Valleys Community Leadership Program was delivered during 1998-1999. Twenty one Annual Leadership Programs have been delivered, creating a strong network of AVCLP Alumni contributing to their communities across North East Victoria and Border regions and beyond. With the addition of this year's graduates we will reach 471 AVCLP Alumni.

1999

Lachlan Campbell
Neil Clydsdale
Jenny Evans
Nola Evans
Mark Felton
Simon Glass
Irene Grant
Roger Haddrell
Tracey Hooper
Don Jackson
Jocelyn Lyon
Mick McNerney
Dianne Mangan
Philippa Noble
Marion Rak
Michael Ransom
Grant Scale
Jon Temby
Maureen Titcomb
Shane Wright

2002

David Bell
Jenny Bradley
Jill Breadon
John Bridges
Rob Carolane
Lyn Coulston
Faith Damm
Marian Dowling
Bruce Dwerryhouse
Rick Felton
Helen Haines
Bev Hoffmann
Phil Howard
Heather Ingpen
Veronica Lanigan
Shaun Lawlor
Denis Martin
Steve Morell
Lucy Pizzini
Graeme Pollard
Jo Saggars
Rob Steel
Rainier Van Dyk

2003

Mandy Allen
Owen Bassett
James Burgess
David Briggs
Debbie Corbett
Yvonne Evans
Karen Hayes
Karen Jones
Kristy McCormick
Marilyn McKenzie-McHarg
Leesa Milne
Kevin Murphy
Betty Murtagh
David Ryan
Graham Scott
MariJana Southern
John Stapleton
Tanya
Tatulaschwili
Geoff Turnbull

2004

Annesha Brown
Wayne Donehue
Tracey Farrant
Phillip Gardner
Phil Geroni
Roger Gregory
Andrew Holm
Gavin Kelly
David Kidd
Carol Hill
Michele Lee
Barry McIntosh
Henry McKenzie
Colleen O'Brien
Tracy Pirie
Deb Randich
Pamela Simpson
Chloe Southern
Michelle Wilkinson
Robert Williams

2011

Luke Brock
Leanne Bussell
Ashley Campbell
-Brown
Kevin Cosgriff
Karen Daglish
Pat Doyle
Adele Earl
Racheal Edis
Emma Avery
Cheryl Impink
Andrew
McGranahan
Kate Marshall
Leon Newton
Austin Nicholas
Sally Rodgers
Birgit Schonafinger
Faye Smart
Melanie Walker

2012

Jacqui Bright
AnnMaree
Christian
Tracey Cooper
Garry Corcoran
Sandra Dalton
Kevin de Henin
Deb Donkers
Julie Folan
Judy Griffiths
Bridie Guy
Lauren Landman
Narelle Martin
Sara Reid
Sandra Ross
Grant Saunders
Kate Simpson
Bart Smith
Cheryl Smith
Michael Vanderzee
Karen van de
Sande
Maree Warnett
Bindy Welsh
Bronwen Wilson

2013

Tessa Archbold
Charlotte Bissett
Deanne Campbell-Brown
Suz Christison
Lyn Clark
Chris Cumming
Michael Donehue
Stephen Gemmill
Craig Grant
Angela Harders
Joanne Hughes
Cate Kirk
Kitty Knappstein
Lisa Linton
Michael Nardella
Kevin Newton
Mayssa Powell
Bruce Ray
Peter Sacco
Jenny Sinnott
Jennie Star
Vanessa Stitz
Jackie Thompson
Geraldine Torpy

2014

Elisha Barry
Paul Blackshaw
Steven Burke
Lisa Cartledge
John Cavedon
Elizabeth Frazer
Jemma Galvin
Sally Hayden
Michelle Hudson
Jeanie Keeton
Richard Merton
Trish Mom
Martina Moore
Kerrie Mountford
Craig Murphy
Kyle Oxley
Will Read
Tania Weller
Anthony Wilson
Brendan White
Gary Wingrave
Elise Wood

2005

Helen Al Helwani
Janet Bell
Andrew Briggs
Erin Brooks
Trish Curtis
Graham Daglish
Lauren Fearne
Kevin Freeman
Kate Green
Christine Jewell
Sue Leavold
Sonia Lewis
Sue McCabe
Gabriele Moritz
Gary Nicholls
Katie Park
Doug Paton
Hugh Paton
Sue Salau
Peter Scales
Ralph Scalzo
Paul Sladdin
Julie Wilkins

2006

Neil Aird
John Antonello
Tammy Atkins
Allan Findlay
Will Flamsteed
Lynn Gibson
Paul Greaves
Anthony Griffiths
Kris Harrison
Chris Hepner
Kaye Hildebrand
Nell Kell
Catherine Kent
Jan Kowarzik
David Larkman
Renee Palmer
Elaine Paton
Mary Prowse
Judy Seymour
Caitlin Sheehan
Aaron Vanegmond
Debbie Watts

2007

Helen Allan
Tracey Appleby
Susan Bull
Paul Brady
Jeff Carboon
Angela Craven
Sarah Daniell
Trish Gallagher
Leanne Harris
Anne Hiskins
Lynne Jones
Jacinta Ludeman
Sue Lukins
Jackie Mooney
Anthony Nicholson
Michele Padbury
Tony Rebetzke
Leonard Redfern
Helen Robinson
Shay Simpson
Travis Smith

2008

Roy Baird
Robert Bon
Felicity Brooke
Tim Clune
Kerry Craig
Shane Downie
Sarah Flamsteed
David Guy
Gwen Holford
Carolyn Humby
Melissa Ivone
Barbara Martin
Lisa McInerney
Kerry Moylan
Cristina Perra
Alison Pockley
Greta Quinlivan
Vicki Robinson
Lizette Salmon
Kim Scanlon
Celia Turnbull

2009

Sue Arndt
Gillian Belle
Sandy Belgre
Brett Bevan
Malcolm Bradbury
Julia Cocks
Kym Goodman
Catherine Hattersley
Phil Horner
Paul Horton
Gayle Hughes
Brian Jones
Grant Jones
Justin King
Lisa Mangelsdorf
Chris Morris
Kelvin Neal
Matthew O'Connell
Colleen Reynolds
Wayne Rotherham
Joanne Ryan
Christopher Tate
Kristy Youman

2010

Mary Anderson
Jenny Ashby
Graeme Blake
Gwenda Canty
Matthew Charles -
Jones
Anthony Cole
Ross Grant
Alice Gratton
Cherie Gottschling
Tegan Lithgow
Helen Langborne
Lauren McCully
Emma McPherson
Shane Martin
Diane Martin
Wendy Porter
Judith Samways
Charmaine Stefani
Craig Turton
Helen Vey

2015

Deanne Burge
Michelle Burrowes
Jane Carney
Bronwyn Chapman
Matthew Currie
Vidura Delpitiya
Mark Ditcham
Elizabeth Ellis
Dianne Ferguson
Tahni Froudish
Jenny Griffiths
Sue Harris
Allan Hooper
Nicholas Jordan
Owen Lappin
Kirsten Lingard
Steven Martin
Bonnie McIntosh
Kerryn Mitchell
Courtney Naughton
Lucy O'Dwyer
Kevin Powell
Rigtje Raadsveld

2016

Margaret Anderson
Lisa Basler
Catriona Brown
Nicola Burns
Simon Crase
Michelle Critchley
Ange Davidson
Kellie Davies
Emma Ghys
Victoria Griffiths
Lauralee Hogg
Rena Johns
Ben Kneebone
Rosie Koop
Renee Leary
Erin O'Connor
Jason Perna
Carolyn Sammon
Victoria Schmidt
Allan Thrum
Courtney Ward -
Jackson
Andrew Whitehead
Fiona Wigg

2017

Luke Chilcott
Helen Clark
Catherine Wanjiru
Clarke
Sandra Duffy
Karen Gunner
Benjamin Hawkins
Will Jerney
Alison Lloyd
Troy Mahoney
Katie Moore
Nicole Murphy
Richard Paschke
Chris Rodgers
Tammy Smith
Jacqueline Smith
Nicole Stephens
Kimberly Taylor
Ryan Thomas
Shane Tucker
Amy Van De Ven
Tamara Watson

2018

Judith Ahmat
Natalie Ajay
Aida Baharestani
Tanille Bailey
Maria Berry
John Chanter
Alice Colclough
Lisa Dekeling
Libby Dowling
Sven Erikson
Julia Fitz-Gerald
Ashley Fitzpatrick
Jane Gehrig
Kelly Harwood
Heidi Hodge
Dave Jenson
Kerryn Lee
Kym Loechel
Swathi Mahendran
Celia Piesse
Dan Purcell
Emma Williamson
Nicola Winter
Kim Woosnam

2019

Leon Carter
Mal Clarke
Shane Crispin
Rebecca Damm
Simon Eakin
Sophie Enders
Jodi Finlayson
Lesley Forman
Kerri Imlach
Rupinder Kaur
Jesse King
Emma Knights
Liam McMahon
Jessica
Oldmeadow
Rachael Richards
Rebecca Sacco
Hayden Sharp
Justine Shelton
Francine Stacey
Sue Thornton
Patricia Van De
Paverd
Lucie Wallis
Trish Winzer

2020

Glenn Allan
Murray Bennett
Elita Briggs
Jackie Broughton
Thomas Carberry
Anita Chennell
Valissa Clarke
Trish Crockett
Jane Diplock
Alyce Fisher
Julie Hancock
Monique Hillenaar
Dave Hume
Jill James
Diarmuid Kelly
Mim McGowan
Bobbi McKibbin
Glenn Mercer
Brett Mugridge
Jack Nelson
Amy Northwood
Bronwyn Parker
Laura Sutherland
Craig Thorp
Shane Tomkins
Suzanne Vilé
Tim Wallis
Rachel Wolfe



Victorian Regional Community

Leadership Programs

The Alpine Valleys Community Leadership Program is one of nine Community Leadership Programs that serve the regional areas of Victoria. These programs form the membership of the Victorian Regional Community Leadership Programs Association and have a Secretariat based in Ballarat.

The Vision of the Association is:

- Leaders in Leadership | Supporting the development of Victoria's Community Leaders
- The nine Community Leadership Programs support each other with Governance and Program development, with the aim of collectively delivering exceptional leadership programs to rural and regional Victorians.
- VRCLP members have an alumnus of over 3,200 leaders who have the opportunity to continually develop their skills and networks through participation in an ever-increasing range of workshops, master classes and regional leadership events.

- The world has changed so much in the recent past, and leadership development must change along with it, to meet the challenges of leading in these ever-evolving circumstances.

Looking ahead 2022 and beyond

AVCL is currently focused on developing our 2022 strategic plan, that is set to be released in the new year. This important work will be informed by an environmental scan of community leadership, not only in our region, but the statewide community leadership learning and development framework which has been adopted by all 9 community leadership programs throughout Victoria. We will invite our partners and key stakeholders to participate in the development of this future strategic direction.

AVCL will continue to develop tailored contemporary community and regional leadership programs, delivered through the lens of climate change adaptation, disaster recovery and community-led project management. Our Annual Program is also reviewed and revised each year, based on the feedback received from our graduates.

Our community leadership workshops and programs will be delivered across a blended modality of face to face and online learning, ensuring we are able to build community leadership capacity in a manner that ensures the safety of our participants.

We will achieve our goal of gaining DGR status, with the outcome of being able to raise additional scholarships and secure funding that ensures our leadership programs are accessible and inclusive.

By the end of 2022, our alumni will be surveyed, and outcomes will be used in an impact report demonstrating how the development of leaders creates positive impact in our region. We are excited to discover and present the amazing contributions our alumni make to their communities.





Alpine Valleys Community Leadership



Executive Officer

Wang Central
15-17 Ely St, Wangaratta 3677

MOBILE 0417 348 547

EMAIL eo@avclp.org.au

Program Manager

Wang Central
15-17 Ely St, Wangaratta 3677

MOBILE 0437 827 548

EMAIL leaders@avclp.org.au

avclp.org.au

