

2023 year book



inspiring tomorrow's
leaders today

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



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 Beyond Housing
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Story Up
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 The Big Issue
 Tim McCurdy MP
 Tomorrow Today Foundation
 Totally Renewable Yackandandah
 Towong Shire Council
 Yackandandah Community Development Company (YCDCO)
 Victoria Police
 Victorian Aboriginal Health Service



Welcome to
AVCL 2023

This year, AVCL delivered an extensive range of programs and initiatives, while we pressed forward with our mission to increase the capacity of people and communities in the North East and Border regions. As an organisation, we were also challenged to explore new opportunities for growth, capacity and sustainability.



For over 20 years, funding from the Victorian State Government helped support over 500 graduates in our Annual Program. Our graduates are at the heart of our work, and this year we released an Annual Program Alumni Impact Report, demonstrating the measurable outcomes achieved by our Alumni. This is a significant accomplishment, and we invite our stakeholders and supporters to read the report, which is available on our website.

Despite the demonstrable impact of our Annual Program, from the end of 2023, it will no longer receive any support from the Victorian State Government. To ensure that our region continues to benefit from the delivery of our valuable flagship leadership program, we crafted and enacted a strategy to support the development of a fit-for-purpose and financially sustainable program, taking an inclusive approach that draws on the views of our valued stakeholders.

AVCL had been preparing for the possibility of the loss of Victorian State Government funding, developing a philanthropy strategy that included obtaining endorsement as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) and Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) as of July 2022. This occurred alongside Alpine Valleys Community Leadership Inc. transitioning to Alpine Valleys Community Leadership Fund Ltd. as of 1 July 2022.

Attainment of Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status enabled us to deliver our first direct fundraising appeal, allowing supporters to make a fully tax-deductible donation via our website, so we can continue to provide scholarships, support and programs to individuals and groups experiencing disadvantage within our community. We thank all who generously donated to this appeal, and we will continue to move forward with executing our philanthropy strategy.

Our success 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.

Throughout 2023, our Board, staff and program participants have acted with flexibility, tenacity, innovation and consideration. Together we have all practised what we teach – leadership.

Thank you to all of our voluntary board members for their contribution to the organisation. Many thanks to the wonderful team of staff and contractors who give their best to bring out the best in our emerging community leaders, so they can foster resilient and vibrant communities.

Madeline Hines
Interim Executive Officer

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2022 - 2023

AVCL Board & Staff



Judy Charlton
Chair



Felicity Whorlow
Deputy Chair



Anthony Griffiths
Deputy Chair
Resigned October 2023



Megan Buntine
Secretary
Resigned April 2023



Katie Warner
Treasurer
Resigned October 2023



Pip O'Donnell
Board Member



Sophie Enders
Board Member



Ameer Jhingoor
Board Member



Elise Hill
Board Member



Kirsten Williams
Board Member



Steve Belli
Board Member



Tegan Allen
Board Member



David Kidd
Board Member
Resigned October 2023



Jacqui Bramwell
Executive Officer
Resigned September 2023



Suz Christison
Program Manager



Madeline Hines
Interim Executive Officer
September 2023



Billie Robertson
Administration Officer



AVCLP 2023

Patron's Message

In 1998, when the AVCLP was created we had an idea, a strong belief, maybe even a tightly held conviction, that a locality with strong leaders would be a great place to live, work and play.

It would be a place that welcomed change. But it was just an idea. We needed leaders to design a program, seek funds to put it into practice, and people with the skills to bring it to reality.

I am immeasurably humbled and delighted by the fact a small group of innovative leaders went and did just that!

More than twenty years has passed since then, and the organisation has gone on to much greater things. AVCL now delivers a variety of programs to meet the needs of different individuals and organisations, be they local government, business and community groups, disasters, sporting bodies and more.

There are now some 500 graduates of the Alumni contributing in various ways to making our region a great place to live, work and play.

The Annual Program has gained a reputation and respect, such that many benefactors see the value in offering financial support.

One of the longer-term benefactors was the Victorian State Government, and it has been most regrettable to learn of its decision to withdraw support for the program.

Once again, we found the critical need for support and leadership at a local level, ensuring AVCL could keep the program operating at its current excellence and capacity.

The benefit of a "leadership strong" community cannot be overstated. Every day we hear of our leaders striving to make things better. We all, ultimately, share in the benefits.

I urge everyone, especially our leaders to rally to the cause. No contribution or effort be too small, whether it is through advocacy, a donation, a kind word, or any other means to show support for the program.

It is imperative that we continue to develop and enact new ways to ensure our local leadership program continues for another twenty years to come.

John Brown AO

The most significant change I've noticed in myself is how my curiosity has grown.

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

“The greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things. He is the one that gets the people to do the greatest things.”

Victorian Regional Community Leadership Programs

Alpine Valleys Community Leadership is one of nine organisations delivering Community Leadership Programs across regional areas of Victoria working cohesively as a collaborative network supporting the:

- ⊙ Development of Victoria's Community Leaders
- ⊙ Governance and Program development, with the aim of delivering exceptional leadership programs to rural and regional Victorians
- ⊙ 3,200 plus 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.



Our Vision

Vibrant and sustainable communities through local leadership

Our Mission

Grow the leadership capacity and voice of people and communities

Strategic Plan 2022 - 2024:

01

Future focused stakeholder engagement

02

Growth to deliver impact

03

Systems to support impact

04

Facilitate leadership development





Chair's Report

I provide this Yearbook message on behalf of the AVCL Board. Congratulations to all our graduates from the 2023 Annual Leadership Program. I hope you enjoyed the year and grew in confidence.

Being challenged while on your leadership journey can have some uncomfortable moments, but often, when we reflect later, we realise that is when we were learning the most. Trying something new reminds us we are alive.

We thank the following partners:

- The Victorian State Government for their financial contribution
- Employers who support their employees with time and funding to undertake the program
- Our philanthropic partners who sponsor community members to participate in the program
- Our alumni who continue to lead their communities and encourage new participants
- Our "in-kind" contributors, including presenters, venue providers and various professionals
- Our program contractors who deliver fantastic content

Our patron, John Brown, has been a steadfast supporter for many years, and we appreciate his continued interest.

Our small band of AVCL staff continually strive for and achieve outstanding results. Their commitment and flexibility, often under challenging circumstances, is greatly valued.

I would also like to thank the AVCL Board Members, who volunteered their time and skills to the organisation, without whom the organisation could not continue.

AVCL is now transitioning to the next stage of the organisation's journey. Delivering our flagship leadership program without state government funding will require significant community and philanthropic support. We look forward to partnering with you to ensure we achieve our vision of "Vibrant and sustainable communities through local leadership" and continue to deliver our mission of "Growing the leadership capacity and voice of people and communities".

Judy Charlton
Board Chair



Interim Executive Officer's Report

Transformation doesn't happen in isolation. I am often reminded of this as I routinely observed the progress of the Annual Program cohort throughout the year. The journey of each participant begins long before the program launch, or even the Opening Retreat. It starts when each individual has the idea to apply to the program, and then follows through on that decision to give it a go.

Some are more confident and assured of their license to participate in the program. While others are less so, swayed by imposter syndrome, the fear of failure, or the fear of going outside their comfort zone. The program is at times challenging; if it were easy, everyone would do it. And yet, the fact remains that all of our participants, at some point, said to themselves, "I can do this, I am worthy, I am going to be brave." And that they have done, magnificently.

But while that first decision was made at the individual level, it has been through the cohort's growth as a collective that each participant has powerfully transformed in earnest. I have had the privilege of seeing the change in our 21 participants, and the difference from their first meeting at the Program Launch in February, through to the Graduation in November, is visually identifiable. The program asks many things of participants, and to name a few - dedication, flexibility, self-honesty, resilience and a commitment to the continuous evolution of self. Each participant has demonstrated this, and more; the entire cohort has developed and strengthened their leadership capacities, and you should each be so proud of your accomplishments. Well done to all.

Community Projects are always of particular interest to me, as they provide a unique opportunity for practical learning, whilst also challenging each project team in ways that have little to do with the intended outcome of the project itself, for example: navigating team dynamics, negotiation, conflict resolution, courage, and much more. Well done to all the project teams for your exceptional efforts, which can be read about on page 24 of this report.

Thank you to Suz Christison, our Program Manager, for your skill in managing this year's Annual Program, and the care you have genuinely conveyed to all its participants. It is bittersweet that you will be leaving the team to explore Canada in 2024, however no one can begrudge you the once in a lifetime opportunity to navigate all those incredible natural wonders. Your multifaceted skills, excellence and compassion will be most missed.

Thank you to all of the funders of our Annual Program, including the workplace and scholarship funders who make participation possible. And to our funders of the Community Projects, the Hugh Williamson Foundation and Kyamba Foundation, your generous contributions ensured that our participants were able to deliver impactful and meaningful outcomes in the community.

In addition to the Annual Program, we have delivered an extensive range of programs this year, which you can read about on page 27. Thank you to the funders of these programs, and to our specialist facilitators and contractors who support program delivery – Mary Hoodless, Susan Benedyka, Chris Mirams and Gary Saliba. And a thank you to our recently departed Executive Officer, Jacqui Bramwell. Jacqui demonstrated an unwavering commitment to excellence, strong leadership, and pursuit of growth opportunities to support the organisation's continued success. I wish her the best of luck in her new role.

Again, congratulations to all of our 21 Annual Program graduates. Your accomplishments this year are a testimony to yourselves, and to each other; and I wish you all the very best in your next leadership initiatives.

Madeline Hines
Interim Executive Officer



Program Manager's Report

Congratulations to the Graduates of the 2023 Annual Program. This cohort comprises people from across the region, in a range of sectors and communities. Each of the graduates bring unique strengths, wisdom and stories to the cohort and the group, and this contributes to the rich learning and growth throughout the shared experience.

We have had the privilege to hear from a range of guest speakers and skills workshop presenters who bring wisdom, knowledge, and generosity in sharing their stories and expertise. Travelling around the region we have seen some great examples of community leadership in action. From the Brown Brother's story of innovation and longevity to the more recent community ownership of Old Beechworth Gaol with the mixture of history and new beginning. In Melbourne we learned about a statewide perspective on regional issues and visited State Parliament.

Through the dreaming, design and delivery of Community Projects, we experienced a powerful connection with community. Each of the project teams identified and met a need, and worked with others to create a project that made an impact.

The personal learning and growth that occurs for participants is inspiring, as they invest in expanding the comfort zone of self and others. I am continually inspired by the courage shown by our leaders as they identify and then address personal growth opportunities. From speaking up in front of others, to deep listening, diversifying leadership styles, there are a range of ways in which participants embraced moments of learning. From each person in the cohort, the sharing through an 'About Me' to the group was considered, thoughtful and engaging. Whether it was dreaded or relished by the presenter, it was a privilege to hear these stories and insights.

Other opportunities to deliver on our vision continue to arise. Early in the year, I had the pleasure of working with Goulburn Murray Climate Alliance, with Executive Officer Carole Hammond as mastermind for a 3-day forum on Climate Leadership. Across three separate days, the forums brought together decision makers from local government and agencies to consider how to include climate in all decision making, and share accountability in governance for acknowledging and addressing the impacts.

I also had the pleasure of facilitating the Youth Leading Wodonga project, an initiative of Wodonga Urban Land Council and Wodonga Council. Being part of this project was another great way to further the vision of AVCL. Through a forum of community leaders active in sustainability and climate action, the young people gained insights into local actions. The group then generated ideas for their own project, narrowing down to one project to deliver themselves in October this year. This collaborative and energising project generated great results.

As we collectively continue to evolve in the post-COVID era, the need for positive and proactive community leadership is as pertinent as ever. For healthy, connected, and sustainable communities, we need leaders who can drive action. I am confident that we have a great group of leaders from our 2023 Program ready to take on that challenge. I am grateful for the shared learning, connection, and growth.

As we look to 2024, I am moving on with a family adventure abroad and will hand over the role. I would like to thank all who have contributed to this experience. Thank you to the small and close-knit staff team I have worked with. Jacqui, Maddi and Billie have each been great supporters and teachers for me in this role, and I am deeply grateful. The AVCL community of supporters, alumni, funders, speakers, board members, family and friends is a wide and wonderful one. Once again, a huge congratulations to the 2023 Graduates. Go forth and lead.

Suz Christison
Program Manager

2023

Annual Program



1. Launch Event

Thursday 2nd February 2023

Venue: Wangaratta CSU Regional Study Centre

Sponsor: Charles Sturt University

- Participants came together for the first time as a group, as part of an inaugural Annual Program Launch event. 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 10th and Saturday 11th of February 2023

Venue: Lake Hume Resort, Lake Hume Village

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. Healthy Connected Communities

Friday 24th of February 2023

Venue: Alpine Health, Myrtleford

- Speaker:** David Kidd, Clinical Safety and Health Improvement
Title: *Health Service Delivery in Regional Areas*
Leadership Capacity: Building Relationships, Innovation
Regional Priority: Health and Wellbeing
- Speaker:** Laura Benson, Senior Advisor, Corporate Strategy, Planning & Performance, Department of Transport and Planning
Title: *Transport for Healthy Connected Communities*
Regional Priority: Transport, Health and Wellbeing
- Site Visit:** Myrtleford Mens Shed with Clive Walker, OAM
Title: *Social connection and mental health through hands on activity space*
- Speaker:** Sally Matheson, Education Benalla Program Manager, Tomorrow Today Foundation
Title: *Tomorrow Today: Making A Difference*
Leadership Capacity: Building Relationships
Regional Priority: Health and Wellbeing, Education & Skills

4. Regional Economy

Friday 17th of March 2023

Venue: Brown Brothers Winery, Milawa

Sponsor: Brown Brothers Family Wine Group

- **Speaker: Mark Byatt**, Regional Development Victoria
Topic: *Economic development*
Leadership Capacity: Building Relationships, Innovation
Regional Priority: Economic Development

Speaker: Katie Warner, OM Partnership
Topic: *Shaping the Region*
Leadership Capacity: Community Engagement, Regional Knowledge and Insight
Regional Priority: How these were established, Community Engagement

Speaker: Celia Adams, CEO, Beyond Housing
Topic: *Housing in our Region: Challenges and Opportunities*
Leadership Capacity: Regional Knowledge and Insight, Health and Wellbeing
Regional Priority: Economic Development, Health and Wellbeing

Speaker: Lee Rowland, Supply Chain Manager
Topic: *Tour of Packaging Facility at Brown Brothers*
Leadership Capacity: Adaptive Mindset, Innovation, Vision and Strategy
Regional Priority: Economic Development

Speaker: Maddi Hines, AVCL
Topic: *Community Project – Project Handbook, Timeline and Scoping Document*

5. Skills Day one: Project Planning & Management

Friday 31st of March 2023

Venue: Wangaratta Regional Study Centre

- **Leadership Team:** 4 Peaks
Facilitator: Mary Hoodless

6. Education & Industry

Friday 21st of April 2023

Venue: CFA Training Room, Wodonga

Sponsor: CFA

- **Speaker: Tim Farrah**, Regional Manager Hume & Riverina, Australian Industry Group
Title: *Understanding regional industry growth, trends and challenges*
Leadership Capacity: Innovation
Regional Priority: Economic development

Speakers: Darren Moffatt & Jebb Hutchinson, Program Manager and General Manager at On Country Pathways
Title: *On-Country Pathways – Employment and Career Pathways into the commercial construction sector for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth in the Albury/Wodonga Area*
Leadership Capacity: Change Management & Innovation
Regional Priority: Education and Skills, Economic Development

Speaker: Bev Hoffman, CEO, NELLEN (North East Local Learning and Employment Network)
Title: *Transitions from education to employment*
Leadership Capacity: Change Management & Innovation
Regional Priority: Education and Skills, Economic Development

Skills Session Speaker: Sandra Martin
Title: *Presenting Your Best Self*
Leadership Capacity: Personal style



7. Melbourne Study Tour

Day 1: Monday 1st May 2023

Location: Metropole Central Melbourne, The Big Issue

- **Speaker: Christine Kotur** (she/her)
Role: Leader in Residence, Leadership Victoria
Title: *Community Leadership: Why It Matters*

- Speaker: Netta Shmerling & Danni** (Big Issue Vendor)
Title: *The Big Issue – Classroom*

- Speaker: Bill Verhagen**, Precious Plastics
Role: Leader in Residence, Leadership Victoria
Title: *Technology, Circular Economy and Making a Difference*

Day 2: Tuesday 2nd May 2023

Location: Metropole Central Melbourne & State Parliament

- **Speaker: Craig Holloway**
Role: Victorian Aboriginal Health Service
Title: *Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing in Victoria*

- Speaker: Michael Donehue**
Role: Founder, Journey Apparel
Title: *Mental Health & the Importance of Looking After Yourself*

- State Parliament Site Visit**
Speakers: Tim McCurdy MP Member for Ovens Valley
Annabelle Cleeland MP Member for Euroa
Title: *State Parliament, What We Do and How You Connect*

8. Skills Day two: Project Planning & Management

Friday 19th of May 2023

Venue: Cheshunt Hall, Cheshunt

- **Leadership Team:** The Parsley Collective
Skills Session Speaker: Tammy Atkins
Title: *Networking and Effective use of Social Media*

9. Justice

Friday 2nd of June 2023

Venue: Old Beechworth Gaol, Beechworth

- **Speaker: Matt Pfahlert**, Co-Founder, Australian Centre for Rural Entrepreneurship (ACRE)
Tour: Community-led rejuvenation through social enterprise and community asset ownership – Old Beechworth Gaol
Topic: *Changing a historic town icon into a thriving community space through effective engagement*
Leadership Capacity: Community Engagement

- Speaker: Rob Francis**, Executive Director, Hume and Loddon Mallee Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS)
Topic: *The role of the Justice in Community*
Leadership Capacity: Developing Others

- MBTI In Teams Workshop**
Workshop presenter: Frank Evans, Principal Consultant, Alberton Consulting
Topic: *Understanding our own preferences for decision and communication and how this impacts in team dynamics*



10. Leadership in a Crisis

Friday 23rd of June 2023

Venue: The Pavilion, Pioneer Park & Bright Police Station, Bright

- **Speaker: Stewart Kreltzhaim**, CFA District 23, Operations Manager
Title: *Healing from Crisis*
Leadership Capacity: Leadership in a Crisis, Resilience & Self Care

Speaker: Romina McEwan on behalf of Doug Incoll, Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator
Title: *Coordination of Response to Emergency Situations*
Leadership Capacity: Leadership in a Crisis

Speaker: Diarmuid Kelly, Emergency Management Victoria
Title: *Working to meet community needs during and post crisis*
Leadership Capacity: Leadership in a crisis
Site tour: Bright Police Station

11. Mid-Year Retreat

Friday 14th and Saturday 15th of July 2023

Venue: The Old Priory, Beechworth

- **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.

Speaker: Anthony Nicholson, Mandala Project
Title: *Team challenges, Building Your Influence*

Speaker: Susan Benedyka
Title: *Vision and Strategy*

Speaker: David Kidd
Title: *Self-Care*



12. Skills Day three

Friday 4th of August 2023

Venue: Old Council Chambers Room, Rutherglen Library, Rutherglen

- **Leadership Team:** Green Fingers

Skills Session Speaker: Bronwen O'Shea, Story Up
Title: *Storytelling Workshop*

Skills Session Speaker: Wade Leonard, Albury Wodonga Volunteer Bureau
Title: *Managing Volunteers*

13. Virtual Federal Parliament Day

Wednesday 23rd of August 2023

Venue: Online Zoom

- **Speaker: Glenn Ryall**, Director Procedure & Research Section of Senate

Speaker: Dr Helen Haines MP, Independent Member for Indi

Speaker: Hon Darren Chester MP, Nationals Federal Minister for Gippsland

Speaker: Shane Wright
Title: *The Role of Media in Politics & Community Leadership*





14. Sustainability & Agriculture

Friday 15th of September 2023

Venue: Upper Murray Events Centre, Corryong

➤ **Speaker: Cr Andrew Whitehead**, Mayor, Towong Shire Council

Title: *Building the Upper Murray Events Centre and Agriculture in Towong Shire*

Leadership Capacity: Community Engagement

Speaker: Lachlan Campbell

Title: *Agriculture and Sustainability in our Region*

Leadership Capacity: Regional Knowledge & Insight

Speaker: Narelle Martin, Founder & Director, Regional Change Agency

Title: *Building Hope in a Changing World*

Leadership Capacity: Thought Leadership

Speaker: Josh Collings, Co-Founder, Acres and Acres Cooperative

Title: *Our Community Driven Climate and Agriculture Project*

Leadership Capacity: Adaptive Mindset, Community Engagement

15. Local Government

Friday 6th of October 2023

Venue: DEECA Hume Regional Office, Benalla

➤ **Speaker: Cr Justin King**

Title: *Benalla City Council - My Journey to Councillor*

Speaker: Rob Carolane

Title: *Governance 101*

Speaker: Professor Kate Auty

Title: *Local Government Working with Community*

Speaker: Tegan Allen

Title: *Local Government and Inclusion*

16. Community Leadership in Action

Friday 27th of October 2023

Venue: Yackandandah Sports Park, Yackandandah
Leadership Team: 4 Peaks

➤ **Speaker: Matthew Charles Jones**

Title: *Totally Renewable Yack*

Speaker: Ian Fitzpatrick

Title: *Yack Community Development Co - Site visit and story*

Speaker: Stuart Crosthwaite

Title: *Alpine Valleys Dairy and Mountain Milk Co-op*

Speaker: Alana Johnson

Title: *From Little Things... Voices for Indi*

17. Final Retreat

Friday 10th and Saturday 11th of November 2023

Venue: Howman's Gap Alpine Centre

➤ 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.

18. Graduation

Thursday 16th November 2023

Venue: Wangaratta Performing Arts Centre

➤ Participants and their loved ones, along with workplace sponsors, scholarship funders, Alumni and the wider AVCL community, came together in celebration of the 2023 Annual Program graduates. Attendees of the event were able to share in the journey of the cohort, and learn more about the achievements of this year's Community Projects.

2023 Graduates

21

program
graduates

congratulations



Sean Barrett

Albury Wodonga & Wangaratta
Wangaratta Turf Club, Chief Executive
Officer

Volunteer Organisation: East Albury Cricket
Club, Vice-President, Junior Coach, Player,
Mentor

Sponsor: Wangaratta Turf Club

I was excited to be accepted into the program and to have the opportunity to build my leadership capacity and learn more about our region. Everyone I'd spoken to about the AVCLP had such glowing feedback about the program and their experiences, including the connections they'd made. Coming into opening retreat it was exciting to meet such a diverse group and surprising how quickly people opened up to a group of strangers. It became such a comfortable space in such a short time.

It's been amazing to hear from the speakers and their evolution as leaders and their community roles. I've been pleasantly surprised by how much I've learned from my fellow cohort. The discussions that evolve at program days and the authentic sharing of personal stories has been a real highlight. The ability to work with my cohort to understand more about how my leadership skills can be developed further is something I am seeing great personal benefit from.

I've developed a greater appreciation for and understanding of the community groups and organisations operating across the region, and what they provide for local communities. I have a deeper understanding of my own leadership style and how this may impact others in my team. I'm looking forward to evolving as a leader to make a meaningful contribution within my community and taking lessons from the many great speakers in the program.

Community

"Leadership is not about being in charge. Leadership is about taking care of those in your charge."



Kirsty Branagan

Myrtleford
Rural City of Wangaratta, Recreation Officer
Volunteer Organisation: Recreational
Running Community, various
Sponsor: Rural City of Wangaratta

I was honoured to be selected as part of the 2023 program intake. I was excited about meeting people who I could connect with and potentially work with to further my own passions. I distinctly remember turning up to the opening retreat a couple of minutes late because I was so terrified of arriving too early and having to make conversation with people I didn't know. Within a few minutes of the retreat beginning, I realised I was worried about nothing.

One of the most valuable pieces of wisdom I have gained has been the importance of connections. I have learned a lot about the way I interact as a leader, but of more benefit has been to see the ways other people work and gain a deeper understanding of the needs of others in order to make sure everyone has the opportunity to be their best. I have absolutely loved getting to know the other members of the cohort and have already made strong friendships.

The networking and connection opportunities provided by the program have been amazing. Not only have I found contacts to help in my professional and volunteer roles, but also lifelong friendships sparked by the shared experience and deep connections made during this inspirational program. I feel empowered to take risks with the knowledge that I have a strong, supportive, vibrant group of people lifting me up and cheering me on. What a privilege it is to be part of the 2023 AVCLP cohort.

Empowering

"A leader is a deeply curious person."



Jenny Corser

Bright

Alpine Shire Council, Manager Community Development

Sponsor: Alpine Shire Council

I was excited to be accepted into the program, and to extend my leadership skills and develop an understanding of a broad range of topics affecting our region and my local community, but I was nervous about how I would fit in and about my ability to commit to the time needed to really benefit from the program. The opening retreat really set the scene for the program, I met some amazing people and left feeling inspired for the year ahead and committed to making time to complete the program.

I feel extremely privileged to be part of such a welcoming, caring and diverse cohort. Being an introvert in a group of leaders can be a challenge, but this group has been supportive, and I have found spending time with the cohort, particularly on the retreats, to be a highlight of the program for me. The program has helped me to broaden my knowledge and understanding of issues affecting our local communities and region and I have enjoyed being inspired and challenged by the variety of speakers and their take-away messages.

One of the most challenging aspects of the program has been carving out time to be present at all the program and skills days. I think one of my greatest learnings has been to make time for my own ongoing development. The most rewarding part of being involved in the program has been the people, the cohort has been incredibly generous, welcoming and encouraging; the speakers so generous with their time and ideas, and of course Suz Christison's passion, energy and flexibility in allowing the group to be ourselves.

Amazing

"Work to have impact – not to do everything."



Irene Day

Wangaratta

Works in Gender Equity

Volunteer Organisation: Wangaratta Landcare & Sustainability, Committee Member

Sponsor: June Canavan Foundation

I felt deeply honoured and privileged to not only have been selected to do the program but that I received a scholarship from the June Canavan Foundation. I was excited about meeting new people and the growth I would experience. I was unsure what the program actually involved and have been delighted with the variety of approaches. I had some vulnerability about whether I really was a leader as I had not held a leadership role for several years.

After the first retreat I felt joyous about the program ahead and the incredible humans in my group that I would get to spend a year getting to know and grow with. I realised that I was a leader and had an increased confidence in the skills I have which started a spark inside. We have been honoured to share space with so many wonderful humans who have been very generous and vulnerable with us. I am struck by the need for more vulnerability, authenticity, and care in leadership if we are to truly have flourishing rural communities.

One of the things I have loved most about the program has been the growth I have experienced by challenging myself to connect with people who I would normally not be drawn to. My skills of consideration and self-awareness in group situations has increased, and I have learnt to trust myself and my team's instinct and experience far more. I have faced some big challenges this year but the care, support and growth mindset that exists within the group has supported me through this.

Trust

"What does better look like for this community?"



Kane Fitzpatrick

Myrtleford

Northeast Health Wangaratta, Occupational Therapy Manager

Volunteer Organisation: Ovens Valley Cricket Club & Whorouly Tennis Club, Vice President & Hotshots Facilitator

Sponsor: Northeast Health Wangaratta

Apprehensive, nervous and excited were feelings I had in anticipation for the program. I was excited about the potential to meet and network with people from outside of my usual area of work. Coming into the program I was enthusiastic and keen to make the most of the experience as I haven't participated in a community leadership program previously. Following the opening retreat, it was reassuring to meet so many other people on the same leadership journey as myself.

I feel I have gathered a real understanding of the current issues of the region. A key learning was understanding how change is made, and key organisations involved with this. It has been great to be inspired by so many different presenters who have created some wonderful and sustainable community enterprises from a simple idea that has continued to grow. I'm looking forward to seeing our community project come to life; after so many months of conversations and planning it will be great to see this in action.

With the program coming to an end, I'm able to look back fondly on the great experiences and connections I've made with those in our cohort. It has been a great opportunity to hear from many key speakers to understand how all areas impact on community and personal development. I'm certain the course has allowed me to reflect on my leadership style and areas I can continually work on in employment and community roles.

Connecting

"I don't have a 5-year plan. It's where I believe I can make a difference."



Sarah Glass

Gundowring

Self Employed Dairy Farmer, Owner

Volunteer Organisation: Bullioh Football Netball Club, Secretary

Sponsor: Gardiner Foundation

At the beginning of the program, I was nervous about meeting new people and whether I was up to the challenges I was possibly about to face, just being a dairy farmer. After the opening retreat I was overwhelmed by what lay ahead but also excited about what I was about to learn alongside a group of wonderful people.

My key learning from the program has been that understanding your own strengths and weaknesses is an asset to any group setting. I am looking forward to putting more of these lessons into practice and growing my confidence. The most challenging aspects of the program for me so far has been opening up to group members and asking questions, but this has become easier with every program day.

This program has pushed me out of my comfort zone which has help me to find a confidence within myself I didn't know I had. The program has taught me to believe in my leadership abilities, but also, to not be afraid to ask for help when it is required. I have had the privilege to meet some wonderful inspiring, caring, thoughtful people each of whom I've learned something from. The experience will help me with my future goals and aspirations.

— Momentous

"Listen to understand – not to have an opinion or to judge."



Amanda Hore

Porepunkah

Alpine Shire Council, Business Analyst

Volunteer Organisation: Bright Spring Festival, President

Sponsor: Alpine Shire Council

When I was selected to start the program, I was very excited about what lay ahead. Having heard excellent things through previous participants I was keen to be involved and continue to grow and learn and be part of a great community of leaders. I was quite nervous coming into the program. By the end of opening retreat, I realised I was not alone in being nervous and everyone was keen for the learning journey we would have together.

The experience of the program has been subtle but empowering. Through each program day I have walked away with learnings and information that I have used on a very regular basis through both my work and personal life. The topics covered are very broad and detailed at the same time. The 2023 Cohort is amazing. Meeting, learning, and growing with everyone is such a valuable and unexpected added benefit of the program.

The things I have learnt through this program are hard to put into words. The program has helped me improve how I engage with others, speaking with people from many diverse backgrounds and given me a broader respect for and understanding of, our community. The learnings have been life changing in a subtle way. I look forward to the next part of my Community Leadership journey, whatever that may be.

— Empowering

"If it is too comfortable, you are not leading."



Matthew Hicks

Beechworth

Forest Fire Management Victoria, Forest Fire Management Officer

Volunteer Organisation: Beechworth Cricket Club, Committee Member

Sponsors: Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action

Before commencing the AVCLP I was unsure what was ahead. I wasn't sure about who I'd meet, or what sort of skills I'd learn during the program. After the opening retreat I knew I'd made the right decision in joining the program. I met some extraordinary people and the nerves settled. I knew I was in for a great year full of opportunity, somewhere where I could get out of my comfort zone and learn about community leadership.

I have learned and experienced so much more than I expected - about my own strengths and weaknesses, areas of community hardship and how best to support and host in a community meeting setting. It has been challenging learning to work with varied personalities with different views on community topics, and how best to voice my views and opinions. My interactions with others during this program have been fantastic, hearing from other's perspective has certainly opened my eyes.

I've gained an immense appreciation for the challenges faced in community leadership. Here, I have learnt so much about myself and the different personalities you encounter throughout all facets of our local communities. This program to me has been challenging, informative and memorable. I hope to use these skills and experiences I have gained at AVCLP to become a better leader both professionally and in my community.

— Inspiring

"If it is to be, it is up to me."



Sarimah Hellyer

Albury

Gateway Health, Executive Director,
Strategy & Impact

Volunteer Organisation: Border Trust, Board
Director & Co-architect of the GIVE500

Sponsor: Border Trust

Two things that most excited me about AVCLP were people and places. I was excited about meeting people with a passion for our communities, people who were emerging leaders in their own ways, and I was excited that I could travel across the region for this course and see so much of the country I love! I was unsure whether the content would be new to me or if I would have experienced similar leadership training throughout my career.

The key difference of this program to any other I have done, is the intensity, the longevity, the relationships formed, and the level of vulnerability we all bring. AVCLP has been unlike any other leadership program I have participated in. By far the highlight of the program thus far has been the friendships developed across the whole cohort. It has felt like every person in the group has bought their whole self to the experience.

Nearing the end of the program, I feel a sense of both pride and sadness. Pride for what a valuable experience this has been, what I have learnt through being an open and vulnerable participant, and how valuable that has been in developing me as a leader. Sadness for the journey being almost over. The great support of this network of friends has been a significant 'value-add' in my life and I am richer for the experience.

Enriching

“The wound is the place where the light enters you.”



Domenica Hunkin

Wangaratta & Myrtleford

Myrtleford Police Station, Sergeant of
Police

Sponsor: Rural City of Wangaratta
Community Grants Scholarship

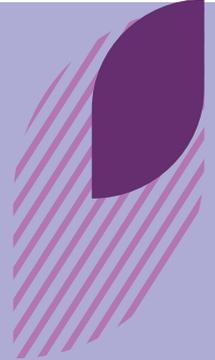
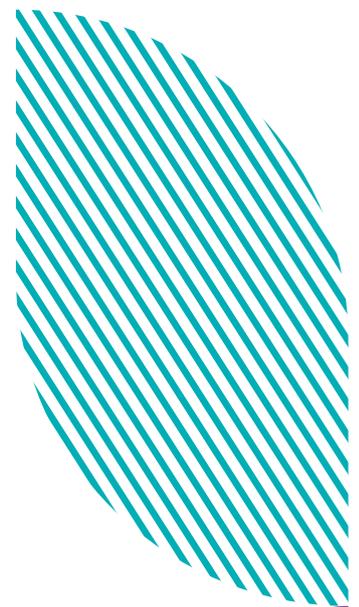
I was excited to join the program because of its great reputation. I was eager to embark on this leadership journey where I knew I would be challenged and rewarded with the gift of knowledge and growth. After the first retreat, I was impressed with how accepting the cohort was, and how all types of leaders were embraced. I've learned how to identify my strengths, my leadership style, and my capabilities, and this will help me be a more effective community leader. I really value the connections I've made, and the lessons in building resilience.

The opportunity to hear from so many amazing people in our local and broader community has shown me how one person can make a big difference in a community. The variety of ideas and perspectives I've been exposed to will be invaluable for me in the future and will change my approach to community work.

I've become more confident in exploring opportunities I might have once turned down due to low self-esteem. I have realised my passion for making a positive impact in the world, whether it's through small gestures to individuals or within community groups. I am eager to volunteer more in the field of gender-based violence, and I'll keep volunteering and using my strengths as a police officer and community member to continue making positive changes in our community.

Incredible

“The greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things. He is the one that gets the people to do the greatest things.”



*“Leadership
is not about
being in charge.
Leadership is
about taking
care of those in
your charge.”*



Lauren Kelly

Wangaratta

Wangaratta Sports & Aquatic Centre,
Operations Team Leader

Sponsor: Rural City of Wangaratta

Heading into the opening retreat, I was aware of being the youngest in the room and feeling as though I wouldn't belong. I remember at the start of the retreat hearing that we would become like family, I didn't quite believe that this would be the case. Contrary to my assumptions, I left the retreat feeling inspired, heard, welcomed, and excited. I remember talking on the way home about how pleasantly surprised I was at how much we had already bonded as a group.

I cannot articulate enough the personal and professional growth I have continually experienced throughout this program. My confidence has skyrocketed both at work and home, as well as my understanding of the region in which I live and work. The cohort has become a family, and I'm so grateful for the opportunity I've had to learn from and get to know these people that I never would've gotten the chance to know otherwise.

The most significant change I've noticed in myself is how my curiosity has grown. The program has shown me how much happens in our region that we may not be aware of, even if we live and work here every day. Others have continued to notice my confidence grow, whether its people at work or members of the cohort. The program has given me more of a purpose outside of work.

— **Eye-opening**

"Keep a thin slice of ice around the heart."



Maria Kraus

Beechworth

Bridge Road Brewers, Managing Director

Volunteer Organisation: Beechworth Chain Gang (Mountainbike Club), Treasurer & Junior Coach

Sponsor: Quercus Beechworth

To be honest, I wasn't sure about the whole thing! I'm already involved in the community and was sceptical about the course being a "waste of time". A good friend (and former participant) convinced me with the argument "you will learn so much about yourself! It's a journey to find YOU." After the opening retreat I felt glad to have taken on the journey. As a mother of three, it has been a long time, since I have done something for ME.

The program cohort has been the highlight so far. Our group is so diverse, interesting, and delightful. I have made friends, connections, and my key inspirations come from the other participants. I've really enjoyed visiting different towns in the region and getting some insight. I'm looking forward to traveling to many more locations.

Quite a few of my "new friends" in the program have been saying how much more confident I have become, and I would agree. Even though the program is coming to an end, it has set me up for success, and I can take it from here. My biggest take-away from the course has been the new connections and friendships I have made. I'm grateful I've done this course. I've opened up to the community and to myself!

— **Cross-pollination**

"Listen, breathe – then react."





Romina McEwan

Myrtleford

Victoria Police, Sergeant of Police

Volunteer Organisation: Myrtleford P12 School Council, Parent Representative

Sponsor: Hugh Williamson Foundation

As a member of Victoria Police, I had grown accustomed to leadership by virtue of rank and was keen to grow and develop as a leader in other settings. I was excited and challenged by the prospect and attended the opening retreat with a little trepidation. As the program days commenced, however, I engaged with the many guest speakers, coming to appreciate that community leadership relies on diversity of thoughts and ideas; we all have something to contribute to reach a common goal.

Engaging with the cohort and meeting inspirational leaders sparked my desire to do more within my own community. I have listened and absorbed ideas and passion and know that I am continuing to grow as an individual. Understanding how different personality types can work successfully together to achieve positive change has been fascinating. This understanding has challenged my status quo and I am now actively thinking beyond my ideas and beliefs; acknowledging other perspectives should always be sought and engaged. The program has increased my understanding of the important role of community leadership.

I have developed an understanding of different leadership styles and mindsets which was one of my goals at the beginning. I now have a new network of leaders who I am confident will support, encourage, and inspire me into the future. My confidence to take on further leadership roles within my community is at an all-time high and I am looking forward to challenging myself.

Inspiring

"Never underestimate your life experience and the leadership qualities it gives you."



Katrina Pawley

Albury Wodonga

Albury Wodonga Regional FoodShare, CEO

Sponsor: Border Trust

As a newly appointed CEO I was eager to learn from a broad network of professional and community leaders to develop my personal leadership skills and knowledge of the region. I arrived at the opening retreat with my 10-week-old daughter, wanting to embrace every opportunity the program had to offer whilst on maternity leave. I quickly discovered the value of self-awareness and the influence this has on leadership.

I've enjoyed building knowledge and confidence from a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by individuals and communities across the broader North-East region. The themes and topics covered have introduced a wide variety of ideas and wonderfully diverse experiences.

Other highlights have been developing new friendships with the other participants and being inspired by passionate guest speakers who I would otherwise not have had the opportunity to connect with. I have learnt to be a better listener and this program has prepared me to engage with community leaders. I'm grateful for the professional growth from the opportunities provided by AVCLP and look forward to using this new knowledge and leadership skills.

Storytelling

"Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail."



Skye Rhodes-Mitchell

Mt Bruno

GOTAFE, Education Coordinator Animal Science

Sponsor: GOTAFE

Before the program commenced, I was excited about meeting new people, learning about various community projects, gaining a greater insight into the world of leadership, and developing a more strategic approach to my leadership journey. Whilst being excited and intrigued about the program I did feel somewhat unsure and a little apprehensive of what lay ahead. However, after completing the opening retreat it became very clear what the aims and purpose of the program were.

I am really looking forward to completion of our team community project, "if you can see it, you can be it". Our team have worked extremely hard and have a strong belief in embedding educational aspiration and providing young people with the knowledge and lived experience of what career opportunities are available to them locally. Education and career pathway decision making in regional areas is crucial for building strong societies and economies across regional Australia.

Significant changes from attending the AVCLP is a building of my ability to guide conversations in an authentic manner. Feeling confident to talk about myself and provide comments and feedback to my organisation's senior management team. Recognising people's temperaments and emotional intelligence as these impact on a person's behaviours which can provide a great insight into a person's preferences and personalities and can help inform the best way to communicate. Always striving to lead by example.

Inspirational

"A great leader is deeply curious, courageous and cares for their team."



Michael Savage

Indigo Valley

Victoria Police, Sergeant of Police

Sponsor: Border Trust

I was excited about the opportunity to further my personal growth in the leadership styles offered by the program. After liaising with previous alumni, I determined that it was too good of a prospect not to take advantage of. Key learnings were around the regional priorities, the ability to learn about new managerial styles, to understand about topics and pathways that were foreign to me and to experience a shared learning environment with my peers.

The most challenging aspect has been time management to ensure as much of the pre reading and preparation is conducted to ensure that the best outcomes are able to be achieved. Interaction with fellow participants has been really rewarding as their individual journeys are so varied and the learnings from the "About Me" presentations are profound.

Since participating in the program, I have observed are that I am more inclusive in my thinking and the various management styles which I can utilise to adapt to the situation. Previously, I had a narrower thought process than I have learned to adopt throughout this process. I feel this course has been a worthwhile program to undertake that has enabled me to become a better manager of my internal and external clients.

Enjoyable

"Don't take criticism from someone you wouldn't take advice from."



Rosie Suter

Whitfield

Self Employed, Farmer

Volunteer Organisation: Landcare, President

Sponsor: Australian Agribusiness Forum Scholarship

Prior to commencing the program, I had participated in the AVCL Climate Adaptation & Disaster Recovery Program. If I had not already completed that course, I would not have ever thought to apply for the full program. I would never have described myself as a leader, nor would I have wanted to. To me, leadership meant something else entirely. I'm glad I was wrong in my assumptions!

So far, the program has confirmed to me that each person has something unique and important to share with the world. Who are we to decide what is and isn't valid or valuable? All our journeys are necessary, and I believe now more than ever that humans need to connect. There is something special about it.

The AVCLP has been incredible. What an opportunity to meet and work alongside such a beautiful group of people. Sharing this time of growth and reflection and cheering on the many people overcoming past challenges and heading into a future of broadened possibilities. I can't wait to see what becomes of all of us. What an amazing experience - I will be forever grateful.

Vital

"She was unstoppable, not because she did not have failures or doubts, but because she continued on despite them."



Lisa Turner

Rutherglen

Helen Haines MP - Member for Indi, Parliament Volunteers & Schools Program Coordinator

Volunteer Organisation: YES23, Community Leader & Campaign Coordinator

Sponsor: Border Trust

Mid-2022 I decided that in the next two years I would commit to working on me - my mindset, strengths, confidence, values, and leadership. I wanted to make a significant difference to not only my life but the lives of my kids and the lives of those in my community. I set my sights on the AVCL Program as I was aware of the impact this program had had on members in my community who had completed it.

It often takes me a little while to settle into a new experience, however I found our cohort to be so welcoming, kind, caring, holistic and supportive. Sharing our stories has brought us closer and given each of us a greater understanding of each other. My key takeaways from our learnings have been around self-confidence, mindfulness, the power of community, the importance of being kind to others and to myself and focusing on the good in others.

This program has been the most empowering opportunity I have ever engaged in. I have since gained employment in the office of our federal MP, Helen Haines, and have become engaged in creating positive political experiences for those in my community. I am striving to make a difference in the lives of those who are marginalised, and I envisage that I will continue to work toward a better and kinder world for future generations.

Transformative



Gianna Verdini Fensom

Harrierville

Fire Rescue Victoria, Leading Firefighter
Wangaratta/Structural Firefighting Instructor
Volunteer Organisation: CFA Harrierville,
Mount Hotham Ski Patrol, Firefighter, Ski
Patroller

Sponsor: CFA

When applying for the AVCLP I spoke of overcoming imposter syndrome in order to be the change I wished to see in the world, by being a leader in emergency service agencies that are as compassionate, diverse, resilient and responsive as the communities in North-East Victoria that they serve and protect. I felt really excited after the opening retreat; tired, but full of inspiration for the journey ahead with the amazingly talented 2023 cohort.

As I approach the middle of the course what has touched and changed me the most is the enduring connections that I have already made with the cohort. The network of organisations and strategic framework supporting the huge and diverse Alpine Valleys area we live in is so big and active, and I am much clearer about the connection and communication pathways from myself and my community organisations to local, state, and federal government.

I can't put my finger on exactly what it was this year that has allowed me see leadership as a part of who I am, rather than something I see in others and aspire to, but it has been a significant and welcome shift. I look forward to using my newfound confidence and patience to continue to build understanding and interoperability between the Emergency Service agencies I work within the Alpine Valleys.

Inspiring

"If it is to be, it is up to me."



Kate Walsh

Whitfield

Whitfield Community Childcare Centre,
Nominated Supervisor & Educational
Leader, Early Childhood Teacher

Volunteer Organisation: Sustainable King
Valley, President

Sponsor: Telstra

While I have often found myself in leadership positions, I often second-guessed myself. I was excited by the prospect of having a sense of intention and confidence in these roles, and anticipated this would come through the learning I would be exposed to, and from reflection and connection through sharing time with the group. Beginning the program was something I looked forward to; though I was also a little daunted by a room of many new faces who were leaders in the community!

The year has been rich, with program days and retreats immersive and intensive. I have been exposed to strategic thinking and government practises I hadn't previously delved into. I have been inspired by initiatives that began through someone, or people caring. This has been particularly important to me; I am an ordinary person, and I carry care and integrity with me and to see extraordinary things happening through this shows me what is possible.

I recently accepted that I am good at what I do. In the past I worried this might mean I was overconfident and that it could blind me. Now, trusting my intent and capacity, I recognise that this confidence makes me more effective; I can listen without self-doubt interfering. My awareness has grown; self-awareness and an awareness of how the world works. I understand quite deeply that great things come, simply, from someone having the care, courage, and motivation to have a go.

Illuminating

"Be quiet and listen really well. In the pause, understand before you judge."



Paige Zamperoni

Wangaratta

Centre Against Violence, Senior Counsellor
Advocate and; Self employed, The Space
Consulting and Counselling

Sponsor: Centre Against Violence

I was encouraged by my manager to apply for the program and was unsure what to expect - though excited to sink my teeth into something new and challenging. I set clear intentions to remain open minded and curious throughout the program, and wanted to ensure I could use the program to grow and adapt as a leader. After Opening Retreat, I knew this year's cohort were an amazing and diverse group of people and I was excited to learn from and grow with them.

I am inspired by the people and connections I have made in the group. The sense of support and safety this group has developed is very special. Program and skills days have allowed me to question current assumptions and challenge my thinking and I have been able to learn different ways to communicate as a leader. I have been inspired by many guest speakers who demonstrate that when you are passionate there is no limit to what you can achieve.

The most significant part of the journey has been the connections and inspiration I have gained from the cohort. I have been able to redefine what leadership means to me, understand different styles of community leadership and learn of amazing types of leadership roles people have in local communities. The course has been transformational and allowed me to get out of my comfort zone, be challenged and grow!

Connection

"When you don't give up, you can't fail."

Community Projects

As part of our 2023 Annual Program, the Community Projects component provided participants with an opportunity to undertake a community focused project and engage in a learning format that is both active and experiential. Participants were able to develop new skills, grow their capabilities, broaden their networks and create an impact within their community.

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.

This year, each team was connected with a volunteer Partner Organisation to support their project ideation and planning. This process provided expertise, support and knowledge such that teams were better able to plan and execute on their project, and insured that each project would meet a genuine need in the region. Special thanks to our Partner Organisations and key representatives who were engaged to guide and ground each of the projects:

- Gateway Health – Clare Schultz and Megan Hunt
- NESAY (North East Support and Action for Youth) – Leah Waring
- Country Universities Centre – Mark van Bergen
- Rural City of Wangaratta – Sally Hughes
- Border Trust – Sue Gold

Our 2023 Community Projects were supported through funding generously contributed by the Hugh Williamson Foundation and the Kyamba Foundation.

Read on to find out how each team took an idea and worked through the challenges to achieve great outcomes across our region.



Boronia Place Community Space

Pirates: Sean Barrett, Sarah Glass, Katrina and Emily (Mascot) Pawley, Mick Savage

Overview: The objective was to co-design and deliver an engaging outdoor community space that facilitates mental and physical health benefits to the tenants of Boronia Place, a social housing space located in Wodonga for tenants over 55 years of age.

Outcomes: The project team facilitated a detailed engagement plan involving a range of stakeholders, including landlords of Boronia Place (the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing) and the tenants themselves. Through an inclusive and participatory process, the project team were able to undertake a co-design process. The collective stakeholder group settled upon an outdoor community space, achieved through a working bee. The end result is a welcoming and vibrant space with seating, garden beds and chickens which fosters physical and mental wellbeing and recovery and resilience.

This model has been flagged to be replicated in other DFFH spaces, a testament to the success of the project. Feedback from DFFH stakeholder, Kylie Wheeler, has validated the need for, and positive impact of the project: "The community garden and especially the chooks have been a tremendous success. The residents have provided feedback as to what a change to their days it has been, giving them something to focus on and look after, even a reason to get out of bed and get going of a morning."

Thank you to Peard's Nursery in Albury for their contribution to the project.



Growing Your Food Security in NE Victoria

The Parsley Collective: Gianna Verdini Fensom, Matt Hicks, Rosie Suter, Kate Walsh, Amanda Hore

Overview: The team undertook a story telling project inspiring viewers to begin their own home food growing and sustainability journey through simple, achievable gardening projects. By connecting with their own communities and families, the project team told stories of lived challenges and success in growing their own food.

Outcomes: The project team developed an engaging video featuring relatable, achievable and inspirational stories centred on growing your own food. Distributed through regional food networks across Northeast Victoria, the video informed viewers of the health, environmental, and financial benefits of gardening.

An online launch event showcased stories behind making the video with a Q&A session aimed at inspiring viewers to grow a garden, to get involved with a food share and to consider where their food comes from.

Throughout the project (and the AVCLP), the team learned a great deal about group work and leadership, and were inspired by food growing as a tangible and brilliant action that we can all take towards being healthier and creating a healthier planet.

Sensory Garden

Green Fingers: Sarimah Hellyer, Lisa Turner, Domenica Hunkin, Romina McEwan

Overview: This project is a collaborative effort with Aspect Riverina School in Albury, supporting students living with Autism. The project involved planning and building a sensory garden to support students living with Autism.

Outcomes: The project team co-designed and installed an outdoor space with garden beds, colour, movement and scent with the intent of providing a multipurpose area for a range of uses, including providing students with an environment where they can come together to increase their health and wellbeing.

Green Fingers consulted with an Occupational Therapist who specialised in sensory processing for advice regarding creation of the sensory spaces. Central to the sensory garden was the construction of three Food Cubes, which are pre-fabricated wicking beds, each filled with plants and objects relating to the senses of sight, smell, and touch.

Aspect Riverina School agreed the garden would be maintained and further developed by students and members of the wider school community, allowing ongoing strong connections and a place to work together to achieve wellbeing and resilience across all ages.

A number of local businesses were engaged to secure in-kind donations to support development of the garden. Thank you for the wonderful contribution made by the following organisations and local businesses who so generously donated either time, material or goods that made the sensory garden possible: the Myrtleford Men's Shed, Brown Brothers Winery, Hennessy Home and Garden of Rutherglen, and Bunnings of Albury.



This immersive experience enabled students to delve into a range of careers through hands-on workshops, facility tours and engaging guest speaker presentations.

Youth Mural

4 Peaks: Irene Day, Jenny Coser Lauren Kelly, Maria Kraus

Overview: This collaborative and creative project connected young people from around the region through the guidance of local mural artist Lisa Bishop. Three mural panels were designed, painted and installed at NESAY (North East Support and Action for Youth), Rowan Street, Wangaratta.

Outcomes: The project team partnered with NESAY to develop and deliver a project that provided opportunities for positive social involvement for young people to develop a sense of connectedness through the painting workshop, develop pride in their culture, ethnicity and gender and give them a voice enshrined in the permanent display.

Over two days in September, 13 young people from Alpine Shire, Indigo Shire and Rural City of Wangaratta came together in Chiltern where they began enlivening the three panels as conversations, connections and new friendships emerged.

The second day allowed for detailed design elements to be added through coaching and guidance. Thank you to Alpine Shire, Indigo Shire and Rural City of Wangaratta for the support provided in engaging with the participating young people, and to NESAY for their role, including a significant financial contribution that made the project possible.

If I Can See It, I Can Be It

Opportunists: Paige Zamperoni, Kirsty Branagan, Kane Fitzpatrick, Skye Rhodes-Mitchell

Overview: This project provided upper primary school aged children in rural locations an opportunity to visit a diverse local enterprise and gain insight into the variety of careers required in large organisations, giving students educational aspirations through learning about employment and higher education pathways.

Outcomes: The Opportunists led a pioneering 'Project Day' with students from Myrree, Everton and Carraragarmungee Primary Schools with a unique opportunity to explore the operations of a prominent rural enterprise, Brown Brothers Family Wines. The success lay in expanding awareness of career options and showcasing the diverse education pathways available to achieve these aspirations.

The students actively participated in a variety of job simulations, including sensory perception (smell test), laboratory testing, barrel maintenance and tours of the kitchen garden and packaging plant. The day fostered collaboration and interaction among students from the different primary schools, evident during the heartwarming sit down lunch, where lively conversations flowed as everyone enjoyed a well-prepared nourishing meal.

The team was delighted to be able to plan and deliver such a successful project, which they hope will generate many future conversations for the children who attended. Special thanks to Brown Brothers Family Winemakers for their contribution in supporting the delivery of this project.

Programs Projects & Workshops



Federation Fischer Community Leadership Program

Now in its second year, the Fischer Community Leadership Program is named in honour of the late Tim Fischer AC and aims to enable and empower leadership within the community from the grassroots up. The program was delivered by Alpine Valleys Community Leadership, auspice by the Border Trust and funded by New South Wales Government Stronger Country Communities Fund Round 5 in partnership with Federation Council.

This year's program was delivered in Corowa by our Program Coordinator Mary Hoodless, and ran from May through to September. The cohort of 15 undertook seven evening sessions and one full day workshop. The sessions were designed to maximise capacity building and have immersed participants in a blend of skills and practical learning experiences, including exposure to local leaders from the community, government, and business sectors.

A key component of the program involved project management training, with participants scoping and planning small, community-led projects. The projects span a broad range of focal points and are intended to be "fund-ready", meaning project teams can now move toward gaining funding to deliver their projects.

The cohort's projects include the Corowa Christmas Quartet Project, which hopes to increase Christmas festivities across Corowa, with the intention of fostering community spirit and generating economic benefit for the township. The Federation Podcast Series celebrates the accomplishments of individuals across Federation Council, while the Neighbourhood House project is an inclusive development that intends to engage older residents to produce a sense of value and increase safety outcomes.

The Park Run project is a health initiative, bringing people together to enjoy a run in a safe and welcoming setting, whilst the Rutherglen Wine Bottle Project is a proposed series of community events in 2024/2025 that would celebrate the 125th anniversary of the "Wine Bottle" Water Tower in Rutherglen. The RSL Women's Memorial Project gives thanks to the women who have served in Australia's defence force through establishing a permanent plaque at the RSL Memorial Gardens in Rutherglen.

The goal of the program is to provide groups with advice and support that builds resilient, strong, and adaptive organisations...



Disaster Recovery & Climate Change Adaptation Program – North East Victoria

AVCL has a proud reputation of developing and delivering initiatives in the area of climate change adaptation, sustainability, and disaster recovery related leadership programs. This year, we delivered the third iteration of our Disaster Recovery and Climate Change Adaptation Program – North East Victoria.

Over a total of 8 days, 13 participants undertook the program from March through to August, visiting a range of locations across the region. The program was facilitated by Chris Mirams and Gary Saliba, and focused on strengthening the cohort's capacity to work within rural communities to lead change, particularly as it relates to disaster recovery and climate change adaptation.

Participants were immersed in sessions that explored leadership fundamentals, leading through crisis, disaster and recovery, climate change adaptation and much more.

Site visits included Beechworth, Wodonga, Dederang, Wangaratta, Corryong and Winton Wetlands.

This project received grant funding from the Australian Government as part of the Black Summer Bushfire Recovery Grants Program.

Alpine Community Recovery Leadership Program

The Alpine Community Recovery Leadership Program was an initiative that aimed to build community resilience and recovery capacity, funded by Alpine Shire Council and the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) in partnership with HMS Trust and the Sidney Myer Fund.

The focus of the program was to support members of Alpine communities to develop leadership skills, strengthen capacity, and create a network of community organisations that would be equipped to lead community recovery from future disasters within the Alpine Shire.

The program was led by facilitator Susan Benedyka and drew in 13 participants, who worked through the seven sessions with a focus on developing leadership skills, strengthening capacity, and creating a network of organisations that would be equipped to lead community recovery from future disasters within the Alpine Shire.

2023 Goulburn Murray Climate Leaders Forum

The 2023 Goulburn Murray Climate Leaders Forum consisted of a series of three workshops, delivered across March and April this year. Executive management and Councillors from GMCA member organisations across the Goulburn Murray region were invited to attend the series.

It brought together a range of speakers from the political, legal, health, financial, public and private sectors, to discuss the business of climate change from their unique perspectives.

The forum was supported by Goulburn Murray Climate Alliance, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) and Rural City of Wangaratta.



GROW Volunteer Resilience and Capacity Program

The GROW Volunteer Resilience and Capacity Program was made possible by the financial support of Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV) and Foundation for Rural & Regional Recovery (FRRR), delivered by Into Our Hands Community Foundation in partnership with Alpine Valleys Community Leadership.

The program will run over two years and is aimed at volunteer run groups and critical service clubs located in the fire affected LGAs of Rural City of Wangaratta, Alpine, Indigo and Mansfield Shires.

In 2023, the program was delivered to volunteer groups in Alpine Shire and Rural City of Wangaratta. Participating community groups were provided with one-on-one training and support by Susan Benedyka, and participated in skills webinars focused on areas such as organisational governance and strategic planning, volunteer engagement, grant writing and digital skills.

The goal of the program is to provide groups with advice and support that builds resilient, strong, and adaptive organisations who are able to sustain their operations and contribute to community recovery efforts. In 2024, the program will roll out in Indigo and Mansfield Shires.

Upper Murray Community Leadership Program

Through major funding provided by Emergency Recovery Victoria, Upper Murray CRC partnered with Alpine Valleys Community Leadership to deliver a leadership program for emerging and future community leaders of the Upper Murray region and other fire affected areas of the Towong Shire.

The 10-day program drew in 11 participants, and was designed based on the framework of a successful pilot that we delivered in the Upper Murray last year. The program enhanced the skills of participants, enabling them to develop the adaptive capacity of their communities and the region, and contribute to both the Upper Murray Recovery and future economic development. Participants undertook a series of six sessions, including a study tour to Derby, Tasmania; a thriving community that has reimagined their economic and social future as part of their recovery process.

Major funding was provided by Emergency Management Victoria, with additional funding contributed by NECMA.

“I was fortunate to be able to attend the Tasmania study tour as part of the 2022 program. The trip was well organised with many interesting activities. I most enjoyed going to Derby and learning about its history and turnaround. Meeting different community members involved in the mountain bike trails was a highlight as well as riding one of the trails and then ending the day experiencing the floating sauna. It was overall a great learning experience I would highly recommend to anyone interested.”

Tania Costello, 2022 program participant.

AVCL PROGRAM

Alumni Engagement



Alumni Subcommittee

To support Alumni with access to ongoing, post-program opportunities, the AVCL Board operates an advisory group known as the Alumni Subcommittee, made up of members that are drawn from the Alumni body and AVCL Board.

The role of the Alumni Subcommittee is an important one, with a primary focus on developing and delivering an annual Alumni Engagement Plan, which gives structure and focus to cultivating an active and engaged Alumni body. This year, membership of the Alumni Subcommittee has been refreshed, and we welcome the following:

- Anthony Griffiths (Alumni, Subcommittee Chair to August 2023 and Board Member to October 2023)
- Bev Hoffmann (Alumni)
- Caz Sammon (Alumni)
- Megan Hunt (Alumni)
- Sophie Enders (Alumni and Board Member, Subcommittee Chair as of September 2023)
- Steve Belli (Alumni, Board Member as of October 2023)

As part of our 2023 Alumni Engagement Plan, we delivered four informal networking events, a series of skills sharing workshops, and undertook a short survey of our Alumni body to increase our understanding of their interests and potential for Alumni-led offerings.

2023 Regional Leadership Alumni Conference

Regional Victoria is home to nine, state-wide Community Leadership Programs. Some of these programs have spanned over two decades, and all of them exist for the betterment of their communities. Alumni from each of the Community Leadership Programs gathered in Bendigo in February for the Regional Alumni Leadership Conference, arranged by the Victorian Regional Community Leadership Program (VRCLP).

The Conference afforded attendees the opportunity for connection and networking, and featured a range of speakers, breakout sessions, and "local hero" stories from Alumni.

AVCL was strongly represented, with Helen Haines, Caz Sammon and Shane Crispin speaking, and AVCLP Alumni (and Board) attendees including: Natalie Ajay, Steve Belli, Kate Clark, Julia Vesval, Margaret Anderson, Diarmuid Kelly, Caz Sammon, Shane Crispin, Suz Christison (Alumni and AVCLP Program Manager), Anthony Griffiths (Alumni and AVCL Board) and Megan Buntine (AVCL Board).

Skills Survey

Through our survey of Alumni in early 2023, we asked our Alumni what they were interested in learning about, how they might like to strengthen their skills, and what they could share to impart knowledge to others. The calibre of responses received to both questions was exceptional and demonstrated the depth of diversity in our Alumni's interests and endeavours. The collected information was then able to be stored as part of our commitment to the continued development of our stakeholder database.

Skills Sharing Workshops

Harnessing the skills survey data, we were able to find the convergence between an interest in continued learning opportunities, and the wealth of knowledge and passion within our Alumni body. As a result, the Alumni Subcommittee were able to find "the sweet spot" between the two, and develop a pilot series of workshops to be delivered by Alumni, for Alumni.

Skills workshops delivered in 2023 included Meeting Skills by Suz Christison, Governance for Community Groups by Rob Carolane, and a panel session facilitated by Al Winters, Irene Day and Olivia Brozecki, exploring Diversity, Inclusion and Gender equity.

AVCLP Honorary Graduate



Linda Griffiths-Brown 2023

Linda served on the AVCL Board from 2016 to 2022. During her tenure, Linda was Chair for three terms, and also served as Deputy Chair, as well as maintaining a very active role on various Subcommittees.

Linda was a key conduit in representing AVCL's interest as part of the Victorian Regional Community Leadership Program (VRCLP), an updated umbrella body representing Victoria's nine Community Leadership Programs. Linda served as the VRCLP Treasurer, and as a member of VRCLP was influential in guiding them through a period of change and restructure, supported by her skills in strategy and advocacy.

Linda contributed to many of AVCL's strategic initiatives, including moving the organisation towards financial sustainability. Linda also provided leadership, oversight and support during periods of transition and uncertainty, which proved to be key to the continuity and stability of the organisation.

As Managing Director at Total HRM, a local HR consulting business, Linda has also provided valuable human resources services to AVCL pro bono, and has continued to do so after her departure from the Board.

Each recipient has:

Significantly advanced the development of community leadership within the region

Made significant contributions to the community through demonstration of exceptional leadership

Contributed outstanding service to the Alpine Valleys Community Leadership Program

AVCLP Honorary Graduates

Robyn Farley 2022

As Strategy & Stakeholder subcommittee and AVCL Board during 2016-2021, Robyn's contribution and leadership includes strategic and business planning, and guest speaker.

Clare Kiely 2022

Having served on the AVCL Board from 2015-2020, and as Chair for two years, Clare generously shared her expertise in strategy and stakeholder management, and has been a strong advocate for AVCL within DELWP and other portfolio partners.

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 Ker 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.

AVCLP Alumni

The first Alpine Valleys Community Leadership Program was delivered during 1998-1999. Since then, the program has been consistently delivered on an annual basis, creating a strong network of AVCLP Alumni contributing to their communities across North East Victoria, and Border regions and beyond. With this year's graduates, we will reach over 500 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 McInerney
Dianne Mangan
Philippa Noble
Marion Rak
Michael Resson
Grant Scale
Jon Temby
Maureen Titcumb
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 Tatu-laschwili
Geoff Turnbull

2004

Annesha Brown
Wayne Donehue
Tracey Farrant
Phillip Gardner
Phil Garoni
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

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

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

2015

Deanne Burge
Michelle Burrowes
Jane Carney
Bronwyn Chapman
Matthew Currie
Vidura Delpitiya
Mark Ditcham
Elizabeth Ellis
Dianne Ferguson
Tahni Froudust
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
Renae 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 Jermey
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

2021

Justin Armstrong
Tamara Barton
Laura Benson
Pahal Man Bhattarai
Anthony Cheesman
Peter Christison
Bonnie Clark
Natalie Flay
Hayley Hollis
Sally Hughes
Andrew Jones
Pia Kennedy
Peter Kenyon
Lee Manning
Olivia Noto
Melinda Pentreath
Edith Peters
Helen Sellar
Tegan Sharwood
Jennifer Sleep
Julia Vesval
Maria Wadley
Gemma Whitehead
Allison Winters

2022

Tegan Allen
Kristin Beggs
Steve Belli
Kate Clark
Nathan Fenton
Rho Fry
Brendan Grigg
Kerissa Heritage
Elise Hill
Rachel Hogan
Tanya Howard
Megan Hunt
Maisie Pilli
Cazz Redding
Maureen Rogers
Kellie
Sutherland
Joanne Turner
Aaron Wallace
Jane Witherow
Nicholas Wright

Looking ahead

2024 & beyond

Although our Annual Program will no longer receive any support from the Victorian State Government from the end of 2023, we have developed a strategy to ensure we can resource our own funding for a flagship community leadership program in 2024. This is made possible by our valued supporters, funders, and the broader community, for which we are most appreciative. We will continue to progress with our plan toward the finalisation of our updated program, and look forward to developing a new cohort of local leaders in 2024.

In recent years, AVCL has delivered a raft of programs and workshops that have focused on increasing capacity through the lens of responding to environmental and natural disaster related challenges, such as bushfire recovery and climate change adaptation. To this end, we are delighted to have secured further funding from Upper Murray CRC through major funding provided to them by Emergency Recovery Victoria, to continue delivering a targeted program in the Upper Murray region in 2024 and 2025. This program enables participants to develop the adaptive capacity of their communities and the region and contribute to both the Upper Murray Recovery and future economic development.

We have also been successful in securing funding through Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) Future Drought Fund's Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Community Impact Program. The funding will geographically expand upon our existing work and allow us to deliver a 7-8 session community leadership program in 2024. The program will take a place-based approach, targeting participants in Indigo Valley, Barnawartha, Springhurst, Chiltern and Baddaginnie.

The program aims to enhance the skills and practical knowledge of participants, and support them to develop the confidence and adaptive capacity to lead their communities through various stages of the drought lifecycle.

This year, funding through Alpine Shire Council and the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) Bushfire Recovery Fund, in partnership with HMS Trust and the Sidney Myer Fund, enabled our delivery of the Alpine Community Recovery Leadership Program.

The GROW Volunteer Resilience and Capacity Program was this year rolled out in the Local Government Areas of Rural City of Wangaratta and Alpine Shire, and in 2024 it will continue, focusing on supporting volunteer groups in the Mansfield and Indigo Shire Local Government Areas. This program is supported by funding from Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV) and Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR), and Into Our Hands Foundation.

Funding has also been secured through the Stronger Country Communities Fund in NSW to continue the delivery of the Fischer Community Leadership Program, with several iterations to roll out across Greater Hume and Federation Shires.

We look forward to continuing to realise our vision and provide contemporary and fit-for-purpose programs that meet the needs of the communities in which we live, work and play.



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Community Leadership

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