



Alpine Valleys
Community Leadership



2024
Year Book

Thank you to Our Supporters

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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| Corowa Distilling Co. | Mt Pilot Estate | Swanpool Cinema | Yarramanda Farms |
| Corryong Allied Movement for Pride | | | |

Our Vision

Vibrant and sustainable communities through local leadership

Our Mission

Grow the leadership capacity and voice of people and communities

Welcome

2024 has been a milestone year for Alpine Valleys Community Leadership (AVCL), marked by significant strides in pursuit of fulfilling our mission. We covered new ground, both figuratively and literally, delivering leadership development and capacity-building initiatives across 10 local government areas in North East Victoria, Southern, and Border regions of NSW. This expansion reflects our ongoing commitment to strengthening community resilience and vibrancy through a diverse range of offerings.

This year also saw the successful operationalisation of AVCL into two distinct yet complementary entities: Alpine Valleys Community Leadership Ltd, dedicated to advancing education and leadership development, and Alpine Valleys Community Leadership Fund Ltd, which supports individuals facing disadvantage through scholarships and targeted program delivery. This new structure enhances our ability to provide all people with meaningful opportunities for both personal and collective development.

Our initiatives this year have, to date, directly engaged with 200 individuals and 60 community groups, participating in a raft of opportunities such as leadership and resilience development, skills-based workshops, community forums, and opportunities for emerging leaders. These efforts underscore our commitment to support the unique needs of the communities which we serve.

These accomplishments are the result of the unwavering dedication of our Board, staff, collaborators, funders and supporters. We extend our heartfelt thanks to our voluntary Board members for their governance and leadership, to our valued supporters for making these initiatives possible, and to our staff and collaborators for their tireless efforts in nurturing the next generation of community leaders and change makers.

Madeline Hines
Executive Officer

2024

AVCL Board & Staff



Judy Charlton
Chair
Resigned October 2024



Sophie Enders
Deputy Co-Chair



Steve Belli
Deputy Co-Chair



Pip O'Donnell
Treasurer
Resigned October 2024



Tegan Allen
Board Member
Resigned August 2024



Kirsten Williams
Board Member
Resigned September 2024



Ameer Jhingoor
Board Member



Elise Hill
Board Member



Megan Hunt
Board Member



Konrad Kucianski
Board Member



Dave Armstrong
Board Member



Madeline Hines
Executive Officer



Irene Pritchard
Program Manager



Billie Robertson
Programs Officer



Tarryn Firman
Business Coordinator
February – August 2024

Our 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



Patron's Message

Leadership often involves setting ambitious goals and driving change. It requires gathering information, engaging supporters, and devising a strategic course of action.

While a good leader takes responsibility for ongoing decision-making and direction, a great leader shares these responsibilities with their team, fostering self-confidence and empowering others.

Retired Victorian Commissioner of Police, Christine Nixon, exemplifies this "great leader" model in her memoir "Fair Cop." She notably applied this approach during the Black Saturday bushfires, relying on the collective expertise of various departments to manage the crisis effectively.

In today's world, where we encounter an array of complex challenges and evolving needs, the call for great leaders is more pressing than ever. The Alpine Valleys Community Leadership Annual Program has proudly graduated around 500 individuals, each contributing to our community's strength and vitality. This is in addition to the scores of graduates from our other programs. Together, these leaders and change makers can embody the essence of great leadership by empowering others and driving positive change.

To the 2024 graduates, I commend your dedication and look forward to your continued efforts in making our region a wonderful place to live.

Remember, if you encounter challenges that seem insurmountable, recall the tenacity of the mosquito in the bedroom—it proves that even the smallest force can have a significant impact.

John Brown AO

'Good leaders inspire people to have confidence in the leader; great leaders inspire them to have confidence in themselves.'

Eleanor Roosevelt

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Chair's Report

This year, after several years of planning and dedicated work by the Board and staff, AVCL achieved a significant milestone. We are now two distinct entities, both registered charities: Alpine Valleys Community Leadership Ltd and Alpine Valleys Community Leadership Fund Ltd. The latter holds Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status, allowing us to better serve our communities and expand our impact.

This year, the AVCL Board also undertook a review of our Strategic Plan, resulting in the development of our new 2024 – 2027 strategy. This will ensure that we continue steering the organisation in the right direction, meeting our communities' emerging challenges while remaining agile and innovative.

In alignment with our mission of "Growing the leadership capacity and voice of people and communities," AVCL delivered an impressive array of programs throughout 2024. We were particularly pleased to expand our reach with the Emerging Leaders Program for 18 to 30-year-olds. You can read about all our offerings in the full report.

Congratulations to the graduates of all the 2024 programs, and a special thank you to our partners and supporters:

- The Federal Government, New South Wales State Government, and Victorian Government for targeted program funding.
- Local Councils across North East Victoria and Southern New South Wales, who championed the programs in their areas.
- Employers who supported their employees with funding and time to participate in our programs.
- Our philanthropic partners, who sponsored community members and supported AVCL in numerous ways.

- Our alumni, who continue to lead their communities and encourage new participants.
- Our "in-kind" contributors, including presenters, venue providers, and service providers.
- Our program collaborators, who delivered outstanding content.

We also extend our gratitude to our patron, John Brown AO, for his steadfast support over the years.

The AVCL team, despite being newly formed in the early stages of 2024, delivered quality programs amidst funding challenges. They also successfully delivered the flagship Annual Program to align with the budget constraints, while retaining the essential immersive experience.

Thank you to the AVCL Board Members, who volunteered their time and expertise. Your contributions are vital to our continued success.

We look forward to engaging with our valued stakeholders in the years ahead to shape contemporary leadership development offerings for our region, ensuring that our vision of "Vibrant and sustainable communities through local leadership" continues to be realised.

Judy Charlton
Board Chair



Executive Officer's Report

Our regional communities are shaped by unique challenges—whether it's economic shifts, environmental pressures, or the evolving needs of the people who call our region home. But with these challenges come opportunities for growth, transformation, and community-led action.

At the heart of responding to these challenges are the people themselves—those who are ready to step up and move forward. Communities aren't monolithic; they are driven by individuals who bring diverse experiences, perspectives, and strengths. It is this diversity that enriches our communities and fuels the potential for meaningful, lasting change. These are the people who see not just the problems, but the possibilities—those who understand that sustainable change begins with building our collective capacity to make a difference.

Our efforts reflect individual and community needs, acting as a bridge between challenges and solutions. In pursuit of our mission, we are invited to practice what we teach: listening intently, understanding deeply, collaborating for opportunities, and taking adaptive, innovative approaches toward a better tomorrow.

This is evident not just in the programs we've resourced this year, but also in the development of our 2024–2027 strategy and the establishment of our new entity structure, both of which enhance our ability to serve the region's diverse needs.

In terms of our program delivery, I am both proud and humbled that this year we have again been able to deliver such a wide range of initiatives. Some have focused on individual leadership development, empowering participants to recognise their own potential, while others have engaged with community groups and organisations, building collective capacity and creating spaces for new projects aimed at community betterment.

One of the most impactful experiences this year has been witnessing how participants have taken what they've learned and applied it to benefit their communities. It's easy to measure success in numbers — over 130 individuals, 55 community groups, and 1,000 hours of capacity building — but the true impact is much greater and infinitely more difficult to distil into simple metrics.

It's in the newfound confidence of someone who now feels better able to contribute their voice within their community, or in enabling a group to find innovative ways to cultivate volunteer engagement and retention. The ripple effects of our work continue to inspire me, reminding us all of the transformative power of a community-led approach.

As we look toward the future, I am filled with optimism. The strength and determination I've seen across our communities this year gives me confidence that we're on the right path. Together, we'll continue to build the capacity, resilience, and connections that create lasting change.

Madeline Hines
Executive Officer

2024

Programs Projects & Workshops

2024 – 2027

Strategy

IMPACT Build the leadership capacity and resilience of local communities by

- Offering meaningful, accessible and inclusive programs.
- Equipping local people with leadership skills, confidence and connections.
- Identifying and offering pathways for people to continue their leadership journey.

IDENTITY Be a trusted steward of local leadership by

- Fostering partnerships that increase access, opportunity and outcomes.
- Enabling the participation of all people within our program offerings.

INVESTMENT Ensure we are well resourced to continue growing the leadership capacity and voices of people and communities by

- Attracting, nurturing and retaining skilled and dedicated Board and team members.
- Securing our financial stability through innovative and diversified income sources.
- Articulating the impact of our work.



Upper Murray Community Leadership Program

Emergency Management Victoria has supported a three year grant to enable the Upper Murray Community Leadership Program to run from 2023 – 2025.

This was made possible through a successful pilot that was delivered in 2022, supported by Border Trust through the Towong Community Bushfire Disaster Relief Fund Grant Program. Ongoing input toward the development of the program is delivered through a strong partnership with Upper Murray Inc. (UMI.)

Led by Chris Mirams and Dr Gary Saliba, the program equips participants with practical tools to lead effectively, fostering skills in adaptive thinking and innovation. A highlight of the program involves a study tour to Tasmania, where participants witness first-hand how others in regional settings have reimagined their community, integrating their understanding of how mindset is a key enabler to achieving transformative outcomes.

Congratulations to our 2024 program graduates: Joel Bailey, Ellie Burgess, Justin Costello, Deborah Culhane, Sophie Hanna, Elise Hill, James Hill, Allanah Hughes, Kerry Miller, Hayley Tregilgas, and Sarah Whiteley.



GROW Volunteer Resilience and Capacity Program

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

The program provided advice and support to build resilient, strong, and adaptive volunteer run groups and critical service clubs within the fire affected LGAs of Rural City of Wangaratta, Alpine, Indigo and Mansfield Shires. Around 45 groups took up the opportunity, receiving one on one specialist mentoring and support from Susan Benedyka, and access to five free workshops focusing on organisational governance and strategic planning, volunteer engagement, grant writing, and project management.

The program yielded significant outcomes for engaged groups, with an evaluation report available that captures some of these outcomes in greater detail:

- Nearly 50% of post-program evaluation respondents reported that the program significantly improved their group's capacity, while 35% indicated a moderate improvement.
- The program significantly increased participants' knowledge, confidence, and skills. On average, groups rated this improvement at 3.3 out of 4, with 73.91% of respondents indicating a moderate to significant increase.
- Strategic plans and other core documents were developed for numerous groups, providing clear directions for future growth and sustainability.
- The program also successfully built the capacity of groups to better manage and engage volunteers.
- A number of groups were able to springboard off the learnings and outputs from the program, and secure grant funding for projects and operational continuity.



Digital Mentoring for Community Groups

Through the GROW program, a need was identified to provide community groups with further digital support.

A grant was secured through the generous support of Kyamba Foundation, enabling the launch of a digital mentoring program designed to enhance the digital capabilities of volunteer-run community groups.

This program offers tailored mentoring to community group volunteers, and in the first instance we are engaging with participating groups within the GROW Volunteer Resilience and Capacity Program. These sessions aim to assist the GROW participating groups, to implement their Digital 101 action plans through strategy development, skill-building, and digital tool adoption to enhance operations and impact.

The program also delivered an online workshop focused on AI technologies.



Fischer Community Leadership Program – Federation & Greater Hume

Now in its third 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 is delivered by AVCL with coordination by Mary Hoodless, auspice by the Border Trust and funded by New South Wales Government Stronger Country Communities Fund Round 5 in partnership with Federation and Greater Hume Councils.

This year, the program was reshaped in response to evolving community needs, adopting an immersive format with two in-person program days and two online sessions. It was delivered across Culcairn and Walla Walla in Greater Hume, as well as Urana in Federation Council, producing a total of 35 graduates.

While adapting to new formats, the program retained its core mission of building individual and collective capacity. Participants benefited from panel sessions with local leaders, project management training, and practical learning experiences. These elements were designed to maximise capacity building and expose participants to leadership from various sectors, including community, government, and business.

Congratulations to our 2024 graduates: Amelia Bedggood, Deborah Bender, Curtis Biggs, Peter Chen, Robert Clancy, Karin Coghill, Natalja Corbett, James Dhizaala, Katrina Dore, Jason Hickford, Arron Hinks, Jessica I'Anson, Abigail Kent, Serena Kent, Tabitha Knott, Bjelkie Lansdown, Philip McCartney, Aimee Mellington, Sara Muller, Joanne Nicholson, Karen Ofak, Pascal Proteau, Suzanne Rogashoff, Sherryn Schilg, Donna Simmons, Rebecca Temple, Denis Tomlinson, Raelene Webb, Karen Wenke, Craig Wenke, and Kirsty Wilksch.

Weathering The Dry in Snowy Valleys – Community Forum

Enabled by funding from FRRR and the Australian Future Drought Fund, the two-day forum offers an opportunity to explore drier times and how the community can take a strengths-based approach to prepare for the future.

The forum is designed to foster community engagement, collaboration, and resilience in the Snowy Valleys region, with a focus on Environmental Stewardship, Community Wellbeing and Preparedness and Innovation.

Taking place in November, the forum will bring together members of industry and the community to share knowledge and explore innovative strategies for strengthening regional resilience. The event aims to create a space for open dialogue, collective learning, and practical solutions that can be implemented to address the evolving needs of the Snowy Valleys community.

Emerging Leaders Program

Through funding from the Black Summer Bushfire Recovery grant funding, we delivered the Emerging Leaders Program, a 4-day program for young people aged 18-30.

Facilitated by Anthony and Mel Nicholson from The Mandala Project, the program provided an immersive experience designed to boost personal leadership capacity and expand networks.

Participants engaged deeply with core leadership principles and group dynamics, learning to navigate and lead within diverse settings. The program also focused on building community resilience, offering strategies to strengthen local communities. Emphasis was placed on mental health and personal resilience, with practical insights for maintaining well-being while enhancing leadership skills.



Community Capacity Creators Leadership Program

Supported by FRRR, through funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund, this immersive 7-session community leadership program aimed to build the capacity and leadership development in regional leaders in the context of drought preparedness within small, ag-based communities.

Commencing in late July and concluding in November, the program encouraged the development of adaptive thinking and leadership ability. It took a dive deep into leadership theories and practical exercises, featuring guest speakers and site tours, including a visit to North East Water.

Drawing in 10 participants from across the Rural City of Wangaratta, Indigo Shire and Rural City of Benalla, the highlight of the program was an overnight regional study tour to Holbrook and Wagga Wagga, with participants uncovering the latest in on-farm innovation and learning more about building social capital within Agricultural initiatives and groups.

Congratulations to our graduates: Chontelle Bourne, Shannon Brennan, Shae Brennan, Kaye O'Kane, Daniel Regli, Raymond Steadman, Donna Taggart, Sara-Jane Tenison-Woods, Lisa Turner, and Karen van Huizen.

Towong Community Groups Workshops

Supported by FRRR in partnership with HMSTrust and the Sidney Myer Fund, Mary Hoodless delivered a series of online workshops and one-on-one mentoring for community groups, associations, committees, and boards in Towong Shire.

The workshops focused on two key components: foundations, and sustainability. The first workshop, Foundations, introduced participants to the basics of active membership.

It covered the importance of new leadership voices, roles and responsibilities, and navigating group dynamics to maintain good governance. The second session, Sustainability, focused on securing the future of community groups by teaching participants how to assess skills, create succession plans, and address challenges for long-term sustainability.

Additionally, participating groups were offered mentoring sessions with Mary to help integrate and apply the workshop learnings.

Alpine Community Groups Forum

Supported by FRRR in partnership with HMSTrust and the Sidney Myer Fund, in November we are delivering a forum for community groups in Alpine Shire to foster collaboration and address local challenges.

This forum will provide a platform for community groups to come together, share insights, and explore strategies for strengthening their collective impact.

Facilitated by Susan Benedyka, the event will include sessions and workshops tailored to the needs of local groups. Participants can explore new opportunities to enhance community engagement, build partnerships, and address common issues faced by their organisations.



Program Manager's Report

Congratulations to the 2024 Annual Program graduates. It has been an incredible journey watching each of you grow into confident community leaders. This year's cohort, with participants from every corner of our region, brought diverse thoughts, opinions, and experiences. Our program delivery spanned the North East, with sessions from Mansfield to Corryong, emphasising the value of our place-based approach.

It's been inspiring to witness the transformation from the opening retreat, where imposter syndrome was common, to the calm and confidence now evident in each graduate. Every participant brought unique strengths, stories, and wisdom to our community, creating a supportive environment that encourages growth and self-awareness.

The program's core elements—place-based awareness, leadership fundamentals, and mobilization—remain rigorous, and ensure the high quality that defines the program's essence and impact. The revamped "Turning Points" segment challenged participants to share personal stories, enhancing their public speaking skills and expanding their understanding of others. The mobilization component offered real growth opportunities, pushing participants to navigate the dynamics of different personalities and focus on the process rather than just outcomes.

Our guest speakers and workshop presenters generously shared their time, knowledge, and personal leadership stories, enriching the learning experience through engaging conversations.

As the Program Manager in 2024, following my own completion of the program on the June Canavan Foundation scholarship in 2023,

I have come to appreciate the immense work and dedication required to deliver the Annual Program.

This year has been marked by adaptability and openness to change, especially as we moved forward without government funding. I am deeply grateful for the support of our Executive Officer, Maddi, Programs Officer, Billie, and the entire AVCL network, including alumni, our board, and the broader community.

To the 2024 cohort: it has been a privilege to be part of this shared experience, witnessing your growth in confidence, skills, and leadership. I have been so inspired by your self-awareness and the courage you have each shown to recognize blind spots or areas for growth. You have each pushed past the edge and taken on challenges, and come out the other side.

Congratulations to each of you on your achievements. I look forward to seeing where your leadership journey takes you. Remember, the 2024 cohort stands with you as you dare to lead.

Irene Pritchard
Program Manager

2024

Annual Program



1. Annual Program Launch Event

Thursday 9th May 2024

Venue: Wangaratta CSU Regional Study Centre

Sponsor: Charles Sturt University

- Participants gathered for the first time as a group during the Annual Program Launch event. The occasion brought together key stakeholders, sponsors, and supporters, providing an opportunity to meet the new cohort and celebrate the beginning of their leadership journey.

2. Opening Retreat

Friday 17th and Saturday 18th of May 2024

Venue: The Old Priory, Beechworth

- Opening Retreat began with an overview of the program, followed by activities designed to help participants get to know each other. They explored different temperaments, the value of networking, and the nuances of questioning etiquette. Participants were introduced to reflection tools, gaining insights into understanding themselves and others. The retreat also focused on team dynamics and group processes, marking the start of the group journey.



3. Wangaratta

Friday 31st of May 2024

Venue: Brown Brothers Milawa Winery, Milawa

Sponsor: Brown Brothers Winery

- Speaker: Mark Byatt**, Regional Development Victoria
Topic: Economic Development
- Speaker: Celia Adams**, CEO, Beyond Housing
Topic: Housing in our Region - Challenges and Opportunities
- Speaker: Joel Tilbrook**, General Manager Viticulture & Supply Chain, Brown Brothers
Tour of: Packaging Facility at Brown Brothers
- Speaker: Cate Looney**, Senior winemaker, Brown Brothers
Topic: Leadership Journey as a Winemaker

4. Skills Development Day

Friday 14th of June 2024

Venue: Wangaratta Turf Club, Wangaratta

- **Speaker:** Sarimah Hellyer, Aligned Thinking
Topic: *What Is Fundraising*
Speaker: Mary Hoodless, Karoo Consulting
Topic: *Project Planning and Management Training*

5. Melbourne Study Tour

Day 1: Monday 24th of June 2024

Location: Brady Hotels Melbourne, The Big Issue

- **Speakers:** Kaylynn Rasmussen & Dani (Big Issue Vendor)
Role: Program Coordinator
Topic: *The Big Issue – Classroom*
Speaker: Judy Ryan (she/her)
Role: Advocate & Author
Topic: *North Richmond Legal Injecting Room*
Speaker: Mary Crooks
Role: Executive Director
Topic: *Vic Women's Trust*
Speaker: Kathryn Ellis
Role: CEO, Leadership Victoria
Topic: *Community Leadership: Why It Matters*

Day 2: Tuesday 25th of June 2024

Location: Kathleen Symes Library & CERES Community Environment Park

- **Speaker:** Claire Hetzel
Role: CEO, Landcare Victoria
Topic: *Advocacy*
Speaker: Paul Murfitt
Role: Director, Regions & Community Action
Topic: *Circular Economy*

6. Online Skills Development Session

Thursday 11th of July 2024

Venue: Online

- **Speaker:** Bronwen O'Shea, Story Up
Topic: *Storytelling for Change & Impact*

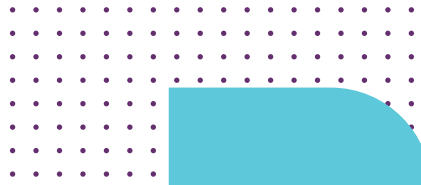
7. Mansfield

Friday 19th of July 2024

Venue: MACE, Mansfield

- **Speaker:** Ian Herbert
Topic: *Swanpool Cinema Community Activation*
Speaker: Sally Matheson, Education Benalla Program Manager, Tomorrow Today Foundation
Topic: *Community Foundation and Changing a Story*
Experience: Mansfield Statewide Autism Service
Host: Simone Reeves
Speaker: Bruce McCormack, Mountain Cattleman Association
Topic: *Advocacy in Mountain Cattleman Association*





8. Wodonga

Friday 2nd of August 2024

Venue: CFA Headquarters - District 24, Wodonga

- **Speaker: Paul King, CFA**
Topic: Leadership in Emergency Management

Speaker: Dr Penny Vine
Topic: Rural Australians for Refugees

Speaker: Emma Jones, GHD Digital
Topic: Innovation Management with GHD Digital

9. Online Skills Development Session

Thursday 8th of August 2024

Venue: Online

- **Speaker: Rob Carolane, Twin Prism**
Topic: Governance



10. Mid-Point Reflection Day

Friday 30th of August 2024

Venue: Benalla CFA, Benalla

- **Speaker: Helen Haines MP, Federal Member for Indi**
Topic: Advocacy and leadership

Speaker: Sarimah Hellyer, Aligned Thinking
Topic: Vision and strategy

11. Online Skills Development Session

Thursday 5th of September 2024

Venue: Online

- **Speaker: Sara Sinclair, Volunteering Victoria**
Topic: The State of Volunteerism (Nationally and Across the State)

Speaker: Hamish Fletcher, CFA
Topic: Sustainable Volunteerism

12. Towong

Friday 13th of September 2024

Venue: Corryong Neighbourhood Centre, Corryong

- **Speakers: Spencer Weeks & Ryan Weeks, Corryong Allied Movement for Pride**
Topic: Corryong Allied Movement for Pride

Speaker: Lachlan Campbell, Sustainable Agriculture Facilitator, NECMA
Topic: Agriculture and Sustainability in our Region

Speaker: Josh Collings, Co-founder, Acres and Acres Cooperative
Topic: Our Community Driven Climate and Agriculture project

13. Alpine

Friday 11th of October 2024

Venue: Bright Vic SES headquarters, Bright



Session 1

Topic: *Building Hope in a Warming World*

Speaker: Narelle Martin, Regional Change Agency

Session 2

Topic: *The Alpine Region Panel: Emergency Services, Tourism, Leadership and Industry*

Panellists: Doug Incoll, Alpine Cluster Vic Police; Steve Belli, AVCL Deputy Chair & Alpine Entrepreneur; Natalie Ajay, ARV Non-Executive Director & Owner of Impact Strategy

14. Indigo

Friday 25th of October 2024

Venue: Old Beechworth Gaol



Session 1

Topic: *Changing a historic town icon into a thriving community space through effective engagement*

Speaker: Clayton Neil, Co-Founder, Australian Centre for Rural Entrepreneurship (ACRE)

Tour: Community-led rejuvenation through social enterprise and community asset ownership – Old Beechworth Gaol

Session 2

Topic: *Totally Renewable Yackandandah*

Speaker: Matthew Charles Jones

‘Leaders instill in their people a hope for success and a belief in themselves. Positive leaders empower people to accomplish their goals.’

15. Final Retreat

Friday 8th & Saturday 9th of November 2024

Venue: Valley Homestead



Participants gathered to conclude the program with a reflective two-day retreat that covered key aspects of their journey. This included clarifying their vision for community leadership, and reflecting on their development throughout the program. The final discussions provided a space for participants to consider their leadership paths beyond the program, assess their progress, and formally close out the experience.

16. Graduation / End of year Celebration

Tuesday 12th November 2024

Venue: Wangaratta Turf Club



Graduation formed part of a broader, end-of-year celebration, serving as a platform to recognise and celebrate community efforts within the region. The 2024 cohort were presented with their certificates of graduation, with a signature address by Program Patron, John Brown AO. Guests enjoyed networking, and also heard a keynote speech by Professor Andrew Campbell, offering insights into policy development, and the role community engagement and advocacy can play in informing and enabling policy development and delivery.



2024

AVCLP Graduates



Tasman Clingan

Mansfield

Alpine Resorts Victoria, Head of Assets and Operations (soon to be Mansfield Shire Council)

Sponsor: Mansfield Bendigo Community Bank

I hadn't heard of the program until I was nominated. When I did some research and reading it seemed like an amazing opportunity to develop my leadership skills. I was excited to gain a deeper understanding of the regions priorities and to be able to do personal development in multiple areas.

The program has had an amazing impact for me not only on my leadership skills but in prioritising what's important, both to the region and to myself. I have experienced significant personal development, and through this journey I've determined what is most important to me. I've been fortunate enough to meet with my sponsor and shared great conversation. This meeting, and my participation in the AVCLP, got me feeling passionate about our Mansfield community. This inspired a job application with the Mansfield shire council, for which I was successful. This is an opportunity that will give me greater capacity to participate in and add to my own local community.

I feel from participating in the program that I'm a more well-rounded leader. I feel my mindset has changed to one of continual growth and I'm more comfortable with taking on feedback as a leader. I love that I have a deeper understanding of the region's priorities and am feeling very energized and excited for what the future holds - not only for the region, but for my leadership journey and career.

Priorities

"Daring leaders work to make sure people can be themselves and feel a sense of belonging." Brene Brown.



Amy Daeché

Tawonga South

AGL, Hydro Environment Advisor

Volunteer Organisation: Albury Conservation Company, Board Director

Sponsor: AGL

In my short time being part of the North-East I have been incredibly lucky to have been surrounded with people who are alumni of the AVCL, and it has been on my wish list to complete. The nerves of meeting the cohort and starting the program soon melted away, as everyone was so lovely.

This program has been equal parts challenging and inspirational. My key take-away was having the opportunity to have open and honest conversations with community leaders and to hear about their personal and professional journeys. It's really solidified that no path to leadership is linear or the same, and has allowed me to start reflecting on where I'm at in my life: personally, from my emotional growth, the way I value myself and how I invest my time in my community. But also professionally, to prioritise development, give myself permission to seize opportunities for growth and celebrate small wins.

The program has personally impacted me by allowing me to be more vulnerable and honest with myself about my capacity both personally and professionally. Having had some tough reflections with myself and open conversations with people in my life. I've now set some exciting personal goals with my partner, have better confidence to lead authentically in my career, learning how to say no and prioritise my engagement, and continue to practise small moments of mindfulness which I had not prioritised until during this program. It's been life altering.

Expansive

"Being brave doesn't mean you aren't scared. Being brave means you are scared, really scared, badly scared, and you do the right thing anyway." Neil Gaiman



Olga Davis

Glenrowan

Rural City of Wangaratta, Economic Development Officer

Sponsor: Rural City of Wangaratta

When I first considered joining the leadership program, I was filled with uncertainty. I wondered what to expect: would it truly bring value or end up being a waste of time? Questions about who would be participating and whether I would find like-minded people also crossed my mind. There were so many “what ifs” and “what nots” swirling in my head. However, after some reflection and conversations with others who had gone through similar experiences, I decided it was an opportunity worth exploring.

As part of the program, I have been learning extensively about our region and the incredible programs and initiatives happening around us. One key takeaway is the question, “What were you challenged by?” which we reflect on after each program day. This process has profoundly impacted me, fostering personal growth and increasing my confidence in my actions, thoughts, and intentions. Professionally, it has sharpened my focus, and in my community involvement, it has enhanced my sense of purpose and direction.

One significant change during the program occurred when I asked a guest speaker how it is that he isn't afraid to make decisions impacting so many people. His response, “I am more afraid not to make one,” was life changing. This insight has made me more comfortable with taking active roles in all aspects of my life while staying true to myself. This newfound confidence and authenticity have been profound learning experiences from the program, shaping my personal and professional growth.

Transformative

“Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality.” Warren Bennis



Sally Day

Oxley

Self Employed, Project Manager

Volunteer Organisation: Oxley Hall Committee, Oxley Primary School Council, Landcare, Various over the years

Sponsor: June Canavan Foundation

I am proud and grateful to have been sponsored to participate in this year's program thanks to the generosity of the June Canavan Foundation. Over the years, I have heard so much about the program and how life changing it can be. Having just left a long-term role with Landcare, I felt the timing was right to commit to the program and I was excited to see what would evolve during our program days.

I've really enjoyed the place-based learning days held in different towns. Guest speakers at these sessions have increased my depth of understanding of the complex issues facing our rural communities. The most enjoyable part of the program has been learning more about each of the participants through their presentations. The presentations have deepened my gratitude for my own journey, challenged and inspired me to pursue more in life, and above all, helped me appreciate the unique gifts and talents of those around me.

I have renewed my confidence in being a community leader and enhanced the skills and attributes needed for working with volunteers and community groups, and a deeper understanding of different personality types, how these styles play out in a group setting and how to navigate challenges to achieve positive outcomes. I am very grateful for the networking opportunity and for the time spent with a wonderful group of individuals that I may never have crossed paths with otherwise!

Appreciation

“The real job of a leader is not about being in charge. It's about taking care of those in our charge.” Simon Sinek



Blake Edwards

Yackandandah

Leading Edge Engineering Solutions, Owner

Volunteer Organisation: Totally Renewable Yackandandah and Yackandandah Community Development Company (YCDCo)

Sponsor: Yackandandah Community Development Company (YCDCo)

I was a bit sceptical of how well suited I was for the program and what I'd be able to get out of it. I wasn't sure if I had sufficient leadership experience and connections in the local area. But after initial meetings with my sponsor, I was eager to take part in the program to become more closely involved with my local community.

Getting to know the other course participants in this setting has been so enlightening and helped me to better understand how other people's perspectives are formed. In combination with the wide variety of speakers covering complex topics, it's been a great experience to share with the rest of the diverse cohort.

Taking part in the program has opened my eyes to the many different styles of leadership and when they can be applied to different situations within my community. This experience has shifted my mindset from a more confined way of thinking to one that is more open and versatile. Overall, the program has been instrumental in my growth as a leader, aligning well with my values of continuous learning and personal development.

Insightful

“We all go through some crap times but thankfully manure makes great fertiliser.”



Cassie Elliott

Yackandandah / Osbornes Flat

Wodonga Council, Population Health and Community Wellbeing Coordinator

Volunteer Organisation: Yack FC Junior Soccer Club, Secretary

Sponsor/s: YCDCo, Quercus Beechworth

I had always heard really good things about the program from workmates who had previously completed the program. Whilst I had wanted to apply previously to this year, with a young family I didn't feel I could give it my full attention until this year. I want to support my community by knowing more about it and how to make it the best it can be, and I felt this program was a great place to start in my journey.

I would say firstly it's been challenging, in a good way. It's pushed me more than I expected, but taught me more about myself in the process. Learning from the other participants and speakers has been very inspiring and I look forward to continuing this journey.

Since beginning the program, I have really developed my confidence in my asking questions and offering my opinion at a greater level. I am looking forward to offering more of my time to support and lead my community, but also knowing my limits and making sure I don't overstretch myself and under deliver.

Deep

"You do not need to be a manager to be a leader. Anyone can be a manager; it takes a special type of person to be a leader."



Amanda Giason

Rutherglen

Yarramanda Farm, Owner/chef

Volunteer Organisation: Rutherglen Agricultural Show Committee, Steward; Show Society Committee Member & Preserving/Cooking Sub-Committee

Sponsor: Hugh D.T. Williamson Foundation

Before commencing the program, I was eager to explore leadership styles that could enhance my personal and professional growth. After speaking with a past participant, I recognized the value of the program in offering unique insights into regional priorities and adaptive leadership. I was particularly excited about the opportunity to engage in a shared learning environment, where I could deepen my understanding of leadership and apply new concepts to my role at Yarramanda Farm and within the community.

During the program, I've been actively pushing myself beyond my comfort zone, particularly through public speaking. The "Turning Points" presentations have been especially impactful, offering profound insights from diverse perspectives. This experience has significantly boosted my confidence and leadership skills, both professionally at Yarramanda Farm and in my role with the Rutherglen Agricultural Show Committee. The support and shared learning with fellow participants have deepened my understanding of adaptive leadership and community impact.

The program has boosted my confidence, allowing me to engage more effectively with my suppliers and customers at Yarramanda Farm and my community work. Overall, it has been a transformative experience, making me a more capable and thoughtful leader.

Expansion

"Carpe diem"



Ilona Goswell

Milawa

Galen Catholic College, CRT

Self-Employed, Educational Supervisor and Facilitator

Volunteer Organisation: CFA, 4th Lieutenant Milawa Brigade

Sponsor/s: CFA

Before starting the Leadership program, I underwent a period of self-reflection and goal setting, identifying areas for personal and professional growth. I faced initial challenges of balancing existing responsibilities with the new learning commitments. I felt this opportunity would be the start of good things to come, something valuable, but what, I wasn't really sure. As I commenced the program, I was introduced to foundational concepts and began building relationships with peers, setting the stage for my transformative journey in leadership development.

Key takeaways from the Leadership program include enhanced communication, strategic thinking, emotional intelligence, self-awareness and confidence. Professionally, my decision-making and leadership skills have improved and I've become more empathetic and proactive in inspiring and motivating others in various aspects of my life.

During the Program, I've experienced significant growth in communication, decision-making skills and resilience. I've gained valuable insights into strategic thinking and problem-solving.

Overall, I've become a more effective and adaptable leader, ready to tackle new challenges and drive positive change.

Growth

"It's all about one life inspiring and motivating another to become the very best version of themselves." Gifford Thomas



Alison Kirkwood

Mansfield

Alpine Resorts Victoria, Environmental Manager – Mt Buller and Mt Stirling Alpine Resorts

Sponsor: North East Catchment Management Authority

It's a great feeling being recognised as someone worth investing in. Being encouraged to apply for this program made me pause, consider my path, and be inspired to step up, open to potential. At the launch event, I realised AVCLP aims for all participants to feel this way. The opening retreat was a fantastic experience that gathered our cohort, effectively breaking the ice for us to connect and embark on our leadership course.

It's personal connections and networking that are stand-out in this course. Themes of trust, vulnerability and honesty are established allowing me to invest myself properly at each session and remain committed to the team. Course speakers have been inspirational and motivating – how one individual who feels led, can have such a positive impact in their community! A key learning was gaining insight into our differing temperaments, and how to apply this in managing a team.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the course. Even when tired and challenged with life, the next program day or online session is guaranteed to be rewarding and very worthwhile. I am so impressed with the variety and calibre of people from all over the North-East that I have met, listened to, laughed with and learnt from. AVCLP has boosted my confidence in taking on further leadership opportunities and equipped me with tools to get there.

Inspiring

"Our greatest fear should not be of failure but of succeeding at things in life that don't really matter."
Francis Chan



Zoe Konkoly

Wangaratta

Rural City of Wangaratta, Childcare Centre Coordinator

Sponsor: Telstra

I had heard a lot of great things about the AVCL program prior to my application with the phrase 'life changing' being thrown around. When the opportunity arose to apply myself, it seemed like a fantastic opportunity. As a person working in a leadership position, I was lucky enough to participate in some leadership training which I thoroughly enjoyed, and I was excited to further this learning and personal growth.

I have enjoyed learning what I find difficult. I found it occasionally uncomfortable to give and receive feedback in this scenario and it is something I have grown to be more comfortable with. Some of the key take-aways are the importance and dare I say ease in networking once that ball gets rolling. I am excited to see where this engagement will take me personally, and my team professionally.

Since participating in the program, I have begun to focus on my own wellbeing and the importance of health within wellbeing. I believe this has and will strengthen my leadership style. I find myself being more comfortable with the uncomfortable moments that can come from change and the different phases of team building and growth. Part of this would also come from the learnings about the different leadership styles and where not only I fit in that but also my team and how all the different strengths can work well together.

Growth

"Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others."



Rachael Mackay

Bobinawarrah

Gender and Disaster Australia, Train the Trainer Manager

Volunteer Organisation: Trainer/facilitator and advocate in the prevention of violence against women for emergency management teams, local government, community support organisations, justice and police.

Sponsor: Rural City of Wangaratta

I saw the AVCLP program as an opportunity to grow, contribute and challenge myself.

As an active member of the Wangaratta community focusing on social justice and gender equality it was time for me to examine not only what I have contributed but look to how I can create space to elevate and inspire others.

The program has been a revelation on so many levels – personally, spiritually and professionally. Gently getting to know each of the participants through candid conversations and through the Turning Points presentation has been so enriching and connecting for each of us. The guest speakers continue to broaden our experience of community leadership at every level and each program day has been exciting, challenging and inspiring.

I expected the unexpected, however I did not envision the program giving me such insight into my own leadership pathway to date. I had assumed I would be examining future leadership concepts, so this reflective piece has created a deeper understanding and confidence I had not expected. Rather than create opportunities, I seized them and brought others along, and I have concluded that this is okay. I have learnt reflection and what leadership looks like in terms of mindset as opposed to hierarchical notions of 'leadership'.

Reflection

"Leadership is creating an environment to help others realise their potential." Ben Crowe



Joanne Nicholson

Albury

Tots2teens Albury Wodonga, Founder / Area Manager

Volunteer Organisation: Tots2teens Albury Wodonga, Founder / Area Manager

Sponsor: AGL

I was so excited to be given the incredible opportunity to learn and expand my knowledge about becoming a versatile and unique leader in my community. Without the sponsorship that I was given, I would not have been able to take up this course.

I never expected to learn such a broad knowledge base to set me on the road to my leadership journey. I feel that I am well on my way to be able to take up volunteer positions that will allow me to speak for the people who feel that they "have lost their voice" and take up community positions that I would never have dreamed of taking up prior to this course.

During the program, I learnt that we are all aiming for similar goals. Inclusiveness within the community, engagement of ALL people no matter what positions they hold in the community and a world that is just and fair on a day-to-day basis. How we as individuals can pursue these areas on a day-to-day basis, may be through Parliament, may be through volunteering or may just be in the way that we go about our days. Whatever it is, the calling to be a Leader has never been stronger for me on an individual basis.

Expansive

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." Maya Angelou



Rachel Paton

Corryong

Ambulance Victoria, Ambulance Community Officer (ACO)

Volunteer Organisation: Rural Fire Service (RFS), Firefighter

Sponsor: Border Trust - Towong Bushfire Recovery Fund

I was nervous to start the program as I am still quite young compared to the average age of the cohort. Though intimidated, I was excited to learn more about community leadership and activation. I love the community that I grew up in, as I have seen the challenges and successes throughout my time and know the importance of a strong and close-knit community. I was able to learn more about not only my area, but surrounds, which will really help me liaise with other community leaders about the future of Corryong.

I found it most challenging to get out of my comfort zone, and to be able to open up to other members of the group. I found it extremely intimidating to begin with, but the interactions I shared with other participants really helped me get out of my head and take a step forward. I always loved the turning points as it gave us a really great view as to who we had in our cohort, and how much more you can appreciate their work and build with them based on their experiences.

Since participating in this program, I have more confidence now in my abilities as a leader than I ever have before. My abilities to organise events and host meetings have improved dramatically, and I feel more comfortable in a larger group setting. I hope to utilise this knowledge to bring more ideas and take a bigger step in the progression of my community.

Progress

"You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You must do the thing you think you cannot do." Eleanor Roosevelt



Vaun Shearer

Mount Beauty

ARV – Falls Creek Alpine Resort, Resort Operations Officer

Sponsor: Alpine Resorts Victoria (ARV)

I felt privileged to have been nominated by my manager and sponsored by ARV to take part in the 2024 AVCLP program. This was an exciting opportunity to grow as a leader, meet other members of my community and region and develop skills from the diversity of experience that the AVCLP offers.

Through the program I now see a lot more value in reflection, and the process of adapting from this. This has been beneficial personally and professionally. I have valued the interaction with fellow participants, and with guest speakers and facilitators, and being able to listen and learn from their experiences and backgrounds. My view of what constitutes a good leader, and how I may lead has changed and continues to evolve.

Through participation in the program, I have been able to assess my leadership style and qualities and reflect on how I can adapt this to best continue to develop as a leader within my life and community. The experience of being exposed to such a diverse range of individuals has challenged how I think of leadership, what constitutes good leadership, and started to shape the way in which I will approach being part of organisations or groups in my future.

Thought

"A leader is best when people barely know he exists, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: we did it ourselves." Lao Tzu



Jo Tanner

Benalla

Dairy Australia, Farm Engagement Lead
Volunteer Organisation: Alpine Valleys Dairy Inc., Office Bearer's Support

Sponsor: Gardiner Dairy Foundation

I wanted to start giving back to the communities that had supported my professional development over the years and I felt the AVCLP might be a good place to start. I didn't have any strong feelings going into the program, but was driven by the question - what do I have to lose and what might I gain? After opening retreat, my sentiments changed dramatically. I was surprised by how much I gained from it. I was excited about what lay ahead and by how engaged I felt.

A key takeaway that resonated with me is you can be the catalyst for change by starting small. Many of our presenters started with an idea and created a legacy. Things can happen when you put your idea out there and ask for help. Working with my team I reflected on working with volunteers and community groups and the importance of having realistic expectations of volunteer time commitments and contributions. I also have greater appreciation that with member diversity great things can be created.

During the program, I've found that circling back to the Temperament Theory allowed me to be more mindful of the needs of others in the group and how to communicate with supportive intent. Inclusivity and respect of temperaments in leadership is important to provide diversity, energy, and cohesion in a group. Therefore, it is beneficial to take the time to develop and nurture differences to leverage and maximise the value of the skills and knowledge individuals bring to a collective.

Insightful

"Think more vertically to benefit longer-term outcomes."



Dr Werner Vogels

Glenrowan, on Bangerang Country

Australian Rural Leadership Foundation,
Insights Manager

Volunteer Organisation: CFA Wangaratta South, Volunteer Fire Fighter and Country Universities Centre, Ovens-Murray, Deputy Chair, Board of Directors

Sponsor: CFA

Prior to the program, I gave lots of thought to how I wanted to turn up as a learner. I made a commitment to enjoy each moment, to learn, share, listen, and above all, remain curious. I was surrounded by a group of like-hearted individuals who care about their communities, and addressing how to best use the collective for complex challenges. It made me realise I have a strong network base with opportunities for collaboration.

With each Turning Point presentation, connection between participants deepened. I am now more confident in stepping into vulnerability and holding space for others to do so. Conscious of my own privilege, I realise the need to use my voice for good. Mental health and wellbeing are of critical importance to me, so I made a pledge to prioritise community resilience, focus on recovery, and invest in interconnectedness.

I was struck by the willingness of the program presenters who donate their time and are happy to be contacted after. It really is a network of people across our regions who have a similar drive to make positive change. The talent, drive, determination and palpable energy within the group was beautifully appreciated and affirmed. We all have so much going on in our lives, it's empowering to hear those stories and see people share their views and insights.

Heartfelt

"You need to sit in discomfort to learn, growth happens when you stretch yourself. You can do that by entering brave spaces, approaching each situation with open heart and open mind."



Melanie Von Blanckensee

Bonnie Doon

Alpine Resorts Victoria, Head of Resort Assets and Operations (Mt Buller, Mt Stirling)

Volunteer Organisation: Parents and Friends Committee, Class Representative

Sponsor: Alpine Resorts Victoria

The Alpine Valley Community Leadership program provides an opportunity to develop leadership skills and I applied for a position in the program to help me reflect on and build these skills. I believed this program would enable me to develop the tools needed to be an effective leader both in my work community and the broader community I live in. Being a part of this course would provide invaluable networking and relationship building opportunities.

One of the best parts of the program has been getting to know the other participants and being inspired by their amazing stories. Hearing from a diverse range of leaders within the North-East region has been so valuable; particularly hearing from Regional Development Victoria to gain a deeper insight into regional priorities and from Helen Haines and the advocacy work that goes on behind the scenes for our region.

Right at the beginning of the program we undertook an exercise learning about our innate temperaments. Part of this exercise included understanding how I communicate based on my temperament and how I can adapt my communication style in addressing others from other temperament types. This piece of work has been transformational for me as I have been able to take it back to my workplace and make significant improvements on my communication techniques and being able to get the best from myself and my team.

Energising

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



Daniel Warner

Bowser

Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE, Trainer Assessor

Volunteer Organisation: Wangaratta Hockey Club, President/Umpire Coordinator/Senior Coach

Sponsor: Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE

As a returning resident to the northeast region of Victoria I realised that this amazing part of the country is home and always was and always will be. Having spent time volunteering locally for the Wangaratta Hockey Club and being part of the GROW program I came across the Alpine Valleys Community Leadership Program and thought it would be an amazing opportunity to learn how I could be a better leader in our region.

Talking and connecting with the other participants has been the most enlightening part of this program, to learn that many of the amazing individuals in the group are like minded and great to talk to and work with. The Turning Points presentations have been one of the most humbling experiences I've ever had to go through; so many hardships and so much resilience.

Since starting this program, it has opened my eyes to the fact that everyone has something to offer and part of being a great leader is listening to people's views, experiences and opinions. These differences are what makes communities stronger and more resilient allowing for growth. Being able to recognise this and accept it is what makes a good leader. One person can do amazing things, but one community - the possibilities are endless.

Enlightening

"You are not what has happened to you. You are what you choose to become." Chuck Norris



Narelle Watters

Smoko

Environment Protection Authority Victoria, Environment Protection Team Leader

Volunteer Organisation: Mountain Safety Collective Incorporated, Treasurer

Sponsor: EPA Victoria

I was excited to join the program to challenge myself and grow both personally and professionally. I hoped that the program would help build my self-confidence and allow my inner voice to emerge. I eagerly anticipated learning from the experiences of a diverse and talented range of speakers and fostering connections and gaining unique perspectives from my fellow participants in the cohort.

I have immersed myself in listening, learning, and adopting new perspectives. Engaging in active discussions and reflecting on diverse viewpoints. Finding my voice and becoming comfortable with articulating my views have been transformative experiences, reminding me that everyone grapples with their own fears and inner critics. These experiences have profoundly impacted me, both personally and professionally.

During the program, the most significant changes I have experienced revolve around leading with vulnerability and allowing my true self to emerge. Embracing my authentic self has given me the confidence to participate fully without fear of judgment. I have become more comfortable in my own skin, appreciating the unique perspectives that everyone brings and the power of a team that is enriched by diverse viewpoints.

Inspirational

'Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, concerned citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.'

Margaret Mead

ANNUAL PROGRAM

Activation Projects

The Annual Program incorporates an action learning component through a collaborative community activation activity, which is a key element in leadership development, providing participants with valuable hands-on experience.

In recent years, this took the form of community projects, and in the years prior, participants engaged in fundraising activities, often supporting a pay-it-forward scholarship for the next year's program or funding specific program activities.

This year, the focus returned to fundraising as the community activation component. Participants learned about values-based fundraising in a community context and worked within their teams, formed at the Opening Retreat, to design and implement a fundraising initiative to support participation in the 2025 Melbourne Study Tour.

Teams undertook project management training focused on exploring their values-based fundraising initiatives. They each devised concepts and project plans, including delivery of a raffle and a beverage drive, in addition to a movie night at community cinema. While time constraints did not allow for the execution of all projects, team members carefully crafted their ideas and brought them to life through thoughtful planning and collaboration.

Our deepest thanks to all who contributed to the projects, including donations from: Big Muster Distilling Company, Brown Brothers Winery, Mt Pilot Estate, Wangaratta Automotive Service Centre, Yarramanda Farms, Stony Creek Fish Farm; and discounted contributions from Baileys of Glenrowan Winery, Bridge Road Brewers, Buller Road Brewery, Corowa Distilling Co., Hurdle Creek Still, John Gehrig Wine, Nightingale Bros, Pizzini Wines, and Red Elk Beverage Co.

'Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others.'

Jack Welch



Alumni Engagement

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 Alumni Subcommittee has 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.

Thanks to members of the Alumni Subcommittee in 2024: Anthony Griffiths, Bev Hoffman, and Megan Hunt (departed February), Elise Hill, Sophie Enders and Tegan Allen.

This year, the Subcommittee enabled a number of initiatives, including two public facing workshops, three online skills sessions, and the opportunity to participate in a 2024 AVCLP program day. The Subcommittee also supported the 2024 Annual Program cohort with their fundraising projects.

Navigating Conflict in Value-Based Settings Workshop

This two-hour online workshop, facilitated by Susan Benedyka, focused on managing conflict in values-driven community settings. Designed for individuals in voluntary roles, such as members of clubs, committees, boards, and local organisations, the session attracted 15 participants. Attendees explored conflict resolution strategies, tools, and techniques to address common challenges related to values-based conflicts.

The workshop aimed to equip participants with the skills and confidence to collaboratively resolve conflicts and refocus on shared goals.

Inclusive Engagement with Diverse Communities Workshop

A panel of three local community members shared their unique experiences with 26 attendees, offering insights on engaging authentically within diverse communities.

The session featured Uncle Dozer, Al Winters, and Tracey McGeehan, who led a meaningful discussion on moving beyond tokenism and effectively connecting with people from different backgrounds. They also addressed the complexities that can create barriers to inclusive community engagement.



AVCLP Honorary Graduates



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

Linda Griffiths-Brown 2023

Linda served on the AVCL Board from 2016 to 2022, and contributed to many of AVCL's strategic initiatives, including moving the organisation towards financial sustainability.

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 Kerr 2014

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

Neil Clydsdale 2014

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

Bernard Young 2013

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

David Roff 2012

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

2024

Awards



2024 Honorary Graduate: **Katie Warner**

Katie Warner served as a board member of AVCL from 2020 to 2023. During her three-year tenure, she played a pivotal role as the Treasurer, a member of both the Finance and Risk Committee and the Executive Committee.

Despite her formal board term concluding, Katie continued to offer her expertise in financial matters during the transition to AVCL's new company structure, a special task appointed by the board. She also mentored new board members, extending her guidance beyond her official term.

Known for her empathic, calm, and measured approach, Katie provided invaluable professional insight into complex organisational issues, helping to navigate and resolve challenging situations with a steady hand.



Inaugural Special Award 2024: **Anthony Griffiths**

This year, we are delighted to introduce a Special Award, honouring the efforts of program graduates.

Anthony Griffiths, an esteemed graduate of the AVCL Annual Program, dedicated twelve consecutive years to serving on the AVCL board from 2011 to 2023. Throughout his tenure, Anthony took on various key roles, including Chair, Deputy Chair, Treasurer, and led multiple committees such as the Alumni, Strategy and Stakeholder, Finance and Risk, and Executive Committees.

His leadership was instrumental in driving innovative governance reviews, including the company's restructure and Board reorganisation. Anthony's efforts in policy development and committee reviews ensured that AVCL could adapt to emerging challenges and sustain its mission. He also played a crucial role in establishing significant partnerships with community stakeholders and philanthropic organisations, enhancing mutual benefits for the region. As a mentor and recruiter, Anthony actively involved new board members and talented community individuals in AVCL's mission. Even after his board tenure, he remains engaged as a member of the Alumni Subcommittee and AVCL's representative on the Regional Leadership Collective.

Anthony's unwavering commitment and energetic involvement in AVCL's mission have left a lasting impact on the organisation.

AVCLP Alumni

First delivered during 1998–1999, the program has since been consistently delivered annually, creating a strong network of Alumni contributing to their communities across North East Victoria, Border regions and beyond. With 2024's graduates, our AVCLP Alumni will reach over 500.

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 Ressom
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

Anneshka 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 Bhat-tarai
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

2023

Amanda Hore
Domenica Hunkin
Gianna Verdini-Fensom
Irene Day
Jenny Corser
Kane Fitzpatrick
Kate Walsh
Katrina Pawley
Kirsty Branagan
Lauren Kelly
Lisa Turner
Maria Kraus
Matthew Hicks
Michael Savage
Paige Zamperoni
Romina McEwan
Rosie Suter
Sarah Glass
Sarimah Hellyer
Sean Barrett
Skye
Rhodes-Mitchell



‘Great leaders are not defined by the absence of weakness, but rather by the presence of clear strengths.’

John Zenger



Looking ahead

2025 & Beyond

Looking ahead to 2025, AVCL remains committed to adapting our approach to meet the evolving needs of our communities, while staying true to our mission. This commitment drives our vision of expanding programs and offerings to ensure they are inclusive and accessible to all people, across North East Victoria, Southern and Border regions of NSW.

At the core of this vision is our flagship Annual Program, which continues to be the foundation of our leadership development work. Through this program, we equip participants with the skills, networks, and experiences needed to influence positive change in their communities.

We are excited to deliver the final round of the Upper Murray Community Leadership Program, which has played a pivotal role in building leadership capacity in that region. We will also continue to deliver the Fischer Community Leadership Program, bolstering grassroots leadership across the Greater Hume and Federation councils. Additionally, 2025 will see the introduction of a program in Myrtleford, funded by Regional Development Victoria's Tiny Towns Grants, focusing on building social capital and leadership ability to enable a more cohesive and resilient community.

In addition to these community-focused programs, we are also innovating our offerings to meet the evolving needs of the region. This includes the introduction of new professional development opportunities designed to strengthen leadership skills within workplaces. These initiatives not only leverage our place-based approach and expertise

in leadership development, but will also contribute to the long-term financial sustainability of our organisation, ensuring we can continue to serve our communities well into the future.

We are also taking steps toward developing a new theory of change, and a framework for measuring and articulating the impact of our work. We look forward to sharing these developments with our stakeholders as they progress.

As we evolve, we will continue to deepen our relationships within the regions we serve, ensuring that we remain responsive to their needs and able to resource programs for all people. By listening and engaging with our communities, we can better understand their unique challenges and opportunities, ensuring our programs are both relevant and impactful.

We look forward to 2025, confident in the strength of our partnerships and the resilience of our region, as we work together to cultivate thriving and vibrant regional communities.



Alpine Valleys Community Leadership

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