



**‘FOR OUR FUTURE’
FOREST INDUSTRY
LEADERSHIP
PROGRAM
-FINAL REPORT-**



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For our Future: Regional Collaborative Leadership Program

Introduction

The Forest and Wood Products (FWPA) contracted the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation (ARLF) to develop and deliver the 'For Our Future, the Regional Forestry Collaborative Leadership Program'. This program was focussed on 'Developing tomorrow's leaders – people with the knowledge and skills to collaboratively drive the future.' This long-standing goal of the FWPA has focussed on supporting industry participants to develop their capability to step up and participate in all aspects of industry leadership.

The Program objectives were as follows:

1. Develop strong leadership capability in the sector, including (inter alia) critical thinking, persuasion and influence, negotiation, facilitation and communication
2. Facilitate a deeper understanding of the shared leadership challenges and opportunities faced by the industry in Australia and to commence a practical, collaborative approach; and
3. Foster ongoing relationships for peer support across the industry.

The Program was a two-year commitment focussed on collaboration across the regions and the supply chain. Seventy-three participants graduated from the multi-session residential program. Refer Attachment One – Participant Summary

The 'For Our Future' program comprised experiential-based leadership experiences, including a range of expert facilitated sessions covering topics like adaptive leadership, behavioural leadership skills, storytelling and collaboration skills, in addition participants worked together on industry focussed group projects. The program was developed to provide a strong platform of skills, attributes and knowledge for emerging leaders to engage their organisations and industry, developing active solutions for the greater good of the forest and wood products industry.

The Program aimed to develop mid-level managers to increase their capacity to take national leadership roles. This report will focus on input from 2019 participants and feedback from their employers. Recommendations will be drawn based on the two-year investment by FWPA.

'The course has made me more self-aware but also aware of those around me. It challenged our preconceptions and gave me a range of ways to think about leadership'

Program structure

The program was nine days over two sessions. The first session was hosted in three different regions, with a focus on local engagement and leadership skills.

Session one	Tasmania
	Gippsland
	SE Queensland & Northern NSW
Session two	Canberra

The program participants gathered then in Canberra for their combined second session which focussed on national collaboration and current and future industry issues and the opportunities they may present.

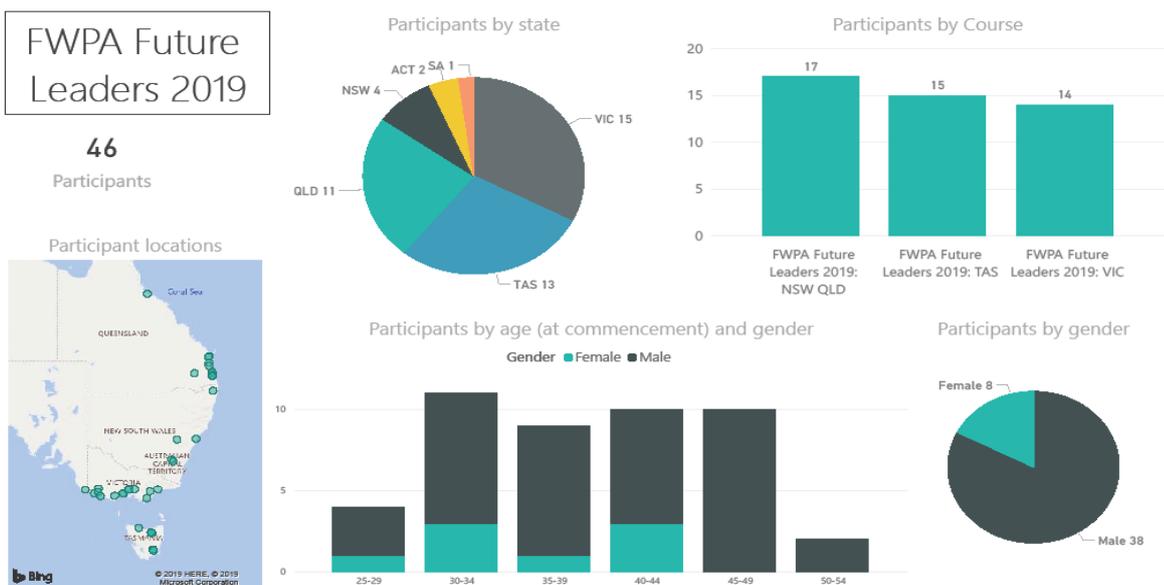
The intention in the 2019 year, was to lead 4 regional programs. FWPA in consultation with the ARLF decided to deliver across three regions, combining SE Qld and Northern NSW. This ensured each cohort group was a size to maximise participant learning and engagement.

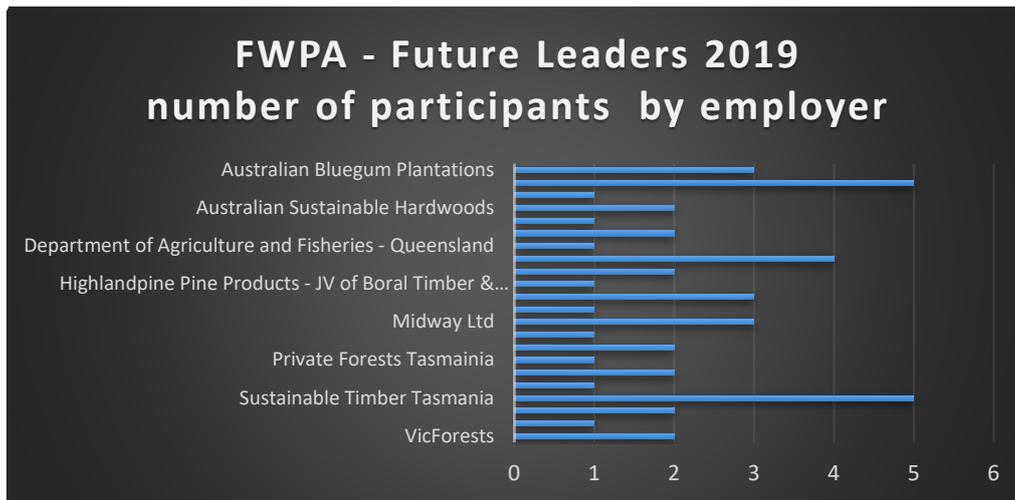
Refer Attachment Two for Program outline.

Participants

The FWPA managed the marketing and recruitment of participants. The Program was open to mid-level managers to increase their capacity to take on national leadership roles within their company and/or broader industry engagement. Participants were responsible for a nominal fee plus travel costs. A participant fee in addition to employer support/endorsement of their participation was critical to meaningful engagement and further the participants' willingness to own their learning process and the application to their workplace/industry.

Forty-six participants completed the program across three regional cohorts. The diversity of participant age was valuable to participant learning. Female participants were about 21% of the cohort.





Participant feedback

Participants have actively engaged in sessions that challenge them mentally, emotionally and socially. The program practice and expectation is that individuals will continue to reflect upon the sessions and continue to learn as they apply new understandings to their everyday contexts in their workplace and industry. This method of continued growth is further supported through the ARLFs' network and professional development support that all ARLF program graduates can access. Follow up phone calls three months post-graduation form an important part of the learning and feedback loop.

After each session a formal feedback and review process was completed which focused on measuring the program delivery and program operations. This feedback is used to monitor effectiveness of individual sessions and session presenters/contributors.

- Program delivery:
 - Adaptive leadership
 - Collaboration
 - Behavioural leadership
 - Social license and storytelling
 - External consultants, alumni and panel presentations
 - Initiative/project
- Program Operations

Feedback on Content – regional sessions				
	Poor 1	Good 2 3	Excellent 4 5	
Outcome:	Session 1.1: Tarreleah	Session 1.2: Inverloch	Session 1.3: Toowoomba	Average score:
Adaptive leadership	4.4	4.0	4.2	4.2/5
Behavioural leadership	4.7	4.3	4.2	4.4/5
Collaboration	3.7	3.3	3.2	3.4/5

Social license and storytelling	4.1	4.0	3.9	4/5
Program Operations	4.2	4.25	4.2	4.2/5

Program feedback from participants and their employers:

At the conclusion of the Forestry Program, all participants and employers were asked the following key questions:

- Should the program continue to focus on collaboration within regions and across regions?
- In addition to leadership what are the skill and competency gaps required in the sector to meet industry challenges.
- At what level of leadership do you see the greatest need for support and development?
le emerging or established
- Please provide us with any general comments relating to program design and delivery

The response rate from participants was over 90%, the majority of participants completed the feedback before they departed Canberra (their final session).

The ARLF asked the participants to identify the person (their direct report or CE) best to respond to our survey. The response rate from employers/direct reports was 40%. In hindsight, the ARLF should have sought feedback from FWPA to verify the distribution list. Any future survey would need to better identify valued respondents and seek broader engagement of the industry.

Further to the written feedback received, ARLF did phone a number of the respondents whom gave their permission and also ARLF industry alumni who's comments were within the scope of the data collected and reported here.

The importance of collaboration:

The opportunity to collaborate across the country and throughout the supply chain provided participants learning insights, understanding and connections they would not have formed in any other way. The support was unanimous for a regional-national approach to leadership development and learning.

Participants noted the value of networking to future leadership contributions, understanding difference and similarities across regions and that it was core and the 'best tool in our tool kit'. A few participants noted how little networking before the program they had engaged in within their local region, let alone more broadly.

'I believe that this cross-region collaboration makes a new road network that may not have been previously noticed'

'I imagine the benefits could flow on for years'

'This was one of the best and most worthwhile aspects of the course'

Employers reflected on collaboration being undervalued and central to establishing important and strategic relationships and achieving all objectives for industry benefit.

One employer noted:

'The challenge for those who attend the Future Leaders course is to ensure they continue to maintain new relationships and to take and use their learnings when they return to their respective business. It is also critical that participants are supported and encouraged by their employer to put the things learned into practice.'

Leadership gap analysis:

Participant feedback varied in response to the needs of the industry. All participants did share the view that relationships (and therefore communication) are key to the industry's future success. This included comments that referred to:

- the need for a 'unified voice';
- networking and collaboration;
- the sharing of ideas;
- wholistic understanding of industry vs sectoral/company interest; and
- the development of trust across and within the supply chain and regions.

Further to this, participants identified the need for a more diverse range of people willing to step up to senior and executive roles. Encouraging the involvement and leadership of women and young people will be critical. This was also reflected in the employer feedback received.

Employers also identified, the technical expertise currently lacking in the workforce and the need to bridge emerging and senior leaders in the industry given the gap of access to tertiary education specific to the sector.

Leadership 'pitch':

Participants shared a variety of views in regard to the target level of leadership for participation. There was a strong sense that emerging leaders, 'next level of leaders' could be a key focus area for development opportunities. Others felt the mixed range of ability and leadership provided its own learning and appreciation for the needs of the sector. For example, one participant highlighted the limited opportunity to date to learn from and with those in the industry and that more experienced leaders could well learn from those who were new to leadership roles.

Three participants indicated they were already influencing their HR teams in regards to future participation and the program's value.

'I think the program is valuable and its very rare that you get such an opportunity to have so much exposure to others and training.'

Participants valued that the program design and facilitation provided for leaders of all levels and this mix of leaders and leadership experience was useful in itself.

'It was valuable to have people from a range of levels, it built layers of different experience and understanding into the program.'

The participants and employer responses were mixed regarding target 'leadership level'. Executive and middle management and a shared space for learning all seen as valuable.

Structure and content

The participant group raised that too much content was included within the program design and that consideration of a three-session program or reducing content needed to be considered. A number of participants noted the need for greater discussion and reflection time in between the speakers and experiential sessions they participated in. The majority of participants truly valued the opportunity to network and learn from peers. There was a suggestion that the program could be improved with more of a focus on technical and leadership skills.

The employer group provided unanimous support for a multi-session program with 50% indicating shorter length sessions over a long time period (ie. 5-6 residential sessions of 3 days). Other responses favoured multi-session and spoke to balancing time away from work/home with learning development needs.

Some further comments included:

- "The course has definitely made an impact on me and has provided me with a good suite of tools plus self-awareness to be able to develop my leadership style"
- "I found the course challenged my thoughts on my place in the forest and wood products industry. It has given me the confidence to step forward"
- "Most grateful for this course. I have made many realisations about my previous leadership style and have implemented several changes learnt from the course. I have further reflected upon my career and now have new aspirations"
- "Provided me with some great tools and a deeper understanding of leadership"
- "Definitely challenged me and I've grown because of that"
- "The course has certainly changed how I view leadership and made me realise I don't need to wait for a promotion to start being a leader"
- "I was lucky enough to implement skills learnt in Inverloch straight into the workplace, these will be skills and networks for life"
- "On reflection I will take away so much but the relationships with my staff and within my organisation have blossomed since taken on this course"

Recommendations

Key recommendations for consideration and future development opportunities include:

1. Further investment in the current model of regional industry leadership program that includes content revision, and recruitment strategies to encourage greater diversity within the cohort
2. Pilot an Executive Leadership Program, this could be a smaller targeted cohort
3. Implement projects that further develop ties within the forestry industry
 - a. Coaching and mentoring framework
 - b. Realisation of the participant initiatives established in 2018 and 2019
4. Extending the stakeholder survey post program for broader consultation and input

1. Regional Industry Leadership Program 2020/2021

Feedback from the participants and their employers support the decision to once again provide a middle-management leadership program within the forest industry. From experience of other bespoke leadership programs we also know that demand increases significantly in their third and subsequent years, as for many 'word of mouth' regarding the program's value and impact both for participants and their colleagues is evident. Of interest our Program Associate, Jen Wressell and the ARLF office has already fielded industry enquiries about a 2020 program.

The ARLF is committed to working with FWPA and industry stakeholders to ensure future programming remains relevant, draws on participant feedback and continues to challenge the assumptions, broaden the perspectives and views considered by leaders in the industry and establish networks for future collaboration.

The ARLF propose the following recommendations for future program implementation:

- FWPA with ARLF support develop a marketing strategy to attract a diverse applicant pool that draws on graduate stories of impact
- ARLF in consultation with FWPA, to revise the balance of content/reflection and debrief time to maximise learning from each session and the broader development process
- ARLF in consultation with FWPA to formally communicate with the participant's employer to ensure understanding and opportunity for them to capitalise on the investment of PD time provided and its relevance to the industry
- The program remains a two-session program with one session in region and the other in a major centre
 - The option of a more formalised third session be explored to either (a) provide content that can be managed remotely between two sessions (b) structured post program development (c) an additional residential component
- Alignment of dates and location with existing industry events provides valuable networking, access to industry leaders and raising profile of the program
- Formalised follow up by ARLF (or delegate) of program graduates at three, six and 12 months to provide development support and understand program impact
- Consideration of the accommodation option for participants – twin share vs own room. This would have significant cost implications.

2. Executive Leadership Program:

During the program sessions formal and informal discussions highlighted the desire for further expansion of the FOF Program. Anecdotal evidence supports the need for executive leadership development.

The ARLF encourage FWPA to consider an industry specific initiative for executive leadership or alternatively, support a forest industry participant/s in the ARLF Agribusiness Leadership Program.

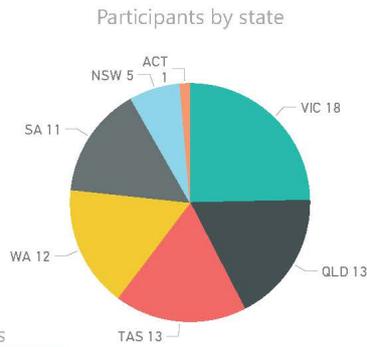
3. Initiative and project support

During the participant initiative presentations in Canberra, the participants raised the need for formal coaching and mentoring opportunities. The ARLF would be interested to partner with FWPA to investigate and implement a rigorous and sustainable framework that provides ongoing leadership learning and support.

In addition to this, we recommend that FWPA consider investing in the 2018/2019 group initiatives. This would involve working with designated team members (now alumni) within the presentation groups to establish project teams to implement their vision statements. We believe that the initial findings and updates of these project be formally presented in 2020 in line with the graduation of the industry leadership program.

ATTACHMENT ONE

FWPA
Future
Leaders
2018 &
2019



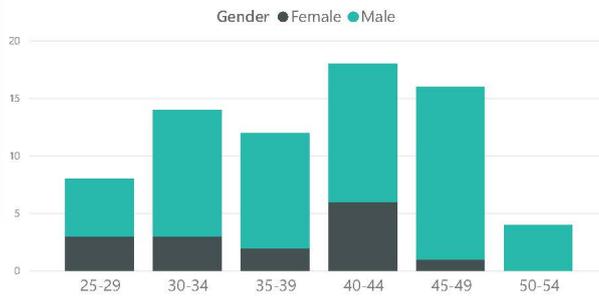
Participant locations



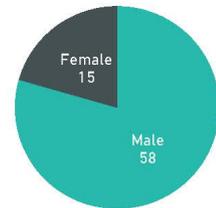
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Participants

Participants by age (at commencement) and gender



Participants by gender



ATTACHMENT TWO

Program Objectives

Program Outcomes
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop strong leadership capabilities, including (inter alia) critical thinking, persuasion and influence, negotiation, facilitation, and communication
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Facilitate a deeper understanding of the shared leadership challenges and opportunities faced by the forest industry sector in Australia and to commence a practical, cooperative
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Foster ongoing relationships for peer support across the value chain and forest regions to strengthen the sector

Program learning intentions: Regional session

Session 1	Learning intentions
Day 1:	<p>To outline participant opportunities in the ARLF</p> <p>Continued leadership development and practice through the ARLF</p> <p>Value networks in various domains</p> <p>To connect with Country and consider Aboriginal custodianship in history</p> <p>Group Forming</p> <p>To generate trust and rapport beyond organisational boundaries</p> <p>Developing deeper understanding of the value of relationships as participants move from self to others to the wider sector/industry and understanding the value chain</p> <p>Self and others emotional intelligence and behaviours</p> <p>Practice and theory of leadership</p> <p>To provide a foundational frame on leadership</p> <p>Shared language and understanding for more effective communication</p> <p>Industry Focus</p> <p>To begin to uncover the issues facing the industry in preparation for further work in Day 2.</p> <p>Facilitate open exchanges of ideas and information</p> <p>Promote collaboration across organisations, groups and functions</p>
Day 2:	<p>Experiential Group Learning</p> <p>To unpack the issues facing the industry, specifically to build collaboration and connection between organisations</p> <p>To practice communication through shared experiences and in demanding situations</p> <p>Facilitate open exchanges of ideas and information</p> <p>Become an effective listener and seek to understand and work with diversity</p> <p>Develop communication channels appropriate to needs and context</p> <p>Greater insight into the construction and maintenance of relationships through shared problem solving</p> <p>To provide experience to explore and engage with the results of the Psychometric Profile</p>

	<p>Enhance the ability of participants to adequately reflect on their current performance as a leader and the performance of others. The emphasis will be on achieving this across the group and ultimately and the forestry sector.</p> <p>Greater understanding of self and others through personal and group challenges</p> <p>Personal leadership story of guests and issues facing the industry</p>
Day 3:	<p>Leadership conversations for implementing change</p> <p>To improve effectiveness as a leader via developing a proactive feedback practice that enhances resilience and sharpens organizational perspective</p> <p>A clearer understanding of industry challenges</p> <p>To demonstrate the Harvard consultation process to participants using an industry example</p> <p>Understanding and clarity of consultation process</p> <p>Participants to consult each other's industry-specific dilemmas</p> <p>Facilitate open exchanges of ideas and information</p> <p>Become an effective listener and seek to understand and work with diversity</p> <p>Personal leadership stories plus questions from the group</p>
Day 4:	<p>Moving from trust to action as a group.</p> <p>Developing ideas for an industry-based initiative project regarding challenges in the forest sector</p> <p>Developing a common interest amongst diverse people</p> <p>Implementing change with a diverse group</p> <p>Personal Leadership Development Plan</p> <p>Action and support for continued leadership development</p>

Program learning intentions: Canberra session

Session 1:	Learning intentions
Day 1:	<p>Setting the expectation for active participation</p> <p>To 'reform' the group as a full collective</p> <p>To generate trust and rapport beyond the regional group boundaries that have been created</p> <p>To develop a full value contract for how the group will work together</p> <p>Develop a set of working values within the newly formed group</p> <p>From connections with interstate participants with the aim of these connections enduring beyond the program - further knowledge of the forest value chain</p> <p>To integrate a process based in group relations theory</p> <p>To observe leadership at play within the new group</p> <p>To seek to surface the subconscious processes of the group</p> <p>To surface the issues that might hold us back individually and as a collective</p> <p>Understand what is happening within a group at a subconscious level, so we can influence</p> <p>Facilitated conversation to unpack this question from session 1 and reach consensus as a full group</p>

	<p>Considering the uncertainty that we may face as leaders and how to prepare for the unknown</p> <p>To consider the following questions:</p> <p>How do we think about the future of the industry (and our businesses) without falling in the trap of assuming that the status quo will continue?</p> <p>How do we build a strategy that can deal with the uncertainty we may face?</p> <p>Contemplating what a future could, and should look like for the forest industry</p> <p>Undertake strategy mapping on the 'potential' futures of the industry</p> <p>Leaders sharing their insights & experiences</p>
Day 2:	<p>Explore the question - what does it mean to do the 'right' thing?</p> <p>Understanding the hidden complexity in this question</p> <p>To build an understanding of why the question of ethics is so important for effective sustainable leadership</p> <p>To place the participants in the shoes of a protagonist who has faced a leadership dilemma</p> <p>To consider decision making through the frame of ethics</p> <p>To challenge participants on their understanding and practice of ethical decision-making and leadership within broader social context</p> <p>To appreciate the complexity behind the question – what is the right thing to do</p> <p>Consider team dynamics and the impact of change on teams and what we can do to support our people</p>
Day 3:	<p>To consider how and why we engage with community</p> <p>To consider how we work with diversity and across cultural groups</p> <p>Greater appreciation for cultural influences and the importance of bringing 'community' along with us</p> <p>Understanding the values that motivate positions different to our own</p> <p>To learn to engage with those who hold different perspectives to us, focusing on the environmental credentials of the industry</p> <p>To identify our own barriers to change and our style in approaching change and in addressing situations involving change</p> <p>Identify the personal changes needed for self-improvement</p> <p>Develop a plan for overcoming our subconscious resistance to change</p> <p>Learn a technique to support others in overcoming resistance and implementing change</p> <p>Leaders sharing their insights & experiences</p> <p>To bring different perspectives onto the day themes</p> <p>To hear from senior notable leaders in an informal setting</p> <p>international and national political context</p>
Day 4:	<p>Considering the learning from the day prior</p> <p>Embedding the learning</p> <p>Develop skills in storytelling</p> <p>Develop and understanding of how to market and engage with the public about the industry</p> <p>To gain a deeper understanding of managing conflict and leading negotiation.</p> <p>To present the 'lived' experience to reinforce the theory on influencing others</p>

	<p>To share ideas between participants and guest contributor</p> <p>Reinforce learning on influence and leadership through the experience of others</p> <p>To gain greater understanding of theory of social change</p> <p>Setting aspiration to become an industry of the future</p>
Day 5:	<p>Reflect on change in leadership from the start of program</p> <p>Capturing of ideas and comments of personal growth</p> <p>Leadership knowledge versus leadership behaviour</p> <p>Working as a regional group to put ideas into action regarding challenges to the forest sector</p> <p>Action for the greater good of the Forestry sector</p> <p>Binding of group and final networking</p> <p>Celebration of achievement</p>