

# Leading Australia's Schools

A challenging national leadership program for principals

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Teaching Australia

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE FOR TEACHING AND SCHOOL LEADERSHIP LIMITED

## 2010 Program overview for prospective participants

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# Leading Australia's School

## Program overview for prospective participants

### Introduction

Leading Australia's Schools is a national, university-accredited leadership development program for school principals who have been selected from every State, Territory and educational system across Australia. It aims to enhance the skills, motivation and confidence of school leaders who are already demonstrably successful in their roles. This 'good to great' approach is intended to create a growing network of superb practitioners who can extend their capacity to make a real difference in student learning within and beyond their individual schools.

### Objectives

The program is designed to ensure that participants are able to inform their practice of educational leadership through the following objectives:

- Understanding current and future trends in leadership in education and other organisational contexts;
- Understanding the global and Australian context shaping the demands on Australian schools and their teachers, including issues in contemporary educational thinking;
- Planning and implementing change in their own school based on an assessment of the need for change;
- Having the confidence to take action;
- Understanding others and how to manage their relationships with them;
- Making a personal contribution to the development of the profession and the education system;
- Developing the capability of their own team;
- Operating strategically and with a focus on the critical issues;
- Having a personal vision for self, school, education and the profession.

### Program content and learning activities

The program is designed to meet the requirements for sustained behaviour change in adults.<sup>1</sup> A key component of designing an intervention of this kind is to ensure its practical application beyond the initial program, utilising peer learning groups, action learning and progress reviews.

Built upon a recognized model of adult learning, the program uses a mix of theory and experiential participation to engage all four learning modes established by Kolb.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Boyatzis R.E & Kolb D.A *Goal Setting and Self Directed Behaviour Change* Human Relations 23 No 5 (1970) pg 439-457

<sup>2</sup> David Kolb (1984) *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall

Personal learning is enhanced by this approach, as it enables improved retention and enhances translation of the learning into practice. The flowchart below outlines each phase of the program, and below this is a detailed description of each phase. It is three months between the 5 and 2 day residential phases.



## Pre-work

As part of the application process, principals select a leadership challenge that currently faces them in relation to improving education outcomes for their students. We incorporate this challenge into the structure of the program to ensure that the program remains embedded in real practice. Successful applicants receive a welcome pack that includes pre-reading and notes for program preparation and during this phase participants are asked to nominate staff members to complete a number of surveys to provide the principals with data on their leadership styles and school climate. The participants also complete a version of these surveys.

## 5 Day Residential Program

Day	Focus	Content
Day 1	My individual characteristics as a leader	<p>The first day of the program focuses on individuals as leaders and how individual motives and values inform behaviours and have an impact on effectiveness as leaders.</p> <p>This initial phase of the program is assisted by uncovering individual learning styles and introducing the importance of “refuelling” as leaders, from an emotional, physical, mental and moral perspective.</p>
Day 2	My role as a leader	Day 2 further consolidates how individual motives and values impact on behaviour. This learning is extended by looking at the principal role and at how behaviour can be managed to gain optimum effectiveness as organisational leaders.
Day 3	My behaviour as a leader	<p>Day 3 looks at individual leadership styles (via survey data) and the impact of these styles on team effectiveness.</p> <p>The day includes a “field trip”, where participants join a leader of a private or public sector organisation in their offices. The purpose of these discussions is to enable principals to learn about common leadership challenges facing leaders from different industries and to understand how the use of ICT and enabling technologies impacts on different organisations.</p>
Day 4	My impact as a leader	The fourth day of the program begins with an introduction to the impact and importance of organisational climate. Once the concept is understood, principals receive their individual

		<p>feedback (via survey data) on the climate they are creating within their schools, and the impact this is having on organisational performance.</p> <p>The afternoon is spent working on Challenge Projects and in consultations (to make sense of the survey data) with a Hay Group consultant.</p>
Day 5	Moving forward as a leader	<p>The final day of the program begins by bringing all of the learning together with a compelling segment on visionary conversations. Principals will learn the importance of engaging with their team to gain common understanding of their school goals and objectives.</p> <p>This is followed by a “Master Class” dialogue where outstanding principals share their stories and experience with the group.</p> <p>The program concludes with a final meeting of challenge groups and a briefing on the intersession work and the 2 Day recall session.</p>

### Challenge Project and Debrief with Staff

After attending the five day residential program, Principals return to their schools armed with an action plan for the leadership challenge that may (or may not) have been reshaped and refined as part of the program. They will also complete a set of structured reflections on their leadership practice to help them embed the learning and make sense of what it means for them in their day to day work. This is supported by a challenge group teleconference which is facilitated by a Hay Group/University of Melbourne facilitator.

### 2 Day Residential Program

The recall program is an important design element. The recall program keeps participants honest, so to speak and ensures that change is embedded in the practice. But the recall does more than this. During this period participants explore influences that might impact their school in the future and factor these into their action planning.

Day 1 My challenge project	<p>The focus of the morning is sharing the experience of undertaking the challenge projects. This is done through a poster session format.</p> <p>The afternoon involves an experiential learning simulation which helps to embed the concept of the impact of motives on behaviours and performance.</p>
Day 2 My role in the future of education	<p>The focus of day two is on the principal’s role as education leader in the future and how to work in and contribute to the profession and the education system more broadly. There is a final action planning session to ensure the work continues beyond the program.</p>