

Leadership and management development: what do the Australian and New Zealand Higher Education sectors want and need?

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Executive summary

This report provides a brief overview of leadership and management and its development in the higher education (HE) sector in Australia and New Zealand. The findings are based on the inputs of conversations with 20 respondents in a variety of roles across 18 organisations.

The conversations highlight opportunities for developing leadership and management to address the ongoing concerns of the sector around sustainability – fiscal, social and most urgently, of workforce, specifically the need to engage and energise wearied and jaded staff; and create more equitable, culturally welcoming workplaces.

Currently routes into leadership and management are reliant on self-recognition and self-promotion, are based on past achievements, evidenced in a rather limited way and thereby exclude those in informal, unrecognised leadership practices and roles and those with leadership potential.

Formal leadership and management development (L&MD) opportunities are limited in availability and accessible to only a few. There is some excellent provision which is likely highly impactful but hard to evidence (and therefore justify further investment) given limited evaluation. Leadership and management development is an ad-hoc experience for most, gained by seeking out or stumbling across and then requesting support for specific offers or getting lucky in having a supportive line manager doing the same.

What is suggested are structural-systemic changes in the form of a roots and branch review of promotion criteria, evidence and pathways including consideration of a robust, credible dual pathway approach. Indigenous leadership practices should be looked to in forming improved promotion pathways, encompassing as they do many of the feminised, relational, distributed and grounded leadership and management practices that currently have limited recognition or formal value, yet are highly valued by staff.

Frameworks that lay-out expectations of the leadership and management practices needed and practised in all staff roles are suggested as a way of recognising, acknowledging, auditing and directing career and performance development. They also enable succession planning and leadership pipelining.

Frameworks that allow all leadership and management development activities to be mapped, recorded and seen as a more coherent collection that adds up to something would be welcomed. On-the-job development through mentoring, coaching, sponsorship and reflective practises alongside peer-networks and groups, immersive programs and online units are all valued and valuable leadership and management development. In an ideal world, formal leadership and management development programs would be accessible, scalable and transferable. All leadership and management development should have equity and inclusion at the core – not as a bolt-on extra but wrapped into the essence of the leadership and management we want to be and do. A range of leadership and management development topics and capability areas are suggested. These aim to bring academics and professionals closer in their understanding, language and approaches to leading and managing complex, multi-faceted universities that both achieve social good and are good businesses.

Out-with the scope of this review, but flagged multiple times, is the need to review governance and include those engaged in governing bodies in professional development.

Who leads on leadership and management development nationally in both countries, seems open to question at the moment. There is a gap to be filled, possibly by collaborative partnership working to provide a more holistic approach to developing university leadership and management now and for future.

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1 Context, aims and scope of the inquiry

Aims: to understand the needs for leadership and management products and services to HEIs and individuals working in the ANZF sector.

To achieve this, the inquiry aims to understand:

- + Needs and aspirations around leadership and management development
- + The degree of fit or tailoring of existing leadership and management products for this market
- + The barriers and opportunities for entry into this market including other actors to compete or collaborate with
- + An approximation of the size of the market and indications of specific audiences.

The broad audience is the 43 universities in Australia, the 8 universities in New Zealand and 3 universities in Fiji along with private Higher Education (HE) providers and related sector bodies in these countries. It includes professional services staff and academic staff at all phases of a leadership pipeline from aspirants to executive/senior teams and across all three university mission areas.

Approach

We followed an abductive process of inquiry seeking to have themes emerge from conversations with respondents. These were then interwoven with a brief review of relevant literature followed by further conversations to gain wider insight, clarity, evidence and direction for possible responses and recommendations.

Tools used included: framed, open 1-2-1/small group conversations; analysis and coding for emergent themes and trends.

We sought to gain insights and opinions from respondents currently occupying leadership and management roles, aspirants and non-leadership roles, and those with oversight of talent recruitment and development within institutions. The respondents also included representatives from peak bodies.

We have since added, refined and amended the draft following check-in discussions and comments from initial respondents and other ANZ HE leadership. This final report therefore reflects the discussions and input from responses, as summarised and reflected upon by the author.

About the respondents

Of the 20 respondents, three are situated in New Zealand institutes. All the remaining 17 are in Australian tertiary bodies of which five are currently situated in universities belonging to the Go8; five are part of the Innovative Research Universities network; two are with Australian Technology Network institutes and one is part of the Regional Universities Network. Respondents from Australian universities were located in all states bar two (Northern Territories and Tasmania).

Declared gender split was 3: 17 (male: female); 6 identify as Indigenous (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or Māori).

The majority of respondents already had a relationship with Advance HE, as members, through the former HEA Fellowship system or Charters. This meant a bias towards those from a teaching and learning background in the initial response set. Secondary responses were from colleagues/ individuals recommended by our initial contacts. These represent a more diverse professional background.

The Conversations: Discussions were framed with the rationale for the inquiry then an invitation to talk to what's working well with leadership and management and its development, and where the gaps are – what (and who) is missing. Respondents were encouraged to speak from personal experience and perspective.

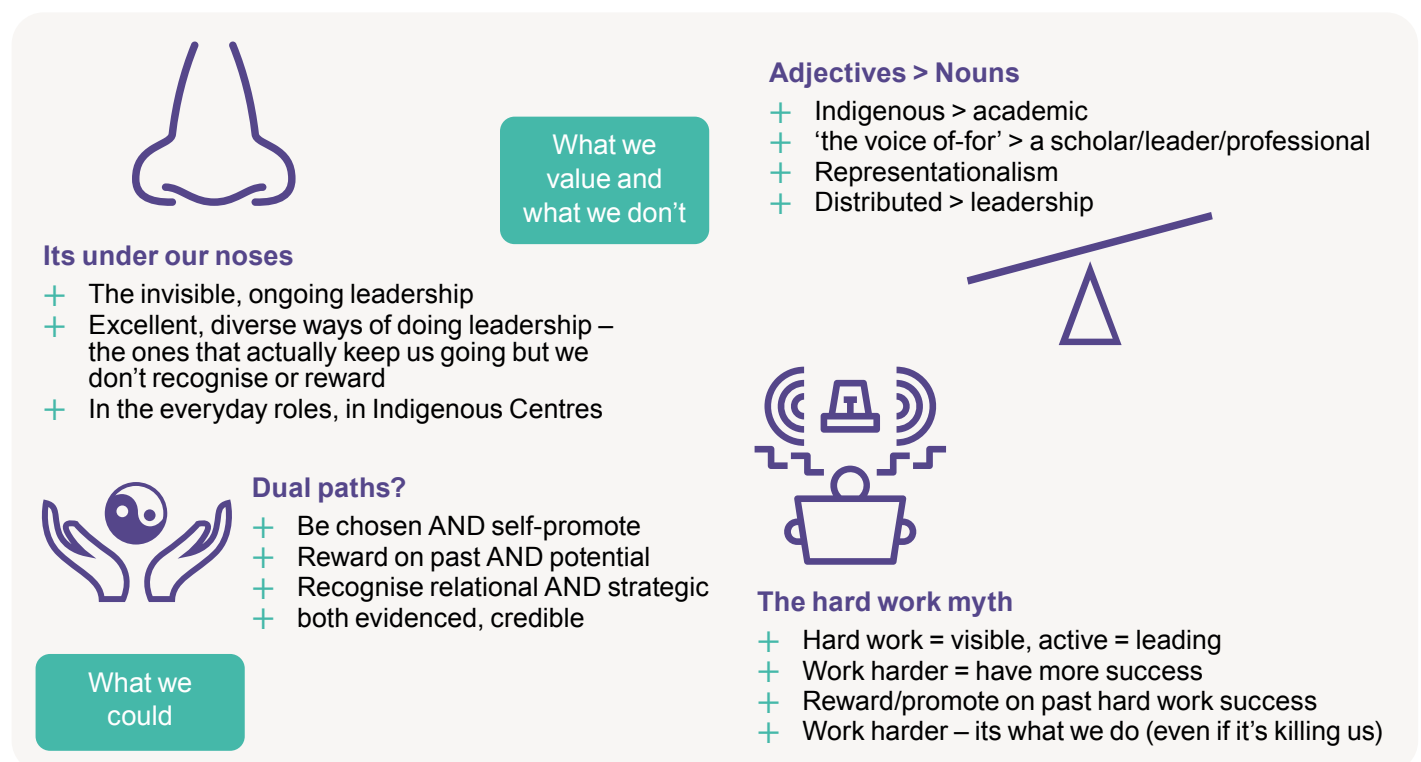
Part one: What emerged – respondents' views

2 Findings and discussion

Themes emerging from the conversations

The key themes emerging from the conversations around leading and managing in Australia and New Zealand's universities now are captured below in graphics 1-4.

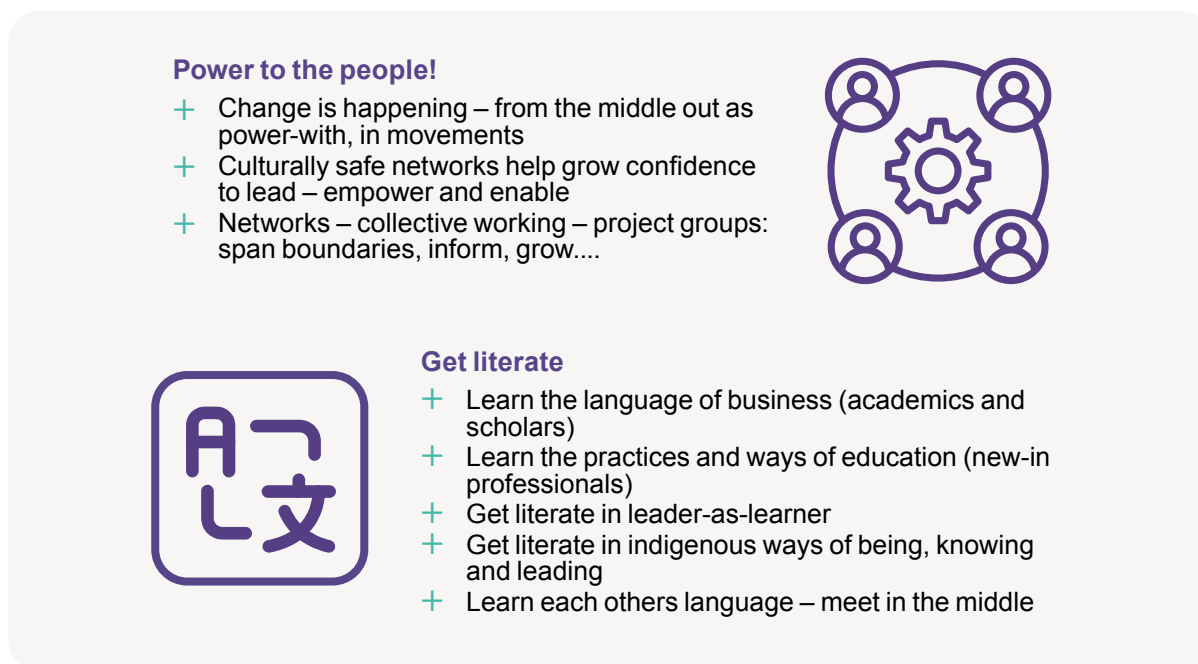
Graphic 1



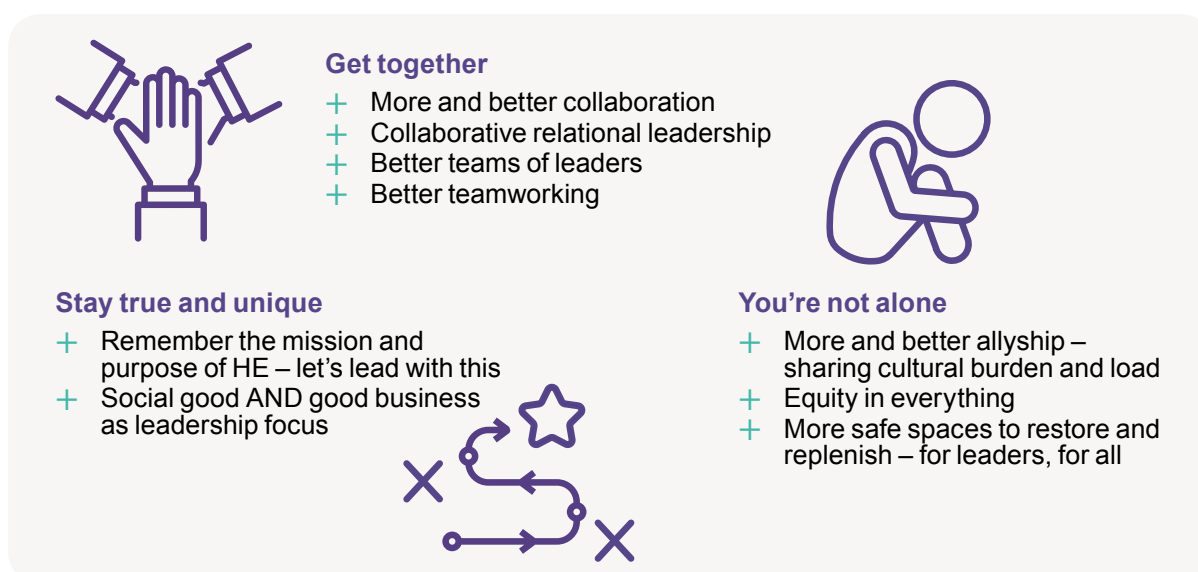
Graphic 1 shows what respondents feel is valued now ('The hard work myth', 'adjectives valued more than nouns'); what is not valued or recognised ('It's under our noses'); and indicating what many felt could be a way to reconcile the current position with an aspirational one that allows different types of leadership to flourish in a credible and supported manner ('Dual paths?').

Graphics 2- 4 (below) show themes emerging around the type and purpose of leadership and management development that is happening now, that which there could be more of, and that which is desirable.

Graphic 2: L&M development now and future: what's happening (power to the people) and what needs to happen more (get literate)



Graphic 3: L&M development now and future: all three themes on this slide represent what we would like to have happen in HE: 'Get together' demands more integrated, holistic working; 'You're Not Alone' speaks to allyship, safety and support; 'Stay True & Unique' is about our institutions, remembering why we are here, who we are for and also that we have to be viable businesses in order to achieve this purpose.



Graphic 4: L&M practices to grow and develop

The consideration of these themes shapes the reporting and recommendations throughout the rest of this document.



Step up – step in

- + to the biggest changes – open, brave
- + to challenging conversations; to dialogue
- + to 'difficulting'
- + to new places, new paradigms



Step back – look out

- + to broader perspectives – rest of sector, rest of world, other industries...
- + boundary crossing
- + To where we fit – the role we play

3 The backdrop of Australian and New Zealand HE leadership and management today: context and trends

Many respondents spoke to some of the trends, themes etc in HE they were noticing. These are summarised here both for their valuable insights and as a backdrop against which the HE leadership and management development needs and ambitions emerge: a starting point. In addition, they also give an indication of the particular perspectives of our contributors, what they notice and what they do not, and therefore also the limitations of this short review.

The business of HE: the increasing corporatisation of universities has been frequently commented on (e.g., Croucher & Lacy, 2020) and our respondents note this too, recognising the growing complexity of the funding and policy environments and of the wider capabilities set required to lead into this. In particular they note the burgeoning in PVC roles, many of them fractional, and the sometimes-fuzzy boundaries of these cross-cutting portfolio areas. They also note the potential problems in future years as the traditional PVC to DVC pathway is disrupted. Two other structural challenges for leadership are the lack of senior roles for professional staff and the subsequent flight risk as highly skilled and experienced staff realise they have 'nowhere to go'. The second challenge noted was in the rise of Provost positions and the possible blurring of accountability lines between Provost and DVCs or SDVCs. Many respondents noted the 'churn' in Executive or Senior Leadership Teams (SLTs): some noted the 'old boys' departure and the opportunities this provides for new and different leadership and leaders. Some noted the 'influx' of leaders from non-higher education backgrounds which parallels a trend noted in recruitment agencies for innovators with high risk-appetites, and 'fresh eyes' in the leadership searches. This is perhaps a response to two years of pandemic related risk-mitigation and risk-aversion tendencies in sector leadership. Whilst **leadership recruitment** processes appear to be getting a welcome overhaul in many places, **promotion** is almost universally viewed as highly problematic and one of the biggest barriers to bringing talent into leadership roles (more on this later).

Many respondents noted the need for **better cohesion and team-working in SLTs**, which some viewed as siloed and lacking (collective) focus, with others going so far as to describe SLTs they had experienced as dysfunctional or toxic. Respondents also noted the care needed in balancing academic and corporate needs across SLT remits and focus, with many feeling the balance has swung too far towards the business of education and away from education itself. The Australian Association of University Professors recently published an Ethical Framework (2022) articulating the unique nature of the academic role, precisely to counter this perceived erosion. Their framework aims to ensure 'appropriate power-relations' and 'shared governance' to help universities fulfil their mission. Many of our respondents also felt a sense of mission drift, captured as the loss of the unique position our universities occupy in shaping society, and a slide into becoming 'just another education business' (also noted in Quinton & Brabazon, 2022). This, many felt, is exacerbated by poor, outmoded or weak governance.

That university **staff are exhausted, jaded and weary** at this time was at the forefront of many conversations (*'we all know this, but no one knows what to do about it'*). Energising and engaging staff was described by many as a key outcome of 'better leadership' but the aspiration was marked with a slight sense of hopelessness (*'how exactly do we do this?'*).

A final trend our group noted is the emergence of increasingly powerful networks who are saying 'no' to Command & Control style (C2) leadership which treats staff as fungibles. These collectives are voicing a demand for, or getting on and creating, change. Many respondents perceive networks, peer groups, and other communities as vehicles for developing leadership practices and for promoting leading differently. That is, networked relations are ways of moving around overly rigid and perhaps no longer fit-for-purpose systems and structures. Respondents view such relational, distributed, and collective leaderships with a great deal of positive regard. These leadership approaches also align well with and may bring allyship to Indigenous leaderships' ways of being, becoming and knowing.

Embracing Indigenous leadership practices alongside those needed for the business of education may just be the mediator needed to bring together HE communities and to evolve more equitable, distinctive and prosperous institutes.

Emergent tensions to balance and lead into: Graphic 5 shows some of the key tensions emerging from conversations around leading and managing HEIs today. It could be said that the role of leadership is in balancing these tendencies, acknowledging their complementarity and interdependencies and the need to work across the continua they represent.

Graphic 5: pairs of competing/complementary tendencies often experienced as in-tension with one another.

Some of the complementary tendencies/tensions inherent to leading in a modern HEI	
'Corporate' perspectives	'Academic' perspectives
HEI as site of transformation and change	HEI as an ongoing status quo
Financially viable organisation now and future	Viability as a desirable place to work and study
C2, technical management	Relational, distributed leadership
Segmented management approaches	Strategic-holistic approaches
Efficiencies and effectiveness (visible KPIs) – audit culture	Cultural infrastructure (invisible KPIs) – the emotional-relational organisation
The pull of rankings	Being of and for community
'I'm more than a number' – feeling devalued	'Academics can be hard to manage' – struggling with the unique demands of the HEI
Valued and rewarded for the past – being expert, from a place of knowing	Leading now and for the future – being a learner, into a place of uncertainty
Recognising systemic privilege and burden	Recognising talent and capabilities

Multiple respondents note the size of the ANZ sectors presents challenges to growing and keeping leadership and management talent. Being very small (and relatively homogenous), means there are restricted options towards the top and everyone knows each other. There's also a tendency to be quite insular in perspective. On the plus side, being small is an opportunity to lead with a coherent and distinct identity built around the cultures and countries which the sector is of.

4 What would 'better' leadership and management in higher education look like?

Development of leadership and management in HE is needed – there's room, need and desire for more than what is currently available.

Having gained an idea of some of the current tensions for the sector, institutions and individuals in leadership and management, it was important to understand respondents on a desired future (or outcome). That is, what 'better' (as a sector, as an institution) would look like, and thereby, where leadership and management would be steering us towards, indicating the capabilities and qualities needed to achieve this.

The 'desired outcomes' picture came to light through conversations around instances where leadership and management is currently working well; and through asking 'What is the impact of 'better' leadership and management? What is it 'for'?' The responses given provide a direction of travel, a purpose and some desirable outcomes for developing HE leadership and management in ANZ. They also provide guidance on how any framework or map of leadership and management development activities should shape up.

Purpose and impact: 'desired outcomes' of better leadership and management

- + Purpose: 'Better leadership and management' is for ensuring universities stay on mission: universities showing stewardship and civic leadership for social good. Respondents noted universities play a unique role as key democratic institutions, carrying the responsibility of using the public purse to shape better societies. When we are playing this role well, the value of universities will be apparent to all; all our communities will have confidence in us.

Some go further to suggest one future role for universities could be as mediators of the difficult conversations that need to be had in our societies around reconciliation and around other topics that divide us.

- + The impact of better leadership and management is universities that are able to stay on mission as a result of the sustainable, sound financial decision-making needed to operate such complex enterprises, which are in-synch with the socio-political, economic and technological worlds within which we operate.

To bring these rather abstract 'desired outcomes' to life, we asked respondents what they would notice in their workplace when 'better leadership and management' is taking us towards these desired outcomes. How would these outcomes manifest – what would our universities look and feel like, how we would be behaving?

The descriptions are grouped and summarised below. More detail is provided in the Appendices.

'We would notice.....':

- + High wellbeing – positive workplace (joy, energy, feeling valued, trust)
- + Safe spaces – creativity, trying and failing, freedom to choose
- + Places for safe, robust discussions – accountability and agency

- + Equitable and inclusive – ‘we can turn up and be an academic’ (not ‘the representative of...’)
- + Better relationships, collaboration and team working
- + Feel part of something bigger – mission-driven, values-led
- + Not all communication is about finance, efficiencies and savings.

The ‘noticings’ start to build a rich picture of what HE looks and feels like when leadership and management is working well, which in turn gives more direction on the leadership and management development needed.

What does the ‘desired outcomes’ necessitate from leadership and management?

To take universities towards these purpose and impacts requires leadership and management that is diverse, that encompasses a wealth of expertise and perspectives, that focuses inwards *and* outwards, and that is held together as a cohesive unit through shared regard for their mission and a shared language. This is not news but, given that things left unsaid often get left off the agenda, it is worth re-stating here.

What might this mean for leadership and management development?

With this desired outcome in mind, the imperative for the leadership and management development is around capabilities, practices and approaches that enable collaboration, reduce or overcome division and work with some of the many tensions inherent in HE today. A starting point is in building competencies etc., that bridge the academic-professional divide to enable colleagues to recognise each other’s expertise, to find meeting-points around key issues and to speak a similar language. These development areas can be grouped into three areas:

- 1 Universal: there are some competencies all leadership and management need whether from academic or professional background
- 2 For academic-background leadership and management: competencies and tools that would enable academic leadership to appreciate and work in a more enterprise-like way manner.
- 3 For professional-background leadership and management: competencies that would enable professional staff to appreciate the practices and underpinning philosophies of the academic approach.

These three individual development areas are described in more detail below.

In sum, leadership and management should be directed towards safer, more connected and positive workplaces – that are ‘for’ something, worth our hard work, commitment and loyalty. Underlying this ambition is an assumption that the business of universities must be sufficiently viable and stable – that the corporate aspects of leadership and management are also effective, capable and working well enough such that financial survival is no longer the chief narrative dominating discourse and atmosphere.

It seems that if the discourse shifts: that is the language feels less alien and style of communication changes, relationships could strengthen and then perhaps the ‘doing’ of university business may feel less adversarial and perhaps be carried out with greater shared accountability.

5 What leadership and management development is available now? And what development ‘works well’?

Current leadership and management development is seen by respondents as a thing that usually only happens informally, ‘on the job’ (learning through doing the role). This is because formal development programs or services are limited or unavailable to the majority of staff. To access formal development programmes requires a very pro-active approach from the developpee, firstly in seeking out such programmes and, secondly, in gaining support. It also requires a bit of luck. Having a line manager who sees direct report development as essential and part of their role, and finding out about any leadership and management development opportunities run through faculties, central services or the sector are both viewed as a game of chance.

Our respondents had all had some form of development themselves and many had also sought it out for their teams. Some excellent national level women in (research) leadership programs were cited, as was a highly valued national development program for early career Māori academics. Some universities were also applauded for in-house leadership and management development efforts including: a future leaders program building cross-functional teams; and a three tier, three-year leadership program building self and other awareness and vertical relationships. Coaching and mentoring, and above all, the networks and peer-support groups catalysed by professional development programs and/or individuals seeking out support were highly regarded for their leadership and management and also career development potential.

Advance HE’s Professional Standards Framework was cited by many as helpful in stretching their self-concept, for recognising one’s own leadership qualities (especially qualities developed outside of substantive leader/manager roles), and for the push for colleagues to build evidence of leading and managing.

The Australian Institute of Company Directors, Company Directors Course (CDC) was highly commended by many for its ability to elevate mindsets, shifting thinking out of one’s field of expertise to thinking at whole-of-enterprise level in a business-like way, and for development of the concomitant skills-essentials in financial acuity, risk management etc. The opportunity to learn with leaders from a range of sectors was also prized.

Indigenous Centres (within universities) are seen by respondents as micro-universities often dealing with the full gamut of university core functions from student recruitment to research development and civic partnering. Respondents feel these Centres are microcosms of many of the leadership and management practices and approaches that are currently less represented in the main university-enterprise e.g., more relational, distributed, grounded and collective. They suggest that, with a little support and openness, these practices and approaches *could* be transferable into the main university-enterprise to complement the existing leadership and management styles. Respondents suggest such centres could be the seed beds for expanding what is practiced, recognised and rewarded as leadership and management in our universities.

Finally, experiencing positive organisational transformation through the leadership of one or more leaders was cited by many as deeply influential on changing their perceptions of the scope and potential for what *could* be achieved and *how* by leadership and management. These experiences had shifted aspirations and lifted horizons of opportunity for some.

Named leadership and management development programs and providers can be found in the Appendices.

Part two: Leadership and management development – suggestions on *how we reach ‘better’*

Analysis of responses highlights two areas for development: firstly, the structural and systemic elements that people perceive are barriers to supporting excellent leadership and management; and secondly, the skills, capabilities and practices for individuals and teams to lead and manage better.

6 Structural and systemic view (what and how)

There are several structural and systemic elements that people perceive are barriers to supporting excellent leadership and management. These are not ‘out there’ challenges but are within the gift of existing leadership and governance to change. They include:

- + Promotion processes, criteria and pathways
- + Performance metrics, processes and support
- + Cultural load – allyship
- + The role and form of governance

Who gets promoted and on what basis? Addressing structural and systemic barriers to leadership and management.

The Universities Australia (UA) Indigenous Strategy 2022-25 focus on staff section, notes the need for ‘opportunities, career development and leadership structures including opportunities to develop academic research careers and to move to senior positions’. Specifically (p32) for universities to “support senior Indigenous staff to be competitive for the most senior executive roles”, an imperative for investment in professional development. The strategy also notes the need to recognise the unique skills of and the cultural burden born by Indigenous staff. How this is done, is of course left to individual universities. However, respondents, including those responsible for operationalising the UA strategy, have all noted that promotion criteria and protocols are rarely adapted to recognise anything other than traditional (usually research) achievements as prerequisites. Given there are currently just c500 Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander PhD holders, these criteria firstly place tremendous pressure on these individuals to move into senior leadership and secondly, means universities are missing out on very talented individuals with a breadth and depth of leadership practices and qualities that the limited criteria fail to recognise and which may be the very practices being demanded by staff and other communities. As our respondents note, Indigenous senior leaders need to have not only the traditional academic qualifications and track record, but the political savvy, cultural embeddedness and communication excellence with which to navigate the additional representational and cultural responsibilities implicit in the roles.

There are some excellent examples of universities creating robust, credible and transparent alternative or dual pathways to promotion for senior Indigenous staff which have resulted in some exceptional individuals gaining roles that a more traditional/static process would have excluded them from. Our respondents suggest these more inclusive processes could provide models for the development of promotion routes and career progression more broadly, as they de-couple the recognition and evidencing of leadership qualities and achievements from holding substantive leader roles. For example, the leadership practices of pastoral care; of empowering and encouraging team members; of building deep and relevant relationships with stakeholders and community; even of energising and sparking hope in exhausted and jaded colleagues – these are the sorts of practices that can be displayed (and acknowledged) in *any* role at any level. Further, promotion to greater management and leadership responsibility could be remodelled to look at people’s potential. That is, how they might flourish and grow in the new role and what this would bring to the team and HEI.

This future directed recognition is largely overlooked, instead promotion is seen to be a reward for past successes.

It was also noted by respondents that the current (academic) culture of putting oneself forward for promotion is antithetical to Indigenous cultures where leadership would come through the suggestions of would-be followers (and elders). Is there an opportunity to reconcile these two approaches?

Dual promotion pathways created with rigour, transparency and credible oversight and supported by pre and in-post development could open-up leadership and management positions to a wider pool of talent, particularly for those not from traditional or privileged backgrounds, bringing the diversity of voices needed for university prosperity and wellbeing. Recognising that dual pathways can also be problematic, an alternative proposition would be a fundamental review and overhaul of current processes to produce a single, more inclusive promotion pathway and systems. Both propositions would require change: to role descriptors (which would all ideally be mapped against leadership attributes); in the types of evidencing of criteria and, in the make-up and capabilities of promotion panels to ensure rigour, equity and fairness are maintained.

To continue the equity pathway, once staff are in role, whichever pathway taken, they should have opportunity and resource to gain whatever skills, capabilities and qualifications to enable them to both flourish in the role and be eligible for similar roles or higher roles in the sector. This may mean gaining traditional qualifications such as a PhD or perhaps a more relevant Professional Doctorate, for those bringing relational and other non-traditional expertise. Similarly, those entering the role from traditional academic pathways should have the expectation to grow different practises. In any case, 'resourcing' must include sufficient time-out so as not to create even deeper burden within what are already demanding roles.

Inappropriate metrics also appear to be problematic for senior staff entering HE from other non-traditional academic backgrounds. For example, it was noted by respondents that industry and business professionals new to HE come in tasked with academic transformation and innovation, but then 'we torture them' with irrelevant KPIs and academic hoops to jump through that prevent them from doing the work for which they were hired. Examples are senior teaching professionals joining teacher training/education faculties at mid-levels; senior financiers taking on research-teaching roles to develop new products.

Incoming professionals are also disadvantaged in their first years by lack of acquaintance with the organisational, policy and political peculiarities of the university – both the visible and hidden organisation. In the time taken to understand the machinations of power flows and regulatory systems they miss out on e.g., research group, grant and other opportunities that are critical to advancement. This quirk has also been noted by Nachatar Singh (2022). On-boarding and inductions that include mapping of the HE architecture, a guide or mentor in the first year of service along with clearly framed leadership and management expectations and evidence types could be instrumental in enabling progress.

In short, a review of leadership and management recruitment and promotion criteria in combination with improved role descriptors that link with expected leadership and management practices would support improved equity, better job satisfaction, progress and purposefulness and contribute to improved wellbeing for aspirant and in-situ leaders and managers. The benefits to the university in terms of retention, performance, innovation and reputation should be well worth the investment.

Research leadership sustainability: our respondents see the level of effort required to gain and sustain research recognition, to lead in the field and to lead and manage projects as cripplingly high. Sustained research leadership in the current paradigm is, many feel, untenable. A review of strategic decisions around which rankings to follow and how this translates into KPIs and internal research ambitions and expectations is requested to address some of the systemic challenges in research leadership and to reduce burnout. Are we researching for rankings impact or real-world impact or both?

Allyship, sharing the cultural burden – systemic change

As mentioned, whilst adoption of the UA strategy by Australian universities through new PVC and, in a few cases, DVC Indigenous roles is very much welcome, the pressure on the role-holders can be tremendous. Beyond the named responsibilities of being a PVC/DVC there is the wider task of catalysing, nudging and pulling fairly ossified HE structures, systems and routines into forms that can embrace different ways of knowing and being at every level, from curriculum, to pedagogies, to relationships with community, to addressing ongoing microaggressions and racism and beyond. The agenda/burden of systemic transformation is huge and currently lays with very few individuals. The burden of systemic change needs to shift – it should be carried more evenly across the system. This more even carrying of the load can be seen in several NZ universities where, for example, Pākehā (non-Māori) leadership and managers have invested in educating themselves in Māori language and accessible cultural aspects, and are taking on the role of catalysing change across the wider university. In these institutes Māori rituals preface all meetings, specific educational programs have been redesigned with balanced cultural foundations etc. In some Australian universities too, the notion of allyship, being the supporting or lead partner in research, in transforming education, in advocacy, on challenging assumptions around many aspects of university structures and behaviours etc, is taking shape. Respondents note the relief brought in ‘not being the only voice in the room’, ‘not always having to speak up’ from these forms of allyship.

The opportunity is for equity to be at the core of all leadership and management programs, and in induction training for all new staff so mindset, behaviour, culture and system shifts start to gain traction to build safer, more equitable workplaces for all people.

It is felt that working to support Indigenous leaderships would also encourage engagement with other inclusive leadership practices that currently go unrecognised and therefore remain under supported. This need seems to be less pronounced in New Zealand than in Australia but there is still work to be done.

Whilst the focus has been on supporting Indigenous leadership and systemic change, the approach is equally relevant to gender equity, allyship for more feminised leadership and for all other under-represented groups and peoples.

Governance cultures and governing bodies

Somewhat outside scope of this report, but nonetheless, essential to mention, are the influential structures that affect how leadership and management are performed and held to account and therefore workplace culture, i.e., the governance bodies of Australian and NZ universities. Respondents felt a tendency to recruit more governors from industry backgrounds with a focus on the corporate aspects of the university has mixed impacts – more scrutiny and not enough focus on strategy, and a lack of up to date understanding of the modern HE environment were two such reflections. Our respondents also note the lack of diversity in governing bodies composition and within this, the lack of equality for different voices to bring their different views and expertise. A review and updating of governing bodies and their relation to the executive was recommended for both the organisational and academic health of institutions. Better understanding of how governance works and the role of all staff, specifically leaders and managers in working with governing bodies and in creating good governance cultures would also reap rewards.

7 Recommendations for leadership and management development for individuals – capabilities and practices

This section details the requests and recommendations from respondents for professional development for current and future leadership and management in our universities.

These are organised as follows:

- G1. What does leadership and management development look like? (infrastructure and formats)
- G2. Who for? Career points, tipping points (target audiences)
- G3. Specific leadership and management development areas (content).

G1. What does leadership and management development look like? (infrastructure and formats)

As noted, there is a need and desire for leadership and management development where the ad hoc and unequitable nature of current offers is reshaped and extended through more accessible, joined up, scalable and transferable development opportunities and pathways.

Leadership and management frameworks: it is suggested that HEIs map the leadership and management practices (and other qualities) expected for each role. HEIs to also provide appropriate metrics and indicate the range of evidence that could be used by role holders and applicants to show these practices in action. This would help staff:

- a) identify the practices they are already using as leadership
- b) allow reframing of self-identity – thinking of themselves as leaders
- c) self-audit for practices in use and those missing for current and future roles.

A framework enables career planning and performance development.

Leadership and management frameworked programs – a holistic approach

Establish a framework that enables staff to record and map leadership and management development activities together to show progress, to show how the collection of activities adds up to single 'whole' and how the parts interconnect. There is no suggestion that there are or should be predetermined routes for development. However, a similar approach to that of the Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education was suggested i.e., in that participants gather types of development, types of content etc, and present these in a single, growing portfolio. Other sectors have similar approaches to professional development whereby points can be accrued through a variety of routes allowing tailored progress towards different goals.

Career planning/succession: linked to the above is the creation of an expectation and infrastructure around career planning (the individual perspective) or succession (the organisational perspective). Many have noted the lack of leadership pipelining activity and see this as a gap.

Evaluation rigour and return on investment: if formal leadership and management development is offered it must be accompanied by evaluation that looks at the program impact to the individual, to their team and to the organisation. Is the program a good return on investment (ROI)? If so, how?

ROI could also be articulated clearly in the descriptions of leadership and management development programmes. This will enable and equip staff to advocate more effectively for their own and their team's professional development and ensure that such development is aligned to organisational priorities.

Learner mindset (leader-as-learner): more abstract but equally important infrastructure is the development of a culture where it is acceptable to be seen to be learning in a leader role. Learning to be leader-as-learner, especially for senior professionals and academics who are experts in their domains, is often a significant and challenging step. Attempting this within a supportive culture may reduce any perceived personal-professional risk (in being seen 'not to know') to seek or engage with development.

Safe places for learning and development: universities need to feel like, or at least have within them, safe spaces for staff to experiment, to try out new practices and roles and to restore confidence and self-esteem away from the scrutiny of leader positions. By safe we mean culturally safe (e.g., not the only person of colour in the room; e.g., feeling accepted-respected and belonging), psychologically safe (enabled, having voice, empowered to choose, act, fail and be).

Acting roles: opportunities to test, try and stretch oneself in leadership roles, with the opportunity to fail and to be encouraged to try and fail. Opportunities to find out about one's aptitude, appetite and attitude towards leading and managing – and to choose to not lead or lead as a result. These opportunities might come in the form of acting roles, project leadership and leadership of other temporary structures.

Leadership and management development on the job: mentoring, coaching, sponsorship, reflection and feedback

Opportunities to step out of the 'doing' of a role into reflecting on, reviewing and reimagining one's own performance, behaviours, successes and growth are seen as essential, high-impact and low-cost (financial/time) leadership and management development. Many cite the role of mentors and coaches in their professional development, although more sponsorship would be welcomed. The role of peers and managers in reflection and feedback/feedforward is important not just for individuals but for developing relational leadership and other collaborative qualities.

Project team leadership opportunities:

As mentioned above, the chance to try and test one's leadership through project work (leading temporary organisations) is highly valued.

Leading and being part of project teams is even more valuable when these project teams span boundaries of expertise, of background and perspective providing opportunities for growth in knowledge and skills and for taking on new perspectives. Respondents note the impact of national and international project involvement on their careers. These provided opportunities to build strong networks and to be seen/stand-out at the national level and many other benefits. They would like more opportunities to lead cross-boundary project teams.

Suggested leadership and management development project formations:

- + Cross-institute – increasing collaboration across expertise silos and teams
- + Cross-sector – connections between universities for whole sector impact and visibility
- + Across-sectors – improving flexibility and innovation; building business and growth mindsets
- + Cross-border – building cultural flexibility; extending horizons and influence

Networks and peer groups:

Networks, groups and other collective peer formations have a number of benefits for developing leadership and management and were strongly advocated by our respondents. The benefits include:

- + Being a safe space, being with 'people like me', reducing isolation
- + Platforms to grow individual and group expertise, to support quality standards (communities of practice)
- + Builds confidence to lead differently
- + Builds know-how and advocacy on how to lead into the system, to influence systemic and structural change
- + Having a voice at the table; creating 'new tables'

G2. Where, when and for whom could leadership and management development efforts be prioritised? Career points, tipping points and target audiences

Given that resources are limited and to address existing inequities in provision and opportunities, respondents were asked to identify particular career tipping points and particular target populations where a leadership and management development intervention may be particularly impactful for individuals, organisations and the sector more widely.

Identify what leadership means at all levels: reiterating points noted above, enabling staff to perceive themselves as leaders and identify the leadership they are already practising in their existing roles whatever these are, would be a relatively simple and highly impactful leadership and management development intervention.

At induction: onboarding new staff provides a built-in opportunity to raise awareness of leadership practices, attributes, values and opportunities for staff at all levels and in all roles, including how different leadership practices are recognised and valued. Specifically, to growing understanding of Indigenous ways and practices of leading and managing to enable better allyship, sharing of cultural loads and a broadening of the leadership and management practices of all staff.

For academics the following transition points were identified (some are overlapping)

- + to Course Leader
- + to Programme Leader
- + to Head of School
- + to Dean
- + level C to D (Senior Lecturer/Researcher to Associate Professor)

For those academics following the pathway to Fellowship through Advance HE's Professional Standards Framework, there is a plateau at Senior Fellow (SF) level – staff often remain at SF for many years, it spans many role changes. The jump to Principal Fellow may be a long time coming or not at all, and after a short while at SF, staff note a dropping off in motivation and drivers to continue their development. What is recommended is a leadership development band for SFs that supports them in developing and evidencing ongoing leadership growth and expansion. This could be achieved by some enhancement to Senior Fellowship, or alternatively, an additional leadership focussed recognition for these staff which may emerge from Advance HE's ongoing work on a HE Global Leadership Survey and Framework.

One respondent noted the need for leadership and management development, specifically opportunities to test and try leadership, at any point in an academic's career when they are facing the **choice of leaving their research behind** in order to create impact through leadership instead.

For **professional staff** the junctures were less clear cut, but any transition to greater responsibility and accountability in leading people merits support. As noted, creating opportunities to keep extending skills and practice for those at the top of the career pathway is essential for retention and innovation.

A key area for development with existing leadership is with the **Executive Level or SLT** around building better team working. Respondents note that SLT members tend to operate separately and lack a common focus which leads to reduced impact and performance that, in turn, has a trickle-down effect across the university. Therefore, leadership and management development that focuses on:

- + Building stronger, more effective and collaborative senior leadership teams/executive teams – relational leadership
- + Enabling Senior Leaders to lead across the enterprise (not just in their silo) – relational leadership
- + Enabling Senior Leaders to lead upwards and outwards to the governing bodies, with stakeholders and into the wider political-regulatory arena
- + Enabling Senior Leaders to build more effective teams to distribute and delegate leadership
- + Enabling Senior Leaders to survive, thrive and then transform dysfunctional teams they land in, especially for first postings at this level.

Staff working on **promotion panels** were identified for leadership and management development, specifically to build capabilities in recognising leadership and the potential for leadership in promotion candidates.

Governing bodies were identified as capstones on leadership and management within the university. It was suggested these would benefit from leadership and management development around the following themes: HE sector trends, challenges and opportunities, national and international; on HE essentials – the shape of HE and HEIs today; on Indigenous leadership.

G3. Specific leadership and management development content

The following capability areas were highlighted by respondents. They are organised around the target audience following the three groupings of need identified in section D above (universal, for academic-background, for professional-background staff). The rationale for grouping them in this way is to build common language and basic skills in one another domain's expertise areas, in order to aid collaboration and organisational sustainability and prosperity and to support healthier working environments and therefore wellbeing.

Universal – for all aspirant and current leadership and management

- + Skills for stepping up, speaking out – having better challenging-conversations, getting into dialogue
 - Difficultating (as referenced by Boal, 2000) – the skills of facilitating conversations about the difficult topics we usually choose to keep hidden
 - Being accountable and holding to account
 - Better listening

- + Good governance cultures
- + Collaboration – building and being in leadership teams
- + Leading teams
- + How to stop doing redundant things: from additive to substitutive leadership and management
- + Learning to fail
- + Leading with strategic clarity – being able to communicate and narrate the big stories and priorities
- + Leadership practices – choices, flexibility and adapting,
 - recognising and evidencing our own leadership in action
 - expanding, experimenting with doing leadership differently (including with Indigenous ways)
 - leading with values, with equity and inclusion at the core
- + Influencing outwards and upwards
- + Universities as part of communities – civic leadership, partnership and allyship
- + Reflecting in/on daily practice
- + Leading to empower others to lead and grow
- + The higher education big picture – global and national trends and themes
- + National policy, regulatory and financial operating contexts.

For those from academic backgrounds

- + Financial acumen – reading and understanding financial reports and funding flows
- + Data literacy – how to read, interrogate and utilise big data, multiple streams etc
- + The business of education – understanding what we do through a business lens
- + Risk – identification, management and mitigation.

For those from professional services backgrounds

- + Navigating the HEI and operating environment
- + The student experience – the academic aspects
- + Understanding the impact of financial and policy shifts on education (curriculum sustainability etc)
- + Creating and communicating KPIs and other performance metrics.

Who leads on leadership and management development?

Australia: whilst there are national bodies with clear authority to drive specific leadership and management knowledge areas such as Australia's SAGE on gender, National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Consortium (NATSIHEC) on Indigenous equity respondents felt there is a gap for a national lead on leadership and management development. For example, they felt UA's role was focused on lobbying and advocacy. Some suggest there is a wider workforce development role to play nationally.

New Zealand: Universities New Zealand currently support women in leadership but not leadership more widely.

Given the reluctance of universities to allow staff to join leadership and management development run by other universities in the sector, some felt an external agency would have a role to play in offering open programmes, particularly if these are offered to international audiences too.

Summary

The conversations, set against the literature reviewed, show a need and appetite for professional development of individuals and teams for more diverse and enabled university leadership and management. To attract, engage and enable the breadth and depth of talent for leading and managing modern, complex organisations with their unique role in society, a fresh look at the promotion and other structural-systemic functions is required. Unfortunately, neither of these requests are radical or new. However, the need to address them appears more urgent as we live with the socio-emotional and financial consequences of the pandemic and its management – in part as a result of this heightened challenge, and partly in consideration of recent socio-political and cultural shifts (at least in Australia) the opportunity to respond with new leadership and management development provision and to remove barriers to progression for people with talent and potential remains open.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: What we will notice when leadership and management is making an impact, as cited by respondents



Appendix 2: Examples of leadership and management development providers and programs cited by respondents

- + CDC (AICD)
- + Top Management Program (Advance HE)
- + Oxford university – Instead Leadership intensives
- + Senior women in leadership (UA offer)
- + Beyond Black and White (equity)
- + Wattle (women in leadership)
- + Jawun (indigenous leadership exchange immersive)
- + Ethos leadership
- + PSF Fellowship (Advance HE)
- + Te Manahua NZUWiL (Women in Leadership by Universities NZ)
- + ATEM <https://www.atem.org.au/>
- + CAULLT <https://www.caullt.edu.au/>
- + HERDSA Fellowship scheme
- + Melbourne Uni CSHE <https://melbourne-cshe.unimelb.edu.au/pd/leadership-and-management>
- + Networks of discipline leads – eg Australian Council of Deans of Science etc
- + Australian Council of Deans of Research



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