

Project 5: Youth Forums & Extension Activities with Youth

Past and present Fellows and Emerging Leaders are committed to undertaking joint projects that will enhance the future of Victoria's Indigenous youth.

The goal of the Fellowship is to create opportunities that will inspire young people to consider themselves for a leadership role in any field.

In 2007, a Fellow and two Emerging Leaders travelled to Vancouver, Canada with three Indigenous youth they were mentoring, as well as three non-Indigenous organisation partners.

The purpose of the trip was to explore issues such as, Indigenous leadership, the challenges faced by Indigenous women in urban areas, men's health, youth-related problems, families/parenting, community capacity building, economic development, employment pathways, educations, sports and recreation, and human rights.

In late 2010, the Fellowship with the support of two organisation partners conducted the first Leadership Forum for young Indigenous people aged 16-24. The workshop - titled "*Who Says You're Too Young To Lead?*" - was held in Melbourne and saw people from across Victoria come together to explore and discuss leadership.

Participants were given the opportunity to hear from established and Emerging Leaders from the Fellowship for Indigenous Leadership program, and experience some of the different ways Fellowship recipients think about, develop and use their leadership skills. Additionally, there were plenty of opportunities for young people to share their views on the issues presented.

It was identified from the 2010 Forum that there should be more opportunities to get together, share ideas and interact with established leaders, and if possible make the Forums regionally-based.

Quote from a Participant: "In my community, there are a number of leaders who work hard to influence positive change for Indigenous people in Victoria. They work in a number of different community and government organisations to create better outcomes for Indigenous families. I regard them as my leaders and I look to them for inspiration."

As future community leaders, it is vital that Indigenous youth acknowledge their cultural heritage and establish pride in their cultural identity. By hearing and understanding the efforts of past Indigenous leaders and the struggles they faced, this generation will understand what it means to be a young Indigenous person in today's society and why leadership is essential to community strengthening.

We are continuing to work with the Koorie Youth Council (previously VIYAC), Indigenous Leadership Network Victoria, Leadership Victoria and other organisations, and hope to build on the relationships we have already established.

The Fellowship would like to provide Indigenous youth with the opportunity to attend forums and workshops on an annual basis, and to include past participants as possible future leaders at the workshops and forums.

Grant per Youth Forum: \$13,000

The Fellowship has Tax Deductible status provided by its relationship with Australian Communities Foundation & the Brotherhood of St Laurence

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