

What are the main benefits of participating in the Northern Mallee Leaders Program (NMLP)?

There are many reasons why people are attracted to this program and they always gain far more than they ever anticipate.

NMLP is designed to assist anyone involved in their local community, industry or region to:

- Improve their effectiveness in current roles and/or take on a leadership role.
- Increase their skills and confidence.
- Increase their awareness of local and regional issues and the challenges and opportunities faced by their community.
- Increase their tolerance and understanding of various community sectors.
- Access to an influential network of community leaders and resources across the region.

Learning will take many forms - experiential, theoretical, reflective and observational. Participants will undertake a group project, speak publicly, discuss privately, question and probe each other and guests on leadership, what it is and the impact it has on themselves and their communities. Participants will be challenged and rewarded with new insights, broadening perspectives, new experiences and many opportunities.

Is the NMLP a management course?

No, NMLP is not an accredited management training program. It is a program based on experiential learning about community leadership, and community capacity and resilience building principles. Learning occurs through existing leaders imparting their knowledge and experience of local and regional issues and their leadership experience, and connections. As participants are chosen for their diversity and the contribution they are making within the community, learning from each other is enhanced. The program is a hands-on leadership experience but also covers self-reflection concepts, leadership styles and skills required to be an effective leader through workshops, discussions and study tours. Whilst some management principals and theories common to leadership in both a business and community context might be apparent, the focus of this program is community and leadership in a community context, as opposed to a business or management context.

What is the commitment to the program?

The program year involves a total of 25 program days over a ten-month period (February to November).

The opening and closing weekend retreats plus Melbourne and Canberra study trips are compulsory. Participants are required to attend an 80% minimum of non-compulsory program days, complete all

evaluation requirements (surveys after every program day and trip) and undertake a community project in order to graduate.

Generally, program days run between 7.00am and 6.00pm. Evening sessions are organised in conjunction with overnight stays and study trips as well as single-program days where specified. Overnight stays require participants to share accommodation and this sometimes may include camping and/or bunk style sleeping arrangements. Individual rooms may be made available at participants own cost, such arrangements will need to be discussed with the Program Manager.

It is the participants' responsibility to get themselves to the program day venues by the start time and they are required to stay until the conclusion of the program day. Combined with travel, this can sometimes involve long days and it is recommended that participants car pool wherever possible and consider overnight accommodation.

Where individuals decide to travel up a night before the program to assist with the long days, it is their responsibility to cover any costs associated. *****N.B. Canberra and Melbourne travel and shared accommodation are provided as part of the program.***

When will I know the final dates for the 2020 Program Calendar?

Draft dates will be supplied when applications open and the final** program will be distributed at the 2020 Launch in February.

*****Each year, the dates of the Melbourne and Canberra Study Trips are dependent upon the confirmation of the Parliamentary Sitting Dates.***

What time is required between program days?

There is a commitment for participants to engage in activity required between program days. This may involve some research on topics and speakers, completing the evaluation/reflection and other small leadership activities.

To enhance the learning experiences of the program, participants will be required to be involved in the running of each program day as part of a duty team (made up of 3-4 people). Duty team responsibilities include introducing and thanking speakers, running reflection activities, scribing and taking photos and writing media releases to help promote the participants and program. Participants will be involved in a duty team 3-4 times during the program year and on these occasions more work will be required between days.

How much does the program cost?

NMLP operates on the generosity of sponsors, including funding support from the Victorian State Government and also through program fees provided by employers, organisations and individuals.

The fee to participate in the NMLP involves a participation fee and a program fee which are determined by whether the participant is being supported/funded by their employer, a charitable not-for-profit or themselves. Each participant is required to pay a participation fee of \$275 (incl. GST) to confirm their commitment to the NMLP. The program fee for 2020 is \$1815 (incl. GST) for those participants being supported by a Community Charity or Not-For-Profit or if they are self-funded. For participants being

supported by their Corporate Organisation (employer), the fee is \$3300 (incl. GST). Corporate Organisations funding their employees receive the benefit of being recognised during the year at the Launch, in the Yearbook and at Graduation. All fees are tax deductible.

In return, this investment will provide each participant with a unique learning journey valued in excess of \$10,000. No person should be discouraged from applying to the program for financial reasons. Please discuss any financial concerns with the NML Program Manager or Executive Officer. Payment plans can be negotiated and, where applicable, assistance can also be provided to seek individual funding if required. A small number of scholarship positions are also available.

How are scholarships awarded and what do they provide?

We are fortunate to secure a number of scholarships each year which are designed to support participants who fulfil specific criteria. In the past, scholarships have funded participants with indigenous or CALD backgrounds, those who have a disability or come from an agricultural industry or sector as well as participants who have come from our more remote outlying townships. Local and state-based community groups, philanthropic organisations and government departments have made available several scholarships for the 2020 Program.

We encourage applicants to provide as much information as possible in the application form. Should an applicant be interested in applying for a scholarship, this will be discussed at the interview and further details may be sought to ensure criteria is met. A scholarship will cover the program fee. It will not cover the participant fee, which demonstrates the individual commitment that the applicant is making to the program. Successful applicants will be required to sign a scholarship agreement and may be required to provide written reports to the scholarship provider or attend functions throughout the year.

What is meant by graduation?

The NMLP does not offer accredited training; however, it is considered a great honour and privilege to become a graduate of the program and member of the NML Alumni. To graduate from the NML Program, each participant must attend all the compulsory components of the program and achieve 80% attendance overall.

A graduation ceremony is held at the end of the program year, with each graduate receiving a formal certificate acknowledging their completion of the program. Graduates enter an influential network of Alumni across the Northern Mallee region of north-west Victoria and southern New South Wales. Graduate names are retained on an Alumni database and kept informed of additional opportunities for professional development and community investment.

The reputation of the NMLP has been recognised by both La Trobe University and Federation University with both offering graduates a pathway to complete an MBA. There is also a pathway to RPL the majority of a Cert IV in Leadership and Management at Sunitafe.

What support is offered during the program?

In addition to support from the Program Manager, NML Inc. can provide participants access to a pool of mentors through the NML Alumni, who can offer advice and act as a sounding board for ideas. Fellow participants find that they also support each other during the program year.

What does the community project involve?

As a way of consolidating learnings, participants will be involved in group projects throughout the program. Participants will work together to plan, implement and evaluate a project that is outside the activities and interests of their workplaces.

A framework for group projects will be provided and participants will be taken through a process to select a project to work on for the duration of the program. Projects have been pre-identified and created in partnership with key organisations and have a direct link to community-identified objectives such as priorities identified by Mallee Regional Partnerships. They are designed to create genuine outcomes for the community in addition to providing participants with the opportunity to develop skills in project management, extend networks and provide experience in working within a group to achieve an outcome. Support and guidance is provided.

There is a requirement for participants to write a brief project plan by June and do a presentation to a panel about your project. In addition, at the completion of the group project, participants will be required to write a one-page case study about the project.

Do I need to be able to use the internet and other technology?

Yes, there is a requirement that all participants can gain access to the internet on a regular basis between program days. Email and a closed social media sharing group are used to evaluate the program, share information and update participants between program days. Online resources are used to enrich the learning experience but those without regular internet access are still strongly encouraged to apply.

Who can apply?

For each program intake a balance is sought among participants in terms of gender, cultural diversity, location, private/public, profit/non-profit etc. NML Inc. is committed to selecting candidates from communities across the region and strives for diversity through representation from industries such as primary producers/agriculture as well as business, government and community sectors. Residents or workers from across the Sunraysia region, including Mildura, Wentworth, Robinvale, Ouyen and the Mallee Track, are eligible to apply. No prior learning is required. The NMLP is seeking people who have a commitment to their community, region or industry and a willingness to learn.

How can I apply?

1. Using the interactive Application Form PDF from the NML Inc. website: www.nml.org.au, complete the form and return by email to Program Manager (address noted below).
2. Email program@nml.org.au or call our Executive Officer, Nardia Sheriff on 0429 22 00 69 to have the link sent out. For any issues when emailing the PDF, please contact Nardia as soon as possible.

Please note that employers/business partners (if applicable) are required to approve an applicant's involvement in this program. This ensures that they are aware of the time commitment and are providing participants with support required to complete the program. This will be checked during the assessment process.

Email your completed application to program@nml.org.au.

What happens after the application closing date?

Eligible applicants will be required to attend an interview. The interview is an opportunity to find out more about the program and allow the interview panel to get to know the applicants. Interviews usually last between 30-40 minutes and will take place in November. Not all applicants will be successful, and the decisions are based on an assessment of each applicant using the same criteria. Up to 24 applicants will be sent a letter of acceptance and confirmation documents in mid-December. All documentation must be signed and returned, along with the non-refundable participant fee of \$275 (incl. GST), by a set date, advised at the time of offer, in order to retain the offered place.

For more information please visit www.nml.org.au or contact the Program Manager via email program@nml.org.au or mobile 0429 220 069 .