



**LEADERSHIP**

**2025 Program**

**Authentic &  
Sustainable  
Leadership**

**Student Leadership  
Conference**

**SSAF  
FUNDED**

*Student*  
**LIFE**  
◆ **VICTORIA UNIVERSITY**



# Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Ancestors, Elders and families of the Kulin Nation (Melbourne Campuses), the Eora Nation (Sydney Campus) and the Yulara/Yugarapul and Turrbal Nation (Brisbane Campus) who are the traditional owners of University land. As we share our own knowledge practices within the University may we pay respect to the deep knowledge embedded within the Aboriginal community and recognise their ownership of Country.

We acknowledge that the land on which we meet, learn and share knowledge is a place of age old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal and that the Traditional Owners' living culture and practices have a unique role in the life of this region.

To learn more, please contact the Moondani Balluk Academic Unit on +61 3 9919 2836 or [Moondani.Balluk@vu.edu.au](mailto:Moondani.Balluk@vu.edu.au).



# Welcome

The Student Leadership Conference is Victoria University's flagship student leadership event. This annual one-day event is an opportunity for you to develop your leadership skills and to grow your professional networks by hearing from inspirational keynote speakers, participating in interactive workshops and connecting with peers and community leaders.

Since 2010 the Student Leadership Conference has inspired and empowered VU students just like you to learn more about themselves, cultivate a growth mindset, seek out opportunities, take risks, learn and adapt and take on leadership roles within VU and beyond.

Our theme for this year's conference is **Authentic & Sustainable Leadership**. Join us to:

- ♦ answer why authenticity builds trust within teams
- ♦ explore how having clarity about your values, priorities and preferences enables you to understand yourself and your relationships with others
- ♦ learn why sustainable leaders are crucial for guiding organisations towards responsible and ethical practices that benefit not only the organisation, but also society and the planet.

This year's conference will explore leadership practices that put people first, and empower you to empower others.

Victoria University strives to support our students to shape not only their own futures but also the wider world in which they live. We have a deep and unwavering commitment to inclusion, respectful relationships and diversity. VU is a place where everyone is supported to realise their potential and aspirations.

Our 2025 Student Leadership Conference will help you to realise your leadership potential. There will be occasions to listen, reflect and learn by doing, as well as network, make friends and get outside your comfort zone.



**Michelle Gillespie**  
Chief Student Officer



# Order of proceedings

Time	Program Component	Presenter
8.30AM	<b>Registration &amp; Breakfast</b>	
9.30AM	<b>Acknowledgement of Country &amp; Welcome</b>	<b>Narmada Makewita</b> Student Leadership Assistant, Student Life & Leadership  <b>Saman Bakhtawar</b> Student Leadership Assistant, Student Life & Leadership
9.40AM	<b>Networking Session</b>	
10:15AM	<b>Morning Workshop Session</b> (choose one)	
	<b>‘Adaptive Leadership: Everything you need to be a high performing leader in 2025’</b>	<b>Jahin Tanvir</b> CEO, Australian School of Entrepreneurship
	<b>‘Mindset for Sustainability’</b>	<b>Anita van Rooyen</b> Chief of Awesomeness, Student Confidence
	<b>‘The Power of Knowing Yourself’</b>	<b>Sarah Dinsmore</b> PEXA - Head of Group Customer Experience
11.50PM	<b>Lunch</b>  LinkedIn photo booth	

*Order of proceedings continued on page 2.*

Time	Program Component	Presenter
1.20PM	<b>Afternoon Workshop Sessions</b> (choose one)	
	<b>‘The Authentic Leader’</b>	<b>Anita van Rooyen</b> Chief Awesomeness, Student Confidence
	<b>Leading Through Difficult Conversations’</b>	<b>Joe Bakhmoutski</b> Author, Podcaster & Health Activist
	<b>‘How Female Friendships Foster Resilience’</b>	<b>Shelbey Thomas</b> Provisional Psychologist, Software Developer, Neurotech & AI Enthusiast
2.50PM	<b>Break</b>	
3.00PM	<b>Closing Keynote</b> ‘Leading the Rollie Way: Authenticity, Growth & Ownership’	<b>Vince Lebon</b> Founder, CEO and Designer, Rollie Nation Shoes
4.00PM	<b>Closing Remarks &amp; Thank You</b>	
4.20PM	<b>Post Conference Networking Event</b> Music, drinks, canapés & photo booth	
5.30PM	<b>Event Concludes</b>	

# Your MCs



## **Narmada Makewita**

*(she/her)*

**Student Leadership  
Assistant, Student Life &  
Leadership**

Meet Narmada, one of the Leadership Assistants for 2025 at Victoria University! She's an international student from Sri Lanka—a beautiful island known for its stunning beaches, vibrant culture, and delicious food. Narmada is currently pursuing a Master's in Project Management and learning how to manage life just as much as projects!

As a Leadership Assistant, she's excited to inspire and support fellow students in their personal growth, help them unlock their leadership potential, and contribute to shaping future leaders at VU. She's all about making this year exciting, memorable, and full of growth.

She looks forward to meeting and connecting with fellow students throughout the year.



## **Saman Bakhtawar**

*(she/her)*

**Student Leadership  
Assistant, Student Life &  
Leadership**

Saman Bakhtawar hails from the vibrant country of Pakistan and is currently pursuing a master's in education at Victoria University. She holds an academic portfolio that includes an MBA, a master's in international relations, and a master's in development studies. This diverse background gives her an interdisciplinary perspective on education and leadership, grounded in global systems, strategic management, and social equity.

She has extensive experience in project management and stakeholder engagement through inclusive and impactful programs. An Australia Awards alumna, she is also an active member of their Women in Leadership (WiL) network. In her current role, Saman contributes to the planning and execution of Victoria University's leadership program. She is passionate about making a positive impact by providing enriching experiences that support students in developing the confidence and skills needed to become capable leaders.

# Morning Workshops

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## **Jahin Tanvir** (*he/him*) CEO, Australian School of Entrepreneurship

Jahin Tanvir is the CEO of the Australian School of Entrepreneurship, Australia's largest soft skills training provider. Jahin is a 3-time TEDx speaker, board director, and was named on the 40 under 40 Most Influential Asian-Australians for 2022, at the age of 21.



As an award-winning advocate for young people, and diversity and inclusion, Jahin was named a 2022 Young Australian of the Year finalist and was the 2021 Young Canberra Citizen of the Year in Individual Community Service. He was born in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and moved to Australia in 2003.

[jahintanvir.com](http://jahintanvir.com)



[linkedin.com/in/jahintanvir](https://linkedin.com/in/jahintanvir)

## **Workshop**

### **‘Adaptive Leadership: Everything you need to be a high performing leader in 2025’**

Forget boring leadership lectures! This is the real deal. In this energising, hands-on workshop, you will learn what it takes to lead in 2025 and beyond from one of Australia's youngest CEOs: a Gen Z leader who's been there, done that, and is helping thousands of young people do the same. We will dive into how to stay calm under pressure, lead through uncertainty, and bring people together with purpose. Whether you are managing a group project, leading a student club, or planning your future career, this session will give you practical tools, real talk, and the confidence to lead with impact.

# Anita van Rooyen *(she/her)*

## Chief of Awesomeness, Student Confidence

Anita van Rooyen is the Founder and Chief of Awesomeness at Student Confidence. Anita used to be the shyest person in the universe... Scared to talk or be seen, her confidence was at level zero. Over time she learned, created and tried all kinds of tools to boost her self-esteem.

Now as a human behaviour expert and Confidence Coach, Anita has helped more than 15,000 young people build lasting confidence, using innovative Australian Government best practice tools that truly work, so that they can make better decisions for themselves about their study, job, happiness, contentment and even life itself.

Anita is also a proud VU Alum and a 2023 finalist in the VU Alumni Awards (Professional Achievement Award).



## Workshop

### ‘Mindset for Sustainability’

Based on the Inner Development Goals (Being, Thinking, Relating, Collaborating and Acting) this interactive session provides an overview of the IDGs and how they relate to leadership. Participants will explore real, practical ways that they can authentically build these vital 21st century skills.

**Sarah Dinsmore** *(she/her)*  
PEXA  
Head of Group Customer Experience

Sarah Dinsmore is a coach, facilitator, and strategist passionate about cultivating authentic, sustainable leadership. With over a decade of experience in leadership, Sarah partners with individuals and organisations to help leaders grow from the inside out — starting with self-awareness and evolving into action rooted in purpose.

Her work focuses on helping people navigate career transitions, define their values, and lead with greater clarity and confidence.

She has worked across industries, countries, and sectors, guiding everyone from emerging leaders to senior executives through transformational growth. Whether one-on-one or with large teams, Sarah creates safe, energizing spaces where leaders can explore who they are and how they want to show up.

Beyond her professional work, Sarah is a baker with five very sweet furry family members.



# Workshop

## ‘The Power of Knowing Yourself’

In a time when external pressures often shape our decisions and leadership personas, authenticity becomes a radical—and necessary—act. Knowing yourself deeply empowers you to lead with clarity, purpose, and resilience. It allows you to stay grounded in your values while navigating uncertainty, complexity, and change.

Sustainable leadership starts from within. In The Power of Knowing Yourself, participants will embark on a reflective journey to uncover the roots of their leadership style—examining personal history, core values, and innate strengths. Through guided exercises and intentional conversation, this session offers space to pause, look inward, and connect the dots between who you are and how you lead.

Come ready to reflect, connect, and uncover the unique leadership potential that comes from embracing who you truly are.

PEXA and VU have a Major Alliance partnership in place and work together to support VU students to graduate job-ready, with digital skills for their future careers. In turn, the partnership helps PEXA to grow sustainable talent pathways and support the learning and development of PEXA staff.

Find out more about the [PEXA partnership](#).

# Afternoon Workshops



# Anita van Rooyen *(she/her)*

## Chief Awesomeness, Student Confidence

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## Workshop

### ‘The Authentic Leader’

We talk about being ‘authentic’, but in a world of fakery, AI and perfectionism what does it actually mean to be fully you as a leader? In this session we’ll uncover practical tools to build your personal leadership authenticity style in all of its real life messiness.

**Joe Bakhmoutski** *(he/him)*  
Author, Podcaster & Health Activist

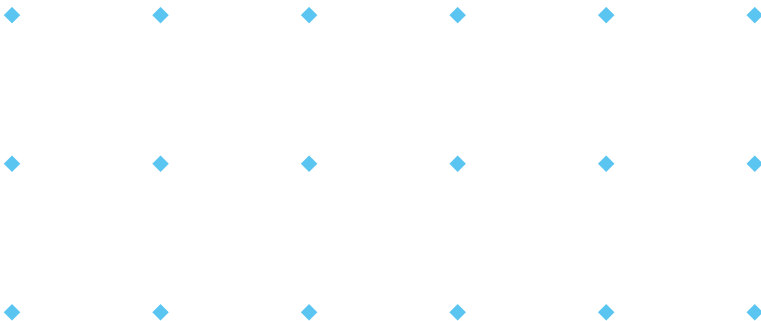
Joe Bakhmoutski is a passionate advocate for positive change, dedicated to supporting those impacted by trauma through his work as a mental health activist. As the author of *Finding Hope in Times of Uncertainty* and host of the *Power To Be Happy* podcast, Joe inspires others to embrace resilience and joy in the face of life’s challenges. Currently a staff member at Victoria University, Joe is committed to fostering growth, leadership, and well-being within the University community.



**Workshop**

**‘Leading Through Difficult Conversations’**

Difficult conversations are absolutely essential for growth, connection, and integrity in your life. Your identity and your ability to lead is shaped by whether you approach challenges or avoid them. In this session, we’ll explore how to lead through difficult conversations with humility, clarity, trust. You will discover how to apply the skill of leading through difficult conversations with your friends, workmates, and even yourself while being your authentic self and creating positive breakthroughs on the other side of these tough talks.



## **Shelbey Thomas** (*she/her*) Provisional Psychologist, Software Developer, Neurotech & AI Enthusiast

Originally from Texas, USA, Shelbey is a provisional psychologist now based in Australia, bringing a global perspective to the intersection of neurotechnology, artificial intelligence, and mental health. With a background that bridges computer science and psychology, they are passionate about leveraging emerging technologies to support special populations, particularly children and women.

Shelbey has contributed to two World Psychiatry publications under the guidance of Dr. Ron Swatzyna, gaining valuable experience in neuroscience, biomodulation, psychiatric interventions, and technology-driven mental health solutions. Her work is driven by a commitment to evidence-based research, the ability to integrate critical feedback and innovation in mental health care. Furthermore, Shelbey has been invited as a panelist and speaker for various seminars and discussions, sharing insights on childhood trauma and resilience, flourishing in adulthood, and the impact of environmental factors on mental health. Through these engagements, she strived to bridge academic research and real-world application, helping to shape the conversation around mental health, technology, and societal well-being.

Beyond professional and academic pursuits, Shelbey enjoys reading, self care, exploring different cultures, exercising, spending time with family, musicals, singing, and volunteering to support mental health initiatives and underserved communities.



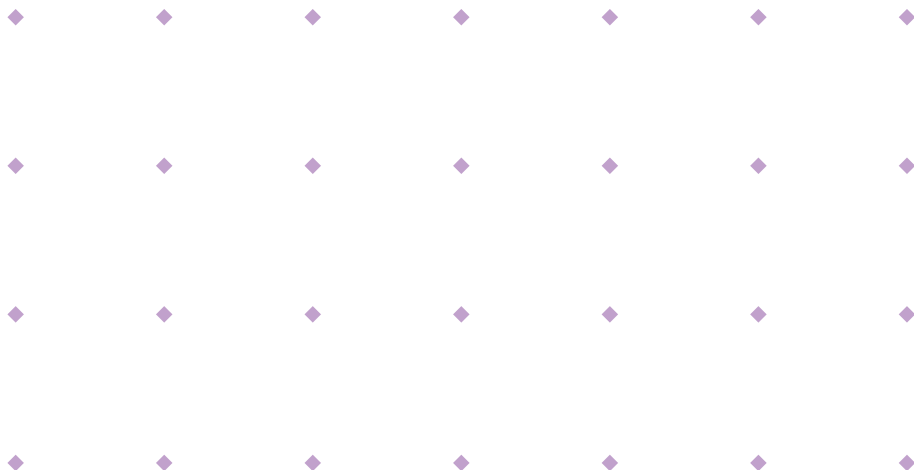
# Workshop

## ‘How Female Friendships Foster Resilience’

Discover the transformative power of authentic connections in this empowering workshop with provisional psychologist Shelby Thomas. This experience is designed to help you build and nurture genuine relationships that inspire growth, trust, and leadership.

Through engaging activities like self-reflection, guided discussions, and interactive networking exercises, you’ll explore how personal values shape meaningful friendships. Learn how supportive female friendships can provide psychological safety, mentorship, and encouragement, helping you combat imposter syndrome and develop resilience for lasting leadership impact.

Walk away with strategies to create sustainable, trust-based friendships and professional networks that foster confidence and community. Join us to celebrate the strength of female connections and take your personal and professional journey to new heights!



# Keynote Presentation



## Vince Lebon *(he/him)*

### Founder, CEO and Designer, Rollie Nation Shoes

Vince is a proud VU Alumni (Advanced Diploma of Arts, Electronic Design & Interactive Media, 2003) with a lifelong dedication to creativity and design collaboration. His impressive portfolio includes work with renowned brands like Adidas, Asics, and Footlocker, where he's known for his innovative thinking and strategic approach to design.

Vince is a visionary entrepreneur, designer, and the creative force behind Rollie Nation — a global footwear brand celebrated for its innovation, comfort, and style. With a career spanning over two decades in design and product development, Vince has built a reputation for challenging industry norms and creating products that not only look good but also feel incredible to wear.

Inspired by a love for travel, culture, and pushing creative boundaries, Vince launched Rollie with a mission to craft the world's lightest and most versatile shoes. His unique approach and design-led mindset has earned him awards and collaborations across industries — all while maintaining a commitment to authenticity, growth, and ownership.

Vince is extremely passionate about sharing insights with the next generation, inspiring others to find their unique voice, and empowering them to turn big dreams into meaningful impact. Whether you're a budding entrepreneur, a creative thinker, or simply curious about where design and business meet, Vince's story offers valuable lessons — and a reminder that the best journeys often begin with a single bold step.



[linkedin.com/in/vincelebon/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/vincelebon/)



[@vince\\_lebon](https://www.instagram.com/vince_lebon) | [@rollienation](https://www.instagram.com/rollienation)



[www.rollienation.com](https://www.rollienation.com)

## Closing Keynote

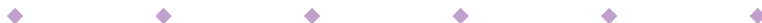
### ‘Leading the Rollie Way: Authenticity, Growth & Ownership’

Join Vince Lebon, Founder, CEO & head designer of Rollie Nation shoes, for this inspiring keynote on what it means to lead with authenticity. Drawing from his experiences leading Rollie, Vince will outline a transformative framework designed to champion growth, collaboration, and accountability, fostering high-performing teams that will thrive both personally and professionally.

He'll highlight the significance of having a clear vision and staying true to your values, explaining how these principles form the cornerstone of building confidence and making a lasting impact. Vince will walk through the key stages of leadership, from nailing execution to empowering others and, finally, shaping a culture where excellence comes naturally. Expect to pick up actionable tips, like the Helicopter Perspective and Skill-Will Framework, to use on your leadership journey.

Vince will challenge traditional approaches to leadership, advocating for a shift from pressure-driven methods to a focus on collaboration and mutual investment in shared goals. He will underline the responsibilities of a leader to model authenticity, uphold high standards, and embrace a growth mindset that prioritises forward-thinking feedback.

This keynote isn't just about ideas—it's about real change. With Vince's experience and passion, you'll leave feeling energised and ready to rethink the way leadership is approached and practised.





# Thank you for joining us!

To find out more about the Student Leadership Program, click the button below or visit **[vu.edu.au/student-leadership](https://vu.edu.au/student-leadership)**

**FIND OUT MORE**

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