



**VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY**

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY & THE WESTERN BULLDOGS COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

2021 REVIEW



Community
FOUNDATION



MAJOR PARTNER



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Victoria University and the Western Bulldogs Community Foundation acknowledge, recognise and respect the Ancestors, Elders, and families of the Boonwurrung, Wadawurrung, and Wurundjeri of the Kulin, who are the Traditional Owners of university land in Victoria, and the Gadigal and Guring-gai of the Eora Nation who are the Traditional Owners of university land in Sydney.



ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP

In 2016, the Western Bulldogs Community Foundation (WBCF) and Victoria University (VU) established an innovative, industry-first partnership. VU Staff and students work alongside the WBCF to build strong and vibrant communities in Victoria's west. The WBCF and VU have been working collaboratively to:

- ◆ deliver programs through student placements and projects;
- ◆ conduct research and program evaluations; and
- ◆ facilitate advocacy for the diverse community of the West.

The WBCF recognises that the West is a diverse community with varying needs. To ensure programs reflect the needs of those within the West, programs have been identified across four key pillars:

- ◆ Health and Wellbeing;
- ◆ Youth Leadership;
- ◆ Diversity and Social Inclusion; and
- ◆ Community Advocacy.

The ongoing partnership facilitates program improvements and evaluates the programs' effectiveness to improve health and social wellbeing outcomes and empower youth. It promotes the values of planetary health at a local level and contributes to reducing the health gap and social disadvantage experienced in Melbourne's West.

During the course of the partnership, the research and evaluation projects have provided evidence that the WBCF is making a profound impact across the region.



More than just a football club, the Western Bulldogs have a long-standing history as the community club of the AFL. The WBCF is the community services arm of the Club and we exist to deliver innovative and engaging community services for individuals and families residing in Victoria's West.

Through the delivery of targeted programs, we provide people in the western suburbs of Melbourne and western region of Victoria with the tools to succeed and thrive within their community. Like our players, our community is courageous, strong, and resilient, but some just need an extra hand to take the next step. That's where we come in. The Club is central to the community of Victoria's West, and the WBCF plays a pivotal role in helping our people reach their full potential and ensuring they are accepted regardless of their gender, ability, cultural background, or faith.

In 2021, much like the year before, the majority of our programs adopted a hybrid model, whereby they were delivered either completely in person, completely online, or a combination of both in between lockdowns. Regardless, we saw strong registration and attendance numbers for all our programs. Sons and Daughters of the West had around 800 participants, our Youth Leadership Project engaged around 100 young people, the Nallei-Jerring program hosted 30 young people who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (aged 13 – 15yrs), Leaders of the Pack worked with a number of multicultural youth (aged 13 – 15yrs), and lastly GOAL connected a significant group of African-Australian youth (aged 13 – 15yrs). In addition, we led a number of other initiatives including multiple webinars that reached 2000+ people, a NAIDOC week event at VU Whitten Oval and the transformation of VU Whitten Oval into a COVID-19 vaccination hub in partnership with VU and others.

Moving into 2022, the WBCF plans to incorporate the digital strategy created in 2020 and further developed in 2021, to optimise and extend our capacity across Victoria's West. We are also very much looking forward to being able to get back into our community to deliver programs and engage with our participants face to face.

Kashif Bouns

General Manager - Community and Government Relations
Western Bulldogs Community Foundation



The pandemic has had a deep and complex impact on the community. With job and income losses, mental health issues on the rise, and general wellbeing on the back burner, many of us have felt the effects as we deal with the ever-changing landscape of COVID-19.

Now more than ever, community engagement programs such as those delivered by the WBCF are paramount. VU has continued working with WBCF – evaluating the programs and supporting their co-design – to make the program delivery relevant for today’s challenges.

Over the course of the year, 93 students participated in placement opportunities across WBCF, some even doing so remotely. They came from exercise science, psychology (undergraduate and postgraduate), community development, youth work, and sports science – this breadth is a fantastic demonstration of VU’s engagement.

Our research students used WBCF participants as their subjects to explore leadership in youth, gender-sensitised community health programs for men and women, masculinity, and men and women’s positive health behaviours.

In addition, with funding support from the Victorian Higher Education State Investment Fund, VU and WBCF are collaborating on a major research initiative titled Promoting Healthy & Active Living: Innovation in Engaging culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) Communities. This project captures insights from men and women from CALD backgrounds to determine barriers and enablers to their participation in the Sons and Daughters of the West health programs.

We continue to be passionate about community advocacy and working with WBCF for the betterment of Melbourne’s West.

I look forward to 2022 and the continued opportunity for our students to partner with WBCF and deliver meaningful programs for the community.

Professor Adam Shoemaker
Vice-Chancellor and President
Victoria University

WBCF PROGRAMS



SONS OF THE WEST (SOTW)

395

ATTENDANCE

395 attended at least 1 session;
316 graduated (80%)

92%

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

At the end of the program,
92% learnt something new in
the education sessions

Compared with the start of SOTW, the group had better scores for the areas of community connection, loneliness, and psychological distress.

“

I LIVE WITH LONG TERM DEPRESSION...
THE CONNECTION TO THE COMMUNITY
WAS MOST IMPORTANT, FEELING PART OF
THE WESTERN BULLDOGS COMMUNITY
AND HAVING THE OPPORTUNITY TO FEEL
INCLUDED MEANS A LOT TO ME...

”



DAUGHTERS OF THE WEST (DOTW)

416

ATTENDANCE

416 attended at least 1 session;
244 graduated (59%)

84%

FORMING CONNECTIONS

84% felt more socially connected
via DOTW during Victoria's
lockdown

96%

EDUCATION

96% know more about different
health services and support
available to them

Compared with the start of DOTW, the group had better scores for the areas of psychological distress, loneliness, connection to community, and confidence for health behaviours.

“

WE COULD ALL CHAT ABOUT WHAT HAD BEEN
DISCUSSED THAT NIGHT AND ALSO HAVE A
CHAT ABOUT ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING.
IT WAS GREAT TO JUST CONNECT WITH
GREAT LADIES THAT WERE ALL THERE FOR
THE SAME PURPOSE

”

“

SUCH AN EXCELLENT PROGRAM. I PREFER
FACE TO FACE BUT IF WE CAN'T IT HAS BEEN
PROVEN ONLINE DOES WORK TOO!

”



GOAL MENTORING PROGRAM

40

ATTENDANCE

40 attended at least 1 session;
average attendance per session
was 14 young people

100%

LEADERSHIP KNOWLEDGE

After GOAL, 100% knew what it
takes to be a leader

72%

CONFIDENCE BUILDING

72% felt more comfortable
signing up to other community
programs

“

I DEVELOPED A LOT OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS,
LEADERSHIP SKILLS, AND LIFE LESSONS

”

“

I HAVE GAINED THE SKILL OF STANDING UP IN FRONT OF
A CROWD AND SHARING IDEAS

”

**GOAL
PROGRAM**



LEADERS OF THE PACK (FEMALE, MARIBYRNONG)

16

ATTENDANCE

16 attended at least 1 session;
11 graduated (69%)

92%

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

92% felt more connected to their
community

100%

GENDER EDUCATION

100% knew more about gender
roles and how to not be limited by
gender

“

THE PROGRAM IMPROVES AND ENCOURAGES
PUBLIC SPEAKING SKILLS, TAKING ACTION, AND
BEING A LEADER IN THE COMMUNITY

”



Compared with the start of the program, the group had better scores
on confidence for leadership.



NALLEI JERRING KOORIE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

30

ATTENDANCE

30 attended at least 1 session;
15 graduated (50%)

100%

PROGRAM INTEREST

100% enjoyed the program

90%

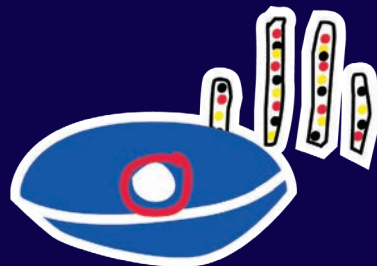
CULTURAL CONNECTION

90% felt a stronger connection to their culture, and closer to their community

“

THE [ELDERS] TALKED ABOUT TOPICS AND ISSUES THAT WE COULD RELATE TO WHICH MADE IT INTERESTING TO LISTEN TO

”



nallei jerring (join and unite)

Bulldogs Koorie Youth Program

YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROJECT

75

ATTENDANCE

75 attended at least 1 session;
66 graduated (88%)

46

SOCIAL IMPACT

46 social impact projects completed

97%

PROGRAM AMBASSADORS

97% found the sessions fun and useful, and would recommend the program

“

NOW, I UNDERSTAND THAT EVERYONE IS A LEADER IN OUR GROUP. IT'S NOT JUST ONE PERSON WHO'S PULLING EVERYONE FORWARD, IT'S EVERYONE WHO'S CONTRIBUTING AND PUTTING IN EQUAL AMOUNTS OF WORK TO CREATE SOMETHING REALLY AMAZING

”





PARTNERSHIP SNAPSHOT

STUDENT WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING 2021

- ◆ 93 VU student placement opportunities provided across the WBCF
- ◆ Students were from Exercise Science, Psychology (undergraduate and post-graduate), and Community Development, Youth Work, and Sports Science.

EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS

In 2020, Brandon King undertook a student placement with the WBCF remotely. He impressed the WBCF team who recommended him when a casual employment opportunity became available within the Club.

“I studied Bachelor of Business: Major in Marketing and Events Management at Victoria University. In my final year of my course, I had a placement with the WBCF. My time spent with the WBCF was an opportunity for exploration in the growth and maturity of the skills developed in my studies.

With a bright and welcoming team there was never a moment in which your mistakes were criticized, and the team were always waiting to assist me when I was unable to fulfil a task. The experience helped me to realise my potential and I was lucky enough to obtain a position within the Western Bulldogs Football Club in the Membership Department. In the role I am still challenged to grow while surrounded and supported by amazing teams and people.”

In addition, a number of VU alumni from the Community Psychology program have been afforded opportunities to complete paid research and evaluation projects with the WBCF in 2021. We wish to recognise the efforts of:

- ◆ Ridhima Tandon
- ◆ Elise Bryant
- ◆ Dr Samuel Keast



RESEARCH

The partnership between the VU and WBCF includes the pursuit of research initiatives as well as contribution to the evaluation of programs detailed above. Students on placement who are registered provisional psychologists undertaking a Master of Applied Psychology (Community) contribute to the evaluation of programs across the Health and Wellbeing and Youth and Diversity streams. Under the supervision of VU academic staff, they collaborate with WBCF program managers and facilitators to design, implement, analyse, and report evaluation findings. Outcomes include health self-efficacy and behaviour, mental health, social connection, community connection, leadership confidence, and gender equality awareness.

Since the commencement of the partnership, we have been developing a program of applied, translational research to not only measure tangible program outcomes, but to understand the factors that contribute to the positive experiences and outcomes of program participants. Research projects are supervised by academic staff from the psychology discipline and undertaken by students at Honours, Masters, and PhD levels.

One example of our current research is a PhD longitudinal study of the SOTW program. This research is investigating sustained positive health behaviour change in men and the ways in which certain aspects of traditional masculinity interact with health self-efficacy to influence both physical and mental health. The dissemination of our research is evident in the publications and theses listed below.

2021 RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

Puxley, S., & Chapin, L. A. (2021). Building youth leadership skills and community awareness: Engagement of rural youth with a community-based leadership program. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 49(5), (1063-1078).

Vassallo, J.S., Shearson, K.M., Dell'Aquila, C., & Sharples, J.M. (2021). Outcomes of a gender-sensitized health behavior program delivered through a professional sports club. *Psychology of Men and Masculinities*, 22(4), 810 – 820.

PUBLICATIONS IN PREPARATION

Vassallo, J., Sharples, J.M., & Shearson, K.M. Cumulative health benefits through a multiyear gender-sensitised community health program for men.

Vassallo, J.S., Shearson, K.M., & Sharples, J.M. Mechanisms of change in a gender-sensitized health intervention: The mediating role of health self-efficacy. *Men and Masculinities*.

Quartarella, G., Morda, R., & Chapin, L. Exploring female adolescents' perspectives and experiences of a youth leadership program.

Chapin, L. & Morda, R. Evaluation of a remote program for youth leadership: YL on-line program.

THESES SUBMITTED

Tandon, R. (2021). On-going engagement in a health promotion program: Benefits and associated outcomes of a safe environment (K. Shearson supervisor).

THESES IN PREPARATION

Earl, S. (2021). Leadership Development in Female Adolescents – Experiences of Leaders of Pack Program (R. Morda supervisor).

Vassallo, J. (Phd Candidate ongoing). The Relationship Between Masculinity and Men's Positive Health Behaviours: The Role of Self-Efficacy as a Mediator in the Context of a Gender-Sensitised Health Program (J. Sharples & K. Shearson supervisors).



VU RISE

With generous funding support of the Victorian State Government, the WBCF and VU are collaborating on a major research initiative that is part of VU RISE (Recover, Innovate, Sustain, Evolve). Our project involves capturing insights from men and women from CALD backgrounds about barriers and enablers to their participation in the SOTW and DOTW health-programs.

We trialled the first of four pilot programs from July-September 2021. It was a tailored version of the DOTW program in which 51 Vietnamese-Australian women took part. Of these, 42 women on average attended each week and 35 were eligible to graduate at the end of the program.

THROUGH
THE DOTW
PILOT PROGRAM

75%
FELT MORE
CONNECTED TO
THE GROUP

85%
LEARNED ABOUT
LOCAL HEALTH
SERVICES

74%
SHARED HEALTH
INFORMATION
WITH OTHERS

“

THIS PROGRAM HELPS ME SEE OTHER PEOPLE,
REDUCE STRESS AND LONELINESS

”



EVENTS AND ADVOCACY

Each year, VU and the WBCF join forces to help better the community of Melbourne's West through advocacy and events. Together we harness the power of our own brands, community personnel, and resources to reach more people and bring about greater change and unity.

Here are some highlights from this year's programs:

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Since 2019, VU and the WBCF have partnered with Maribyrnong City Council to deliver events celebrating International Women's Day.

In one of the first events held between lockdowns, 89 people attended the Human Library event on International Women's Day at VU Whitten Oval. The concept facilitated small-group discussions between participants and invited guests, who were leaders in community activism; sport; research; or their profession, including Professor Vasso Apostolopoulos from VU, Western Bulldogs AFLW player Ash Guest, Cr Sarah Carter from Maribyrnong City Council, Minister for Workplace Safety Ingrid Stitt, Community activist Rahima Ahmed, and disability and LGBTIQ+ rights activist, writer, and educator Jax Jacki Brown.

Through the sharing of stories, the aim was to inspire conversations between young people and leaders in an informal setting, to build a sense of inclusiveness and empowerment.



IFTAR 2021

Iftar is the meal eaten after sunset during the month of Ramadan, the Islamic Holy Month. An event was held at VU Metro West on Tuesday 27 April 2021 titled, Connecting Perspectives (debunking myths through shared stories). The VU Vice-Chancellor Professor Adam Shoemaker welcomed approximately 50 guests to the event, which comprised a short presentation on the significance of fasting and Ramadan followed by short personal reflections from our panel of guest speakers:

- ◆ Associate Professor Abdel Kareem Halabi, Executive Board member, Islamic Council of Victoria
- ◆ Sherene Hassan, Director of Education and Community Engagement, Islamic Museum of Australia
- ◆ Professor Aladin Zayegh, VU
- ◆ Clarissa Teixeira, VU

VU Law School lecturer Abdul Rahman Mohamed Saleh initiated a call to prayer, and participants broke fast together with a delicious feast provided by the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre.



PLAY ON WEBINAR SERIES

Since its launch in 2020, the WBCF has reached in excess of 2000+ via our Play On webinar series.

Topics covered have included *Women in Sport*, which featured Western Bulldogs Football Club President, Kylie Watson-Wheeler and *Mental Health* which featured past player Lin Jong, Director of Mental Health Foundation Australia, Peter Barlis and Western Bulldogs Sport Psychologist Lisa Stevens.

Towards the latter half of 2021, the webinars had a particular focus on *COVID-19 vaccinations and COVID-safe behaviour*, which we knew was important to our local communities.

Other guests on the webinars included Victorian Government COVID-19 Response Commander Jeroen Weimar; Community Engagement Leader Dr Mukesh Haikerwal, IPC Health; WBCF Board member Patricia Anthony; Youth Activating Youth Founder Ahmed Hassan; Acting Chief Health Officer for Department of Health Prof. Ben Cowie; and Consultant Pediatrician Prof. Margie Danchin.

Lets Vax: Protect yourself to Protect the Community

A panel discussion featuring:



Prof. Benjamin Cowie
(Acting Chief Health Officer Dept. of Health)



A/Prof. Margie Danchin
(Immunisation expert & Consultant Pediatrician)



Sobur Dhieu
(Facilitator GOAL Mentoring Program w/ WBCF)



Wallace Butterfield
(Western Bulldogs Inner West Youth Leadership Group)

VACCINATION POP-UP HUB AT VU WHITTEN OVAL

On two separate weekends in October, a pop-up vaccination clinic was held at VU Whitten Oval, in a move to provide increased access and to boost vaccination rates in the West of Melbourne. In a truly collaborative effort VU and the WBCF joined forces with Western Health, the Victorian Department of Health, and Dr Mukesh Haikerwal of IPC Health to deliver the community vaccination pop-up.

In under a week, 2000 appointments were snapped up and the model was then replicated and delivered across the state. So successful was the clinic, it returned three weeks later to deliver second jab doses to the community.



PREVENTING VIOLENCE TOGETHER

Led by Women's Health West (now known as GenWest), Preventing Violence Together (PVT) is the regional partnership and strategy that guides the primary prevention of men's violence against women in the West.

The partnerships coordinates:

- ◆ the implementation of the *Preventing Violence Together 2030: Western Region Strategy to Prevent Violence Against Women* strategy
- ◆ capacity-building activities to strengthen prevention work within community groups, health agencies, local and state government, and other key organisations in Melbourne's West (including the Western Bulldogs and VU).

Both partner representatives collaborated on the Engaging Men working group in 2021. This group acted as a Community of Practice for PVT partners who work with men on violence prevention initiatives across the West of Melbourne, culminating in the 16 Days of Allyship activation during the annual *16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence* campaign.

IT STARTS
WITH
RESPECT



Gender Based Violence
Victoria University says

NO
violence

dexus
JOHN HOLLAND
Leading Enquiries
www.dexus.com.au



Respect



**GENDER-BASED
VIOLENCE,
VU SAYS NO!**



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