

# ESF IMPACT

## newsletter

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### Learning Network Designs New Approach to Leading for Better Mental Health



ESF began to pilot a new [Leading for Better Mental Health](#) program in March. Funded by the State Government through WorkSafe WorkWell the program will see 55 team leaders from 12 Victorian emergency management organisations participate in the pilot over six months.

The [ESF Learning Network](#) collaborated to develop the program informed by widespread evidence and conversations with team leaders from all agencies, which pointed to the need for a new approach to leadership development for the sector. The program is unique because:

- It specifically targets team leaders recognising their impact on the day-to-day wellbeing of workers and volunteers.
- It was codesigned with input from subject matter experts, team leaders and wellbeing managers.
- It brings together staff and volunteers from all corners of the state who range in age from 21-75 years but share similar leadership challenges.
- It brings the agency heads into conversation with participants to discuss cultural and systematic barriers to leading for better mental health.

- Individual coaching, workplace practice and peer reflection groups supplement learning to help participants develop deeper understanding and personal insight as they apply key concepts in the workplace.

The program is expected to deliver individual, agency and sector wide benefit. It will be evaluated by Charles Sturt University in relation to content, delivery, and shift in leadership style amongst participants.

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*better together*



### REACTIONS

I have seen countless leadership development programs, and this program is unique in bringing together: the best experts from different fields, individual assessment, work-based projects, peer-to-peer learning and applying this to workplace reform.

**Professor Russell Roberts, Charles Sturt University**

It is great to be part of this leadership pilot because it connects me to experts who provide content that is realistic and informative, and I am enjoying applying what I am learning on the job.

**Denise Crawford, Ambulance Victoria**



The Learning Network and this pilot have really made a difference to Ambulance Victoria and our people. It enables our people to draw on knowledge and experience from right across the sector rather than just having an AV lens on all we do in the mental health space.

The pilot is showing promising signs of changing the way we develop leaders across the sector to improve mental health outcomes. Our participants are reporting great things to me about the program so far and we look forward to continuing to see these benefits.

**Tony Walker, CEO Ambulance Victoria**

The ESF leadership pilot is unique because it brings employees and volunteers together to learn how to improve their leadership skills and share their experiences, so they really feel valued as one.

**Margaret McCarthy Red Cross and Learning Network member**



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