



**Victorian
Public Sector
Commission**



Video transcript for the participant stories

Participants from the Barring Djinang leadership program talk about their experiences in the program.

[Title: Barring Djinang leadership program – reflections from our participants]

My name is John Patten. I'm a Yorta Yorta and Bundjalung man.

Luke Isaacs, I'm a Wadandi Nyungar saltwater person, that's from the Southwest of WA.

My name is Fatimah Siddique. I'm a proud Torres Strait Islander and Pakistani Woman.

I'm Jay Rossetto.

[Text: What was your overall experience?]

Jay: It's been an amazing place for growth for me to stretch myself and really to explore what it means to actually be First Nations within the VPS.

John: It's been very positive in the opportunity to meet from people who are very capable leaders and development figures, but also to network and connect with other managers, First Peoples' managers across the public service.

Jay: The schedule of learning activities is exceptional. They're well-paced, they're well-structured and the team has been fantastic at communicating the expectation over the next nine months.

[Text: What were your highlights?]

Fatimah: My highlights for the program were probably working in our individual groups and doing a lot of the team building activities.

For me, they were very different to traditional learning setups in a classroom and it really made us work in teams and think about the principles that we were working on.

Luke: Being able to reconnect and connect and make new connections to other First Nations people who are at varying points on their journey been probably the highlight of the program. Taking the time out for myself, to really look at who I am, understand how that fits into the picture of the VPS.

Jay: Highlights would be the people. 100% it's the people. It's the people that I would not have had the opportunity to cross paths with.

But by crossing paths, pathways with them, they've actually increased my sight and my vision on myself and where I can continue to improve and opportunities where I can continue to grow.

[Text: What have you learnt?]

Fatimah: What I've learned the most is that leadership is actually about collaboration. I always thought that you had to lead and you had to drive a lot of the actions yourself, but you have to stop and you have to listen to your team or your, you know, your colleagues and actually bring them along on that journey.

Jay: We have as a culture, 65,000 years worth of stories of learning of leadership. And what that says to me is it highlights some of the opportunities for us to actually bring these learnings into a new sector and create growth.

Luke: The value of how Engoori looks at approaching complex situations through the lens of relation, I think is something that is really powerful. These opportunities don't present very often.

So when they do it just, you know, it's really energising and I think it's a great way of looking at leadership, but then more importantly you know, understanding when something's Aboriginal led, you know, what can be achieved.

[Text: How was the 3-day residential?]

Fatimah: Three day residential was an absolute highlight. Being able to be in a venue that was really connected to country, connected to each other you know, was just, it was amazing.

Jay: To be in and on country really just added to that sense of being in the right place, that sense of being in the right place, feeling grounded and feeling supported within heritage and culture surrounding me in every point and avenue.

John: It's a nurturing environment and that's always a fantastic thing to have when you're trying to build networks and build your own pathways for the future.

Fatimah: By at the end of it, we all, you know, connected and just felt. It just felt probably the most different that I've ever felt, when I left a camp. It was just really culturally safe and culturally sound and I just felt really invigorated.

Jay: I'd never felt more comfortable with a group of people that I had barely just met before. It is a very inclusive space.

[Text: Reflections from Jason, leadership program coordinator]

My name is Jason Cockatoo. I'm a Gungalidda Woppaburra KuKu-Yalanji, Gungalidda man of Far North Queensland.

The public sector can nurture First Nations people's talents by participating in programs, such as the Barring Djinang leadership program. It's about creating a culturally safe environment for people to work in and to learn as well.

A lot of the people that came on the program.

First Nations participants, they felt that they weren't leaders and they felt that they weren't able to become leaders or that they weren't good enough to be leaders.

Whereas what we've found is that they were actually practising Engoori practises, they were actually practising leadership qualities. So I think for our participants to recognise that those Engoori practises are in them and also acknowledge that they are leaders within their own right.

What we do as Aboriginal people, we continually move forward, we continue to support each other and we're out there doing what we need to do to support the Victorian community.

[Text: Your advice for potential applicants?]

John: If you have the opportunity to take part in this program, grasp it, take a hold of it and do it. It's been a fantastic journey so far.

Luke: I would strongly encourage people to, to seriously look at doing the program.

Fatimah: Once you apply, you know you, you feel like you're, you are stepping up as a leader and it's really great experience to be feeling. So I would encourage anyone to take the time to to apply or talk to anyone else that they may know in the program or have previously participated in it. Don't hesitate with this program.

Jay: If you feel a little bit of anxiety and a little bit of uncomfortable. It means it's the right thing to do and it's the right time.

[Text: vp.sc.vic.gov.au/barring-djinang]