



WOMEN OF COLOUR AUSTRALIA

Championing Australia's Women of Colour

MEDIA RELEASE

Women of Colour Australia in partnership with Women's Business, launches Australia's first Executive Leadership Program, developed by and for Women of Colour

Supported by the Victorian Government, WoC ELP is a 7-month program designed to build the capability and confidence of Women of Colour leaders to advance in their careers while improving diversity, equity, and inclusion in Australian institutions.

MELBOURNE, Australia - 1 February 2023: Women of Colour Australia (WoCA), an Australian not-for-profit organisation advocating for the advancement of Women of Colour through tailored education programs, community support initiatives, and advocacy work joined forces with Women's Business, a First Nations owned and led business amplifying Women of Colour in Leadership, to launch Australia's first Executive Leadership Program, developed by and for Women of Colour including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. The program will be delivered in person and online, over seven months from May to December 2023.

Backed by the Victorian Government, Office for Women, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH), WoC ELP is specifically designed for Women of Colour, who currently hold or aspire to hold senior leadership roles in their workplaces. The groundbreaking program, delivered by Women of Colour subject matter experts and thought leaders, offers a culturally and psychologically safe leadership program, including tailored workshops and modules that examine racial and gendered influences, explore adaptive challenges, and help design clear and executable strategies that have the potential to transform people and organisations.

Brenda Gaddi, Founder and Managing Director of WoCA, said, "While the rhetoric for the advancement of women in leadership positions is widespread, there is very little to no support for Women of Colour to break through that concrete ceiling. When Women of Colour participate in existing career development programs, they have to navigate White spaces, have to code switch and they don't feel culturally and psychologically safe to bring their full, authentic self to the program. Through WoC ELP we create an environment where Women of Colour can be fully invested in a program that is specifically designed and delivered by Women of Colour. We want to help Women of Colour step into their power as changemakers and transformational leaders".

WoCA and Women's Business sourced highly-respected subject expert matters and thought leaders, all Women of Colour, to contribute to the design of the program. Some of the facilitators include Tasneem Chopra OAM, Cross-Cultural Consultant and DEI trainer, Winitha Bonney OAM, global DEI expert, and Abiola Ajetomobi, Founding Director of Leading Impact, an Australian-based Equity & Inclusion consulting agency. Participants of the program will also have access to small group coaching, executive mentoring, and support to complete a group adaptive challenge project as well as pre and post-program assessments.



WoC ELP is designed by Women's Business Founder, Kat Henaway who is a descendant of the Mer and Maa peoples of the Torres Strait Islands and Director of Women's Business. Kat has extensive experience in contextualising leadership programs for Indigenous and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse people and has led the design of some of the country's most innovative leadership programs including the award-winning Emerging Indigenous Executive Leadership Program at UNSW and Political Candidate Training for Women of Colour at Politics in Colour.

“At Women's Business, we've seen first-hand how contextualising career leadership programs has been immensely beneficial for Indigenous people and how they are able to give 100% of themselves to the program because they feel safe, seen and heard. With WoC ELP, we are bringing the tried-and-tested approach to Women of Colour because we understand the importance of having representation of Women of Colour in leadership positions and we want to empower Australian corporations to embrace cultural diversity at all levels of their organisations”, said Kat Henaway.

We are accepting applications throughout February. Women of Colour who hold senior management positions in the private, public and community sectors, with a demonstrated and genuine commitment to advancing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and who reside in Victoria, are highly encouraged to apply [here](#).

For more information about WoCA and to donate, click [here](#).

Supporting Quotes

[Natalie Hutchins MP, Minister for Women](#)

“Our record on gender equality leads the nation, and I encourage all culturally diverse women from across the state to apply for this Women of Colour Executive Leadership program.

“Diverse women are ready to lead, they are capable and ambitious. This program presents a real opportunity for businesses to do more than just talk about supporting diversity and inclusion, it's an opportunity to show it.”

About Women of Colour Australia

Founded in 2020, Women of Colour Australia is a non-profit organisation run by Women of Colour for Women of Colour. WoCA aims to champion Australia's Women of Colour through tailored education programs, community support initiatives, and advocacy work.

About Women's Business

Women's Business is a collaboration of women aligned in their passion to amplify and empower Women of Colour in Australia. Women's Business collaborates with Australian organisations and provides strategies to develop programs that respectfully and authentically engage Women of Colour - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander & Culturally and Linguistically Diverse.