

Media Release

The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP

Minister for Education

Minister for Women



Wednesday, 1 February 2023

SUPPORTING MORE WOMEN OF COLOUR IN LEADERSHIP

The Andrews Labor Government is helping more women of colour to reach their leadership aspirations, thanks to a new program.

Minister for Education Natalie Hutchins today encouraged culturally diverse women across the state to apply for the Women of Colour Executive Leadership Program.

The program will support 20 diverse women – including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women – to upskill and navigate the distinct barriers that women of colour face in advancing their careers through workshops, mentoring and coaching over seven months.

It will also help women to complete an individual strategic challenge project and improve their board capabilities.

The Labor Government is investing \$1 million in leadership programs for women – with the Women of Colour Executive Leadership Program one of four initiatives announced in 2022 to help women gain leadership roles and build-more inclusive workplaces.

The program is the first leadership program of its kind in Australia – designed by Women of Colour Australia, with an advisory group of Women of Colour leaders including First Nations leaders from Women’s Business.

Under the program, workplaces of the participants will also contribute a one-off \$10,000 co-payment to help identify ways they can strengthen diversity in the workplace and be more inclusive.

Barriers to women’s leadership are not about lack of ability but the systemic issues – including workplace racial discrimination – that limit women’s leadership progression.

In June 2021, Women of Colour Australia released the findings of its 'Women of Colour in the Australian Workplace' survey, which looked at what was needed to improve women’s experiences in workplaces and boardrooms.

The survey respondents included 543 women – of which seven per cent identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and named having access to executive leadership programs as a key priority to advancing their career.

Applications to join the program are now open until 28 February 2023. The program will run from May.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Women Natalie Hutchins

“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.”