

# Victorian Rural Women's Network Leadership & Mentoring Program

**Mentor Expression of Interest**

**Program Introduction & Overview**

August 2024

**LEADERSHIP  
VICTORIA**

# Victorian Rural Women's Network Leadership & Mentoring Program

## Mentor Expression of Interest

### Call for Mentors



Leadership Victoria have partnered with Agriculture Victoria to deliver the Victorian Rural Women's Network Leadership & Mentoring Program. Delivered over 7 days, the program consists of two 3-day immersive workshops beginning in October 2024, culminating in a Graduation in March 2025.

We are seeking mentors to support the 20 program participants as they navigate their leadership challenge and adaptive leadership journey. To maximise the mentor/mentee relationship, ideal mentor candidates will have expertise in the agricultural sector and have capacity to commit to at least two mentoring sessions, either face to face (where practicable) or online from late October 2024 to March 2025.

#### Responsibilities

- Provide support and guidance to the mentee with their own leadership growth
- Role model and demonstrate positive leadership behaviours
- Provide a safe and non-judgmental environment for the mentee to learn and develop
- Attend and participate in mentor training as required
- Attend essential program days and/or events, such as, graduation
- Participate in mentoring evaluation and debrief sessions (via online survey and/or face-to-face) as required.

#### Mentor Selection

Mentees will be presented with responses to the questions you provide in your Expression of Interest, your bio and your photo and will be asked to nominate their top 3 preferred mentors. Leadership Victoria will support both mentors and mentees for the duration of the program to ensure productive, positive interactions are experienced by all involved.

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## Call for Mentors (continued)

### Selection Criteria

The ideal Leadership Victoria mentor brings wisdom borne of experience. Leadership Victoria values mentors who know when to listen, when to reflect and when to advise.

- Previous leadership and/or mentoring experience (professional or community)
- Interest in developing the leadership capabilities of others
- Experience in the agricultural sector is preferred
- Commitment to enter into a mentoring partnership and to honour the mentoring work plan established with the mentee
- Commitment to uphold the privacy and confidentiality of the mentee
- Respect and consideration for the mentee's growth, development and learning journey
- Ability to maintain appropriate boundaries
- Commitment to role model positive leadership behaviours
- Highly developed communication skills
- Ability to engage respectfully with people from diverse backgrounds and experiences
- Availability and commitment to attend program events, where required (e.g. graduation)

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### Program Context

Despite their contributions, rurally and regionally based women experience poorer economic security than their metro counterparts. They are over-represented in the casual workforce and are consequently more vulnerable to and disproportionately affected by economic shocks and financial pressures, the likes of which were experienced intensively during COVID. Though progress is being made, women still face systemic barriers to leadership and are under-represented in leadership and decision-making bodies (elected, appointed, volunteer or professional positions), and even more so outside our major centers.

As a traditionally male industry, agriculture is no exception. Women have made up approximately a third of agriculture sector workforce for a decade (31%), but they remain proportionally under-represented in leadership roles (27%) and over-represented in support roles (43%), according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The Victorian Rural Women's Network Leadership & Mentoring Program (The Program) aims to support rural and regionally based women working in the agriculture sector to participate in leadership and decision making that benefits the agriculture sector and their local communities. Approximately 20 women from across Victoria will have the opportunity to participate in the program, with costs covered for each participant via support from the Victorian State Government.

The Program is an opportunity to learn from industry leaders, subject matter experts and their peers in a supportive community. As part of the program, we want to provide ongoing mechanisms to support the development and participation of women as leaders and change makers and provide participants with the skills and confidence to influence their sector.

### Program Scope

As a group, participants will:

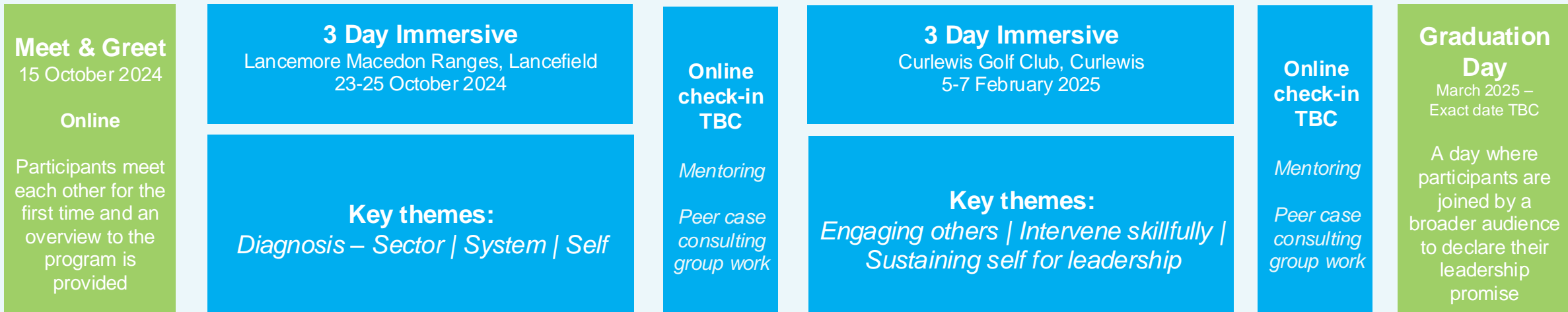
- reflect on effective leadership and the broad characteristics and types of leadership
- interrogate complex issues that both the agriculture sector and local communities must respond to
- consider and interrogate the various barriers that women leaders often face
- understand government and private sector decision-making
- engage in deliberate reflection and strategic thinking
- gain skills in governance, advocacy and communications
- set and pursue goals for their development as leaders

Program participants will form an alumni network following the formal conclusion of their program.

# Victorian Rural Women's Network Leadership & Mentoring Program

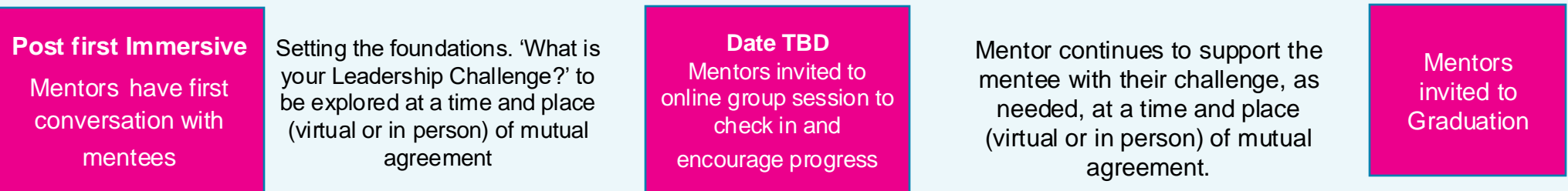
## Mentor Expression of Interest

### Program Structure



In program, participants are placed into **peer groups** to support each other, consider how they can apply what they are learning to their own unique leadership challenge and to hold each other accountable for taking action.

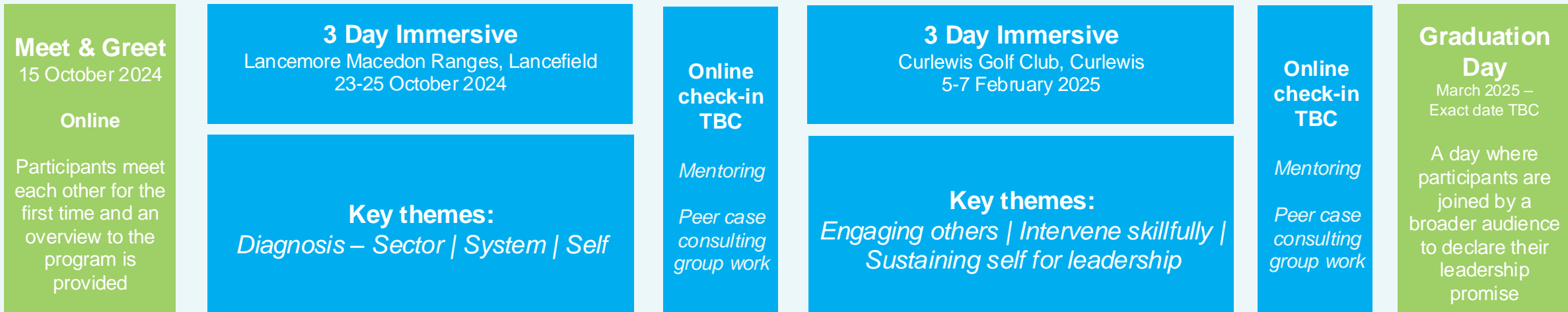
### Mentoring Schedule



# Victorian Rural Women's Network Leadership & Mentoring Program

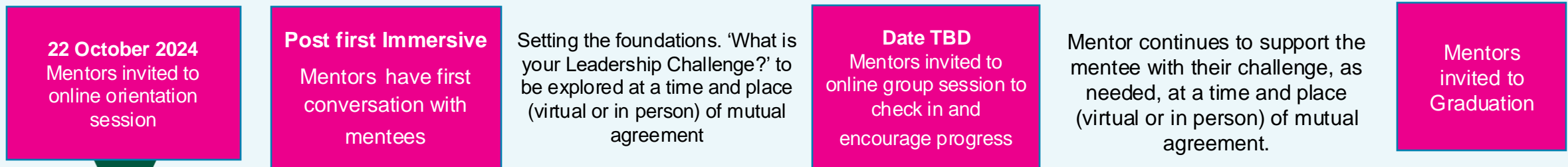
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## Leadership Challenge – an explanation

Throughout the program participants (mentees) will be work on a live leadership challenge / opportunity that they wish to make progress on. This work will involve conducting deep diagnostic work about the nature of the challenge / opportunity and designing small experiments.

The challenge / opportunity could be anything that has posed ongoing concern for participants in their professional or community roles. Appropriate challenge/opportunities may include initiatives designed to advance women in agriculture, an organisational change e.g. organisational restructures, culture issues or staffing issues, an issue impacting a community, a long-standing conflict, advocacy for changes to government policy and dealing with emerging inter-generational differences. The most appropriate choice is a challenge where the participant may make good progress over the course of the program.

The intent of the work on the challenge is to strengthen participant's confidence and competence in leading change through strengthening their skills in problem diagnosis, stakeholder engagement and experimentation.

As their mentor you can help your mentee by:

- talking through their challenge, supporting them to deepen their thinking about the issues and identifying root causes and conflicting perspectives
- encouraging them to take considered actions, reflect on outcomes and learn from experience

An important role of the mentor is to support your mentee to stretch themselves and build their confidence in tackling complex challenges.

As this program is still in a co-design process, if you would like to know anything else about the program design, please contact the Program team at [programs@leadershipvictoria.org](mailto:programs@leadershipvictoria.org). We look forward to receiving your expression of interest for the Victorian Rural Women's Leadership & Mentoring Program.

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## Mentor Expression of Interest

### Timeline



Expressions of interest open	9.00am 13 August 2024
Expressions of interest close	5:00pm 8 September 2024
Successful mentors notified for progression to Mentor nomination	Friday 20 September 2024
Successful program applicants notified by email	Late September 2024 (pending Ministerial approval)
Mentor nomination period open to successful program applicants	30 September – 11 October 2024 (pending receipt of Ministerial approval of successful applicants – this date may change)
Mentor/Mentee matching period	14-17 October 2024 (pending receipt of Ministerial approval of successful applicants – this date may change)
Mentor/Mentee matching introductory emails sent	18 October 2024 (pending receipt of Ministerial approval of successful applicants – this date may change)
Online orientation with Leadership Victoria for successful mentors	22 October 2024
Program activities commence for cohort - Immersive 1 (Retreat style) 3 days in person	23-25 October 2024 (Mentors are not required to attend the immersive workshop)
Mentor/Mentee catch up period	25 October 2024 – early March 2025
Activities commence Immersive 2 (retreat style) 3 days in person	5-7 February 2025 (Mentors are not required to attend the immersive workshop)
Graduation of Program (in person)	Early March 2025 (in person, to coincide with International Women's Day event for DEECA – exact date TBC)

### Register your interest



Register your interest in becoming a mentor for this program via the following link: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VRWN\\_Mentor\\_EOI](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VRWN_Mentor_EOI) or scan the QR code to follow:

