



Australia Awards
Women's Leadership Initiative

Workplace Internships and Professional Development Opportunities Information for Host and Partner Organisations



The *Women's Leadership Initiative* offers Australia Awards emerging leaders from Pacific countries skills development and mentoring to build leadership capability and boost gender equality.

“My placement will be of significant benefit to my professional career. The knowledge that I have gained ... will [assist in] developing agribusiness in Papua New Guinea and the Pacific.”

Lavinia ToVue (Papua New Guinea),
Master of Agribusiness
(University of Queensland), 2018

The *Women's Leadership Initiative* is a five-year, \$5.4 million initiative of the Australian Government promoting women's leadership and building a future generation of women leaders in the Pacific region. It delivers a range of learning, networking and development opportunities to Australia Awards scholars from the Pacific studying at Australian universities and institutions. This helps scholars build their skills, networks and readiness to take on leadership roles in their workplaces, communities and countries.

The *Women's Leadership Initiative* is delivered in three tiers:

- **Learning and networking events (Tier 1)** are held around Australia each year, supplemented by online activities.
- **Leadership and mentoring program (Tier 2)** is offered to up to 35 women scholars each year, and includes a comprehensive program of leadership intensives, coaching, and working with an Australian woman mentor.
- **Workplace internships and professional development opportunities (Tier 3)** in Australia or the Pacific are offered to a select number of leadership and mentoring program participants (Tier 2) each year.

Workplace Internships on the *Women's Leadership Initiative*

The *Women's Leadership Initiative's* workplace internships and professional development stream strengthens linkages between Australia and the Pacific, through mutual respect, knowledge and understanding. Through tailored internships and other activities, participants build leadership and professional skills and forge lasting networks to support them into the future.

Workplace internships are intended to be mutually beneficial and are tailored to meet the needs of the host organisation and the individual participant. Many participants come to the program with significant work experience in their home countries. Host organisations therefore gain practical knowledge and professional insights from future Pacific leaders, as well as have their networks broadened into Pacific environments.

Identifying internship opportunities

Many internships are identified through the existing relationship between a participant and her Australian mentor. Mentors either host the intern at their own workplace or assist in identifying a suitable placement that is in line with the participant's interests and needs.

Placements can take a range of forms, depending on the specific location, interests, and resources of the participant and host organisation. They should have a clear benefit to the participant, the participating organisation and the Pacific region, whilst not taking the place of, or resembling, formal employment. Recent workplace internships and professional development opportunities completed on WLI include:

- A one-month cost-share placement with a national scientific research organisation—the intern worked at the organisation's headquarters and travelled to project sites in Australia and Papua New Guinea to gain in-depth understanding of the daily operations and the context(s) within which the organisation works.
- A semester-long placement with a private secondary school—the intern spent one day a week for a semester working across different sections within the school to develop a broad view of the school's overall operations.
- A three-week full-time placement in a major public hospital—the intern observed day-to-day clinical and operational functions of the hospital's perioperative services department.
- A four-day training course—the participant learned how to investigate complaints of protection, sexual exploitation and abuse and how to improve safeguarding capacity in an organisational setting.

Prospective host organisations are welcome to identify a specific project or opportunity that will benefit both the organisation and a Pacific woman scholar. The *Women's Leadership Initiative* can help the organisation to match suitable participants to these opportunities.

What sort of hosts are needed?

Approximately 70 Pacific women from a range of Pacific countries are participating in the *Women's Leadership Initiative* leadership and mentoring program at any one time. Participants are located around Australia (and in the Pacific) and are experienced and interested in a diverse range of sectors, including politics and diplomacy, agriculture, environment, governance, public policy, finance and accounting, public and clinical health, IT, engineering, national security and defence, education, and community development.

We welcome approaches from a wide range of potential host organisations, including government departments, non-government organisations, research or educational institutions, private sector businesses, peak bodies, or regional agencies, based either in Australia or the Pacific.

Placements may be identified and commenced at any time of year, depending on the nature of the placement, the needs/requirements of the host organisation, and the availability of a suitable participant.

Responsibilities and expectations are confirmed during drafting of the placement proposal and Letter of Agreement. These are finalised and agreed before the placement commences.

What is expected of host organisations?

Host organisations are expected to provide a stimulating and comprehensive internship for the intern. Where possible, we ask that host organisations cost share internships—this is negotiated during the scoping process. At a minimum, host organisations are expected to:

- Work with the intern and *Women's Leadership Initiative* to confirm the specific objectives, activities, timings and cost / resource implications of the placement;
- Provide the necessary equipment and space (computer, phone, desk etc.) to support the intern for the duration of the placement;
- Provide an orientation program and ongoing guidance and supervision for the duration of the placement; and
- Provide formal feedback on the internship and the intern's performance on completion of the placement.

What is expected of participants/interns?

Women's Leadership Initiative interns are expected to:

- Work with the host organisation and the *Women's Leadership Initiative* to confirm the placement's specific objectives, activities, timings and cost / resource implications (Placement Proposal);
- Undertake the internship as agreed in the proposal.
- Adhere to the host organisation's normal working hours, Code of Conduct and other regulations, as specified in the Letter of Agreement.
- On completion of the internship, prepare a placement report for the host organisation and *Women's Leadership Initiative*.

How the *Women's Leadership Initiative* supports the internship

We provides a range of advice and logistical support to internships, as required. This includes:

- Supporting host organisations to scope placements and identify suitable interns;
- Supporting the intern and host organisation to confirm the objectives, activities, timings and cost/resource implications of the placement (Placement Proposal);
- Financial contributions towards internship costs, including travel and living expenses, visa costs and insurances (as applicable); and
- Logistical and other support as required; for example, booking flights and accommodation.

As workplace internships vary widely in scope, cost, location and duration, factors are discussed and negotiated between WLI and potential host organisations before an offer is made to a suitable participant.

Interested or want to know more?

If you or your organisation is interested to host a workplace internship, contact Bebe Beckerman, *Women's Leadership Initiative* Program Manager:



“I wanted to know what it was like working in another cultural setting and I am thankful for the experience because it prepared me for the role I am in now.”

Karen Anawe
(Papua New Guinea), Master
of Environmental Science (University
of Sydney), 2019