



# Annual Report 2021



**McKINNON INSTITUTE  
FOR POLITICAL LEADERSHIP**

A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN



**MONASH**  
University



Susan McKinnon  
Foundation



## John Thwaites *Interim Chair*

Trust is the foundation for a successful democracy.

Public trust in government has been put to the test during the Covid-19 crisis, as governments have had to take extraordinary measures to counteract the pandemic. The quality of political leadership has been brought into sharp focus across the world as leaders battled the multiple challenges of the past two years.

Australian governments have managed the crisis reasonably well and we have had far less deaths per head of population than many comparable countries. Public trust in governments in Australia increased in the first 12 months of the pandemic, which helped us achieve our better outcomes. Countries with lower levels of trust had much more difficulty achieving the behaviour changes necessary to combat the pandemic.

Yet we know that trust in government had been declining in Australia prior to the pandemic. This raises the question whether there will be sufficient public trust to tackle the many long term societal challenges that Australia faces including recovering from the pandemic.

There are many building blocks for public trust in government but competence, integrity and openness in our political leaders are vital. The McKinnon Institute is dedicated to enhancing the skills of our political leaders and thereby building public trust. We do this by providing professional development courses for Members of Parliament that are non-partisan, relevant and practical.

Like all organisations we have had to change our operations this year and largely pivot to on-line. Despite this we were able to deliver our flagship Advanced Political Leadership course to a dedicated cohort of Federal and State members of Parliament who are potential Ministers. We also delivered our Political Leadership 2021 course to a group of State MPs from Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia.

We are fortunate to have developed a faculty for our courses of former leaders, ministers and chiefs of staff from the major parties, some of Australia's most respected public service leaders and global thought leaders on a range of strategic topics.

The fact that we have such a committed faculty and so many Members of Parliament who have shown support and enthusiasm for our programs demonstrates the strong appetite for improving the quality of our political leadership and building public trust in Australia's democracy.



## Margaret Fitzherbert *CEO*

In another year when big disruption was an everyday challenge, the McKinnon Institute delivered strongly.

We expanded our delivery to include members and senators from the federal parliament as well as MPs from the parliaments of Western Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory. By the end of 2021, nearly 100 members of parliament had undertaken professional development with the McKinnon Institute through two different programs.

We debuted our flagship and annual program, Advanced Political Leadership – Australia's first leadership program for MPs who are likely to become ministers. We were delighted to receive many more applications for this program than we had places on offer. We are grateful to our independent panel, comprised of the Hon Jenny Macklin, the Hon Mike Baird AO and Professor Peter Shergold AC FRSN for selecting the participants, as well as the many highly notable individuals who were willing to share their knowledge and insights with participants.

We delivered Political Leadership for 2021, as the third iteration of the online Political Leadership program, to MPs from an expanded number of state and territory parliaments. This included MPs who joined us for the first time from Western Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory, as well as again welcoming MPs from Victoria and New South Wales.

This year's achievements would not have happened without an exceptional team. This includes the board of the McKinnon Institute, and especially the Interim Chair the Hon Professor John Thwaites AM. Monash University has proved to be an outstanding and supportive partner. None of this would be possible without the generous financial support of the Susan McKinnon Foundation, as well as the contribution of the McKinnon Institute staff, who have tackled their work during this second year of the pandemic - and our second year of program delivery - with dedication, creativity and very good humour. We are grateful for the contribution of the McKinnon Faculty: the educators and presenters who have worked with us to develop and deliver exceptional, relevant and practical programs.

The McKinnon Institute is doing something genuinely new in Australia, and it has been fantastic to attract strong support from a highly diverse range of MPs, and from expert presenters. We have carefully assessed and improved programs based on participant feedback, and in 2022 we will focus more closely on the challenge of measuring impact. We also plan a more public consideration of what good political leadership looks like, and we will commence training for brand new members of parliament. We also plan to expand the number of McKinnon staff to support our expanding agenda.



## About Us | The Board



**Grant Rule**  
*Director*

Grant is co-founder of the Susan McKinnon Foundation. He is a former director and co-founder of Australia's largest cloud based, business SMS solution provider, MessageMedia



**Professor John Thwaites AM**  
*Interim Chair*

John is a Professorial Fellow, Monash University, and Chair of the Monash Sustainable Development Institute and ClimateWorks Australia. He was the Deputy Premier of Victoria from 1999-2007.



**Sam Mellett**  
*Director*

Sam runs the Susan McKinnon Foundation, joining as their first employee. She joined the philanthropic sector after over a decade in brand and marketing.



**Professor Sharon Pickering**  
*Deputy Vice Chancellor,  
Education – Monash University*

Sharon is the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) and Senior Vice President of Monash University. She previously served as Dean of Arts at Monash University and prior to that as the Head of the School of Social Sciences.



**Hon Adj Prof Chris Pearce**  
*Director*

Chris is Managing Partner at DB Results. He serves on a number of not-for-profit boards and is an adjunct professor at Deakin University. He was a federal MP from 2001 – 2010.

## Staff



**Margaret Fitzherbert**  
*CEO*

A former state MP and federal government adviser, prior to her election Margaret was a communications professional, writer and not-for-profit director.



**Professor Rod Glover**  
*Academic Director*

Rod's deep passion is public policy. This includes roles as Deputy Secretary (Innovation and Projects) in Victoria's Department of Premier and Cabinet and as Senior Adviser to an Australian Prime Minister.



**Amy Green**  
*Communications &  
Events Manager*

With a background working in communications and campaigns in state and federal politics for members of parliament, Amy is responsible for all outward-facing communications and producing all MKI events.



**Tia Trieu**  
*Finance & Operations Manager*

An experienced client engagement specialist with extensive experience across a variety of sectors in relationship, account and project management positions.



**Matt Crocker**  
*Strategic Adviser*

Matt Crocker is a leading public policy professional. Across a two-decade long career in public policy and related fields, Matt has developed unique expertise in government, strategy and achieving policy change.



**Naomi Ockerse**  
*Executive Assistant*

Naomi is Executive Assistant to the CEO and Academic Director. She has a background in corporate sales and marketing.



## Professor Rod Glover *Academic Director*

In 2021, the McKinnon Institute ran two programs:

- **Advanced Political Leadership**  
(17 May 2021 – 11 March 2022)
- **Political Leadership**  
(15 October 2021 – 3 December 2021)

These programs sought to engage and challenge participants, to develop in our political leaders a combination of practical skills, learning mindsets and stewardship responsibility. Our pedagogical approach draws on leading insights from practice, research and education, benefiting particularly from the strong engagement of Monash University expertise.

**Advanced Political Leadership** (APL) is Australia's first advanced leadership course for members of parliament who are assessed as having the potential to be ministers in the short to medium term. APL is a cohort-based program, with participants selected by an independent panel comprising Peter Shergold AO, Hon Mike Baird and Hon Jenny Macklin.

APL supports participants to reflect on the role of ministers in our governance, their personal leadership needs and challenges, and the strategic policy challenges they and Australia will face over the decade ahead. An advanced program, it provides political leaders with access to the latest global thinking on issues relevant to policy and political leadership.

APL was delivered by program facilitators Professor Rod Glover and Professor Anne Tiernan.

The inaugural APL program was intended to involve a five-day residential intensive in July, supported by four half-day workshops in May, June, August and September. However, the ongoing disruptions of COVID-19 required the program to adapt on a number of occasions. While covering similar material to original plans, the program ultimately involved 16 sessions over the period May 2021 to March 2022.

Delivered with Program Co-Director Professor Anne Tiernan, APL 2021 had three core learning objectives:

- Develop an understanding of the practicalities of the job of a Minister and of the key success factors for a Minister.
- Develop an understanding of the major forces and challenges that Australia's future political leaders will have to manage and meet.
- Develop an understanding of leadership and to consider their personal leadership styles and trajectories.

Two further goals emerged as the program progressed. First, there was deep interest in how to develop, deliver and sustain large-scale policy reform in today's challenging information and political environment. Second, there was a recognition that our political leaders have a stewardship responsibility, as their conduct impacts on the trust and legitimacy of not just themselves but also their parties, parliaments and democracy.

Sessions explored the relationship between ministers and the public sector, delivering policy outcomes, maintaining integrity, empathy and active listening, prioritisation of time and resources, and Australia's major strategic challenges.

Despite the challenge of online sessions, participants carved out space in their busy schedules and took the opportunity to step back and reflect in a non-adversarial context. Notably, participants embraced the opportunity to engage with colleagues from other parties and levels of government.

The inaugural class of McKinnon Scholars graduated at an event at the State Library of Victoria in March 2022. Three McKinnon Scholars – Tim Wilson, James Griffin and Mark Coure – have already been appointed as ministers during 2021, and we anticipate many more to do so in the future.

**Political Leadership 2021** was our third iteration of a program that we ran twice in 2020, for the Victorian and NSW jurisdictions specifically. PL 2021 encouraged the participation of parliamentarians from all states and territories, and the program attracted a diversity of participants from Victoria, NSW, Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

Each iteration of PL is tailored to the particular political leadership challenges of the time. The program engages politicians on a set of issues that they nominate as directly relevant to their representative roles in their communities and to their stewardship roles as members of a government and/or parliament delivering legislative and social change.

PL2021 involved eight online workshops and enabled MPs to explore strategies to:

- Show leadership, influence policy and achieve change at local and societal levels;
- Manage stress and sustain wellbeing - for self, staff, colleagues and communities; and
- Respond effectively to the emergent economic and social challenges presented by the COVID-19 crisis, and prepare for the recovery beyond it.

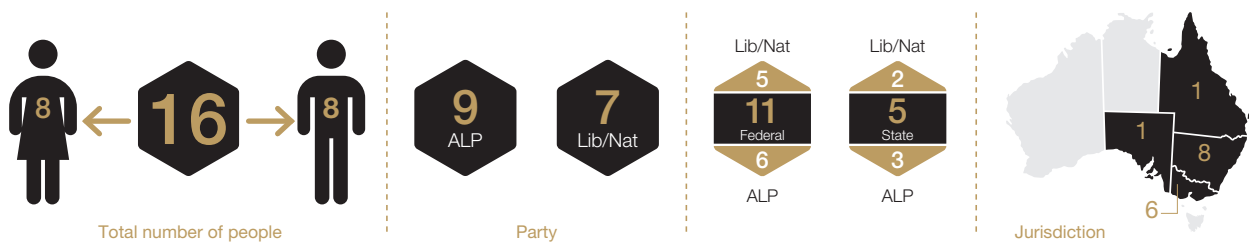




## By the numbers

The McKinnon is non-partisan and delivers programs to MPs from a diverse range of parties, and to independents. The proportion of party representation among our program participants generally reflects the numbers in their parliaments.

### Advanced Political Leadership Participation (split by party, gender and jurisdiction)



*APL is a selective program chosen by an independent panel*

In 2020, we delivered programs to MPs from New South Wales and Victoria. In 2021, we extended our delivery to include MPs from Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory, and the federal parliament.

### PL2020 & PL2021 Participation (split by party, gender and jurisdiction)



*MPs are invited to register for Political Leadership for 2021*

# The McKinnon Faculty

In 2021, the McKinnon Institute received expert contributions from many leading policy and political thinkers – former political leaders, senior public servants, chiefs of staff and advisers – as well as leading researchers and change-makers from Australia and globally.

This specialist insight assures the quality and relevance of our programs, and supports participant and institutional confidence. As a non-partisan Institute, our faculty reflects a range of political and philosophical views, and we are targeting a level of demographic and academic diversity that reflects Australia and its key challenges.

Our faculty supports the McKinnon Institute not merely in program delivery, but also in program and session design. The programs we offer are informed by workshops, focus groups and semi-structured interviews with practitioner and academic experts.

Our action for the Faculty as expressed in our 2022 business plan is, “The McKinnon faculty is continuing to grow and strengthen”. Success is described as, “The McKinnon faculty is expanding beyond NSW and Victoria and we have repeat interactions in different programs with trusted and credible presenters”.

The table below shows McKinnon’s developing pattern of working with presenters across more than one program. In 2021, the McKinnon Institute acknowledges generous contributions from:

	PL 2020 (VIC)	PL 2020 (NSW)	APL 2021	PL 2021		PL 2020 (VIC)	PL 2020 (NSW)	APL 2021	PL 2021
Deidre Anderson	✓	✓		✓	Jenny Menzies		✓		
Hon Mike Baird AO			✓		Sam Mostyn AO			✓	
Sharon Bent	✓	✓		✓	John Pesutto	✓			
Hon Julie Bishop			✓		Bronwyn Pike AM	✓			
John Brogden AM	✓	✓		✓	Dennis Richardson AO			✓	
Hon Gerry Brownlee	✓	✓			Professor Anthea Roberts			✓	
Melinda Cilento				✓	Janelle Saffin MP				✓
Sally Cray			✓		Ben Scott			✓	
Matt Crocker			✓		Peter Shergold			✓	
Dr Alan Finkel AO			✓		Helen Silver AO				✓
Professor Richard Hall			✓	✓	Hon Arthur Sinodinos AO				✓
Georgie Harman	✓	✓			Senator Dean Smith				✓
Professor Paul ‘t Hart			✓	✓	Liam Smith	✓	✓		
Hon Will Hodgman		✓			Professor Anne Tiernan			✓	
Ben Hubbard	✓	✓	✓		Jeff Whalan AO			✓	
Sarah Kneebone	✓	✓			Professor Simon Wilkie			✓	
Hon Jenny Macklin			✓		Danielle Wood			✓	
Peter Mares	✓	✓		✓					

# What our graduates say about us

“ In a year of so many obstacles and unprecedented events such as drought, bushfires and of course the COVID-19 pandemic, the course provided a unique environment to help shape our approach and objective thinking, as we are tasked with responding to these crises.

The expert guest speakers across the various panels and modules of the course were brilliantly diverse and well versed in their fields. They provided excellent first-hand experience, advice and challenges for us to consider, for which I am grateful.

Please know that I shall have no hesitation in commending the course to colleagues and political affiliates considering undertaking professional development. Raising the standard for our civic leaders is vital and the opportunity to participate in such a forum is most worthwhile.

## **Hon Natalie Ward MLC**

Minister for Metropolitan Roads, and Minister for Women's Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence  
Parliament of New South Wales  
Political Leadership for 2020

“ The importance of authenticity. Being yourself and working towards community outcomes. Importance of work life balance and challenges as a public figure. Working with electorate staff and how to better manage. Insightful discussion on current and emerging issues.

## **Enver Erdogan MP**

Member for Southern Metropolitan Region, Victorian Parliament  
Political Leadership for 2021

“ The programs of the McKinnon Institute are professional, engaging and targeted to parliamentarians wanting to undertake professional development. Through undertaking relevant courses, colleagues have better equipped themselves to meet the challenges of political leadership, whilst also enhancing their promotion prospects. I thoroughly recommend MPs personally invest in a McKinnon program.

## **Hon Jonathan O'Dea MP**

Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Member for Davidson  
Political Leadership for 2021

“ I was honoured and excited to be selected for the inaugural McKinnon Institute Australian Political Leadership Program. I was attracted to the Program because it was designed for people who had entered politics and I was hoping it would help me develop skills and knowledge to make me a better politician aware of governance and accountability. I was not disappointed. The sessions were well presented covering both theoretical as well as real world experience. Working with a cross-partisan cohort from State and Federal jurisdictions ensured we didn't get mired down in policy conversations but focussed on the “how” of delivering on policies. I definitely think that through this Program, if I am ever lucky enough to be offered higher office, I will be better prepared to navigate the system, work with the bureaucracy and deliver effective programs.

## **Senator Perin Davey**

Senator for New South Wales  
Advanced Political Leadership 2021

“ When I was first asked to be a part of this course, I thought two things – firstly, do I need to this, and secondly, do I have time for this?

Well, the answer to the first question was yes – I absolutely needed to do this, and the answer to the second part of the question – I have to find the time to do this, there's no excuse. We've never experienced a situation like COVID-19, whether as a Member of Parliament and as a member of the community. It's something that we are learning to deal with.

So what the McKinnon Institute team are doing is absolutely brilliant and we need you to keep doing it, and we need to encourage our colleagues to attend more of your courses. So thank you for putting this all together.

## **John Ajaka**

Former President of the NSW Legislative Council  
Political Leadership for 2020

“ I enjoyed getting different perspectives from other MP's and political people from around the country about topical issues particularly COVID-19 and the response.

## **Shane King**

Member for Kurwongbah, Queensland Parliament  
Political Leadership for 2021

“ Very pleased to have participated. Even after 20 years in Parliament, there is still an opportunity to learn and pick up new tools to assist with the work.

## **Hon Kate Doust MP**

Member for the South Metropolitan Region, WA Parliament  
Political Leadership for 2021

“ I like the global insight, and hearing colleagues' feedback, the small chat sessions and Melinda [Cilento]'s absolute confidence and honesty. And simultaneously, the frustration of opposition...

## **Liesl Tesch MP**

Member for Gosford, NSW Parliament  
Political Leadership for 2021

“ Managing your own well-being and the ethical leadership aspect of the course stood out for me. In high pressure roles if one's mental and emotional health is compromised then this can affect a person's decision-making ability. Therefore learning to look after self is imperative. The 10 commandments that we discussed from the ethical decision making program provided a valuable step by step process in understanding how to make the best ethical decisions.

## **Hon Russell Northe MP**

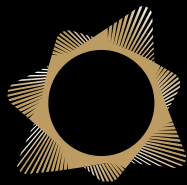
Member for Morwell, Victorian Parliament  
Political Leadership for 2021

“ APL was a fantastic program. It provided me with the tools and insights to be effectively prepared to become a Minister. I found the speakers engaging and content incredibly useful. I cannot recommend the course highly enough to other Parliamentarians.

## **Hon James Griffin MP**

Minister for Environment and Heritage & Member for Manly  
Advanced Political Leadership 2021





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