



Future Leaders

Applicant Information Pack

2019

Autism Spectrum Australia is the major sponsor of Future Leaders. The Sylvia Rodger Academy was established by Autism CRC, an initiative of the Australian Government.



Australian Government
Department of Industry,
Innovation and Science

Business
Cooperative Research
Centres Programme

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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the Future Leaders. We are excited to be able to offer autistic adults from across Australia the opportunity to apply for our 2019 program.

This Application Information Pack is intended to:

- Explain the different activities which form Future Leaders
- Help you to determine if this program may be right for you and;
- Explain the application process.

Please refer to our website for other information about the program including its purpose and history.

<https://www.autismcrc.com.au/sylvia-rodger-academy/future-leaders>

Eligibility criteria

To be eligible to apply for the 2019 Future Leaders Program an applicant must:

- be an autistic adult;
- be aged 18 or older (**no upper age limit**) on 1 July 2019;
- live in Australia;
- be willing and available to participate in all of the program activities, and;
- have an interest in both
 - making a positive difference in their community, and;
 - exploring and developing their leadership potential.

Program activities

Online modules

The first part of Future Leaders which you will complete is a series of 4 online modules. The first one will start on **Monday July 22**. Each module will run for 2 weeks before the next module opens. Like the rest of the program, these modules have been designed in conjunction with autistic leaders.

If you haven't studied online before, **don't worry**. Future Leaders **isn't** a formal course. We won't ask you to write essays or memorise definitions for different kinds of leadership for a test. Instead, the modules are an opportunity to **start thinking about the leadership strengths you already have and how you might be able to grow as a leader and work towards your goals**.

What we will ask you to do is:

- **explore information** (articles, videos etc.) about different areas related to leadership
- **reflect on that information** (and who you are as a leader) through the **activities** and;
- **share your responses** to those activities and the thoughts you have about the topic with others in the group (as you feel comfortable doing so).

We estimate that you will need to allow approximately **2 hours a week** to work on the modules. There will be more content and activities available than you will be able to complete in this time, but not all of them are considered essential.

The resources and activities are broken into **three categories** to help you to choose what to focus on:

- **Required** – These are resources you need to look at or activities **you need to complete** before the residential workshop.
- **Recommended** – These are resources or activities we would **like you to complete if you can**. But you do not have to if you are not able to.
- **Extension** – These are activities and resources that are available **if you would like to explore the topic further**. We **do not** expect you to view or complete these.

We will also have one or two **online discussion sessions** for each module, which you may choose to attend via **video conferencing** software. This is another great opportunity to start getting to know other Future Leaders and members of the Project Team.

The 4 modules are:

- Self-discovery and goal setting
- Leadership
- Advocacy and influence
- Resilience and wellbeing.

There will also be 2 weeks between the end of the 4th module and the residential workshop for you to catch up on anything you may have missed.

Here are some useful things to know about the modules:

- Each module includes a range of videos, reading and activities.
- Sometimes you will be given a **choice** between a **written resource** and a **video resource**. This is to allow for the fact that people learn best in different ways.
- Future Leaders are **strongly encouraged** to start discussing the topics and interacting online so they can start to get to know each other before the workshop.
- **There won't be any tests or graded assessments**. We are just looking for people to show that they have engaged with the resources we have made available and thought about the questions and activities we have provided.
- Future Leaders will be able to go back and look at the modules later on in the program (or even after it has finished) if they would like to.

Residential workshop

The residential workshop will be held between **Thursday 3 October** and **Sunday 6 October 2019** in Sydney. You would arrive at the workshop venue on Thursday afternoon and head home on Sunday afternoon.

The workshop will be attended by all 2019 Future Leaders and Project Team members. There may also be a guest media trainer and support staff from Autism CRC and/or Aspect.

We consider attending the workshop to be an essential part of the Future Leaders experience. If you **won't be available** to attend this year's workshop we would encourage you to apply for Future Leaders **next year**.

Activities at the workshop may include:

- Presentations and discussions on leadership-related topics
- Practical activities on topics such as goal setting or problem solving
- Question and Answer sessions
- Media training
- Optional social activities (such as a movie night or walk around the local area)
- Group and individual photos.

The workshop is a flexible space. It is not compulsory to attend a particular session and people are free to position themselves in a way that makes them feel comfortable and able to participate (move about the room, sit in bean bags, colour in etc.) as long as it doesn't interfere with another Future Leader's ability to participate.

Important things to know:

- Meals, transport and accommodation will be provided.
- The workshop will take place at the same site as the accommodation to allow participants to use their rooms as a retreat space.
- You will have the option to stay at the hotel with the rest of the group, even if you already live at the same city as the workshop.
- If you would like additional snacks beyond the meals provided you will need to bring or purchase these yourself.

Information about the workshop venue, including menus and photos (both of the venue and the people who will be there) will be provided in advance. As part of accepting your place in the program, you will be asked to complete an online form that asks you for your emergency contacts, dietary preferences and questions about how you best learn. You will also be given a **Preparation and Wellbeing Toolkit** to complete to help you to prepare for the experience.

Voluntary placement

The voluntary placement is a practical opportunity to further explore and develop your leadership skills and potential as you meet, share with and learn from others.

The placements are for a minimum of 50 hours. This includes the time you spend getting to know your placement host, and being inducted to their organisation. If you are really enjoying your placement, and have the time to do so, you may complete a higher number of hours if your placement provider agrees to it.

Everyone's placement will be different. You and your placement host will work together to develop something that is mutually beneficial for both of you. There will be some **flexibility** with regard to when you do your placement – it needs to suit **both** you and your placement host.

For example, it may be 4 hours a week across a period, or in a block. You may only be available in school hours, or on certain days.

Some of the things you are asked to do may not be what you would traditionally think of as being a leader. However, an important part of being a leader is being able to be a positive influence and good example wherever you go and whatever you are doing.

You will be matched to a placement. Placement decisions will be based on a number of different factors including:

- which organisations have offered to host Future Leaders placements
- where you live
- the skills and experiences you shared in your application
- what we know about your goals and interests from what you shared in your application
- what we think will be a good opportunity for you to learn and grow.

Our 2018 graduates undertook volunteer placements in fields such as communications, human resources, administration, training and resource development – lending their diverse skills and insights to a range of organisations including art galleries, construction companies, government departments and disability service providers.

Please note that Future Leaders is **not** an employment program and we do not anticipate that voluntary placements will lead to employment with the placement provider.

Mentoring

As part of the program, you will be mentored by an autistic leader or Project Team member during your voluntary placement.

You will be matched to a mentor during the online modules and will know who they are at the workshop. Your mentor will then contact you to arrange your first mentoring session just **before you start your placement**.

During your placement you will be able to contact your mentor to ask questions or initiate more mentoring sessions. You will also have the option to have a final mentoring session once you complete the program to help you plan your next steps.

Please be aware that the mentoring sessions may not happen face to face. Your mentor may not live in the same town or city as you. You and your mentor will discuss the best way for you to connect with each other (face to face, skype, phone call etc.)

You will also be given a mentoring guide before you start being mentored. This will help to outline what the expectations are for the mentoring relationship (both for you and your mentor).

Graduation

After completing the program you will receive a certificate of graduation. At this stage there is no national formal graduation event planned for the 2019 program, though this may change in the future.

Evaluation

Future Leaders participants will be invited to take part in evaluation activities related to the program. This helps us to improve future programs and may include online surveys, focus groups and/or interviews. You would be provided with information sheets and asked for your consent before participating in any evaluation activities. These activities may take place at the start of the program, during the program, and after you have graduated.

Application process

Applications for our 2019 program will **close at 5pm AEST on Monday 13 May 2019**.

There are 3 sections to the application.

- **Part A** is an online form that will ask you questions about who you are and some of your experience.
- **Part B** is a series of selection questions that can be answered through your choice of an online form, PowerPoint presentation or video. At the end of the online form you will also be asked some marketing questions (such as where you heard about Future Leaders).
- **Part C** is a series of marketing questions and a declaration. We will ask you to confirm that you are eligible to apply for the program and that to the best of your knowledge everything you have recorded as part of your application is true and correct.

You need to submit **all parts** of your application by **5pm AEST on Monday 13 May 2019**.

Key dates for applications

Applications close	Monday 13 May at 5pm (AEST)
Expected notification of outcome (via email)	Week of 1 July
Program starts	Monday 22 July

Completing Part A (Online form)

Part A is an online form which asks some general information about you and your experience.

The “**About You**” section asks you to provide information such as your name and your email address as well as things like where you live.

The information requested in the “**Your Experience**” section will allow us to understand more about your background and build a profile of your interests and experiences. This helps us understand where you have come from and what you are currently doing and provides us with information that may help us to match you to an appropriate voluntary placement if you are accepted into the program.

You do not need to have experience relevant to every question in this section to be considered for the program. For instance, you do not need to be currently working, to have formal qualifications or to have had experience in formal leadership roles.

Completing Part B (Selection questions)

Part B is a series of 5 selection questions that can be answered in your choice of any one of the 3 different formats described in this section. Whichever format you choose, you will still complete Part A (About You/Your Experience) and Part C (Marketing Questions and Declaration) via the online form.

Please **do not** include any links to external sources (websites, blogs, media interviews etc.) or any referee contact details in your responses, as **these will not be considered by the selection panel**.

1. Why would you like to be part of the leadership program?

Hint: You might like to share what motivates you to develop and demonstrate your leadership skills.

2. Why do you think you are ready for this opportunity?

Hint: Think about how it might assist you to learn, grow and help others.

3. What are the 1 or 2 main areas (or issues) that you are most passionate about as a leader or change maker? Why are they important to you?

4. What are some of your plans or ideas for creating a positive difference in your community?

Hint: Think about the areas you talked about in the last question.

5. What would you see as the value in connecting with other Future Leaders?

Hint: Consider both what you might receive and what you might share or do to encourage other Future Leaders in the 2019 group

Part B Option 1 - Online form

The first option for addressing the 5 selection questions is using an online form. If you choose this option you will write your responses to each of the selection questions after you answer the Part A questions. You will have between **50 to 150 words** to answer each question.

Part B Option 2 - PowerPoint presentation

The second option to answer the selection questions is to prepare a PowerPoint presentation. This method allows you to incorporate both writing and images into your responses.

You will have up to **2 slides** of content to address **each** question.

In addition to this, you can also have:

- a **title slide** at the start of your presentation, and;
- a slide showing each question (as long as those slides **do not contain any other text**)

Please use a minimum 20pt easy to read font (such as Arial) with no embedded video addressing the questions or additional notes beyond the slides. Any embedded video or additional notes included will not be considered by the selection panel.

There will be a question in the online form after the Part A questions asking how you want to complete Part B. Select “Powerpoint Presentation” and you will then continue to answer the Part C questions before submitting the form. After you have completed and submitted the online form you will need to email your completed presentation to arobinson@autismspectrum.org.au by **5pm AEST on Monday 13 May 2019** with “FL 2019 Part B” and your full name in the subject line.

Send	To...	arobinson@autismspectrum.org.au
	Cc...	
	Subject	FL 2019 Part B - John Smith

Please ensure you include your full name in both the email subject line and the title slide of your presentation so we can match it to your Part A responses.

It will take a few days for our Project Officer to respond to your email containing your PowerPoint to confirm we have received it (especially if you submit it over the weekend or on the closing date).

Part B Option 3 - Video

The third option for addressing the 5 selection questions is through a video.

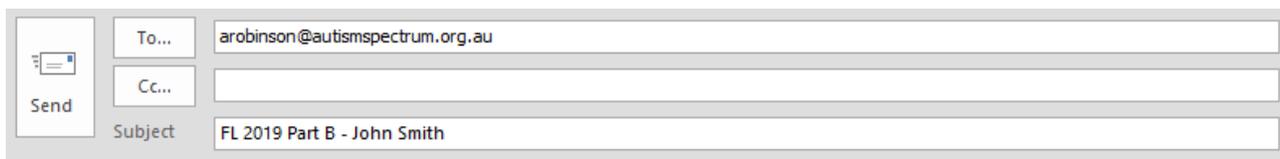
This might involve you speaking to the camera directly or having a friend or family member interview you using the selection questions. You will have up to **60 seconds** of edited video to

address each question. After filming your video you will need to edit it and upload it to either DropBox or as an **unlisted** YouTube video (we won't be able to access it if it is listed as private).

Instructions for uploading and sharing videos on both of these websites can be found online, including the examples listed below:

- <https://blogs.dropbox.com/dropbox/2015/05/share-large-files/>
- <https://blogs.constantcontact.com/how-to-upload-video-to-youtube/>

There will be a question in the online form after the Part A questions asking how you want to complete Part B. Select "Video" and you will then continue to answer the Part C questions before submitting the form. After you have completed and submitted the online form, you will then need to email a link to your video to arobinson@autismspectrum.com.au by **5pm AEST on Monday 13 May 2019** with "FL 2019 Part B" and your full name in the subject line.



Send	To...	arobinson@autismspectrum.org.au
	Cc...	
	Subject	FL 2019 Part B - John Smith

Please ensure you include your full name in both the email subject line and the title/file name of your video so we can match it to your Part A responses.

It will take a few days for our Project Officer to respond to your email containing your video link to confirm we have received it (especially if you submit it over the weekend or on the closing date).

Being offered a place

You will receive an **email** to let you know whether you are being offered a place in the program sometime **between Monday 1 July and Friday 5 July**. We cannot advise when during this period you are likely to hear.

If you are offered a place in the program you will have until **Monday 15 July** to respond to the email and confirm your acceptance. You will also be asked to complete another online form to provide things like your contact details (phone number and address), dietary preferences, accessibility needs and emergency contacts.

The first online module will start on **Monday 22 July**.

Additional information about the application questions

This section is for people who have read the application form and the other information provided in this document but are **still unsure** about what they need to provide.

If you feel confident that you already understand what the questions are asking you do not need to read this section.

Part A Q6 Describe some of the ways you've been involved in making a positive difference in your community both now and/or in the past.

There are many ways you may have been involved in making a positive difference in your community. Some examples are giving presentations, being part of a committee/advisory group, collaborating with others in the community who are passionate about a particular issue, writing and blogging, giving radio or TV interviews, helping organise community events or advocating for yourself or others.

You may have lots of things to share here, or only a few things. If you have a lot of things to share you might need to choose the experiences which are most notable or relevant. You can also include experiences that are not directly related to autism or disability.

If you aren't sure which examples are most relevant to include you may want to ask a friend or family member for their opinion.

Part A Q7 Describe the skills and personal characteristics that you think give you potential to be a successful leader.

There are lots of different skills and personal characteristics that people can use in leadership. If you aren't sure what skills and personal characteristics to include, you might want to search online for examples of leadership characteristics. You could also ask a friend or family member for their thoughts.

Part B Q3 What are the 1 or 2 main areas (or issues) that you are most passionate about as a leader or change maker?

These areas may be **broad** (example: making education more inclusive) or **specific** (example: improving the accessibility of public transport in country areas).

Part B Q4 What are some of your plans or ideas for creating a positive difference in your community?

People will have different responses to this question, and will have spent different amounts of time thinking about and working towards their goals.

One of the things that Future Leaders does is work with you to help figure out what your goals are and set a path towards reaching them. This means **you don't need to have an exact plan** of what you want to do and how you will get there.

That said, we do want to see that you've **thought about** how you could be part of working towards improving your community. Especially in relation to your areas of interest.

Part B Q5 What would you see as the value in connecting with other Future Leaders?

An important part of Future Leaders is the opportunity to be part of a group of people who learn from and encourage each other. It's important to consider **both parts** of this question in your response.

For example things you might **receive** might include being able to spend time with other autistic adults (if you haven't had that experience before) or learning from others with more public speaking experience about how they write abstracts for conferences.

For example things you might **give** might include sharing examples of skills or experiences that you have had that others may not.

Is this program right for you?

Future Leaders are a diverse group of autistic adults. They come to the program with a broad range of types and levels of experience (both as people and as leaders). What they have in common is a desire to positively impact their communities and use their influence to make the world a better place for autistic people. They are also interested in exploring their potential as leaders to help them in their desire to influence positive change.

If this sounds like you, and you meet the eligibility requirements, we would encourage you to consider applying for the program.

Some of our Future Leaders graduates have shared their thoughts about who they think would benefit from being part of the program, which you can [view in a short video here](#).

If you are still unsure if this is the right program for you. Our Project Team have also put together two other resources which you may use to help you work out whether to apply for Future Leaders.

Self-assessment checklist

The following dot points highlight some of the characteristics of an emerging leader. You may identify with some of these attributes and not others and we don't expect anyone to relate to all of them. These are simply intended to help you to self-assess whether this program is for you, and to help you to start thinking about what you might want to tell us about yourself in your application.

- I want to be a positive influence
- I am motivated to make a difference to my community
- I think about how the world could be more inclusive both for me and for others
- I could see myself in a leadership role
- I have been exploring my leadership potential
- I am involved in my community but would not currently describe my role as that of a leader
- I would like to collaborate with others to see change happen or improve my community
- I would like to learn more about what being a leader involves and how to get started
- I am passionate about seeing change in relation to specific areas or issues (for example, public transport, community attitudes towards autism, bullying in schools, inclusive sport etc.)
- I have a little bit of leadership experience and would like to learn skills to be more effective in or expand my leadership role

What do we mean by leadership?

We asked members of our Project Team to share some of their thoughts about **what leadership is** and **who makes a good leader**. This is what they shared:

Different leaders have different skills and behaviours. Good leaders can have various communication styles and those who prefer sharing through writing or creative expression can be equally as effective as those who like giving large public presentations. Diversity is an important part of leadership and there no such thing as an ideal leader.

Leadership is about influence. It's about more than holding a specific role that gives you authority over other people. People who have lots of leadership potential may not yet have had the opportunity to be on a committee or lead a team of people.

Leaders make their impact in a variety of ways. Some leaders are naturally comfortable being up the front of a group of people. Other strong leaders may prefer to work in the background most of the time and encourage others and influence change by interacting with small groups or even one-on-one.

Leadership is about creating a positive difference for others. Personal goals and self-advocacy are both important, but they aren't the same thing as leadership. Leaders are passionate about seeing things change in their communities that would benefit others and not just themselves. Importantly, they want to be actively involved in seeing that change happen.

Find out more information

Please see <https://www.autismcrc.com.au/sylvia-rodger-academy/future-leaders> for more information about the program including answers to some of the questions you may have.

If the question you'd like to ask is not answered on the website (including the **FAQs** on the Applicant Webpage) or in this Applicant Information Pack, you can email Ainslie on arobinson@autismspectrum.com.au. Please note that Ainslie is part time and will take 2-3 business days to respond to your email.

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