Future Leaders: Community Projects

Applicant Information Pack

2022

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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the Sylvia Rodger Academy's 2022 Future Leaders: Community Projects Program, delivered in partnership with Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect). We are excited to be able to offer autistic adults from across Australia the opportunity to apply for our 2022 program.

This Applicant Information Pack is intended to:

- help you to determine if this Program may be **right for you**,
- explain the **different activities** which form Future Leaders, and;
- explain the **application process**.

Eligibility criteria

To be eligible you must:

- identify as **autistic**;
- be **aged 18 or older** (no upper age limit) on 1 February 2022;
- live in **Australia*** as a citizen or permanent resident;
- be willing and available to **participate in all of the Program activities**, and;
- have an interest in
    - o making a **positive impact** in your community
    - o developing and shaping your idea into a community-based project
    - o being part of a community of emerging and established autistic leaders who **learn from**, **encourage** and **support** each other.

It is not important to have previous leadership experience for this Program.

* At the time of publication, all state and territory borders were open. Whether the Program will be open to every State and Territory is dependent on relevant State or Territory public health orders and border restrictions. A decision will be made in February 2022.

Program activities

Online modules

The first part of the Future Leaders program you will be expected to complete is a series of 5 online modules. The first module will start on **Monday 18 April 2022**. Each module will run for 2 weeks before the next module opens. These modules act as an introduction into leadership and have been written by community 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 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 goal**.

You will be asked to:

- **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 thoughts you have about the topic with others in the group.

It is estimated that you will need to allow approximately **2 hours a week** to work on the modules.

There will be a lot of content and activities available to you for each module, but not all of it is essential. The resources and activities for each module are broken into **3 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 that we would **like you to complete if you can**, but you do not have to if you're 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.

There will be **an online discussion** for each module, which you can attend via Zoom. These will be of a night time in the second week of each module.

The 5 modules are:

- Self-discovery and Goal Setting
- Leadership
- Advocacy and Influence
- Resilience and Wellbeing
- Inclusive Leadership in Autism

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 because people learn and understand information 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 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 in the program (or even after the program finishes) if they would like to.

Residential workshop

The residential workshop will be held in **July 2022** in an Australian capital city, for 3-nights. The workshop will be attended by all Future Leaders participants and Delivery Team members. There may also be some guests and support staff from Autism CRC and/or Aspect.

Attendance and participation in the workshop is an **essential** part of the Future Leaders experience.

Activities at the workshop may include:

- Presentations and discussions;
- Practical activities;
- Question and answer sessions, and;
- Optional social activities (such as a movie night or walk around the local area).

The workshop will be a **flexible space**. Attendees are free to engage in a way that makes them feel comfortable and able to participate (move about the room, stim, colour, etc.) if it doesn't interfere with another Future Leader's ability to participate.

Here are some useful things to know about the residential workshop:

- Meals, transport, and accommodation will be provided.
- The workshop will take place at the same site as the accommodation, so you can use your room as a retreat space.
- If you live in the same city as the workshop, you still have the option to stay at the hotel with the rest of the group.
- If you would like any additional snacks beyond the meals provided, you will need to bring or purchase these yourself.

Information about the workshop venue, including menus and photos (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 which asks you for your emergency contacts, dietary requirements, 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.

Practical component

The practical component is an opportunity for you to **further explore and develop your knowledge and skills** by developing (and possibly delivering) your community-based project.

Throughout the Future Leaders: Community Projects Program, you will spend time developing and refining your community-based project, and planning how to deliver it. This will be supported by through **mentoring and upskilling** with autistic leaders on the skills or knowledge you'd like to develop. The practical component for this Program includes a time commitment of a minimum of 50 hours, and everyone's practical component will be different and tailored to their needs. This is because it will be based around your idea for your community-based project.

During the practical component (July to November) we will have **fortnightly online master classes and/or mentoring sessions** at night time.

Graduation and evaluation

After completing the Program, participants will receive a **certificate of graduation** and **membership** into the Sylvia Rodger Academy.

It is expected that Future Leaders provide **feedback** about the program and its content at various stages throughout the program.

Application process

Applications for the 2022 Future Leaders: Community Projects Program will **close at midnight AEST on Sunday 27 February 2022**. There are 3 sections to the application.

- **Part A** is an online form that will ask you questions about yourself and 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.
- **Part C** is a series of marketing questions and a declaration. You will be asked 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.

Applicants are required to submit **all parts** of the application **by midnight AEST** on **Sunday 27 February 2022**.

If you are invited to the next stage of the application process, we will arrange a structured friendly chat with you.

Key dates for applications

Applications open	Friday 11 February
Applications close	Sunday 27 February at midnight (AEST)
Notification of application outcome	by April 8 2022
Program starts	Monday April 18 2022

Completing Part A

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

The "**About You**" section asks you to provide information such as your name and your contact details.

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.

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 or have formal qualifications.

Completing Part B

Part B is a series of 5 selection questions that can be answered via the online form, in a video or in a PowerPoint presentation. Whichever format you choose, you will still complete Part A (About You/Skills and Experience) and Part C (Marketing Questions and Declaration) via the online form.

If you complete Part B via the online form, you will have **up to 250 words** to answer each question. For information on **how to submit a video or PowerPoint response** to Part B, check the Appendices of this Pack.

Selection Questions

1. **What is your idea for making a positive impact in your community?** *Up to 250 words.*

   Hint: *Tell us what your idea is, and why this is needed.*

2. **What community/communities will your idea impact, and what is your connection to this community?** *Up to 250 words.*

   Hint: *Some examples of possible communities could be people in your local area, your local sports club, autistic people, or a new virtual community you'd like to create.*

3. **Why would you like to be part of the Future Leaders Program?** *Up to 250 words.*

   Hint: *Why are you ready to be part of the Program? Do you need to develop your idea? What knowledge and skills do you need to learn?*

4. **What would you see as the value in connecting with other Future Leaders?** *Up to 250 words.*

Hint: *Consider the benefit of connecting with autistic people also developing community-based projects. How can they help you? What skills and knowledge do you have that you could share with others in the group?*

Stronger applications versus weaker applications

Stronger Applications	Weaker Applications
✓ Have an idea that is based on community need	— Have an idea that is focused on changing large established systems like education, employment and the justice system.
✓ Have an idea that can be turned into an achievable community-based project	— Have an idea that is too large to be able to be a community-based project
✓ Clearly identifies the community your idea will impact	— Doesn't identify the community your idea will impact
✓ Shows your connection to this community, or that you have the skills or knowledge to work with or for them	— Doesn't demonstrate your connection to the community, or that you have the knowledge or skills to work with or for them
✓ Shows how you would benefit from the Program, and have thought about what knowledge or skills you need to learn	— Doesn't explain how you would benefit from the Program
✓ Shows you are willing to learn from, and teach, others in the group	— Doesn't show that you are willing to learn from others or teach others in the group

If you have any further queries about the selection questions, please contact Liv Gatfield at ogatfield@autismcrc.com.au.

Structured chat

For the first time, the 2022 Future Leaders Program will involve a **structured, friendly chat** for as a second step in the application process.

Not everyone who submits an application will be asked to have a chat, and not everyone who has a chat will be offered a place in the Program.

The chat will involve you meeting Liv Gatfield and Tammy McGowan (who are part of the autism and autistic communities) over Zoom to talk or type for approximately ten minutes. If you are asked to have a chat, we will provide you with more information, and make sure it is accessible to you.

Being offered a place

Applicants will be offered a place via email or be notified that they were unsuccessful by **Friday 8 April 2022**.

The first online module for successful applicants will start on **Monday 18 April 2022**.

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 have a **positive impact on their communities** and use their influence to **make the world a better place for autistic people**.

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

Some of our Future Leaders graduates have shared their thoughts about they think would benefit from being part of the program, which you can view on our website.

If you are still unsure if this is the right program for you, previous Future Leaders Project Teams have put together the following resource 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 that would make you a **good candidate** for this program. You may identify with **some** of these attributes and **not** others, and we **don't** expect anyone to relate to **all of them**.

We won't be asking you to tell us which dot points apply to you. Instead, they are 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 and a change-maker
- 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 am involved in my community but would not currently describe my role as that of a leader
- I would like to start and build my own community
- 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

Privacy

The Sylvia Rodger Academy recognises the importance of protecting your privacy when it comes to your personal information. Any information that is collected from you, including your application, is protected under Australian law and kept private. This means that your application is stored securely and we legally cannot share details of your application (or that you've applied to this Program) with unauthorised staff, visitors, or the general public. This includes family members and support persons.

For more information on Autism CRC's Privacy Policy, which has been guided by the *Privacy Act 1988*, please click here.

Find out more information

Please see our website 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) or in this Applicant Information Pack, please email Liv Gatfield at ogatfield@autismcrc.com.au.

Appendices

Completing Part B (PowerPoint)

You can answer selection questions using a PowerPoint presentation instead of the online form. This method allows you to use both writing and images in 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 "Via PowerPoint". 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 tmcgowan@autismcrc.com.au by **midnight AEST on Sunday 27 August 2022** with "Future Leaders Program 2022 Part B" and your full name in the subject line.

Please ensure you include your full name in both the email subject line and the title slide of your presentation to match it to parts A and C of your application.

It may take a few days for us 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).
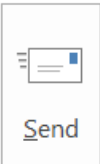
Completing Part B (Video)

You can answer selection questions using a video instead of the online form.

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 "Via 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 need to email your completed presentation to tmcgowan@autismcrc.com.au by **midnight AEST on Sunday 27 February August 2022** with "Future Leaders Program 2022 Part B" and your full name in the subject line.

	To...	○ tmcgowan@autismcrc.com.au
Send	Cc...	
	Subject	Future Leaders Program 2022 Part B - John Smith

Please ensure you include your full name in both the email subject line and the title slide of your presentation to match it to parts A and C of your application.

It may take a few days for us 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).