



supporting women  
leading change

# FUNDING PROSPECTUS 2021





*WELA National Gathering, September 2019*



# Supporting women leading change

Women's Environmental Leadership Australia (WELA) is a growing community of women leading change. WELA exists to empower, support, fund and diversify women's leadership for our environment and climate action, in order to transform Australia's response to these crises.

This year, more than ever, the impact of a lack of women in leadership in Australia is plain for all to see. This must change, for our communities and our future.

In mid-2020 Victoria McKenzie-McHarg, an experienced Strategic Director, joined WELA to lead our expansion and build the team to deliver our mission. Investing in additional capacity now will bring our plans to fruition.

## Our funding task

- To deliver our work plan for this year, we need to raise a further **\$53,000 by 30 June 2021**.
- To invest in the next phase of WELA's development, we need to secure funding of **\$200,000 by 30 June 2021**.
- WELA is seeking support of \$850,000 over the next three years to deliver our full plans.

**Will you support this essential work of transforming women's leadership for our environment with a gift to WELA over the next three years?**

# About WELA

WELA was established in 2016 as an annual leadership development program for women in the Australian environment and climate movements.

It was born out of an Australian Research Council project, *Diversity in Leadership: Australian women, past and present*, that revealed the vital role women play in the environment movement, their poor representation in leadership positions and a lack of support for those aspiring to leadership roles.

Based on the success of that pilot phase, in 2020 we recognised the need for our work to significantly expand in response to the growing environment and climate crises and urgent need for change. Following extensive consultation, we have reviewed our vision and mission, and adopted a clear three-year plan.



WELA is dedicated to Jane Elix, Louise Crossley and Felicity Wishart, women leaders who made a difference and inspired WELA

# Our challenge

The world now faces an unprecedented set of environmental and climate crises. Overwhelmingly, our existing political, business and societal leadership has failed to adequately respond to these crises.

It's time for leadership change. Put simply, we will not get out of this by relying on the same leadership that got us into it.

Leadership has traditionally been seen as masculine, heroic, individual and normative, reinforcing self-reliance, assertiveness and competition. These qualities reinforce power structures that underpin unchecked capitalism, environmental destruction, inequity and the marginalisation of diverse voices.

Instead, leadership styles that are collaborative, networked and responsive to communities will be essential elements in the transition to a sustainable future. Qualities we see in abundance in women's leadership.

International evidence indicates that more women in decision-making ensures better environmental outcomes. While many women are already leading for our environment in Australia, this leadership has largely remained unsupported, unseen and unfunded – limiting its impact and influence.

Women have not been granted the development, mentoring, networks or funding to help them identify or step into their own approach to leadership. Additional barriers, both personal (confidence, family responsibilities) and structural (patriarchal systems, racial inequality, economic disadvantage) further hinder women. WELA exists to address these challenges.

**If we're to make the most of the opportunities for renewal presented by our current environmental crises, women must play a key role in leading and shaping a future in which people and the planet can thrive. Our work has never been more important. We cannot delay.**



# WELA's mission and three-year plan

**Our vision** is for a world transformed by women's leadership, where women's insights, knowledge and contributions have been fully integrated and valued in the changes we're making to save the world. And where the solutions to our climate and environmental crises have reinvigorated and revived communities and landscapes, and centred justice, equity, connection and regeneration in our society, governments and economic activity.

**Our mission** is to empower, support, fund and diversify women's leadership for our environment and climate action, in order to transform Australia's response to these crises.

**Our approach** encompasses both scale, by building a connected, collaborative and thriving community of women leading, and depth, by offering transformative programs.



*I have gained some incredible skills in management styles, leadership strategies and understandings of why and how some of the work challenges we face today evolved and how to apply practical solutions to solve those challenges. I also experienced substantial personal growth, overcoming my imposter syndrome, that feeling I am not good enough, not experienced enough, that I shouldn't have a seat at the table, wherever that table might be. I am more confident and a better communicator. If you get the chance, please join WELA and embrace all the amazing team has to offer.*

**Sherie Bruce**  
**Arrente and Yolgnu woman, Environmental Scientist and WELA alumna (2020)**

With confidence gained from WELA, Sherie applied for and took on an academic role at Central Queensland University.

# WELA's three-year plan is built on four pillars that underpin the WELA mission

## EMPOWER



Leadership development is at the core of WELA's work. While continuing to deliver our annual flagship program, additional program formats will provide this transformative experience to many more women.

In the next 12 months, WELA seeks to develop a new weekend-based program targeted to women within regional communities.

## SUPPORT



WELA is creating a collaborative and supportive community of women environmentalists from diverse cultural communities, geographic locations and sectoral backgrounds. Through online and in-person activities, our growing community will enable participants to support each other, provide feedback and advice, and open doors to new opportunities.

## FUND



We'll fund women-led advocacy for our environment and climate action through a new WELA Giving Circle, raising and granting much needed funds for women-led campaigns, and empowering new members with a gender lens on their giving. We aim to launch the first granting round by the end of 2021.

## DIVERSIFY



To create a thriving community of women leading change, we must also focus our efforts on supporting women from diverse backgrounds and sectors including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women of colour, gender diverse people and trans women, women from remote, rural and regional areas, and working class women. This approach will be embedded throughout all our work streams.

# Our impact to date

WELA women are strategists, organisers, campaigners, project leaders, volunteer coordinators, managers, CEOs, lawyers, creatives, communicators and networkers. With the skills and confidence developed through WELA, their opportunity to influence the effectiveness and impact of our movement is immense.

Since 2016, WELA has successfully supported the leadership development of over 70 women who have, in turn, gone on to influence some of Australia's most important and strategic environmental campaigns and projects.

The leadership of WELA alumni, since graduating, has resulted in:

- stopping a new coal mine in NSW;
- stopping dangerous waste incinerators in Sydney's suburbs;
- WELA women being elected to state parliament and various local councils;
- successfully leading climate emergency declarations through numerous local councils;
- contributions as key organisers or campaigners to save essential habitat from logging, to Stop Adani, and build renewable energy; and
- WELA women stepping forward into formal and informal leadership positions in government, business, NGOs, the media, academia, on boards and in community groups.

Our work supports organisations leading some of Australia's most important environment and climate campaigns and projects. WELA alumni include paid and unpaid leaders from:

- Australian Conservation Foundation
- The Wilderness Society
- 350.org
- The Australian Marine Conservation Society
- Beyond Zero Emissions
- Groundswell Gloucester
- Landcare
- Environment Defenders Office
- Environmental Justice Australia
- Australian Youth Climate Coalition
- Environs Kimberly
- Environment Centre NT
- Kids in Nature Network
- SEED Indigenous Youth Climate Network
- WA Forest Alliance
- Nature Conservation Council of NSW
- Birdlife Australia
- Greenpeace
- Wongatha people, WA
- Janandi Aboriginal Corporation
- Parks and Wildlife Service, Tasmania
- North Central Catchment Management Authority
- Local government authorities across Australia





Since embarking on our expanded mission in July 2020, WELA has:

- **Launched a new public events series.** Attendees have reported being inspired to step up their leadership through new roles, or even deciding to run (successfully) for election.
- **Initiated a new digital community for women environmentalists.** Our new Digital Support Consultant is opening the community beyond our program alumni to hundreds more women.
- **Responded to COVID-19 by shifting our flagship leadership development program online.** The online format has enabled other benefits for accessibility that will inform future program delivery.
- **Increased the number and diversity of applicants to the 2021 program.** Our program is supporting the changing face of women’s environmental leadership in Australia – the future is looking bright!



***WELA online event: Women’s Leadership for Bushfire Resilience, October 2020***

# Our next steps for growth

**To achieve the opportunity for impact, WELA is seeking to invest in additional capacity to develop the following four program areas.**

## 1 Expand our leadership development programs

Leadership development is at the core of WELA's work.

The intensive experience of our current program is suitable for approximately 20 participants a year. However, the need and opportunity is far greater. Additional program formats, targeted to a range of audiences, can provide this transformative experience to many more women.

We've identified a range of additional opportunities and audiences who would benefit from WELA's approach to leadership development. Potential formats include:

- weekend retreat programs supporting women within the same region or community;
- state-based programs to support women in states with less access to such programs;
- specific programs for women in the business, government and community sectors; and
- a Leadership Exchange Program, for women already in senior formal leadership positions.





**To enable this growth, WELA must invest in a Programs Director to scope and develop new programs, bring these to market, establish new partnerships, coordinate our existing offering, and expand and coordinate our facilitation team.**

	ACTIVITY	
<b>EMPOWER</b> 	<b>Continue existing WELA leadership development program</b>	WELA's 2021 program will support at least 20 participants, with online and face-to-face retreats.
	<b>Develop new program opportunities</b>	Assess need, audience size, potential impact and financial viability of additional programs.
<b>DIVERSIFY</b> 	<b>New monitoring, evaluation and learning framework</b>	A comprehensive framework is being developed throughout the 2020/21 program.
	<b>Expand and diversify our facilitator team</b>	Identify and coach a diverse group of experienced facilitators to deliver WELA program content and support.
	<b>Program coordination and logistics</b>	Additional program coordination capacity will be required as we expand our programs.

## 2

## Strengthen our support network

WELA is creating a collaborative and supportive community for women environmentalists from diverse cultural communities, geographic locations and sectoral backgrounds. This project will transform the ability of women across the country to connect, support and empower one another in their leadership for our environment and climate action.

There are many barriers to women contemplating, or stepping into leadership roles including personal and structural barriers. Our programs over the last five years have identified the need for ongoing support for these women. Through online and in-person activities, our growing community will be organised for participants to:

- support and encourage one another in their leadership;
- seek and offer feedback and input to strategies, projects and campaigns; and
- open doors to new opportunities, ideas and people.

Our pilot of this approach has included a face-to-face network in Canberra, our 2019 National Gathering event in Melbourne, and a series of digital network events for WELA program alumni. WELA women are embracing the opportunity to build relationships and create their own support networks.



*The WELA program gave me confidence and helped me find the courage to take the next steps for Kids in Nature Network. I was empowered to create connections, energy and ideas and to continue on my authentic leadership journey. With WELA, you'll be in a space where you belong.*

**Cécile van der Burgh**  
Co-founder and Director of Kids in Nature Network, Education Manager at Port Phillip EcoCentre, and WELA alumna (2018)





*WELA has provided me a steady stream of support and wisdom in a year full of uncertainty. I wasn't sure what to expect from online programming, but I can say with confidence that WELA delivered in spades. I feel so close to and supported by my cohort and the WELA team, and am grateful for the opportunity to have connected with such kind and talented women. I know that their support and advice will continue to sustain and strengthen my work well into the future.*

**Sanaya Khisty**  
**Chief Strategy Officer Beyond Zero Emissions, and WELA alumna (2020)**

Following her participation in the WELA 2020 program, Sanaya stepped up into a new Chief Strategy Officer role at Beyond Zero Emissions.

***Our investment in a new Community Builder position will enable WELA to build on our initial pilot activities, and expand the WELA community beyond our current alumni to support hundreds of women across the country stepping up for our environment and climate action.***

**ACTIVITY**

**SUPPORT**



**Establish our digital workspace for WELA's growing community to collaborate**

By June 2022, over 300 women working for our environment and climate action in Australia will be participating in the WELA online workspace, supporting women across NGOs, grassroots, government and business.

**Train new WELA community members**

Targeted training for new community members to use and engage with our digital workspace. Training will welcome and support women from diverse backgrounds and communities.

**DIVERSIFY**



**Expand our social media presence**

Build broader engagement with interested women and allies, and a public narrative around the importance of women's environmental leadership.

**Expand our public events**

A minimum of six public events each year (40 participants at each) to broaden public discussion of women's leadership for our environment.

**Continue WELA alumni events**

Includes online campaign and social events, and face-to-face gatherings.

# 3 Fund women-led advocacy

Women are already leading campaigns and projects for our environment across the country. However many of these remain under-funded. In many cases, women do not have the funding networks or experience required to fundraise for their ideas, or their approach to bottom-up engagement and collaboration fails to attract traditional philanthropic support.

To address this gap, WELA is establishing a Giving Circle to directly support women-led advocacy for our environment and climate action. We aim to launch the first grant round by the end of 2021.

In doing so, we will:

- leverage additional funding for women-led environmental advocacy with an initial target of raising \$100,000 for granting in the first year, growing to \$150,000 in the second year;
- educate Giving Circle members about their power through their giving, and applying a gender lens to their giving so that they continue to exercise greater influence with their giving in future; and
- expand a thriving network of people, particularly women, supporting women’s leadership for our environment.

***Our investment in a new Community Builder position will enable WELA to establish a volunteer management committee, recruit members to the WELA Giving Circle and ensure an efficient and impactful granting program to women-led advocacy projects.***

	ACTIVITY	
<b>FUND</b> 	<b>Establish a volunteer management committee</b>	To develop fundraising, management and granting processes, establish relevant partnerships, and oversee the delivery of the Giving Circle.
	<b>Establish a fund management partnership</b>	A suitable fund management partner will ensure a high level of relevant governance and tax deductibility for gifts. This approach will build trust and confidence for members.
<b>DIVERSIFY</b> 	<b>Recruit Giving Circle members</b>	Aiming to recruit at least 100 members to the Giving Circle in the first year, with an initial commitment from members to give for three years.



# 4

## Secure our future as an independent organisation

The WELA project is currently hosted by The Green Institute and is overseen by an independent Steering Committee.

In light of our new strategy, we have reviewed this structure and determined that for WELA to grow, reach new audiences and deliver the impact we believe is possible, we must become an independent organisation.

Our steering committee will become the inaugural WELA Board, and we are now recruiting for additional board members. The board includes experienced founders and directors who have established new and successful entities throughout their careers and have considerable governance experience. We are grateful for the guidance of MinterEllison as our pro-bono legal advisors through this process.

WELA will remain as a hosted project at The Green Institute while our new governance structure is in development.

WELA works in partnership with Green Skills Inc, with whom we have an auspicing relationship. Donations to WELA via Green Skills Inc. are tax deductible.



*WELA's power is in the strength of the collective. WELA brings together a group of women to learn from each other, to challenge and inspire, and provides a space to network and build relationships so we can return to our work stronger, more connected and better able to have the impact we need to create positive environmental change.*

**Bernadette Thomas**  
**Maribyrnong City Councillor, and WELA alumna (2017)**

Bernadette successfully ran for local council as a result of the confidence, knowledge and support developed through WELA.



## Immediate requirements:

To increase our capacity, WELA is seeking to employ two new full-time positions: a Community Builder to lead our support network and Giving Circle, and a Programs Director to lead the development, marketing and coordination of our expanding leadership programs.

- To deliver our work plan for this year, we need to raise a further **\$53,000 by 30 June 2021**.
- To invest in the next phase of WELA's development, we need to secure funding of **\$200,000 by 30 June 2021**.
- WELA is seeking support of \$850,000 over the next three years to deliver our full plans.

## Budget

		2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
<b>EXPENSES: CORE COSTS</b>				
<b>Strategic Director</b> (0.8 FTE)	Leadership and Management	\$106,000	\$109,000	\$112,000
<b>Community Builder</b> (1 FTE)	NEW POSITION	\$27,000	\$83,000	\$86,000
<b>Programs Director</b> (1 FTE)	NEW POSITION	-	\$98,500	\$101,000
<b>Administrator</b> (0.4 FTE)	Program support, governance etc	\$20,100	\$29,000	\$30,000
Operating on-costs	Admin, communications, travel etc	\$52,500	\$64,000	\$69,000
<b>PROGRAM COSTS*</b>				
Community leadership program	Facilitation, mentor program, retreats	\$90,000	\$110,000	\$110,000
Developing facilitator team	Recruitment, training etc	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
<b>SUPPORT NETWORK COSTS</b>				
Events and training	Online and face-to-face	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
<b>GIVING CIRCLE COSTS</b>				
Communication, events, management	Admin and governance of the fund	-	\$17,500	\$18,750
Funds granted	For women-led advocacy	-	\$100,000	\$150,000
<b>TOTAL CORE AND ACTIVITY COSTS</b>		<b>\$310,600</b>	<b>\$626,000</b>	<b>\$691,750</b>

<b>INCOME</b>				
Community leadership program	Participant fees and secured scholarships	\$62,000	\$61,500	\$61,500
Giving Circle income raised	Member commitments (for granting)	-	\$100,000	\$150,000
Giving Circle membership fees	Approx. 13%	-	\$13,000	\$19,500
Committed donations and grants	Donors and philanthropy	\$195,000	\$78,000	-
Corporate partnerships	As yet unsecured	-	\$20,000	\$20,000
<b>TOTAL INCOME (CONFIDENT)</b>		<b>\$257,000</b>	<b>\$272,500</b>	<b>\$251,000</b>

<b>ADDITIONAL FUNDING REQUIRED</b>	Donors and philanthropy	<b>\$53,600</b>	<b>\$353,500</b>	<b>\$440,750</b>
------------------------------------	-------------------------	-----------------	------------------	------------------

\* Note that program costs and income will increase with new programs



# Giving to WELA

If you want to save the environment, solve the climate crisis and take on the patriarchy, we can't wait to work with you.

WELA is a project of The Green Institute, and works in partnership with Green Skills Inc. Donations to WELA can be made via our partner Green Skills Inc. Gifts to Green Skills are fully tax-deductible for Australian donors (there is no annual donation limit).

You'll find more about WELA's work on our website – [www.welaprogram.org.au](http://www.welaprogram.org.au)

*To discuss your potential gift to WELA, please contact:*

*Victoria McKenzie-McHarg,  
WELA Strategic Director  
[victoria@wela.org.au](mailto:victoria@wela.org.au)  
or on 0428 480 409*



*Prior to WELA, I did not see myself as the traditional, out-the-front, confident CEO type. The WELA program reaffirmed for me that there are many effective styles of leadership and decision making that involve collaboration and power-sharing, and some of the things that I thought were a problem just fell away.*

**Nicola Rivers**  
**Co-CEO at Environmental Justice Australia, and WELA alumna (2018)**

WELA supported Nicola to develop the confidence to pitch a co-CEO model to the EJA board.



# The WELA Team

## WELA staff

### **Victoria McKenzie-McHarg**

#### **Strategic Director**

Victoria started with WELA in July 2020 to lead the delivery of our expanded vision and mission. Victoria has spent the last 15 years as a climate campaign manager at the Australian Conservation Foundation, Environment Victoria, and more recently as the Manager of Strategy at Bank Australia. Victoria is the Chair of the Climate Action Network of Australia (CANA).



### **Louise Duxbury**

#### **Lead Facilitator, WELA leadership development program**

Louise is the Executive Officer of the WA Landcare Network Inc, a Director of the Gondwana Link Initiative and a Project Manager with Green Skills Inc.



### **Libby Harper**

#### **WELA Administrator**

Libby is a business administration consultant, passionate community gardening advocate, and President of the Moreland Community Gardening Inc. Libby is also a WELA alumna.





## WELA inaugural board includes:

**Karen Alexander OAM**, WELA co-founder, campaign and not-for-profit governance expert. A former Chair of Bush Heritage and Campaign Director at the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF), Karen was also a lead organiser of the famous campaign to stop the Franklin Dam.



**Dr Judy Lambert AM**, WELA co-founder. Judy is a collaborator and passionate environmental advocate. Judy was a Councillor at Manly Council for nine years, worked as an advisor to a Federal Environment Minister and co-founded an environmental consulting business.



**Dr Sue Lewis**, WELA co-founder. Sue was formerly the Director of Swinburne University's Centre for Gender and Cultural Diversity and is a board member of The Green Institute.



**Imogen Jubb** is the National Manager of Zero Carbon Communities at Beyond Zero Emissions and a Director of the Australian Energy Foundation. Imogen is an alumna of the WELA leadership program.



**Cherry Muddle** is a local activist, and formerly the Great Barrier Reef campaigner with the Australian Marine Conservation Society where she led successful campaigns to protect the Reef and the Caley Valley Wetlands from unsustainable development. Cherry is an alumna of the WELA leadership program.





[www.welaprogram.org.au](http://www.welaprogram.org.au)

WELA acknowledges we live and work on the lands of traditional custodians, and we pay our respects to elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the leadership of indigenous women for our environment over tens of thousands of years.