

WOMEN in Transport

Leadership Development
Scholarship Program

WOMEN IN TRANSPORT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Women in Transport (WiT) Leadership Development Scholarship provides high potential women opportunities for career advancement to rise to senior positions within the industry.

Three scholarships up to the value of \$30,000 each are awarded to support courses at the Masters, Postgraduate or executive level, related to a transport and infrastructure area. Scholarships are open to all women (including non-binary and gender diverse people) employed by the VPS within the MTIA and its project, or by DoT and its associated agencies.

Below is a summary of 12 WiT Scholar's profiles who have either completed their course or continue to complete their studies while working in the Victorian Transport public sector.

Since 2017, 15 women have been awarded scholarships, with many moving into positions of influence since commencing their studies.



2022 Scholars

Aditi Sachdeva

One of three successful 2022 Scholars to be awarded the Leadership Development Scholarship, Aditi Sachdeva is currently employed as a Senior Advisor (Strategy) – Network Pipeline & Programs within the Department of Transport. The Pipeline Strategy team sets the strategic framework for the pipeline including both prioritisation of solutions and development of forward programs at DoT. Aditi aspires to lead teams, major state projects and put a value focus on 'customer-centricity' into practice.

Aditi's approved course, the Master of Professional Management will

help her to develop customer-centric cultures and boost her confidence to unleash her strategic leadership to navigate through change in mindsets, while harnessing the true potential of diversity and inclusion within the Transport sector.

By completing her course, Aditi's aim is to apply and promote best practice safe system guides to improve safety and accessibility of the transport system. Aditi also aims to contribute to the 'safety-focussed-culture' to better anticipate costs/risks/reactions and plan countermoves relative to project options, subsequently, contributing

towards the overall reduction in environmental impacts across the state projects.



Rhiannon Drummond-Clark

One of three successful 2022 Scholars to be awarded the Leadership Development Scholarship, Rhiannon Drummond-Clark currently works as an Environmental Adviser at Suburban Rail Loop Authority (SRLA). SRLA is committed to continually striving for improved environmental outcomes by establishing meaningful and practical sustainability targets. Rhiannon has always had a strong interest in environment and sustainability and is passionate about public transport due to its undeniable potential to help reduce emissions. Rhiannon's

approved course - the Masters of Environment and Climate Emergency at Curtin University – prioritises climate change emergency planning and response whilst developing multi-disciplinary capabilities such as economics, policy development, project management and urban and regional planning. This course will position Rhiannon as a leader in an emerging field, learning the most up-to-date strategies and developments in innovation for managing the environment, sustainability and climate risk in transport.



Tamara Preuss

One of three successful 2022 Scholars to be awarded the Leadership Development Scholarship, Tamara Clare Preuss is a Principal Lawyer for the North East Link Project (NELP), currently working on the Public Private Partnership (PPP) tunnelling package (Central Package). Tamara's approved course, the Master of Laws at Melbourne University, focused on construction law subjects, will seek to cultivate her as an expert in infrastructure delivery and construction

law. The course will provide the foundation for advancing Tamara into key leadership roles within Victoria's exciting portfolio of transformative transport projects and position her for advancement in delivery teams where there is commonly an under representation of women in the workforce. Tamara is excited to be working in transport infrastructure in Victoria during a time of such growth and development.



2021 Scholars

Helen Jing Yun Cui

As a successful WiT Leadership Development Scholarship recipient for 2021, Helen Cui commenced a Masters of Infrastructure Engineering and Management at Deakin University. To build on Helen's existing studies in Civil Engineering and Management from RMIT previously, her master's offers exposure to lessons of design and sustainability in both railway and transport systems. Additionally, the course has sharpened Helen's stakeholder management and problem-solving abilities, to enhance

negotiations during the design phase of complex projects as part of Victoria's Big Build, which is invaluable as a current V-line Project Manager. Helen's passion for engineering was cultivated from her childhood Lego sessions and now encompasses a vision to contribute to building a sustainable transport infrastructure. Helen aims to demonstrate strong leadership skills and be a role model, inspiring a future generation of engineers, particularly female engineers.



Kate Stapleton

Kate Stapleton, Director Planning and Heritage Practice, Transport Precincts within the Department of Transport was awarded the Women in Transport (WiT) Leadership Development Scholarship in 2021.

Kate is a passionate urban planner and policy reformer who, thanks to the WiT scholarship, has been studying towards an Executive Masters in Cities at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Through this experience, Kate has been able to work with and learn from international experts in the complexities and delivery of sustainable and compact cities.

This includes exploring how transport infrastructure can be delivered to support integrated land use and transport outcomes in Victoria, governance reform and importance of partnership.

Kate reflects on her ability to juggle work, life and study stating that the 'challenge is about making good choices, having a great team in place and good communication', while also having an 'incredibly supportive boss'. Kate encourages all future Scholarship applicants to think about how learning can build new skills that can be applied in the Transport Portfolio – you won't get a scholarship if you don't apply!



Annie Xu

As Senior Digital Product Owner, Department of Transport, Annie Xu was a successful WiT Scholar in 2021, leading to a Masters of Business Administration (MBA) at the University of Melbourne. With a background in Engineering and a passion for working with technology, Annie aspired to advance her leadership and strategic management skills to promote the adoption of innovative technologies within the transport industry. The MBA advanced Annie's skills set in finance, marketing, operations and has also evolved her as a person, boosting

her communication and negotiation skills and 'big picture perspective'. A driving force behind Annie's innovative tools and technology platform enhancements is to ensure transport information is accessible for 'all commuters', including those with a disability and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. As a first-generation migrant, Annie understands the challenges migrants and refugees experience entering the workforce and strives to be a role model for women, in particular, seeking a career in the transport sector.



2020 Scholars

Kim Achkar

Kim Achkar, Project Manager of North East Link Project (NELP) was awarded the WiT Leadership Development Scholarship in 2020 and is more than half way in completing a Master of Engineering Management (Project Management), at Melbourne University. After completing a Bachelor in Civil Engineering, Kim was motivated to expand of her management skills as a leader in the transport industry. Since commencing this stimulating yet challenging journey, Kim reports that her career goals are on track and that the course has contributed to the acceleration of her own personal and professional growth.

Whilst working on one of the largest infrastructure projects in Victoria's history, NELP, which is building the missing link from M80 to the

Eastern Freeway, Kim considers the opportunity to combine her work experience and study to be the essential ingredients to her transition into more senior roles. The benefit of practical learning while digesting the theoretical key management principles and tools has led Kim into exciting new areas of her professional development, including the current delivery of piling works and future tunnel boring machines (TBMs) arrival and assembly.

Kim's advice for future WiT Leadership Development Scholarship applicants is to "make sure you know what the gap you are fulfilling in your career is to get the most out of the scholarship's benefits. If you are not totally sure why, you may give up – so understand what you want to develop and how it will help you in your career".



Marion Carrabin

In 2020, Marion Carrabin was a successful applicant for the Women in Transport (WiT) Leadership Development Scholarship program. Marion has almost completed her Masters of Infrastructure Engineering and Management (Monash University) and recently commenced as Change Lead, embedded into the Rail Network Alliance of Metro Tunnel Project.

As a skilled Systems Engineer, with a Master of Control and Systems already under her belt, Marion completed a 'skills mapping' exercise with her manager and identified the need to further develop her civil engineering expertise if she were to overcome the barriers to more senior roles within

the industry. Marion has enhanced her understanding of the sector's economics, key thinking and policies behind developing a business case, risk management strategies and the fundamentals of transport, thereby contributing to a global view of the sector.

Marion's ability to complete full time work while studying part time (two subjects a semester) has been no small feat. Upon reflection, Marion acknowledges the challenges she has experienced to get this done, but also recognises the opportunities that her hard work and commitment has now meant for her future career pathway.



2020 Scholars (continued)

Julia Jenvey

Julia Jenvey, Manager Sport and Recreation, North East Link Project (NELP) was awarded the Women in Transport (WiT) Leadership Development Scholarship Program in 2020 to complete a Masters in Urban Planning and Environment at RMIT. A crucial aspect of Julia's role is to strategically assess the project's sport and recreation impact on the multiple stakeholders, including the broader community, and identify mitigation strategies to satisfy all parties. Julia has been instrumental in developing a best practice framework focused on achieving high quality community outcomes that encompass planning, design and delivery of sport and recreation infrastructure projects to meet community need. Since commencing her studies, Julia's knowledge of sustainable

urban planning and design has further enhanced her leadership capacity whilst stepping into a new management role. Julia is currently preparing for an International Study tour to Vietnam where she will be immersed in urban planning, sustainability and governance in a mega city which will undoubtedly be a highlight of the course. While tackling full time work with part time study and a young family has been 'tricky' (during home schooling as well!), Julia acknowledges the scholarship has overcome the financial barrier to undertaking post graduate study, for which she is extremely grateful. Julia's advice to future applicants is to definitely give it a go and reach out for support where required, as the rewards far outweigh the challenges.



2019 Scholars

Melissa Webb

Melissa Webb, Brand and Creative Advisor, Level Crossing Removal Project (LXRP) was awarded the Women in Transport (WiT) Leadership Development Scholarship in 2019 to support her professional practice in strategic leadership. As part of this, she chose to do the Masters of Design Futures at RMIT. As part of the Creative Services team within the Strategic Communications Department, this course has built Melissa's capacity to utilise human centred design principals to better solve business objectives and improve design outcomes within government.

Working for an organisation heavily focused on innovative solutions, Melissa has been focused on sharing her learnings along the way, working on how to integrate human centred design approaches into her wider team's ways of working. Now part of an alumni of high performing women, Melissa is keen to share her experience and knowledge with future Scholarship applicants and promote the opportunities available from the Women in Transport programs.



Alexandra Morey

Current Principal Engineer - Engineering Assurance for Metro Tunnel at the Department of Transport, Alexandra Morey completed her Masters in Systems Engineering at The University of New South Wales as a 2019 WiT Scholar. Alexandra has witnessed the evolution and increased importance applied to systems engineering skill sets in Victorian projects and the lack of locally trained professionals needed to resource the nationwide infrastructure boom. As safety and human factors specialist, Alexandra has been able to use the knowledge gained from the Systems Engineering Masters to support the goal of enabling the Victorian Government to become a

better-informed client by knowing what is expected, acceptable and achievable on these complex and integrated projects. Another key driver of the systems engineering focus is its ability to identify, prioritise and address project needs created an integrated system that works as one scope, as opposed to multiple siloed works that don't talk to each other'. Alexandra acknowledges the financial barrier of further studies and is a keen advocate of the WiT Scholarship program. Alexandra strongly encourages all VPS women in transport to consider applying if they have a skillset they wish to improve upon, as the demand is clear, and opportunities are endless.



Dishita Masalia

Dishita Masalia successfully secured the WiT Leadership Development Scholarship in 2019, commencing a Master of Business Administration (MBA) Majoring in Business management at University of Canberra almost immediately. Dishita completed her studies full time, while working full time at V-line, within 12-months of her commencement. Despite this period being infinitely exhausting and a strain on her family/personal life, Dishita received unlimited support and encouragement from her employer,

colleagues and family. The MBA built on Dishita's previous work experience and studies in Commerce and Law gained prior to moving from India to Australia and has accelerated her strategic, analytical and financial skills which has boosted her overall confidence and leadership skills. Dishita continued to work hard since completing her course, having achieved two new role promotions since commencing the Scholarship program and is now Contract Manager at V-Line.



2018 Scholars

Esther Warren MBA BE(Hons) CPEng

Esther Warren, Executive Director of Strategic Projects within the Department of Transport (DoT), received this scholarship in 2018 and has since completed a Master of Business Administration (MBA) (Melbourne Business School). Esther acknowledges the financial contribution made by the scholarship directly helped her overcome the often-prohibitive cost of tertiary study.

Esther's MBA has strongly contributed to a steep career trajectory and the skills she has gained have enhanced her engineering problem solving, infrastructure delivery experience and have also been able to apply these learnings to a broader strategic lens of Victoria's transport sector.

"A highlight of my studies was an exchange to the University of California, Los Angeles where I was able to study amongst some of the top MBA students in the world and also gain insight into the way the city of Los Angeles approaches infrastructure planning and place making" shared Esther.

"I am fortunate to have inspirational women working within our sector such as the newly appointed Deputy Premier Jacinta Allan".

Esther is a strong advocate for more women to enter the transport industry, highlighting this will ultimately result in a more diverse talent pool to achieve better outcomes for the Department and sector as a whole. Esther also focuses time to support her fellow women engineers to navigate this industry and identify opportunities that will accelerate their careers.

While balancing full time work and part time study over four years was challenging, Esther reflects on the many supporters at the Level Crossing Removal Project & within the Network Design and Integration Group who have contributed to her success, "There is a unique stress that comes with an upcoming exam week coupled with looming project deadlines. Having the support of my managers & senior leadership team was critical to gaining the most out of my studies".

Esther's advice for future scholarship applicants is to perform a 'skills mapping' activity against their mid to long term career goals to help identify how formal studies could both support their goals and the sector's needs. Esther encourages potential applicants to "give it a go" as a lot can be gained through the personal reflection required to participate in the application process.



Contact

Please email queries to the WiT Scholarship Secretariat

E: witprograms@levelcrossings.vic.gov.au