



Case Study

Bridging the Gap 2022



Dattner Group
Little by Little

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At Dattner Group, we acknowledge First Nations people both here in Australia and around the world. We thank First Nations people for the countless millennia of teaching, caring, learning, leadership and culture, and we pay our deepest respects to the wisdom of Indigenous people and custom past, present and emerging.

CONTEXT

The Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) is working with the water sector in support of gender diverse participation in executive leadership positions. They support women who aspire to fulfil their executive career ambition by investing in programs to elevate their visibility and influence.

The water sector partnered with Dattner Group to deliver a multi-faceted, experiential program that recognised how women approach leadership.

The Insight - Executive Leadership for Women in Water Program

- This is part of the commitment in Water for Victoria to focus on gender equity and to develop programs in support of women wanting to lead at the highest level. Gender balance in the sector will enrich discussions and see diverse perspectives result in better decision making and good legacy outcomes.
- Insight is a bespoke highly personalised program focused on insightful self-development and learning from others. It aims to bring together an intellectually rich group of women ready to take the next step into more senior leadership roles and create a collaborative and supportive peer network.
- This program has been designed to elevate the visibility of women in water and ancillary industries and to support them to successfully step into leadership roles at the highest level. In particular, the Minister for Water (The Hon Lisa Neville) wanted to support women in the smaller regional rural organisations to consider Insight as signalling their intentions and their long-term commitment to making a difference in the communities in which they live and work.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

DELWP outlined the program objectives in their initial Request for Quote (RFQ) as follows:

Building resilient leadership

In Dattner Group's response, we addressed each of these objectives and additionally provided an out-of-scope piece about our signature program, BRIDGING THE GAP.

Increase circles of influence and networks

Lengthen vision and broaden scope in choosing career pathways

At its heart, Bridging the Gap ensures both men and women are part of the change to create a diverse, inclusive and agile sector. BTG is about the need for systemic change (of which men are an intrinsic part) and hence the catalyst for sector alignment.

Getting a seat at the table – What is missing in your leadership journey?

Create a community of practice and alumni

In this context, the Bridging the Gap program reinforced and leveraged the benefits inspired by the Insight program to look at the need for change in organisations participating on the Insight program and across the sector more broadly.

PROGRAM DELIVERY

- **INSIGHT**

1. All women participated in an interview and assessment process (as a practice run) with an Executive Search Firm. This was endorsed by their Managing Director or Chief Executive Officer. Selection was based on the interview findings around readiness and developmental needs.

2. Dattner Group then did the following:

- Using the recruitment report and a series of key performance documents and diagnostics for each woman, we wrote a simple individual report for each participant.
- Each participant participated in 1:1 coaching with our team to ascertain her ambitions for the program, her strengths and her sense of development opportunities. This rich pre-program coaching ensured each woman was well prepared for the journey ahead.
- We led a leadership program with a deep dive on personal purpose, values, and personal strategy mapping. In the first retreat we built a community charter and set up an online community forum (simple, personal, intimate, supportive)

- At this point we all experienced major disruption as the COVID 19 pandemic emerged and Australia (in particular Victoria) was faced with substantial restrictions and lockdowns. We quickly and seamlessly shifted the entire program to online delivery and reviewed and refined the content, style and delivery to ensure it became more relevant, intense and pragmatic.
- The online community blossomed into a significant executive safety net where ideas and approaches to managing the pandemic were shared instantly and without barriers.
- The program was delivered online and adapted to ensure the development of skill while focusing on collaboration, inclusion and legacy mindset.
- In April 2020, each of the women were invited to identify a significant senior male leader to partner them on the journey.

PROGRAM DELIVERY

- **BRIDGING THE GAP**

1. Bridging the Gap became a parallel program [13 male executives] specifically chosen to partner the women. Within three years, together they would create a critical mass of engaged, informed leaders - both men and women - in the Water Sector; committed to ensuring the best leaders are attracted, selected, and supported to achieve their full potential and elevate the sector's performance.
2. Along the way this primary goal has included the need to elevate the visibility, skills and contribution of women leading.
3. This program was also delivered online; it missed the initial community building of a face to face retreat that Insight benefitted from, but very quickly the men entered into the spirit of Insight.
4. We focused on:
 - a. The power of privilege.
 - b. The importance of emotional agility.
 - c. The development of an approach to leadership competencies that was about including a 'meta' model of leadership driven by the women in large part. They identified those attributes of leadership so sorely needed and so often overlooked in traditional leadership competency frameworks.

- **LEADERSHIP OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (LOC)**

The Minister appointed a leadership oversight committee to guide the design and undertake the final selection of women to join the Insight program in its inaugural year.

With the support of Dattner Group, the LOC went on to articulate a simple scope for the partnerships [Insight and BTG peers] to work towards in developing their individual organisation's nuanced intent within this initiative including establishing:

- A clear goal.
- The audience the initiative was designed to influence.
- The message of 'we are gender blind'.
- The possible platforms the program/initiative would use to influence the sector.

PROGRAM DELIVERY

- **SECTOR EVENTS**

Sector events were included in the initiative to increase the visibility of the various regional organisations and opportunities for women in leadership.

These initiatives were designed and facilitated by DG and continued to evolve to provide sector wide means of influence on the topic of women and leadership and why this shift is of such importance.

- **THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP & COLLABORATION**

This project has become a signature example of the founding principles of leading for the greater good and the importance of collaboration, inclusion, legacy and trust.

The project has involved many parties, including the Deputy Secretary of DELWP, Women in Water Directors Network, guest speakers from the water sector and CEOs and MDs from other sectors to share their own senior leadership journeys, organisations within the sector who have significant influence on the Victorian community and, of course, the incredible women of Insight and the men of Bridging the Gap who support them. The influence and impact are growing exponentially.

"The value I got from the program, Fabian, all of the DG team and the special group we created is tremendous. The program was truly unique."

"It was such an incredible initiative and its meaningful impact on me along with treasured connections will be lifelong I hope - it will be a very hard act to follow."

"The Program provided an incredible journey for us all that changed so many of our lives!"

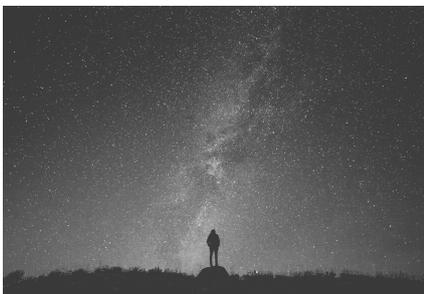
"Huge commitment to the program by the Dattner Group."



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ABOUT US

For thirty-five years, Dattner Group has been questioning, challenging, and driving leadership to be more collaborative, inclusive, legacy-minded, and gender balanced in its approach. We know that the leadership practices which have brought us here are not sufficient for ensuring a sustainable and profitable future.



WHY

Dattner Group has big ambitions - ambitions to change the narrative of leadership, for the greater good.

HOW

Dattner Group contributes to creating a culture of rapid and adaptive learning that empowers individuals to contribute to our complex and changing world.



RESULTS

We work with our clients to develop leaders at all levels who are deeply self-aware, guided by their values, driven by purpose, and skilled at sustaining constructive relationships.

Always Accountable | Calmly Courageous
Deeply Collaborative | Categorically Curious

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