

PATHWAYS TO POLITICS PROGRAM FOR WOMEN

Professor Vicky Browning
Program Director

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Pacific Regional Conference



What do these young women have in common?



Agenda

- The **QUT Pathways to Pathways to Politics Program for Women**
 - The aim, ethos and origins of the program
 - Overview of the QUT program
- What **our young female alum** say about:
 - getting into politics
 - interventions to support young female aspiring politicians

Aim and Ethos of the Program

- **Aim**
 - To provide women with the knowledge, skills and networks to reach elected office at local, state and national levels.
- **Ethos**
 - Bipartisan
 - Creates a network to support women to gain access to politics
 - Respect (Chatham House rules, Code of conduct)



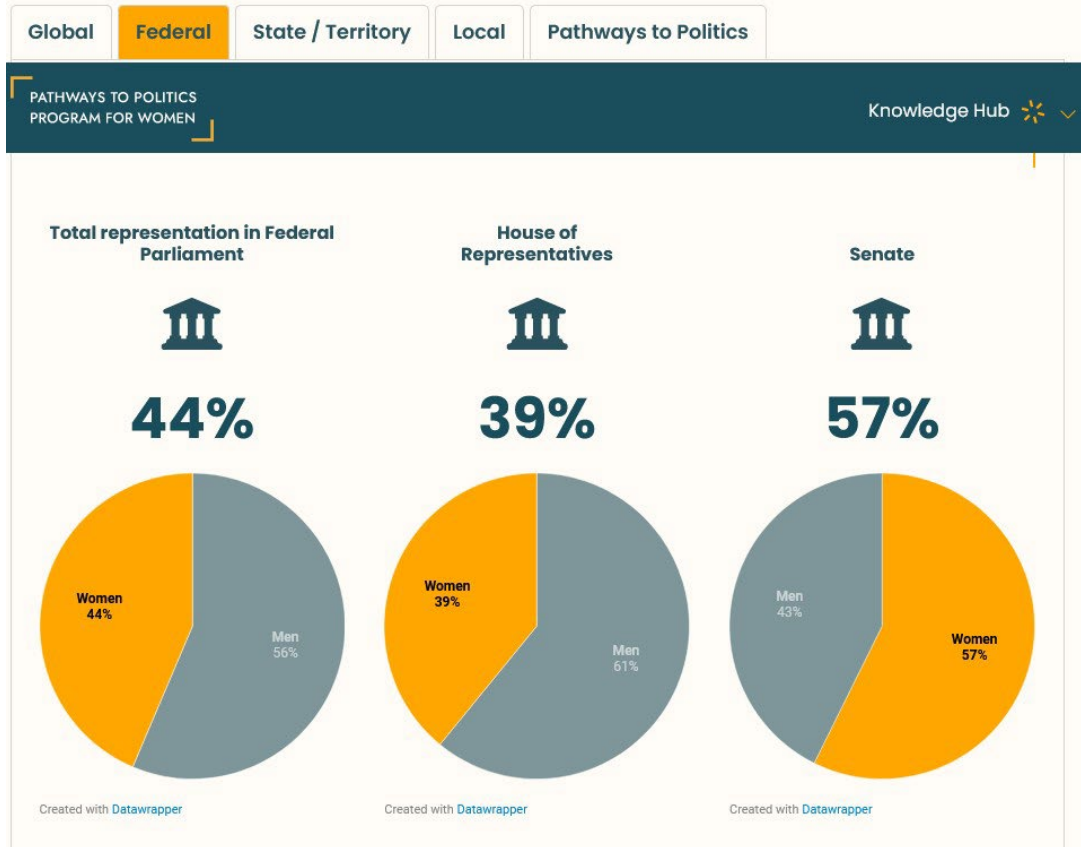
Origins of the Program



- Created in partnership with the Women's Leadership Institute Australia & Trawalla Foundation.
- Redress the underrepresentation of women in Australian politics.
- A national network of independent programs based at Australian universities in every state and territory.



Why does it matter?



- Federal parliament: ranked 32 (IPU) (Oct, 2023)
- Queensland
 - State parliament: 37%
 - Local council: Mayors: 26%, Councillors 36.6%
- Young women are underrepresented (Church, 2021)

Female political leaders do make a difference.

- Countries led by women were **better at controlling the impact of COVID** due to a high level of trust and credibility given to these leaders based on **their caring and nurturing style of leadership** (Maity & Barlaskar, 2022; Bruce et al, 2022).
- Women mayors with a high proportion of female councillors **increased the probability of budgetary and financial stability and keeping within the legal debit limit** (Balaguer-Coll & Ivanova-Toneva, 2021)
- *Gilligan(1982): women “construe social reality differently” which leads to a distinctive female voice that embraces ideals of responsibility, caring and interconnectedness (p. 171).*

Selection for the Program

To be eligible for the program you must be:

- an Australian citizen/Australian permanent resident/holder of a permanent Humanitarian Visa
- female-identifying or non-binary in gender identification
- a Queensland resident.

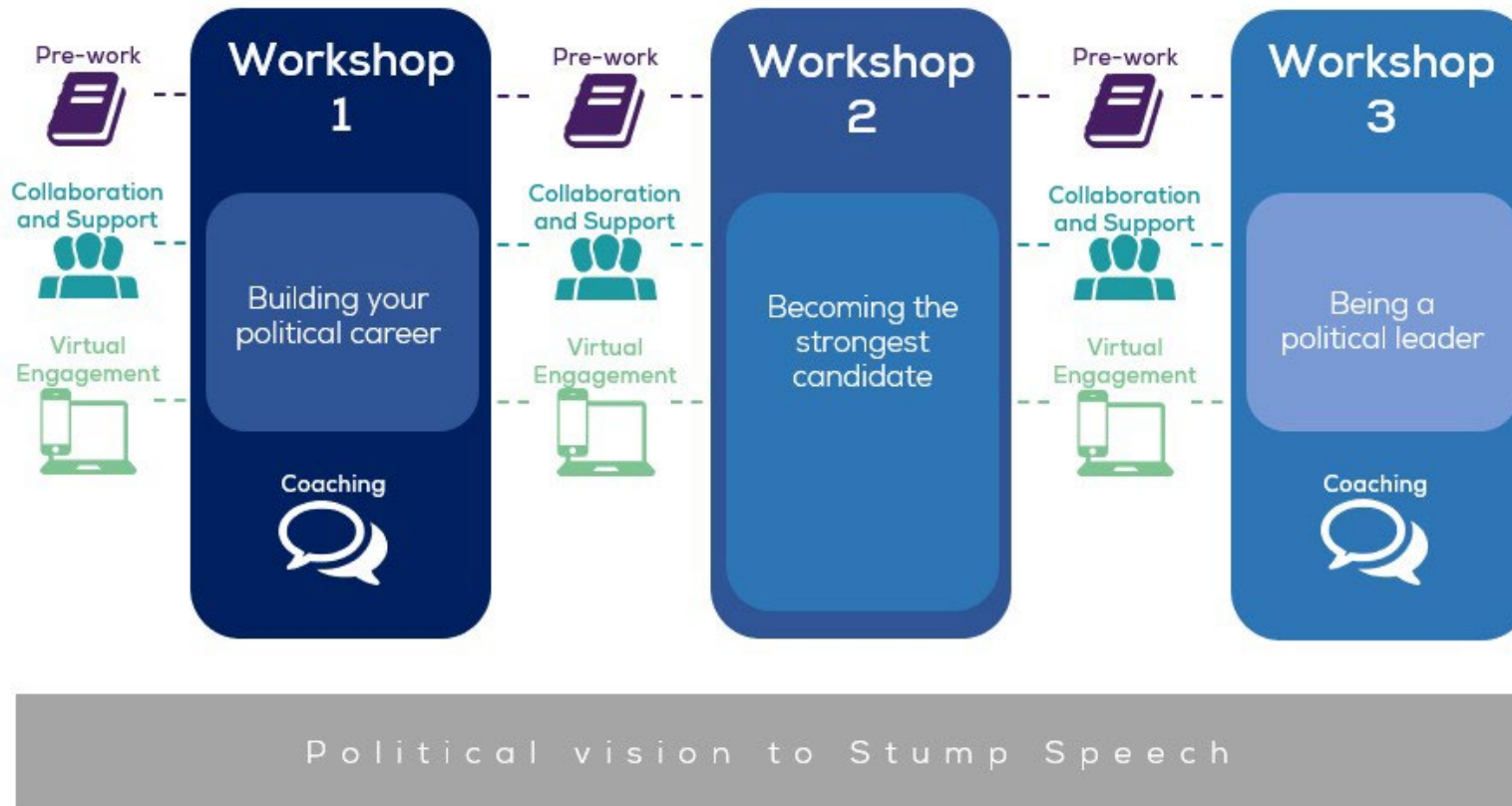
Equity criteria

- identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- identify as LGBTQIA+
- previous status as a refugee or current holder of a humanitarian visa
- regional, rural, or isolated background
- disadvantaged socio-economic circumstances
- person with a disability and/or chronic medical condition
- person from a culturally and linguistically diverse background.

Participants selected on a competitive basis against the following criteria:

- commitment to seeking elected office
- leadership experience
- professional and life experience
- political engagement
- ability to tell your story in a compelling way

QUT Pathways to Politics Program for Women



Program Topics

Workshop 1	Workshop 2	Workshop 3
Making the decision to run Navigating the Parliamentary Workplace Culture Creating my story – my why Political planning Coaching Circle	Campaigning Fundraising Economics and Policy Art of networking Delivering your speech Media training	Power with Purpose Ethical dilemmas and decision making Political Leadership Coaching Circle Speeches in Parliament Graduation




Workshop sessions

2023 cohort



What is the impact?

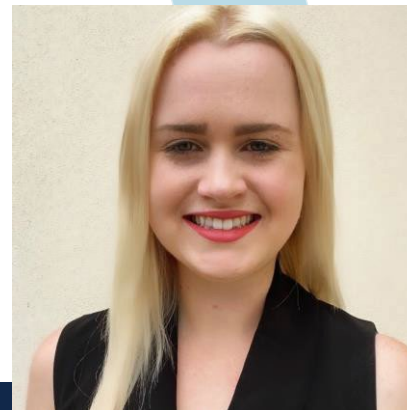
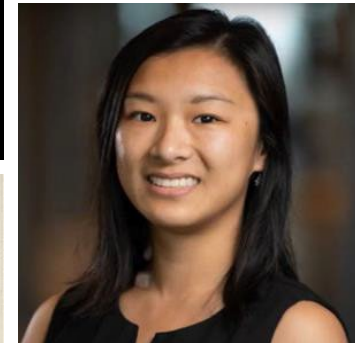


"After completing the program, I know I have a future in politics and now feel confident to step up into leadership roles within my party."

– Taylor-Rose Hull, QUT Pathways to Politics alum

The Pathways to Politics Program changed my life. Being able to live my truth and express myself with like-minded women only furthered my passion and aspirations to run for public office. (Sara Diana Faraj) Young Alum

What do our young female alum have to say about young women in parliaments and politics?



Benefits.

New generational perspective, energy, ideas and innovative solutions especially technological solutions

“We represent the voices of hardworking young professionals in the community and we provide a fresh perspective to solutions”

“Today’s youth are tomorrow’s leaders so it is imperative that they are involved in decision making that will ultimately impact theirs and their children’s futures. “

“For far too long, young women have sat on the sidelines and watched as men made decisions that directly impacted their futures without understanding the complete impact it may have. A great example of this is how extremely underfunded under researched the Endometriosis disease is. Governments are now scrambling to fund research centres and laboratories for a disease long ignored and misdiagnosed for many women.”

Barriers.

- Not being preselected to win-able seats
- Little time and financial means to participate in foundational activities
- Work and family commitments. “However, from my experience and from meeting other young women in politics, I have learnt that we are truly the best multitaskers!”
- Racism (being of Middle Eastern descent), living in Regional Queensland and ageism (others believing that I don’t yet possess the right life skills)
- Lack of self-belief

What does the research say about barriers?

- Not acceptable for girls and young women to engage in political activities. One in five (19%) have personally been discouraged from doing so
- 72% of young Australian women do not feel politics is an equal or inclusive space for them, with just 1 in 10 believing Parliament was a safe workplace for them

(*Equal Power Now: Girls, Young Women & Political Participation. 2022*)

- Double obstacle of youth and gender (Pan, 2020; Burness, 2000)

Interventions

- Education and transparency about the roles and skills of political representatives
- Networking events
 - “I got to network with women who have experienced similar things, so I got to confirm that the things I was thinking weren’t just in my head. They were real. I got to meet a lot of other women in the same situation”*
- Mentorship programs - connect experienced politicians with young aspiring women leaders
- Preselect diverse candidates, whether First Nations, women, culturally diverse or youth
- “Political movements should make stronger connections with local community and professional groups to inspire more female leaders to run in politics ”
- Educating our future leaders on democracy and political representation during their schooling years

What do we provide through the QUT Program?

Individual strategies

- Supportive women networks

“The program explicitly builds those connections and supports for people outside of the traditional power structures.”

- Understanding what it means to be a female politician

“It also “humanised” the prospect of being a politician through candid conversations with current and past female politicians.”

- Mentoring (PAM)
- Coaching
- Building knowledge, skills and personal beliefs

What do we provide through the QUT Program?

- **Cultural strategies**

- Recognise and honour the 'female style' of leadership
- Support more androgynous ways of leading that reflect the greater complexity of organisations and the environment in which we operate

- **Structural strategies**

- Creating awareness with the program and research to change the structures that marginalise women

PATHWAYS TO POLITICS
PROGRAM FOR WOMEN



“If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair.”
Shirley Chisholm



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Thank you
Questions

