



“Previously to Fairley I did not value or acknowledge that I was a leader.”

Sarmed Yassin Fairley Fellow 2015

Leadership comes in all shapes and sizes. It's not a title, it's a state of being, and rather leadership is a way of living for anyone in our community who has the courage to step up, to take responsibility for someone or something and to see their actions through to a conclusion. A lesson Fairley Fellow Sarmed Yassin discovered during his journey in the Fairley Leadership Program.

At the age of 22, Sarmed never set out to be a leader, all he wanted was to contribute to his community in a meaningful way. Unsure of what this looked like he applied for the Fairley Leadership Program which helped shape the young enthusiast into the community leader he is today.

“Previously to Fairley I did not value or acknowledge that I was a leader, I was definitely nervous when I commenced. At the launch evening, I felt rather nervous being amongst other leaders in the community however very quickly I realised they felt just as nervous.”

With the support from his Fairley Fellows, Sarmed was able to network with a diverse cohort of leaders from across the region, a valuable opportunity that assisted Sarmed in his future roles. Not long after finishing Fairley, Sarmed was employed by Greater Shepparton City Council which allowed him to work on the strategic direction of multiculturalism in the region.

“I always thought I could only influence or provide input at a grass roots level, I now acknowledge that I have a role to play at influencing at a broader level. I look at things broader and how issues/opportunities link with each other. A very important attribute for a community leader.”

After successfully implementing a number of initiatives at Greater Shepparton City Council that engaged and strengthened the collocation of our regions diverse community, Sarmed continued to lead in the multicultural space. For the next few years, he worked in a number of roles with organisations such as Uniting Care, The Ethnic Council of Shepparton and Districts and the Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project.

Sarmed also co-founded Culture and Co, a social enterprise providing cultural training and consulting services to businesses, Not-for-Profits and government agencies to support them with designing and delivering impactful programs for people from multicultural backgrounds. This is enabling him to tackle the structural challenges many people from refugee/migrant background face, and work with various stakeholders to design collaborative initiatives that create opportunities for all.

“Fairley challenged me to broaden my thinking across issues and solutions. It gave me the spark to mobilise into action and I've learnt to value myself and feel confident in my ability to walk into a room, hold my head high and share my opinions/viewpoints in a respectful and informed way.”

Sarmed now sees leadership as an ongoing journey, continually learning from each other but also learning more about ourselves.

Everyone one of us has the capacity and the choice to lead, to inspire and to create our own style of leadership. It doesn't matter what type of leader you become to be, when you choose to lead, you're choosing to make positive changes for your life and those around you.