Evaluation of the SILA program – Cohort 1 report

4 November 2022

nous

Nous Group acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging, who maintain their culture, country and spiritual connection to the land, sea and community.

This artwork was developed by Marcus Lee Design to reflect Nous Group's Reconciliation Action Plan and our aspirations for respectful and productive engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

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1 Executive summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The first cohort for the Social Impact Leadership Australia (SILA) program has been a success. SILA delivered overwhelmingly positive outcomes for the CEO participants. SILA is also on track to deliver outcomes at the organisation and for-purpose ecosystem levels.

The SILA program is designed as a ground-breaking program that aims to disrupt common ideas of leadership. It ambitiously aims to catalyse change and achieve impact across three intersecting pillars:

- supporting individual leaders by improving their understanding of self while building self-leadership and leadership cultures
- supporting for-purpose organisations by aligning self-leadership with organisational strategy to advance organisational capability
- creating a stronger for-purpose ecosystem by building a network of system-thinking leaders that can lead for social impact and navigate the complex social ecosystem.

SILA ACHIEVED POSITIVE OUTCOMES ACROSS MULTIPLE LEVELS FOR CEOS

CEOs were very positive in their overall assessment of the program with a strong net promoter score of 86 out of 100 – 16 out of 19 CEOs that responded to the post-program survey rated the program 10 out of 10. For context, an NPS score above 80 is seen as a world class result.[1]

Central to the very high satisfaction ratings from CEOs were the individual outcomes the program achieved for the participants. CEOs reported increased knowledge and understanding of leadership and social impact theories and tools, improved understanding of self and self-confidence to apply new skills and mindsets in their role. Critically, over 80 percent of CEO survey respondents agreed to some degree that they can now better manage their wellbeing as a leader.

[1]Qualtrics, *What is a good Net Promoter Score?,* accessed 4 November 2022, available at: https://www.qualtrics.com/experience-management/customer/good-net-promoter-score/

ORGANISATIONS EXPERIENCED MOSTLY POSITIVE OUTCOMES

Almost every stakeholder - including CEOs, their SUL and board delegates - interviewed felt their organisation's investment of time and energy into the program was justified. This endorsement was found even though some organisations experienced significant disruption due to the program, namely during and after the sabbatical period.

Although to early for many to identify tangible changes in performance, all the CEO survey respondents agreed to some degree that their organisation has or is likely to enhance its capability and culture and to experience tangible improvements across key business measures due to their participation in SILA. Several stakeholders shared organisational changes that they have already witnessed. This includes new organisational behaviours and mindsets, new approaches to leadership development and, in a few cases, tangible improvements in capability and performance.

THERE ARE EARLY SIGNS OF ECOSYSTEM IMPACT

SILA is on track to have broader impact at the ecosystem level. This evaluation has documented examples of individual CEOs pivoting towards systems leadership and emerging collaborations between participants. The improvements in organisational capability also have the potential to have ripple effects on sector leadership capability.

IMPROVEMENTS TO PROGRAM DESIGN AND DELIVERY WILL STRENGTHEN SILA FOR FUTURE COHORTS

Positive outcomes were achieved in the face of significant challenges due to COVID-19 and the novel nature of the program. This meant that the SILA program team were both trailblazing new ground whilst rapidly adjusting program design and delivery.

Although positive about the benefits of the program, all stakeholders provided useful feedback on different aspects that can improve. This means there is an opportunity to build on the success of cohort one and learn from its shortcomings to improve the program for future cohorts.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION FUNDINGS

BACKGROUND TO THE EVALUATION

The Centre for Social Impact (CSI) has engaged Nous Group (Nous) to complete a long-term evaluation of the SILA program. This report focuses on the experience of the first 23 participants that completed the SILA program from July 2021 through to June 2022.

Nous has used a modified model for leadership evaluation based off the Kirkpatrick, Phillips and Kaufman models[1]. This modified model allows the evaluation to assess outcomes across the individual, organisation and ecosystem levels as per the objectives of the SILA program (*see Figure 1*). The rest of the executive summary provides an assessment of the extent to which SILA has achieved its stated objectives across the six levels. It then provides a summary of the key recommendations to improve the program.

Figure 1 | Modified model of leadership evaluation for the SILA program
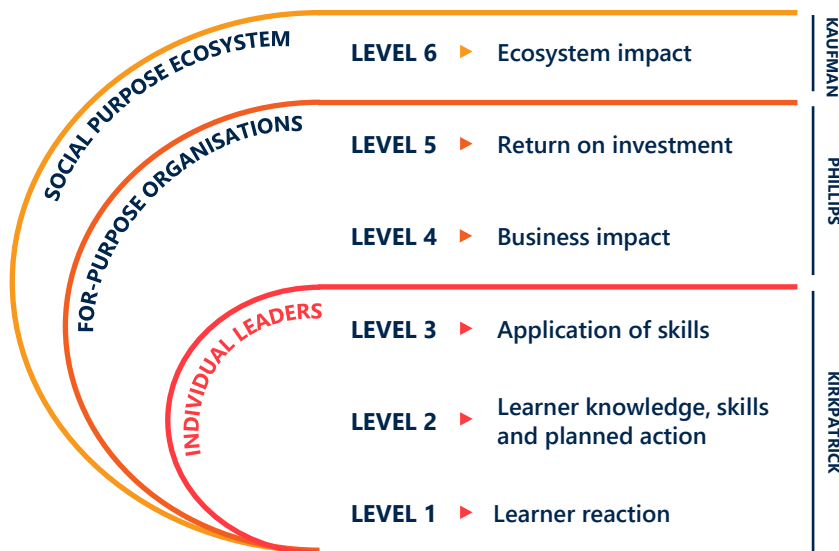

THE COHORT ONE EVALUATION REPORT IS THE FIRST OF FIVE.

The five cohort reports will be followed by an overall summative evaluation report to identify the program's impact and outcomes on individuals, organisations and the ecosystem.

The evaluation of the program will focus mostly on formative findings early on to inform future direction. Each cohort specific evaluation will also include summative aspects to assess the impact of the program on individual participants and their organisation. It is likely that individual and organisation outcomes will fully manifest one to two years post program completion. For this reason the evaluation will follow up with program participants one year and two years post program completion.

The long-term nature of the evaluation will allow it to explore the cumulative impact of SILA on the for-purpose ecosystem. It will be difficult to observe the program's tangible influence on the ecosystem in the early cohort evaluations. Later cohort evaluations and the final summative report will highlight these cumulative impacts. The graph presents expects ecosystem outcomes may accumulate over time.
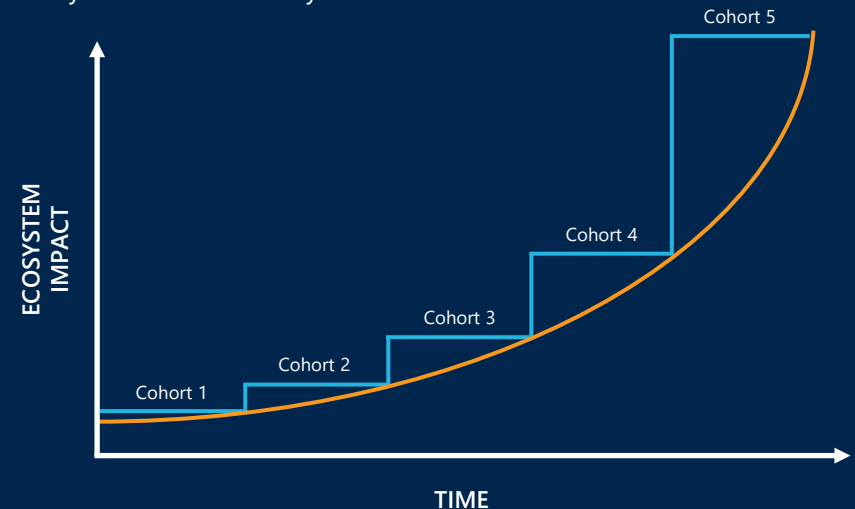
[1] D.L. Kirkpatrick & J.D. Kirkpatrick, *Evaluating Training Programs*, 1994; R Kaufman & JM Keller, *Levels of Evaluation: Beyond Kirkpatrick*, 1994; J Phillips, *How much is the training worth?*, Training and Development,1996.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION FUNDINGS

The following seven pages provide a summary of the evaluation findings against each level of the Kirkpatrick, Phillips and Kaufman modified model. The findings are organised against the key evaluation questions for each level. It starts with the program's outcomes and impact on CEO participants and then moves to the outcomes and impact on organisations and the ecosystem. The executive summary then outlines the program experience for the CEOs and their organisation more broadly. This section ends with a summary of the key recommendations. For each key evaluation question Nous has provided an overall assessment drawing on all the evaluation data. For longer-term outcomes, such as the ecosystem and organisational outcomes, Nous has indicated the extent to which the SILA program is on track to achieve those outcomes. For each assessment Nous has provided a rationale, which is detailed further in the body of the report.

1. Evaluation assessment of CEO outcomes

LEVEL 2 ▶ Learner knowledge, skills and planned action	Did the CEO participants learn new knowledge and skills?
Evaluator assessment	Achieved Level 2 outcomes for CEOs.
Rationale See *page 20*	CEO participants increased their knowledge and understanding of leadership and social impact theories and tools. Three key themes supported this finding: 1. Almost all CEO participants shared at least two or three impactful theories or tools that they learned through the program. 2. Each retreat improved participant understanding of the core concepts covered for over 90 percent of survey respondents. 3. The online learning materials provoked learning.

Average rating of participants who rated that their understanding of key concepts improved by some or a significant extent at:[1]

Retreat 1 (n=16) – **91%**
Retreat 2 (n=16) – **94%**
Retreat 3 (n=10) – **95%**

LEVEL 2 ▶ Learner knowledge, skills and planned action	Were the CEO participants ready and willing to apply the new skills?
Evaluator assessment	Achieved Level 2 outcomes for CEOs.
Rationale See *page 21*	CEO participants improved their understanding of self and increased their self-confidence to apply new skills and mindsets in their role. Four themes supported this finding: 1. For some, the exploration of self was transformational. 2. Stronger personal relationships outside of work was an unexpected benefit for three CEOs. 3. SILA helped over half CEO participants overcome 'imposter syndrome'. 4. All CEO participants were more confident that they can make a difference.

89% of CEO survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that **they have clear ideas about how they can use the new skills and knowledge.**[2]

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION FUNDINGS

LEVEL 3 ▶ Application of skills	Have the CEO participants successfully applied their new skills in their role?
Evaluator assessment	Mostly achieved Level 3 outcomes for CEOs
Rationale *See page 22*	CEO participants have implemented new leadership behaviours due to their experience on SILA. Three areas of behaviour change were most common: 1. Almost all participants are thinking more strategically with a systems lens. 2. Some participants are more comfortable delegating and distributing decision-making. 3. Some participants can better manage their own and others' wellbeing.

84% of CEO survey respondents agree to some degree that **they can now better manage their wellbeing as a leader.**[1]

2. Evaluation assessment of organisation outcomes

LEVEL 4 ▶ Business impact	Did SILA have positive impacts on Step-Up Leaders?
Evaluator assessment	On track to achieve level 4 outcomes.
Rationale *See page 23-24*	**Most step-up leaders improved their understanding of self, their CEOs and their organisation while learning new leadership skills**. Three key themes supported this finding: 1. Over half of SULs gained a deeper understanding of whether the role of CEO was right for them. 2. Some SULs gained a greater appreciation for their CEO and their role. 3. The CEO role provided many SULs a broader understanding of their organisation. **Most step-up leaders have demonstrated greater confidence and implemented new behaviours post their time as CEO**. Five themes supported this finding: 1. Stepping up resulted in a tangible increase in confidence for half of SULs. 2. Over half of the SULs have implemented new behaviours thanks to their increased understanding and confidence. 3. Over half of the SULs have taken on additional or different roles and responsibilities to reflect their increased confidence and new capabilities. 4. The SILA experience helped some SULs and CEOs to form stronger relationships. 5. SILA had a limited impact on six SULs. This was due to external personal factors, burnout during the step-up period and prior experience in the CEO role.

94% of SUL interviewees identified that they **learned new knowledge or skills** due to SILA.[1]

[1] Post-program participant survey (n=19), Nous analysis
[2] Post-program interviews with 18 SULs, Nous analysis

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION FUNDINGS

LEVEL 4 ▶ Business impact	Did SILA have positive impacts on organisational culture and/or performance?
Evaluator assessment	····▶ ✓ On track to achieve level 4 outcomes.
Rationale See *page 25-26*	**SILA contributed to new organisational behaviours and mindsets in some organisations.** The evaluation identified four examples: 1. Surviving and in some cases thriving without the CEO invigorated organisational confidence as reflected by almost half of the SULs. 2. Providing step-up opportunities across multiple layers inspired new mindsets and behaviours within half the organisations. 3. Learning from and addressing cultural issues raised during the organisational diagnostic process has resulted in three organisations realigning behaviours and mindsets to improve culture. 4. Experiencing adverse outcomes during the step-up-period supported two organisations to develop a sharper understanding of their organisation's values. **Some organisations expect or have already experienced improved organisational performance due in part to SILA.** Seven CEOs have already experienced improvements, while eight CEOs stated that it was too early to tell although they remained positive about likely impacts. There were four key areas in which organisations expect or already have experienced positive business impacts: 1. Better leadership and management capability. 2. Stronger networks for fundraising and knowledge transfer. 3. Organisational restructures implemented to improve performance. 4. Higher ambition to pursue more influential projects and initiatives.

100% of CEO survey respondents agree to some degree **that their organisation has or is likely to enhance its capability and culture and to experience tangible improvements across key business measures** due to their participation in SILA.[1]

LEVEL 4 ▶ Business impact	Did SILA have positive impacts on organisational approaches to leadership development and succession planning?
Evaluator assessment	····▶ ✓ On track to achieve level 4 outcomes.
Rationale See *page 27*	**SILA has influenced new mindsets and behaviours for leadership development and succession planning across some organisations.** Stakeholders identified four shifts due to SILA: 1. Shifting from a focus on technical skills to soft skills development. 2. Extending leadership development opportunities to middle management. 3. Incorporating a broader range of approaches to support leadership development. 4. The program has clarified some boards' views on their succession planning.

100% of CEO survey respondents agree to some degree that **they intend to continue to invest in their own and their senior leadership teams' leadership development.**[1]

[1] Post-program participant survey (n=19), Nous analysis

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION FUNDINGS

LEVEL 5 ▶ ROI	Was the organisational investment in SILA justified?

Evaluator assessment	⊘ Achieved Level 5 outcomes for organisations.

Rationale

See page 28

SILA has already delivered a positive return on investment for participating organisations. Two themes support this finding:
1. Participant CEOs, SULs and board delegates expressed a positive qualitative return on investment and confirmed that their investment in the program was justified.
2. Two board delegates mentioned that external circumstances had impacted the ability of their organisation to get the most from the program but they still expect positive return in the future.

50 out of **52** interviewees stated that **the investment they made into the program was justified.**[1]

3. Evaluation assessment of ecosystem outcomes

LEVEL 6 ▶ Ecosystem impact	Did SILA have a positive impact on the social purpose ecosystem?

Evaluator assessment	·····▶ ⊘ On track to achieve Level 6 outcomes.

Rationale

See page 29-30

There are early signs of broader outcomes for the for-purpose ecosystem, including individual CEOs pivoting towards systems leadership, emerging collaborations between participants and potential ripple effects on sector leadership capability.
Four themes support these findings:
1. Half the CEOs shared an explicit intention to drive purposeful collaboration.
2. Over half the organisations are taking steps to be more systems-oriented.
3. Some participants have began working with SILA peers to increase the impact of their organisation.
4. Some stakeholders indicated that the capability uplift may positively impact the overall performance of the sector in the long-term.

95% of CEO survey respondents agree or strongly agree that **they can make a difference** in their organisations and **across the sector by using what they have learned.**[2]

[1] Post-program interviews with 21 CEOs, 18 SULs and 13 board delegates, Nous analysis
[2] Post-program participant survey (n=19), Nous analysis

4. Evaluation assessment of program design and delivery for CEOs

LEVEL 1 ▶ Learner reaction	Was the overall learner experience for the CEO positive?	Was the program relevant to the CEO's role?
Evaluator assessment	Achieved Level 1 outcomes for CEOs.	Achieved Level 1 outcomes for CEOs.

Rationale

See page 32-36

Several aspects of program design and delivery have enabled SILA to deliver positive outcomes for CEOs. Four themes supported this finding:

1. Effective program design and delivery supported a positive CEO learner experience. Almost 95 percent of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the overall learning experience.
2. The program was relevant to the CEOs role and provided the right amount of challenge to all but one CEO. The setting, format and content resonated with participants and the responsibilities of their roles.
3. The unique combination of elements amplified outcomes at the individual, organisation and ecosystem levels. The multifaceted approach supported the participants to scaffold their learning and translate it into action and helped participants to build strong interpersonal relationships.
4. The SILA program team successfully adapted the program to meet emerging needs. Through changing the timeline and sequence of the retreats to enable an in-person experience and adding leadership circles to foster interpersonal engagement during the lockdown.

Stakeholders identified several areas for improvement, including:

- Communication from the program team at the start was confusing and overwhelming for some. The lack of clear timelines and expectations at the start created confusion. CEOs were asked to do too much within short timeframes at the outset.
- The integration and sequencing of elements could improve. Some elements felt disjointed from the rest of the program, specifically the executive coaching and the organisational diagnostic and facilitated workshop.
- SILA could deliver greater impact through targeted alumni engagement with participants. Stakeholders highlighted three key benefits from extended engagement: keeping CEOs accountable following the program; strengthening the SILA network of peers (including for SULs); facilitating connections and transfer learnings between cohorts.

100% of CEO survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that **the program was relevant and useful to their role.**[1]

98% of CEO survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the **program was engaging, that the program's delivery method was modern and professional and that they were satisfied with the overall learning experience.**[1]

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION FUNDINGS

LEVEL 1 ▶ Learner reaction	Was the learner experience of each element positive for the CEO?

Evaluator assessment	Mostly achieved level 1 outcomes across elements for CEOs.

Rationale

See page 38-43

Each element played a unique role within the program with opportunities to improve the design and delivery for some elements.

As shown to the right, the three most valued elements are:
1. The immersive retreats – provided an opportunity to engage with content and develop relationships.
2. Leadership circles – provided a safe space to be vulnerable and share ideas.
3. Organisational capacity funds – supported a range of needs and encouraged participation.

The three elements with the most room for improvement are:
1. Organisational diagnostic and facilitated workshop – lacked integration with the rest of the program.
2. GLWS – required a reassessment to track improvements.
3. Hogan 360 assessment – lacked sufficient guidance and alignment with the sector.

The coaching element also received lower scores than anticipated. This was due to an inconsistent experience for CEOs and SULs. Further detail on this is provided on .

The top three and bottom three rated elements based on the survey question - *I found the following valuable (n=19)[1]*
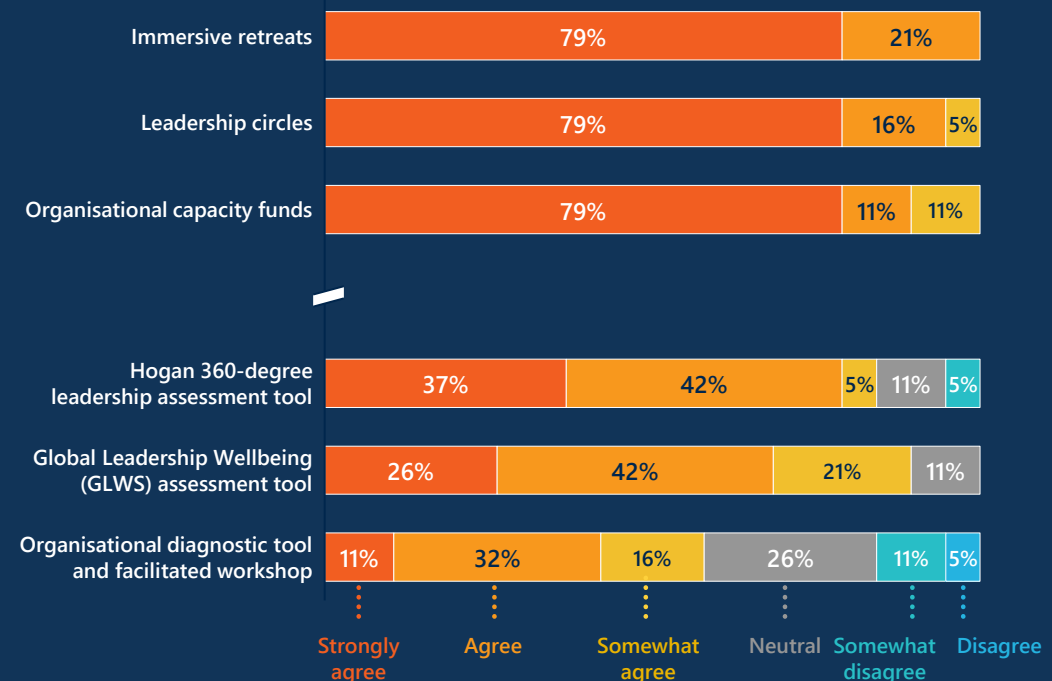
Element	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
Immersive retreats	79%		21%			
Leadership circles	79%		16%		5%	
Organisational capacity funds	79%		11%		11%	
Hogan 360-degree leadership assessment tool	37%	42%	5%	11%	5%	
Global Leadership Wellbeing (GLWS) assessment tool	26%	42%	21%	11%		
Organisational diagnostic tool and facilitated workshop	11%	32%	16%	26%	11%	5%

5. Evaluation assessment of program design and delivery for SULs and organisations

LEVEL 1 ▶ Learner reaction	Was the learner experience for the SUL and broader organisation positive?
Evaluator assessment	Mostly achieved Level 1 outcomes for SULs and Boards
Rationale See page 33-34, 37	**Several aspects of program design and delivery have enabled SILA to deliver positive outcomes for SULs and organisations.** Two themes support this finding: 1. The unique combination of elements amplified outcomes at the individual, organisation and ecosystem levels. The various elements supported the organisations to engage with and benefit from SILA. The mix of elements contributed to setting the foundations for broader ecosystem level impact. 2. The SILA program team successfully adapted the program to meet emerging needs. Extending coaching and individual leadership assessments to the SUL cohort was valuable. **Stakeholders identified several areas for improvement, including:** • The SUL learner experience was mixed due to an ad-hoc approach and poor guidance to navigate the sabbatical element. Some SULs mentioned not having learnt much from their experience whereas others were burnt out during their step-up period. • Boards were not engaged in the program to their full potential. Board members felt in the dark as to what the program entailed and more specifically what the benefits would be.

"It's been a really positive experience and made a huge change in what we do individually and as an organisation."
– SUL, interview

"It was all pretty vague to me. I sort of I struggled with; what are we doing? What's happening here? Why are we doing it? Who are they again?"
- Board delegate, interview

6. Recommendations for program improvement

The evaluation has identified a series of recommendations that build from the findings outlined above. The recommendations aim to improve the design and delivery of SILA and to enhance outcomes for individuals, organisations and the ecosystem. The recommendations are:

1. Improve the integration of program elements through better sequencing and a more connected program delivery team.

2. Streamline communications and leverage administrative supports at the start of the program to lessen the load on CEOs.

3. Improve guidance for CEOs, SULs and their organisations to manage the organisational diagnostic funds and the sabbatical period.

4. Design and implement an alumni engagement strategy to support learning, accountability and networking.

5. Design program features to better integrate SULs into the program.

6. Develop an engagement strategy to better integrate boards into the learning environment.

7. Consider element specific changes against how they support the overarching recommendations outlined above.

Further details on each recommendation, including potential actions, are provided in section 5.

2 **Introduction and background**

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2.1 Overview of the evaluation

The Centre for Social Impact (CSI) engaged Nous Group (Nous) to conduct a long-term evaluation of the first five cohorts undertaking the Social Impact Leadership Australia (SILA) program. This report is the first cohort evaluation report. It focuses solely on the experience of the first cohort of participants that completed the SILA program from July 2021 through to June 2022.

Purpose and scope of the evaluation

The SILA program evaluation will need to support a range of purposes, which are outlined below:

• Understanding the likely direct, indirect, intended and unintended effects of the program on the participants, their organisations and the for-purpose ecosystem.

• Identifying how and why the program and its elements were effective or ineffective.

• Learning from the successes and failures of the program so that the delivery of SILA can improve over time.

• Identifying any opportunities or gaps in program design to sustainably achieve SILA's desired outcomes.

• Demonstrating the evidence for continued investment in the SILA program or similar programs.

• Sharing the findings of the evaluation with broader stakeholders to influence change across the social sector.

The evaluation investigates five high-level evaluation areas – appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

Cohort 1 Report

This report looks at the outcomes and impact that the SILA program had on the individual CEO participants, their organisations (including the Step-Up Leaders (SULs)), and the for-purpose ecosystem. The levels of impact are demonstrated in a modified model for leadership evaluation based off the Kirkpatrick (1998), Phillips (1997) and Kaufman (1995) models.

In addition to the outcomes and impact, this document looks at the effectiveness and efficiency of the program overall and the individual program elements.

The report includes recommendations on how the SILA program team can enhance the experience and outcomes of the program for future cohorts.

The evaluation has used a mixed-methods approach to collect and analyse qualitative and quantitative data. Data collection and analysis activities have included:

• Interviews with CEO participants (21), SULs (18) and board delegates (13)

• Post-program participant survey analysis

• Post-program coach survey analysis

• 3x participant retreat survey analysis

• Learning management system (LMS) usage report analysis.

• Hogan 360 summary report analysis*

• GLWS summary report analysis*

Evaluation limitation: The Hogan 360, GLWS survey and organisational diagnostic were only conducted at the beginning of the program. Therefore, the evaluation did not have access to a pre- and post-program comparison. Nous did not receive data relating to the organisational diagnostic.

2.2 The cohort one program journey

The SILA program is multi-faceted and incorporates several evidence-based leadership development elements. This includes:

- Curriculum that addresses identified skills gaps.

- The Hogan 360 and Global Leadership Wellbeing Survey leadership assessments for CEOs and SULs to provide a baseline of strengths and opportunities for improvement to work on across the program.

- Immersive retreats to provide CEOs time out, an opportunity to develop trusting peer relationships, and a reflective space for learning.

- An organisational diagnostic, organisational capacity funds and Step-Up Leader support to create space for the CEOs to engage fully in the program, support succession planning and to provide development opportunities for emerging leaders.

- Executive coaching to enhance the impact of the program on the CEO participants and the Step-Up Leaders.

- A tailored sabbatical to give the participating CEOs an opportunity for rejuvenation and personal renewal.

- Peer based support and networks to create a community of practice. This included action-learning leadership circles.

The diagram below presents an example learner journey for a CEO and SUL. The sequence of elements differed for each individual as they chose the timing for their coaching sessions and 3-month sabbatical. Some groups also chose to continue their leadership circles beyond the first three. Lastly, the organisational funds were untied, which meant each organisation was free to choose how to spend the funds to best meet their organisational needs.

| JUL 21 | AUG 21 | SEP 21 | OCT 21 | NOV 21 | DEC 21 | JAN 22 | FEB 22 | MAR 22 | APR 22 | MAY 22 | JUN 22 |

PROGRAM LAUNCH

LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENTS

ORGANISATIONAL DIAGNOSTIC, WORKSHOP AND CAPACITY FUNDS

R1 — LEADERSHIP AND GROWTH OF THE SELF

3-MONTH SABBATICAL
SUL STEPPING UP INTO CEO ROLE

R2 — SYSTEM LEADERSHIP

R3 — ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE AND DELIVERING AGAINST PURPOSE

CEO — SUL — COACHING SESSION — LEADERSHIP CIRCLE — R RETREAT

17
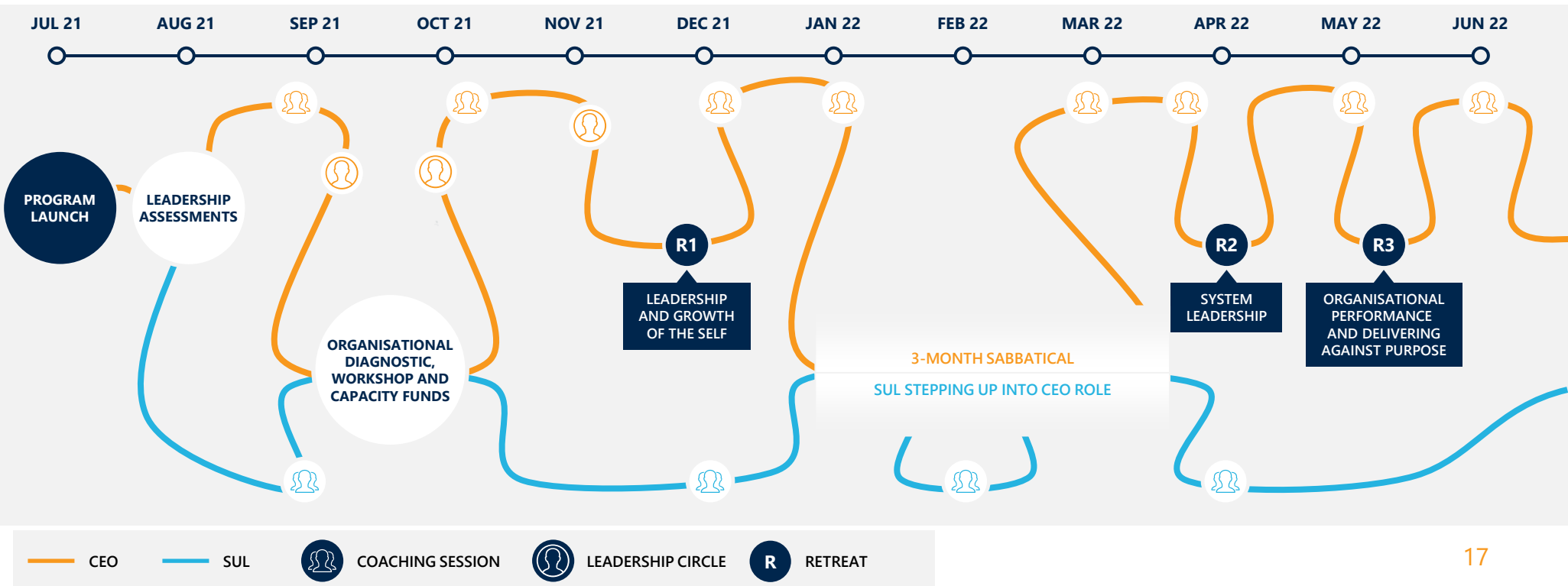
The first cohort of CEOs and for-purpose organisations was diverse. This infographic provides a snapshot of the cohort of CEOs, SULs and their organisations.

19 FEMALES OUT OF 23 CEOs

*24 prior to one male dropping out

1 participant identifies as **Indigenous**

1 participant identifies as having **a disability**

CEO tenures varied between 3 and 10+ years with **half** having served as a CEO for **5-10 years**

Tenure	Count
3-5 years	5
5-10 years	10
10+ years	4
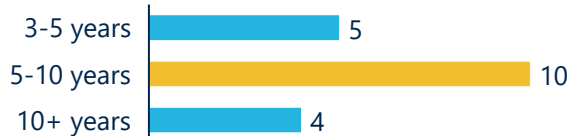
*out of 19 survey respondents

ORGANISATIONS VARIED IN REVENUE SIZE

$1.5M-$3M	$3M-$5M	$5M-$10M	$10M-$25M
3	5	7	4
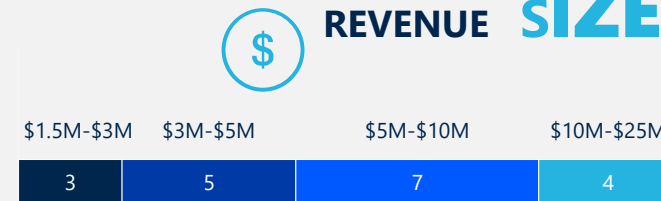
*out of 19 survey respondents

SECTORS INCLUDE...

- Children and youth
- Community development
- Disability
- Health
- Indigenous
- International development
- Mental health
- Philanthropy
- Refugee
- Regional
- Social purpose consultancy
- Social services
- Women

17 organisations based in **Sydney** with **21** delivering services across regional, rural and remote areas

Canberra-based **3**

HOGAN 360 DATA

CEOs have strong leadership skills, build effective relationships, are visionary and strategic, have high ethical standards and integrity.

SULs are calm under pressure, have positive and enthusiastic attitudes, are problem-solvers, show empathy, and are supportive.

CEOs and SULs need to delegate more, set clear goals and performance indicators, challenge poor performance, stop taking on too much and spreading themselves thin.

GLWS WELLBEING DATA

✓ Authentic relationships
Meaning, purpose & direction
Intellectual engagement & flow

✗ Resilience & equanimity
Vitality & energy
Balance & boundaries

CEOs had high self-doubt
53%
23%
25%

CEOs were feeling burnt out
43%
30%
28%
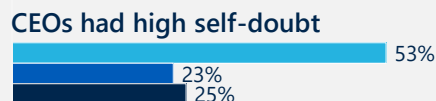
CEO SUL Benchmark

STEP-UP LEADERS came from diverse roles, previous experiences and career aspirations.

HEADS OF:
Marketing
Services and engagement
Partnerships
Resource mobilisation
Operations
Business innovation

Some had been CEOs before

Some had stepped-up before

Some were nearing retirement

Some wanted to be the next CEO

3 Outcomes and impact

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3.1 SILA has delivered positive outcomes for leaders

The first objective of the SILA program is to support leaders to improve their understanding of self while building self-leadership and leadership cultures. The program evaluation for cohort one found:

- CEO participants increased their knowledge and understanding of leadership and social impact theories and tools.
- CEO participants improved their understanding of self and increased their self-confidence to apply new skills and mindsets in their role.
- CEO participants have implemented new leadership behaviours due to their experience on SILA.

Details on the extent to which SILA has supported these outcomes is outlined to the right and on the following two pages.

CEO participants increased their knowledge and understanding of leadership and social impact theories and tools

This theme is reflected in the following:

- **Almost all CEO participants shared at least two or three impactful theories or tools that they learned through the program.** The most cited theories or tools related to understanding self (e.g., challenging assumptions and biases), self-leadership (e.g., technical vs adaptive leadership) and leading others (e.g., the cultural iceberg model). Those participants with limited knowledge and understanding of systems leadership theories and tools also highlighted these as impactful.
- **Each retreat improved participant understanding of the core concepts covered.** More than 90 percent of respondents to each of the post-retreat surveys indicated that they had experienced either some or a significant increase in understanding of key theories and tools *(see Figure 2 below)*.
- **The online learning materials provoked learning.** 18 out of 19 post-program survey respondents agreed to some degree that the online learning materials were valuable. Qualitative comments confirmed that the learning materials helped to set a baseline understanding and either challenged current or stimulated new thinking.

Figure 2 | Average rating of response to question – *The retreat improved my understanding of* – for the key concepts at each retreat[1]

	No increase	Some increase	Significant increase
Retreat 1 (n=16)	9%	34%	56%
Retreat 2 (n=16)	6%	69%	25%
Retreat 3 (n=10)	5%	40%	55%
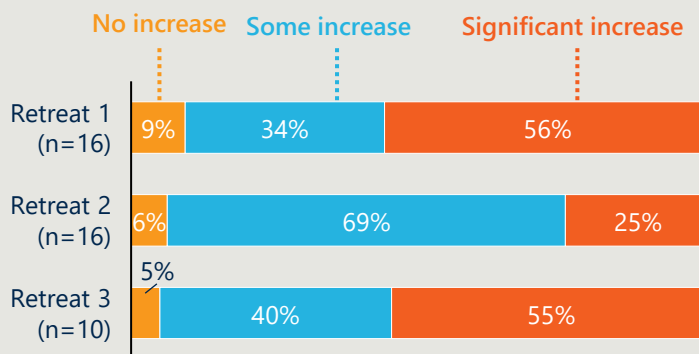
Figure 3 | Quote related to the online learning materials

> *Targeted to the retreat, the pre-reading helped set the tone for what was to come and helped [me] understand the concepts as they emerged...I revert to the resources regularly.*

[1] Post-retreat surveys, nous analysis. Concepts rated for each retreat were: Retreat 1 - Exploring my growth edge, understanding authority, adaptive leadership and deep listening; Retreat 2 - Working in a complex system for social purpose, how leaders and groups interact to achieve outcomes for their community, how to work with difference, boundaries, culture and politics in the context of place; Retreat 3 - Working with purpose, how to work politically and working in a complex system for social impact.

CEO participants improved their understanding of self and increased their self-confidence to apply new skills and mindsets in their role

A range of factors, including sharing with their CEO peers, learning the leadership theories and tools, and understanding and working on the results of the individual assessments supported participants to improve their understanding of self and increase their self-confidence as a leader. These themes arose through feedback from the CEOs themselves and the reflections of their SULs and board delegates. Participants experienced this in many ways:

- **For some, the exploration of self was transformational.** Across the interviews and the post-program survey six participants described ways in which they had transformed. One participant noted that the program had transformed how they identify as a CEO.

- **Stronger personal relationships outside of work was an unexpected benefit for some.** Three survey respondents noted that the benefits of the program for them extended to their relationships with family, friends and their community. This theme was also raised across several interviews. For example, some CEOs reflected on how their individual assessment results supported a reassessment of their priorities.

- **SILA helped CEO participants overcome 'imposter syndrome'.** Almost 60 percent of participants indicated they always or usually had self-doubt at the start of the program. This changed significantly by the end of the program as CEOs expressed enhanced confidence through interviews and the post-program survey. Only one participant shared that their feelings of anxiety did not improve across the program.

- **CEO participants were more confident that they can make a difference.** All post-program survey respondents agree to some degree that they had clear ideas about how they can use the new skills and knowledge they learned on the program and can make a difference in their organisation and across the sector by using what they learned _(see Figure 4 below)._

Figure 4 | _To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (n=19)[1]_

I can make a difference in my organisation and across the sector by using what I have learned. — Strongly agree 63% | Agree 32% | Somewhat agree 5%

I have clear ideas about how I can use the new skills and knowledge. — Strongly agree 42% | Agree 47% | Somewhat agree 11%

[1] Post-program participant survey, Nous analysis

CEO participants have implemented new leadership behaviours due to their experience on SILA

Participants, Step-Up Leaders, board delegates, executive coaches and SILA facilitators all identified tangible shifts in mindsets and behaviours in the CEO participants due to SILA. Three areas of behaviour change were most common:

- **Almost all participants are thinking more strategically with a systems lens.** Almost all the CEO participants shared that they had been able to use both the strategic and systems thinking tools and the time for reflection to shift toward more strategic mindsets and behaviours. Many SULs and board delegates reinforced this theme when sharing that they observed a purposeful shift from operational to strategic leadership from their CEO. This shift was most apparent in CEOs who were either developing, or about to develop, their organisation's strategy during the program.

- **Some participants are more comfortable delegating and distributing decision-making.** To facilitate the shift from operational to strategic leadership, participants shared that they had delegated parts of their role to their executive team and implemented distributed decision making across their organisation. A key enabler of this shift was the sabbatical experience and the success of their teams to manage the organisation in their absence. The organisational impacts of this shift are explored in pages 25-27.

- **Some participants can better manage their own and others' wellbeing.** The GLWS assessment, coaching discussions, the retreat and the sabbatical have together encouraged new wellbeing practices. For some, this shift has been significant. Five participants shared that they had not thought of themselves as burnt out until they took the sabbatical. These leaders see improving their wellbeing as a work-in-progress as they have implemented new practices on their return. For others, the program helped them to realise the importance of role modelling and better organisational policies. One SUL noted that their CEO had started to take consistent days off and to encourage her executive team to do the same. Meanwhile, one CEO noted that they had pushed their organisation to move beyond policies that address symptoms and think about the systemic changes needed to improve wellbeing.

Figure 5 | *To what extent do you agree with the following statement: I can now better manage my wellbeing as a leader? (n=19)[1]*
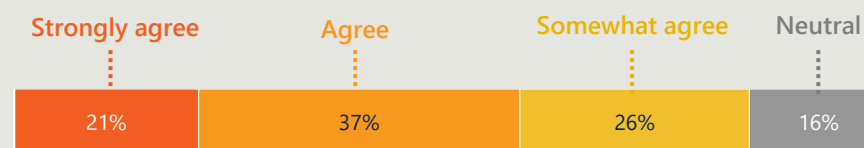
Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral
21%	37%	26%	16%

84% of CEO survey respondents agree to some degree that **they can now better manage their wellbeing as a leader.**

[1] Post-program participant survey, Nous analysis

3.2 Organisations experienced mostly positive outcomes

The second objective of the SILA program is to support leaders to align self-leadership with organisational strategy and advance the capability of NFP organisations. Organisations experienced different levels of disruption from their participation. In most cases, this disruption supported positive outcomes. Yet, there were some instances of neutral or negative outcomes for SULs and organisations. More specifically:

- Step-Up Leaders improved their understanding of self, their CEOs and their organisation while learning new leadership skills.

- Most Step-Up Leaders have demonstrated greater confidence and implemented new behaviours post their time as CEO.

- SILA contributed to new organisational behaviours and mindsets in some organisations.

- Some organisations expect or have already experienced improved organisational performance due in part to SILA.

- SILA has influenced new mindsets and behaviours for leadership development and succession planning across some organisations.

- SILA has already delivered a positive qualitative return on investment for participating organisations.

Details on the extent to which SILA has supported these outcomes is outlined on the following pages.

Step-Up Leaders improved their understanding of self, their CEOs and their organisation while learning new leadership skills

All Step-Up Leaders interviewed shared at least one new learning from their time as CEO. These learnings ranged from those related to their own ability to step-up into the role, or the requirements of the CEO role itself, through to broader learning about their organisation. New learnings were strongest for SULs with no prior experience as a CEO. Those SULs with previous CEO experience generally did not experience the same level of growth and learning. CEO participants and the executive coaches reinforced the SUL experience. The key themes included:

- **Over half of SULs gained a deeper understanding of whether the role of CEO was right for them.** Three SULs reflected that the CEO role was not the right fit for them. This was either due to the increased workload and expectations, or a view that they did not have the capability or motivation to deliver part of the CEO role. Another three felt that they could successfully take on a CEO role but expressed that their current life situation – such as having young children or health issues – meant that it was not the right time in their career. There were also a third of SULs who were energised so much by the experience that they can see themselves taking on a CEO role sooner rather than later. Although the level of desire for a CEO role varied amongst SULs, most discussed having or developing the skills needed to be CEO.

- **Some SULs gained a greater appreciation for their CEO and their role.** SULs were required to step out of their comfort zone and step into their CEOs shoes for three months. Many had to take on roles within the organisation or take on responsibilities they had never done before. The majority of SULs, especially those with no prior CEO experience, reflected that this experience of walking in their CEOs shoes gave them a greater appreciation for their CEO. Specifically, some SULs spoke about feeling loneliness as a CEO and dealing with staff performance and welfare issues as particularly impactful experiences.

- **The CEO role provided many SULs a broader understanding of their organisation.** Several SULs observed that moving into the CEO role allowed them oversight of areas of the organisation that they had previously had little engagement with. This was most evident in organisations that had a clear delineation between operational and fundraising or marketing functions. A small number of SULs also had little previous experience engaging with their board. This changed when they took on the CEO role. One reflected that the experience had given them much greater visibility of how the business really works.

Most Step-Up Leaders have demonstrated greater confidence and implemented new behaviours post their time as CEO

Improvement in confidence and behaviours has been observed by SULs, participants and board members across four main areas:

- **Stepping up resulted in a tangible increase in confidence for SULs.** Half of the SULs interviewed said that they gained confidence from their experience. Specifically, they felt that they were more equipped to have difficult conversations, to participate strategically and purposefully in executive leadership conversations and to make decisions. Eight of the CEOs and five of the board delegates interviewed agreed with this sentiment. A few CEOs specifically commented on how their SUL was more assertive in taking the initiative to solve problems or pursue opportunities.

- **SULs have implemented new behaviours thanks to their increased understanding and confidence.** Like the CEOs, over half of SULs are more comfortable delegating and distributing decision-making. Some SULs reflected that they had empowered their team to continue making decisions and operating as they did during the sabbatical period. Three SULs also reflected that their experience in the CEO role had allowed them to identify new approaches to better support the CEO. In one case, the SUL has spearheaded a new executive decision-making approach to reduce their reliance on the CEO.

- **Over half of SULs have taken on additional or different roles and responsibilities to reflect their confidence and development.** Following the CEOs' return from sabbatical, over half of SULs were given new strategic projects or continued to perform parts of the CEO role to recognise their professional development. The added responsibilities were agreed upon with the CEO and helped to alleviate any tension created from the CEOs return from their sabbatical. One board delegate noted that the high performance of their SUL during the step-up period was the main reason they decided to promote the SUL into a new role.

- **The SILA experience helped some SULs and CEOs to form stronger relationships.** An unexpected benefit for five of the SUL and CEO pairs was a stronger working and personal relationship. For some this was due to the joint experience of growth the individuals experienced. For others, the stronger relationship was forged from addressing tensions that were uncovered or exacerbated during and after the sabbatical. In one case, the SUL and CEO used their coach to complete 'marriage counselling'. Through this process they unearthed latent tensions and then identified a path forward that saw the SUL take on a new growth focused project for their organisation.

- **SILA had a limited impact on six SULs.** This group of SULs reflected that they had not experienced significant changes in behaviour post program. Two SULs did not fully participate in the program due to external factors. This limited their ability to learn or apply new knowledge or skills. Four SULs experienced burnout because of the step-up period and have not returned to their role and applied any changes to their leadership. Finally, two SULs with previous CEO experience reported no or little change to their leadership.

SILA contributed to new organisational behaviours and mindsets in some organisations.

Many stakeholders shared tangible examples of how their organisation's participation on SILA led to ripples of cultural change through their organisation. The impact of the SILA program on organisational culture was most evident through the following:

- **Surviving and in some cases thriving without the CEO invigorated organisational confidence.** Almost half of the SULs reflected on the positive boost to the confidence of their organisation after they had successfully navigated an extended period without their CEO. Many organisations realised that they are not as dependent on their CEO. This was especially evident for organisations with founder or long-term CEOs. This sentiment was echoed by a number of Board delegates.

- **Providing step-up opportunities across multiple layers inspired new mindsets and behaviours.** Just over half of the organisations reflected on the positive shift in confidence they saw from individuals stepping up across multiple layers of their organisation. One CEO commented that their organisation has a much stronger growth mindset thanks to SILA. These new mindsets, coupled with the new knowledge and behaviours of the returning CEOs, have resulted in behaviour change. For example, in some organisations the increased confidence in middle management has supported more distributed decision making. One such organisation is about to embark on a transformation of their service model to empower their operational teams with greater autonomy.

- **Learning from and addressing cultural issues raised during the organisational diagnostic process has resulted in stronger organisational cultures.** Three CEOs shared that their organisational diagnostic had uncovered significant cultural issues within their leadership team or broader organisation. All three CEOs leaned on their coach to identify strategies to address these challenges. One commented on leveraging the SILA network to discuss how to create and a maintain culture change in their organisation. Another spoke about gaining the confidence through SILA to make the difficult decisions to move people on and prioritise a healthy organisational culture.

- **Experiencing adverse outcomes during the step-up-period supported two organisations to develop a sharper understanding of their organisation's values.** Two CEOs shared that the negative impact on organisational culture of their SUL or other managers who had stepped up during the sabbatical period gave them a clearer view of the core values of their organisation. For example, one shared that a SULs compliance-driven style had negatively impacted on the more innovative and experimental culture that was a hallmark of their organisation.

"The program has resulted in significant impact in terms of culture and whole of organisation confidence-build, that we can step up when we need to. We've got an ability to step up and we're not completely dependent on the CEO."
- Board delegate, interview

"There was an openness to learning and a desire to better understand how they can take up their roles."
– SILA coach, survey response

Some organisations expect or have already experienced improved organisational performance due in part to SILA

Ten of the CEOs that participated in interviews felt it was too soon to see any tangible improvements in organisational performance. However, all CEO survey respondents agreed to some degree that their organisation will enhance its capability and culture or experience tangible improvements across key business measures *(see Figure 6)*.

Figure 6 | *To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (n=19)[1]*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree
My organisation has or is likely to enhance its capability and culture	53%	37%	11%
My organisation has or is likely to experience tangible improvements across key business measures	37%	37%	26%
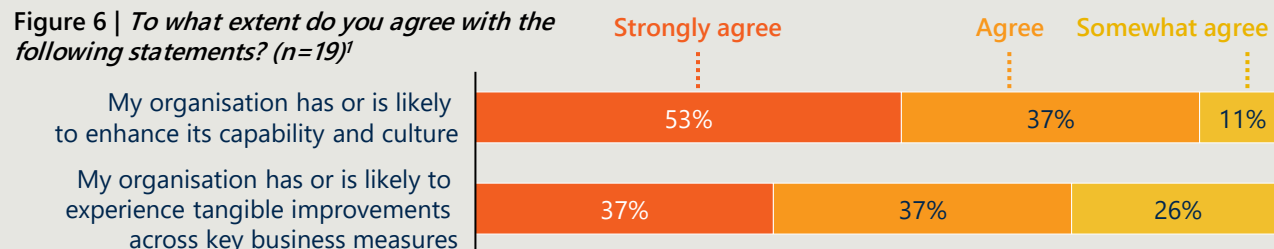
CEOs, SULS and board delegates identified four mechanisms that had supported or are likely to support better organisational performance:

- **Better leadership and management capability.** Seven CEOs shared that SILA had helped them increase the capability and performance of their executive team. One CEO mentioned that greater clarity on her role and that of her executive had contributed to better decision making. Another CEO commented that their executive team was communicating better and making decisions faster.

- **Stronger networks for fundraising and knowledge transfer.** Two CEOs shared that they had already received unsolicited donations due to their participation in SILA. One of the CEOs mentioned that the specific funder had identified the her participation in SILA had increased their trust in their capability. Three other CEOs commented on how they had already leveraged the SILA network to gather ideas on how to improve their internal systems and processes.

- **Organisational restructures implemented to improve performance.** Six CEOs shared that they had undertaken organisational restructures on their return from sabbatical. As outlined earlier, this was often due to a desire to delegate operational aspects of their role and reward the high performance of their SUL. The CEOs and SULs were confident these changes would result in improved organisational performance.

- **Higher ambition to pursue more influential projects and initiatives.** CEOs and SULs from five organisations shared that they had become more ambitious with the types of projects and the level of impact they are pursuing due to SILA. For one organisation this has means that they are now pursuing geographic expansion. For another it means they are now pursuing a large government contract.

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[1] Post-program participant survey, Nous analysis

"We had a really good experience with the Step-Up Leader process so – and this has happened organically so it's nice to hear it – they're now implementing the Step-Up Leader process for our junior front-line workers to give them the exposure to more senior roles."
- CEO, interview

"[The program] caused us to be quicker, more structured and more formal about our succession planning. It has had a lasting effect in that we now have a COO [promoted SUL] and we've looked at our other executives' capabilities."
- Board delegate, interview

SILA has influenced new mindsets and behaviours for leadership development and succession planning across some organisations

Almost all interviewees shared that they had always highly valued leadership development . However, many also shared that limited funding had restricted their ability to match their belief in the value of leadership development with investment. SILA has shifted this mindset for almost all the CEOs, as demonstrated in Figure 7.

Figure 7 | As a result of the program, my organisation intends to invest more in leadership development. (n=19)

Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral
32%	37%	21%	11%
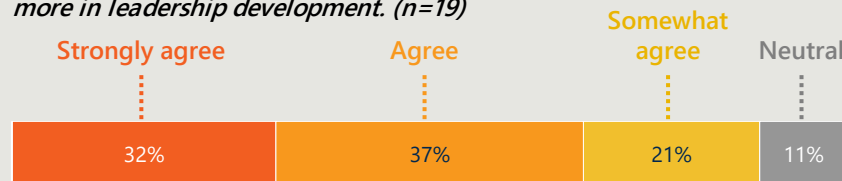
90% of CEO survey respondents agree to some degree that **their organisation intends to invest more in leadership development as a result of the program.**

Stakeholders identified several ways in which mindsets and behaviours had shifted due to SILA:

- **Shifting from a focus on technical skills to soft skills development.** Four CEOs commented on how SILA had demonstrated the value of adaptive (or soft) leadership skills development. This contrasted with their previous focus on technical professional development. One CEO shared that they have now encouraged all their executive team to develop their adaptive leadership.
- **Extending leadership development opportunities to middle management.** Three CEOs shared that the positive experience of the sabbatical had convinced them of the importance of investing in the leadership capability of the middle managers in their organisation. One CEO shared that their organisation had instituted a step-up program for their front-line workers to step up into coordinator roles.
- **Incorporating a broader range of approaches to support leadership development.** Across six different responses to the post program survey CEOs shared a desire to expand the leadership development opportunities available for their executive team to include individual and group coaching, action-learning approaches, and new types of leadership development programs. One CEO shared that they now have a stronger focus on 'practice' as a learning approach.

The program has clarified some boards' views on their succession planning. Some board members and CEOs interviewed have mentioned that SILA pushed them to explicitly consider succession planning for the first time. For example, there were three organisations that chose a 'safe pair of hands' as their SUL due to no clear successor. Each of these organisations shared that the lack of a clear successor has motivated them to put in place clearer leadership development pathways in their organisation. One board member shared that he now feels like they have up to three potential future CEOs thanks to their experience during the step-up-period and other strategies the organisation has put in place. As mentioned on page 23, the experience has also clarified whether some SULs are motivated or capable to take on the CEO role.

[1] Post-program participant survey, Nous analysis

"

"The investment was justified, but like all first runs of things, I think the base is so good there that it's difficult not to see the lost opportunity – what could be capitalised on further. So, I already think it was worth it in that iteration."
– CEO, interview

"The investment was absolutely justified, no question about that. I think that the knowledge that has come and will continue to come from [the CEO] has been worth it. Every minute – it's been really good. It's made a massive difference to the confidence of our team."
– SUL, interview

"

SILA has already delivered a positive qualitative return on investment for participating organisations

Almost all CEO participants, SULs and board members interviewed said that the SILA program had so far delivered a positive qualitative return on their investment of time and energy to participate. CEO participants were by far the most enthusiastic. Notably, even those SULs who had a challenging experience still believed the experience was worth it in the end. Many believed that their participation in the program would continue to deliver tangible benefits well into the future. Others mentioned that there is an opportunity to create a larger return for individuals, organisations and the ecosystem through improvements to the program.

3.3 There are early signs of broader outcomes for the for-purpose ecosystem

The third objective of the SILA program is to create a stronger social purpose ecosystem through a strategic network of system-thinking leaders, who can support and guide each other through conflict, crisis and opportunity. Although too early to see tangible impacts, there are early signs of broader outcomes for the for-purpose ecosystem. More specifically:

- Individual CEOs have pivoted their organisations towards a stronger focus on collaboration and systems leadership.

- The strong peer network has resulted in emerging opportunities for new collaborations.

- Improved leadership and management capabilities across participating organisations may support broader capability uplift across the sector.

Details on the extent to which SILA has supported these outcomes is outlined to the right and on the next page.

Individual CEOs have pivoted their organisations towards a stronger focus on collaboration and systems leadership

Half the CEOs shared an explicit intention to drive purposeful collaboration. This manifested itself in aspirations to explore new collaborative partnerships, reimagine current collaborations or engage more deeply in collaborative networks of for-purpose organisations. For a subset of this group there was a strong desire to use purposeful collaboration to drive systems change.

Over half the organisations are taking steps to be more systems-oriented. The SILA program coincided with a strategy development process for some organisations. CEOs of these organisations noted that this provided a real time opportunity to put into practice their learnings and change the focus or direction of the organisation. For four organisations, this resulted in a more ambitious and systems focused strategy compared with previous strategies. Around half of CEOs also commented on how they had refocused their role on external engagement so they could take more of a systems leadership role. This was often supported by their SUL taking on additional operational responsibilities. Almost all board members positively reflected on this shift for their CEO and organisation.

The strong peer network has resulted in emerging opportunities for new collaborations

Some participants have began working with SILA peers to increase impact. As reflected by all interviewees and respondents to the post-program participant survey, coach survey and participant retreat survey, the networks made have been incredibly valuable. Participants identified three reasons they found the networks valuable. The networks:

- offer a wealth of information, skills and knowledge

- are supportive and offer a safe space to share with CEO peers that they previously did not have

- provide the opportunity to collaborate, build partnerships and deliver mutually beneficial outcomes for the CEOs' organisations.

Emerging opportunities for new collaborations has been the result of these three compounding benefits. Some participants reported attending and supporting other organisations' events and collaborating to build proposals and lobby government. These are early indicators to further, more official partnerships in the for-purpose ecosystem.

Improved leadership and management capabilities across participating organisations may support broader capability uplift across the sector

Some stakeholders indicated that the capability uplift may positively impact the overall performance of the sector in the long-term. With the continuous movement of personnel across the sector, the skills and knowledge gained can be indirectly shared through organisations beyond those who have participated in the program. As seen in one situation, a SUL openly looked for a CEO role elsewhere to capitalise on the confidence and capability gained. Although unfavourable for the organisation, the movement could create benefit for the sector.

*"I'm more confident to engage with the system. I previously was more thinking about my place **within** the system rather than my place **leading** in that system."*
– CEO, interview

"Programs like this are really critical and will have long-lasting impacts on organisations and the sector."
– Board chair, interview

Effectiveness and efficiency

4

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4.1 Several aspects of program design and delivery have enabled SILA to deliver positive outcomes

The design and delivery of the SILA program played an integral role to support the outcomes outlined in the previous section. This was especially true for the CEO participants, who found the program delivered a high-quality learner experience both in terms of the content and delivery.

This section explores what worked across the whole program. More specifically:

- Effective program design and delivery supported a positive CEO learner experience.
- The program was relevant to the CEOs role and provided the right amount of challenge.
- The unique combination of elements amplified outcomes at the individual, organisation and ecosystem levels.
- The SILA program team adapted the program to meet emerging needs.

Effective program design and delivery supported a positive CEO learner experience

CEO participants provided overwhelmingly positive feedback on the overall design and delivery of the program. Almost 95 percent of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the overall learning experience. At least 94 percent of survey respondents also agreed or strongly agreed that the delivery method of the program was modern and professional, the program was engaging, and the program content was easy to understand *(see Figure 8)*.

Figure 8 | *To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (n=19)[1]*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree
The program content was easy to understand	68%	32%	
The program was engaging	68%	32%	
The delivery method of the program was modern and professional	47%	47%	5%
I was satisfied with the overall learning experience	47%	47%	5%
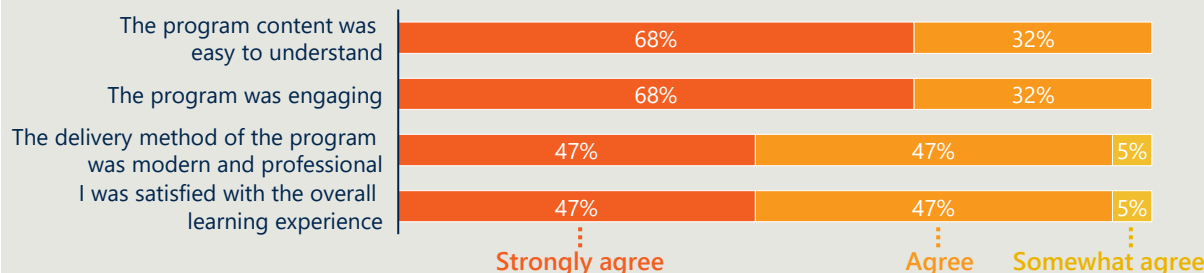
The program was relevant to the CEOs role and challenged most participants

The fact that the entire cohort included for-purpose CEOs and that they learned and applied theory collaboratively resonated with participants. Some participants also spoke about the general nature of the program (i.e. not focusing on one sector) meant they found all the program material relevant. Interviews with CEOs also indicated that they felt constructively challenged across the retreats. Many participants acknowledged that getting out of their comfort zone enabled personal growth. That the program was relevant, useful, and provided appropriate challenge is reflected in the survey results in *Figure 9* below. Only one participant did not agree that they felt appropriately challenge. This participant highlighted in their interview that their previous experience on other leadership programs and a poor coaching match influenced their response.

Figure 9 | *To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (n=19)[1]*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat Disagree
The program was relevant and useful to my role	79%	21%		
I felt appropriately challenged by the program	74%	16%	5%	5%

The unique combination of elements amplified individual, organisation and ecosystem outcomes

The multifaceted approach that SILA took was as a strength and was a critical enabler of the program's impact. The evaluation found that the multifaceted approach:

- **Supported the CEOs to scaffold their learning and translate it into action.** CEO participants were able to use the specific strengths of each element to enhance their engagement with the other elements. This helped to scaffold their learning from the individual and organisational diagnostics through to the online learning materials and immersive retreats. The sabbatical then provided an opportunity for the CEOs to rest, reflect and consolidate their learnings. Most CEOs shared that their coach supported them to reflect on the other elements so that they could convert the theory, learnings and experiences into action.

- **Helped participants to build strong interpersonal relationships.** The most valued aspect of the program for most CEOs was the network and relationships with their peers. Interviews highlighted that the shared experience of the retreats and learning circles played a critical role to foster the network. This was amplified through encouragement from the retreat facilitators and the executive coaches.

- **Supported the organisations to engage with and benefit from SILA.** Almost half CEOs and board delegates volunteered that the organisational capacity funds was a major or deciding factor for their organisation to participate in the program. CEOs also shared that the additional supports for their organisation, including the organisational diagnostic and coaching for the SUL, had played a critical role to support them and their organisation get further benefit from the program. For example, several CEOs spoke about how the organisational diagnostic had identified areas for improvement that they then addressed through their organisational capacity funds. Several SULs spoke about the important role their coach played to support them through the step-up period. In three cases, the CEO extended coaching to others in their executive team to further share the benefits of SILA.

- **Contributed to setting the foundations for broader ecosystem level impact.** The focus on systems leadership through the online materials and immersive retreats coupled with insights from the leadership assessments and organisational diagnostic was influential in driving the shift in systems mindsets and behaviours across cohort one. Pushing this further, the improved leadership and management capabilities across participating organisations would not have been possible without the sabbatical, the organisational capacity funds and the general improvement in leadership for the CEOs and the SULs.

The SILA program team successfully adapted the program to meet emerging needs

The COVID-19 pandemic and the NSW and ACT lockdowns had profound impacts on participating organisations and the design and delivery of SILA. The SILA program team were quick to adapt to the developing situation through targeted changes to the program. The team has also made other improvements to based on emergent needs. These alterations, whether due to COVID or otherwise, have in hindsight played an important role to support the program outcomes. The alterations to the original program design included:

- **Changing the timeline and sequence of the retreats to enable an in-person experience.** The SILA program team moved the first retreat from September to December 2021 in response to the NSW and ACT lockdowns that started in July. The SILA program team made this decision to enable in-person retreats. This move was critical. All participants emphasised the value of in-person retreats to support developing relationships and collaborating with others. The consequence of this was a compressed timeline at the end of the program that's aw the final two retreats delivered one month apart.

- **Adding leadership circles to foster interpersonal engagement during the lockdown**. The leadership circles were not originally included in the design of SILA. The SILA program team introduced the leadership circles as a response to the amended retreat timeline. Most participants mentioned having a peer group to lean on and discuss issues with, in a safe environment, was valuable. This element was consistently perceived as one of the most valuable program elements across the cohort. The success of this move has resulted in the ongoing inclusion of leadership circles within the SILA program.

- **Extending coaching and individual leadership assessments to the SUL cohort.** Early in the cohort one journey the SILA program team decided to provide the SUL cohort with access to additional supports. This decision proved valuable for the SULs, the CEOs and their broader organisation to mitigate against the significant disruption organisations experienced during the sabbatical. SULs reflected that the individual assessments were useful in providing reassurance on their strengths and surfacing areas of improvement to focus on during their step-up period. The executive coaching element was fundamental for some SULs in working through assessment results and, more importantly, acting as a sounding board during the sabbatical period.

This adaptive approach has proved to effective for cohort one and has continued for cohort two. Making the temporary changes from cohort one permanent moving forward will improve the program's overall value. Further improvements, which can be found in *Section 5: Conclusions and Recommendations*, can enhance the program further.

4.2 Stakeholders identified several areas for improvement

There are several opportunities to improve both the effectiveness and the efficiency of the program. This recognises the pilot nature of the first SILA cohort and the desire to continuously improve the program.

This section explores what can improve across the whole program. More specifically:

- Communication from the program team at the start was confusing and overwhelming.

- The integration and sequencing of elements could improve.

- The SUL learner experience was mixed due to an ad-hoc approach and poor guidance to navigate the sabbatical element.

- Boards were not engaged in the program to their full potential.

- SILA could deliver greater impact through targeted alumni engagement with participants.

Communication from the program team at the start was confusing and overwhelming for some

Acknowledging COVID-19 and the team's adaptive approach, CEOs felt overwhelmed and confused by communications they received at the start of the program. Specifically:

- **The lack of clear timelines and expectations at the start created confusion.** CEOs shared that they thought the program's elements and expectations were not clearly signposted at the beginning of the program. This left participants with a sense of uncertainty.

- **CEOs were asked to do too much within short timeframes.** Some participants felt as though their time as a CEO was not respected when they were asked to complete multiple administrative tasks, such as organising the 360-leadership assessment, the organisation diagnostic and logistics for the facilitated workshop, within short and strict deadlines.

Figure 10 | Quote related to the overwhelming and confusing communication.

> " *Communications from SILA [is the most important change to improve the program for future cohorts]. It was confusing and overwhelming at the start in particular.* – CEO, post-program survey "

The integration and sequencing of elements could improve

CEO participants reflected that some elements felt disjointed from the rest of the program. For one example, participants felt that the executive coaching occurred in a silo form the rest of the program. This was confirmed through the survey of executive coaches. Five out of six respondents to the coach survey confirmed they had little connection to the materials taught at the retreats nor a clear understanding of the organisational diagnostic. More communication between the facilitation team and the coaching team could create a more coherent experience for participants.

CEOs, SULs and coaches also shared that the sequencing of elements was not as useful as it could be. For example, coaches suggested that coaching start earlier to allow for an introductory coaching session before discussing the individual assessments. There was also a suggestion that the GLWS assessment occur closer to the sabbatical. CEOs saw an opportunity to better connect the organisational diagnostic and facilitated workshop with the immersive retreat that focuses on leading organisations. Meanwhile SULs suggested tighter sequencing between their individual assessments, the coaching element and the sabbatical period.

SILA could deliver greater impact through targeted alumni engagement with participants

Through the survey and interviews, some CEOs highlighted that there was an opportunity for additional engagement from SILA post the final retreat. Interestingly, over 30 percent of survey respondents felt the program was too short (see Figure 11).

> "I think we would all benefit from a 6-month post retreat check-in; a semi formal 'where are we all and how do we keep going forward' reflection. Would be handy as we re-establish ourselves as leaders and position our ongoing connections without the supportive SILA structure around us. And to ask ourselves - have we changed? Have we applied what we learnt?"
> – CEO, post-program survey

Figure 11 | *The length of the whole program was... (n=19)[1]*

Too short — 32%
Just right — 68%

1/3 of CEO survey respondents thought the length of the whole program was **too short**

Through interviews and surveys CEOs shared several reflections on the potential benefits of extended engagement from SILA:

- **Keep CEOs accountable following the program.** Some participants mentioned that they found the structure of the program useful to keep them accountable to their personal development goals. Post program they had found the lack of structure a barrier to maintaining momentum due to the pressure and requirements of their roles. One participant shared that a light touch check-in or facilitated workshop 6-months post the final retreat could support the participants to further consolidate learning and track progress.

- **Strengthen the SILA network of peers.** Two participants reflected in interviews that although the cohort has remained connected to some extent, via Whatsapp chat for example, they would value a formal 'reunion' or event to reconnect and check-in with their peers.

- **Facilitate connections and transfer learnings between cohorts.** Some participants mentioned that they are eager to engage with future cohorts to facilitate broader networks and contribute to their experience. One CEO mentioned that they had already had conversations with five participants of the second cohort. Many asked for practical tips – for example, how to navigate the sabbatical. While the SILA team can share this content, hearing from alumni of the program may have a greater impact.

[1] Post-program participant survey, Nous analysis

The SUL learner experience was mixed due to an ad-hoc approach and poor guidance to navigate the sabbatical period

Over three quarters of SULs, half the CEOs and three board members interviewed reflected that the SUL learner experience could improve. Some SULs shared that the SUL role felt disjointed from the overall program. One SUL shared that they felt like the only role they served was to give their CEO some time off. Although a more extreme opinion, it does reflect the ill-defined role of the SUL within the broader context of the SILA program.

The quality of the step-up experience depended on the organization's planning prior to sabbatical, the SULs' relevant past experiences and the quality of their coaching experience. Although most SULs shared a positive experience, some SULs did not learn much from their experience while others were burnt out after their step-up period ended. The lack of consistent guidance and process to prepare organisations for the sabbatical meant that some SULs struggled while others thrived.

The SUL cohort felt remote from their peers

All SULs interviewed expressed a desire to connect with their peers at the other organisations. Many CEOs also shared this sentiment, that is, that the SULs would have benefited from the same opportunity they did to develop a strong peer support network. A peer support network may have provided SULs with access to effective supports to navigate the step-up- period and increased their sense of inclusion in the program.

Boards were not engaged in the program to their full potential

Board members and CEOs identified two important shortcomings in how the SILA program engaged Boards:

- **The quality of information about the SILA program that Boards received was mixed and highly contingent on the CEO.** All the board delegates interviewed received most of the information on SILA from their CEO. There was no interaction with the SILA program team. Board delegates shared that they sometimes felt in the dark as to the program details and specific reason for certain elements. For example, whether board delegates were included in the organisational diagnostic process was up to the CEO. One Board member highlighted their disappointment over not being involved nor receiving any briefing on the result of the diagnostic. Two board members shared doubts about the benefits of the Sabbatical. This was due to the significant disruption their organisation experienced and little information from the CEO on the details and benefits of their sabbatical period.

- **There was a missed opportunity to upskill boards through greater exposure to the theories and tools explored through the program.** Two board delegates from smaller organisations highlighted an opportunity for the SILA program to explicitly engage boards in learning opportunities in parallel to their CEO. In their opinions this would not only benefit the board members but also benefit their CEOs. Some board delegates did highlight that the primary onus should remain on the CEO to engage their boards.

4.3 Each element played a unique role with opportunities to improve their delivery

SILA consists of nine elements that are individually delivered as part of the program. Each element plays a specific role to support the program's objectives. This section provides an overview of each individual element.

- To the right, Figure 12 highlights the value that the post-program survey respondents placed on each element.

- The following pages discuss what worked well and what can improve for each element. The statements are supported by quotes extracted from the participant post-program survey. The pages are divided by the four types of elements:

  1. Leadership assessments – Hogan 360-degree leadership assessment and Global Leadership Wellbeing Solutions (GLWS) assessment

  2. Organisational elements – Organisational diagnostic tool and facilitated workshop and organisational capacity funds

  3. Group elements – Immersive retreats and leadership circles

  4. Individual elements – Executive coaching, online learning materials and tailored sabbatical.

Figure 12 | *I found the following valuable: (n=19)*[1]

Element	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
Immersive retreats	79%	21%				
Leadership circles	79%	16%	5%			
Organisational capacity funds	79%	11%	11%			
Tailored sabbatical	74%	11%	11%	5%		
Online learning materials	47%	42%	5%			5%
Executive coaching	42%	37%	16%	5%		
Hogan 360-degree leadership assessment tool	37%	42%	5%	11%		5%
Global Leadership Wellbeing (GLWS) assessment tool	26%	42%	21%	11%		
Organisational diagnostic tool and facilitated workshop	11%	32%	16%	26%	11%	5%

[1] Post-program participant survey, Nous analysis

Program element feedback – Leadership assessments

	WHAT WORKED WELL	WHAT COULD IMPROVE	QUOTES
Hogan 360-degree leadership assessment	• Provided confidence in CEO and SUL strengths and reassurance in the value they bring to their organisations • Framed in a constructive way that highlighted areas to improve as well as areas of excellence • Produced in a well formatted report • Provided new insights on CEOs' and SULs' leadership due to its 360 nature	• Provide more guidance on who should give feedback • Re-assess 360-degree feedback after the program to measure improvement • Align the assessment tool better with the for-purpose sector	*"It validated some areas which the participants felt I was strong in which built my confidence in my leadership ability and highlighted some consensus on areas where I could make changes for the better."* *"Ensuring there is the appropriate blend and number of people completing the assessment. If it is a small group size, one person's responses could have an impact on the overall results?"*
Global Leadership Wellbeing Solutions (GLWS) assessment	• Reminded participants of the importance of wellbeing practices • Identified red flag opportunities • Drove honest conversations • Unearthed painful truths about wellbeing and wellbeing practices • Set direction for sabbatical	• Support in developing an action plan as part of the process • Re-assess wellbeing after the program to measure improvement	*"This really made me reflect on my current state and again highlighted areas in which I needed to put my attention and focus."* *"I think it might be useful to repeat this after the program has finished to see if there has been a significant change. I certainly feel like I have had a significant focus on my well-being throughout the program and the learning materials supported reflection in that area. So, I'm curious about what this might look like now."*

Program element feedback – Organisational elements

	WHAT WORKED WELL	WHAT COULD IMPROVE	QUOTES
Organisational diagnostic tool and facilitated workshop	• Reinforced what organisations knew or thought of themselves • Encouraged organisations to take action and improve • Sparked useful discussions within the leadership team • Involved program stakeholders (SUL, board, other staff) in the program • Acted as a board/executive team building exercise	• Integrate the diagnostic into the program • Provide follow up support to organisations • Improve the facilitation portion and potentially make it face-to-face • Ensure the reports are anonymous and shared with CEO prior to being shared more widely • Ensure the survey questions align with the organisations	*"The tool was useful for assessing organisational strengths and weaknesses and to facilitate internal reflection with the leadership team and board."* *"Write-up and follow-up was quite limited and felt disconnected from the rest of the program."*
Organisational capacity funds	• Untied nature was well received • Supported a diverse range of needs e.g. backfilling roles, professional and team development, extra coaching or strategic planning • Encouraged board support of the program • Made participation feasible and justified sabbatical • Increased investment in development	• Share ideas on the different ways organisations might consider spending the funds	*"Internal resourcing for the sabbatical would have been very difficult if it was not for the generous capacity funds. These untied funds also relieved any issues the board could have had in agreeing/supporting me to participate in SILA."* *"Getting ideas about how these could be best spent beyond covering salary costs - when we heard how others were using them, it definitely made me reflect on whether we could have used these differently."*

Program element feedback – Group elements

	WHAT WORKED WELL	WHAT COULD IMPROVE	QUOTES
Immersive retreats	• Provided the opportunity to engage deeply with content and learn from others • Allowed participant to connect with others and build strong relationships • Brought CEOs together and away from their jobs for multiple days	• Communicate intensity expectations with participants • Allow downtime to reflect, relax and self-learn • Rename 'retreats' to 'intensives' • Provide CEOs more time in the initial retreat to socialise and learn about each other	*"[I valued] the opportunity to have time out and to learn from/with others. It was invaluable to see a group of people without their CEO masks on and to realise we are all experiencing similar fears and challenges."* *"They were super busy. I liked this but think that more time would have been good. We needed more relational time and time to digest/process etc."*
Leadership circles	• Provided the opportunity to get to know other participants • Explored key leadership challenges and learnt from others • Provided a safe space to be vulnerable	• Clarify the process and logistics • Provide guidance on how to organise and run without an authority figure • Consider facilitating face-to-face sessions • Encourage the groups to learn and engage with the process	*"Incredibly valuable opportunities for getting external advice on difficult problems in a structured and analytical way, providing exposure to others' problems and approaches to solving them which are often transferrable, and generating a close-knit support network within the cohort."* *"I felt like we needed clearer direction in relation to how often to meet and to make it clear that we had to initiate the circles beyond the first few or beyond the retreats."*

Program element feedback – Individual elements (1)

	WHAT WORKED WELL	WHAT COULD IMPROVE	QUOTES
Executive coaching	• Challenged and supported CEOs and SULs through the program • Built strong relationships with coachees • Held coachees accountable for their learnings and improvements • Acted as a sounding board for SULs	• Undertake more deliberate matching of coaches • Provide the opportunity to choose or change coaches • Integrate the coaching element into the program • Provide expectations and guidance on how to work with a coach (specifically for SULs)	*"Coaching was where I got to unpack my learning and process thinking. It was also valuable to have someone to reflect with and help me identify proactive strategies to put learning into practice."* *"I didn't connect well with my coach until maybe the last 2-3 sessions. Better matching of coaches or allowing people to select coaches. Better integration into the program and giving the coaches more visibility of what was going on."*
Online learning materials	• Provided a good mix of material • Utilised a diverse range of mediums and channels • Provoked thought and provided useful frameworks	• Provide materials earlier • Offer additional optional readings • Include readings and materials from under represented or minority leaders and academics	*"They were stimulating, relevant, challenging and I loved the multi-media approach and the poetry."* *"It was overwhelmingly sampled from white men. Some scholarship from women and minorities would have provided some alternate views and perspectives."*

Program element feedback – Individual elements (2)

	WHAT WORKED WELL	WHAT COULD IMPROVE	QUOTES
Tailored sabbatical **(and step-up period for the SUL)**	• Provided the flexible opportunity to reflect, recharge, research, read, disconnect, think strategically and focus on wellbeing • Assessed the succession plan within organisations • Drove confidence and capability uplifts for SULs and within organisations	• Provide accessible support to CEOs on how to plan sabbatical • Support organisations and SULs to plan for CEOs absence and transition back into the organisation • Communicate with boards to explain the purpose of the sabbatical and set expectations • Create connections between SULs to foster peer support during the step-up period	*"I valued the opportunity to step back/away from the brink of complete burnout. And for the organisation the internal growth and development from realising they can function and thrive in my absence."* *"It was important (and evidence-based) to leave it open and non-directed, but almost everyone in the cohort was hungry for some direction and guidance in advance. Also need to be clear about and set plans in place for the strain on the SUL and organisation generally created by the CEO's absence."*

5 Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Through further iteration the SILA program can deliver greater impact

The first iteration of the SILA program has been a success. The cohort one evaluation has on balance demonstrated positive outcomes for the CEO participants, the Step-Up Leaders and their organisations. SILA has also set the foundations for broader for-purpose ecosystem outcomes. These outcomes were outlined across section 3. The success of the first cohort has set a strong foundation for growth and continuous improvement.

Section 4.1 outlined how several design and delivery features of the program had enabled the positive outcomes for leaders, organisations and the broader ecosystem. Section 4.2 then went on to describe several opportunities for improvement from a whole-of-program perspective. Section 4.3 provided detailed suggestions on how to improve each individual element.

This section provides a series of recommendations that build from the findings outlined in sections 3 and 4. The recommendations aim to improve the design and delivery of SILA and to enhance outcomes for individuals, organisations and the ecosystem.

1   **IMPROVE THE INTEGRATION OF PROGRAM ELEMENTS THROUGH BETTER SEQUENCING AND A MORE CONNECTED PROGRAM DELIVERY TEAM**

Potential actions

- Develop a process to share information between the coaching team, the retreat facilitators and the AGSM (who deliver the organisational diagnostic). For example, coaches could receive access to the same information that SILA shares with participants prior to each retreat and summaries of the retreat outcomes post each retreat.
- Put in processes to improve coach matching for CEOs and SULs. For example, better information sharing between coaches and facilitators could support coach matching throughout the SILA program.
- Consider options to better sequence elements so that the learnings from each element better complement and build from each other. For example, SILA could consider linking the organisational diagnostic and facilitated workshop to the immersive retreat that focuses on organisations.

2   **STREAMLINE COMMUNICATIONS AND LEVERAGE ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORTS AT THE START OF THE PROGRAM TO LESSEN THE LOAD ON CEOS**

Potential actions

- Reassess the start of program communications plan to identify opportunities to streamline communications with CEOs.
- Consider engaging executive assistants (if available) to help manage the administrative tasks each CEO needs to complete at the start of the program.

3 IMPROVE GUIDANCE FOR CEOS, SULS AND THEIR ORGANISATIONS TO MANAGE THE ORGANISATIONAL DIAGNOSTIC FUNDS AND THE SABBATICAL PERIOD

Potential actions

- Develop guidance that provide organisations with examples of how they might consider spending the organisational diagnostic funds based on the experience of the first cohort. For example, SILA could share a list of activities that cohort 1 organisations funded through the capacity funds.
- Complement the Sabbatical Guide for CEOs with a similar guide for SULs and consider a joint briefing with the CEO and SUL from each organisation prior to the sabbatical. SILA could leverage executive coaches to deliver the briefing if appropriate.

4 DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT AN ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY TO SUPPORT LEARNING, ACCOUNTABILITY AND NETWORKING

Potential actions

- Design an alumni engagement strategy that clearly articulates the purpose, channels and timing for engaging CEOs and SULs post participation on the SILA program.
- Consider how to leverage the alumni network (both CEOs and SULs) as peer support and mentors for future cohorts.

5 DESIGN PROGRAM FEATURES TO BETTER INTEGRATE SULS INTO THE PROGRAM

Potential actions

- Foster a network of SUL peers through facilitated networking opportunities.
- Provide SULs access to the SILA learning materials and consider whether SULs could also access the SILA Learning Management System.
- Provide a more consistent coaching experience for SULs that is integrated and better sequenced within the overall program.
- Provide opportunities for CEOs and SULs to engage in joint activities, for example, a joint briefing at the start of the program or a joint briefing prior to the CEO sabbatical.

6 DEVELOP AN ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY TO BETTER INTEGRATE BOARDS INTO THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Potential actions

- Design and deliver board briefing sessions delivered by SILA to provide board representatives opportunities to engage with the program scope and objectives.
- Provide Boards access to relevant learning materials that can support their capability uplift alongside their CEO.
- Provide CEOs with guidance on how best to engage their board across the program to foster ongoing buy-in and support accountability. For example, SILA could encourage CEOs to develop summaries of their key learnings and areas of focus after each immersive retreat to share with their board.

7 CONSIDER ELEMENT SPECIFIC CHANGES (OUTLINED IN SECTION 4.3) AGAINST HOW THEY SUPPORT THE OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS OUTLINED ABOVE.

6 Appendices

Appendix A – Cohort one

Cohort one participants

Eligibility criteria:

- CEO of a for-purpose organisation (for e.g. a not-for-profit, charity or social enterprise).
- Demonstrable senior management experience in the for-purpose sector and have been in current CEO role for a minimum of one year.
- Organisation has an annual revenue greater than $1m.
- Australian citizen or Permanent Resident and are personally based in NSW or the ACT.
- Available and have organisation's support (including from board) to attend on the dates published, including a three-month sabbatical.
- Have a 2IC or Step-Up Leader/s in place.

Participating CEOs and organisations:

1. Alice Lans, CEO Noah's Inclusion Services
2. Annabelle Daniel OAM, CEO Women's Community Shelters
3. Antonia Ruffell, CEO Australian Philanthropic Services
4. Cassandra Goldie, CEO Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS)
5. David Keegan, CEO Host International
6. Fiona Strang, CEO HealthWISE
7. Frances Crimmins, CEO YWCA Canberra
8. Frances Rush, CEO Asylum Seekers Centre
9. Janet Cousens, CEO Act for Peace
10. Jarrod Wheatley, CEO Professional Individualised Care
11. Jess Wilson, National Director Good Things Foundation Australia
12. Jodie Darge, CEO Project Youth
13. Kathi Boorman, CEO One Door Mental Health
14. Leanne Townsend, CEO National Aboriginal Sporting Chance Academy (NACSA)
15. Liz Ritchie, CEO Regional Australia Institute
16. Melinda Phillips, CEO BackTrack Youth Works
17. Melissa Abu-Gazaleh, Managing Director Top Blokes Foundation
18. Michele Goldman, CEO Asthma Australia
19. Michelle Higelin, Executive Director ActionAid Australia
20. Nick Chapman, CEO Policy Cures Research
21. Penny Dakin, CEO Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth (ARACY)
22. Rory Gallagher, Managing Director APAC, The Behavioural Insights Team
23. Suzie Riddell, CEO Social Ventures Australia

Appendix B – Evaluation Approach

Key Evaluation Questions

Key Evaluation Question	Research question
KEQ 1 **Appropriateness**	• To what extent does the SILA program design address the identified need for the program? • How appropriate is SILA's design to achieve the intended outcomes? • How appropriate is the process to source and select cohorts to achieve the intended diversity and inclusion objectives? • Could the program elements be better designed to address the identified need and the program's intended outcomes and objectives?
KEQ 2 **Effectiveness**	• To what extent have the cohorts of participant CEOs met expectations for participant diversity and quality? • Has SILA delivered what it intended to deliver for each cohort and overall? Why or why not, and with what variability? • To what extent did the program achieve the intended outcomes for the participant CEOs? • To what extent did the program achieve the intended outcomes for the Step-Up Leaders and organisations? • How do these outcomes differ or change within and between cohorts? What factors have shaped any variance in outcomes? • What factors have enabled SILA to achieve its intended outcomes? • What factors have constrained SILA from achieving its intended outcomes? • What were the distinct or common enabling or constraining factors across cohorts? • How should the enabling and constraining factors shape future program delivery? • To what extent were the individual program elements effective to support the delivery of the intended outcomes? • How did the different program elements interact with each other to support the delivery of the intended outcomes? • Could the program elements be delivered more effectively? • Could SILA stop the delivery of any program elements?
KEQ 3 **Efficiency**	• What resources (funding, people, facilities) have SILA deployed to deliver the program? For what purposes? • How does this compare to the use of resources expected prior to implementation? How did this change between cohorts? • Could the program be delivered more efficiently and how? • What variables have affected the use of resources in the program and what lessons does this present for future program planning? • How cost effective was the delivery of the program for each cohort and overall?
KEQ 4 **Impact**	• To what extent has the program achieved long-term impact for the participant CEOs and their organisations? • To what extent did the program achieve the intended sector/ecosystem impacts? • Were there any unintended impacts, both positive and negative, at the individual, organisational and ecosystem levels? • What were the factors that drove any unintended impacts? • What can we learn from the unintended impacts to improve program design and delivery? • Did the individual, organisational and ecosystem impacts justify the investment in the program? • What are the opportunities to expand the impact of this program?
KEQ 5 **Sustainability**	• To what degree has SILA demonstrated accountability for results? • To what degree has the program built the processes, systems, capability and relationships with key stakeholders to support a culture of critical reflection and continuous improvement? • To what extent has the SILA program evolved to support the ongoing sustainability of the program? • How financially sustainable is the ongoing delivery of the program? • To what extent has SILA delivered on the expectations of its funders?

Interview guides

#	CEO participant interview questions	Kirkpatrick Phillips model
1	What were the most impactful theories or tools that you learned during your time on the program?	Level 2 – knowledge, skills, and planned action
2	What changes in behaviour have you noticed in how you manage your wellbeing?	Level 3 – Application of skills
3	What changes in behaviour have you noticed in your organisational leadership following the program (if any)?	Level 3 – Application of skills
4	What changes in behaviour have you noticed in your system leadership following the program (if any)? (i.e. how you engage with and influence other stakeholders across the social purpose ecosystem)	Level 3 – Application of skills
5	What changes in behaviour did you notice about your Step-Up Leader when they stepped up to the role and on your return to the organisation?	Level 3 – Application of skills
6	How useful was the organisational diagnostic? How effective were the organisational capacity funds?	Level 4 – Business Impact
7	What impacts has the program had on your organisation? (i.e. changes in your organisational culture and/or organisational performance)	Level 4 – Business Impact
8	How has the program impacted your views on investing in leadership and professional development for yourself and your senior executives?	Level 4 – Business Impact
9	What was the qualitative return on investment (time and effort) from your participation and your organisation's participation in the program? Do you think the investment was justified?	Level 5 – Return on Investment
10	Do you have any suggestions on how the program could improve?	

#	SUL interview questions	Kirkpatrick Phillips model
1	What did you learn during your time as a Step-Up Leader?	Level 2 – knowledge, skills, and planned action
2	What changes in behaviour did you observe about yourself from this experience?	Level 3 – Application of skills
3	What changes in behaviour have you observed in your CEO's leadership following the program (if any)?	Level 3 – Application of skills
4	How useful was the organisational diagnostic? How effective were the organisational capacity funds?	Level 4 – Business Impact
5	What changes in your organisational culture and/or organisational performance have you observed upon your CEO's return from the program?	Level 4 – Business Impact
6	How has the program impacted your views on investing in your leadership and professional development?	Level 4 – Business Impact
7	What was the qualitative return on investment (time and effort) from your participation and your organisation's participation in the program? Do you think the investment was justified?	Level 5 – Return on Investment
8	Do you have any suggestions on how the program could improve?	

#	Board delegate interview questions	Kirkpatrick Phillips model
1	What changes in behaviour have you observed in your CEO's leadership following the program (if any)? What other impacts has participation in the program had on your CEO?	Level 3 – Application of skills
2	How did you choose the Step-Up Leader? Why? What changes in behaviour have you observed in your Step-Up Leader's leadership following the program (if any)?	Level 3 – Application of skills
3	How did you spend the organisational capacity funds? Was it useful?	Level 4 – Business Impact
4	What changes in your organisational culture and/or organisational performance have you observed upon your CEO's return from the program?	Level 4 – Business Impact
5	How has the program impacted your views on investing in leadership and professional development for your CEO and senior executives? How has it impacted your views on succession planning?	Level 4 – Business Impact
6	Have you observed any changes in how your CEO or organisation is engaging with and influencing other stakeholders across the social purpose ecosystem?	Level 4 – Business Impact
7	What was the qualitative return on investment (time and effort) from your organisation's participation in the program? Do you think the investment was justified?	Level 5 – Return on Investment
8	Do you have any suggestions on how the program could improve?	

Appendix C – Post-program survey results

nous

Participant post-program survey context and questions

- Survey responses were anonymous

- 19 out of 23 participants responded to the survey

- Survey consisted of 63 questions which covered Levels 1 to 4 of Kirkpatrick and Phillip's model

Demographic questions asked

1. How many years have you acted in a CEO role?

2. How large is your organisation by revenue?

Level 1 – Learner reaction questions asked

3. The length of the whole program was... (Too short, just right or too long)

4. The program content was easy to understand. (7-point scale – Strongly agree to strongly disagree)

5. The program was engaging. (7-point scale – Strongly agree to strongly disagree)

6. The delivery method of the program was modern and professional. (7-point scale – Strongly agree to strongly disagree)

7. I was satisfied with the overall learning experience. (7-point scale – Strongly agree to strongly disagree)

8. How likely is it that you would recommend the SILA program to anther social purpose sector CEO? (10-point scale – Not at all likely to extremely likely)

9. I found the Hogan 360-degree leadership assessment valuable. (7-point scale – Strongly agree to strongly disagree)

10. What did you find useful about the Hogan 360-degree leadership assessment?

11. What can improve regarding the Hogan 360-degree leadership assessment?

12. I found the Global Leadership Wellbeing Solutions (GLWS) survey assessment valuable.(7-point scale – Strongly agree to strongly disagree)

13. What did you find useful about the GLWS assessment?

14. What can improve regarding the GLWS assessment?

15. I found the organisational diagnostic tool and facilitated workshop valuable. (7-point scale – Strongly agree to strongly disagree)

16. What did you find useful about the organisational diagnostic tool and facilitated workshop?

17. What can improve regarding the organisational diagnostic tool and facilitated workshop?

Participant post-program survey questions

Level 1 – Learner reaction questions asked (cont'd)

18. I found the organisational capacity funds valuable. (7-point scale – Strongly agree to strongly disagree)

19. At a high level, what did your organisation spend the capacity funds on?

20. What did you find valuable about the organisational capacity funds?

21. What can improve regarding the organisational capacity funds?

22. I found the leadership circles valuable. (7-point scale – Strongly agree to strongly disagree)

23. What did you find valuable about the leadership circles?

24. What can improve regarding the leadership circles?

25. I found the immersive retreats valuable. (7-point scale – Strongly agree to strongly disagree)

26. What did you find valuable about the immersive retreats?

27. What can improve regarding the immersive retreats?

28. I found the executive coaching valuable. (7-point scale – Strongly agree to strongly disagree)

29. What did you find valuable about the executive coaching?

30. What can improve regarding the executive coaching?

31. I found the tailored sabbatical valuable. (7-point scale – Strongly agree to strongly disagree)

32. What did you do for your tailored sabbatical?

33. What did you find valuable about the tailored sabbatical?

34. What can improve regarding the tailored sabbatical?

35. I found the online learning materials valuable. (7-point scale – Strongly agree to strongly disagree)

36. What did you find valuable about the online learning materials?

37. What can improve regarding the online learning materials?

Participant post-program survey questions

Level 2 – Knowledge, skills and planned action questions asked

38. The program provided the right level of coverage of: (7-point scale – Strongly agree to strongly disagree)
    - Adaptive leadership theory and tools for applied use
    - Purpose centric leadership
    - Aligning leadership of the self with organisational and system strategy for social impact
    - Working and leading in complex environments
    - Social impact theories and tools
    - Understanding own and other's mindsets and views on the world
    - Deep collaboration
    - Working across difference and boundaries
    - Applied systems thinking, understanding systems and sub-systems
    - Navigating a complex social ecosystem and your organisation's role within it
    - Personal authority, power and rank
    - Working politically and understanding the political landscape
    - Understanding narratives and assumptions

39. The program encourages continued learning and conversation with others. (7-point scale – Strongly agree to strongly disagree)

40. I felt appropriately challenged by the program. (7-point scale – Strongly agree to strongly disagree)

41. The program was relevant and useful to my role. (7-point scale – Strongly agree to strongly disagree)

42. Which parts of the program were the most relevant and useful?

43. I have clear ideas about how I can use the new skills and knowledge. (7-point scale – Strongly agree to strongly disagree)

44. Please provide examples of how you can use the new skills and knowledge.

45. I can make a difference in my organisation and across the sector by using what I have learned. (7-point scale – Strongly agree to strongly disagree)

46. Please provide examples of how you can make a difference in your organisation and across the sector by using what you have learned.

Participant post-program survey questions

Level 3 – Application of skills questions asked

47. Developing self - As a result of the program: (7-point scale – Strongly agree to strongly disagree)
    - Being vulnerable with others is now much easier
    - I am motivated to grow my leadership skills
    - I am more willing to be stretched and challenged
    - I am more willing to reflect on feedback and adjust my ways of working

48. Please explain your responses to the above.

49. Growing networks - As a result of the program: (7-point scale – Strongly agree to strongly disagree)
    - I intend to maintain connection with other participants
    - I have a peer support network of for-purpose CEOs

50. Please explain your responses to the above.

51. Managing wellbeing - As a result of the program: (7-point scale – Strongly agree to strongly disagree)
    - I can now better manage my wellbeing as a leader

52. Please explain your responses to the above.

53. Investing in self and others - As a result of the program: (7-point scale – Strongly agree to strongly disagree)
    - I intend to continue to invest in my own leadership development
    - I intend to invest more in the leadership development of my senior leadership team

54. Please explain your responses to the above.

Level 4 – Business impacts questions asked

55. As a result of the program: (7-point scale – Strongly agree to strongly disagree)
    - My organisation has or is likely to enhance its capability and culture
    - My organisation has or is likely to experience tangible improvements across key business measures
    - My organisation intends to invest more in leadership development

56. Please explain your responses to the above.

Participant post-program survey questions

General reflections

57. Did you experience any unexpected benefits from participating in the program? (yes/no)

58. Can you please describe the unexpected benefits?

59. Did you experience any barriers to fully participating in the program? (yes/no)

60. Can you please describe what the barriers were?

61. What do you think was the most useful and engaging aspect of the program?

62. What do you think is the most important change to improve the program for future cohorts?

63. Any additional feedback?

CEO participants primarily had a medium-term tenure in their roles and worked in organisations with various revenues

Nous developed and uploaded the survey to Microsoft Forms. The form was distributed to Social Impact Leadership Australia (SILA) program cohort 1 CEO participants following their completion of the program.

Overall, the survey received 19 responses. Not all respondents answered every question.

Most of the respondents had been in a CEO role for over five years (73.7%).

The majority of organisations were larger than $5M in revenue (57.9%) with no organisations exceeding $25M.

How many years have you acted in a CEO role?

0-3 years	0
3-5 years	5
5-10 years	10
10+ years	4

n=19

How large is your organisation by revenue?

$1.5M - $3M	3
$3M - $5M	5
$5 - $10M	7
$10M - $25M	4
$25M+	0

n=19
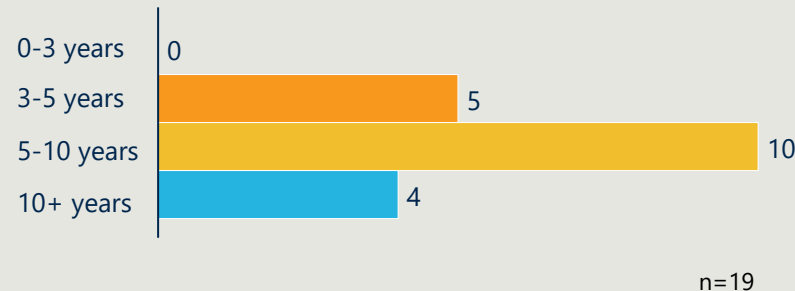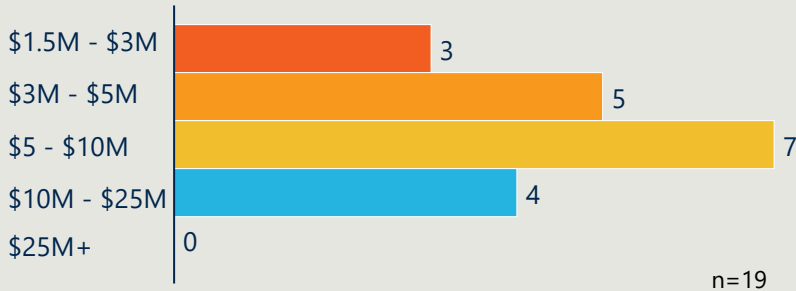
Participants found the overall program engaging and professional

The general structure and progression of the program was excellent.

The program content was easy to understand	68%	32%	19
The program was engaging	68%	32%	19
The delivery method of the program was modern and professional	47%	47%	5% 19
I was satisfied with the overall learning experience	47%	47%	5% 19

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Neutral ■ Somewhat Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree
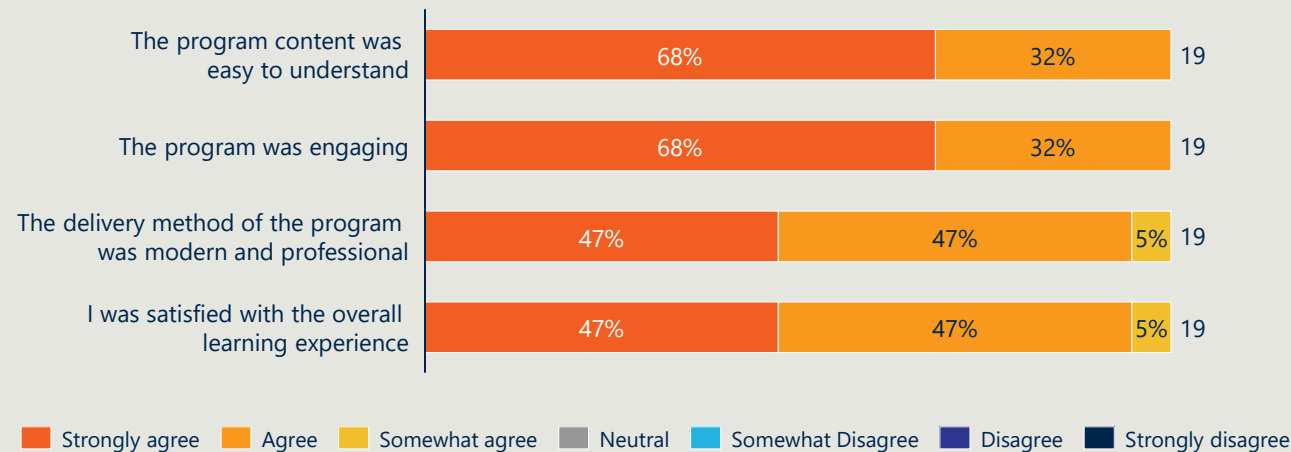
Most participants also agreed that the length of the program was just right, while the rest thought it was too short.

The length of the whole program was…	68%	32%	19

■ Just right ■ Too short ■ Too long

How likely is it that would recommend the SILA program to another social purpose sector CEO?

9.68

Average response out of 10

60

All of the program materials were useful to participants, but to varying degrees

The group elements of the program were deemed the most valuable, while the program assessments and diagnostic were of less use.

I found the following valuable:

Category	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	n
Immersive retreats	79%	21%						19
Leadership circles	79%	16%	5%					19
Organisational capacity funds	79%	11%	11%					19
Tailored sabbatical	74%	11%	11%	5%				19
Online learning materials	47%	42%	5%		5%			19
Executive coaching	42%	37%	16%	5%				19
Hogan 360-degree leadership assessment	37%	42%	5%	11%	5%			19
Global Leadership Wellbeing Survey (GLWS) assessment	26%	42%	21%	11%				19
Organisational diagnostic tool and facilitated workshop	11%	32%	16%	26%	11%	5%		19

61

Participants found the group experiences to be rewarding and worthwhile

Small improvements to the logistics and scheduling of these activities were suggested to improve understanding and allow participants to get the most out of their time in the sessions.

Leadership circles

What participants found valuable

- Provided a safe space for open and honest sharing among peers

"Sharing problems, building a rapport with a supportive group."

- The smaller groups were favourable, it created a more intimate and inclusive environment

"It was great to have a small group that we could form closer relationships with and access support."

What can improve

- Clearer instructions about the process, logistics and expectations of the sessions

"Without an authority figure in our learning circle driving accountability for meet ups, we did not get all that was on offer from these groups."

Immersive retreats

What participants found valuable

- Opportunity to have time to connect with and build values with peers

"Time with exceptional people, time away to think, activities that pushed you and your leadership learning journey."

- Pre-reading and content allowed for exploration of new ways to approach leadership

"Opportunity to engage deeply with peers and content."

What can improve

- More down-time for reflection, self-learning and recovery

"...create more time and space to link learnings back to challenges, how to apply them."

- Reframe them from retreats to intensive learning experiences since 'retreat' implies relaxed downtime

"Clearly communicating to participants that there is no significant downtime."

The individual program elements were great and could have been further improved by offering more guidance and support

Many participants found the structure of the individual elements to be lacking and could be improved with more guidance on how to get the most from these activities, especially for the sabbatical and executive coaching.

Executive coaching	Tailored sabbatical	Online learning materials
What participants found valuable	**What participants found valuable**	**What participants found valuable**
• Being challenged by the coach was valuable in pushing the participants to reflect and grow	• Time to recharge and reflect	• Great quality and variety of materials to provoke learning
"Precious time to reflect and be challenged."	*"It gave me time to breathe and think about my future and the future of the organisation."*	*"Very interesting reading and great to get into the intellectual side of the program."*
	• Allowing the rest of the organisation to step up led to internal growth and confidence	• Great diversity of mediums
What can improve	*"Growth and development from realising that they can function and thrive in my absence."*	*"Variety of materials, from leadership theories, to podcasts, to poetry."*
• More tailored matching of participants to the coach		
"Better matching of coaches or allowing people to select coaches."	**What can improve**	**What can improve**
• Having different coaches for CEOs and their SULs, or setting better boundaries	• More information/guidance on how to plan and structure the sabbatical	• Providing the materials in a more timely manner
"I found a lot of the views from my SUL were filtering into my coaching sessions. There were not always clear boundaries."	*"The program advertises that SILA will help co-design the sabbatical. That didn't happen for me."*	*"More discussion about the learnings as a group."*
	• More support in preparing and setting expectations for boards and SULs for CEOs' absence as well as their transition back	• Utilising sources from a broader base of gender, race and privilege
	"I think some more input from SILA organisers to CEO Boards as to what is expected."	*"Scholarship from women and minorities would have provided alternate views and perspectives."*

The individual assessments were reassuring and beneficial in highlighting areas for improvement

The two individual assessment provided reassurance, prompted action and encouraged further thought. Both assessments could be improved with further SILA involvement and guidance.

Hogan 360-Degree Leadership Assessment

What participants found valuable

- Provided open and honest feedback that was reassuring

"Results surprised me as they were very positive and as I always doubt myself."

- Framed in a constructive way that highlights areas to improve

"Distillation of key characteristics that enable me to be an effective leader."

What can improve

- Participation and diversity of stakeholders

"Ensuring there is the appropriate blend and number of people completing the assessment."

- Feedback post-assessment was not utilised or took too long to be returned

"Took a long time for me to learn the results as they weren't fed back to me for after 6 months."

Global Leadership Wellbeing (GLWS) Assessment

What participants found valuable

- Encouraged reflection on physical and mental wellbeing

"Provided a wake-up call about my personal wellbeing."

- Reassured participants who proactively looked out for their wellbeing that it is a valuable activity

"I found it reassuring to have the results reflect my understanding of my wellbeing."

What can improve

- Conducting GLWS both pre and post SILA to 'track' wellbeing

"Changes within your personal and professional life can impact on your wellbeing and change perspective."

- Building a follow-up plan to utilise results to improve or maintain wellbeing

"Developing an action plan and having it integrated into the coaching/ program."

The diagnostic was hit or miss amongst organisations, however all participants greatly valued the capacity funds

Many participants acknowledged the organisational diagnostic's value in proving what they knew about their organisation but also described it as a flawed tool and process that did not contribute much to the overall program.

Organisational diagnostic and facilitated workshop

What participants found valuable

- Proved prior thoughts and sparked conversations or action

"The organisational diagnostic tool was useful in highlighting consistency of thought across the executive and Board as to improvements required."

What can improve

- Clarity about the intentions and purpose of the session and how the results would be used was poor

"I don't feel there was clear enough instruction about what would be included in the final report and some people were incredibly frank about their perspectives on some of issues with the team, not knowing that this would be word-for-word in the report."

- The facilitated workshop was not useful to many and felt disjointed from the rest of the program.

"The workshop was quite disappointing; I would encourage SILA to consider who runs their workshops - the value is in the facilitators skill in assisting the team to analyses findings and 'get over' assumptions and our facilitator did not demonstrate this skill. "

Organisational capacity funds

How it was spent

- Most funds went to backfilling CEO and other roles that became vacant due to sabbatical
- Some also invested in individual and team development

What participants found valuable

- Funds made the sabbatical possible, especially from a board perspective

"Recognised costs to an organisation of a Step-Up Leader and the importance of taking time for the CEO."

- Untied funds allowed for a range of development initiatives.

"They were valuable from a financial perspective in permitting us to invest in activities we wouldn't have otherwise been able to."

What can improve

- *The majority had no suggestions*

The program was comprehensive in its cover of knowledge and skill development

The majority of participants either agree or strongly agree that they sufficiently explored all of the key areas identified as most important to the SILA program.

The program provided the right level of coverage of:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	n
Understanding own and other's mindsets and views on the world	53%	32%	16%		19
Adaptive leadership theory and tools for applied use	47%	47%	5%		19
Personal authority, power and rank	47%	42%	11%		19
Working and leading in complex environments	47%	37%	11%	5%	19
Applied systems thinking, understanding systems and sub-systems	42%	32%	26%		19
Purpose centric leadership	32%	63%	5%		19
Aligning leadership of the self with organizational and system strategy for social impact	32%	63%	5%		19
Understanding narratives and assumptions	32%	53%	16%		19
Navigating a complex social ecosystem and your organization's role within it	26%	53%	16%	5%	19
Working across difference and boundaries	21%	58%	21%		19
Working politically and understanding the political landscape	21%	47%	26%	5%	19
Deep collaboration	16%	58%	26%		19
Social impact theories and tools	5%	53%	32%	11%	19

Legend: Strongly agree, Agree, Somewhat agree, Neutral, Somewhat Disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree

The experiences and skills gained from the program are likely to support future action

The program challenged participants to grow and develop with takeaway messages flowing onto their companies.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat Disagree	n
The program was relevant and useful to my role	79%	21%			19
The program encourages continued learning and conversation with others	74%	26%			19
I felt appropriately challenged by the program	74%	16%	5%	5%	19
I can make a difference in my organisation and across the sector by using what I have learned	63%	32%	5%		19
I have clear ideas about how I can use the new skills and knowledge	42%	47%	11%		19

Legend:
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

> *I found the connection with other participants and the genuine friendships formed to be an unexpected benefit of the program which I deeply value.*

> *I have found that learning more about systems thinking has allowed me to see situations differently. I have been able to have conversations with staff members which are challenging and see them as positive.*

> *I have entered into a strategic planning process at the end of my SILA journey which has allowed me to apply many of the tools and to harness leadership opportunities. It has allowed me to reposition from a place of fear and self doubt to a place of confidence.*

67

Self reflection was one of the most difficult aspects of the program but also facilitated personal growth

Many participants described the self-reflective aspects of the program as the most uncomfortable. However, it also allowed them to grow accustomed to being vulnerable and supported CEOs to build confidence in their leadership abilities.

> " *The program has really helped me to step into my authority (previously I really struggled with imposter syndrome). It's helped me to be more confident, to own my decisions and to have uncomfortable conversations.* "

> " *As a result of the program I feel far more able to be vulnerable with others without feeling I am losing control or need to apologise and own everything not working.* "

All participants agreed that they were motivated to grow their leadership skills and had a stronger desire to push those boundaries.

I am motivated to grow my leadership skills	58% / 42%	19
I am more willing to be stretched and challenged	47% / 32% / 16% / 5%	19
I am more willing to reflect on feedback and adjust my ways of working	37% / 42% / 11% / 11%	19
Being vulnerable with others is now much easier	32% / 21% / 26% / 5% / 11% / 5%	19

Legend:
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
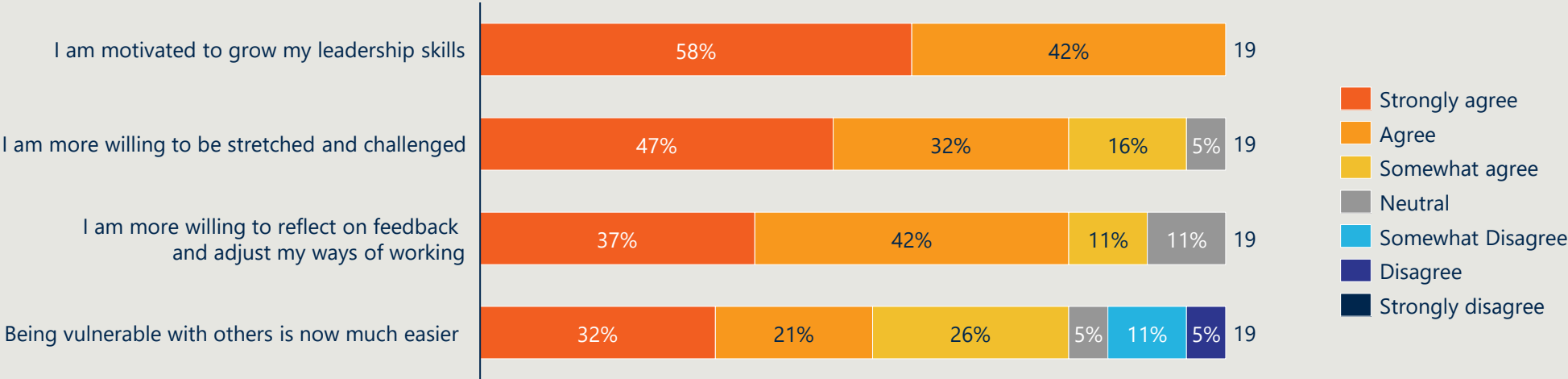
Almost every participant found the greatest benefits from collaboration and networking with their fellow CEOs

All the feedback regarding connections with the other participants was overwhelmingly positive.

" This is perhaps the greatest unexpected gift of the program and the connection with others through social media etc. is what acts as a constant reminder of what we learned. "

" One of the most positive outcomes of SILA is the relationships established and the access to a network of amazing CEOs who offer a wealth of information, skills and knowledge. "

18 of the 19 participants strongly agree that they will maintain a connection to the other CEOs.

I intend to maintain connection with other participants	95% — 5% — 19
I have a peer support network of for-purpose CEOs	84% — 11% 5% — 19

Legend:
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
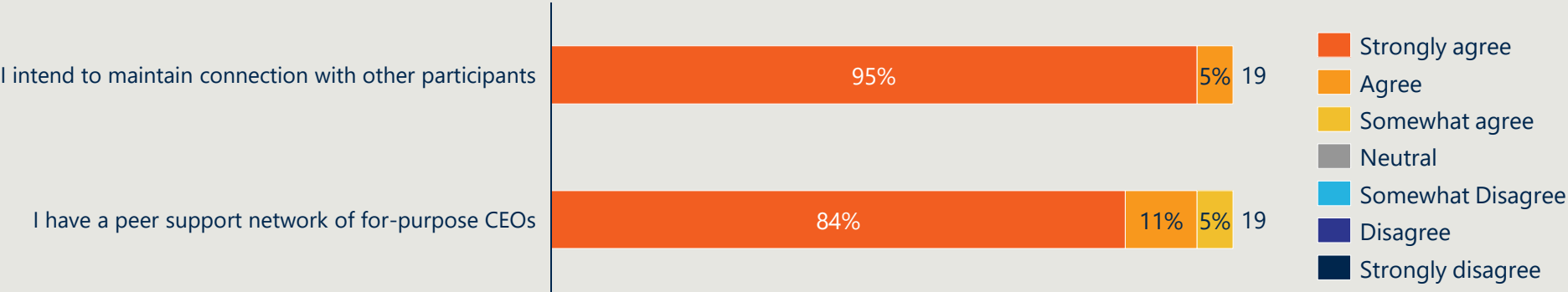
Improving wellbeing was seen as a work in progress that can be hard to maintain outside of the program

Participants found this easier whilst during the program but afterward it became harder to implement practices into their daily lives.

"*This is an ongoing challenge. I certainly improved my wellbeing during and immediately following my sabbatical. Whilst some of these good practices have declined, I still have my written intentions to revisit and hold myself to account.*"

"*Whilst this is a challenge, I have made changes within the organisation to allow me to have more time for networking, reading, learning and planning. I am also more aware of taking time off and not feeling like I need to work long hours every day. It hasn't changed over night but I am making progress.*"

84% of participants could at least somewhat agree that they can manage their wellbeing better following the program.

| I can now better manage my wellbeing as a leader | 21% | 37% | 26% | 16% | 19 |

Legend:
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
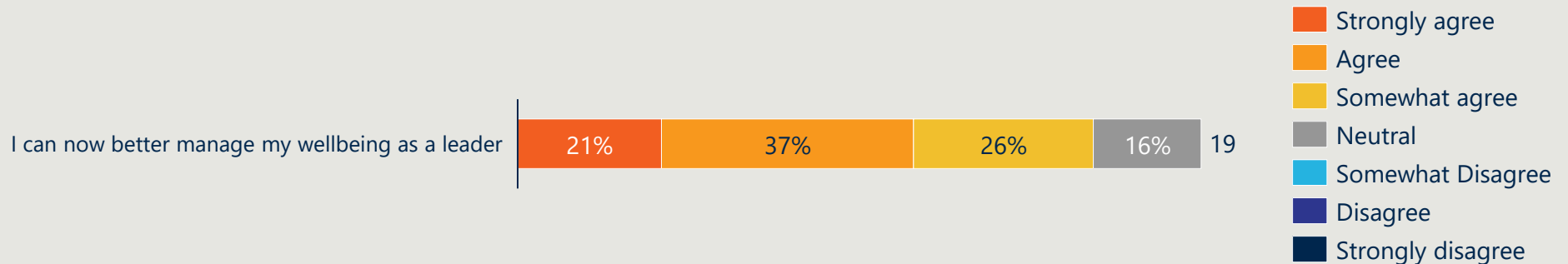
The benefits of investing in leadership are clear and participants are starting to share these with their leadership team

Reflecting on their time in the program, participants can now share their learnings and help others grow as they did.

> " *I have always had a focus on my own development and I am now more focussed on ensuring the continued development and learning of my senior team, both on the job, through coaching and reflection as a team, and also through leadership development programs.* "

> " *SILA was a fantastic learning and personal development opportunity. I can continue to draw on the learnings for years to come. It was also an opportunity for others in my team to step up. I saw how creating space for others to do so enabled them to lead in new ways. I want to ensure there are ongoing opportunities for them to continue their growth and development.* "

A greater proportion of participants strongly agreed to invest in their senior leadership team compared to themselves.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	
I intend to continue to invest in my own leadership development	68%	21%	11%	19
I intend to invest more in the leadership development of my senior leadership team	84%	11%	5%	19

Legend:
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
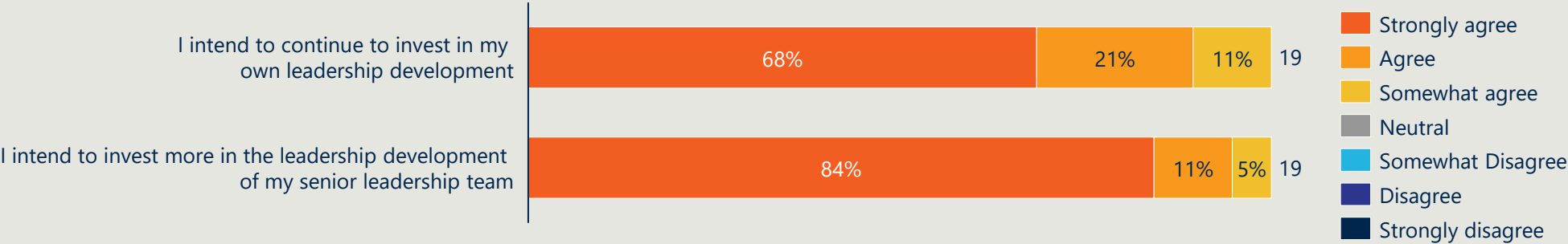
Almost all participants believe that their SILA experience will lead to tangible benefits for their organisation

These benefits predominantly came from the growth in responsibility for the step up leaders and the development the CEOs themselves went through.

> " *The sabbatical and step up opportunities this created has enhanced leadership capabilities across the broader team. Some of the changes have been made permanent i.e. my step up has relinquished some of her direct reports as she has identified new ways to support me and the organisation.* "

> " *I feel that these things will come from my ongoing leadership development. We have already enhanced our capability in many ways and our business measures will be next. We do invest in leadership and will continue to look for opportunities to do this.* "

All participants could at least somewhat agree that they would see tangible benefits from participating in the SILA program.

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	n
My organisation has or is likely to enhance its capability and culture	53%	37%	11%		19
My organisation has or is likely to experience tangible improvements across key business measures	37%	37%	26%		19
My organisation intends to invest more in leadership development	32%	37%	21%	11%	19

Legend:
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

The program provided rewards beyond what was originally expected

Most of the participants experienced some sort of unexpected benefit, ranging from personal development to organisational growth.

Did you experience any unexpected benefits from participating in the program?

Yes	No
68%	32%	19

Categorised unexpected benefits (n=13)

Self-development (wellbeing)	6
Peer group	3
Improved personal relationships	3
Team and organisational benefits	2
Improved leadership knowledge and skills	1
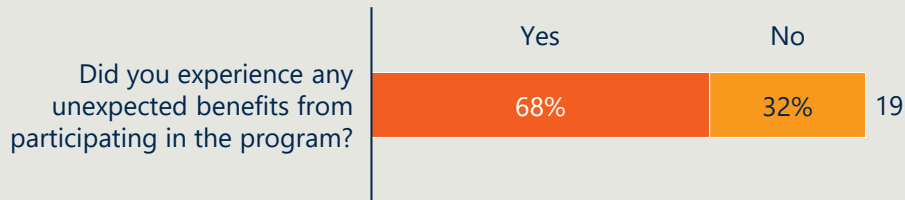
"
I completely underestimated the work on 'self' from the program. I have a much better understanding of myself, my values, purpose and how I intend to use my skills.
"
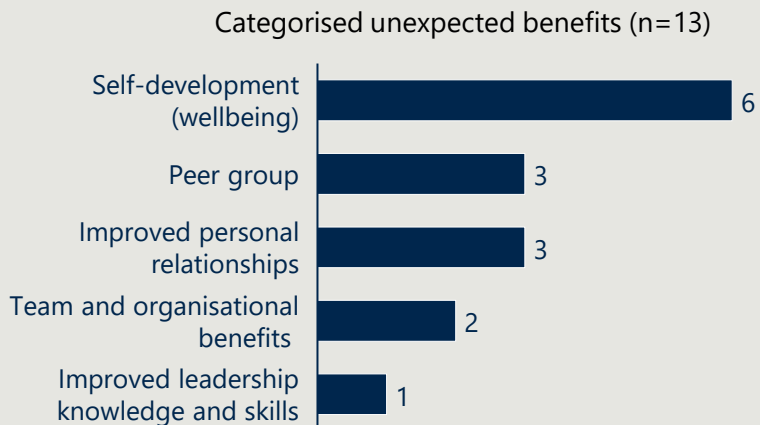
"
I was not expecting to make such strong connections with the other CEOs, I really this program has forged trust and long term professional relationships.
"

"
There has been a tangible impact for the team and organisation. Through the step up opportunities and ripple effects, there is a precedent for mixing things up and changing roles to both cater for the changing needs of the organisation and provide opportunities for growth and development.
"

Some participants were restricted during their time in the program

A handful of participants were not able to fully participate in the program due to a number of reasons, including COVID disruptions, travel and difficulties managing time for the program.

Did you experience any barriers to fully participating in the program?

Yes	No
47%	53%	19
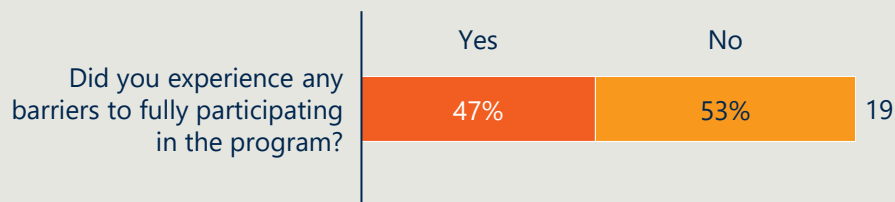
Categorised barriers (n=9)

Category	Value
COVID	3
Work obligations	3
Parenthood	1
Illness	1
Online experience	1
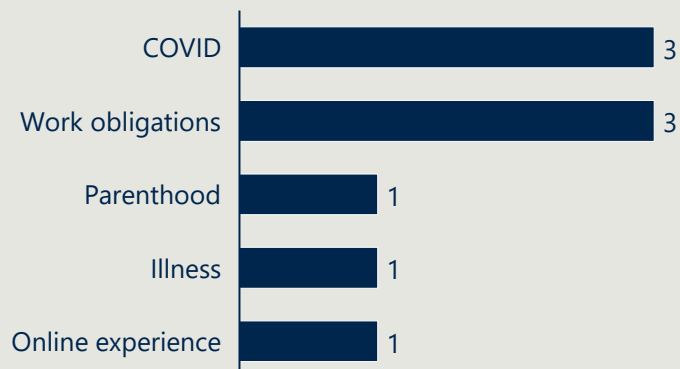
> " *The heavy workload and day to day responsibilities both personally and professionally impacted on my ability to give as much time as I would have liked to preparation and reflection.* "

> " *COVID and the shift to online experiences as well as its impacts on my planned sabbatical activities definitely limited my full participation in the program.* "

Overall feedback was positive, but there is room for improvement in certain areas of the program

What do you think was the most useful and engaging aspect of the program?

Highlights of the program include the peer group connection, the retreats and the opportunity to reflect and learn.

What do you think is the most important change to improve the program for future cohorts?

Feedback on improvements was varied but some examples are below.

> *The intensive retreats and the people themselves including the SILA leaders and the CEO cohort. The ability to bring an amazingly honest and diverse group of CEOs who all want to improve and change the world and guide us through a learning process that both affirmed and challenged is such a rewarding experience.*

> *There were diverse experiences with 1:1 coaching throughout the program. Being such an important component it would be wonderful if there was consistent feedback on it being a very positive experience. For individuals: Allow good preparation for retreats (appropriate reading time) and build in time to reflect afterwards. Plan the sabbatical well, and don't underestimate the role the SUL takes on.*

> *The most valuable part of SILA was the ability to learn and be challenged as well as having time to reflect through a sabbatical on how to take forward those learnings.*

> *Better integrating the various components so that they reinforce each other to create more opportunities to apply learning in practice, and share learnings with peers.*

> *The retreats and the learning circles. Being able to consolidate the learnings and experiences at a deeper level with the others in the cohort is extraordinary. This continues as we have stayed connected and are still bringing our new knowledge and approaches together.*

> *Communications from SILA. It was confusing and overwhelming at the start in particular. It feels like a group of freelancers and not a coherent team. In the beginning it felt like we were being told our wellbeing mattered and we know you're stressed and now here's 3 different surveys and things to schedule and stuff to attend.*

Overall feedback was positive, but there is room for improvement in certain areas of the program

What do you think was the most useful and engaging aspect of the program?

Categorised responses

Category	Count
Development of a strong peer network	7
Retreats	7
Sabbatical	7
Learning environment and materials	5
The program facilitators	2
All of it	2
Development of SUL	1

What do you think is the most important change to improve the program for future cohorts?

Categorised responses

Category	Count
More support for SULs	3
More down-time on retreats	3
More direction on sabbatical planning	2
Extending the program	2
Better matching of coaches	2
Better integration of program elements	2
Hybrid participation opportunities	1
6-month post program finishing check in and reflection	1
Clearer communication from SILA in initial stage	1

The participants were very thankful for the program and the personal and organisational growth it afforded them

Most participants responded overwhelmingly positively and testified to the immense value of the SILA program as a personal and organizational development tool.

Any additional feedback?

"The SILA program is an excellent initiative and has changed the way we think, plan and operate, even at this early stage."

"I just loved this program so much and it is one of the best things I have done in my life. It was a gift for which I am incredibly grateful and I will commit to using it to continue learning and upskilling in my leadership journey. The end of the program feels like the beginning of the rest of my life."

"Thank you for an amazing program and experience. Whilst there are no doubt opportunities to build on and improve going forwards, I appreciate the huge amount of research and design that went into creating this unique program. I know I will continue to reap benefits for years to come."

"The program was amazing and it has been such a privilege to have been a part of it."

"Thank you for this extraordinary experience. I have never been a part of something that has a lifetime value that continues to grow and deepen on completion! The ability to revert back and apply the theories and learnings is endless, and I am definitely more equipped to consolidate and grow in my role."

"A wonderful experience, thank you. I feel that with some further iterations and improvements this could be a truly world class course."

"Thank you to the visionary funders who are supporting this. It's going to have long-lasting positive ripple effects in the sector. Please tell the story well so that they'll continue to fund it and so that other funders will invest more into leadership capacity and capability in the sector. It will pay off."

Appendix D – Post-retreat survey results

nous

Post-retreat surveys context

1. The length of the retreat was (too short, just right or too long)

2. The retreat content was easy to understand (5-point scale, strongly disagree to strongly agree)

3. The retreat content was engaging (5-point scale, strongly disagree to strongly agree)

4. The delivery method of the retreat was modern and professional (5-point scale, strongly disagree to strongly agree)

5. The overall learning experience stretched and challenged me (5-point scale, strongly disagree to strongly agree)

6. The retreat provided opportunities to connect with and learn from my peers (5-point scale, strongly disagree to strongly agree)

7. The retreat encouraged continued learning and conversation with my peers (5-point scale, strongly disagree to strongly agree)

8. The retreat provided a thorough coverage of the subject matter* (5-point scale, strongly disagree to strongly agree)

9. The delivery of the content across the retreat suited my learning preferences (5-point scale, strongly disagree to strongly agree)

10. The content I learnt in the retreat was relevant and useful to my role (5-point scale, strongly disagree to strongly agree)

11. The retreat improved my understanding of the core concepts (5-point scale, strongly disagree to strongly agree)

12. Coach ratings (knowledge, delivery style and extent they helped me learn) (5-point scale, strongly disagree to strongly agree)

13. I can make a difference in my organisation and across the sector by using what I have learned from the retreat (5-point scale, strongly disagree to strongly agree)

14. I have clear ideas about how I can use the new skills and knowledge following the retreat (5-point scale, strongly disagree to strongly agree)

15. Leadership of the self is a core part of each SILA retreat. What did the retreat help you learn about yourself as a leader?

16. What did you learn from the Retreat that is applicable to your organisation?

17. What did you value most about the retreat?

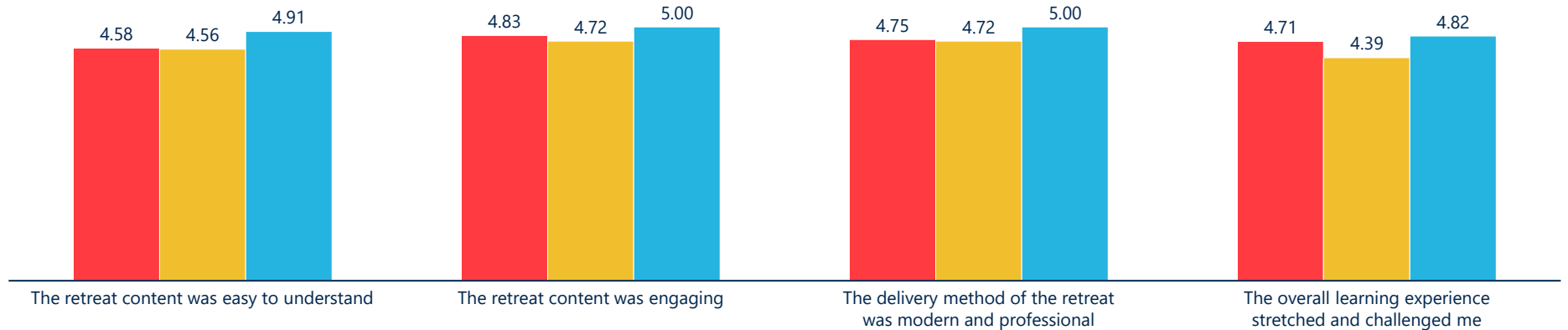18. How could the retreat experience be improved?

*R1: leadership and growth of the self
 R2 & R3: systems leadership and aligning self and systems leadership

Quantitative comparisons

Average rating for the extent to which survey respondents agreed with the statement
(1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)

Retreat 1   **Retreat 2**   **Retreat 3**

	Retreat 1	Retreat 2	Retreat 3
The retreat content was easy to understand	4.58	4.56	4.91
The retreat content was engaging	4.83	4.72	5.00
The delivery method of the retreat was modern and professional	4.75	4.72	5.00
The overall learning experience stretched and challenged me	4.71	4.39	4.82

Average rating for the extent to which survey respondents agreed with the statement
(1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)

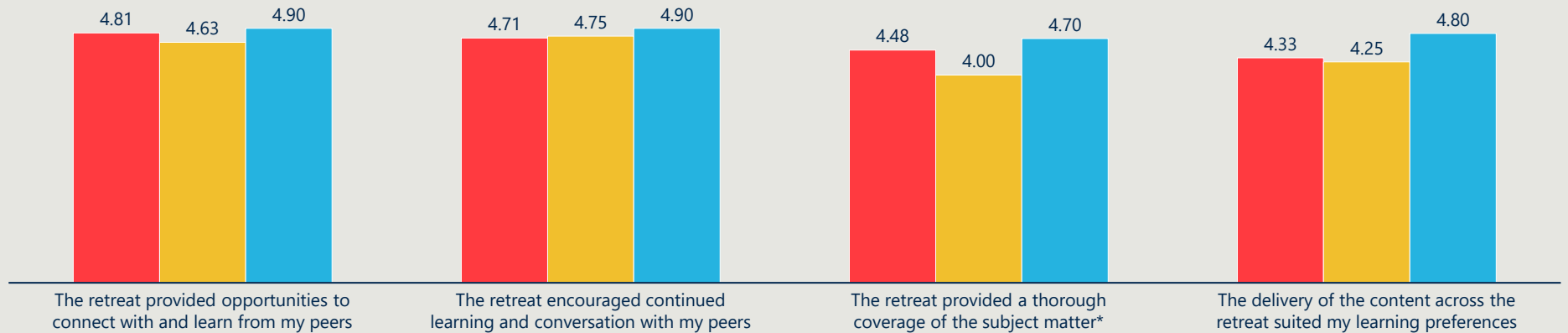|	Retreat 1	Retreat 2	Retreat 3
The retreat provided opportunities to connect with and learn from my peers	4.81	4.63	4.90
The retreat encouraged continued learning and conversation with my peers	4.71	4.75	4.90
The retreat provided a thorough coverage of the subject matter*	4.48	4.00	4.70
The delivery of the content across the retreat suited my learning preferences	4.33	4.25	4.80

Quantitative comparisons

Average rating for the extent to which survey respondents agreed with the statement
(1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)
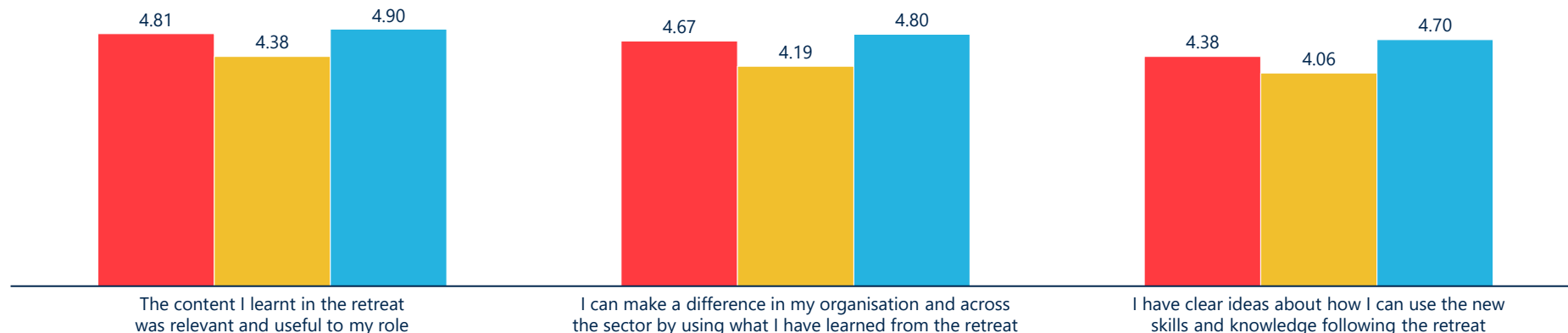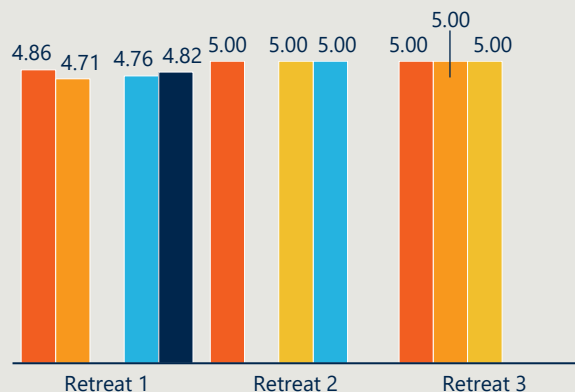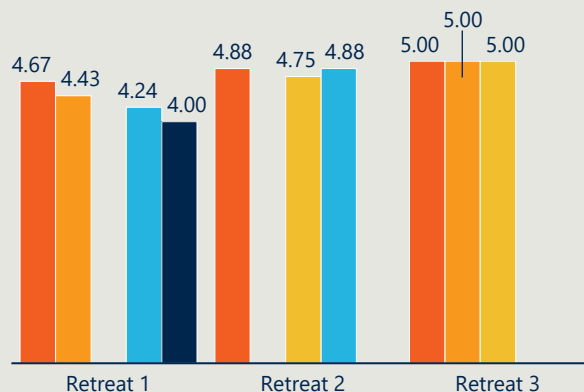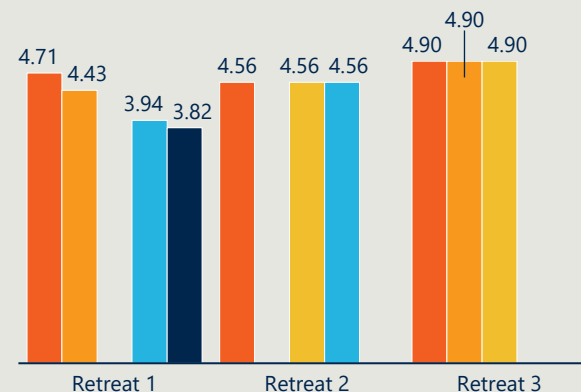
Legend: Retreat 1 | Retreat 2 | Retreat 3

The content I learnt in the retreat was relevant and useful to my role
- 4.81 (Retreat 1)
- 4.38 (Retreat 2)
- 4.90 (Retreat 3)

I can make a difference in my organisation and across the sector by using what I have learned from the retreat
- 4.67 (Retreat 1)
- 4.19 (Retreat 2)
- 4.80 (Retreat 3)

I have clear ideas about how I can use the new skills and knowledge following the retreat
- 4.38 (Retreat 1)
- 4.06 (Retreat 2)
- 4.70 (Retreat 3)

Facilitator average rating - knowledge
	Retreat 1	Retreat 2	Retreat 3
Kristy Muir	4.86	5.00	5.00
Terri Soller	4.71	5.00	
Robbie Macpherson		5.00	5.00
Mark Yettica-Paulson	4.76		
Audrey McGibbon	4.82		

Facilitator average rating – delivery style
	Retreat 1	Retreat 2	Retreat 3
Kristy Muir	4.67	4.88	5.00
Terri Soller	4.43	4.75	
Robbie Macpherson		4.88	5.00
Mark Yettica-Paulson	4.24		
Audrey McGibbon	4.00		

Facilitator average rating – extent they helped me learn
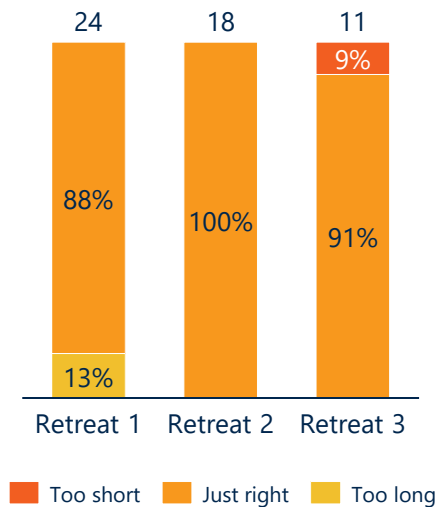|	Retreat 1	Retreat 2	Retreat 3
Kristy Muir	4.71	4.56	4.90
Terri Soller	4.43	4.56	
Robbie Macpherson		4.56	4.90
Mark Yettica-Paulson	3.94		
Audrey McGibbon	3.82		

Legend: Kristy Muir | Terri Soller | Robbie Macpherson | Mark Yettica-Paulson | Audrey McGibbon

*R1: leadership and growth of the self
R2 & R3: systems leadership and aligning self and systems leadership

Qualitative comments

The length of the retreat was...

	24	18	11
	88%	100%	9% (Too short), 91% (Just right)
	13% (Too long)		
	Retreat 1	Retreat 2	Retreat 3

■ Too short   ■ Just right   ■ Too long

- Retreat 2 has the most potential – Can improve the coverage of the subject matter (systems leadership and aligning self and systems leadership) and the mode of delivery of the content to better suit learning preferences.

- What did the retreat help you learn about yourself as a leader?
  - R2 – To exercise greater self-compassion, I lack self-belief, don't need to be loudest voice in the room.
  - R3 – To drop perfectionism.
- What did you value most about the retreat?
  - R1 – Networking and connecting (in-person) with peers, the facilitators, time to learn and reflect, tools.
  - R2 – Location and people, developing connections.
  - R3 – Collaboration, exercises, becoming a better social impact leader.

- How could the retreat experience be improved?
  - R1 – More downtime and outdoor time.
  - R2 – Space pre and post-retreat would be ideal to ensure there is time for the learnings to sink in.
  - R3 – Individual facilitator check ins, actual downtime and self-reflective time.

Appendix E – Coach survey feedback

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Coach post-program survey context

- 6 out of 10 coaches responded to the survey

- Survey consisted of 12 questions which covered Levels 1 and 2 of Kirkpatrick and Phillip's model

- Coaches reflected that they had provided a lot of this feedback to SILA previously

Level 1 – Learner reaction questions asked

1. What did you find worked well with the delivery of the coaching sessions?

2. What do you think could be improved with the delivery of the coaching sessions?

3. To what extent was the coaching you provided integrated with the other components of SILA (e.g. the learning objectives of retreats, the individual assessments, the learning circles, and the sabbatical)?

4. What reflections did participants share on their experience with the other SILA components, i.e. retreats, individual assessments, organisational diagnostic, online learning, small group learning circles, sabbatical?

5. To what extent did participants fully engage in the coaching? How did this differ across the coaching sessions and for different participants?

6. What barriers to engaging did participants experience? How did this differ across the coaching sessions and for different participants?

7. What reflections did SUL participants share on their experience with the SILA program?

8. To what extent did SUL participants fully engage in the coaching? How was this different across the coaching sessions?

9. What barriers to engaging did SUL participants experience? How did this change across the coaching sessions?

Level 2 – Knowledge, skills and planned action questions asked

10. What shifts in mindset (e.g., the willingness of participants to grow their leadership skills, to be stretched and challenged, to be vulnerable with others or to reflect on feedback and adjust their ways of working) did you observe in CEO participants? How significant were the shifts?

11. What shifts in knowledge, skills or behaviours (e.g., participant knowledge of new leadership and social impact theories and tools, application of those theories or tools in their role, confidence to lead their organisation or ability to manage their wellbeing) did you observe in CEO participants? How significant were the shifts?

12. What shifts in mindset (e.g., the willingness of participants to grow their leadership skills, to be stretched and challenged, to be vulnerable with others or to reflect on feedback and adjust their ways of working) did you observe in SUL participants? How significant were the shifts?

Level 1 – Learner reactions themes

- **Overall engagement with coaching was good** – the majority of coachees were engaged throughout or became more engaged with the coaching after a few sessions.

- **The reaction to coaches supporting both CEO and SUL from the same organisation was mixed** – some coaches held sessions with both the CEO and the SUL and found it very beneficial and are recommending to formalise these sessions, whereas others have mentioned that having coachees from the same organisation poses a conflict of interest.

- **The program could provide better support for CEOs to plan the sabbatical (including more guidance for coaches to navigate discussions)**– many CEOs came to coaches with questions about the sabbatical since they could not find it elsewhere. Participants needed guidance on how to plan for the sabbatical or coaches should be better equipped to do this with them. They also retrospectively mentioned the need to highlight potential issues with transitioning back to the organisation and how to alleviate them.

- **SULs did not feel involved in the program** – SULs expressed that they felt thrown into the program without support or guidance, including on how to approach coaching. They also didn't know what to expect from the program and how it would benefit them. Additionally, SULs mentioned wanting to connect with other SULs.

- **Coaching needs to be better integrated with other elements** – the majority of coaches reflected that coaches should be more incorporated and aware of other program elements (as well as other coaches) to ensure the experience for coachees is more cohesive and integrated.

Level 2 - Knowledge, skills and planned action themes

- **The program led to a positive mindset shift for CEOs** – Many coaches noted a shift in CEOs in that they became reflective, self-aware and re-inspired, and that they began valuing wellbeing more, leaning on others and adopting a strategic and systems mindset. These shifts occurred due to Hogan 360 and GLWS assessments paired with other program elements (retreats, sabbatical, coaching, etc.).

- **SULs experienced a confidence boost** – Coaches reflected that they felt many SULs realised that they have what it takes to be CEO and became more self-aware on their development areas.

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A bigger idea of success

Nous Group is an international management consultancy with over 600 people working across Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Canada.

With our broad consulting capability, we can solve your most complex strategic challenges and partner with you through transformational change.

600
PEOPLE

70
PRINCIPALS

5
COUNTRIES