



**Fairley  
Leadership  
Program**



**“Fairley [Leadership Program]  
was a game changer for me.”**

**Lisa McKenzie**      Fairley Fellow 1997

With some thirty years living and working in Shepparton, Lisa McKenzie has been a catalyst of change in the community. As a member of the inaugural Fairley Leadership Program, she was restless and wanting to do more at work and in the community.

A key takeaway from her involvement in the community leadership program was “I realised you don’t have to be extraordinarily talented or gifted – you [just] need to do things and do them with conviction and bring others with you.”

“I looked at the other members of the cohort and the speakers over the course of the year and realised they were not so different from me. They were ordinary people having a go and making a difference by tapping into their own ideas, values, passion and capacity and aligning with like-minded people to make things happen.”

When asked how the program enabled her to become a community leader, Lisa said “I felt valued among our cohort and that gave me the confidence to step up. I established my own business, joined committees and started to contribute. I organised a peace rally, was involved in establishing RiverConnect, the Sampson Leadership Trust, the Lift Off Scholarships and [the] Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project. I came to understand my own leadership style and leant on the complementary strengths of others to make things happen.”

Lisa believes the Fairley Leadership Program and all her other work and learnings led her to becoming the inaugural Executive Officer of Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project in 2014, a large-scale place based movement focused on improving childhood outcomes in our region.

What’s the next challenge this Fairley Fellow is contemplating? Lisa wants to continue leading and driving change, particularly to support the community to deal with the current crisis of how to raise and prepare children for life.

“Data shows far too many children in our region are falling behind even before they start school. This has a knock-on impact across every part of our community, and our region won’t fully thrive until we address the underlying causes such as inadequate infrastructure including transport, housing and green space; underlying social issues such as domestic violence and racism and a lack of innovation in service provision.”

“[The] Fairley [Leadership Program] taught me not to accept the status quo and I refuse to believe we can’t do better for our children.”