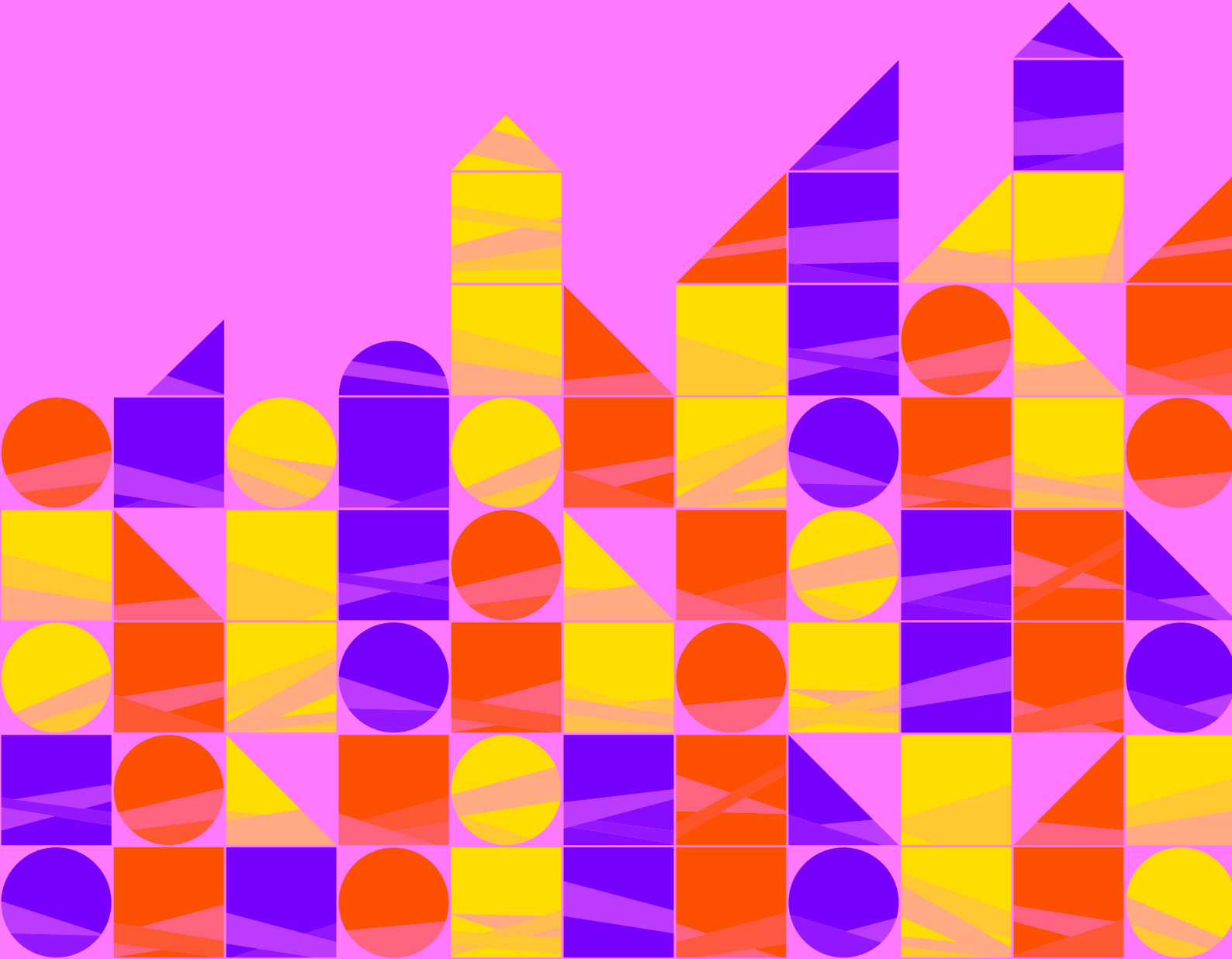


FAST TRACK

INTENSIVE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS



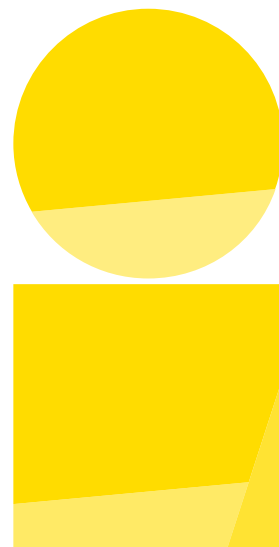
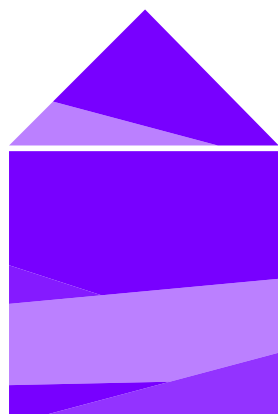
2022-2024 Evaluation Report





ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

Safe and Equal acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional and ongoing custodians of the lands on which we live and work. We pay respects to Elders past and present. We acknowledge that sovereignty has never been ceded and recognise First Nations peoples' rights to self-determination and continuing connections to land, waters and community.



ABOUT SAFE AND EQUAL

Safe and Equal is the peak body for Victorian organisations that specialise in family and gender-based violence across the continuum, including primary prevention, early intervention, response and recovery.

Our vision

Our vision is a world where everyone is safe, respected and thriving, living free from family and gender-based violence.

Our work prioritises the safety of all people experiencing, recovering from or at risk of family and gender-based violence. While we know that most family violence is perpetrated by men against women and children, we recognise that family violence impacts people across a diversity of gender identities, social and cultural contexts, and within various intimate, family and other relationships. We apply an intersectional feminist lens in our work to address the gendered drivers of violence, and how these overlap and intersect with additional forms of violence, oppression and inequality.

We believe in and work towards a world where people are not only safe and free from family and gender-based violence, but are respected for who they are and thriving in their lives.

Our purpose

As a peak, we work with and for our members to prevent and respond to violence, building a better future for adults, children and young people experiencing, at risk of, or recovering from family and gender-based violence.

- + We bring together evidence, lived experience, practice expertise and collaborative partnerships to mobilise for and effect social, policy and system change.
- + We advocate on behalf of and support the development of high-quality services and programs across the continuum.
- + We drive the continued development of an innovative and leading family violence sector.

THANK YOU

Safe and Equal would like to thank all those who have supported the Fast Track programs, facilitator Sarah Johnson, participants, expert guests, mentors and managers.

We deeply appreciate everyone who generously gave their time to provide feedback on the programs and support this evaluation. We hope that the findings of this evaluation report can further support and enhance future Fast Track programs and what has been learnt can contribute to other leadership capacity development initiatives and strengthen sector outcomes.

AUTHORSHIP

Kylie Henry, Beth Mooney and Amelia Ditcham wrote this report, while Kate Randall and Michael Moriarty provided the evaluative and analytical input. It was written in 2024–2025 and finalised in September 2025.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS	2
ABOUT SAFE AND EQUAL	3
Our vision	3
Our purpose	3
THANK YOU	3
AUTHORSHIP	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
Program and evaluation overview	5
Findings overview	6
1. INTRODUCTION AND PROGRAM CONTEXT	9
1.1 About this report	9
1.2 Program background and aims	10
1.3 Key activities and deliverables	15
2. EVALUATION DESIGN AND CONTEXT	16
2.1 Evaluation approach	16
2.2 Evaluation designs	16
2.3 Scope	16
2.4 Methodology and limitations	17
3. CORE PROGRAMS FINDINGS	18
3.1 Did the core programs reach appropriate participants?	18
3.2 Are the core programs still appropriate and effective?	19
3.3 Are the core programs achieving their intended impact?	29
4. LEADERSHIP FOUNDATIONS FINDINGS	39
4.1 Did <i>Leadership Foundations</i> reach appropriate participants?	39
4.2 Was <i>Leadership Foundations</i> fit-for-purpose?	40
4.3 Was <i>Leadership Foundations</i> relevant to the sector?	45
4.4 Did <i>Leadership Foundations</i> increase participants' knowledge, skills and confidence?	48
4.5 How is <i>Leadership Foundations</i> benefiting the sector?	49
4.6 What effect does <i>Leadership Foundations</i> have on roles and careers?	51
4.7 Is there continued demand for <i>Leadership Foundations</i> ?	53
5. EVALUATION QUESTIONS SUMMARY	54
5.1 Core programs	54
5.2 <i>Leadership Foundations</i>	56
6. CONCLUSION	58
7. APPENDICES	60
Appendix 1 – Program logic: Core programs	60
Appendix 2 – Program logic: <i>Leadership Foundations</i>	64
Appendix 3 – Core program data collection methods	68
Appendix 4 – <i>Leadership Foundations</i> data collection methods	70

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Program and evaluation overview

This report summarises the findings of an evaluation of Safe and Equal's Fast Track intensive leadership programs which was conducted through an analysis of contemporary monitoring and data evaluation. The report was primarily written to inform and support Safe and Equal's learning and sector development, as well as convey to a broader audience what works in leadership and workforce development in the family and gender-based violence sector. The evaluation focuses on the effectiveness of Fast Track in building the cohort's knowledge and skills, and also explores longer term outcomes relating to both career progression and broader organisational and sector-level outcomes. It also provides an insight into the specialist family violence (SFV) response and primary prevention of family and gender-based violence (primary prevention) workforces more broadly; what practitioners' development interests and needs are; and their individual career experiences.

The Centre for Workforce Excellence (CWE) through the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH), funded the 2022-24 Fast Track program which was an extension of the 2021-22 program. Fast Track was designed to increase the supply of suitably skilled practitioners available to take up management and leadership roles in the sector.

Following the extensive evaluation that tested the appropriateness and impact of Fast Track's *Response* and *Prevention* streams (the core programs) in 2021-22, this evaluation of the core programs was designed to monitor progress of the program to date, using data collected by Safe and Equal throughout and after the programs' completion. It sought to answer three fundamental questions:

- **To what extent are the core programs reaching and graduating appropriate participants?**
- **Do the 2022-24 core programs continue to be fit-for-purpose and effective in building key leadership and management capabilities?**
- **Are the core programs achieving the intended sector impact?**

The evaluation of Fast Track's piloted new stream, *Leadership Foundations*, was summative in nature and based on seven key evaluation questions that addressed the areas of program design and process, appropriateness, effectiveness and impact, and sustainability.

Findings overview

Core programs

Reach and graduation

The core programs reached a geographically broad and diverse group of participants in the SFV response and primary prevention workforces. A total of 163 practitioners were recruited, with 145 graduating. This was an 8% increase in recruitment and 14% increase in graduation on the 2021-22 program.

Outcomes

The *Prevention* and *Response* programs performed well in 2022-24, showing improvement on almost all measures.

More than 90% of participant responses in the 60 weekly surveys agreed or strongly agreed with the positive statements posed about the workshops. The positive feedback about the introduction of videos, the balance of learning activities, and relevant and useful program content demonstrated the success of the sustainability and learning design review, and its changes. Participants most valued the opportunity to meet and collaborate with others in the sector, draw on expertise in the room through Fast Track's peer learning method, and access sector experts.

The core programs overall, including the highly regarded mentoring component, effectively increased participants' knowledge and skills across a set of targeted capabilities which were aligned with the Victorian capability frameworks. In terms of application, the vast majority of respondents agreed they had more confidence to apply new knowledge and skills in their role or workplace, and had already applied these. The percentage of positive responses to questions about the application of new knowledge and skills increased, building on the success of the 2021-22 program.

Longer term impact for graduates and their organisations

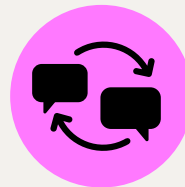
Program staff surveyed graduates and their managers from the 2022 and 2023 cohorts to gauge the impact of the core programs beyond immediate completion. Feedback was positive on the impact of participating in a *Prevention* or *Response* program.

Results showed 93% of graduate respondents reported increased confidence in undertaking their role. In addition, 94% of managers on average agreed their employees exhibited increased knowledge, increased skill levels and increased confidence since completing the program. As well, 64% of graduate respondents confirmed they had continued professional connections formed during the program. The value of these connections included increased trust and understanding between organisations, connection to the sector, resource sharing and peer support.

Graduate respondents also reported benefits for their organisations with eight of 14 agreeing that their involvement in a core program had enhanced their organisation's advocacy activities and enabled their organisation to provide better services and programs.



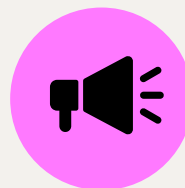
93% INCREASED
CONFIDENCE



64% CONTINUED
CONNECTIONS



94% INCREASED
KNOWLEDGE
AND SKILLS



57% ENHANCED
ADCOVACY

Leadership Foundations

Program design and process

The *Leadership Foundations* pilot recruited and graduated a diverse cohort of 25 practitioners. The cohort comprised nine primary prevention and 16 SFV response practitioners (which was representative of the different sized workforces). These practitioners came from a broad range of services or programs, across a wide range of geographic locations, with a third located regionally or remotely.

Appropriateness

Leadership Foundations is fit-for-purpose in meeting the needs of participants and is relevant and practical. Some iterative improvements can be made to enhance participants' experience.

The weekly surveys of participants revealed almost all agreed with the statements describing positive workshop outcomes. The strong themes that emerged from the feedback included an appreciation of the various tools and models explored, interactions with peers and expert guests, and opportunities for reflection. All the respondents agreed that the program was relevant to their work.

Overall participants were in favour of retaining a mixed cohort of SFV response and primary prevention practitioners, offering some constructive feedback for consideration. Online delivery was both an enabler and barrier to participation. While this mode of delivery made the program more accessible, participants noted barriers in the sense of keeping focused, staying engaged and building relationships. Participants also valued the program's engaging delivery model, shorter five-week length and having the support of their manager.

Graduates praised their mentors and felt they were well matched. Mentors were positive about the program and appreciated its focus on leadership and how it applied in the family and gender-based violence sector.

Participants made many comments in their feedback praising the facilitator and program staff for their efforts and complementing them on providing a safe and supportive environment.

Effectiveness and impact

Leadership Foundations is effective and shows some early signs of impact. Nearly all graduates reported feeling more confident to progress their careers in the sector, while half reported that their role or span of influence had expanded because they had participated in the program.

Participants' knowledge, skills and confidence increased significantly as a result of the program. 96% of weekly survey respondents agreed the workshop had deepened their understanding of the topics discussed. Additionally, nine of the 10 graduates responding in the post-program survey reported that they had more confidence to apply their new knowledge and skills at work, with everyone reporting that they had applied their newly acquired capabilities. Graduates in the group interview also anticipated opportunities to apply newly learned capabilities.

Mentors observed increased confidence in their mentees which was evidenced by attributes such as staying strong, setting boundaries and advocating for oneself, as well as an increased sense of where their role and that of others fit into the sector.

All post-program survey respondents reported developing supportive relationships with their mentor. Post-program survey data also showed that participants developed supportive peer relationships during the program. Some of these relationships spanned the SFV response and primary prevention workforces. The positive impact of these relationships include feeling less isolated and having a network to reach out to when needed.

Sustainability

Leadership Foundations is valuable, needed in the sector and has ongoing demand.

Data from all stakeholders indicated a unique need met by the *Leadership Foundations* program. For *Leadership Foundations* to be financially viable continued funding is required to ensure it is accessible to practitioners, considering their organisations' limited professional development budgets.

Conclusion

This evaluation demonstrates the Fast Track intensive leadership programs continue to be highly effective for building key leadership and management capabilities across the SFV response and primary prevention workforces.

After implementing all the recommendations from the 2021-22 Evaluation Report, the core programs built on the success of previous deliveries and demonstrated improvement on the earlier programs on virtually all measures. The core programs are achieving their intended outcomes from reaching and graduating more diverse cohorts, to improving on the number of positive responses to feedback about increased knowledge, skills and confidence. This is supported by praise from managers on the impact on participating staff, graduates' reports of career progression, and positive organisational results stemming both from participation and continued professional connections.

Leadership Foundations has confirmed professional development programs to build "traditional" leadership and management skills can be successfully delivered to a mixed cohort of SFV response and primary prevention practitioners. The pilot was overall fit-for-purpose, relevant and effective in increasing participants' knowledge, skills and confidence.

The clear commonality for the growing success of the core programs and *Leadership Foundations'* positive results is Fast Track's iterative monitoring and refinement approach which meets and responds to the needs of practitioners, organisations and the sector.

There is strong interest in all three Fast Track streams, as shown by waiting lists of 75 for *Response*, 54 for *Prevention* and 21 for *Leadership Foundations* as of May 2024. This, together with the considerable positive feedback and outcomes, indicates strong future demand.

To ensure leadership and management pathways remain open to new and emerging SFV response and primary prevention leaders, Fast Track needs to be financially accessible to organisations. This requires resourcing for Fast Track to provide subsidised places in its programs.

Recommendations

After reviewing the evidence and feedback, the following recommendations have been identified:

▶ Recommendation 1

To ensure high quality delivery and continued positive outcomes program staff should continue their iterative monitoring and refinement approach to the design of the programs.

▶ Recommendation 2

Fast Track should continue to contribute to the workforce development evidence base of SFV response and primary prevention by:

- Ensuring its monitoring and evaluation framework is fit for purpose and efficient for future iterations.
- Investing in a retrospective evaluation to better understand the medium to long term impact of the Fast Track programs on practitioners and their organisations.

▶ Recommendation 3

Safe and Equal advocacy should consider Fast Track as a key part of Victoria's workforce development infrastructure which requires sustained funding.

1. INTRODUCTION AND PROGRAM CONTEXT

1.1 About this report

This document reports on the analysis of monitoring and evaluation data from Safe and Equal’s Fast Track *Response* and *Prevention* programs (the core programs), and a summative evaluation of its new *Leadership Foundations* program piloted in 2024.¹ Safe and Equal and an independent evaluator co-authored this evaluation report and summarised the findings from analyses of extensive monitoring and evaluation data collected during all the programs. It has been written primarily for Safe and Equal to support learning and sector development, as well as to contribute to further understanding of what is successful in workforce development. This evaluation report is also provided to the Centre for Workforce Excellence (CWE) in the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) as the Fast Track funders.

Safe and Equal is committed to sharing the evidence and learning from these evaluations more widely – including with sector stakeholders and program participants – to inform and support further leadership or workforce development initiatives. To suit a diverse range of audiences, this report is intentionally high level, with technical details provided in the Appendices where appropriate.

This first chapter provides brief program introductions and contexts. Chapter 2 provides further information about the evaluations including evaluation design and methodology. Chapters 3 and 4 set out the findings, arranged under the areas of interest for monitoring evaluation of the core programs, and by the key evaluation questions of the *Leadership Foundations* pilot. Chapter 5 summarises the findings, resulting in the recommendations in Chapter 6.

Acronyms and abbreviations

The following acronyms and abbreviations are used throughout this report:

Acronym/Abbreviation	Meaning
Core programs	This term refers to the Fast Track Response and Prevention programs (not Fast Track Leadership Foundations, piloted in 2024)
CWE	Centre for Workforce Excellence
DFFH	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
FSV	Family Safety Victoria
LDAP	Leadership Development Action Plan
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
SFV	Specialist Family Violence

¹ The monitoring evaluation analyses standardised data taken over time to gauge the progress of the program, whereas the summative evaluation employs a broader range of data to determine success on completion of the program.

1.2 Program background and aims

Background

The Fast Track intensive leadership program was first piloted in 2018 in response to recommended reforms following the 2015 Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence. The program is designed to substantially increase the supply of suitably skilled professionals available to take up management and leadership roles within the sector. As such, Fast Track aims to build the capabilities and confidence of mid to senior level practitioners to encourage them to undertake urgently needed SFV response and primary prevention leadership roles. Building the management and leadership capabilities of current practitioners will create the skill sets needed to lead highly effective organisations, while ensuring crucial experience and feminist values are retained within the workforce, ultimately developing a thriving, sustainable sector.

Fast Track uses a practice-informed, multi-modal leadership training and mentoring program underpinned by Family Safety Victoria's (FSV) capability frameworks² and focuses on transforming practice experience into leadership capability. The core programs describe Fast Track's core streams: the *Response* stream is designed for specialist family violence (SFV) response practitioners while the *Prevention* stream is designed for primary prevention of family and gender-based violence (primary prevention) practitioners.

Between 2018 and 2022, through funding from FSV, Fast Track's delivery of the core programs included:

- 2018: *Response* stream (pilot) delivered in-person to 15 SFV response practitioners,
- 2019: Pilot evaluation,
- 2020–22: Program scaled up (including introduction of *Prevention* stream) and adapted for online delivery:
 - Three *Response* rounds delivered to 65 SFV response practitioners,
 - Three *Prevention* rounds delivered to 62 primary prevention practitioners,
- 2022: Extensive evaluation showing Fast Track's effectiveness in building capabilities and confidence for participants in both the short and medium term.

In 2022 CWE through the DFFH provided funding to Safe and Equal to build on and deliver Fast Track for another two years. Fast Track's 2022–24 program deliverables included:

- Implementing all recommendations from the 2021–22 Evaluation Report,
- Delivering three *Response* and two *Prevention* rounds,³
- Developing and testing an innovative pilot program comprising a combined SFV response and primary prevention cohort (*Leadership Foundations*),
- Recruiting 177 participants, a facilitator, mentors and expert guests, and
- Refining the existing MEL framework for evaluation.

² Responding to Family Violence Capability Framework and Preventing Family Violence & Violence Against Women Capability Framework (2017).

³ To meet sector demand, program staff added a fourth *Response* round in 2024.

Core programs

Concept

The core programs, open to new and emerging leaders, aim to sharpen a participant's leadership skills to think critically about aspects of practice such as intersectional feminist leadership, advocacy, policy, staff and organisational development, partnerships, program design, and working in diverse settings. Practitioners graduate with the tools and confidence to influence and implement best practice in their professional setting.

Target audience

The *Prevention* stream is designed for either:

- Experienced practitioners in the Victorian primary prevention sector who want to move into a leadership role, or
- Professionals with significant experience in family violence roles who want to move into primary prevention in Victoria.

The *Response* stream is designed for either:

- Victorian specialist family violence managers and senior workers who are new to their roles and/or want to build their leadership and management capabilities, or
- Experienced practitioners in the Victorian specialist family violence sector who want to move into a leadership role.

Program elements

The core programs use mutually reinforcing delivery methods. *Prevention* and *Response* streams comprise:

- An introductory workshop and nine scaffolded workshops containing a range of activities,⁴
- A workplace project designed and implemented by participants,
- Three hours of mentoring with field experts for each participant,
- Dissemination of policy, theory and practice resources,
- Networking with key stakeholders and other participants, and
- A participant presentation at an end of program forum.



**10 ONLINE
WORKSHOPS**



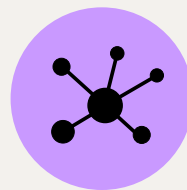
**LIVE AND
RECORDED GUEST
SPEAKERS**



**WORKPLACE
PROJECT**



MENTORSHIP



NETWORKING



FORUM

⁴ Activities in each workshop vary and can include elements such as watching pre-recorded interviews and panel discussions with sector experts, interacting with live expert guests, group discussions including the use of different models and frameworks, and individual break-out group activities and discussions.

Workshop outline

Workshop	Prevention	Response
1	Introducing the program, participants and the team	Introducing the program, participants and the team
2	Using research, theory and evidence to support practice	Applying theory, research and evidence
3	Intersectionality in practice	Legislative, policy and practice frameworks
4	Developing program logic frameworks	Intersectionality, practice and organisations
5	Monitoring, evaluation and learning	Management across staff, teams and organisations
6	Establishing and maintaining partnerships	Supporting healthy, safe and reflective organisations
7	Prevention across settings	Data and policy to manage and improve planning, practice and organisations
8	Working with men and boys	Partnerships and supporting collaboration
9	Communications and managing resistance	Representing your organisation
10	Advocating for change	Advocacy for policy and practice reform

2022–2024 delivery

The Fast Track program delivered:

- four *Response* rounds to 107 SFV response practitioners and
- two *Prevention* rounds to 38 primary prevention practitioners.

Leadership Foundations

Concept

In addition to delivering the core programs, the 2022–24 Fast Track program piloted a new stream called *Leadership Foundations*. The original idea for the pilot was to merge the core programs and offer this hybrid stream to a mixed cohort of primary prevention and SFV response practitioners. The purpose was to test an alternative and potentially more sustainable version of the core programs by connecting participants working across the family and gender-based violence continuum and providing an opportunity to gain a better understanding of each other's work. SFV response and primary prevention practitioners would explore content that applied to both workforces together and then branch out by specialisation to focus on content specific to their setting.

Program mapping had found there was insufficient shared content between the *Response* and *Prevention* streams to develop a hybrid stream that would be as effective as the separate core programs. So, the program staff decided to develop a new leadership program responding to the demand identified in the 2021–22 Evaluation Report.

The concept for *Leadership Foundations* was “traditional” management skills and theory with a feminist lens, tailored to the family and gender-based violence sector. The program would provide participants with the opportunity to reflect on the values and strengths they brought to their leadership, explore tools to build and manage effective teams and projects, and consider their leadership role in a whole of organisation context. Through participation, practitioners should develop the confidence to lean into their leadership style and values so as to execute strategies and excel in their role.

Design and development

Safe and Equal engaged a consultant to design and facilitate *Leadership Foundations*. The program's design was informed by the sector which involved seeking feedback from core program graduates, their managers and mentors via a needs analysis survey, as well as a consultation process with Safe and Equal program staff. *Leadership Foundations* used a multimodal design to reinforce learning because this was successful in the core programs.

Leadership Foundations was designed to be stand-alone and complementary to the core programs. Practitioners can complete up to two Fast Track streams (*Response or Prevention*, and *Leadership Foundations*) in any order. They are encouraged to apply for the stream that best aligns with their practice specialty, role, career goals and availability.

Target audience

Leadership Foundations is designed for leaders in Victoria working to end or respond to family and gender-based violence, who have between 6 and 18 months' experience managing teams, projects and specialist areas. It is a foundational program for:

- SFV response team leaders, co-ordinators or managers who have responsibility for managing staff or teams, or
- Primary prevention co-ordinators, managers or senior project officers who have responsibility for leading projects and/or managing staff or teams.

Program elements

As with the core programs, *Leadership Foundations* comprises mutually reinforcing delivery methods. This includes:

- Five scaffolded workshops containing a range of activities,⁵
- Dissemination of leadership and management theory, frameworks, models, resources and tools,
- Three hours of mentoring for each participant with field experts,
- Proactive career planning through a Leadership Development Action Plan,
- Networking with key stakeholders and other participants.



5 ONLINE WORKSHOPS



LIVE AND RECORDED GUEST SPEAKERS



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN



MENTORSHIP



NETWORKING

⁵ Similar to the core program, each workshop varies and includes elements such as viewing pre-recorded interviews and panel discussions with sector experts, interacting with live expert guests, individual reflection, peer group activities and discussions.

Workshop outline

Workshop	<i>Leadership Foundations</i>
1	Leadership and self
2	Leadership styles, self-management and change
3	Staff support and development
4	Building and managing effective teams
5	Strategic and whole of organisation thinking

2022–2024 delivery

Leadership Foundations was delivered in May 2024 to 25 participants comprising nine primary prevention and 16 SFV response practitioners.

Program staff

The program was resourced and delivered by 1.2 FTE staff, with additional support from a contracted program facilitator. These staff members were located within the Primary Prevention Unit and were also supported by other staff and functions within Safe and Equal, including Client Services Operations, Quality and Governance, Communications and Sector Development. External evaluation assistance was also procured.

1.3 Key activities and deliverables

The table below is a summary of key Fast Track activities and deliverables, all of which were completed on time or before deadline.

Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
Implement recommendations from the 2021–22 Evaluation Report	Refined communications strategy.	Increased representation of participants who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. Participants are clearer about intended learning outcomes.
	20 Facilitator Guides (workshop plans) reviewed; content and activities adjusted, and 26 interviews/panel discussions recorded for use in workshops.	Strengthened engagement and learning opportunities within workshops. Sustainability of core programs enhanced without compromising participant outcomes.
	Workplace Project Databank created for participants.	Increased opportunity for collaborative work across organisations to strengthen sector-wide outcomes.
	Participant drop-in sessions scheduled.	Increased opportunity to network and establish professional connections.
	Post-program networking opportunity identified.	Participants invited to join Safe and Equal's Leadership Network after graduating providing opportunity to strengthen partnerships and collaboration sector wide.
	New data collection methods and processes introduced.	Reduced errors in data collection.
	MEL framework reviewed and updated.	A MEL framework, with integrated <i>Leadership Foundations</i> program indicators, which is appropriate and efficient.
Recruit a facilitator, expert guests and mentors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sarah Johnson facilitated all seven online programs • 59 guest speakers engaged • 34 mentors engaged 	Sector experts share insights and advice with participants leading to increased skills, knowledge and confidence.
Screen and recruit 177 participants	188 practitioners recruited, 170 graduates across all the core programs and pilot.	Participants with new skills and strengthened capabilities are more confident to undertake their role leading to strengthened program and service delivery and resulting in greater organisational and sector outcomes.
Produce and test a leadership development program which can be delivered to a mixed cohort of SFV response and primary prevention practitioners	<p>Conducted needs analysis survey of graduates, their managers and mentors. New program developed. <i>Leadership Foundations</i> piloted comprising of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 online workshops • 5 workbooks • 3 hours mentoring • Additional resources provided on Canvas • Tools to support Leadership Development Action Plan. 	Opportunity for participants to develop additional leadership capabilities which are not covered in the core programs e.g. "traditional" management skills, and connect workers across the continuum.

2. EVALUATION DESIGN AND CONTEXT

2.1 Evaluation approach

An independent evaluator undertook the evaluation work of the core programs and *Leadership Foundations* by collating, analysing and reporting on participant and stakeholder data which Safe and Equal collected during and after programs' delivery. The evaluation for the *Leadership Foundations* pilot was more rigorous as it needed to assess the program's effectiveness. It included qualitative data collected from group and individual stakeholder interviews.

2.2 Evaluation designs

Core programs

The 2021–22 Evaluation Report provided a comprehensive review of the core programs. It showed they were effective in increasing participants' capabilities, confidence and connections, directly contributing to their career development (both through career progression and extending their role responsibilities), and provided valuable lessons and recommendations for program improvement. As such, the current evaluation of the core programs was designed to be smaller in scale and focus on answering three fundamental questions:

- **To what extent are the core programs reaching and graduating appropriate participants?**
- **Do the 2022–24 core programs continue to be fit-for-purpose and effective in building key leadership and management capabilities?**
- **Are the core programs achieving the intended sector impact?**

Where feasible, 2022–24 evaluation results were compared to previous results to gauge the progress in outcomes.

Leadership Foundations

Following the design of a separate program logic, key evaluation questions and relevant sources of data specific to the *Leadership Foundations* pilot were integrated into the existing Fast Track core programs' monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) framework. These were employed in this summative evaluation, designed to gauge the success of the pilot program. The key evaluation questions were formed to provide evidence of success across four domains: program design and process, appropriateness, effectiveness and impact, and sustainability.

2.3 Scope

The scope for this evaluation was largely focused on the 2022–24 program; four *Response* and two *Prevention* programs and the *Leadership Foundations* pilot. However, a small component of the evaluation investigated longer term results, particularly relating to the career progression of participants. Therefore, selected data collection methods were extended to try to include the 135 participants who completed a core program in 2022 and 2023 as well as their managers.

Further evidence and exploration of *Leadership Foundations* medium to longer term outcomes are not possible in this evaluation due to time constraints.

2.4 Methodology and limitations

The following methods were used to gather data from various stakeholder groups at key points during the program. A summary of the methods and participation is provided here, with further details and any limitations including the timing, sample sizes, response rates and analysis methods provided at Appendices 3 (core programs) and 4 (*Leadership Foundations*).

Core programs

Participants:

- Weekly workshop surveys (n=averaged between 13 and 22 a week across 6 cohorts),
- Post-program survey (n=86 of 145, 59% response),
- Follow-up survey 6–24 months after completion (n=14 of 135 participants, 10% response),
- Case study interviews with one *Prevention* and one *Response* graduate.

Managers of participants:

- Follow-up survey 6–24 months after completion (n=31 of 122, 25% response).

Mentors:

- Post-program survey (n=24 of 73, 32% response).

Leadership Foundations

Participants:

- Weekly workshop surveys (n=averaged 14 per week),
- Post-program survey (n=11 of 25, 44% response),
- Post-program group interviews (n=7),
- Case study interview with one graduate.

Mentors:

- Post-program group interview (n=5).

Program Team:

- Post-program interviews with program staff (n=2) and facilitator (n=1).

3. CORE PROGRAMS FINDINGS

3.1 Did the core programs reach appropriate participants?

3.1.1 Characteristics of core program cohorts

The core programs recruited a total of 163 practitioners, with 145 graduating as shown in Table 1. This was an increase on the 2021-22 program where 151 practitioners were recruited and 127 graduated, an increase of 8% and 14% respectively.

In keeping with the 2021-22 application process, participants were invited to submit an online application form together with their resume and a letter of support from their manager. Program staff assessed the applications using a tool to ensure assessment consistency. The application tool allowed program staff to identify and promote cohort and practice diversity, including regionality, program area and organisations. Program staff developed relationships with relevant organisations and stakeholders to support engagement of those from diverse cultural backgrounds. This ensured a targeted approach to recruitment as well as broader promotion.

A total of 17 participants withdrew from the program, which was slightly less than the withdrawal rate in 2021-22 (10% versus 13% respectively). Graduation was slightly higher in the *Prevention* stream than the *Response* stream (90% versus 88%). Most withdrawals occurred because unforeseen external factors impacted participants' personal or employment circumstances. To allow for attrition, program staff invited up to 31 practitioners to enrol so as to attain the target of 29 per cohort.

	Stream	Recruited	Withdrawn	Graduated	Graduation Rate
Prevention	Round 1	20	2	18	90%
	Round 2	22	1	20	91%
	Total	42	3	38	Average: 90%
Response	Round 1	30	4	26	87%
	Round 2	31	4	27	87%
	Round 3	30	6	24	80%
	Round 4	30	0	30	100%
	Total	121	14	107	Average: 88%
Grand Total		163	17	145	Average: 89%

Table 1: Count of core program recruits and graduates

Of the 163 participants recruited, 13 were from Aboriginal services, a three-fold increase on the 2021-22 program. Seven participants identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, more than the number of participants who identified as a First Nations person in the 2021-22 program. Four participants also identified as First Nations people of other countries. These are the only cultural demographics collected.

There was an almost even spread of participants across metropolitan Melbourne and regional and rural Victorian areas (52% and 48% respectively). This representation was similar for both the *Prevention* and *Response* cohorts.

Most participants (153, 94%) identified as being "woman/female", with one identifying as "male", and four identifying as trans or gender diverse. The ages of participants were gathered in ranges from 18 to over 65 years, with the majority (71%) being between 25 and 44 years of age. This is a similar composition to the 2021-22 program.

3.1.2 Enablers of diversity and retention

Greater diversity in each cohort was encouraged through establishing and maintaining relationships with specialist organisations, a targeted recruitment strategy, a considered application process, and online delivery.

“It was great to see a mixture of people of different backgrounds in the group as well. We need diversity in leadership and I believe that this program you offer will be one of the things that gets the sector there.”

– Participant, *Response* post-program survey.

For monitoring purposes, participants were asked in surveys (weeks 3 and 7) if the program provided a safe and inclusive environment, with 97% across both streams agreeing or strongly agreeing. The Program Team then had the opportunity to address any comments that reflected otherwise and support retention.

“I think the program is thoughtfully tailored for its participants’ various communication styles, experiences and abilities.”

– Participant, *Prevention* weekly survey.

3.2 Are the core programs still appropriate and effective?

3.2.1 Meeting participants’ needs

As the extensive evaluation of the 2021–22 program concluded that the core programs were effective in building capabilities and yielding high satisfaction, survey questions for this phase focused on monitoring continued effectiveness and satisfaction, particularly after new resources were introduced and the delivery mode was updated in line with recommendations from the 2021–22 evaluation.

One recommendation called for the development of a Workplace Project Databank. This databank was made available to participants as a spreadsheet that included descriptions of de-identified workplace projects from previous participants. The purpose of the databank was to inform and inspire. As participants could be connected with graduates whose workplace project they were interested in, the databank also aimed to reduce duplication and increase opportunities for collaborative work across the sector.

The majority of respondents agreed that the new Workplace Project Databank was useful (76% of *Prevention* and 85% of *Response*). One participant commented that the resource was informative and that they “plan to draw upon it to follow up with participants about how their projects are going and to share any resources if possible”.⁶

Another recommendation encouraged program staff to “identify ways to improve efficiency and sustainability in program delivery and administration, including reducing the reliance on scheduling expert guests to deliver a large proportion of the content ...”.⁷ Considering this, program staff engaged subject matter experts to conduct a learning design review to identify opportunities to introduce bespoke recorded video interviews and panel discussions with expert guests. Activities were also adjusted to strengthen engagement and learning opportunities. Consequently, the 2022–24 core programs differed from previous programs in that they delivered a higher proportion of expert content through custom and exclusive videos.

“The mix of videos and learning activities kept up my interest and ensured the workshops were enjoyable, interesting and engaging.”

– Participant, *Prevention* post-program survey

⁶ Participant, *Response* post-program survey

⁷ *Fast Track Intensive Leadership Program 2021–2022 Evaluation Report*, Safe and Equal, 2022

The surveys tested if these videos were engaging and if the information provided was useful. Overall, survey results in Figure 1 show that the integration of unique videos was successful.

- On average, 93% of respondents agreed that the videos were easy and interesting to watch, and that the information was useful.
- 96% of *Prevention* and 88% of *Response* respondents agreed the overall balance of videos, activities and group discussions were well designed for engagement and learning.

“The videos were one of the highlights for me. I didn’t think I’d get so much out of them, but there was something about hearing from the guests (all of whom were excellent) without needing to be “on” e.g., thinking of questions, appearing interested on camera. The three-hour workshop is the edge of my limits and I really appreciated time to just absorb.”

– Participant, *Response* post-program survey.

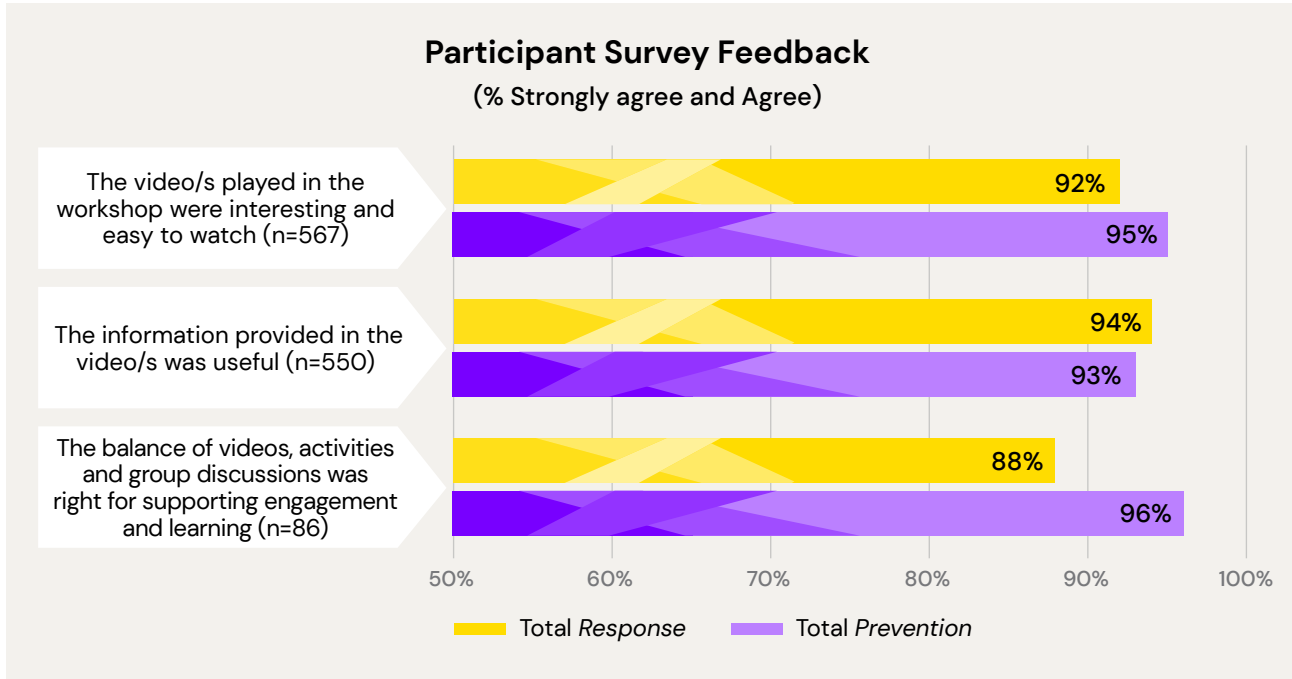


Figure 1: Aggregated Strongly agree/Agree survey responses by core program stream (n=86-567)

“The videos were great for hearing how the discussion material was put into practice, but also for inspiration and examples of types of leadership and what is happening in the sector.”

– Participant, *Response* post-program survey.

Overall, the workshop survey results showed participants were satisfied with more than 90% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the positive statements in Figure 2 below.

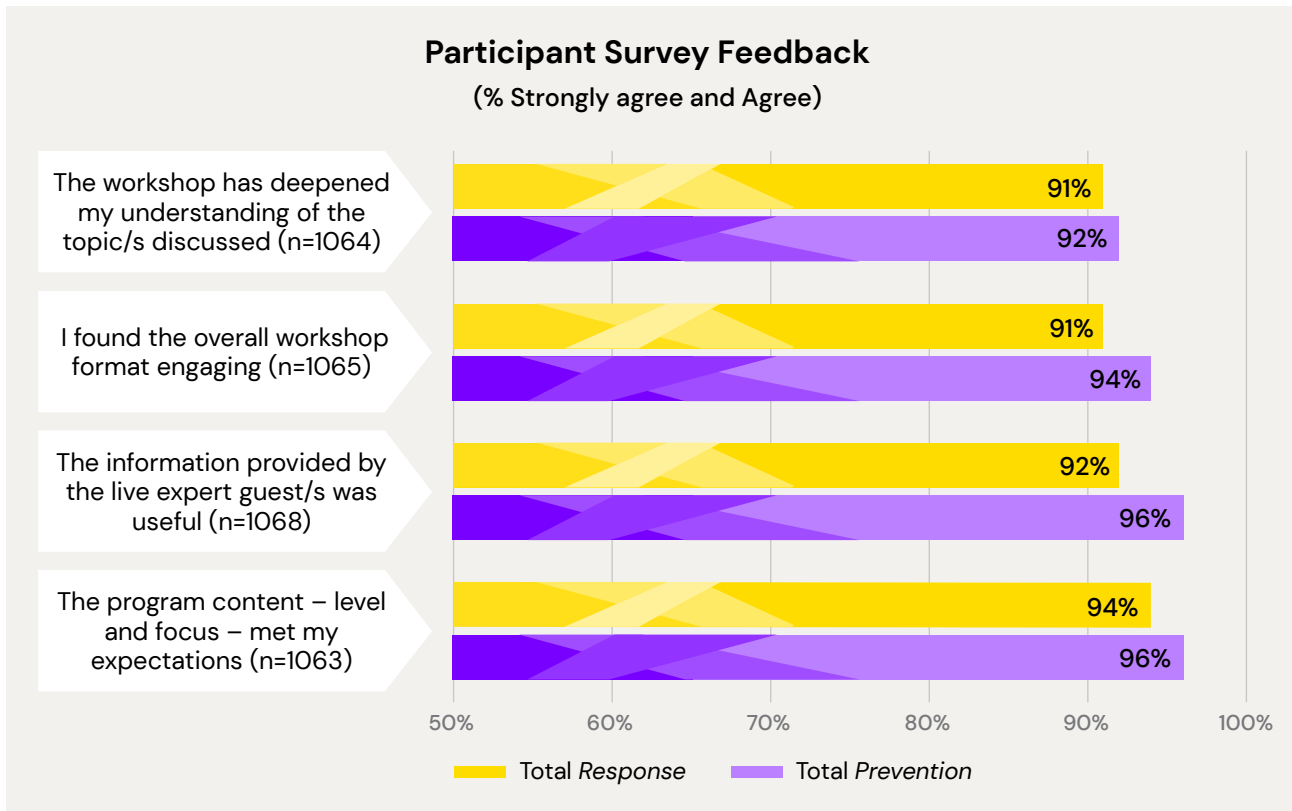


Figure 2: Aggregated Strongly agree/Agree survey responses by core program stream (n=1063–1068)

On average:

- 91% of respondents agreed that the **workshops deepened their understanding** of the topics discussed.

"I wish I had this information available at the beginning of my prevention career. Everything is making sense now."

– Participant, Prevention weekly survey.

"Through this training, we have the opportunity to share our experiences and knowledge, and to learn from each other. Furthermore, we are gaining advanced knowledge about primary prevention through interviews and presentations by experts."

– Participant, Prevention weekly survey.

- 92% of respondents agreed that the **workshop format was engaging**, and that the **live expert guest information was useful**.

"The individual and panel [expert guests] provided clear and informative advice ... The breakout room sessions were also valuable. I gained a lot from speaking with other program participants, it's great to hear the experience and knowledge of others, and the discussion I had with another participant about the workplace project has prompted me to re-think my project and clarified my goals."

– Participant, Prevention weekly survey.

"There was a good balance to address the challenges of remote learning. The mix of activities helped participants stay engaged and connected with one another."

– Participant, Response post-program survey.

"Thank you for a wonderful program, it was so well organised and facilitated. Everything was well thought out and had a purpose. The workshops were engaging and thought provoking, loved the guest speakers/panels and activities. Was so wonderful to be a part of Fast Track!"

– Participant, Prevention post-program survey.

- 95% of respondents agreed that the **program content – level and focus – met their expectations.**

“The content has been informative and beautifully presented. I continue to reflect most days on the content and how to then apply it to my project”

– Participant, Response weekly survey.

Participants provided numerous positive comments when asked to share the most valuable aspect of each workshop. While many of the comments were about individual and specific content or resources used in the workshop, three aspects were clearly articulated as being most valuable:

- **Drawing on expertise in the room**

“Sharing with others in the breakout rooms our knowledge and experiences as well as challenges we have faced in our respective roles”

– Participant, Response weekly survey.

“[T]he discussions with my peers – pulling apart the information and seeing how it is applied differently and the limitations and opportunities in each space was really valuable. It was also great to broaden my thinking about how information can be heard, interpreted, used and what diverse challenges people experience.”

– Participant, Prevention weekly survey.

- **Access to sector experts**

“The guest speakers were amazing and offered such great insight and knowledge as well as providing us with a networking opportunity”

– Participant, Response weekly survey.

“It was really helpful to hear from others in the breakout rooms and how they’re utilising the frameworks presented on a daily basis. This has given me a lot to think [about] in my daily work and how I can better utilise the frameworks to support my work.”

– Participant, Prevention weekly survey.

“I have found comments made by the guest speakers really enriching especially around radical honesty and not withholding information. In reflecting on my style of leadership, it is a space that I resonate with and wanting to work collaboratively and alongside others and being able to lean into my vulnerability and acknowledging that I do not know everything. It’s reassuring to know that there are leaders who hold similar views.”

– Participant, Response weekly survey.

• Growing professional networks and opportunity to collaborate

"I found the one-to-one break outs were a great opportunity to meet and make connections with the other participants".

– Participant, Response weekly survey.

"I have enjoyed the smaller breakout rooms as it allows for everyone to contribute to discussions and provide for a much more engaging and meaningful interaction between participants."

– Participant, Response weekly survey.

"I liked the small groups and 1:1 with other group members. The 1:1 break out rooms allowed for that incidental conversation which is missing from online training."

– Participant, Response post-program survey.

"I have learned so much and the professional connections I have made in this program are invaluable. This group had so many experienced professionals across all disciplines, and I really felt that the group was safe, which I think is really important."

– Participant, Response post-program survey.

Table 2 shows that the new version of the core programs has built on the success of the earlier programs with an increase in respondents who agreed that the workshops were engaging and deepened their understanding of the topic/s discussed, information provided by live expert guests was useful, and the program content met their expectations.

Survey statements		2021–2022	2022–2024	variance
Prevention	Live guest experts info was useful	91%	96%	+5%
	Overall session format was engaging	86%	94%	+8%
	Session had deepened my understanding of the topic/s	86%	92%	+6%
	Program content – level and focus – met my expectations	92%	96%	+4%
Response	Live guest experts info was useful	89%	92%	+3%
	Overall session format was engaging	87%	91%	+4%
	Session had deepened my understanding of the topic/s	88%	91%	+3%
	Program content – level and focus – met my expectations	82%	94%	+12%

Table 2: Fast Track weekly survey data by delivery year

3.2.2 Mentorship

Data in Figure 3 shows that the rapid mentorship program, which was a hallmark of the 2021-22 program, continued to yield successful outcomes for participants in meeting their needs and developing supportive relationships.

"[My mentor] was such an amazing support through this whole process. His mentoring style I could not fault – really balanced out using his knowledge and expertise to advise but also [to] gently challenge ... My learning with him I will take away with me for a lifetime."

– Participant, Response post-program survey.

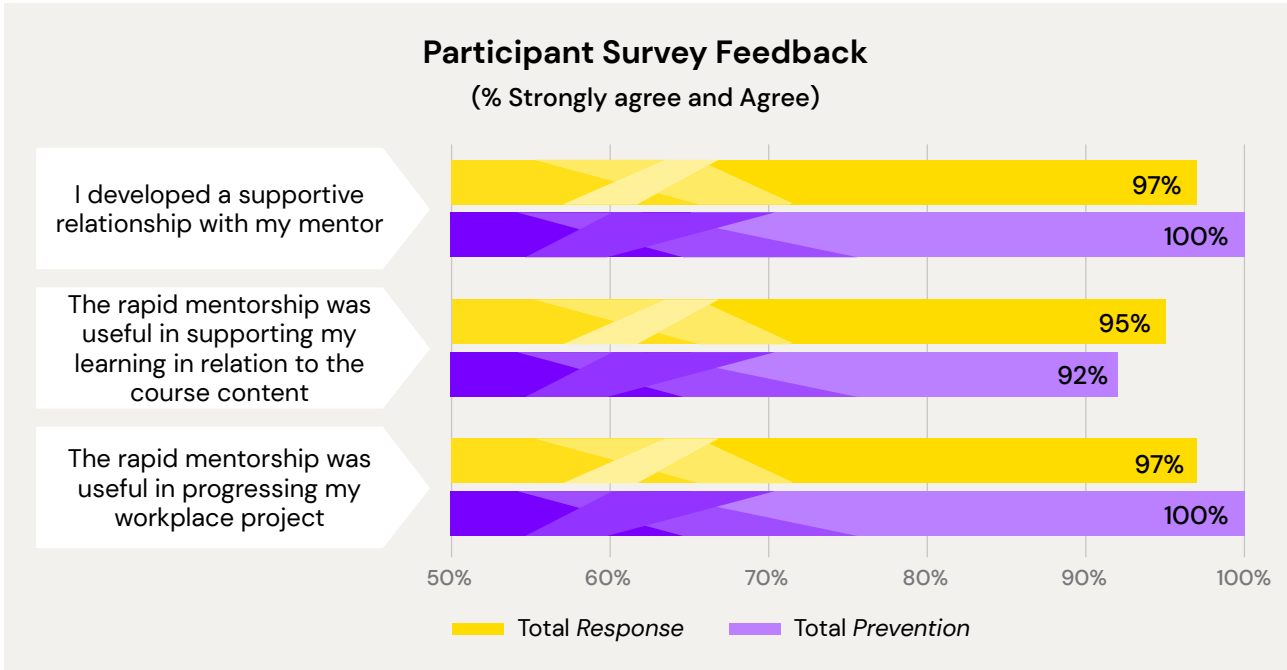


Figure 3: Aggregated Strongly agree/Agree survey responses by core program stream (n=86)

Table 3 which compares evaluation data from each phase, shows an increase in the percentage of positive responses in the 2022-24 program across all three questions.

Survey statements	2021-2022	2022-2024	variance
I developed a supportive relationship with my mentor	94%	98%	+4%
The rapid mentorship was useful in supporting my learning in relation to the course content	92%	94%	+2%
The rapid mentorship was useful in progressing my workplace project	96%	98%	+2%

Table 3: Post-program survey results – Overall percentage Strongly agree and Agree by delivery year

This data shows that rapid mentorship continues to play a key role in supporting participants’ learning as well as progressing their workplace project.

"My mentor confirmed I was thinking properly and allowed me hold my confidence in my workplace project."

– Participant, Response post-program survey.

"The mentor program was amazing – the knowledge which will further inform my practice and career was invaluable."

– Participant, Response post-program survey.



There is also evidence that mentoring expanded participants' professional networks with an overwhelming majority of respondents (98%) confirming that they developed a supportive relationship with their mentor.

"I've never had a mentor before so that was incredible, and I really hope to keep in touch with them in the future."
– Participant, *Prevention* post-program survey.

3.2.3 Barriers to participation

In the post-program survey, participants were asked to share any barriers that made it more difficult for them to participate in the program. **The most common barrier noted was under-resourcing.**

Participants consistently said that they found the three-hour weekly workshops a big commitment while managing their workload. Comments of this nature were particularly prominent in the *Response* cohort – where many participants work in crisis response services.

"The sheer volume of work I have to do and the fact that no one covers this while I am in the program ... I was still required to have my phone on and to manage any crisis that could not wait, and I found it very challenging to block that out and focus at times."
– Participant, *Response* post-program survey.

Several mentors also shared their observations of the difficulty participants had juggling program commitments with work and family commitments. Typical of these was:

"... in recent times peoples' capacity to balance doing the program and their full-time jobs presents as quite a struggle. I do think if organisations are supporting their staff to become future leaders ... then their commitment needs to be more than just supporting their participation".
– Mentor, post-program survey.

Competing work commitments was also the key barrier reported by participants in the 2021–22 Evaluation Report.

It is essential that employers support their staff to fully engage in the program by building it into their workload. To help participants garner this support, the time commitment Fast Track requires is communicated to managers during the application process. Managers are required to sign a letter of support which outlines the time commitment required each week.

"I have a really supportive manager and [Team Leader] so it was easy for me to participate as I was given a reduced client load for the duration of the program and was able to work from home each Thursday so I was not interrupted by work."
– Participant, *Response* post-program survey.

Another barrier to participation was shared by a participant who spoke English as a second language. They flagged that some of the words used in the workshops and topic discussions were difficult to understand. As program staff take an iterative approach to delivery, this feedback from the weekly survey was used to improve accessibility by reviewing and simplifying activity instructions, encouraging expert guests to use plain English and encouraging participants to avoid jargon and explain acronyms.



3.2.4 Increases in knowledge, skills and confidence

Knowledge and skills

As noted in section 3.2.1 above, more than 90% of respondents agreed that the workshops deepened their understanding of the topics discussed. The post-program survey went further by asking graduates to rate the extent to which their knowledge and skills had changed after completing a core program across a set of targeted capabilities mapped from the Victorian capability frameworks. Table 4 shows the capabilities in which the most participants reported a major or moderate increase (the three highest increases are listed).

	Capability	Percentage of respondents reporting major or moderate increase in knowledge and skills
Prevention	Understanding theoretical frameworks underpinning violence against women from feminist, social justice, intersectional and psychological approaches	81% (n=26)
	Understanding and using research and evidence in the design of Prevention of Violence Against Women initiatives	81% (n=26)
	Understanding and developing program logic frameworks to underpin Prevention of Violence Against Women activity	81% (n=26)
Response	Construct a program logic model to link the aims and objectives of advocacy activity to desired outcomes	93% (n=59)
	Analyse and select management policies and procedures for healthy workplaces	88% (n=59)
	Recognise and apply management function styles	80% (n=59)
	Apply and analyse partnership theory and tools	80% (n=59)

Table 4: Post-program survey – Capabilities with highest reported major or moderate increase in knowledge and skills

"[Fast Track] validated a lot for me, it has given me confidence to see that I already possess a lot of the knowledge expected of a leader in this sector and I have filled gaps in my knowledge of some of the frameworks which has been amazing."

– Participant, Prevention post-program survey.

"I cannot wait to employ the skills and tools I learnt from the workshop in my workplace."

– Participant, Response weekly survey.

"During the Fast Track program, I was offered a leadership role, which I accepted with increased confidence due to the training provided. I have been utilising the tools, frameworks, and strategies learned in the program in my new role, supporting my team effectively."

– Participant, Response post-program survey.

Confidence

Figure 4 shows most graduates responding to the post-program survey had increased confidence to apply new knowledge and skills to their role or workplace. Further, most respondents had gone on to apply these new skills in their role/workplace and had also applied new skills through their workplace project.

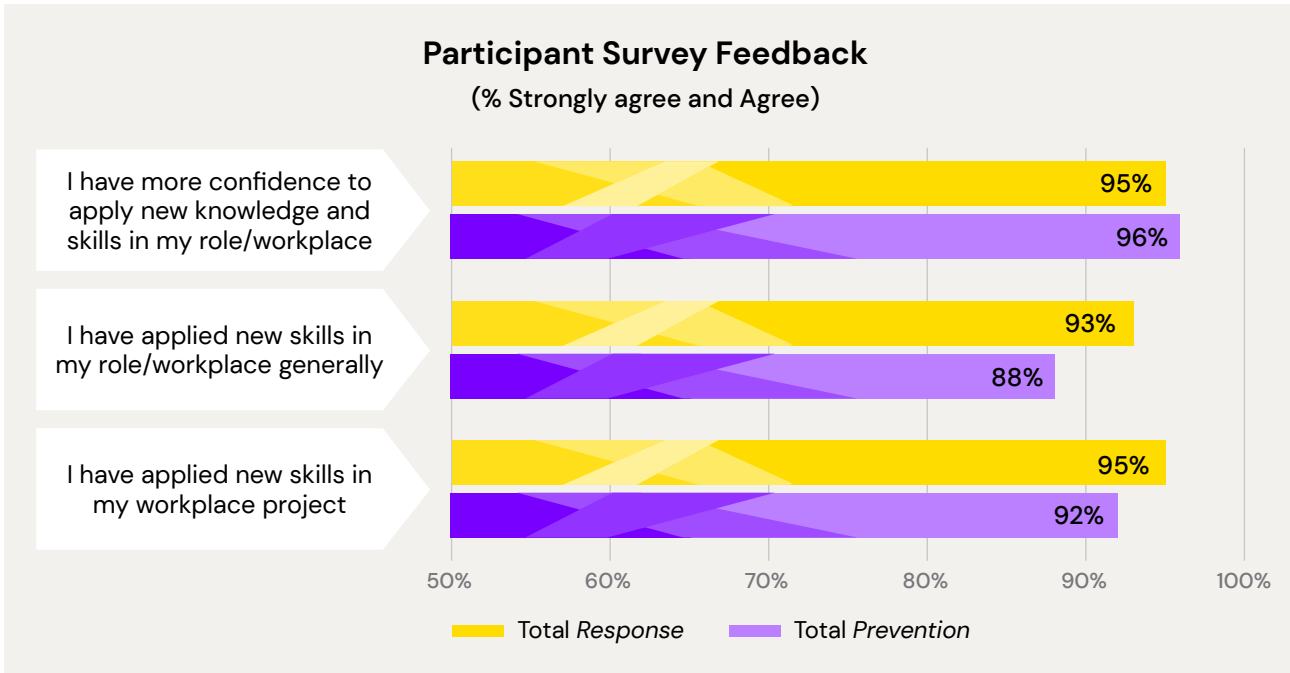


Figure 4: Aggregated participant Strongly agree/Agree survey responses by core program stream (n=86)

“Just thank you – you have helped to clarify my passion for this role and built my confidence and helped me to feel more grounded in this space. I just hope I can find opportunities now to make this a bigger part of my role.”
– Participant, Prevention post-program survey.

“I feel more confident in my ability and have a stronger leadership lens, using reflective practice to further improve.”
– Participant, Response post-program survey.

Table 5 which compares the results of the core programs' two phases, confirms the 2022–24 program has built on the success of the previous phase and continues to be effective in building participants' confidence to apply new knowledge and skills.

"One of the best trainings I've ever done!"
 – Participant, Response post-program survey.

Survey statements	2021–2022	2022–2024	variance
I have more confidence to apply new knowledge and skills in my role/workplace	84%	95%	+11%
I have applied new skills in my role/workplace generally	91%	92%	+1%
I have applied new skills to my workplace project	90%	94%	+4%
After graduation, I intend to complete my workplace project	85%	94%	+9%

Table 5: Fast Track post-program survey – percent Agree/Strongly agree by practitioner type and delivery year

Another indication of participants' growth in skills and confidence is their intention to complete their workplace project as this component is designed to support participants achieve "on the job learning" and translate skills developed through the program in a real-world environment. Table 5 shows an increase in the percentage of respondents intending to complete their workplace project compared to the 2021–22 program, showing the core programs continue to be effective in building key leadership and management capabilities.

Overall, 91% of respondents agreed that core program outcomes met or exceeded their expectations. A positive result following the implementation of the learning design review and introduction of expert videos.

"So fantastic, such a worthwhile program. I feel so lucky to have been able to access this training. I hope it can be continued way into the future!"
 – Participant, Response post-program survey.

"It's such an amazing program and I'm privileged to be part of the journey for this cohort. I would definitely recommend other senior practitioners/emerging leaders in my organisation/network to apply for the Fast Track program."
 – Participant, Response post-program survey.

"Acknowledgement to Fast Track who provide such a useful program in leadership, really beneficial especially for emerging leaders in this sector."
 – Participant, Response post-program survey.

"This program was exactly what I really needed. I had attended several other leadership training and mentoring sessions but these came from a more corporate lens ... [I] was looking for something that focused more on the frameworks, polices, research and development. Pretty much everything Fast Track focused on. It was perfect. Thank you!"
 – Participant, Response post-program survey.

"Thank you for a terrific learning and development experience"
 – Participant, Response post-program survey.



3.3 Are the core programs achieving their intended impact?

3.3.1 Impact of new knowledge, skills and confidence

Follow-up surveys to gauge the impact of the core programs beyond immediate program completion were conducted separately with graduates from 2022 and 2023. The range of time since graduating was between six and 24 months.

Thirteen of 14 respondents reported that since completing a core program they had increased confidence in their roles. This broader facet of increased confidence to undertake one's role has a flow on effect which contributes to stronger family violence response and primary prevention systems. One example is the positive impact on a graduate's ability to support their team and their interactions with colleagues, as noted in this comment:

"[I have gained] a greater knowledge of supporting team members around feedback, theoretical framework to understand managers and people, and clarification of my own role."

– Participant, Response follow-up survey.

Program staff developed in-depth case studies through interviews with a participant from each stream. These case studies illustrate how increased knowledge, skills and confidence enable practitioners to perform better in their roles. This positively impacts on their colleagues, organisation and the sector.

Case Study 1: Response

About Bing

When Bing started Fast Track Response, she was working as a Senior Practitioner in suburban Melbourne in an intake and assessment role, and was "new to leadership". Shortly after completing Fast Track, she secured her current Team Lead role, providing support and supervision for up to 12 team members.

The impact of Fast Track

Bing found participating in Fast Track as a Senior Practitioner a very positive experience that covered a broad range of factors on effective leadership:

"The program content ... not only provided me with fundamental understanding of leadership but also tools and skills to navigate day-to-day challenges".

As part of Fast Track Response program, participants complete a workplace project which requires them to develop a program logic. Bing has continued to utilise the program logic skills she developed in several instances which have led to improvements within her organisation as well as the services it offers:

"The most important learning I gained from Fast Track is the Project Program Logic designing tool. I find this tool highly versatile that, on an organisational level, it can be used to achieve a goal that improves service quality, staff performance, organisational wellbeing, and system processes. It is also useful in developing external partnerships or improving inter-sector communication and collaboration. I have used this tool many times including in a workshop ... in the identification of goal, data, and resources, the building of project analysis, review and assessment plan, and the implementation/delivery plan. This learning allowed me to logically compose and articulate the findings and planning into a formal proposal which eventually supported in the process change of the organisation."



Bing found a number of the resources and tools presented in Fast Track insightful and practical, and also uses some of these to advantage in leading and supporting her team:

“I consider the Health and Safety Self-Assessment tool another main learning from the Fast Track Program. Learning about the five pillars of Workforce Health, Safety and Wellbeing refreshed my view about the responsibilities of wellbeing in a professional setting and helped me in forming strategies and gathering resources to support the staff on a day-to-day basis.”

As an example, Bing was able to resolve an issue of bullying and discrimination against one of her team members by drawing on her learnings in workforce health, safety and wellbeing, and effectively advocating for them.

Bing also reflects that Fast Track enabled her to “jump out of the individual-focused lens in viewing challenges, managerial decisions, and system changes.” Bing is now able to perceive the ‘bigger picture’ when dealing with issues, such as assessing the socio-ecological factors that might be causing challenges for members of her team.

Connecting and influencing

Bing credits Fast Track for increased confidence to make professional connections and build networks. The content on partnerships was helpful for developing both referral pathways externally, and greater rapport within her workspace.

Bing’s influence after completing the Fast Track program has contributed to her organisation experiencing improved processes, systems and team culture, resulting in higher quality service provision.

“I found myself understanding and learning more from the program as my experience grew richer. I would highly recommend the program to emerging leaders in the sector”.

A stronger service system

Bing is now keen to broaden her knowledge base, especially in other fields of practice that intersect with family violence, such as mental health. She envisages applying new knowledge back in the family violence field to continue her passion for keeping women and children safe.

“My long-term goal is to bring that knowledge back to the family violence field and seek opportunities in practice leading positions, therefore, to confidently support the development of future FV practitioners and the improvement of the service system”.

Case Study 2: Prevention

About Dani

Dani is the 'Prevention of Violence Against Women' Lead at Women's Health In the South East. WHISE is the Regional Women's Health Service delivering a range of women's health and gender equity services across Melbourne's Southern Metropolitan Region. Dani's role involves promotion, capacity building and provision of resources to a range of community and local government organisations for the primary prevention of family and gender-based violence. She also has a leadership role in the Southern Metropolitan prevention of gender-based violence strategy, working with a large range of stakeholders and partners. Prior to her contracted two years at WHISE, Dani had worked as a health promotion officer with a community health service for eight years.

This is Dani's first full-time role in the gendered violence space and she was prompted to do Fast Track's *Prevention* program when she started supervising a new health promotion officer:

"It was the first time I'd ever supervised somebody else, so I was really interested in what I could learn about leadership and jumped at the chance to participate in the Safe and Equal Fast Track program".

During and since completing *Fast Track Prevention*, Dani's role expanded and solidified, through supervision of a colleague new to primary prevention work, taking on a leadership role in the region's prevention of gender-based violence strategy, and her organisation's recent decision to make her role permanent. "I'm chuffed that they were happy enough with my work and my style of doing the work that they wanted to keep me on".

Connecting and influencing

Dani found *Fast Track Prevention* appealing as she saw her new role as a significant "step up" in responsibility and increased breadth, and this was a way she could "continue to grow in the role". Following the program, Dani now facilitates collaboration for a regional strategy across 10 local government areas. She also facilitated local council connections to help her former employer implement her *Fast Track* workplace project, which centered on respectful relationships in early education. Dani also brought into her organisation's learning forums some of the experts she connected with in the program, to help build the capability of the partners she now works with.

The impact of Fast Track

Dani began *Fast Track Prevention* in May 2023. She particularly enjoyed hearing from the guest speakers and meeting and mixing with peers in the sector:

"I really enjoyed meeting the other practitioners as well, so I kept in touch with loads of them ... and we touch base and share resources and other learning opportunities".

One guest speaker was particularly inspirational for Dani, piquing her interest in advocacy. This led to working with and learning from a colleague who had specialist skills in advocacy.

Feminist leadership was another aspect of the program that resonated strongly with Dani. She identified with the emphasis on collaboration and shared understanding, which follows on from her background in community development:

"You know, there are always very knowledgeable people involved in projects ... I think that a collaborative, non-hierarchical approach leading to collective impact – I really see that as a strength".

For Dani, participating in *Fast Track Prevention* has boosted her confidence and, importantly for her, validated her existing knowledge and capabilities. This has enabled her to more confidently support others in their learning and understanding of primary prevention:

"... it really helped me position myself within the field ... and it changed my perception of myself as a practitioner. I think I'd always seen myself as a bit of a newbie before this".

Dani is now supporting a practitioner new to primary prevention, by working through some of the frameworks and concepts she learnt: "... [Fast Track *Prevention*] gave me that confidence that I know what I'm talking about and I can support them in that learning journey".

As well as enjoying the mix of other participants with varying backgrounds and experience, Dani enjoyed having a mentor and has kept in touch with them since completing Fast Track. She has made good use of the resources provided and has recommended Fast Track to a colleague.

In summing up the impact of completing Fast Track *Prevention*, Dani reflected: "The impact for me was it has been in my own confidence as a practitioner ... it sort of solidifies you in that leadership role".

Confidence to advocate and build coalitions

Dani is acutely aware of the challenge of continued funding for primary prevention work and this was one reason for her increasing interest in advocacy:

"Realising the power in advocacy and the ability to pitch things at the right time in the right way ... knowing the funding cycles and knowing the political landscape".

She appreciates that many people: "do not really understand what primary prevention actually looks like in practice". This together with the difficulty in quantifying outcomes of the work (such as changed attitudes and behaviours), makes her role of awareness raising and capacity building challenging but important.

Another challenge for Dani is leading a regional strategy while managing the many relationships of partners and stakeholders while simultaneously fostering a sense of collective ownership. The Fast Track program has enabled Dani to feel more confident in creating relationships and partnerships within the sector: "During Fast Track I heard about a lot of different kinds of projects and was inspired by the breadth of work happening in Victoria". Meeting other practitioners who were grappling with some of the same challenges strengthened her resolve to keep up the partnership work in the region.

Part of the sector

Dani is keen to further her leadership capabilities and was interested in applying for Fast Track's new *Leadership Foundations* program at the time of writing. She is "really happy" with her permanent role and excited about developing the next four-year primary prevention strategy while continuing to work with partners across the region: "I now find myself ensconced in this whole sector and I never want to leave".

Manager Feedback

The managers of core program graduates from 2022 and 2023 were also sent a follow-up survey. The survey was deliberately brief to encourage a response. **On average, 94% of respondents agreed that their staff member showed increased knowledge, skills and confidence after completing a core program.** The results are detailed in figure 5. The greatest increase observed was to participants' skills.

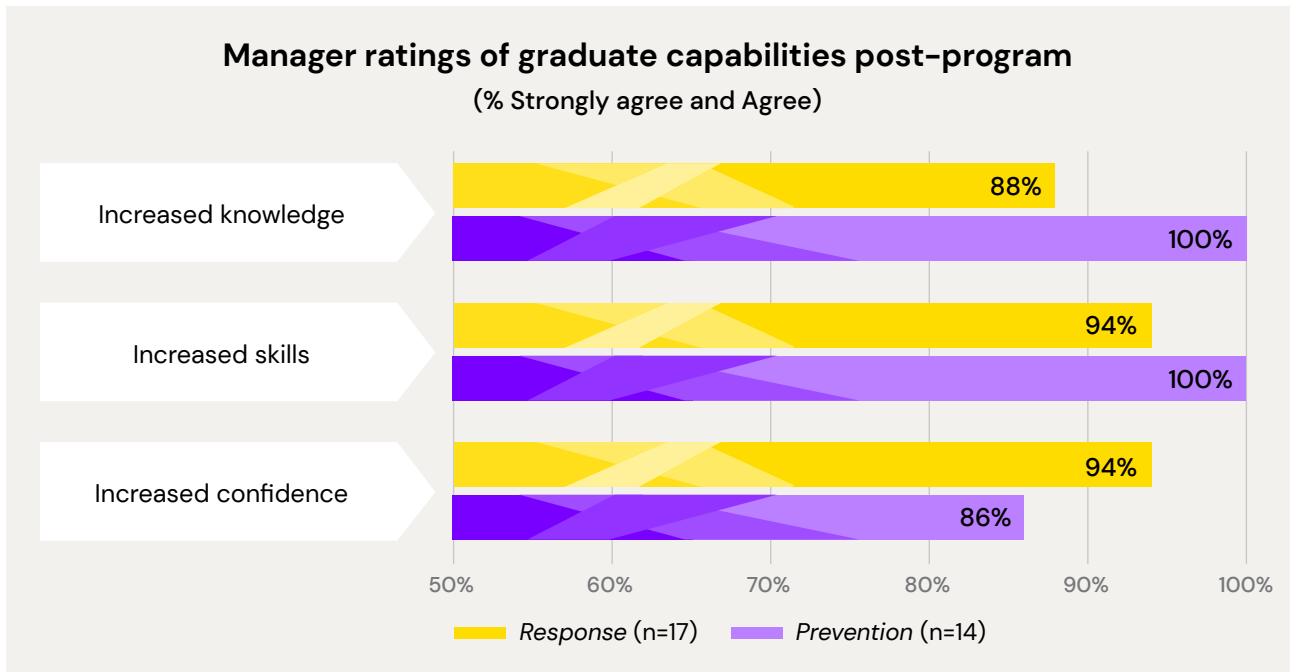


Figure 5: Manager follow-up survey – Aggregated Strongly agree/Agree survey responses by core program stream (n=31)

Managers also had the opportunity to comment on their ratings. There were 16 comments, all of which were positive. **Several managers particularly noted their staff member's increased confidence:**

"I have seen an incredible and marked change in her confidence to lead in the prevention space".

– Manager, Prevention follow-up survey.

"Employee felt enough confidence to apply for and be successful in Managerial position. Skills developed during [the] Leadership program contributed to skills and capabilities ...".

– Manager, Response follow-up survey.

A final comment was a ringing endorsement of the program:

"I would recommend this program to any up-and-coming leaders in the sector!"

– Manager, Response follow-up survey.

The feedback from managers is further evidence of the core programs' ability to prepare practitioners to lead, thus growing the pool of skilled and capable practitioners available to take up leadership roles thereby increasing organisations' capacity to deliver programs and services.

3.3.2 Building relationships across the sector

Participants' individual relationships

In the post-program survey participants were asked whether they developed supportive relationships with their peers. Table 6 compares the responses between programs. Across *Prevention* and *Response*, there was a noticeable increase of 12% and 9% respectively on the 2021–22 program. Participants were also asked to consider whether they expected these relationships to continue after the program. While there was a 5% increase overall, responses from each stream differed with a 27% increase from *Prevention* respondents compared with an 8% decline from *Response* respondents. It is possible that *Response* practitioners, of whom there are many more in the sector and who often work in teams, might already be well connected. This was noted in the survey feedback. As mentioned in section 3.2.2, 100% of *Prevention* and 97% of *Response* respondents also reported developing a supportive relationship with their mentor.

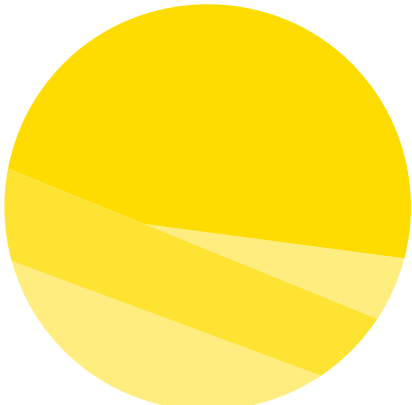
"I don't think I realised how isolated I had been in my role until I heard other people talking about their isolation, but I have made some wonderful peer friendships which I intend to maintain."
 – Participant, *Prevention* post-program survey.

Survey statement		2021–2022	2022–2024	variance
I developed supportive relationships with peers	<i>Prevention</i>	88%	100%	+12%
	<i>Response</i>	76%	85%	+9%
I expect these relationships to become an ongoing professional connection post-program	<i>Prevention</i>	69%	96%	+27%
	<i>Response</i>	80%	72%	-8%

Table 6: Fast Track post-program survey – percent agree/strongly agree by practitioner type and delivery year

"I have also made what I hope will be lasting connections with others in the program and I really hope that we can share our learning with each other in the future."
 – Participant, *Prevention* post-program survey.

"A highlight was that I have really enjoyed getting to know other participants during the program and am planning to stay in contact with some of them."
 – Participant, *Response* post-program survey.



Medium to long-term connections

The follow-up survey sent to graduates from 2022 and 2023 also asked whether professional connections developed during the program had continued. Figure 6 shows nine of 14 respondents (64%) have maintained these professional relationships. A greater proportion of *Prevention* graduates maintained their connections compared to *Response* graduates – a trend which was also reported in the 2021-22 Evaluation Report. Participants reported that the barriers to maintaining connections were primarily lack of time.

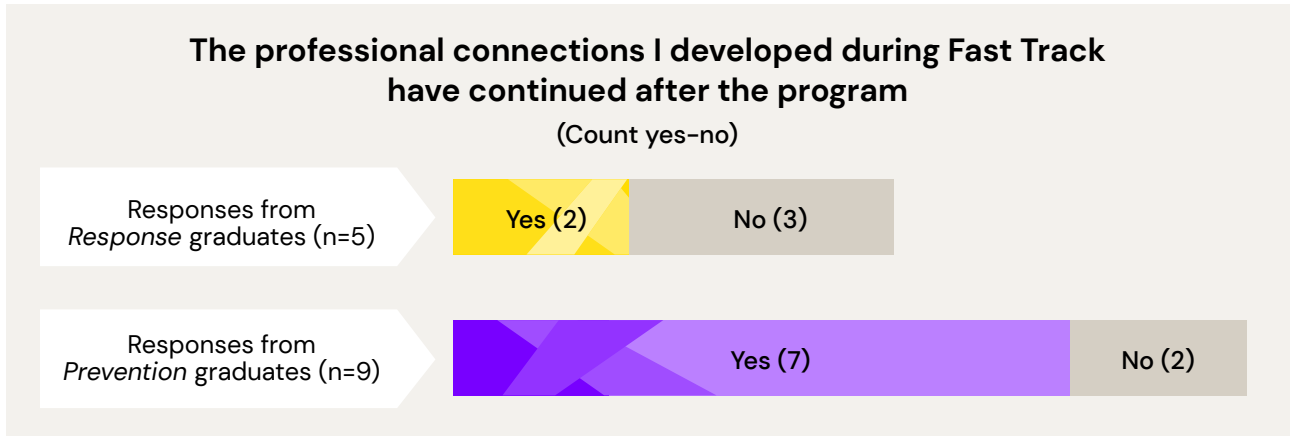


Figure 6: Count of graduates' yes-no responses in the follow-up survey by core program stream (n=14)

When asked how these connections were beneficial, some responses were:

"Increased trust and understanding between organisations."

– Participant, Response follow-up survey.

"Yes, they've kept me connected to the sector and provided a peer support, we've stayed in touch via LinkedIn."

– Participant, Prevention follow-up survey.

"Keeping in touch with other practitioners has been great, hearing about their work and sharing learning. We've also been sharing resources between us."

– Participant, Prevention follow-up survey.

A couple of respondents also commented on still being in touch with their mentor with one noting:

"I have reached out to my mentor to support a job application."

– Participant, Prevention follow-up survey.

The follow-up survey went on to explore the impact of continued professional relationships by asking if these connections had supported graduates to strengthen greater sharing, collaboration, partnerships and/or co-ordination between their organisations and others in the sector. More *Prevention* respondents (67%, n=6) than *Response* respondents (40%, n=2) answered in the affirmative. This could be due to primary prevention practitioners working in more isolated roles so prioritising connections and networking.

As noted above, participant feedback in the post-program and follow-up surveys confirmed the core programs were successful in strengthening connections across the sector by supporting the creation of professional relationships. Where these connections are maintained, there is evidence that they lead to increased trust and understanding between organisations, reduced isolation, peer support and resource sharing.

Safe and Equal has invited graduates to join its new Leadership Network to further encourage participants to maintain peer relationships after the program. This supported online network is designed to foster new connections, reflect on leadership practice and hear from experienced leaders. As at 6 June 2024, 34 *Response* and 40 *Prevention* graduates have joined. While the Leadership Network is managed outside Fast Track's project scope, it provides scaffolding to support graduates to build and maintain connections in the sector.

3.3.3 Career changes and advancement

In the follow-up survey graduates were asked three questions about advancement in their role or career. Whether they had:

1. Taken on more responsibility in their current role,
2. Applied for more senior roles, or
3. Moved into a more senior role

Although it was a small sample, the analysis showed that 77% of the responding graduates had some positive career progression. Six respondents reported having moved into more senior roles, a further two had applied for more senior roles, and another two had taken on more responsibility in their current role.

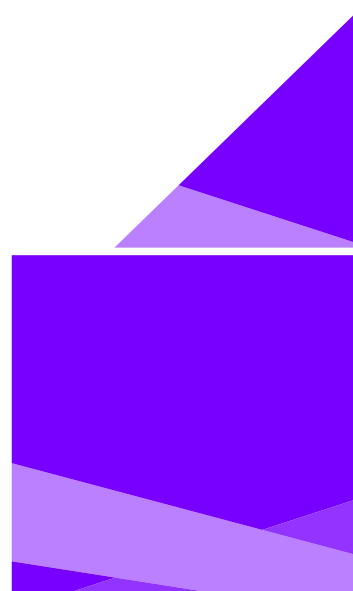
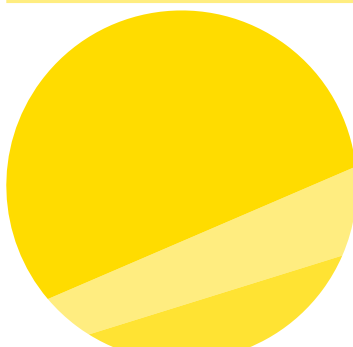
Enablers and barriers for career progression

In the follow-up survey, four of the nine *Prevention* graduates felt as prevention funding is typically short-term and there are limited roles this was a barrier to career progression. However, it was positive to see several respondents highlighted increased confidence as an enabler to career progression, with one graduate saying:

"... confidence building has been a significant enabler. Listening to leaders, their stories and advice helps [me] feel less like an impostor and trusting intuition, knowledge and skills and to be authentic in yourself."

– Participant, *Prevention* follow-up survey.

Participants of a core program were asked what could be included in Fast Track to support career progression. Responses were mixed, however several graduates identified areas of further development that are now covered in the *Leadership Foundations* stream such as building staff capability, giving constructive feedback and intersectional feminist leadership.



3.3.4 Sector-level outcomes

Figure 7 shows that the greatest level of agreement reported in the follow-up survey was that participation in Fast Track resulted in enhanced advocacy and enhanced services and programs.⁸

"I have been able to advocate more for the importance of partnerships with other organisations within the sector. This has improved [organisational] advocacy."

– Participant, Prevention follow-up survey.

"My engagement with other practitioners enabled me to share our learning forums more widely and I participated in other organisations' workshops and events too. Because of this shared understanding of the work, we were able to develop common themes in our advocacy activities as well."

– Participant, Prevention follow-up survey.

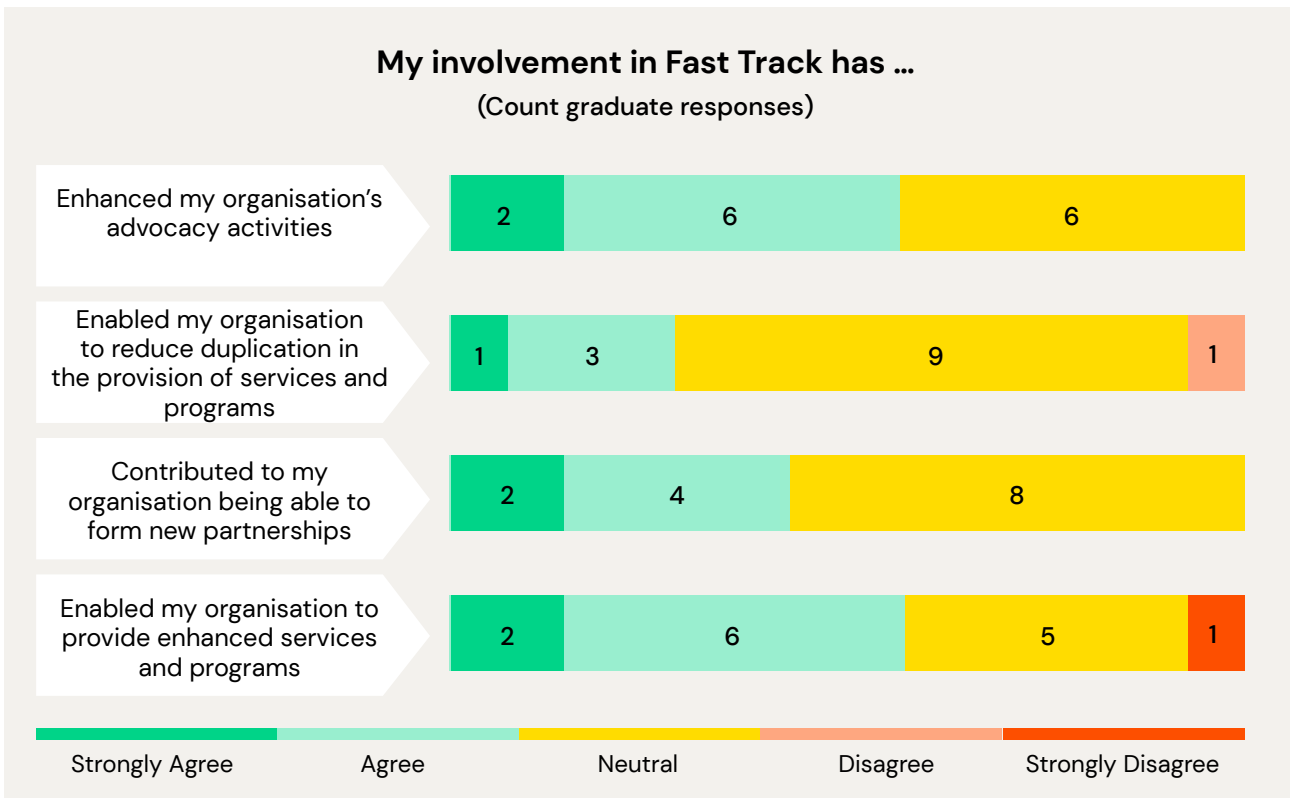


Figure 7: Count of core program graduate responses in the follow-up survey (n=14)

Comments from the follow-up survey showed that participating in a core program positively influenced new partnerships for many graduates:

"[Fast Track] gave me a base understanding of the ways to create partnerships and the importance of having some structure. For example, after Fast Track I set up regular catch ups with our partnerships so we can continue to strengthen the connections."

– Participant, Prevention follow-up survey.

When asked to reflect on key factors that enable or limit organisational collaboration, sharing or partnerships, a Response graduate noted that: "Knowing some other workers in other organisations has given me people to call when I need, and people to tap into for resources." A Prevention graduate also noted: "Knowing what people and organisations are working on or have done is hugely beneficial to inform work plans".

⁸ This is a positive result after program staff actioned a recommendation from the 2021-22 Evaluation Report to "Review the Fast Track program content relating to advocacy and refine the focus or content accordingly to strengthen advocacy outcomes".

In response to the question asking about participants' progress on their workplace projects, 50% reported that they had or expected to complete it. Enabling and limiting factors for the implementation of the workplace project were mixed. In general terms, graduates referred to a lack of time and funding restraints as limiting factors.

3.3.5 Continuing demand for core programs

Reflecting on the program overall, 93% (n=13) of respondents from the graduate follow up survey agreed that they would recommend the program to others.

Tables 7 and 8 below provide an insight into demand for the core programs, including waitlist,⁹ application and participant numbers for each round. As expected, the difference in workforce sizes reflected higher demand for *Response* than *Prevention* places. When *Response* was publicly promoted through Fast Track's communications plan the high number of quality applications led program staff to offer early acceptance into upcoming rounds. For example, the 72 applications received for *Response* round 1 filled that cohort as well as a significant portion of the round 2 cohort. As such, promotion for *Response* round 2 was limited to those on the waitlist. In late 2023, program staff added a fourth *Response* round to the 2022–24 program to accommodate the strong demand. While neither *Prevention* rounds reached capacity, sufficient numbers were still achieved, and demand remained consistent.

Response	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4
Delivered	Feb–Apr 2023	Jul–Oct 2023	Feb–Apr 2024	Apr–Jun 2024
Number of participants	30	31	30	30
Number of applications received	72	28*	59	21*
Number of people on waitlist	119	164	213	75

Table 7: Waitlist and application data for Fast Track Response

*Only advertised to waitlist due to limited number of places available.

Prevention	Round 1	Round 2
Delivered	May–Jul 2023	Oct–Dec 2023
Number of participants	20	22
Number of applications received	27	26
Number of people on waitlist	130	54

Table 8: Waitlist and application data for Fast Track Prevention

Based on the evidence in this chapter, the core programs continue to be successful in building the management and leadership capabilities of current practitioners, supporting them to build relationships with their peers and broadening their perspective across the sector. Positive outcomes for organisations are also emerging. This evaluation shows there is sector demand for *Prevention* and *Response* to be offered on an ongoing basis to maintain and increase the supply of suitably skilled professionals to take up primary prevention and SFV response management and leadership roles.

"It was such a great program, and a great way to meet people in the sector. I wish that more practitioners got the opportunity to develop the knowledge I did in Fast Track."

– Participant, *Prevention* follow-up survey.

⁹ Program staff maintained a waitlist for each stream. Anyone interested in the program was invited to join it via Fast Track's webpage. Those on the waitlist were invited to apply when applications opened for the upcoming round. Anyone on the waitlist who did not apply or confirm their continued interest was removed from the waitlist to ensure currency.

4. LEADERSHIP FOUNDATIONS FINDINGS

4.1 Did Leadership Foundations reach appropriate participants?

4.1.1 Characteristics of the Leadership Foundations cohort

The *Leadership Foundations* pilot recruited a full cohort of 25 practitioners, with all 25 graduating. Unlike the core programs, *Leadership Foundations* targeted and recruited a mixed cohort of SFV response and primary prevention practitioners. Recruitment followed a similar process to the core programs, whereby participants submitted an application form with their resume and a letter of support from their employer. The questions on the *Leadership Foundations* application form were tailored to understand the applicant's managerial experience and whether the program would meet their needs and goals. Program staff received 31 applications for the 25 places. The six unsuccessful applicants did not meet the program's eligibility requirements (listed in chapter 1.2). Places were offered to 16 SFV response and nine primary prevention practitioners (proportional to the different sized workforces). Eleven of the 25 practitioners had previously completed a core program (comprising six *Prevention* and five *Response* graduates). All participants identified as female with the majority (58%) aged between 25 and 34 years. One recruit identified as Aboriginal and one participant identified as a First Nations person from another country. As with the core programs, these are the only cultural demographics collected.

Recruits represented a broad range of program areas or services. The geographic spread of recruits was reasonably broad, with nine from regionally located organisations and 16 located in the Melbourne metropolitan area. Three of the metropolitan organisations delivered services statewide.

4.1.2 Enablers of diversity and retention

Program staff made proactive efforts to recruit for and retain diversity among the cohort in line with the core programs. These included:

- Implementing a targeted communications strategy to promote the program.
- Utilising a selection criterion tool during the application assessment process which promoted diversity among locations, organisations and program areas or services.
- Developing a group agreement with participants in the first workshop.
- Encouraging participants to include their pronouns in their Zoom name.
- Inviting different participants to deliver an Acknowledgement of Country each week.
- Seeking feedback via weekly surveys (weeks 2 and 4) about whether the program provided a safe and inclusive environment.

The weekly survey results showed that all respondents agreed the program provided a safe and inclusive environment for them.

Attendance during the five-week program was high, with 100% retention.

"Everybody is super respectful in the breakout rooms."

– Participant, weekly survey.

"... the space has been beautifully set up and the size of breakout rooms has been a good selection of one on one and group work which makes me feel very comfortable to contribute where I want but also listen and absorb where I need to."

– Participant, weekly survey.

4.2 Was Leadership Foundations fit-for-purpose?

Experience from the core programs' multimodal approach influenced the *Leadership Foundations* program design. It adopted many of the same successful elements, such as online delivery; a workshop structure using breakout rooms; a peer learning method; access to expert guests; and a rapid mentorship program. There were also some key differences in the program, most notably a mixed cohort of SFV response and primary prevention practitioners, engagement with a Leadership Development Action Plan (LDAP) and a shorter program of five workshops instead of 10.

4.2.1 Mixing SFV response and primary prevention cohorts

Leadership Foundations provided an opportunity to test delivery to a mixed cohort of SFV response and primary prevention practitioners. It was also a chance to foster connections between the workforces which may have been working in silos, but share an overarching purpose, guiding values and principles, and elements of their evidence base.

When considering the program's target audience, it was important for participants to bring management experience which they could discuss and reflect on. Because primary prevention roles have a limited opportunity to manage staff, the scope for the primary prevention target audience was expanded to include practitioners with experience leading projects. So, while SFV response practitioners needed to manage staff or teams to be eligible, primary prevention practitioners were eligible if they had responsibility for leading projects or managing staff. Both are forms of management and leadership. This meant the Program Team needed to consider two aspects when designing *Leadership Foundations*; firstly, the mix of SFV response and primary prevention participants, and secondly, the mix of participants who did and did not manage staff. The cohort comprised 16 SFV response and nine primary prevention practitioners.

Overall, participants favoured retaining a mixed cohort for the benefit of a broader sector-wide understanding. Participants were asked specifically about the mixed cohort in the end of program survey and during group interviews conducted a month after program completion.¹⁰ The program facilitator also encouraged participants to share their experiences of the mixed cohort in the weekly surveys so that the Program Team could address any issues. In the weekly surveys, the participants' comments highlighted the value and limitations of the mixed cohort:

"I loved all of the breakout spaces. It felt really great to be in a space with practitioners from different orgs, and both prevention and response."

– Primary prevention practitioner, week 1 survey.

"It is challenging talking about feedback with participants who do not manage staff"

– SFV response practitioner, week 3 survey.

"I know there is a conscious approach to integrating prevention work with response work but as a prevention practitioner it is my feeling that the structure of the content leans toward supporting growth in the response sector. I work in local government and at times feel like the content does not speak to my situations."

– Primary prevention practitioner, week 3 survey.

"I noticed and appreciated [the facilitator's] conscious effort to tailor the content to speak more directly to the prevention experience."

– Primary prevention practitioner, week 4 survey.

¹⁰ Two group interviews were held with graduates within a month of program completion. One interview comprised three SFV response participants and the other of three primary prevention participants plus a SFV response participant.

In the post-program survey, participants were asked to reflect on whether the mixed cohort worked for them. Figure 8 below also shows varied feedback. All six SFV response respondents answered positively and added:

"It allowed me to see the kind of work being done in prevention and how the content relates to their roles as well."

"It was interesting to hear [primary prevention practitioners'] perspective on things."

Meanwhile, opinions among primary prevention practitioners were mixed. One commented that in breakout room discussions a lot of time was taken up with trying to understand the role of the other person rather than answering discussion questions. A particularly insightful reflection from one graduate was:

"When the purpose of the breakout [room activity] was to apply a tool we were learning about, and working through the steps, it was more effective. But for general reflection or discussion, it often felt like we were not on the same page".

One participant felt that prevention practitioners were in the minority which had the effect of skewing conversations towards the response context.

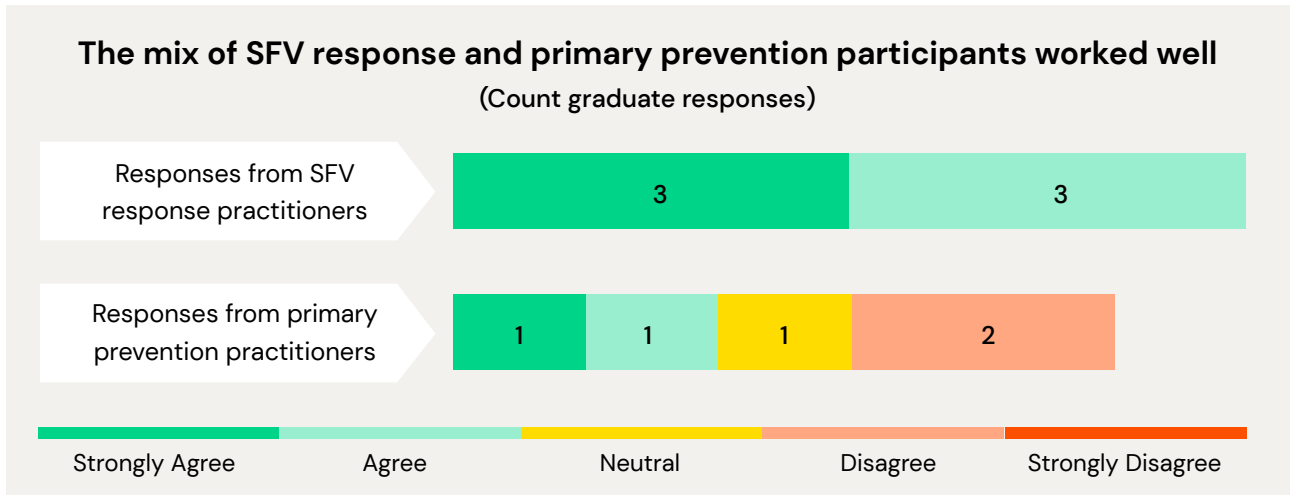


Figure 8: Count of graduate agreement in the Leadership Foundations post-program survey by practitioner type (n=11)

Group interviews of graduates echoed this mixed feedback. Reflecting on their experience in breakout rooms, some graduates expressed a preference for a mix of primary prevention and SFV response practitioners, but some commented on challenges such as unfamiliar jargon, and the program design which did not specifically enable knowledge exchange between the two groups. After being asked, the overall opinion appeared to support retaining a mix of practitioners for the benefit of a broader sector-wide understanding.

To address some of the concerns which participants expressed and improve the experience of a mixed cohort, program staff could consider the following adjustments for future deliveries:

- Recruiting a more even split of SFV response and primary prevention practitioners so group discussions are less likely to skew towards one end of the continuum.
- Pre-planning breakout room allocations based on the purpose of the breakout room activity. Consider when it is more suitable to group participants by speciality and/or people management experience.
- Providing more guidance around how staff management tools could be applied to program management settings, increasing the relevance of the content for those who do not manage staff.

4.2.2 Leadership Development Action Plan

The *Leadership Foundations* team designed a leadership development planning template and integrated it into the multi-modal approach. The Leadership Development Action Plan (LDAP) was a prominent feature of the pilot, designed to provide structure to support participants in identifying areas of leadership practice they wished to further develop. After each workshop participants were encouraged to write down the leadership or management capabilities they wanted to build on. The intention was for participants to determine the actions they would take to improve in their practice. This included useful resources and stakeholders they could engage with. By utilising the LDAP, participants could practise accountability to integrate what they learnt into their role and workplace. Participants were encouraged to seek guidance from their mentors to further develop their LDAPs, and share their plans with their managers to prompt discussion and gain support for professional development and career planning.

When asked about the LDAP in the post-program survey, 70% (n=7) of respondents found it useful.

Some shared how they engaged with the plan:

"It is important to have accountability and some SMART goals and the plan – however it is structured – helps you to be action focused and move toward your leadership goals."

– Primary prevention practitioner, post-program survey.

"The Leadership Development Action Plan helped me to identify my goals and the steps and resources needed to achieve them. The plan helps me to identify my strengths and weaknesses and areas where I need to focus more."

– SFV response practitioner, post-program survey.

"It was incredibly useful to map out areas I want to develop and have a clear plan of how to do so."

– Primary prevention practitioner, post-program survey.

In the graduate group interviews, the only feedback on the LDAPs was that they might be improved with some more structure, such as including examples.

4.2.3 Mentorship design

The mentoring component of *Leadership Foundations* followed a similar approach to that of the core programs. Participants were matched with a field expert who was aligned as closely as possible to the participant's experience and needs, and offered three hours of mentoring. However, as the *Leadership Foundations* workshops spanned a shorter time (five weeks), the mentorship structure was 2 x 90-minute sessions (compared with the core programs 3 x 1-hour sessions). Participants were responsible for scheduling the sessions and determining how the sessions would be utilised. For example, they could seek support to build their LDAP, reflect on workshop content and explore areas of interest, or move beyond Fast Track and ask questions outside of the program. This participant-driven approach is similar to mentoring in the core programs.

In the graduate group interviews, all participants praised the mentoring aspect of the program. Data from the post-program survey showed 100% (n=10) of respondents felt they developed a supportive relationship with their mentor.

"I found [my mentor] to be really supportive and interested in where I am in my journey. She was able to provide a lot of insight and expertise throughout our time together."

– SFV response practitioner, post-program survey.

"I felt like my mentor brought a lot of value to the discussion and seemed invested in supporting me."

– Primary prevention practitioner, post-program survey.

Results from the post-program survey also showed that:

- 70% (n=7) of respondents believed the mentorship component supported their understanding of the program content.
- 70% (n=7) of respondents found the mentorship helpful in progressing their LDAP.

When asked if the structure of the mentorship worked well, 70% (n=7) of respondents agreed, however there were multiple comments that three sessions would have been better: “I would have preferred 3 x 60-minute sessions. Two sessions didn’t feel like enough”.

Mentors echoed this feedback during their post-program group interview. While mentors appeared satisfied with their experience in the program, all agreed that the mentoring component seemed short for the program. The optimum discussed was three sessions of between 1 and 1.5 hours’ duration, at the beginning, midway and towards the end of the program.

4.2.4 Workbooks

Workbooks were introduced for the pilot program and accompanied each of the five workshops. These workbooks provided participants with workshop content in the one place including pre-workshop activities, resources, references to models, tools, frameworks, PowerPoint content, instructions for break out room activities and space to take notes. Because of the personal and reflective nature of many of the activities, the Program Team chose to develop workbooks which participants could “own”. Interviewees in the graduate group agreed that the pre-workshop activities were useful, and generally liked the workbooks. Table 9 below shows that participants viewed the workbooks as an enabling factor for participation in the program.

4.2.5 Enablers and barriers of participation and engagement

In the post-program survey graduates were asked what barriers and/or enablers to participation they experienced. Table 9 below shows many more enablers (22) than barriers (6).

Enablers	Count	Barriers	Count
Online delivery	4	Online delivery	3
Shorter program (5 weeks instead of 10)	3	Lack of organisational support to fit program into workload	2
Manager support	3	Schedule (workshops in the mornings)*	1
Facilitation style	2	TOTAL	6
Program schedule (regular workshop times)	2		
Program resources	2		
Supportive learning environment	2		
Workbooks	2		
No cost	1		
Little homework	1		
TOTAL	22		

*respondent was a night-shift worker

Table 9: Participants count of enablers and barriers to participation, post-program survey

Consistent with the feedback from the core programs, participants saw *Leadership Foundations* being delivered online as both an enabler and a barrier. Respondents’ comments revealed that the enabling factor of online delivery was mainly increased accessibility, particularly being able to fit participation into their schedule, while the online barrier factors included difficulty keeping focussed and building relationships.

The Program Team considered Zoom fatigue in the program design and mitigated this by utilising a range of learning methods which had proven successful to support engagement in the core programs. *Leadership Foundations* workshops included live and recorded expert interviews, pairs and group activities in breakout rooms, case studies, role plays and individual reflection activities. The aggregate weekly survey results showed 99% (n=67) of respondents found the format of the workshops engaging, while in the post-program survey, 100% of respondents (n=11) agreed that the balance of videos, activities and group discussions supported participants’ learning.

Program staff and facilitator interviews found that despite the limitations of online delivery (mostly around the types of activities possible),¹¹ the Program Team continued to support this method of delivery for all streams due to increased accessibility and budget constraints.¹² In line with Fast Track's iterative approach, the Program Team continued to review weekly feedback, implement more stretch breaks and amend activities to minimise Zoom fatigue. They also noted that the number of 25 participants in an online environment was "about right" as any more could risk poor delivery.

Leadership Foundations' shorter program length of five weeks was another enabler to participation. Some graduates viewed the "concise" nature of the program as a benefit, as it could be fitted into their workload. The intention is for participants to graduate with the foundational skills and knowledge required of a manager and leader, identify capabilities they wish to develop further, and utilise their Leadership Development Action Plan to do this.

In the mentor group interview,¹³ the most pertinent sentiment from mentors regarding barriers to participation was that some employers did not allow their employees enough "space and time" to fully immerse and engage in the program. Several mentors were aware of the work pressure their mentees were under.

While barriers due to work pressure often fall outside the control of Fast Track, program staff try to garner organisational support for participants where possible. In addition to the letter of support managers sign during the application process,¹⁴ program staff reached out to managers in week two and prompted them to play an active role in their employee's professional development. A short video was shared detailing the program's different components and topics covered, and managers were encouraged to engage with their employee's LDAP by using it to prompt conversations about embedding learnings into the workplace, further professional development opportunities and career planning.

4.2.6 Suggested improvements to workshop delivery

In the weekly surveys participants were asked *what could be improved about today's workshop?* Of the 26 (53%) comments that offered suggestions for improvements to workshops, there was very little commonality and contrasting sentiment in some cases. The Program Team monitored and actioned feedback where possible, including reduction of jargon by expert guests, managing breakout room sizes, and group cohesion.

In the mentor group interview it was noted that as mentors were not always familiar with the models and frameworks explored in the workshops, receiving this information would be useful. For future programs, program staff could develop a resource for mentors detailing the models and frameworks used so that mentors could engage in discussions about these tools.

When mentors were invited to share any final thoughts or comments about the program, one mentor proposed bringing the mentors together at some point, to have the opportunity to share their experiences. In the interview, the mentors appeared to enjoy relating, discussing and sharing their mentoring experience.

¹¹ The *Leadership Foundations* facilitator and two program staff were interviewed separately within one month of the pilot concluding. For reporting anonymity, the facilitator and program staff are referred to as 'Program Team' collectively.

¹² Previously, staff had explored the idea of a face-to-face introductory workshop for the core programs but found it too expensive, particularly disadvantaging regional participants needing to travel.

¹³ A group interview was conducted with five mentors within a month of program completion. They all had prior experience as mentors in a Fast Track core program.

¹⁴ In this letter, managers committed to providing sufficient time and resources to support their employee's participation in the program.

4.2.7 Insights from the Program Team

Reviewing what worked well and what did not, the Program Team felt that the program worked well mainly because it listened to what Fast Track alumni and other stakeholders had said they needed. This resulted in a leadership program tailored to the family and gender-based violence sector (this is discussed further in 4.3).

A more specific reason for the program's success was the Program Team's ability to draw on the approach, tools, learnings and successes of the core programs. This included replicating the core programs' recruitment strategy to ensure cohort diversity and cohesion, the multi-modal approach to reinforce learnings, and workshop design which utilised a peer learning method and mix of activities to keep participants engaged. The Program Team also took an iterative monitoring and refinement approach and responded to participants' feedback.

The Program Team also attributed *Leadership Foundations'* success to the fact that leadership skills training with an intersectional feminist lens is unique in the non-profit sector. However, the Program Team acknowledged that some adjustments to aspects of the program could be beneficial. For example, more considered breakout room allocation, based on workforce, management responsibility, and the purpose of the activity, was discussed.

4.3 Was *Leadership Foundations* relevant to the sector?

The focus of *Leadership Foundations* was informed by sector feedback. The need for further professional development focusing on "traditional" aspects of management and leadership within sector context was initially identified in the evaluation conducted of the 2021-22 core programs.

Figure 9 shows responses to *Leadership Foundations'* weekly survey questions were overwhelmingly positive. 94% (n=64) of respondents agreed that workshop content (level and focus) met their expectations.

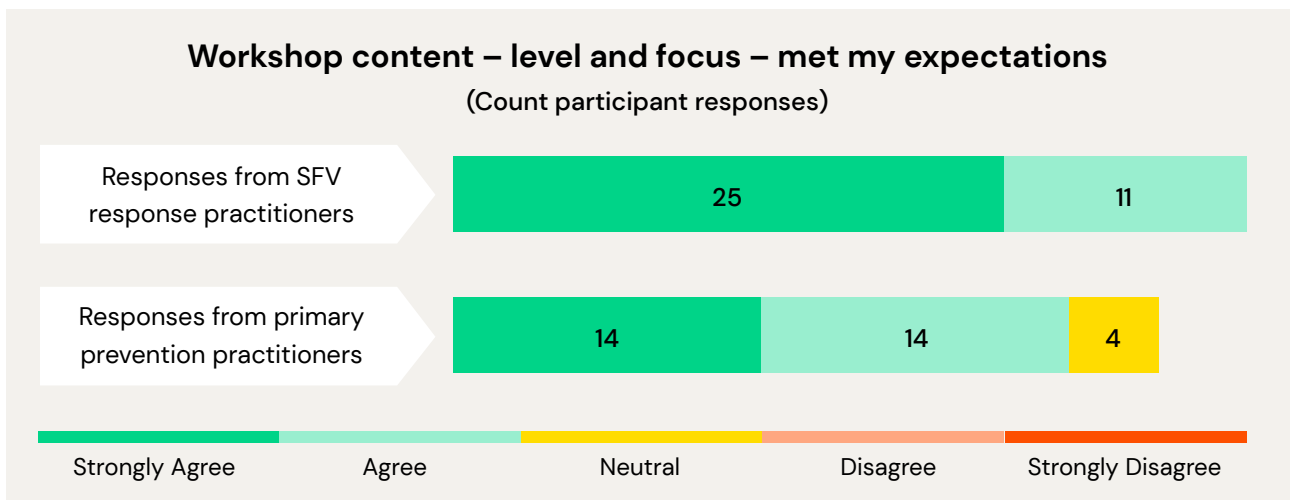


Figure 9: Count of participant agreement in the *Leadership Foundations* weekly surveys by practitioner type (n=68)

Participants' feedback developed strong themes such as an appreciation of the various tools and models explored, interactions with peers and expert guests, and opportunities for reflection.

"I valued the opportunity to sit with the theory, reflect on current and past management/ leadership practices and collectively share learnings."

– Prevention practitioner, weekly survey.

"The content on the decision making and delegating was SO useful for me! Incredibly relevant for my current situation, so it was much appreciated and well timed. I know I will be able to take this back to others in my org and share with them."

– Prevention practitioner, weekly survey.

"I found it very helpful that we worked in small groups or with a partner to apply things that we had just learnt and heard. It was good to be able to reflect with other like-minded people on both hypothetical and real situations."

– SFV response practitioner, weekly survey.

All respondents agreed that the information provided by expert guests, both live and recorded, was useful. Some found it insightful if they had contrasting styles and strengths.

"I thoroughly enjoyed the guest speakers and their reflections on their leadership styles and journeys. Their reflections felt very intentional and well considered. The focus on leadership styles and wisdom in this conversation was great."

– Prevention practitioner, weekly survey.

"The information shared in the video was truly insightful. Thank you for helping me to reflect on what I should let go of and what I should embrace as a leader."

– SFV response practitioner, weekly survey.

"The information provided by the expert guests was extremely useful. I thoroughly enjoyed the workshops with them. One key takeaway from the expert guest was the insight that all work is people work, and it's important to know your own staff."

– SFV response practitioner, weekly survey.

Of the many positive comments in the weekly surveys, two aspects were repeated in comments which highlighted the program's relevance and practical focus:

"The examples throughout are very relevant for all different areas of FV work. It is clear they have been considered to suit the cohort of both prevention and response. I really appreciate this."

– Primary prevention practitioner, weekly survey.

"Thoroughly enjoying this program, practical and informative and my skills are increasing".

– SFV response practitioner, weekly survey.

In the post-program survey, all respondents (n=11) agreed that the program was relevant to their work, with nine of these 'strongly agreeing'. Two comments were added to responses, that emphasised the relevance:

"I found that the content was relevant to the role I am in and provided a space for me to reflect on my leadership style and capabilities."

– Response practitioner, post-program survey.

"The knowledge I gained was directly and indirectly applicable to my current role, and I feel better equipped to lead effectively within my team and organisation."

– Response practitioner, post-program survey.

91% of respondents also agreed that the *Leadership Foundations* pilot met or exceeded their expectations.

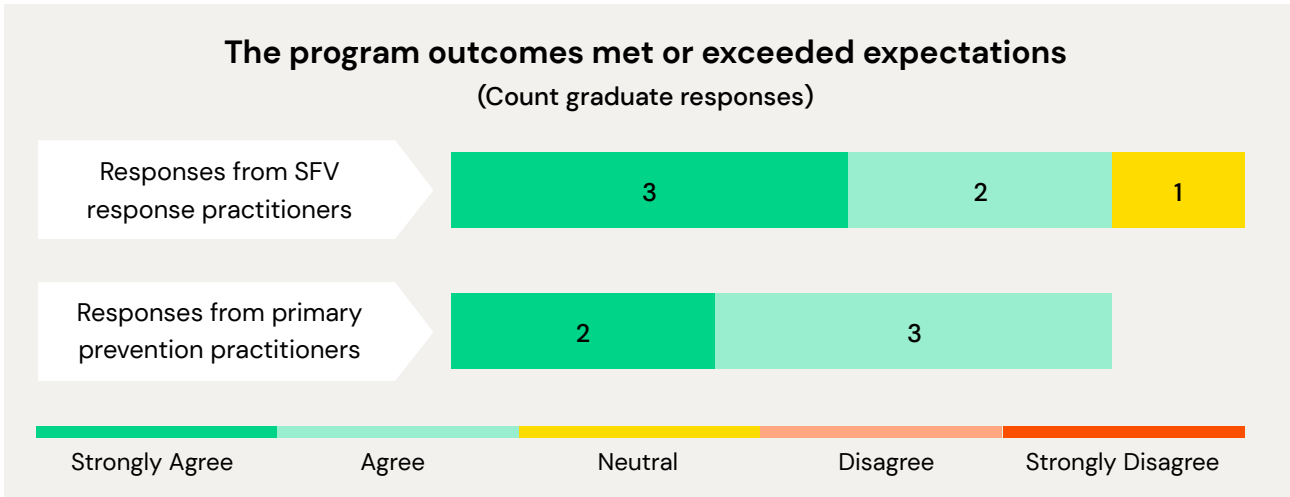


Figure 10: Count of graduate responses in the Leadership Foundations post-program survey by practitioner type (n=11)

The one respondent who neither agreed nor disagreed commented that this was because they had no specific expectations of the program prior to participation. Other comments included:

"I knew the quality of the program as I had completed the 10-week program before, but this really took my knowledge of leadership and feminist leadership to a new level."

– Primary prevention practitioner, post-program survey.

"So much valuable content, it was just what I needed to contribute to my baseline of leadership capabilities."

– Primary prevention practitioner, post-program survey.

"The program was extremely informative and really helped me obtain a better understanding and how to differentiate between different roles i.e. being a manager vs a leader. The things I've learnt can be implemented and used in my role so I believe there was a lot of valuable material."

– SFV response practitioner, post-program survey.

"The workshop was thorough and aligned perfectly with what I was looking to learn such as leadership style, identifying my strengths, reflective supervision and so on. Really enjoyed the breakout rooms and the guest speaker's panel."

– SFV response practitioner, post-program survey, program survey.

"Was a great program, very interesting and relevant content for leaders."

– Primary prevention practitioner, post-program survey.

In the two graduate interviews several graduates continued to say that their expectations of the program’s content was well met.¹⁵ These participants had previously completed a core program and felt that their needs had been understood, therefore *Leadership Foundations’* content was tailored to them.

“Thank you for being responsive to feedback from the Fast Track prevention program I did in 2020 – this is exactly what I was looking for at that time. There is an appetite from practitioners who are not yet in leadership roles to get the opportunity to add this learning to their profile so they can make the step into leadership (which is otherwise very difficult).”

– Primary prevention practitioner, post-program survey.

The Program Team was emphatic on the question of the program’s relevance. Overall, it was perceived as “extremely relevant” as “(feminist) leadership in the sector has been asked for over and over”.

In the mentor group interview, mentors were positive about the program and appreciated the difference between it and the Fast Track core programs, recognising *Leadership Foundations* was more specific to leadership and detailed in its sector application.

4.4 Did Leadership Foundations increase participants’ knowledge, skills and confidence?

The aggregate weekly survey results showed 96% (n=65) of respondents agreed that the workshops deepened their understanding of the topic/s discussed.

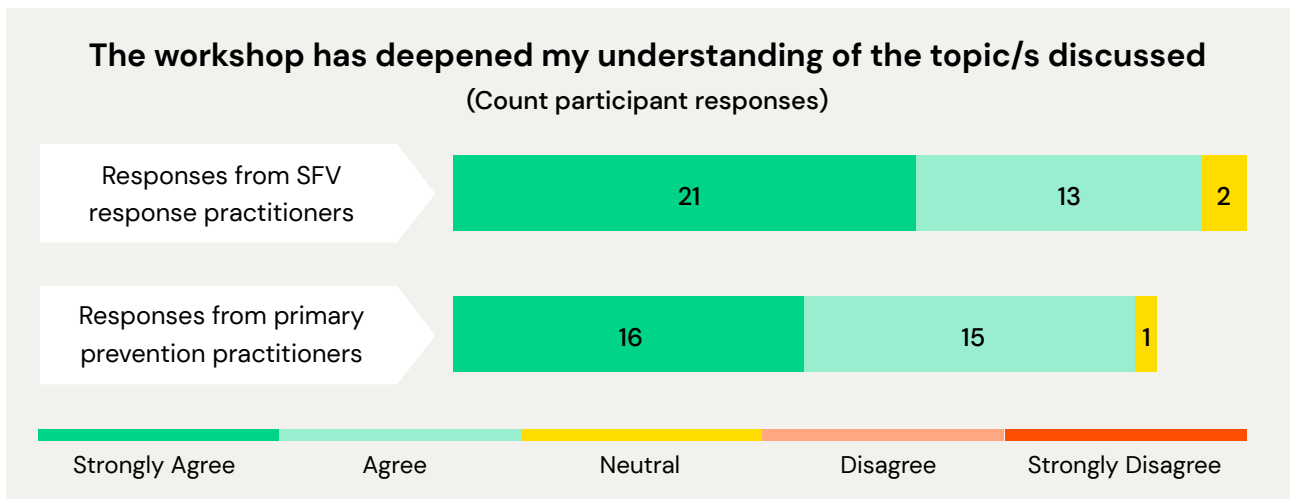


Figure 11: Count of participant agreement in the Leadership Foundations weekly surveys by practitioner type (n=68)

In terms of confidence, one SFV response participant provided insight into how engaging in discussions could help practitioners develop their communication skills:

“... very helpful that we worked in small groups or with a partner ... has helped build my confidence and lessen my social anxiety when talking in groups ... I could express my ideas and thoughts with others, because of having more opportunities to discuss and apply knowledge in these settings.”

– SFV response practitioner, weekly survey.

15 One interview was comprised of three SFV response participants and the other comprised of three primary prevention participants and one SFV response participant.

In the post-program survey, 90% of respondents (n=9) agreed that they had more confidence to apply new knowledge and skills in their role or workplace, with all reporting that they had already used new skills at work.

"At this particular point in my career, I felt like I was lacking a basic understanding of my span of influence and how I would like to show up as a leader. Fast Track Leadership Foundations increased that understanding and also gave me the confidence to exist as a leader in my own right, and position. I cannot thank the team enough for designing a very practical but ruminating program where each workshop I was gaining knowledge from [the facilitator] but also my fellow participants because everyone seemed very comfortable and safe to share experiences."

– Primary prevention practitioner, post-program survey.

"I have confidence to just be myself, knowing that I already have knowledge and skills in the leadership space to offer".

– Primary prevention practitioner, post-program survey.

In the graduate interviews, participants commented that they were aware of new capabilities they had acquired and planned to use them.

Mentors observed increased confidence and self-care such as, staying strong, setting boundaries and advocating for oneself which are useful capabilities for working and leading in a challenging environment. They also believed their mentees had gained a better sense of where their roles, and others', fitted within the sector.

4.5 How is Leadership Foundations benefiting the sector?

In addition to the supportive relationship all respondents developed with their mentor (discussed in 4.2.3), *Leadership Foundations* also fostered peer connection. Analysis of post-program survey data and participant interviews showed participants developed peer relationships during the program, some of which spanned primary prevention and SFV response participants. The most prominent barrier to continuing connections after the program was participants' limited time, and the difficulty of maintaining online relationships. This feedback is similar to the Fast Track core programs, where participants form supportive relationships with their peers online, and experience time and resource barriers to continue these after the program. As with the core programs, graduates from *Leadership Foundations* were invited to join Safe and Equal's Leadership Network to help overcome these barriers.

In the post-program survey, **60% (n=6) of respondents agreed that they had developed supportive relationships with peers during the program and half of those who agreed expected these relationships to become ongoing professional connections.**

"I have a list of those I want to meet for coffee :)"

– Primary prevention practitioner, post-program survey.

While the remaining 40% of participants appeared unsure if professional connections would continue (they responded to "neither agree nor disagree"), one respondent felt that introductions to peers was still beneficial even if relationships had not yet formed:

"I have come away feeling less alone and I know I have peers I can reach out to if I want to..."

– Primary prevention practitioner, post-program survey.

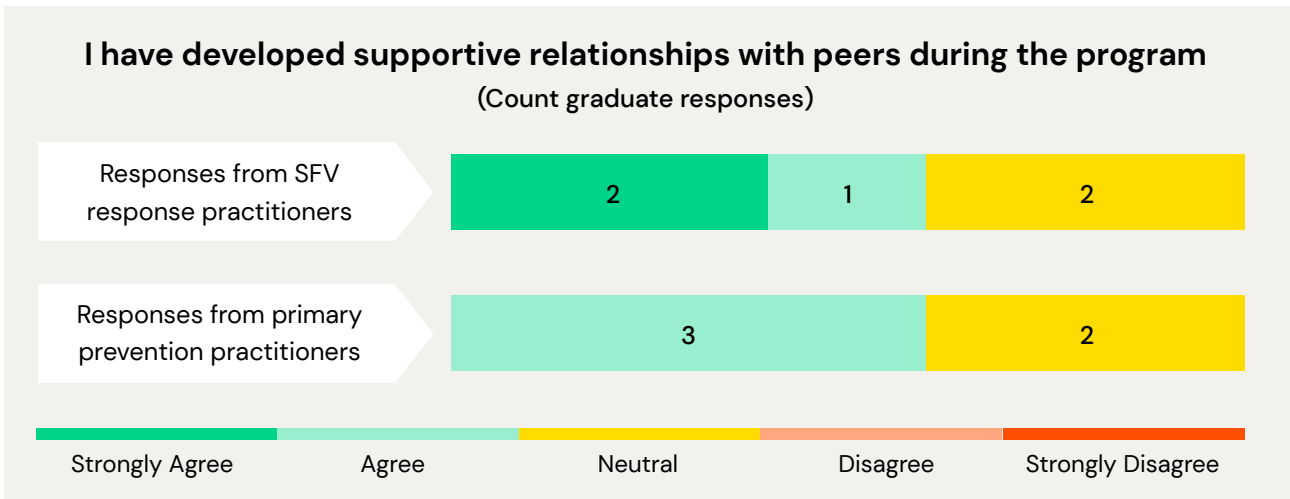


Figure 12: Count of graduate responses in the Leadership Foundations post-program survey by practitioner type (n=10)

As the figure above shows, an equal number of SFV response and primary prevention respondents developed professional relationships during the *Leadership Foundations* program. Some respondents shared insights into these connections:

"[Leadership Foundations] strengthened an existing connection."

– Primary prevention practitioner, post-program survey.

"Having the opportunity to speak with people in similar roles was helpful. We don't often get the chance to do this across different organisations."

– SFV response practitioner, post-program survey.

"It was great to be able to connect with people who 'get it'. I found this group to be really supportive of one another."

– SFV response practitioner, post-program survey.

Survey data further revealed that two of the six people who made connections did so with participant/s across the continuum.

4.6 What effect does *Leadership Foundations* have on roles and careers?

In the post-program survey, 90% (n=9) of respondents agreed with the statement that they felt more confident to progress their career in the sector, with half of these 'strongly agreeing'. One commented on this confidence:

"It has boosted my confidence and made me feel more competent in my role".

– Prevention practitioner, post-program survey.

Further, at the conclusion of the program, half of respondents reported that their participation in *Leadership Foundations* had expanded their role or influence.

"... I am able to discuss practical challenges when dealing with team members."

– SFV response practitioner, post-program survey.

"Just participating in this program brings with it some weight in terms of career progression. But it has helped me understand how to bring force to my ideas to upper management in a more conducive way."

– SFV response practitioner, post-program survey.

It is important to note that due to time constraints, feedback on this topic was gathered almost immediately after graduation. Consequently, there is a limit on determining how much participants' roles or careers have changed as a result of completing the *Leadership Foundations* program.

The case study below illustrates how *Leadership Foundations* has instilled a leadership mindset in a graduate. She discusses how the program increased her confidence so that she is now open to taking on a people management role and is looking for opportunities to exert her influence at a strategic level.

Case Study 3: *Leadership Foundations*

About Michelle

Michelle is a primary prevention practitioner for a Victorian organisation with state-wide coverage. Michelle's role involves working with partner organisations on policy, planning and implementation of gender equity and prevention of violence against women initiatives. Michelle has also worked in community health and with various not-for-profit community organisations.

Leadership mindset

Michelle participated in Fast Track's inaugural *Leadership Foundations* program in mid-2024. One of the first things that resonated with her was a comment by the program's facilitator: "... 'you don't have to be a manager to be a leader' ... that's something that I think about a lot now and it's been really empowering". Another benefit Michelle took away from the program included learning to reflect on "things achieved and things needing to be done", rather than just getting caught up incessantly with "the doing".

Resources provided in the program have also developed Michelle's leadership mindset. After several discussions with her manager about work prioritisation but without subsequent improvement, Michelle remembered a prioritisation framework explored in the program which she shared and is now using at work. The program content and advice from expert guests on 'organisational thinking' also proved valuable. Working in a dynamic and changeable environment, Michelle now sees impactful decisions made, through a strategic, whole-of-organisation lens.

Peer connection and support

Michelle enjoyed meeting and working with peers from across the continuum when she participated in *Leadership Foundations*. Connecting with peers who have a diversity of roles within a range of different organisations broadened Michelle's outlook for the future:

"Because there are other people in that room where you go, oh, I hadn't heard of that organisation, or, oh, I hadn't thought of that role before. So, it's helpful in that sense when you hear from other people because you can otherwise get caught up in your own little bubble".

She finds herself now recommending Safe and Equal's programs to others, particularly to individuals working alone in primary prevention so they can: "... connect with like-minded individuals and learn from each other".

Reflecting on her participation in *Leadership Foundations* as well as *Fast Track Prevention* in 2021, Michelle especially valued:

"... the chance for people to come together in a really safe and respectful way. There are not a lot of spaces where you can come together with colleagues and peers, often people you don't know and just say, this is happening for me, or this happened at work, and know that people will listen and, you know, support you. So, I really appreciated that with these programs as well".

Confidence to navigate challenges

Since completing *Leadership Foundations* and gaining confidence in her leadership skills and abilities, Michelle has taken on a mentoring role providing guidance to a young adult interested in health policy which she finds fulfilling. Michelle is also open to the idea of managing people in the future.

With recent changes and subsequent challenges within her current team, Michelle found some of the people management skills she acquired from *Leadership Foundations* helpful in increasing her confidence to navigate them successfully:

"giving me the confidence to go, all right, I can [do this]. I've got some ideas of things I can say and how to say them, and it doesn't have to be as scary as I think it's going to be".

Michelle is also increasingly interested in working at the strategic level, where relationship building entails engaging leaders and individuals at senior and executive levels. So, the skills and confidence gained through the training is great encouragement for her to take on this challenge, particularly given many of these executives are older males who can be intimidating.

"One of the things that I guess I have learned in [Leadership Foundations] is that I can do hard things and I'm good at it. So just backing myself a bit more ... being confident in my own abilities".

Future possibilities

While Michelle sees a bright future in her current role, she can also envisage a broader scope for her work. She is also pleased that the capabilities she learnt through the *Leadership Foundations* program are transferable:

"Which is why I thought so highly of Leadership Foundations, because it wasn't all just prevention. It was kind of general things that can be transferred, which is super helpful".

4.7 Is there continued demand for *Leadership Foundations*?

When asked about the value of the program to the sector, mentors in the post-program group interview felt that *Leadership Foundations* was invaluable, particularly because as one mentor put it: “cross-sector collaboration is rare ...”. The overall sentiment was that *Leadership Foundations* is needed by those going into management or leadership roles, especially front-line staff, who might not yet have adequate skills or support and therefore require encouragement and capacity building.

When interviewed, the Program Team felt there would be demand for *Leadership Foundations* because it fulfilled an identified need and was concisely delivered at five weeks’ duration. They believed that the pilot was successful even though it was short on lead-time and marketing, indicating that the interest generated was “just the tip of the iceberg”. The waitlist as of 6 June 2024 demonstrated continued demand, with 21 applicants on the *Leadership Foundations* waitlist. This waitlist data together with the participants’ overwhelming satisfaction with the program shows strong future demand. In terms of financial viability, the Program Team believed that because organisational professional development budgets are limited, continued funding was needed to ensure *Leadership Foundations* remained financially accessible to all practitioners across the state.

5. EVALUATION QUESTIONS SUMMARY

5.1 Core programs

Efficiency and Process	<p>To what extent are the core programs reaching and graduating appropriate participants?</p> <p>Overall, the core programs reached a geographically broad and diverse group of practitioners in the SFV response and primary prevention workforces. A total of 163 practitioners were recruited, with 145 graduating. This was an 8% increase in recruitment and 14% increase in graduation on the 2021–22 program.</p> <p>The number of participants identifying as Aboriginal was close to the proportion in the Family Violence workforce, with a three-fold increase in the number of participants from Aboriginal services.</p>
Appropriateness	<p>Do the 2022–24 core programs continue to be fit-for-purpose and effective in building key leadership and management capabilities?</p> <p>The core programs performed well in 2022–24, showing improvement on virtually all measures compared to the 2021–22 program.</p> <p>More than 90% of participant responses in the 60 weekly surveys agreed or strongly agreed with the positive statements posed about the workshops. Positive feedback about the introduction of videos, balance of learning activities, and relevant and useful program content, demonstrates the success of the sustainability and learning design review, and its implemented changes. The opportunity to meet and collaborate with others in the sector, draw on expertise in the room through the program’s peer learning method, and access sector experts were identified as most valuable by participants.</p> <p>The core programs overall, including their highly regarded mentoring component, continue to effectively increase participants’ knowledge and skills across a set of targeted capabilities, aligned to the Victorian capability frameworks. In terms of application, the vast majority of respondents agreed they had more confidence to apply new knowledge and skills in their role or workplace, and had already applied these. The percentage of positive responses regarding the application of new knowledge and skills increased, building on the success of the 2021–22 program.</p> <p>The most common barrier to participation was under-resourcing as Fast Track’s time commitment was not built into many participants’ workloads; in particular <i>Response</i> participants who were still required to manage crisis response work. Program staff continued to engage participants’ managers to encourage their involvement and remind them of the value and time commitment needed.</p>

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Are the core programs achieving the intended sector impact?

93% (n=13) of graduates who responded to the follow-up survey reported increased confidence undertaking their role. In addition, 94% of the 31 managers on average agreed their employees exhibited greater knowledge, skill levels and confidence after completing the program.

77% of graduates reported their increased confidence in their role had contributed to positive career progression. Six respondents reported having moved into more senior roles, a further two had applied for more senior roles, and another two had taken on more responsibility in their current role.

64% (n=9) of graduate respondents confirmed connections and professional relationships formed during the program had continued afterwards. The value of these connections includes increased trust and understanding between organisations, connection to the sector, resource sharing and peer support.

Graduates responding to the follow-up survey also reported benefits for their organisations resulting from their participation in Fast Track. Eight of 14 agreed that their organisation's advocacy activities improved and that participation enabled their organisation to provide better services and programs.

Reflecting on the program overall, 93% (n=13) of respondents from the graduate follow up survey agreed that they would recommend the program to others. Meanwhile, 16 managers freely expressed open-ended comments that were generally positive or specifically praised the program. For example:

"I would recommend this program to any up-and-coming leaders in the sector!"

- Manager, *Response* follow-up survey.

With the core programs continuing to demonstrate positive sector impact, the Program Team anticipates demand to remain strong.

5.2 Leadership Foundations

Program design and process	<p>To what extent did the <i>Leadership Foundations</i> pilot reach and graduate appropriate participants?</p> <p><i>Leadership Foundations</i> recruited and graduated a diverse, full cohort of 25 practitioners. The cohort was made up of nine primary prevention and 16 SFV response practitioners (proportional to the different sized workforces). These practitioners came from a broad range of services or programs and a wide range of geographic locations, with one third located regionally. All participants identified as female, and most (58%) were between 25 and 34 years of age. In comparison to the broader workforce,¹⁶ participants who identified as a First Nations person was proportionate to the estimate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family violence workers in Victoria. All 25 participants graduated.</p>
Appropriateness	<p>To what extent was <i>Leadership Foundations</i> fit-for-purpose in meeting the needs of participants?</p> <p>The design of <i>Leadership Foundations</i> was generally fit-for-purpose and responsive to participants’ needs. However, some ongoing improvements could be made to enhance the workshop’s experience.</p> <p>Participants’ overall opinion was in favour of retaining a mixed cohort of SFV response and primary prevention practitioners, with some constructive feedback for consideration. Program staff should aim to recruit a more even split of SFV response and primary prevention practitioners, consider when it is more suitable to group participants by speciality and/or people management experience to tailor breakout room allocation accordingly, and provide additional guidance around the adaptability of staff management tools in a program management setting.</p> <p>The majority of participants found the new Leadership Development Action Plan (LDAP) useful and liked the workbooks designed for the program. Program staff could consider providing participants with an example of a completed LDAP to give additional guidance on how they can be structured.</p> <p>Graduates praised their mentors and felt they were well matched. All survey respondents felt they developed a supportive relationship with their mentor. The majority also agreed that their mentor supported them to understand program content and progress their LDAP. The only adjustment for program staff to consider is changing the mentorship component from two 90-minute sessions to three 1-hour sessions, as suggested by both participants and mentors.</p> <p>Online delivery was equally an enabler and barrier to participation. Other notable enablers included the program’s engaging delivery model, a shorter five-week program length and participants’ support from their manager.</p> <p>How relevant was <i>Leadership Foundations</i>’ focus within sector context?</p> <p><i>Leadership Foundations</i> is relevant and practical to the sector. This is likely a result of the Program Team’s design which invited sector input from the outset.</p> <p>91% (n= 10) of graduate respondents agreed that the <i>Leadership Foundations</i> pilot had met or exceeded their expectations. Strong themes that emerged from feedback was appreciation of the various tools and models explored, interactions with peers and expert guests, and opportunities for reflection.</p> <p>All (n=11) respondents agreed the program was relevant to their work. As noted in section 4.2, program staff could consider grouping participants in breakout rooms according to whether they manage people or programs to strengthen engagement on the staff management content.</p> <p>Mentors were also positive about the program and appreciated its focus on leadership and how it is applied in the family violence sector.</p>

¹⁶ Family violence and sexual assault workforce pulse survey, 2022, Family Safety Victoria.

Effectiveness and impact

To what extent did participants’ knowledge, skills and confidence increase as a result of Leadership Foundations?

Knowledge, skills and confidence increased significantly as a result of participation according to the feedback collected. 96% (n=65) of weekly survey respondents agreed the workshop had deepened their understanding of topic/s discussed, and nine out of 10 graduates in the post-program survey agreed that they had more confidence to apply new knowledge and skills in their role, with all 10 reporting that they had.

Mentors observed increased confidence and self-care in their mentees such as, staying strong, setting boundaries and advocating for oneself. These are useful capabilities for working and leading in a challenging environment. There was also a view that their mentees had an increased sense of the importance of their roles and contributions to the sector.

To what extent has Leadership Foundations built or enhanced connection and relationships across the sector and what has happened as a result?

Leadership Foundations has built or enhanced connections and relationships across the sector. In addition to the supportive relationship all respondents developed with their mentors (discussed in 4.2.3), *Leadership Foundations* was successful in fostering peer connections among several participants. Post-program survey data showed that participants developed supportive peer relationships during the program and some of these relationships spanned SFV response and primary prevention workforces. Positive impacts of these relationships included having a network to reach out to when needed and feeling less isolated. All graduates were invited to join Safe and Equal’s Leadership Network.

How have participants’ roles or careers changed as a result of Leadership Foundations?

Graduates were optimistic about career progression and shared anecdotes about the impact of their increased influence. 90% of respondents in the post-program survey agreed they felt more confident to advance their careers in the sector, and 50% reported that their role or span of influence had expanded due to participation in *Leadership Foundations*.

Sustainability

What value does Leadership Foundations offer the sector and what evidence exists of continued demand?

Sentiment from all stakeholders was that the *Leadership Foundations* program is valuable, needed in the sector, and that there is ongoing demand for it. Data from the waitlist and evaluation support this.

In terms of financial viability, the Program Team believed that continued funding, as is also the case with the core programs, was needed to ensure *Leadership Foundations* remained financially accessible to practitioners given limited organisational professional development budgets.

6. CONCLUSION

This evaluation demonstrates that the Fast Track intensive leadership programs continue to be highly effective for building key leadership and management capabilities across the SFV response and primary prevention workforces.

After implementing all recommendations from the 2021–22 Evaluation Report and continuing to action stakeholder feedback in real time, the core programs built on the success of previous deliveries and demonstrated improvement on the 2021–22 program on almost all measures. From reaching and graduating more diverse cohorts, to improving on the percentage of positive responses to feedback about increased knowledge, skills, and confidence, the core programs are achieving their intended outcomes. This is supported by praise from managers on the impact of participation on staff, reports of career progression from graduates, and positive organisational results stemming from participation and continued professional connections.

The *Leadership Foundations* program confirmed that professional development programs which build “traditional” leadership and management skills and knowledge can be successfully delivered to a mixed cohort of SFV and primary prevention practitioners. The pilot was found to be fit-for-purpose, relevant and effective in increasing participants’ knowledge, skills and confidence.

The clear commonality for the growing success of the core programs and *Leadership Foundations’* positive results is Fast Track’s iterative monitoring and refinement approach which meets and responds to the needs of practitioners, organisations and the sector.

There is strong continued interest in all three Fast Track streams, evidenced by waiting lists of 75 for *Response*, 54 for *Prevention* and 21 for *Leadership Foundations* as of May 2024. Alongside the considerable positive feedback and outcomes, future demand appears likely.

To ensure leadership and management pathways remain open to new and emerging leaders, Fast Track needs to be financially accessible to all organisations. This relies on resourcing for Fast Track programs to ensure subsidised places.

Recommendations

After reviewing the evidence and feedback, the following recommendations have been identified:

▶ Recommendation 1

To ensure high quality delivery and continued positive outcomes program staff should continue their iterative monitoring and refinement approach to the design of the programs.

▶ Recommendation 2

Fast Track should continue to contribute to the workforce development evidence base of SFV response and primary prevention by:

- Ensuring its monitoring and evaluation framework is fit for purpose and efficient for future iterations.
- Investing in a retrospective evaluation to better understand the medium to long term impact of the Fast Track programs on practitioners and their organisations.

▶ Recommendation 3

Safe and Equal advocacy should consider Fast Track as a key part of Victoria’s workforce development infrastructure which requires sustained funding.

Final words

CWE has granted funding for Safe and Equal to continue to deliver Fast Track across 2024–2026. This will include four *Response*, two *Prevention* and two *Leadership Foundations* rounds for up to 240 participants. The distribution of the programs has been considered taking into account the waitlist numbers and sizes of the two workforces.

As Fast Track graduates advance in their careers and step into more senior leadership roles, their leadership development needs will evolve. Safe and Equal's recent leadership offerings have successfully provided specialist leadership development opportunities at key stages of a leader's journey. While Fast Track supports new and emerging leaders to build foundational capability and confidence, Lead + Adapt has supported senior and executive leaders navigating complexity and systems change. Complementing these programs, Safe and Equal's Leadership Network creates ongoing opportunities for leaders to connect and grow. To maintain pathways for professional growth, it is essential that a combination of programs continue to be delivered to the SFV response and primary prevention workforces across various career stages. Building and sustaining an integrated suite of leadership offerings will ensure a strong pipeline of capable, confident and connected leaders for the sector.

7. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Program logic: Core programs

PROBLEM/ NEED

In order to lead highly effective organisations and shape a sustainable sector, Specialist Family Violence (SFV) response and Primary Prevention leaders need both sector-specific expertise, and management, leadership and technical capabilities. Workforce retention is a known challenge across the sector, and is further compounded by increasing demand for services, recent and rapid sector growth, and the changing nature of family violence leadership in a context of major sector reform. Furthermore, where some skilled SFV and primary prevention practitioners choose to remain in the sector and advance their careers, there are insufficient opportunities for sector-specific management and leadership training that would support them to take on mid-level or senior roles, and fulfil them effectively and with confidence.

Therefore, the SFV and primary prevention sector is significantly constrained by an under-supply of suitably skilled and capable practitioners available to take up mid-level prevention and senior-level response leadership roles. This need is hampering recruitment and limiting organisational capacity, and is likely contributing further to retention challenges through practitioner burn-out.

PURPOSE

Safe and Equal's Fast Track program aims to substantially grow the supply of suitably skilled professionals available to take up management and leadership roles within primary prevention and response organisations. This will be achieved by delivering a practice-informed, multi-modal leadership training and mentoring program underpinned by Family Safety Victoria's (FSV) workforce capability frameworks, and delivering it to a large number of experienced primary prevention and SFV response practitioners.

By building the management and leadership capabilities of current practitioners, supporting them to build relationships with their peers and broadening their perspective across the sector, Fast Track equips and encourages participants to take on more senior roles. This will immediately grow the pool of managers with the dual skill-set required to lead highly effective organisations, mitigate workforce retention challenges and ensure crucial experience and feminist values are retained within the sector, and ultimately contribute to the development of a thriving, sustainable sector.

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INPUTS		
<p>People:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe and Equal project staff across Units • Learning and design consultants • Program facilitator, mentors & guest experts • SFV practitioners – transitioning to/new in senior management • Primary prevention practitioners – transitioning to/new in mid-level management 	<p>Funding from Family Safety Victoria</p> <p>Knowledge, resources & materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training content from Fast Track 21-22 and program reputation • <i>Responding to Family Violence and Preventing Family Violence and Violence against Women</i> Capability Frameworks • <i>Fast Track 21-22</i> evaluation findings and recommendations 	<p>Infrastructure & support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comms infrastructure & resources • Evaluation frameworks and tools • Program planning and delivery infrastructure • Training & Logistics infrastructure & resources • Senior leadership, oversight & governance

ACTIVITIES		
<p>Course development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing learning redesign recommendations to increase efficiency and sustainability of core program • Implementation of evaluation recommendations to continue and strengthen program effectiveness 	<p>Communications & engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector engagement & promotions – broad and targeted • Engaging with participants' and key program stakeholders • Using program learning and data to inform workforce development advocacy 	<p>Recruitment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit facilitator, guest speakers, mentors • Screen & recruit up to 87x suitable participants for the Response courses • Screen & recruit up to 58x suitable participants for the Prevention courses
<p>Core program delivery – 5x (3 response, 2 prevention) courses each comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10x workshops • 3x mentoring sessions • 1x end of course forum • Tools & support for workplace projects 	<p>Management & evaluation activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise MEL Framework • Monitoring (feedback & data) • Ongoing review of data to inform iterative program learning and adaptation <p>Program planning, management and delivery (including risks)</p>	

OUTPUTS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5x core program (3 response, 2 prevention) courses delivered • Up to 145 engaged, upskilled and connected graduates • Design and endorsement of participant workplace projects <p>New connections and relationships between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants from different organisations • Participants and mentors 	<p>A reputable professional development package for the sector</p> <p>A certificate to demonstrate expertise & course completion</p> <p>Graduates eligible to join to Safe and Equal's other leadership offerings</p> <p>Feedback & other MEL data</p> <p>Progress and monitoring reports</p> <p>Final program evaluation report (combined with pilot evaluation)</p>

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OUTCOMES	
<p>Participant outcomes:</p> <p>Short-term changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased skills, knowledge & confidence in line with the Capability Frameworks Creation of a supportive network of peers Feeling energised and connected to the sector <p>Medium- to longer-term changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased confidence to practically apply skills & knowledge in their roles Career progression including to more senior roles Reduced isolation & burn-out, feeling more engaged & empowered in their roles Advocating for & affecting change at organisational and sector levels 	<p>Organisational & sector outcomes:</p> <p>Short-term changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased supply of skilled professionals available to take up leadership & management roles Trusting relationships between participants enhances sharing and collaboration between organisations The sector values the program and holds it in high regard through continued demand & participation <p>Medium- to longer-term changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased organisational effectiveness which leads to enhanced services & programs Increased coordination and new partnerships, within and across sectors

IMPACT		
<p>SFV organisations are strengthened and have greater capacity to provide people with the services they need.</p> <p>People have access to more timely, appropriate and effective SFV services when needed.</p>	<p>PVAW programs have greater capacity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reach more people respond to unique community needs become embedded within organisations and communities. 	<p>Community attitudes and behaviours prevent gendered violence.</p> <p>The family violence response & primary prevention systems are stronger, more sustainable & highly valued in the community.</p>

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CONTEXT

This program is being delivered in the context of very high demand for SFV response services, which has increased in recent years as a result of recommendations, funding and action arising from the Royal Commission into Family Violence. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated demand for family violence services and enhanced community awareness of the need – as well as rapidly changing the way SFV and primary prevention programs are being delivered, redirecting prevention staff, and, in many cases, impacting the health and wellbeing of practitioners. These sector and workforce contextual factors are likely to affect some practitioners' ability to participate in the program.

Fast Track is an initiative of the Victorian Government's *Building from Strength* 10-year Industry Plan, and therefore has a strong degree of interest and expectation from sector stakeholders – which will ideally be leveraged for buy-in and participation by key organisations.

The evaluation of the 2021–2022 *Fast Track* program demonstrated that *Fast Track* was effective in increasing participants' capabilities and confidence and influenced a number of participants' development and career progression post the program. *Fast Track* also contributes to organisational and sector-level outcomes through improvement of services and programs, workforce retention, and partnerships. The prior successful delivery and achieved outcomes has established *Fast Track* as a recognised effective leadership professional development opportunity in the sector. *Safe and Equal* also brings substantial organisational infrastructure, networks and reputation, which – together with the successful delivery of the recent *Fast Track* 2021–2022 program – will continue the program's ongoing success.

EVIDENCE BASE

The *Fast Track* 2021–2022 evaluation report summarises the findings from an analysis of extensive monitoring and evaluation data collected. The evaluation focuses on the effectiveness of the program in building the cohort's knowledge and skills, and also explores longer term outcomes relating to both career progression, and broader organisational and sector-level outcomes. The report also informs further understanding of what works in leadership and workforce development in the family violence sector.

Family Safety Victoria's Workforce Census identified that a considerable proportion of both specialist family violence and primary prevention practitioners intended to leave the workforce, citing lack of career advancement opportunities, short-term contracts, or the role having an impact on health and wellbeing. The census also identified the sector's need for more professional development and an opportunity for greater peer networking and connection. Considering this, the *Fast Track* program logic has intended short term and medium to longer term outcomes that aims to further support the sector. The 2021–2022 *Fast Track* evaluation report demonstrates that the program has contributed to positive outcomes relating to capability development, workforce retention, career progression, enhanced networking opportunities, and a sense of reconnection to the sector.

Safe and Equal's approach to course design and delivery is underpinned by a growing evidence base and documented best practice. This includes the *Responding to Family Violence* and *Preventing Family Violence and Violence against Women* capability frameworks which detail the knowledge and skills required to respond to and prevent family violence, *Change the Story*, and intersectional feminist and anti-oppressive principles. The extensive body of knowledge around adult learning principles also informs *Safe and Equal*'s approach, ensuring training participants' individual experiences are recognised and drawn out in discussion, and employing a range of learning modes and activities which enable nuanced application to participants' own roles and contexts. *Safe and Equal* also draws on internal research into blended learning within family violence contexts, and previous evaluation of multi-modal workforce capability building projects which provide valuable evidence of what works well, and what can be effectively scaled or extended.

Appendix 2 – Program logic: Leadership Foundations

PROBLEM/ NEED

In order to lead highly effective organisations and shape a sustainable sector, Specialist Family Violence (SFV) response and Primary Prevention practitioners need the dual skill-set of sector-specific expertise, and management and leadership capabilities. Workforce retention remains a challenge across the sector, and is further compounded by increasing demand for services, ongoing staff vacancies, unfavourable career prospects and lack of advancement opportunities. Furthermore, once skilled SFV and primary prevention practitioners successfully secure mid-level or senior leadership roles, there are limited opportunities for sector-specific management and leadership training that would support them to excel.

Therefore, to mitigate staff attrition and ensure the supply of suitably skilled and capable practitioners available to fulfil mid-level prevention and senior-level response leadership roles, there is an ongoing need for:

- a) leadership development tailored to the family and gender-based violence sector so practitioners can develop the skills and knowledge required of leaders and managers
- b) supported career pathways into senior roles
- c) facilitation of cross-sector networks of peers and collaborations to reduce isolation and burn-out.

While the Fast Track core program (Prevention and Response streams), which focuses on transforming practice experience into leadership capability, has provided leadership development specific to each workforce since 2021, graduate and mentor feedback indicates demand for additional content on leadership topics and capabilities.

An opportunity also exists to enhance connection between the SFV response and primary prevention workforces, who may currently be working in silos but share an overarching purpose and elements of their evidence base.

PURPOSE

Fast Track Leadership Foundations (Leadership Foundations) will add a new and unique program to Fast Track's existing offerings to meet demand for development on additional leadership and management capabilities. It will be tailored to support new leaders in the family and gender-based violence sector. Leadership Foundations will focus on:

- developing the basics of **good management and leadership practice**
- building **support networks across the sector through professional relationships, and**
- **boosting career trajectory through proactive planning.**

Leadership Foundations **will enable new leaders to excel in their role and pave the way for them to take on more senior roles in the future.** This, in turn, will immediately grow the pool of capable leaders and managers with the dual skill-set required to drive highly effective organisations, mitigate workforce retention challenges and ensure crucial experience and feminist values are retained within the sector, and ultimately contribute to the development of a thriving, sustainable sector.

Leadership Foundations will test a new approach to Fast Track delivery by bringing SFV response and primary prevention practitioners together. This will build a shared knowledge for all, regardless of specialisation, and promote connection and the opportunity to harness expertise across the continuum of prevention to response.

Leadership Foundations will be offered as a stand-alone program complimentary to the core program. It will be open to new audiences as well as alumni of the core program. Leadership Foundations will be positioned as a stream within the Fast Track leadership program, and part of a suite of Safe and Equal leadership development offerings. These offerings will be embedded in the sector and offered ongoing, creating a flow of suitably skilled professionals who can take up and excel in, management and leadership roles within SFV and primary prevention organisations.

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INPUTS		
<p>People:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe and Equal Fast Track Program Team and cross-unit staff • Learning and design consultants • Program facilitator, mentors & guest experts • Core program graduates and their managers • SFV practitioners – new to managing staff or teams • Primary prevention practitioners – new to leading projects and/or managing staff and teams 	<p>Funding: Centre for Workforce Excellence</p> <p>Knowledge, resources & materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training content and feedback from Fast Track 2.0 (current core program) and program reputation • <i>Responding to Family Violence and Preventing Family Violence and Violence against Women Capability Frameworks</i> • <i>Fast Track 21–22 Evaluation Report</i> findings and recommendations • Current sector expertise from Safe and Equal 	<p>Infrastructure & support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comms infrastructure & resources • Evaluation frameworks & tools • Program planning & delivery infrastructure • Training & Logistics infrastructure & resources • Senior leadership, oversight & governance

ACTIVITIES		
<p>Learning design:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs Analysis Surveys • Develop the course and materials 	<p>Communications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and roll out Leadership Foundations comms & promotions – change journey, broad and targeted • Use program learning and data to inform workforce development and advocacy • Liaise with participants and key program stakeholders 	<p>Engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage facilitator, mentors and guest speakers • Recruit and screen up to 25 participants – a reasonably balanced mix from across SFV response and prevention
<p>Leadership Foundations program delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5x workshops • 3x mentoring hours • Support to develop Leadership Development Action Plan 	<p>Management & evaluation activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program planning, management and delivery (including risks) • Develop Leadership Foundations MEL design • Monitoring and adaptation if needed (feedback & data) • Evaluation of Leadership Foundations 	

OUTPUTS		
<p>1 new course (Leadership Foundations) designed, developed, delivered and evaluated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full suite of new materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Facilitator guides – Participant guide – Participant workbooks – Mentor guide – Induction videos – Course reading materials – Canvas course – Leadership Development Action Plan template 	<p>Up to 25 course graduates</p> <p>New connections and relationships between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants from both same and different workforces and organisations • Participants and mentors <p>Participants receive certification or recognition of completion.</p> <p>Eligibility to join Safe and Equal's Leadership Network.</p>	<p>A new tested model of professional development for both workforces.</p> <p>Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning data, including stakeholder feedback, progress reports and summary findings.</p> <p>Program evaluation report (combined with core program evaluation).</p>

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OUTCOMES

Participant outcomes:**Short-term changes:**

- Increased skills, knowledge & confidence
- Increased understanding of management and leadership across the continuum of response to prevention
- Creation of a supportive network of peers
- Feeling energised and connected to the broader sector, and to the feminist social justice movement
- Awareness of Safe and Equal's other leadership offerings

Medium- to longer-term changes:

- Increased confidence to practically apply skills & knowledge in their roles
- Meaningful career progression
- Reduced isolation & burn-out, feeling more engaged & empowered in their roles
- Advocating for & affecting change at organisational and sector levels
- Collaboration across different sector organisations

Organisational & sector outcomes:**Short-term changes:**

- Increased supply of skilled professionals available to excel in and advance in their leadership & management roles
- Trusting relationships between participants enhances sharing and collaboration between organisations
- The sector values the program and holds it in high regard through continued demand & participation

Medium- to longer-term changes:

- Increased organisational effectiveness which leads to enhanced services & programs
- Increased coordination and new partnerships, within and across prevention and response workforces
- Programs and services are increasingly mutually reinforcing
- SFV and prevention workforces have more regular ongoing opportunities for leadership development, and these initiatives are led and influenced by the sector
- Safe and Equal has a growing network and role in influencing leadership development, informed by its pipeline of skilled and experienced feminist leaders

IMPACT

SFV organisations are strengthened and have greater capacity to provide people with the services they need.

People have access to more timely, appropriate and effective SFV services when needed.

Primary prevention programs are strengthened and have greater capacity to:

- reach more people
- respond to unique community needs
- become embedded within organisations and communities.

Improved community attitudes and behaviours help prevent family and gender-based violence.

The family violence response & primary prevention systems are stronger, more connected, more sustainable & highly valued in the community.

CONTEXT

Other Safe and Equal leadership offerings:

The Fast Track Response stream was first piloted in 2018. In 2020 it was scaled up to expand Response delivery and develop and deliver a Prevention stream. Three Response and three Prevention rounds were delivered online to 151 practitioners during 2021/22. An extensive evaluation preceded the 2021/22 program, and the findings showcased the proven effectiveness Fast Track had in building capabilities and confidence for participants in both the short and medium term. CWE provided further funding over 2022/24 to deliver three Response and two Prevention rounds, as well as a combined cohort pilot (Leadership Foundations), to a target of 177 participants overall.

In 2023 Safe and Equal launched Lead + Adapt, which is complementary to the Fast Track leadership program (Response, Prevention and Leadership Foundations), with a different focus and intended audience. These programs are currently free but may be developed as 'Fee for Service' beyond their funded periods. The new Lead + Adapt program is for a more senior cohort than Fast Track; the two programs create opportunities for cross-promotion and continued professional development for Fast Track alumni, but it will be important for Safe and Equal to clearly differentiate these offerings.

The Safe and Equal Leadership Network was also established in 2023, which is both a next step for Fast Track core program graduates and a potential pool for Leadership Foundations applicants.

When funding for Fast Track concludes in mid-2024, the need for professional development, peer connection, and organisational collaboration to promote retention will continue to exist. All Fast Track offerings must continue to be cost-efficient and sustainable to enable access for an ongoing flow of practitioners

Capability framework review:

Fast Track Response and Prevention have so far been aligned with the *Responding to Family Violence* and *Preventing Family Violence and Violence against Women* Capability Frameworks, which are currently being reviewed by CWE with substantial sector consultation, and Safe and Equal involved in the reference group.

EVIDENCE BASE

- Evaluation data from Fast Track 1.0 and 2.0 core program demonstrated demand for training to develop foundational skills and knowledge in leadership and management.
- Evaluation data from Fast Track 1.0 also supported a program which brings prevention and response practitioners together. As the principles of leadership and management can be adapted to any sector, Leadership Foundations provides an opportunity for prevention and response cohorts to learn and develop together.
- Safe and Equal's approach to Leadership Foundations course design and delivery will continue to be informed by insights from past evaluations, current core program monitoring and evaluation data, sector-wide frameworks and adult learning principles.

Needs Analysis Survey results from alumni, managers and mentors indicated capability areas they wanted included in the program. (The survey was designed around 11 potential capability areas of focus based on a mapping of community sector leadership capabilities, [Dangerous Hope](#), and gaps described by Fast Track alumni and mentors in core program evaluation surveys.)

ASSUMPTIONS

Effectiveness of learning outcomes when combining cohorts

It is assumed SFV response and primary prevention participants will be able to engage effectively in a learning environment despite the differences in their work.

Course structure

There might be a need to group participants by specialty for some activities, if content or examples are not relevant to both.

Ongoing training

Leadership Foundations will be delivered into the future if the pilot, conducted in May 2024, is found to be successful and potentially sustainable.

Appendix 3 – Core program data collection methods

Method/data source		Round and date completed	Responses	Date surveys conducted
Weekly workshop surveys	Prevention	Round 1 July 2023	Average 16 Range 12 – 20	May-June 2023
		Round 2 Dec 2023	Average 16 Range 10 – 21	Oct-Dec 2023
	Response	Round 1 Apr 2023	Average 22 Range 15 – 27	Feb-Apr 2023
		Round 2 Sept 2023	Average 20 Range 13 – 26	Jul-Sept 2023
		Round 3 Apr 2024	Average 13 Range 4 – 22	Jan-Apr 2024
		Round 4 June 2024	Average 20 Range 14 – 25	Apr-June 2024
	Total	70% response rate		
Post-program participant surveys	Prevention	Round 1 July 2023	11 (of 18)	July 2023
		Round 2 Dec 2023	15 (of 20)	Dec 2023
	Response	Round 1 Apr 2023	18 (of 26)	Apr 2023
		Round 2 Sept 2023	12 (of 27)	Sept 2023
		Round 3 Apr 2024	14 (of 24)	Apr 2024
		Round 4 June 2024	16 (of 30)	June 2024
	Total	86 (of 145) 59%		
Post-program mentor surveys	Prevention	Round 1 July 2023	3 (of 10)	July 2023
		Round 2 Dec 2023	4 (of 12)	Dec 2023
	Response	Round 1 Apr 2023	5 (of 11)	Apr 2023
		Round 2 Sept 2023	5 (of 11)	Oct 2023
		Round 3 Apr 2024	4 (of 11)	Apr 2024
		Round 4 June 2024	3 (of 18)	June 2024
	Total	24 (of 73) 32%		

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Method/data source		Round and date completed	Responses	Date surveys conducted
Follow-up manager survey	Prevention	Round 3 June 2022	14 (of 56)	July 2024
		Round 1 July 2023		
		Round 2 Dec 2023		
	Response	Round 3 Apr 2022	17 (of 66)	
		Round 1 Apr 2023		
		Round 2 Sept 2023		
Total		31 (of 122) 25%		
Follow-up graduate survey	Prevention	Round 3 June 2022	9 (of 61)	July 2024
		Round 1 July 2023		
		Round 2 Dec 2023		
	Response	Round 1 Apr 2023	5 (of 74)	
		Round 2 Sept 2023		
		Round 3 Apr 2024		
Total		14 (of 135) 10%		
Case study interviews	Prevention		1	July 2024
	Response		1	

Appendix 4 – Leadership Foundations data collection methods

Method/data source	Participation	Date survey conducted	Comments/limitations
Weekly participant surveys	Average 14 Range 9 – 19 59% response rate	May 2024	Unlike workshop attendance, response to the weekly questionnaires waned as the program progressed. The average response rates to scaled questions steadily decreased from 78% for workshop 1 to 39% for workshop 5. This is likely an example of the known phenomenon of survey fatigue.
Post-program participant survey	11 (of 25) 44% response rate	May–June 2024	One graduate partially completed the post-program survey. Responses to the questions they answered have been included in this report.
Graduate group interviews	Group 1 3 Group 2 4	June 2024	N/A
Mentor group interviews	5		
Facilitator interview	1		
Program staff interviews	2		
Case study interview	1		