

# WOMEN

## in Transport

Mentoring Program  
Impact Report:  
Round One 2020

# Mentoring Program Impact Report: Round One 2020

## Introduction

The Women in Transport Mentoring Program facilitates growth and knowledge transfer and drives the increased capability of women in transport. It helps women set and progress their professional goals, strengthen their industry connections and support life-long learning. The program is part of the State Government’s Women in Transport; a \$6 million package of initiatives and business improvements led by Victoria’s Department of Transport.

Delivered by the Level Crossing Removal Project, there have been 2,037 applications and 1,512 participants of various disciplines from across government and private sectors taking part in the program since it began in 2018.

The six-month program runs twice a year and offers three professional development sessions, networking opportunities, plus monthly guidance to structure mentee-mentor meetings. Pairs are matched based on criteria selected in their application forms, including areas for development, skills, and goals.

### COVID-19 impact

The onset of COVID-19 global pandemic in March 2020 has thrown up previously unknown challenges for the program, however these were met with agile solutions to continue ongoing support of mentors and mentees. The face-to-face component of the program was adjusted to suit an online delivery format. The lack of in-person networking opportunity was felt by participants who said this impacted their overall experience.

### Evaluation

In August 2021, mentees and mentors were asked to complete a one year on survey, focusing on what, if any, impact the program had. Some 28 of 164 mentees and 18 of 151 mentors responded (see **Appendix A: Mentee Responses** and **Appendix B: Mentor Responses** for detail).

As well as illustrating the impact the program has on mentees and their mentors, its findings offer evidence the program resonates with women in Victoria’s transport industry, and they will inform future rounds to ensure that the program continues to grow and strengthen.

*“I was disappointed that the program had to move online but it was done well. I think the networking and the energy from meeting new people and engaging is critical and that is hard to replicate”.*

### Participant

## Highlights

### A year after completing the Program:



100% of the surveyed participants are still working in Victoria’s transport industry.



83.3% of mentors think the program makes it more likely for women to stay in industry.



34.5% of mentees have changed role or responsibility; some reported that they’ve taken on more responsibilities in their current work.



17.2% were promoted within their field.



72% of mentors expanded their network, however, only 31% of mentees felt more connected and increased their industry knowledge. This could be attributed to the impact of COVID-19.



## Round One 2020

Round one of the 2020 program opened for applications in November 2019 and attracted 336 applications across government and private sectors (see **Appendix C: Employers** for detail). 316 participated in the program, of which 45 were men. Participants made up 156 pairs, surpassing initial expectations of 100 (with some mentors taking up to two mentees). The round ran from 1 February to 31 July 2020.

## Career transition and network development

Based on the survey results, all participants are still working in Victoria’s transport industry.

### Since the Program finished:

- 17.2% were promoted within their field
- 10.3% commenced study to strengthen/gain new skills
- 3% changed employers
- 31% of mentees remain in their role with 34.5% reporting that their roles or responsibilities changed because of the program.

### For the 34.5% of mentees who changed role, they tended to:

- pursue roles that aligns with their potential
- make attempts to progress and put into practice learned networking skills
- took on more responsibilities via higher duty arrangements.

### Other impacts on mentees’ professional development included:

- 38% were able to identify career goals
- 31% expanded their network.

Both mentors and mentees acknowledged that it was very difficult to connect online, feeling that the pandemic had impacted the networking aspect of the program. One mentee stated that;

*“COVID-19 impeded our original relationship when we barely began to form one”.*





## What do mentors think about women in transport?

83.3% of mentors think the program makes it more likely for mentees to stay in the industry.

The survey also highlighted there is still a strong need to create an atmosphere that allows women in transport to prosper. As one mentor wrote:

*“the managers of the mentees did not appear supportive in developing the mentee into better roles, or roles that were exciting or motivating. Whilst some managers move on to higher roles, the mentees appear to be left where they were.”*

When asked what they learned about opportunities or barriers for women in the transport industry, common mentor responses were that while industry is changing and despite more opportunities, women are:

- finding it difficult to advance in their career
- unsure of career path options
- experiencing feelings of self-doubt and lack of confidence.



## Mentees thoughts on Victoria’s transport industry

To gauge mentees’ overall loyalty to the transport industry, they were asked a Net Promoter Score satisfaction question: *‘How likely are you to make the Victorian transport industry your ‘career home’?’*

Net Promoter Score measures satisfaction in terms of Promoters (those who tell their friends and family of their satisfaction with a service) and Detractors (those who tell their friends and family to avoid a service).

Of those that answered, 15 mentees responded with a neutral level of satisfaction (answered with 7 or 8).

There was an equal split between promoters (answered with 9 or 10) and detractors (answered with 0 or 6), which generated an NPS score of 0.

Similarly, 52% of mentees reported being satisfied with working Victoria’s in transport industry and see a future for themselves to grow and develop.

Common factors influencing mentees to stay or leave the industry include:

- job satisfaction and security
- the volume, diversity and complexity of work and opportunities to learn, grow and take on new or higher duties
- available options for career progression
- being part of a supportive team.

These results indicate that approximately half of the sampled mentees are non-committal or reluctant to make the Victorian transport industry their career home.

This is consistent with the challenges outlined in the The Women in Transport Strategy 2021-24 and shows that we still have some way to go to improve the experience of women in the transport sector.

## Impact on mentors

As well as learning about equality and challenges for women in transport, some fantastic results were seen in the impact that the program had on mentor’s own careers in transport.

72.2% of mentors who completed the survey reported that their network expanded because of the program, likely because of connecting with their mentee and through structured virtual networking opportunities offered at the professional development sessions and its high-profile key-note speakers.

Most mentors found that the program helped them develop their own skills, especially listening, coaching and adaptability of shifting mentor meetings online due to COVID-19. One mentor felt that *“I am making a big difference in people’s lives”* and another said, *“I have a lot more experience than I realise that is useful for others, even if industry is totally different discipline”*.

Other ways mentors learned about themselves through the program were:

- an increased awareness of shared knowledge and experience
- have upskilled their core leadership qualities.

When asked **‘has your mentoring relationship continued past the end of Round 1 2020?’** there was a split of 50/50 response.

# Appendix A

## Round 1 – 2020 impact report: Mentee responses

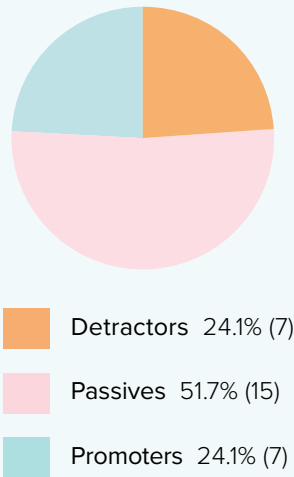
28 respondents completed the online survey

### Are you still working in Victoria’s transport industry?

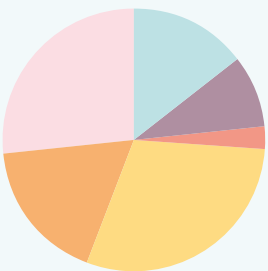


### How likely are you to make the Victorian transport industry your 'career home'?

(0 = very unlikely, 10 = very likely)



### If you are still in Victoria’s transport industry since the program finished in July 2020, have you:



- Been promoted 17.2% (5)
- Commenced study to strengthen/gain skills 10.3% (3)
- Changed employer 3.4% (1)
- Changed role or responsibilities 34.5% (10)
- N/A 31.0% (9)
- Other (See details below) 20.7% (6)

#### (OTHER)

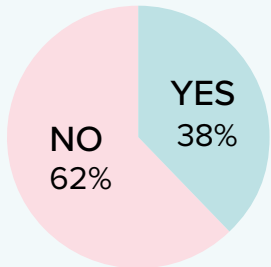
- Become a mentor (1)
- I have been reclassified down with the VicRoads /DoT merger (1)
- Reclassified as part of the DoT restructure and demoted as part of that (1)
- Currently in a temporary higher duties arrangement (1)
- No change (1)
- Possible impending promotion (1)

### What influenced your decision to stay/leave/return to the industry?

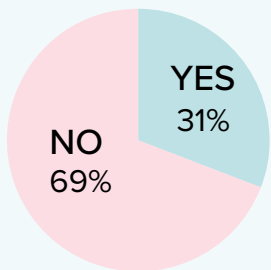
- Gain more experience and exposure to the industry
- I enjoy my team and, for the most part, find the work enjoyable and varied
- I was actually looking to move pre covid, but I haven't dared look for a new job since the pandemic. My employment is very stable in VIC Transport
- Transport nerd - hard to leave despite issues
- Security of the industry
- Covid - to stay
- Currently waiting for covid to finish then I will be leaving
- Lots of experience and connections - would be wasted if i moved to another industry. Ability to work on projects that have visible and tangible results in the community
- Just started in the industry, so still finding my feet
- Lots of good projects in the transport industry
- Opportunities available while being motivated to perform at our level best. Support within the industry
- The diversity of work in the transport industry and the option for career progression
- There was a secondment available in a different division that offered me a chance to gain new skills and experience
- Growth opportunities
- I've continued to have opportunities to develop. I also like the topic of transport
- Interesting projects and opportunities
- Stability

- I enjoy the work and helping make our transport network better for all
- Stable industry during tough covid times
- Interesting industry, and is complementary to my heavy industry back ground
- Still enjoying and learning
- Still in industry
- I will be leaving once the current covid restrictions have been released
- I decided to stay as there are many public infrastructure projects on the go and job security is good
- Enjoy working in the transport industry
- Job security & learning skills
- Safe field during pandemic

### Did this program help you identify your career goals?



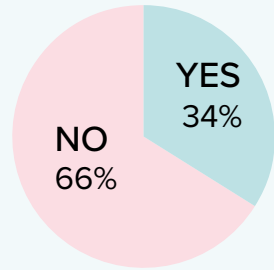
### Did you expand your network from participating in the program?



### What is the most important skill to you, that you've worked on together with your mentor?

- Resilience
- Voicing my opinion at meetings
- Networking
- Knowledge of the industry
- No interaction with mentor
- I liked my mentor very much and was a good sounding board
- Goal setting and believing
- Building relationships
- Did not meet up with mentor often due to covid
- Confidence
- Understanding worth and how to put myself forward for promotion
- Communication
- Leadership skills
- Communicating my worth
- Confidence, managing stakeholder expectations
- Knowledge of the industry
- Speaking up more and asking for more responsibility
- Becoming a new manager and having trouble with a team member
- Building networks
- Stakeholder engagement
- Meeting my mentor and the advice and support he has given me
- Communication
- Strategic thinking

### Have you continued your mentoring relationship with your Round 1 2020 match?



#### If No, could you share why?

- Covid and work constraints really got in the way
- Covid impeded our original relationship so we barely began to form one
- Difficult to make a connection due to being completely online
- Difficulty with moving online and COVID restrictions
- I was on mat leave for 6 months so fell out of touch
- Mentor was not in it for the right reasons. Did not add value
- Mentoring ran its course
- My Mentor didn't reply back to my messages
- My attempts for initial contact with allocated mentor failed and never went any further
- My mentor had helpful advice, but I don't think we were a great match personality wise
- Time constraints, not essential at this time
- Was very hard to stay in touch and catch up
- We got to a place where I was happy so we both agreed we could finish the relationship but could keep in touch every now and then



# Appendix A

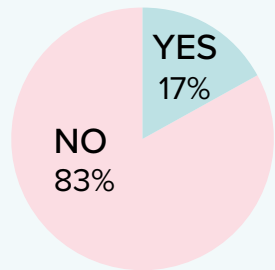
## Round 1 – 2020 impact report: Mentee responses

28 respondents completed the online survey

### If No, could you share why? (Continued)

- Covid hit, the program fell away
- Did not have enough face-to-face time to develop relationship
- My mentor was more interested in being mentored by myself rather than mentoring me ( or getting a job with my company)
- Only met once, another person didn't seem interested

### Have you participated in the program again?



### On reflection, do you have any suggestions for improvement or general feedback?

- Increase engagement, I've had matches which have only had one meeting
- Just run it again
- Unfortunately, i found that due to covid that the networking side of the experience didn't happen
- Maybe redo the survey in 18 months
- I think COVID and online meetings affected what I got out from the program, but I think given the circumstances the online sessions were run very well
- Unfortunately, the only networking was with my mentor as the restrictions were implemented
- General feedback - this is an excellent program, kudos to the organisers!
- The program is fantastic! Prepare for every meeting with mentors will help you maximize the benefits you get out from those sessions
- Match people with the proper mentor and ask the mentors to help mentees by giving them ideas and shows them the ways/methods

# Appendix B

## Round 1 – 2020 impact report: Mentor responses

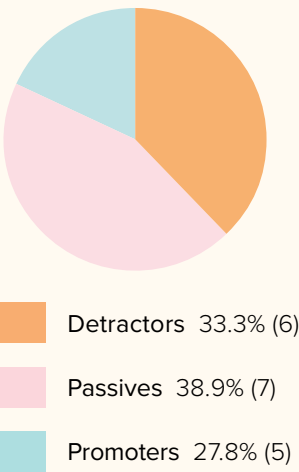
18 respondents completed the online survey

### Are you still working in Victoria's transport industry?

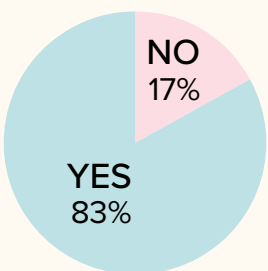


### How likely are you to make the Victorian transport industry your 'career home'?

(0 = very unlikely, 10 = very likely)



### Do you think the program encourages mentees to stay in Victoria's transport industry?



### What was the most valuable piece of support/advice you provided to your mentee?

- Be happy in your work or move on
- Assistance with their resume
- Promoted public speaking
- DoT systems and processes
- It is ok to change career paths and try new things to ensure you find what you are passionate about
- Advice around workplace politics and behaviours
- Prepare and practice interview questions
- Adjust your goals based on the current situation
- How to negotiate and self-evaluate
- To follow your interests, not what you think you should be doing
- The importance of networking
- Take risks, ask for what you need to be successful
- It is your career not anyone else's and no one else can decide what is best for you
- Experience
- To back yourself
- Broaden their networks

### What were the opportunities or barriers you were surprised to learn about from the program/your mentee?

- The managers of the Mentees did not appear supportive in developing the mentee into better roles, or roles that were exciting or motivating. Whilst some managers move on to higher roles, the mentees appear to be left where they were
- Barriers for workforce participation for women are never a surprise
- Finding female champions
- Unfamiliarity with govt process

- The opportunity to meet someone working for the Contractor was interesting given this gave me an overview of the environment they work in. The only barrier at the moment is definitely COVID as the engagement/networking is not the same and as effective
- Barriers with regards to working for a Manager who was also friends outside of work
- All the divisions and opportunities within the department of transport
- I was surprised (pleasantly) to see how structured and goal focused she already was about her work and her career. Her barriers were perhaps more about the way her organisation managed working from home during COVID and how she could stay engaged
- Sometimes it was hard to schedule meetings with my mentee working night shifts and my work being 9-5. We also would have like to have gone out on the networks but the covid lockdown prevented that. Instead, we used photos to share ideas
- Unsure of career path options
- Barrier: Perception of their worth to the industry - real lack of appreciation of their skills and how they make a difference to the industry - no matter their role or level. Opportunities: huge potential for greater contribution once mentees understand how they can impact

- Not prepared and did not know what they wanted from being mentored
- Difficulties with people in leadership and managing out-of-work friendships
- Reaching out and networking between industry colleagues happens a lot more at LXRP. My mentee has not really had much exposure to this

# Appendix B

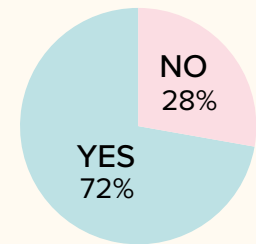
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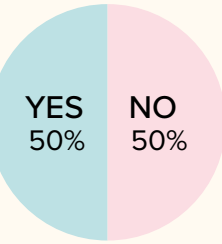
### Did you learn anything new about yourself or develop skills from participating in the program?

- I am making a big difference in people's lives
- I have gotten better at active listening
- I learnt to listen more
- Mentee's area of expertise
- I learnt that I can be more understanding and a good listener and learnt to be more self-aware of my approach
- Adaptability of shifting mentor meetings online due to Covid
- To prioritise making time to check in regularly with my direct reports
- I learnt quite a bit from her directly about her area of expertise which was interesting. I think I further developed coaching and listening skills as well
- I learnt I knew more about the industry than I thought but still have a lot to learn
- The benefit of just being a person to listen to whose priority is the mentee
- Provide support not the answer
- Really improving my listening skills and identifying when to listen and when to contribute
- Connections and building trust online!
- I have a lot more experience than I realised that is useful for others, even if industry is totally different discipline

### Did you expand your network from participating in the program?



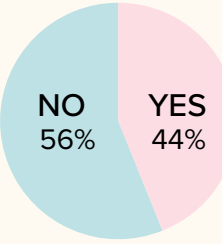
### Has your mentoring relationship continued past the end of Round 1 2020?



#### If No, could you share why

- I think COVID derailed the contact
- Mentee wasn't interested in staying in touch
- Moved interstate & the other gained a promotion but communication is open & never formally ended
- Other commitments
- Other mentoring commitments
- We've exchanged a couple of emails but no formal sessions. We both got out what we want from the 6-month program.
- I have been too busy, and our disciplines quite different
- Mentee did not start program

### Have you participated in subsequent WIT programs as a mentor?



#### If No, could you share why

- Could not find the time
- Covid
- I've taken part in 3 programs, and because I still see some mentees, I want to prioritise that
- No time / No time this year
- On maternity leave

- Joined Property Council committee and applied to Mentor for White Lion. Can't do it all unfortunately.
- Time poor, plus I still have a relationship with my mentee
- Workload and uncertainty about how we are working was the main reason.
- Yes and no. I have also been a mentee as I wanted to observe how other mentors run this program.

### What improvements could be made to the program, for you as a mentor?

- Get the WIT Zoom break out spaces working properly, as these small groups seem to get the mentees to be more open in sharing their experiences and issues.
- Run the program longer with more use of tools
- Resources or games that encourage interaction in a fun way
- The goals template needs to be more detailed and it will be useful to get independent feedback on how the current mentorship match is going e.g. get the feedback from my mentee or from other person within the program.
- Networking for the mentor group only
- I think it would work better in non-covid time it was very difficult to network (basically impossible) over zoom
- I was disappointed that the program had to move online but it was done really well. I think the networking and the energy from meeting new people and engaging is critical and that is hard to replicate.
- I thought the program was well structured and the coordinators have done a fantastic job to bring the in-person workshops online. So, no improvements.
- Portal was a bit confusing
- Mentors catch ups to further develop mentor skills
- It is a great program and the matches have been excellent
- No Covid being able to catch up face to face
- More connections with other mentors

# Appendix C

## Round 1 – 2020 impact report: Employers

EMPLOYER	Employer totals	R1 2020
ActivateRail	1	1
Advisian	2	2
AECOM	6	6
Arcadis	1	1
Arup	2	2
Aurecon	2	2
Australian Terminal Operations Management	1	1
Bombardier Transportation Australia	3	3
CPB Contractors	3	3
Cross Yarra Partnership	1	1
Department of Transport (2020 may inc PTV & Vic Roads)	82	82
Downer	1	1
Fulton Hogan	5	5
GHD	1	1
GTA Consultants	1	1
Hatch	1	1
Jacobs	1	1
John Holland Group	7	7
Keolis Downer Rail Victoria	2	2
Laing O'Rourke	4	4
Lendlease	1	1
Level Crossing Removal Project	21	21
Major Road Projects Victoria	20	20

EMPLOYER	Employer totals	R1 2020
Major Transport Infrastructure Authority	3	3
McConnell Dowell	2	2
Metro Trains Melbourne	37	37
Mott MacDonald	2	2
North East Link Project	7	7
Price Waterhouse Cooper	2	2
Rail Projects Victoria	8	8
Road Safety Victoria	1	1
Seymour Whyte Constructions	2	2
South East Program Alliance	1	1
Suburban Rail Loop Authority	4	4
Tieco International Australia PTY Ltd.	1	1
Transport Safety Victoria	1	1
Transurban	1	1
University of Melbourne	1	1
V/Line	24	24
Victoria Levy	2	2
Victrack	9	9
West Gate Tunnel Project	6	6
Western Program Alliance	2	2
WT Partnership	4	4
Yarra Trams	24	24
Zero In Solutions	1	1



## Continuation of mentoring relationship post-program

**Most participants built a solid and ongoing connection with their mentee or mentor.**

A year after the program completion, 35% of mentees and 50% of mentors were still in a mentoring relationship with the person they were matched with in this program. For those who didn't, it was mostly due to difficulty making a connection online, time constraints and lack of interest.

## Proposed program changes

Overall, the majority of participants perceived the program to be relevant and important to their success, but some suggestions were made for its improvement.

A few participants suggested mentor only networking opportunities and coaching training to enable more tangible results with their mentees. Other suggestions included adding new resources and fun games to boost engagement.

The WiT mentoring team has taken this feedback under review, with the aim of addressing these areas for improvement. This coincides with the implementation of a new mentoring platform which

provides access to a whole suite of resources, specific to mentors. Mentor specific training is also an option through this new provider. The team is also investigating implementing a social media channel to increase engagement and sharing of information among all participants, and of course in person events and activities are high priority for reinstatement when the Covid-19 restrictions allow, expected sometime in 2022.



## Contact

Please email any queries to the Program Coordinator,  
Industry Capability and Inclusion Team, Level Crossing Removal Project.

**E:** [witprograms@levelcrossings.vic.gov.au](mailto:witprograms@levelcrossings.vic.gov.au)