



# LEADERSHIP IN OUR SCHOOLS:

## The Incubator Model

PROMOTING THE  
**NEXT GENERATION**  
OF AUSTRALIAN LEADERS



## ABOUT THE INCUBATOR

The Menzies School Leadership Incubator is a unique and flagship initiative within the Australian education system.

The purpose of the Menzies School Leadership Incubator (“the Incubator”) is to contribute to systemic changes required to build a pipeline of school leaders who are equipped to lead well in increasingly challenging and complex school contexts – ultimately, a pipeline that will result in improved learning outcomes for Australian school students.

## INCUBATOR MEMBERS

The Incubator currently consists of three main groups:



### COLLABORATIVE TEAM



### FELLOWS



### ADVISORY PANEL

## Collaborative Team

A core team of cross-sectoral specialists who lead the design and implementation of the Incubator. The collaborative team members work together, building the team's own collective efficacy. They aim to understand the system in order to: co-design and test innovations; build evidenced interventions and insights; and share knowledge. The Menzies School Leader Fellowship Program is the central 'sandpit' for the collaborative team's innovation.

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## Fellows

Fellows are cohorts of selected school leaders who participate in a two-year leadership development program. The Menzies School Leader Fellowship Program is the 'sandpit' from which practice-based evidence is generated by the Fellows and the Collaborative Team.

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Advisory Panel

The Advisory Panel is a group of cross sectoral leaders with experience in the education sector and the community more broadly, who provide strategic oversight, and support the development of the initiative’s influence strategy and its systems approach. This includes:

SENSE-MAKE

Bringing deep expertise and systems understanding to contribute to the analysis and interpretation of insights from the Menzies School Leader Fellowship Program.

INFLUENCE INWARDS

Providing evidence-based advice to inform the strategic priorities of the Incubator.

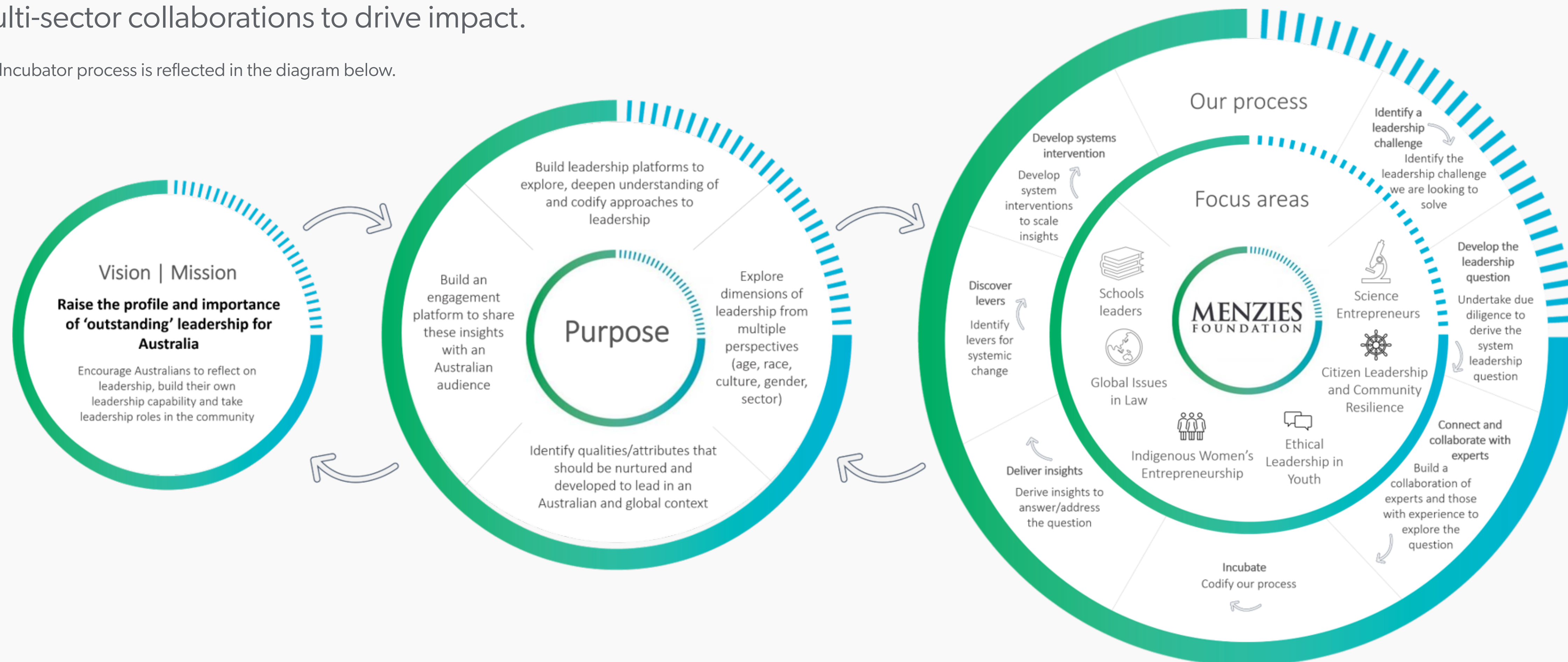
INFLUENCE OUTWARDS

Leveraging networks to influence systems level change informed by evidenced insights from the Incubator.


## INCUBATOR PROCESS

The Incubator aims to leverage the power of multi-sector collaborations to drive impact.

The Incubator process is reflected in the diagram below.







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*The impact of high-quality school leadership  
on school improvement and delivering the  
best outcomes for learners is unequivocal*

*(Leithwood et al., 2004)*

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## THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

Education systems and communities across the globe recognise the critical role that school leaders play in focusing efforts on improving the quality of teaching and learning, and fostering the conditions that promote a culture conducive to learning and development. We know that collective efficacy is a key element of school improvement and it can significantly impact student outcomes.

Schools face enormous challenges today as they work to prepare students for success in a complex and rapidly changing world. Achieving an education system which promotes excellence and equity, and aims to be fair, equitable and top-performing, are some of the core goals articulated in the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (2019).

A scan of the current environment suggests that while many school leadership programs exist, they are not equipping participants with the skills they need to lead effectively in complex contexts. Furthermore, very few target the kinds of leadership characteristics and practices required for the future or are looking at how we can do this in a collaborative way. One obvious challenge is that there is a blockage in the talent pipeline and an impending shortage of school leaders.

Our findings suggest a more collective approach to leading the work of schools is required, and a more systematic effort to identify, support and develop current and potential school leaders is needed. So, how might systems build a pipeline of individuals who are better prepared for the complexities of the role, and who can drive school improvement through collective efficacy, and lift student outcomes?

Gaining a deeper understanding of what influences school leaders and what they need in the way of support and development, is a crucial building block. Through taking a collaborative approach, working with existing school leaders on co-designed programs, we can gain valuable insights.



## THE LEADERSHIP QUESTION

How might we build a pipeline of school leaders equipped to lead collective efficacy in increasingly complex and challenging contexts?