



Arabella Douglas

Social Sustainability Manager - Barangaroo South, Lend Lease

There is a truly massive urban development taking place in Sydney right now. Lend Lease's \$6bn, 7.5 hectare Barangaroo South project situated on the lip of the harbour and western edge of the CBD promises to be the first large scale, carbon neutral precinct in Australia.

Arabella Douglas is overseeing the social sustainability of the development. That's a big job given it includes three commercial towers as well as residential and retail areas.

She emphasises that her role is to ensure the precinct is a place for all of Sydney to enjoy.

"My role is to influence all aspects of the development to create sustainable social value through social inclusion

and collaboration" she says. "That includes employment diversity and integration as well as innovative green technologies incorporated in construction."

Arabella recalls her childhood living just five minutes from the city in a housing commission area. So close, and yet she did not feel a part of the city.

"I did not have a meal in the city until I was about 17! That is not going to happen at Barangaroo South" she says.

"In my leadership and shaping of this new precinct I will ensure everyone feels welcome and included. I'm looking beyond arguing for inclusion and diversity and will focus my power on demonstrating how it will become a place for everyone."

This year, Arabella was the lucky recipient of a scholarship to participate in the AGSM Women in Leadership program.

Arabella had already made the decision to leave her executive role in the public service and move back to the corporate environment at Lend Lease.

"I felt that I had very strong managerial skills when working with my own staff. However, I needed to develop my skills in managing upwards and outwards to have greater impact within the board room and workplace" she says.

The Women in Leadership Program is delivered over several months as four two-day modules plus coaching.

Arabella says the program has been "tremendous in connecting the strengths I knew I had with the diligent and intelligent application I required in the workplace."

"I feel more empowered by the course" she says. "I realise now that I am truly motivated by the ability to influence. My former roles as lawyer, public service executive, Native Title board member and lecturer were all roles in which I was seeking to penetrate minds, attitudes and behaviours."

"The program helped me locate my ability to assist in shaping a fantastic Australia" she says earnestly.

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Arabella says the best thing about the program is that it allows natural leadership style to flourish. “Developing and maintaining authentic behaviours and empathy is pivotal to powerful and genuine leadership” she says.

Arabella is full of praise for the high profile key presenters and program leaders. “It felt so liberating to have powerful women demonstrating their brilliant finesse at managing family life, community responsibilities and demanding professional roles” she says.

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“It doesn’t matter if you lead a country, a political party or an organisation – you must genuinely engage with others and tap into innovation and creativity to be an effective leader.”

Program Director, Rosamund Christie gets a special mention from Arabella. “Her ability and courage to push and challenge the group of highly intelligent, competent and strong-willed women was amazing” she says.

“Rosamund was so capable in getting us to the ultimate point of self-reflection and then enabling us to identify and ascribe new dimensions to our talents.”

Arabella appreciates having the opportunity to work so closely with other executive women and explore and express different points of leadership development.

“Executive education is a privilege, it is a luxury” she says. “But it needs to be more accessible so that people with different perspectives can engage in executive conversations, and can influence executive leadership discussions to create innovative solutions and collaborate to improve processes.”

“I certainly feel the program has helped me redefine my professional pathway forward” she says. “I feel strongly connected to the power of my authentic leadership ability. In this aspect, the program was far more enriching than I could have hoped for.”

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