



2026 EMERGING LEADERS PROGRAM

APPLICATION FORM



CAIRNS CHAMBER
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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Applications are now open for the 2026 Cairns Chamber of Commerce Emerging Leaders Program, Far North Queensland's premier leadership program for 40-year old's and under.

The Emerging Leaders Program (ELP) is designed to develop globally relevant and locally connected leaders, in a manner that supports the future economic, social and environmental prosperity of Far North Queensland.

The program consists of six (6) industry immersion days over twelve months which include site famils, keynote presentations, fireside chats and panel discussions aimed at building leadership skills, soft skills and industry knowledge.

A mentoring program runs simultaneously, with each delegate paired with a business or industry leader from the region for the duration of the Program.

KEY PROGRAM COMPONENTS AND OUTCOMES

There are four (4) key components and four (4) key outcomes of the Program.

Components

- Leadership in Focus
- Skills in Focus
- Industry in Focus
- Mentoring in Focus

Outcomes

- Enhanced leadership skills
- Improved understanding of the industries that drive Cairns
- A consciousness to the bigger picture of our region's future, including its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
- Expansion of professional networks and development of business and industry connections



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KEY DATES AND DETAILS

Eligibility

Born in or between 2008 to 1986

Program Cost

\$1,800 + GST

Applications Open and Close Dates

Applications Open: 9am Monday 12 January 2026

Applications Close: 5pm Monday 9 February 2026

Applicants Notified of Outcome

Monday 16 February 2026

Key Program Dates

Welcome Event (3 Hours):

Thursday 5 March 2026

Industry Immersion Days (Full Days):

Thursday 26 March 2026

Thursday 14 May 2026

Thursday 18 June 2026

Thursday 6 August 2026

Thursday 10 September 2026

Thursday 5 November 2026

Graduation / Chamber Luncheon (3 Hours):

Friday 4 December 2026 (TBC)



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HOW TO APPLY

In 2026, 16 high potential delegates will be accepted into the Emerging Leaders Program. To be considered for the 2026 intake, you will be required to provide the following information via email to Claire Simmons at emergingleaders@cairnschamber.com.au by 5pm Monday 9 February 2026.

1

Cover letter outlining your response to the following criteria:

- Why do you want to participate in the Emerging Leaders Program and how do you believe it will support you in achieving your career goals?
- How do you provide leadership within your local community and how do you believe the Emerging Leaders Program will help you grow as a leader in our region?
- The Emerging Leaders Program encompasses a welcome event, six (6) mandatory industry immersion days and a graduation event. If your application is successful, are you committed to attending the following six (6) full days? They will be held on:
 - Thursday 26 March 2026
 - Thursday 14 May 2026
 - Thursday 18 June 2026
 - Thursday 6 August 2026
 - Thursday 10 September 2026
 - Thursday 5 November 2026

2

Letter of support from your employer, including written acknowledgement that you will be available to attend all six (6) industry immersion days. If you are a business owner, please provide a professional letter of recommendation.

3

A copy of your resume.



“The Emerging Leader Program is something that has been on my bucket list for a few years now and it definitely did not disappoint! This is like no other leadership program I have been exposed to – and it was exactly what I was looking for!

There is no other program where you have the opportunity to immerse yourself in some of our region’s top industry sectors; where you are exposed to some of the top leaders of these sectors; and where you can ask as many questions as you can – where no question is off the table!

As a group of people who have completely different backgrounds and careers, it’s incredible how quickly we found common ground. The common ground to learn from each other, to support each other with different challenges we were experiencing, and to genuinely see each other succeed. The genuine connections we have formed are invaluable.

The program is an excellent fit for anyone looking to broaden their horizons, learn new things, and be part of a community that genuinely cheers for each other's success. It's been a humbling and transformative journey, and I wholeheartedly recommend to those ready to embrace growth and shared achievements!

A massive thank you to the Cairns Chamber of Commerce, for your commitment to investing in our emerging leaders of today and tomorrow and enabling professional and personal development across our region.”

- Claire Simmons, 2023 Emerging Leaders Program Delegate