

# AACB Staff Scholarship 2018 – 19

## Future Proofing Our People

Submitted by

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Association of Australian  
Convention Bureaux



## **Project Proposal: 'Future Proofing' Our People**

### **Background**

A lot of focus these days is on technology and innovation within the workplace but the key to stay relevant in this rapidly changing world is to engage our people, encourage high performance and equip them with the skills to lead Australian convention bureaux into the future. Besides the AACB Annual Conference there is limited opportunity to share, collaborate and educate. What is the succession plan for our leadership, and how do we build the 'bench strength' in our leadership team for long term growth and stability (the competence and number of employees ready to fill available leadership roles).

My project will investigate ways to cultivate this specialised talent, to analyse methods to transfer knowledge and experience and to connect current leaders with future leaders. Early research has led me to believe that creating an industry specific mentor program for AACB members is one way to bridge this gap. There are several tourism industry mentor programs but none focus on our specific industry and set of skills, several have age restrictions and are aimed at entry level staff and they do not engage in two way mentoring. My project is to research how similar organisations 'future proof' their teams. What programs do they use, what works, what doesn't, then to document the findings and recommendations to create a blueprint for implementation for bureau staff nationally using AACB as the platform.

### **Objectives**

- To meet with prominent Employee Engagement and Mentor Program Managers to identify the steps they take to 'future proof' their teams and best practice in Mentor programs.
- To document these findings in a research paper including different types of coaching and mentoring; suggested programs; communication tools; program structures; partnering with training organisations; matching mentors to mentees; informal and/or project based mentoring.
- To create an implementation plan for a bureau coaching and mentor program to be introduced for Bureau staff nationally using AACB as the platform.
- To 'champion' the implementation of this project, as an active committee member, led by AACB and using the Annual Conference and or industry events (eg. AIME) as an opportunity to 'kick off' the program.

### **Outcome and Benefits**

The outcome of this project is twofold, to create a blueprint for a bureau specific coaching and mentor program for AACB members throughout Australia and to 'champion' this project to implementation. The purpose of this program is to connect current bureau leaders with future leaders to 'future proof' the workforce, to retain staff, transfer knowledge, engage and upskill to create organisation agility to ultimately support growth in economic and social impact of business events in Australia.

Secondly, I have a genuine interest in mentoring others, as demonstrated this year as a mentor in the Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) Young Professionals Mentoring Program, fostering young talent. I also mentor my team on a daily basis, so this project will not only benefit my personal development, my team, but also AACB members as I learn more transferable coaching and leadership skills.

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### Proposed Timeline and Activities

	Description of Activity	Dates
Phase One	Research meetings – document findings	August 2018 – July 2019
	Travel to Sydney to meet with Jennifer Bruce, National Manager – Industry Development and Education, Australian Tourism Export Council, to discuss the ATEC Mentor Program (ELITE 2018) and other programs they use to coach and connect their people.	August 2018 – July 2019
	Meet with Mentor Program Managers at Griffith University, Gold Coast to gain a better understanding of their programs.	August 2018 – July 2019
	Travel to Auckland to meet with CINZ Mentor Program Leader, Sue Sullivan. Discuss the programs that they have in place to coach their leaders and transfer knowledge.	November 2018
	Travel to Washington DC	July 2019
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) – Ladders Program Leader to discuss their industry engagement strategies.</li> </ul>	July 2019
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with Jim McCaul, Advocate for Destination Development and Promotion at Destinations International to discuss the '30 under 30' program, also meet with staff to look at the way they work with industry to 'future proof' leadership.</li> </ul>	July 2019
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with Nichole Pinkney, Assistant Director, Headquarters Employee Engagement at NASA HQ to discuss employee engagement methods and the NASA Mentoring program.</li> </ul>	July 2019
	Travel to St Louis 23 – 26 July to attend the Destinations International Convention to continue my investigations into leadership and coaching, to learn from the sessions and to see some of the '30 under 30' program in action.	23-26 July 2019
Phase Two	Analyse and review my findings - create a report on the best methods to coach and mentor our people and to present my findings at the AACB National Conference.	August 2019/September 2019
Phase Three	Implementation – work with stakeholders to create an implementation plan to introduce a coaching and mentor program into the industry using AACB as a distribution channel.	October 2019 - ongoing

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<b>Proposed Budget</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Anticipated Costs \$AUD</b>
<b>Qantas Flights</b>	Brisbane to Sydney (RTN) Sydney to New York (RTN)	Qantas sponsorship
<b>Transport</b>	<p><b>Taxi and Transfer costs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gold Coast – Brisbane - \$300 Return</li> <li>• Taxi transfers for trip \$500</li> </ul> <p><b>Airfares</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New York to Washington -\$150</li> <li>• Washington to St Louis - \$250</li> <li>• St Louis to New York - \$500</li> </ul>	\$1,700
<b>Accommodation</b>	<p>*\$250 AUD per night as a guide</p> <p>New York Accommodation (arrival and departure – 2 nights) - \$500</p> <p>Washington Accommodation (3 nights) - \$750</p> <p>St Louis Accommodation (23 – 26 July) \$750</p>	\$2,000
<b>Meals and Incidentals</b>	<p>*\$90AUD per day Meals as a guide</p> <p>2 days New York – arrival/departure</p> <p>3 days Washington DC – meetings</p> <p>4 days St Louis – DMAI Conference</p> <p>Incidentals - \$350</p> <p>Travel Insurance - \$120</p>	\$1,280
<b>Destination International Convention Registration</b>	Registration	\$1,100
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,080*</b>

\*Destination Gold Coast has an employee training budget and I can apply to contribute funds towards the cost of me attending the Destinations International Convention and the excess over the \$5,500 cash grant.

Monday 23 July 2018

Andrew Hiebl  
Australian Association of Convention Bureaux (AACB)  
C/- Canberra Business Chamber  
Ground Floor, 216 Northbourne Avenue  
Braddon ACT 2612

Dear Andrew

**RE: AACB Staff Scholarship 2018/19**

I am delighted to nominate and support Shannon Thwaites in her application for the AACB Staff Scholarship 2018/19 with her project proposal, 'A Research Paper – Best Practice in Mentor Programs'.

Shannon joined Gold Coast Tourism 6 years ago as an Account Executive in Business Events and for the last 5 years, has managed the team. Shannon is a highly respected leader in our organisation and the broader tourism industry on the Gold Coast. She is very passionate about the travel and tourism industry with over 24 years' experience, predominately in sales and management roles. She is an excellent communicator; is hard working, self-motivated; and works well under pressure.

Shannon has a genuine interest in mentoring others, as demonstrated this year as a mentor in the Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) Young Professionals Mentoring Program, fostering young talent. She also mentors her team on a daily basis, successfully managing the 'This is Gold Coast' familiarisation program which achieved \$19.5Million worth of business event leads for the city, a 100% overall satisfaction rating from clients and members; lead conversion rates of 53% and the successful delivery of events to promote the Gold Coast as a premium business events destination to engage members and clients.

I can't think of a better subject for Shannon to research as it will not only benefit her personal development, and her team, but also AACB members as she learns more transferable leadership skills. I am proud to nominate and support Shannon's submission for the AACB Staff Scholarship 2018/19 and wish her all the best.

Kind regards



Martin Winter  
Chief Executive Officer  
Destination Gold Coast