Lesley Fitzpatrick

Dr Lesley Fitzpatrick is the Chief Executive of the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation. Lesley has a commitment to building sustainable and resilient communities, industries and services in rural, regional and remote Australia.

Lesley has worked in many sectors, specialising particularly in human services and health, leadership, philanthropy, and in developing individuals and programs that can work effectively in regional, rural and remote contexts. Her early career experiences in regional and rural community development and capacity building have shaped her understanding and approach to her work.

Lesley’s academic background as a sociologist underpins her professional practice which draws on her understanding of the impacts of political and social systems, community sustainability and resilience, cultural values, and their inter-relationship. She has significant experience in leading organisations, senior management, corporate governance, strategic planning, research, policy development and advocacy. This broad platform informs her approach to developing effective strategies to address complex issues through intersectoral collaboration, addressing structural and policy issues, and developing and enhancing programs that contribute to the resilience of rural, regional and remote Australia.

Lesley has a Doctorate and a Masters degree in Sociology. She is a fellow of the Sir Gustav Nossal International Fellowship for Leadership in Health Reform and was a state finalist in the Telstra Business Women’s Awards. She is the winner of an Innovation Award from the Australian Institute of Management and a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. In 2012 Lesley was named as one of Australia’s 100 Women of Influence in The Financial Review and Westpac 100 Women of Influence Awards.