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2021 ELC delegate testimonials

We invited some of our 2021 ELC delegates to share their experiences attending the first virtual ELC. Read about their experiences below.

Dr Marissa Ferguson



What better time to attend a leadership conference than in the midst of a global pandemic? The 2021 ANZCA Emerging Leaders Conference Organising Committee should be congratulated for not only an outstanding conference, but also for modelling numerous examples of excellent leadership, adaptability, and emotional intelligence – key themes that ran throughout the program.

The ongoing Melbourne lockdown unfortunately required late conversion to a fully online event, from the planned in-person conference. Despite this challenge the organising committee managed to achieve the unicorn of zoom conferences – a truly interactive virtual meeting. This included pre-posting care packages (S'mores and cocktail making packages), preparatory reading and videos, and the opportunity to virtually meet and greet our fellow delegates in the conference lead-up.

Key themes covered during the conference included emotional intelligence, adaptive leadership, and the importance of equity and diversity. The conference success was facilitated by frequent breakout discussions, small group membership for reflective discussions, and was really cemented by my two incredible group mentors (the very generous Associate Professor Michael Vagg and Dr Nicole Phillips). The conference concluded with an evening of gin cocktails and S'mores by the virtual fireside, a fitting end to celebrate a fantastic conference!

Dr Annie Carlton



As a member of the Perth 2020 ROC Committee, I was looking forward to what was going to be an amazing ELC conference back then! Alas, then came COVID and the sad news and a heavy heart that we would need to postpone our ASM and ELC. Not all was lost however, with the tantalizing promise of what was held in store with the Melbourne Teams' turn at the ASM and ELC, all thoughts and feelings of disappointment were put aside.

Flights and accommodation booked, I looked forward to what would be an amazing escape to the countryside with

+61 3 9510 6299
events@anzca.edu.au
anzca.edu.au



likeminded individuals to learn about what it meant to be an emerging leader! But yet again, plans were foiled! However, as adaptable the ELC and College team are, an in-person conference appeared to seamlessly evolve into the online platform that was to become, social events included!

The program was insightfully curated, with an amazing array of topics and presenters. The experience provided me with a new perspective to approach the numerous leadership roles that I had found myself in during my early consultant life, in particular the insight gained from reflecting upon the backgrounds of others and how that impacts on my own leadership style. The small group discussions allowed opportunities for networking and discussion, in addition to reuniting with friends across the ditch. The mentors provided thoughtful insights and we often found ourselves running out of time for discussion during our breakout sessions.

I have had the privilege of sharing an office with one of the 2020 (and 2022) ELC Convenors and seen the tireless work that goes into making such an amazing conference and am almost envious that I cannot attend the upcoming ELC. Despite the transition to a virtual format again in 2022, I can't help but feel that this will not impact of the experience of attending the ELC!

Dr Noam Winter



I was a participant in the 2021 Virtual ELC. I was originally slated to attend in-person in Perth in 2020 but the world had other plans for us all. I had attended and even organised a number of virtual events throughout 2020 and 2021 and was concerned about how a conference that was supposed to encourage leadership skills and networking would go in the virtual sphere. I'm pleased to report that I was pleasantly surprised by the entire experience and despite its virtual nature it still managed to exceed my expectations.

There were a number of attendees whom I knew from training and ANZCA courses, and the convenors made an effort to setup a WhatsApp group in the weeks preceding, to encourage attendees to

introduce themselves and share small bios. The format of the conference lent itself to small group discussions which were attended by an ANZCA/FPM mentor in residence, which allowed for much greater discussion and networking to occur. The organisers made an effort to incorporate a social component – making 'smores by a candle one evening and a gin tasting the following night, which was a nice touch.

It is a tiring event – staring into a computer screen for an entire day requires a different set of skills to being in theatre or clinic. Invest in a good set of headphones and encourage your colleagues to do the same, it makes a world of difference to your levels of concentration. Normal Zoom etiquette still applies, so keep your cameras on and remember we can still see your face when a colleague makes a provocative remark. In every session someone will (still) forget to mute and a chorus will yell "you're still on mute" to another. Ultimately, like most things in life, you will get more out of it, the more you put in; so keep an open mind and heart, try to be an active participant and remember the shortcut for the mute button.