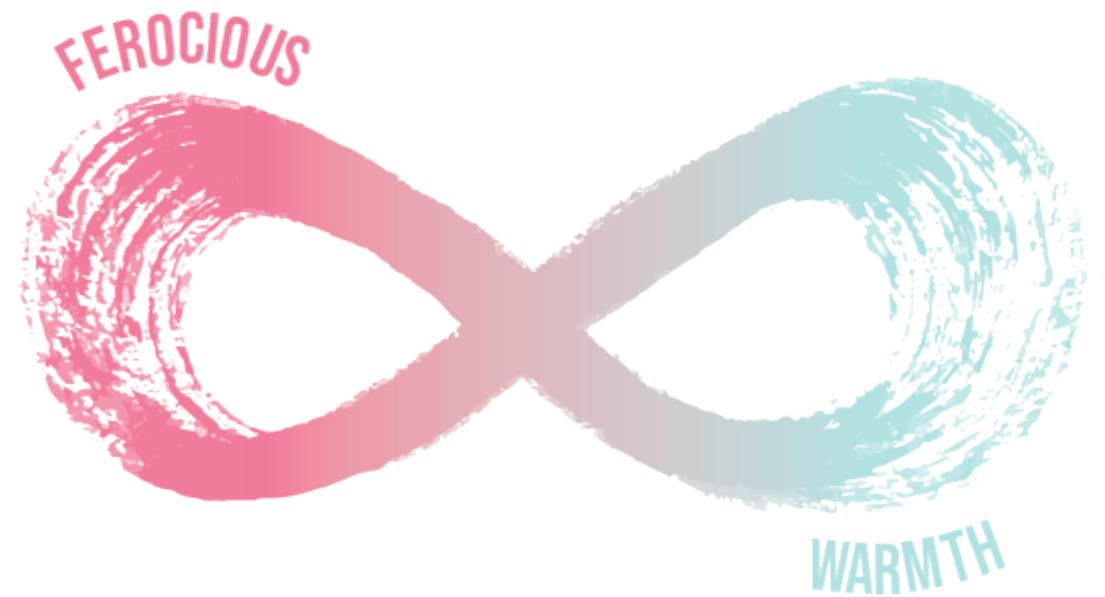


# *Ferocious* WARMTH

# LEADERSHIP

RESULTS **AND** RELATIONSHIPS









A Leadership White Paper by Tracey Ezard



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# Challenges of maintaining balance when leading transformational work



Leadership is messy. Everyday there are a myriad of cross relationships, interactions and dances that go on in offices, meeting rooms and corridors. Leading in the messy middle of that is hard work. It constantly pulls us to one direction or another. Our ability to lead with balance and calmness can be a daily challenge.

## Challenge 1: Focussing only on results

Leading a results at-all-costs culture at the expense of support and empathy ends in a cultural and wellbeing demise. How do we inspire our people for the stretch that transformational work necessitates while providing the safety nets required for them to thrive and grow?

## Challenge 2: Focussing only on relationships

For some leaders, maintaining goodwill and harmony trumps the need for good robust dialogue, hard decisions and shift. This can lead to complacency, avoidance and a 'digging' in when true transformation is required to achieve results. Open discussion and lifting the bar is seen as conflict and 'unfair'.

## Challenge 3: Staying in balance - courage and kindness

The conflict - stay a course of action or back away - is real, as is the overwhelming pressure put on leaders to be all things to all people. The context of COVID19 has brought to light the need for swift and brave decision making, strong support for strategic shift, coupled with deep empathy to ensure the wellbeing of our people.

# Leader Types



## EXTREME

### Unfettered Ferocity

This leader rules through fear. They are closed to ideation with their teams or senior leaders. There is a lack of psychological safety for those they lead, with people not willing to take any interpersonal risks for fear of retribution. They are the archetypal extreme authoritarian leader - my way or the highway. At its worse, the Unfettered Leader **inflicts trauma** on those they lead. Their focus is on being right. Their style of feedback is based on harsh criticism rather than growth. Forward momentum is difficult as people are not working at their best and toxic behaviour is either brewing or in evidence when transformation is demanded. This transformation is delivered as an ultimatum. People do not buy into change due to a feeling of powerlessness.

### Stifling Warmth

The Stifling Leader must be the centre of emotional attention within the culture. They provide strong support for their teams but the outcome is unhealthy and enmeshed relationships. This leader is deeply concerned about people not liking them, or making decisions that will create disharmony. They seek out the drama within conflict and add fuel to situations through a lack of clarity and objectivity. Often displaying rescuer behaviour, the Stifling Leader feeds a need to protect and be needed emotionally. They can **create drama** by getting too involved in people's emotional lives. Moving forward is difficult as there is a lack of clarity of strategic direction and where people's work fits into the big picture. Harder decisions are avoided to keep the peace.

# Leader Types



## MODERATE

### Results Driven

Results Driven leaders get results in many of the performance measurements that are used as 'hard data'. They put task before people. They are focussed on lifting the standards and moving the team forward. Results Driven leaders work from a logic base in their decision making and are clear and objective in their communications. They can struggle with building trust and having appropriate levels of empathy for others. Their listening lens is generally from an objective, critique approach. When leading they require others to bring the human centred leadership skills to their attention. Results Driven leaders rely on compliance more than collaboration to reach goals. They maintain focus on growth and improvement.

### Relationship Driven

Relationship Driven leaders put people over task. They provide a culture of support and empathy for those they lead and create high trust through empathy and connection. Decision making is made with emotional reasoning. They maintain focus on wellbeing and relationship building. Relationship Driven leaders can struggle with holding people to account and increase ambiguity through unclear expectations. They can rely on others on the team to raise expectations and have the more difficult conversations. Their listening lens is generally from a subjective, emotional based approach. They maintain focus on support and connectedness.

# Leader Types



## CENTRED

### Ferocious Warmth

Ferocious Warmth leaders balance both *results AND relationships*. They are brave and courageous in the face of big challenges, and inspire their people to come with them on the journey. They are lead learners who provide the right balance of high challenge and high support. People feel psychologically safe to raise and discuss ideas, differences of opinion and share personal challenges. Ferocious Warmth leaders draw from clear evidence base directions, as well as provide the culture that allows innovation to flourish. They have strong conviction on their leadership beliefs and discuss them openly with others. They work from a firm set of values and moral purpose. They build trust through their ability to have empathy and deeply listen, as well as the balance of their logical and emotionally based discussion. Ferocious Warmth leaders inspire people to be their best self and connect into the vision and purpose of the organisation. They build deep collaborative cultures and create leaders within their teams. They lift expectations and build momentum to achieve the results and transformations required.

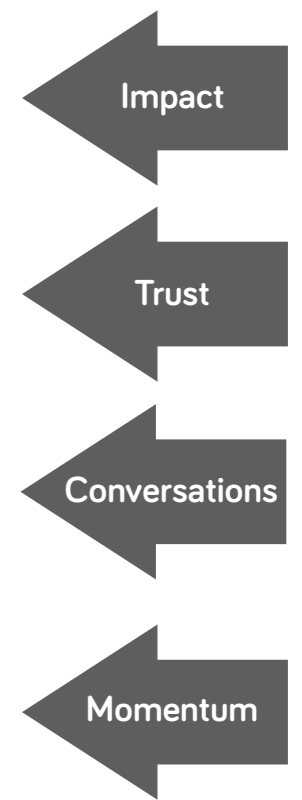
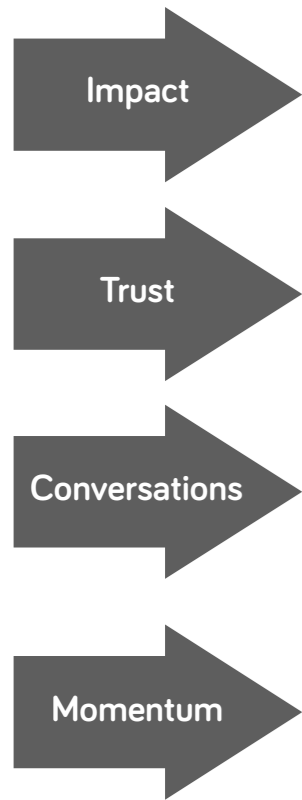
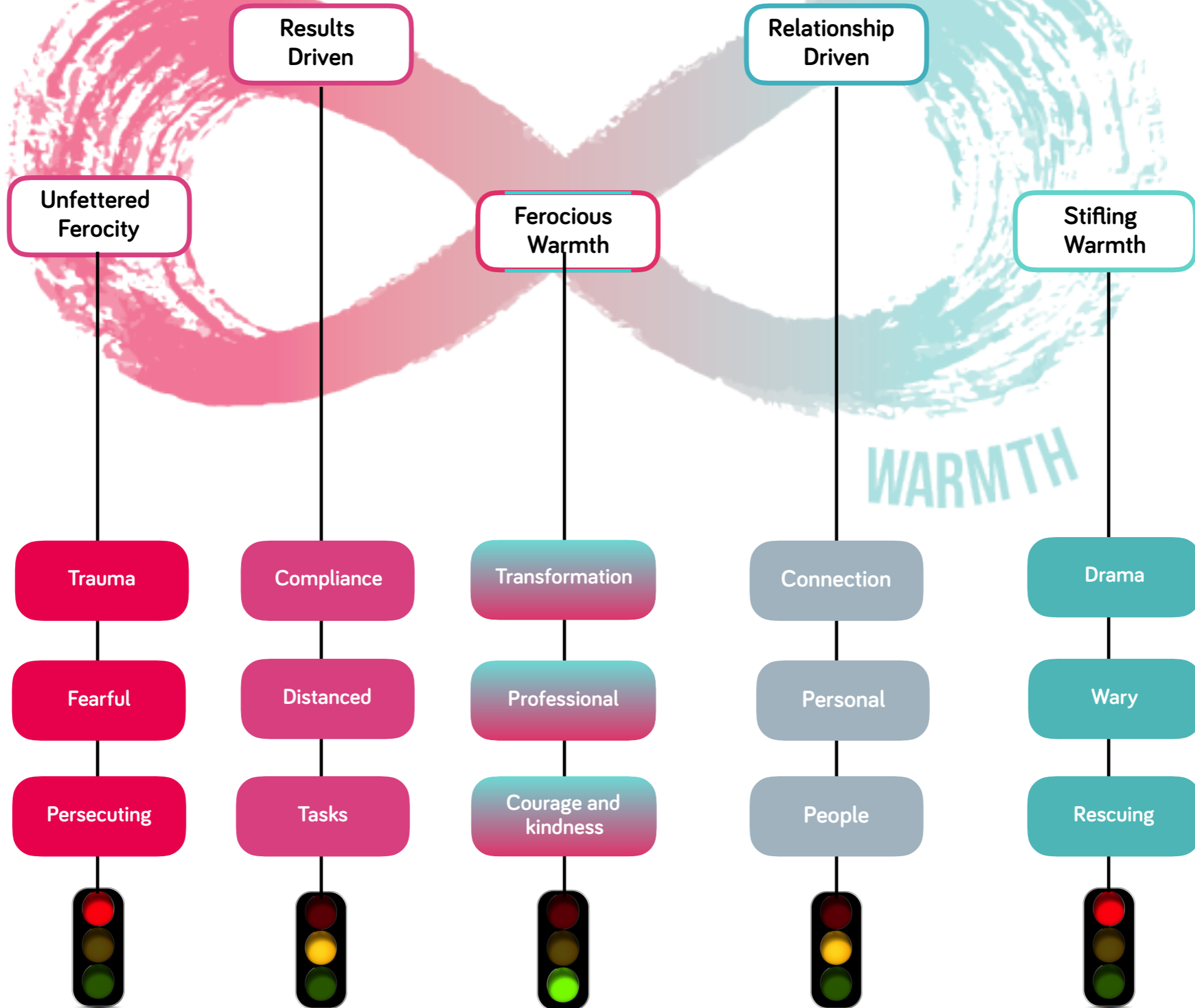
*Ferocious* **WARMTH** Leaders connect **heads** and **hearts**





FEROCIOUS

WARMTH



# 4 Steps to Balance



## Awareness

### Reflection

Reflection on self is critical to be able to address feelings, thoughts and behaviours that are impacting our leadership. Self awareness begins by listening deeply to one's self, and others' perceptions. Leadership is about impact. Reflective time, either by ourself or with others provides opportunity for insight and perspective shift on this impact.

### Self care

Often leaders leave self care on the bottom of the list. Yet we know that self care is pivotal to our wellbeing and ability to fulfil our role. Without our own wellbeing looked after, the barometer goes towards extreme far more easily, and frequently. Knowing what brings about calm and centredness for ourselves and investing the time to take part in those activities, whether physical, mental, emotional or spiritual increases centredness.

### Self regulation

Emotional self-regulation provides us with the skills to deal with high stress situations. It puts us in touch with what is happening to us cognitively and emotionally. Self regulation increases our ability to manage instinctive reactions to people and situations that are damaging and reframe them to something more useful.

## Conviction

### Purpose

Leaders driven by a strong sense of moral purpose create a centredness for themselves and for those they lead. Decision-making becomes much easier when the reason for our existence as leaders is front and centre in our thinking. Connecting our teams to purpose increases momentum and commitment.

### Values

Values drive our beliefs and behaviours. With our values identified and clarified, we are able to reflect on how we manifest them in our lives. We also become more aware of when we are behaving outside of those values. Value driven leadership gives a north star guide to being a congruent leader who cares for results and relationships. They also help us to call behaviour in others that is undermining the work.

### Beliefs

Beliefs that help us lead with conviction display the depth of our knowledge and approach to the world. When we can discuss and debate our beliefs about leadership, our work and other aspects of our life with curiosity and exploration, we start to have clarity on where our leadership beliefs lie. Leaders with a strong sense of these often have mantras that guide their approach to the world.



# 4 Steps to Balance



## Learning

### Feedback

As we rise in the leadership ranks, our openness to feedback on our work can decrease. Feedback can be harsh and difficult to deal with if we do not work at stepping into it with grace and openness, while protecting ourselves from ignorant criticism. Ferocious Warmth leadership creates an open and honest environment for feedback loops to flourish. In this way we can re-calibrate when needed, and grow in our leadership skills.

### Curiosity

When we wonder about the world with curiosity, we shift our perspective of being right. Moving to curiosity when we are challenged rather than defensiveness steps us into a mode of learning that helps creativity, collaboration and innovation thrive. We seek to challenge our assumptions about the way we have always worked and inquire and explore what is possible.

### Modelling

How can we expect our educators to continue learning and transforming their practice if we do not make our own learning explicit to others and model learning? Leaders who show willingness to have their thinking stretched, try new approaches and collaborate to test their assumptions are leading the way as the lead learner. Linking to research and evidence based initiatives as well as trialling innovations shows learning that is informed and dynamic.



## Focus

### Our Clients

One of the best ways to pull conversations out of rabbit holes is to ask the question: 'What difference will this make to our clients?' These people are the reason for our existence and sometimes we forget that in the day to day craziness. Focussing on the impact and outcomes for the clients helps us to align our thinking and actions.

### Strategy

Thinking strategically provides the framework for forward momentum. It gives us a bird's eye view of what we should focus on and most importantly why. Ferocious Warmth leaders make sure that they are leading strategy that is linked to a strong why - much stronger than 'to improve patient outcomes'. That is an outcome, not a driving reason.

### Connection

Connecting to and understanding the needs, feelings and experiences of those we lead gives us the insight and empathy we need to lead with balance. The ability to see and hear the world from another eyes is one of the best ways to build trust with others. It sharpens our decision making and opens us up to the needs of those we serve. Connection between ourselves, our clients and collaborative partners keeps us in touch with where to next.



Ferocious warmth is the call to leaders everywhere - our world needs more empathy and belief, more deep wisdom and willingness to continue learning. It needs more connectedness between those in leadership and those on the ground. People are crying out for more open discussion and deeper listening. We also need transformation and growth in the way we deliver so 'we've always done it that way' doesn't cause us to stagnate. Yet leadership is hard - in the complexity of the world, society and everyday life, how as a leader do we stay in balance? Able to make the hard calls, stand in conviction, while still be able to work flexibly and shift when the need arises. Holding people gently to bring out the best in them, even in the darkest of times, while lifting the accountability to ensure we are giving our patients all that they deserve.

Ferocity and warmth are not opposites when used mindfully. They can sit supporting each other in every decision we make. If we are focussed on strategically achieving our moral purpose, and constantly building our emotional intelligence to understand how to best serve our people, they go together hand in glove. Our challenge is staying in balance. Ferocious warmth leadership embraces the concept of 'yet':

- Explicit, yet empowering
  - Strategic, yet people focussed
- Challenging, yet providing psychological safety
  - Clear direction, yet drawn from co-creation
  - Compassionate, yet with high expectations
    - Courageous, yet vulnerable
  - Open to influence, yet with purposeful intent
- Focussed, yet open to ambiguity and flexibility



## About Tracey and her work



Tracey is a speaker, author and educator. Tracey's collaborative culture framework for creating an environment of learning, trust and collaboration - 'The Buzz' - is used in education and organisational systems throughout Australia. Tracey has run leadership programs for education and health and other sector leaders for over 15 years around Australia and New Zealand

Tracey is well known for her high energy, interactive and engaging style. She uses visual tools to increase the collaboration and 'stickiness' of the work being discussed and gets leaders the momentum they need for improvement. Tracey inspires & challenges her audiences to think differently about how they collaborate, connect and commit at a deeper level.

As a speaker, author, educator and mentor, Tracey brings to any group she works with a range of models and positions that will spark the new thinking and discussion that needs to continue evolving in a complex and diverse global paradigm.

Tracey is an author of two books, 'The Buzz - Creating a Thriving and Collaborative Staff Learning Culture' designed for education leaders to support schools to bring about transformation in the classroom and 'Glue. The Stuff that Binds Us Together to do Extraordinary Work' for leaders across all sectors who want to lift beyond convention to create high performing teams. She is currently working on her third book 'Ferocious Warmth: Connecting Heads and Hearts to Transform', interviewing leaders from all over the globe.

Tracey helps teams thrive by focusing on building collaboration and learning. She builds the capacity of leaders and staff to create an energy buzz about the work and alignment on the future plans. She helps leaders and staff co-create and collaborate - and most importantly, learn deeply with each other as they do so. Tracey is an educator and a Fellow of the Australian Council of Education Leaders (Vic).

Tracey Ezard  
[www.traceyezard.com](http://www.traceyezard.com)  
[tracey@traceyezard.com](mailto:tracey@traceyezard.com)  
0417 317 563

