



CO.LAB  
 STORIES  
**Dr Sherene  
 Devanesen**  
 ex CEO Yooralla,  
 Board Chair Eye  
 & Ear Hospital

(45 mins) 1.30PM  
 14 October 2022

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*"Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing"...* Arundhati Roy

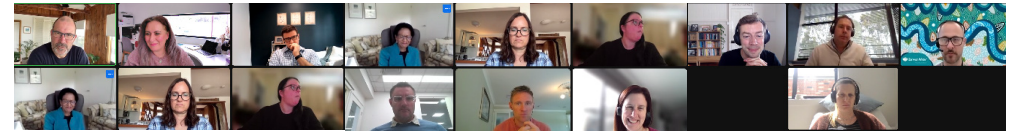
I have had the advantage of working within skilled, motivated and competent teams. Individuals who unreservedly collaborated to deliver positive outcomes. Any successful outcomes were delivered by the whole team. It is necessary to build a culture of integrity, uphold public sector values and work in partnerships with the relevant govt departments.

The shock of no confidence vote mentioned in the local newspaper was the start of my resilience training. The hospital did achieve its desired outcome. Surprisingly many of my opponents accepted the change and some became good friends.



**"My school motto - was never give in."**

**"I am reminded many times of unexpected opportunities"**



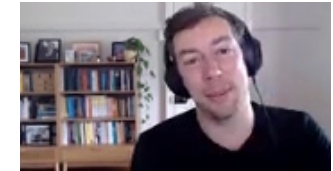
**James:** "I am keen to hear how you look after yourself outside of work and in that battle."

**Sherene** "I have to admit I do thrive on work :) I love being with other people and really enjoy their interactions and working together as a team. I mostly find work quite uplifting. I'm keen on the Australian Bush - I find being out in nature soothing and balances you. I truly believe in developing and maintaining valuable relationships that are mutually beneficial. When years go by you can call on a previous relationship that was so good and still get help."



**Andrew:** "When you are knocked off your feet, how do you go through that self care process and find the courage and energy to fight on?"

**Sherene** My background and work led me to focus on just doing my job and to do it the best that I can - eventually I would be accepted. There was a lot of angst, anger and confrontation. But I received a small gesture of care from the CEO. There were people who I turned to who supported me and guided me. I received perspective from others who had been through this before and reached out.



**George:** With those that you are now friends with - What do you credit that to and what was it in the process that led to forming the strong relationship bonds?

**Sherene** 'I think it was them recognising themselves the benefits of what had occurred. The medical staff realised if we had not changed - and had not become a self sustaining organisation the amalgamation would have occurred and not what they wanted. People began to appreciate what was happening. Change was seen as a positive.'

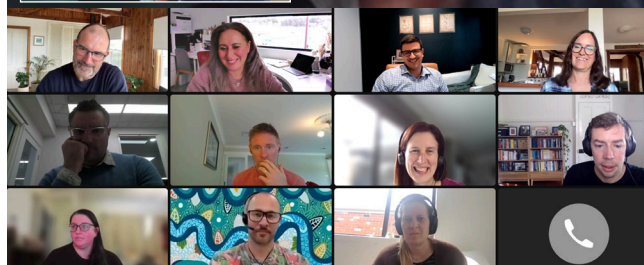
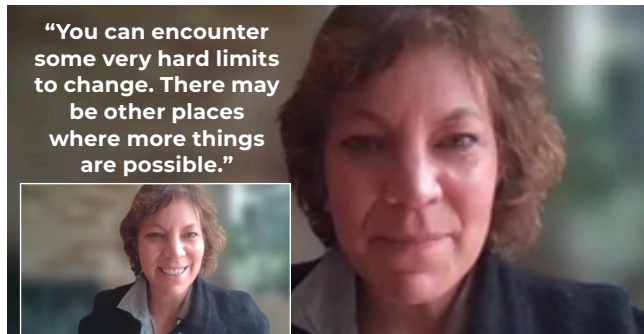


**Nick:** At the time I was running a Leaders Forum with about 100 of Sherene's Leaders in the room. I saw the amount of admiration and care towards Sherene who received a standing ovation - with not a dry eye in the house. The courage that she showed to represent her organisation to the Royal Commission, and perhaps endure something that she wasn't necessarily expecting to walk into. The admiration was palpable in the room. When you start to think of the impact Leaders have - that is one of the memories that will stick with me for a very long time.



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**Dr Pip Cohen**  
 Independent Research  
 and Advisor

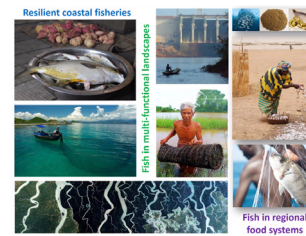
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I led a team of researchers and worked with small-scale fisheries. When you are given those responsibilities, you soon realise it's not all about you. A shift occurred in the way I thought about Leadership and my responsibility as a Leader - to be more about service provision... to ensure everyone has the tools they need: the space, the time, the support - to do their job well. That is your job. I think that suited my core values and energised me. It's a fine balance though, and not everyone will feel you operating like that. One of the things too prevalent in my previous organisation was burnout, born from extreme dedication but also ongoing frustration because in terms of institutional health, people were not making or seeing the changes they were fighting for.



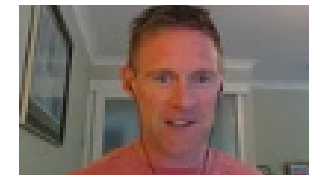
**Nick:** Pip had a great deal of responsibility for people - advocating for people who had needed a voice within her industry - Aquaculture and Fisheries operates in a very small pond. A few factors that made her decision to leave tough. You move in what you can control and what concerns you. Sometimes it takes others to see you as a Leader before you do.



**I think its important to humbly create the space for someone else to thrive. When you insert yourself in someone else's success story - well you have some more work to do on yourself.**

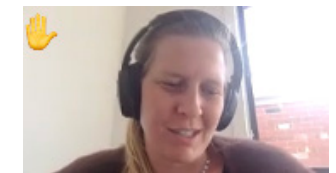


**Daz:** "Was their a defining moment when you talk about leaving and going it alone or was it a gradual transition to get to that point? **Pip** My identity was wrapped up in what I do. The tortuous bit before that was in fact not knowing if it was in fact a brick wall your head was butting against. I had some very patient friends who knew leaving was the best option long before I felt clear enough to enact it.

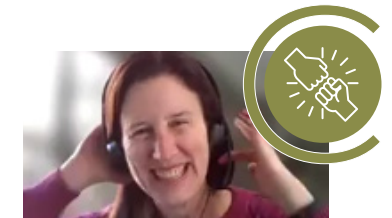


**Andrew:** What does that look like changing your dialogue from your normal preference to do something different. **Pip** I tended to be all about the meat, and forget about the bread. Because that's how I preferred feedback. But understand how other people operate.

I needed to think what motivated people - how they work. How do you want me to work with you? Being much more thoughtful and considered.



**Moniek:** "You just said you wish you could have handled it differently - what do you think you might have done to handle it differently? **Pip** You fall into this trap don't you, when you encounter a complex challenge - you believe that if you think more about it, eventually you will solve it. But it is very hard for an individual t change a systemic problem. Get the support from those you trust, but also give yourself a break.



**Clare:** "I wanted to give Pip a fist bump after that session!"