

# RO&Ming with Lil Episode 32

## The Australian Leadership Paradox - Liz



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# Introduction to Episode 31

- Welcome to Liz Skelton
- Organisational consultant with Collaboration for Impact  
<https://collaborationforimpact.com/>
- Co-author with Geoff Aigner:  
The Australian leadership paradox: What it takes to lead in the lucky country. (2013). Allen & Unwin.

# Paradox 1

We are both anti-authority and authority dependent

- We are openly cynical about power. We admire a larrikin spirit.
- Tall poppy syndrome means that those who stick their heads up get cut down.
- But we also want someone else to take charge, and have someone to blame when things go haywire.
- In looking for good leadership we become unhealthily fixated on bureaucracy.

# Paradox 2

We are egalitarian and hierarchical

- We think of ourselves as a classless society.
- It's safe in the middle, where everyone has a fair go.
- But the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer.
- We create hierarchy to redistribute wealth to maintain our egalitarian values, and as a result, bureaucracy swarms...

...NDIS?

# Paradox 3

We are relational and competitive

- Mate!
- We crave strong social relationships
- We call the boss by his/her first name
- Gender matters – the boys club is alive and... well
- Blokes jostle for position – blatantly in sports and more subtly elsewhere

# Paradox 4

- We are battling adversity and living in prosperity
  - White settlement began with adversity – people doing it tough
  - We are good at dealing with crises – floods, bushfires, drought
  - But we are not so good at dealing with our prosperity
  - We are actually a prosperous, lucky country, but if we don't own it, then maybe we don't have to be responsible for it
  - Who are we kidding?

# Good leadership

... means taking individual responsibility for the power we have, and using it wisely and well.

What does this look like at home, or in the disability sector?

Tune in for another conversation with Liz in the near future.

# Contact & Credits

- To offer feedback, suggest a topic, or record an episode together:  
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- Links and PowerPoint slides for *RO&Ming with Lil*  
[www.lildeverell.net/resources/roaming-with-lil/](http://www.lildeverell.net/resources/roaming-with-lil/)
- Music: *Happy Stroll*, a royalty-free download from Purple Planet Music
- Graphics by Lil Deverell, with technotherapy from Erin Deverell

