

A PRACTICAL PATHWAY TO CHRO READINESS

Chief**HR**TM

ASPIRING
CHRO PROGRAM

2027



Stepping into your first CHRO role is not a bigger HR job

It is a fundamental shift.

From leading a function to
leading at enterprise level.

Our research shows that even highly experienced HR leaders often feel underprepared in their first CHRO role.

Not because they lack HR capability, but because the role demands a different mindset, different judgement and a higher level of exposure.

Many CHROs also describe the role as unexpectedly isolating, with fewer safe spaces to test judgement, sense-check decisions or speak openly about the weight of accountability.

The Chief HR Aspiring CHRO Program is designed to help you make that shift before you are in the role, so when the opportunity comes, you step in with clarity, confidence and perspective.



Janelle Leonard
Chief Executive Officer
Chief HR

"I felt prepared at the time, but in hindsight I wasn't fully aware of the difference between my previous role and the CHRO role"

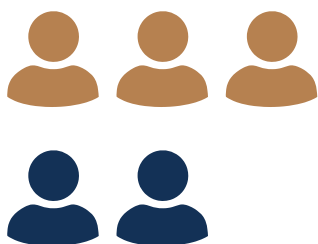
"I understood HR well. I didn't fully understand what working at executive and board level would demand."

"You are expected to hold a lot, often without a safe place to test your thinking"

The Step Up to CHRO

We captured the thoughts of Australia's senior HR leaders on their first CHRO experience.

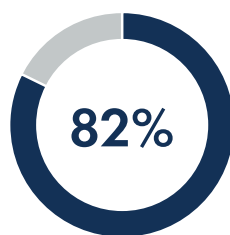
The step up is bigger than expected



3 OUT OF 5

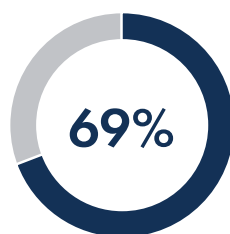
felt unprepared when they stepped into their CHRO role

...despite being technically strong HR leaders, with deep functional credibility

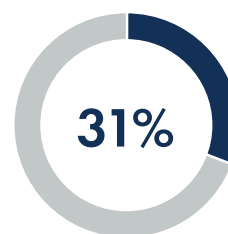


had **10 years or more** in HR before their first CHRO role

...and dominant experience in



HR business partnering leadership



transformation and change leadership



The biggest gaps were

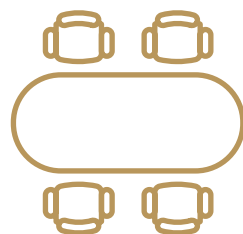
Boards and Governance



45%

cited working effectively with Boards and Remuneration Committees

Enterprise Leadership and Politics



55%

cited the earliest challenge was navigating organisational power dynamics and politics

Personal Toll and Isolation of the Role



44%

highlighted managing the emotional and cognitive load of the role

Program modules designed to accelerate your readiness

We translate lived experience into a practical development model that reflects how the CHRO role operates today.





1. CHRO Landscape

Build a clear understanding of how the CHRO role has evolved, the operating context it sits within, and the expanding scope of accountability that shapes how CHROs define and hold themselves in the role.



2. Think Enterprise

Shift how you think and decide from an HR leader to an enterprise executive, strengthening your ability to contribute to business strategy, value creation and commercial decisions beyond the HR lens.



3. Intentional Influence

Build deliberate, credible influence with CEOs, executives and boards so you can shape outcomes, navigate power dynamics and exercise authority without relying on formal control.



4. Navigate Risk

Equip you to operate confidently in governance, remuneration and people risk environments, applying sound judgement under scrutiny and knowing when and how to escalate, challenge or hold the line.



5. Anchor and Sustain

Support your long-term effectiveness as a CHRO by helping you manage isolation and load, anchor your judgement through peers and external calibration, and sustain confidence and perspective over time.



How the Aspiring CHRO Program works

The six-month program facilitated by Chief HR CEO, Janelle Leonard, is designed to support senior HR leaders preparing for their first CHRO role.

Participants can expect

Real CHRO readiness

Sessions are grounded in real CHRO decisions, realities and trade offs, explored through facilitated discussion and structured reflection.

A senior peer cohort

Monthly 1-hour mini board sessions to reflect, integrate learning and build a trusted peer network.

Practical tools you can use immediately

A personalised CHRO readiness plan, plus a practical Day One guide for your first CHRO role.

Insight from experienced CHROs

The program includes five facilitated 2-hour online modules, with top Australian CHROs including Athalie Williams (ex BHP), Kath van der Merwe (Telstra), sharing their insights and experience.



Early access to the CHRO community

Invitation to a Chief HR CHRO member evening networking function in November in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane or Perth.

Individual guidance

One mentoring session with the Chief HR CEO focused on your specific readiness questions.

Recognition of your participation

On completion, participants receive a Chief HR Aspiring CHRO digital badge.

The Program is for Aspiring CHROs who...



Are actively positioning themselves for their first CHRO role within the next one to three years.



Operate at enterprise or group level in roles such as Head of HR, GM HR or senior HR Business Partner.



Have significant experience influencing executive leaders and contributing to enterprise-level decisions.



This program is not intended for early-career HR managers, current CHROs or CPOs, or HR consultants who are not operating in an in-house, enterprise HR leadership role.

How to Apply

Applications are now open for the **February to July 2027** cohort.

Places are limited and applications are assessed as received. Endorsement from your current CHRO or CEO is required.

Early Bird deadline

11 September 2026 (for discount)

Final application deadline

6 November 2026 (or earlier if capacity is reached)

Investment

\$6,995 plus GST

Payable prior to program commencement and subject to [Terms and Conditions](#).

5% Early Bird discount available until 11 September 2026.

apply online today



Chief**HR**TM

More questions?

Review our
frequently asked
questions online

Program FAQs

OR

Email us
info@chiefhr.com.au

AUSTRALIA'S FASTEST GROWING CHRO NETWORK



OUR MISSION

Advocate



Together we advocate...

- for the commercial value of investing in people;
- for the future of work that we want to inhabit.

Collaborate



Collaboratively we...

- provide a safe space for peer mentoring and support;
- sharing our knowledge and best practice to create greater impact.

Elevate



Our aim is to elevate...

- the role of the Chief Human Resource Officer (CHRO) to its full potential;
- demonstrate CHRO value to Boards;
- develop and mentor emerging CHRO talent.

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