Ethical leadership in Local Government

SOLGM
16 October 2020

Professor Karin Lasthuizen
Brian Picot Chair in Ethical Leadership
www.victoria.ac.nz/ethical-leadership
The Brian Picot Chair in Ethical Leadership was established with the purpose of strengthening Victoria’s Business School’s capabilities in training, research and support to communities of interest, and to improve the understanding and practice of ethical leadership in business, government and civil society organisations in New Zealand.

www.victoria.ac.nz/ethical-leadership
Ethical leadership in a changing world
Free edX online course
What does ethical leadership really mean?

Discover the importance of an ethical approach, how ethical issues can be addressed, and how to become an ethical leader yourself in New Zealand’s first ethical leadership online course.

Professor Karin Lasthuizen and Professor Alan Lawton from Victoria University of Wellington’s Brian Picot Chair in Ethical Leadership, at Victoria Business School, will introduce you to the theory and practices of ethical leadership.

Hear from recognised New Zealand leaders about the issues ethical leadership should address, and find out why this value-based leadership matters to us all.

Second edition: 30 Sept 2020

For more information and to enrol, go to: www.victoria.ac.nz/edx-ethical-leadership

https://www.edx.org/course/ethical-leadership-in-a-changing-world
Ethical leadership - concept

**MORAL PERSON**
- Moral Character
- Ethical behaviours
- Ethical decision-making

“In a leadership role, ethical leadership is about demonstrating the highest standards of integrity. It’s doing the right things all the time.”
- Stephen Walker, Executive Director Audit New Zealand

“Ethical leadership is about the impact of the decisions you make in the business that you operate and how does that impact the people, communities and environment.” - Abbie Reynolds, Executive Director Sustainable Business Council

**MORAL MANAGER**
- Role modelling
- Communication
- Reinforcement

“Ethical leadership is how we role model, live the values of the organisation.” - Mike Bush, Commissioner, New Zealand Police

“You can be quite robust in your interactions, but you can also work together towards a shared outcome.”
- Clare Kearney, NZ Business woman

**PURPOSE**

“Ethical leadership is how we role model, live the values of the organisation.” - Mike Bush, Commissioner, New Zealand Police

**MEANINGFUL LEADER-STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIP**

“The biggest thing that we have to do is keep putting ourselves in the individual’s shoes; if you keep doing that you will mostly get it right.”
- Iona Holsted, Secretary for Education, Ministry for Education

Illustrations: StudioAlarm.nl
Ethical Leadership - From the head to the heart

**Reflect - Moral sensitivity/awareness**
How do your actions – attitudes, words, decisions, practices - impact people in and outside the organisation, the wider community and the environment?

**Practice - Moral reasoning and judgment**
How do you apply moral principles to particular cases?
Learn how to make critical ethical decisions in daily (work) situations.

**Decide - Moral motivation**
What is in the end more important – good behaviour or good performance?
Committing to place moral values above competing non-moral values and do the right thing.

**Courage - Moral character**
Acting upon moral values and principles and having the courage to act. Standing up for our principles can be hard, particularly when it might be unpopular or when you believe that you are standing alone.
How to make an ethical decision?

- **EFFORT**
- **CONDUCT**
- **IMPACT**

- **VIRTUE ETHICS**
- **DEONTOLOGICAL ETHICS**
- **CONSEQUENTIALIST ETHICS**

- **AGENT**
- **ACTION**
- **OUTCOME**

Ethical decision-making model

1. Perception of an ethical problem
2. Describing the problem and defining the ethical issue
3. Identifying alternatives based on:
   - Moral rules
   - Ethical principles
   - Rehearsal of defenses
   - Anticipatory self-appraisal
4. Projection probable consequences
5. Selecting an alternative as a state of resolution
Do we talk enough about ethics?

Do you have the courage to give honest feedback?
Ethical leadership in local government

Key points:

- A senior leaders ethical base needs to be ‘rock solid’, particularly during times of stress and challenge, such as the pandemic. → Moral person

- During this time working in partnership with so many stakeholders is vitally important, and the ability to have meaningful and trusted relationships with a wide variety of people helps for senior leaders to be more effective. → Taking different perspectives, values and principles into consideration

- Senior leaders at the local level are under huge scrutiny from all angles – staff, leadership teams, elected members, iwi & hapu, community members and groups. → Moral management

- A key consideration is managing conflicts of interest well – in small communities this can be very hard, e.g. awarding contracts to local businesses, pressure on supporting local employers, etc. while maintaining adherence to policies. → Purpose
Ethical dilemma - Public versus political leadership

As a Chief Executive, one of your primary relationships is with your Mayor and elected members. How do you navigate this relationship when they are your employer, they represent the community, and they need to understand enough about the council to govern effectively whilst allowing you to ‘run operations’? How you manage these interactions can be pivotal for your and your executive teams’ relationships.

Key points:

- The sharing of reporting for staff, with Mayors & elected members, has the potential to "blur the lines" between operations and governance, although can be seen as being very 'transparent'.
- CE’s have a mechanism for raising issues with their Mayor & elected members on an ad hoc basis. To enable this type of reporting, CE's are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This can create a heavy expectation on the CE to be constantly available and never “off duty”.
- Technology that was introduced as a means of communication through COVID has continued to be used, often along side the more traditional methods.
The Brian Picot Chair in Ethical Leadership at the Wellington School of Business and Government works towards facilitating transparent and ethically sound business, government and civil society organisations in New Zealand.

Connect with us

www.wgtn.ac.nz/ethical-leadership

ethical-leadership@vuw.ac.nz

Capital thinking. Globally minded.