



## MEDIA RELEASE

### Leadership with a Little 'l'

**Thursday May 10, 2012.** Kameleons-developing leaders Principal Michael Peiniger commented in a recent communiqué that leadership is a very popular and topical subject at the moment. Politicians don't show enough of it (or the right type), corporate CEO's are vocal about it and football teams have so much of it they have leadership groups and sub-groups.

Everyone has an opinion on what is good leadership, and it seems that many identifiable high profile leaders in Australia seem to lack it in some substantial way.

Michael Peiniger asks, "Have we made the definition of good leadership so unattainable that mere mortals can't achieve it?"

"Great leadership can be defined as influencing others in a positive way. Perhaps we need to focus less on Leadership with a big 'L' and more on leadership with a 'little l'."

Paraphrasing a popular movie, leadership is actually all around us. There are people leading by example and guiding others through difficult times in all major industries, yet their behaviours may be ignored because it doesn't fit into the 'big L' category of leadership.

Peiniger invited his readers to take a moment to think about the leaders, managers, parents, teachers and mentors that have had a significant influence on their lives.

Over his extensive career as a provider of leadership and team building programs, Peiniger has asked this very question of hundreds of managers and would be managers. The answers received rarely compare to Scotland's legendary leader that inspired the masses to feats of greatness as portrayed in the Hollywood movie Braveheart.

Michael Peiniger continued, "In fact, they were small things; providing you an opportunity when others wouldn't, seeing potential in you, guiding you and providing advice, demonstrating a better way of doing things. It might have even been having that difficult conversation about your behaviour that wasn't quite up to par."

"It's these 'little l' leadership moments that make mentors great, often backed up by personal example that extends for months and years."

On so many occasions, it has been the small moments of helping and guiding another that have the most profound leadership impact.

Reflecting on his own personal and professional journey, Peiniger remembers many defining moments, but the first is the one that probably had the most profound and enduring influence. It was a photo of his father Staff Sergeant Stephen Peiniger taken when Michael was five years of age on a cloudy and crisply cold Anzac Day standing next to his mother and brother, watching the three members of the Catafalque party as the Last Post was sounded.



The young Michael Peiniger remembers shivering, and couldn't understand how the men lowering their heads over their rifles could stand so still for so long without doing the same.

Over time, this photo came to represent what he thought being in the military was about; disciplined, focused and resolute. It also came to represent many of his personal thoughts on leadership regarding duty, doing things for others and trying to achieve a higher goal. For many years that picture was what he aspired to be.

The earliest and one of his strongest leadership memories involved someone not being able to move an inch and not being able to make a sound. The image, feelings and awe are as vivid today as they were when Michael Peiniger was five.

“Leadership is as much about the big, bold decisions and statements as it is about the small, personal influences that we have on the lives of those around us. The discussion you have with a team member about striving to be better and achieving more than they have been could be the leadership catalyst that lives in that person’s memory for years to come.”

“In the ongoing debate on whether politicians, business leaders or sportspeople demonstrate leadership, we should remember that the longest lasting leadership influences start with a ‘little l’, and that shouldn’t be forgotten,” concluded Michael Peiniger.

**ENDS**

**Issued by Kameleons – Developing Leaders [www.kameleons.com.au](http://www.kameleons.com.au)**

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## Notes to the editor: About Michael Peiniger

Michael Peiniger is the founder of Kameleons, a boutique leadership & team building consultancy committed to providing businesses and individuals with the expertise and solutions that they need to succeed in today's ever changing work environment.

Passionate about leadership and the need for businesses to harness individuals', Michael develops the natural skills of individuals so that they can fulfil their full potential.

Michael has a broad professional background that includes leadership and team facilitation, leadership course design, management consulting, change management and senior manager coaching and development.

Key skills include his ability to weave complex leadership theories and the strategic 'big picture' into simple and practical leadership solutions through his honest, direct and results oriented style.

Michael's career began with Royal Australian Air Force where he succeeded in a wide variety of challenging roles, including an exchange with the Royal Air Force in Scotland.

During his defence career, Michael won the prestigious Air Force Association leadership sword in 1998 and progressed to the rank of Squadron Leader ahead of his peers.

As the senior instructor at the Air Force Officers' Training School, Michael trained more than 1500 junior officers to meet the demanding requirements of leadership and adaptation to change that is required of a leader in the dynamic military environment.

Since leaving the Air Force, Michael has used his extensive leadership and management experience to provide tailored leadership consultancy services and dynamic facilitation for a wide variety of organisations. These include:

APIA	Lonely Planet Publications
Australian Unity	The Meinhardt Group
City West Water	Sensis
Fosters Group	Shannons Insurance
Jetstar	Realestate.com
The Laminex Group	Victorian Workcover Authority

Michael holds a Master of Business Administration (HR / Leadership) and a Bachelor of Physics. He is a Fellow of the Institute for Learning Practitioners and holds a Diploma in Assessment & Training Systems as well as the Certificate IV in Training & Assessment.