

Thirdlink Charity profile - Raise Foundation

“creating thriving communities by empowering young people to become resilient, capable & connected”

Raise impacts the wellbeing of young people in Australia who are at risk of disengaging, by delivering best-practice mentoring programs in schools and communities throughout Australia.

The power of best-practise youth mentoring comes from its capacity to address every young person's individual needs. It gives young people facing a wide range of adversities the opportunity to experience, often for the first time, a confiding and supportive relationship which is one of the single best predictors of their psychological health and vitality.

It takes a village to raise a child.



OVERVIEW & HISTORY OF RAISE FOUNDATION

When more young people die by their own hand than by car accidents, when one in four say they are unhappy with their lives and one in ten young people are completely disengaged from their education and employment, we know this is not OK.

Since inception nine years ago Raise has been working to make a positive impact on the lives of struggling young Australians by providing industry leading, TAFE-accredited mentor training to volunteers who it then takes into local high schools and community centres to connect one-on-one with these young people. From a single program in 2009 involving 15 young people, 15 community mentors and managed by Founder and CEO Vicki Condon, Raise has since trained more than 2,400 community volunteers to be mentors who have made a significant impact in the lives of more than 3,400 young Australians.

Unfortunately, this only represents a small percentage of youth in need of support. In 2016, Raise enlisted the expertise of an Advisory Council chaired by Patron David Gonski. The Advisory Council is driving Raise to dramatically expand the reach of its mentoring programs across Australia.

KEY PROGRAMS

In School Mentoring Program (Ismo) - designed to impact the wellbeing of high school students (Years 8 – 9). The primary objectives and achievements of this program include improving the relationships of students within their permanent support network, improving their resilience and ability to employ coping strategies, increasing their self-confidence and ability to set and achieve goals, and re-engaging them with education and employment options.

Raise Foundation's qualified Program Counsellors manage the Ismo programs which each have up to 15 mentor/mentee pairs. The Program Counsellors bring a group of trained mentors into each participating high school for an hour of one-on-one mentoring at a consistent time each week, followed by a group supervision session for the mentors. The program is conducted throughout school terms 2 and 3 (i.e. 20 weeks) and concludes with a graduation celebration.

Career Workshops - designed for high school students (Years 10 - 12) to provide them with extra support to complete Year 12 and look forward to life beyond





school. During this one-day workshop, held in the offices of a sponsoring Corporate Partner, students work with trained Corporate Partner mentors, who assist them to identify their learning style, personality type, career aspirations, and suitability for certain fields, under the supervision of a Raise Program Counsellor. They also work on their resumes and practice for interviews. By providing the students with direct real-world experience, our Corporate Partner mentors help them recognise the choices they have in life, increase their employability skills and help them to make decisions about their future career.

Bump - mentoring program designed to impact the wellbeing of young pregnant and parenting girls aged between 13 and 23. The program's objectives and achievements are similar to those for the high school program - re-engaging young girls into the community by equipping them with the life skills required to sustain them.

Young mums meet with their mentor in a community space each week for a chat and some morning tea throughout all of school terms 2 and 3 (i.e. 20 weeks). Mentors are typically experienced mums who have also completed Raise TAFE-accredited training and are supported in these sessions by a Raise Program Counsellor.

Bump Up - an advanced course for graduates of the Bump mentoring program. Bump graduates are eligible to enrol in Bump Up, and sessions are held with their mentors every week over for three school terms (i.e. 30 weeks). Enrolling through TAFE, the girls complete a Certificate II in Skills for Work and Training and conduct a small business management project together.

CLIENT BASE

Raise currently operates mentoring programs for public high school students and young mums in communities across New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland.

EVIDENCE BASE

Young people in Australia are experiencing poor outcomes in a number of key areas:

- 1 in 3 are without adequate work (i.e. either un- or under-employed)
- 1 in 10 are completely disengaged from education, employment and training
- 1 in 4 young Australians say they are unhappy with their lives
- 1 in 4 have a mental health condition
- Suicide is the leading cause of death for young Australians aged 15-24
- Australia has the fourth highest rate of teenage pregnancy in the western world

Raise Foundation is committed to improving these outcomes for young people by delivering youth mentoring programs aligned with researched best practice. Its model is based on Rhode's (2005) Model of Youth Mentoring and calls for consistent, high frequency and longer duration connections between a young person and the mentor who supports them.

There has been a great deal of international research carried out on the benefits of mentoring to a young person. Research by Joseph P Tierney and Jean Baldwin Grossman (Making a difference: an impact study of Big Brother/Big Sisters) and David L Dubois et al ('Effectiveness of mentoring programs for youth: A meta-analytical review', American Journal of Community Psychology), has shown that young mentees are:

- Less likely to become involved in criminal activity
- Less likely to become involved in drug taking and alcohol abuse
- Less likely to leave school early
- More likely to have improved academic performance
- More likely to have healthy relationships with teachers and family compared to their peers who are not mentored

However, the more risk factors a young person faces, the less likely they are to have a natural mentor in their life. Raise is committed to changing this.

Before implementing a mentoring program, Raise identifies clear aims. For each aim, there is a series of concrete, specific and measurable objectives so that progress can be measured. Progress against these measures is used to demonstrate positive outcomes for Raise participants in areas such as relationships, resilience, confidence, school engagement and the ability to set and achieve goals.

"I like, truanted a lot. Like a lot. And then we set this goal, right, and I said I'd come every day for two weeks. And I signed it and stuff. And I came, every day. And then my mum wasn't bugging me, and things got better at home. And my teachers weren't bugging me so things got better at school. And for once I actually knew what was going on in class – that felt good!"

14 year old male mentee



HELPING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO THRIVE NOT JUST SURVIVE

Resilience research confirms that the presence of a caring adult in a young person's life is important in assisting them to overcome adversity and to achieve at school. Effective mentoring seeks to provide such a presence by establishing a trusting relationship between a mentee and a mentor that focuses on the needs of the young person.

Through mentoring, Raise is working with community volunteers to halt the downward spiral and equip young people with the skills and resources to set them on a positive pathway ... creating thriving communities by empowering young people to become resilient, capable and connected.

POINT OF DIFFERENCE

Raise has identified four key differentiators that maximise the impact of its youth mentoring programs for young people and their mentors:

- TAFE-accredited training for mentors
- professional mentor supervision as an integral part of Raise programs with active qualified counsellors
- evidence-based, best-practise mentoring program design
- extensive impact evaluation and continuous improvement strategies

These four differentiators combine to result in delivering positive outcomes for mentees at a relatively low benchmark investment.

ORGANISATIONAL GROWTH

Raise has positioned itself as a leader in the delivery of best practice youth mentoring program design and is intent on making its programs available to every public high school in need across Australia.

Over the next 3 to 5 years, Raise intends to expand delivery of best practice youth mentoring programs and make it available to every public high school in need across Australia. That would equate to over 15,000 mentees and volunteer mentors across over 1,300 programs, each of which would be supervised by a qualified Program Counsellor.

With the support of the Advisory Council and Board of Directors, Raise is bringing in assistance to help plan and implement this expansion, while maintaining ongoing programs and building in efficiencies to enable its strategic growth.

- i Muir, K., Butler, R. and Powell, A. (2015) A whacking stick is not enough to get young people into work, The Conversation [Online]. www.theconversation.com/a-whacking-stick-is-not-enough-to-get-young-people-into-work-38710
- ii Reeve, R., Marjolin, A., Muir, K., Powell, A., Hannigan, N., Ramia, I. and Etuk, L. (Eds.) (2016) Australia's Social Pulse. Centre for Social Impact: UNSW Australia, Sydney and UWA, Perth.
- iii <http://www.missionaustralia.com.au/publications/research/young-people>
- iv Australian Bureau of Statistics (2008) National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing: Summary of Results. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- v Australian Bureau of Statistics (2015) Causes of Death. <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/3303.0Main+Features12015>
- vi Rhodes, J. E. (2005). A model of youth mentoring. In D. L. DuBois, & M. J. Karcher (Eds.), Handbook of youth mentoring (pp. 30-43). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications

