Evaluation Report 2023

Building confidence and connection so communities can thrive





A note from our Data and Youth Insights Director

Building confidence and connection so young people and their communities develop the skills to thrive.

"You can talk about things you don't normally get to talk about, with an anonymous person to everyone else, but a special person to me."

Powerful words that sum up what the mentoring experience means to a young person in need. In 2023, Raise provided individual mentors to 2,238 young people across Australia and supported a further 506 in our Youth Introduction to Mentoring 10-week group mentoring program. This was the highest number of young people reached in one year (2,824) as well as the highest number of school communities we worked within (209). I am delighted to share with you the impact Raise has made in 2023 for our mentees and their families, our mentors and the wider community.

For young people in Raise Youth Mentoring programs, we saw strong results across all our four key outcomes areas, with statistically significant improvement in each and every one. What was particularly apparent this year was the strength and breadth of this improvement, with 1 in 6 mentees improving in all four areas, compared with 1 in 9 in 2022. At the centre of the Raise impact is the mentoring relationship between a young person and a trained and supported volunteer mentor. Our mentors and program counsellors are equipped with the skills to build safe, inclusive and supportive environments. In 2023, Raise mentees again told us they felt safe talking to their mentor (98%) and supported by their Raise program counsellor (97%). This creates the conditions to deliver the impact we see.

We continue to build on our university partnerships to support the skill development, confidence and capacity of the mental health workforce of the future. We partnered with 46 educational institutions to train and support 392 student mentors. The clear impact being a Raise mentor has on students' confidence and capacity to join the workforce, gives us hope for the future.



Our Raise community spreads beyond the mentee and mentor match, into the support networks mentees gain and the skills they take home to their families. We know mentors use the skills they develop through mentoring in their homes, in their workplace and in their communities.

For the first time, this year we have started to quantify the ripple effect of mentoring on a mentor. We have found that each mentor, on average, supports **at least** one additional young person as well as **at least** one additional adult in their lives. As we expand into different training offerings, we have strengthened our measurement of the outcomes volunteer mentors experience through training and mentoring with Raise.

This year we captured two psycho-social safety measures, with strong results in both. With a growing expectation that workplaces provide physical and psychological safety for their employees and actively support the wellbeing of their teams, we are thrilled that Raise mentors are more confident to support others' wellbeing in the workforce (91%) and able to create safe and inclusive environments (85%).

This year marked the second year of the Raise independent evaluation, with data collection and analysis being undertaken to support the impact and economic evaluations. We have already been using the process review undertaken in 2022 to inform our program improvement and further strengthen the experience and outcomes for mentees and mentors. We are looking forward to sharing the findings of the independent evaluation in early 2024 and using the recommendations to improve our effectiveness and our quality.

For many young people in Australia, stress is at school and at home, when they look at what is going one in the world right now and what is to come in their future. And while the fear about lockdowns or a return to remote learning has diminished, the worry about financial and housing insecurity is rapidly increasing. We saw large increases in the prevalence of households' stressors, as well as discrimination, bullying and mental health issues. We know what we're seeing at Raise is a snapshot of what is happening for young people right across Australia, demonstrated again in this year's Mission Australia Youth Survey. For many adult Australians, their sense of connection and social cohesion is decreasing. They are feeling more pessimistic about the future and less connected to Australian society. Loneliness is increasing and is described as one of the most pressing public health priorities in Australia. The decline in formal volunteering accelerated due to the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic (36% in 2019 to 27% in 2022), at the same time informal or local-scale volunteering is increasing.

I hope as you read through this year's Raise Evaluation Report you will consider what improved connection and confidence can create, starting at the individual relationship between a young person and their mentor and rippling out into their many different communities across our country.

We know how great the need is, but at Raise we are proud to be contributing to so many parts of the solution.



Lucy Snowball

Lucy Snowball Data and Youth Insights Director

How to engage with this Evaluation Report

Often, evaluation reports can appear like a series of figures and diagrams without a meaningful story, and we find ourselves wondering 'why does this matter?' What is the purpose of a report like this, and why is it important? At Raise, the data we collect from our program participants – our mentors, our schools, our staff, and most importantly, our young people, is our vehicle to demonstrate the positive impact our program has each year, and where we can enhance our delivery to serve the needs of our mentees. Young people are at the centre of everything we do at Raise, and we need their voices to guide us. Without asking, we can't know, and without knowing, we can't improve.



This report outlines how and why we collect data from our key stakeholders, our processes and models of collection and our outcomes for 2023. We tell the story of the impact of our mentoring program across Australia with statistics, comparative examples, and anecdotal quotes direct from our program participants. Reading through this report will provide a clear understanding of how successful our programs were in 2023, the key themes, and what we learnt. We use these stories as our map moving forward for bettering our youth mentoring programs in 2024 and beyond.

"After the first lesson I realised how amazing my mentor was. I truly have no words for how thankful I am that I could talk to my mentor each week and I have loved looking forward to every session. Thank you Raise."

- Oliver, Mentee

"Just being able to talk to someone about my problems and have them understand." .

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- Ben, Mentee

Executive summary

Raise mentoring programs achieved statistically significant impact for the whole cohort in all 4 key outcome areas - help seeking, resilience, hope for the future and school belonging.

Snapshot of our impact



98% of mentees felt safe talking to their mentor



93% of mentees would refer Raise mentoring to a friend



89% of mentees improved in at least one of our four key outcomes areas



Improved school belonging for **77%** of mentees who needed it most



97% of mentors felt a sense of purpose through mentoring



96% of student mentors feel more equipped to gain employment



91% of corporate mentors feel more confident to support wellbeing of others at work



86% of parents/carers saw improvement in their child due to mentoring

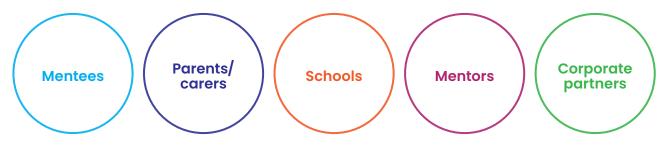


96% of schools would recommend Raise to another school

Rigorous evaluation proves and improves our impact

How is data collected?

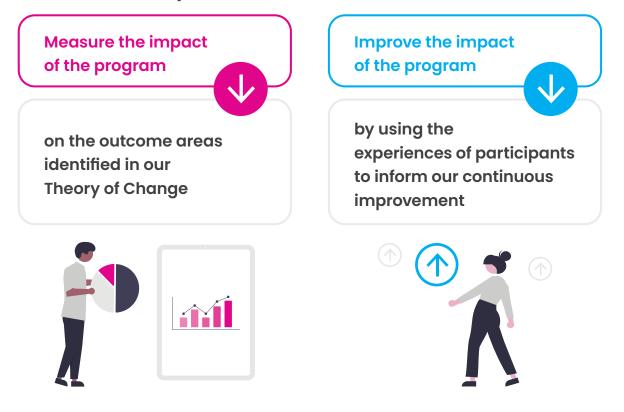
Each year we conduct a rigorous evaluation via robust surveys, interviews, and focus groups with:



How will the data be used?

The data we've collected gives us a clear understanding of how successful our program was in 2023. We use our learnings as a roadmap to improve our program not just for mentees, but volunteer mentors and school partners as well.

Our evaluation process enables us to:



Theory of change

Participants 🔿	Outcomes 🔿	Impact 🗸
Ţ	Mental health support• Asking for help• Finding trusted adults who can help• Knowledge of resources	
Mentees	 Social & emotional wellbeing Resilience Confidence Coping strategies Hope for the future Awareness of capabilities Ability to set goals Ability to achieve goals 	Young people gre able to
	School engagement School belonging Better relationships Academic confidence Improved attendance 	navigate challenges, believe in themselves and others, and are
Mentors	 Mentor outcomes Transferable skills Empathy with young people Understanding of youth issues Increase sense of purpose More confident mentors in society More connected generations 	equipped to shape a purposeful life
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School outcomes

- Increased capacity for School Wellbeing Teams
- Wellbeing needs of students are met
- Schools able to meet key Australian Wellbeing Framework objectives

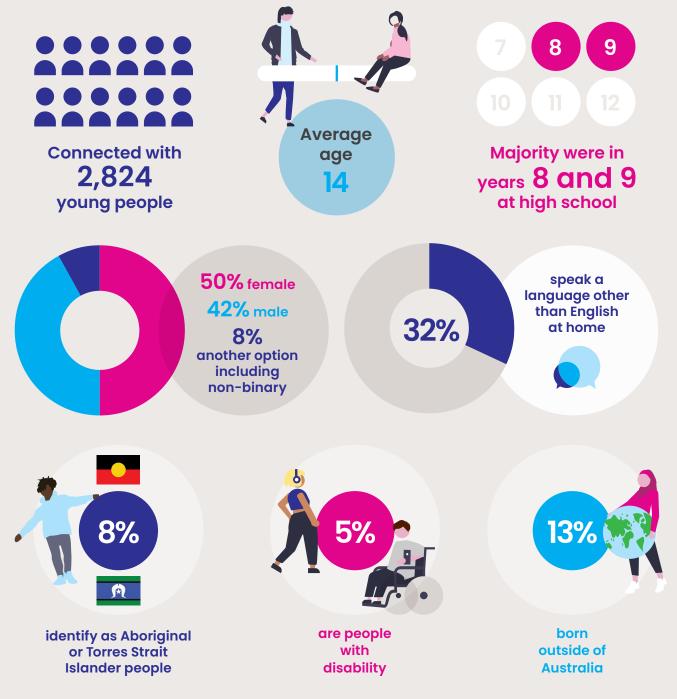


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Spreading hope to young people across Australia

Raise mentees come from a range of backgrounds and experiences, and we work hard to make our mentoring program inclusive and suitable for all young people.

In 2023 we...



29% of mentees look after a family or friend due to disability or mental health issue

Listening to our mentees

What mentees told us they want from their mentors:

72% A space to be able to talk openly and be listened to

50% Advice and guidance from their mentor

44% Help with their mental health

41% Help with their future

Current issues of most concern to mentees:

57% Mental health

38% Discrimination

32% Safety and crime

32% Animal rights

31% Environment

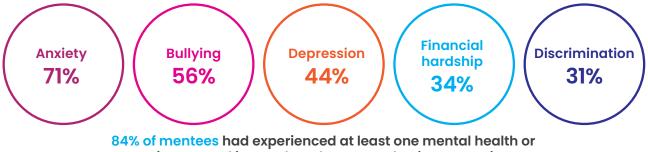
25% Homelessness



What skills mentees would like to develop through mentoring:



Most common issues they've experienced:



environmental issue when they started Raise mentoring. 91% for young people who identify outside the gender binary

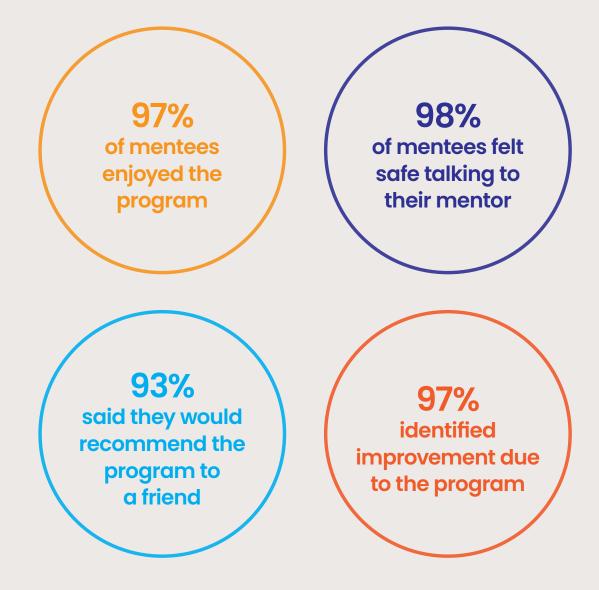
78% of mentees said that the program helped them cope with these issues

"My mentor has shown me a way to live life that makes me happy. One that is centered around doing the right thing no matter what others think about you and to always seek knowledge and be involved with the community."

- Chloe, Mentee



Creating safe and engaging spaces for young people



97% of mentees felt supported by their Raise Program Counsellor

90% rated their connection with their mentor favourably (excellent or very good)

89% liked the group activities

82% liked the activities in the Raise handbook

82% felt safe talking in their mentoring group

Equipping our young people with the right tools

We can't remove the barriers and challenges that young people face – what we can do is equip, inspire and empower.

Equip them with skills and resources to support their own mental health and wellbeing.

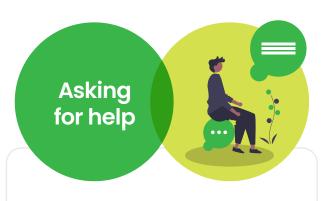
Inspire and foster engagement with school and learning.

Empower them, giving them hope for the future.

Mentees can use and further develop these skills and tools long after the program finishes – equipped to tackle whatever life throws at them.



Focusing on our four key outcome areas



Mental Health Support

Young people are the least likely of any age group to seek help. Through mentoring, young people have more capability to ask for help and a stronger likelihood of accepting it. They develop trust in adults, improve communication skills, and can find support and resources.

Social and Emotional Wellbeing

Hope

for future

With higher levels of hope, young people improve socially and academically. They are able to set and achieve goals, and develop a growth mindset with mentor support. Hope is a buffer against stress, anxiety and suicide ideation.



Social and Emotional Wellbeing

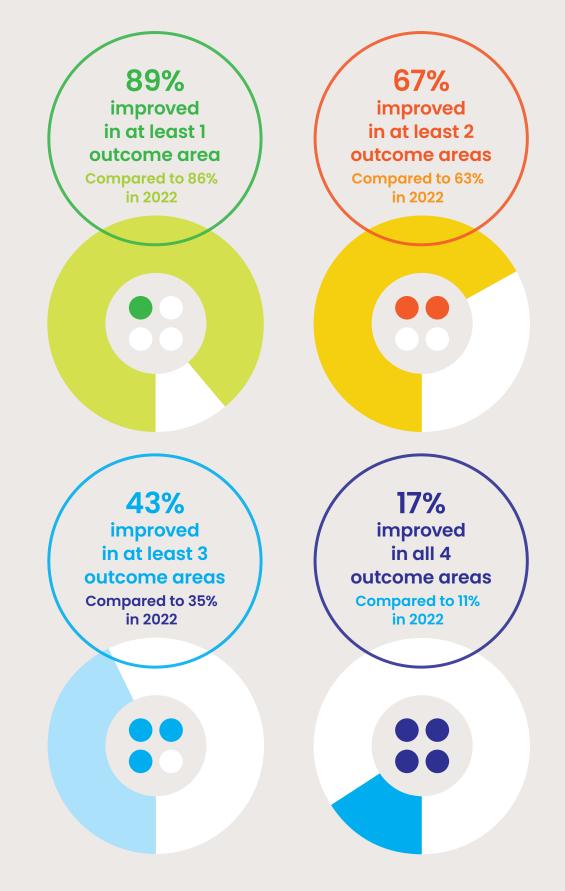
Mentoring improves a young person's ability to bounce back after stress and enhances recovery. Mentors help young people to increase confidence, adapt to new situations, develop coping skills to deal with adversity, and overcome challenges.



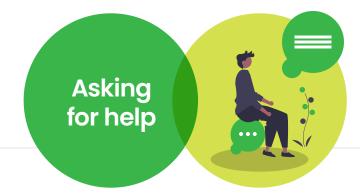
School Engagement

Through mentoring, young people improve their relationship with peers and teachers. Mentees attend school more, resulting in increased grades, higher school completion rates, stronger academic confidence and better economic outcomes.

Delivering key outcomes in 2023



Dive deeper into our Mental Health Support outcomes



Mentees made statistically significant improvements in:

- ability to ask for help
- 🗹 ability to trust adults who can help
- 🗹 knowledge of where to seek help
- 🖌 number of supports they can turn to for help

Help seeking improved for 64% of mentees who needed it most~

~ Started the program as low in this outcome



73% of mentors noticed an improvement in their mentee's ability to ask for help 95% of school staff noticed an improvement in students' ability to ask for help

"The ability to know that communicating with a trusted adult can make a huge difference to students' decision making and how they are feeling about life challenges."

- School contact

Increased number of supports they can turn to for help

Dive deeper into our Social and Emotional Wellbeing outcomes



What hope meant for mentees, and how showing up and listening made a difference. Raise mentees saw a statistically significant improvement in their hope for the future, which buffers against stress, anxiety and suicidality. Hope improves problem solving and goal setting, and means that our mentees are better able to cope with challenges that arise.

- Mentees also saw a significant improvement in their ability to persevere which is associated with achievement and goal setting and protects against anxiety
- **60% of mentees set a goal,** and **98%** achieved or partly achieved their goal. They also saw significant improvements in ratings of their ability to set and achieve goals.
- 62% of mentors felt that their mentee improved in their ability to set and achieve goals
- 84% of school staff members surveyed also noticed an improvement in students' ability to set and achieve goals

Hope for the future improved for 72% of mentees who needed it most~

~ Started the program as low in this outcome

"I feel much more motivated and confident about myself, I feel inspired to achieve the best for me."

- Lachlan, Mentee





Mentees in the program saw a statistically significant improvement in their resilience, confidence, and belief in their ability to cope. This means they are better able to adapt and cope with new situations and deal with challenges and adversity.

- 56% of mentees said they felt better about themselves because of the program
- 67% of mentors noticed an improvement in their mentee's ability to cope
- 81% of mentors felt that their mentee's confidence improved
- School staff also noticed improvements in:
 - students' confidence 99%
 - ability to cope 90%
 - and resilience 96%

Resilience improved for 67% of mentees who needed it most~

~ Started the program as low in this outcome

"The program has helped me realise that being myself isn't a bad thing. Overall, this experience has been amazing and I have learnt many things about connection and resilience."

- Jessica, Mentee

Dive deeper into our School Engagement outcomes



Building a feeling of belonging:

Mentees in the Raise program saw statistically significant improvements in:

- 🔽 self-rated attendance
- 🗹 grades
- 🗹 school belonging
- their belief in their ability to finish school
- 🗹 find employment

Approximately 45% of the mentors noticed an improvement in:

their mentees' relationships at school (friends, teachers) and their confidence in their ability to finish school and find employment.

School belonging improved for 77% of mentees who needed it most~

- School staff noticed improvements in school engagement for students in the Raise program including:
 - attendance 68%
 - school relationships 88%
 - classroom engagement 69%
 - leadership qualities 68%

~ Started the program as low in this outcome





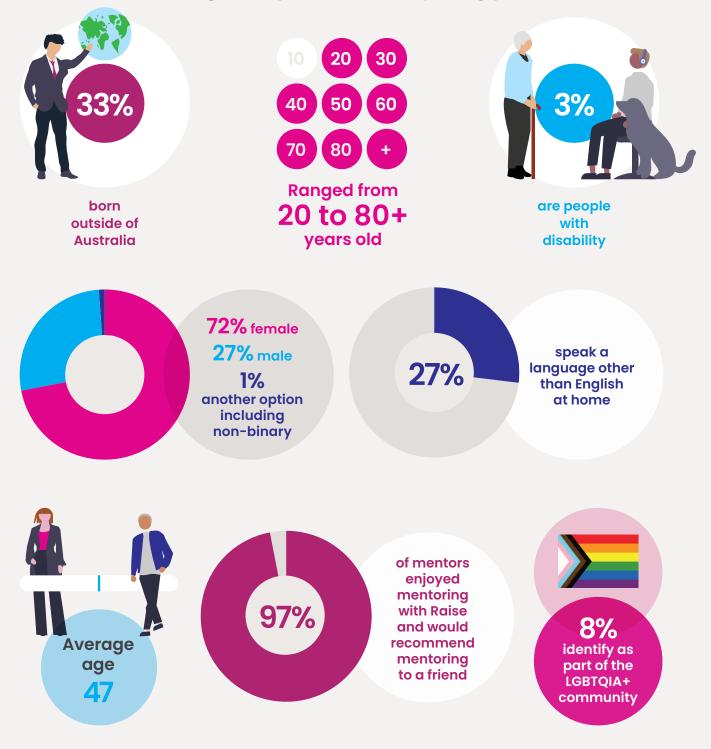
"I never used to go to school, now that I have done Raise, it has changed my whole school year."

- Abigail, Mentee

Who are our volunteer mentors?

Raise mentors come from a wide range of backgrounds, bringing a depth of expertise and experiences to the role.

2,193 volunteers signed up to mentor a young person



Our industry leading training delivers high quality mentors



Training provides mentors with additional skills

96% felt knowledge and skills had increased

96% confidence to mentor significantly increased

94% learnt skills they could apply in personal relationships

Corporate mentors

76% more likely to mentor someone in workplace

70% improved leadership skills

58% feel more engaged with their employer

96% of placement students said training complemented their studies



Causing a ripple effect...

Raise mentees aren't the only ones who get something out of our mentoring program – our mentors consistently tell us how much they benefited from the experience. They are often pleasantly surprised by how applicable the skills they've learnt are to their daily lives.

Raise mentors saw statistically significant improvements in their:



Going forward, Raise mentors will be more comfortable checking in with young people in their own lives – and better equipped to support them. These outcomes help contribute to our broader goal of **creating thriving communities.**

"I enjoy listening to young people and their thoughts and ideas about life, the future and how they feel about themselves. Giving them a sounding board is rewarding."

- Liz, Mentor



Delivering on mentor outcomes

Other benefits that Raise mentors experience include:

98% felt a sense of contribution to their community

97% felt a sense of purpose

93% more likely to volunteer in the future

93% improved listening and communication skills

91% improved connection with the community

83% improved mental health literacy

81% improved parenting skills

70% improved relationships with family/ friends

"Spending time with young people keeps me open minded, curious about the world and able to see things through different eyes. This softens us as we get older, preventing a calcification of our views and ideas. It lightens our spirit in a way nothing else can."

- Mark, Mentor

The ripple of hope flows to Australia's workforce of the future

17% of mentors volunteer with Raise as part of a student placement for their university course and some outcomes they experience include:





"The mentoring program has been very rewarding and fulfilling. I'm currently studying and have been able to put my learnings into practice. I have gained lots of knowledge and skills becoming a mentor and now have assurance I have made the right career change. The biggest change for me would be improving on my communication skills, in particular active listening."

- Chris, Mentor

The ripple effect on corporate partners...

12% of mentors volunteer with Raise through their workplaces, who partner with Raise as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR), Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) or community involvement strategy. Organisations who partner with Raise can benefit from a decrease in employee turnover and an increase in employee engagement and commitment.

Benefits that Raise corporate mentors experience include

95% felt a sense of pride in their employer for partnering with Raise

91% able to confidently support wellbeing in the workplace

87% able to apply mentoring skills in the workplace

85% improved leadership skills

85% able to confidently support a safe and inclusive workplace

69% more likely to stay with their employer

"Confidence that I make a difference to another. Recognising how powerful patience, allowing another to contemplate and ponder piecing together their thoughts can be."

- Helen, Corporate Mentor

"There is strong leadership and a strong and consistent culture within Raise. You recruit and retain the right people for the job/organisation and everyone we interact with clearly believe in their organisation and programs."

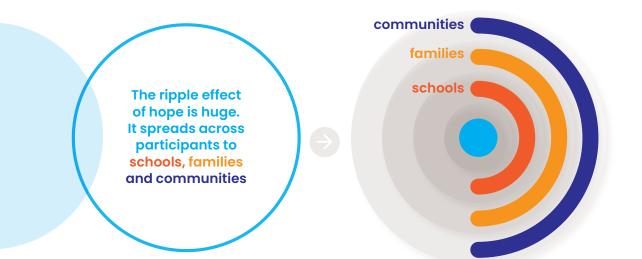
- Origin Energy Foundation

The ripple of hope spreads to parents

Parents/carers of Raise mentees tell us:

92% were happy their child participated in Raise mentoring

86% saw an improvement in their child in at least one area because of mentoring



"My child thrived in the mentoring program. They gained more confidence, became more excited about what the future has in store, was increasingly happier throughout the program and became more motivated to pursue his goals. It was the highlight of every week!"

- Angela, Parent

Collaborating with schools across Australia

This year, we partnered with 209 schools across New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory.



Shaping communities, far and wide

School staff, parents and carers of the mentees also reported experiencing positive outcomes – the widespread ripple effect of mentoring. Outcomes experienced at the wider school level include:

99% felt the program helped students cope with challenges

88% helping build individual and collective wellbeing at school

76% encouraging student engagement with school

68% supporting the wellbeing team at school

Supporting young people in hard to service areas

In 2023, we ran our Youth Introduction to Mentoring (YIM) group mentoring program in 22 schools where we were unable to recruit the required number of mentors.

YIM is a ten-week workshop style program, facilitated by a Raise Program Counsellor. Some programs also had the support of a small number of volunteer mentors.

96% of participants enjoyed the program

95% would recommend the program to a friend

95% identified improvement due to the program

The YIM curriculum is designed to build skills in help-seeking, resilience, hope and school engagement.

53% feel more confident

47% feel better about themselves

46% feel their communication skills improved

44% are more likely to help others

44% feel able to make better choices

34% feel better about school after the program

32% know more people at school now

31% are more likely to continue school



"It's been a great way for me to seek advice and help on issues as well as an outlet for stress and help on not being so negative with myself." - Pat, Mentee



"I loved the program so much I wish we could have been doing this for 1,080,338,738 billon years." - Skye, Mentee



Mentoring evidence

We conduct regular audits of our program against the Australian Youth Mentoring Network Benchmarks, and meet or exceed all of them.

In 2024, our Program Director, Kathleen Vella – the original author of the Australian Youth Mentoring Benchmarks – is reviewing the Benchmarks in line with international best practice to celebrate 10 years since their adoption in Australia and compare them with those recently updated in the US.

Element and rating	S • Raise rating key 🕒 exceeds • M meets	Average rating (1-4)	Total score 2.75 to 3 to meet	% Meeting element	Raise rating
Element 1 Planning and Design	Thorough program planning that clearly articulates the target group, aims, criteria and model of the program.	2.83	17/18	95%	M
Element 2 Management and Governance	A management and governance structure underpinned by well-developed and targeted organisational policies and procedures.	2.78	19.5/21	93%	
Element 3 Evaluation	Evaluation to assess the impact and effectiveness of the program to improve its operation and promote its outcomes.	3.5	12/12	100%	0
Element 4 Staff	High quality program staff with sufficient resources and support.	3	12/12	100%	
Element 5 Recruitment	Suitable mentors and young people recruited from the program's target groups.	3.25	12/12	100%	B
Element 6 Screening and Selection	A clear selection process to assess the suitability of mentors and young people.	3.16	18/18	100%	8
Element 7 Orientation and Training	Comprehensive orientation and training for mentors and young people to assist them in building an effective mentoring relationship.	3.33	9/9	100%	8
Element 8 Making the Match	A consistent matching process that links the young person with the most appropriate mentor.	3	9/9	100%	
Element 9 Monitoring and Support	Ongoing match support including regular monitoring and feedback to manage risk and create opportunities to celebrate the relationship.	2.85	20/21	96%	M
Element 10 Closing the Match	A planned end to the formal relationship that is clearly agreed and adhered to by all stakeholders.	3	9/9	100%	

The Raise impact over time

Outcome	Measure	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Enjoyed the program	Proportion	97%	99%	97%	98%	99%
Things are different	Proportion	77%	77%	78%	79%	85%
Asking for help	Statistically significant impact	Yes	Yes	Yes~	N/A	N/A
	Effect size	0.47	0.36	0.3~	N/A	N/A
Resilience	Statistically significant impact	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes~	Yes
	Effect size	0.16	0.24	0.1	0.32~	0.1
Hope for the future	Statistically significant impact	Yes	Yes	Yes~	Yes	Yes
	Effect size	0.39	0.38	0.8~	0.18	0.3
School belonging	Statistically significant impact	Yes	Yes~	Yes~	N/A	N/A
	Effect size	0.27	0.81~	0.2~	N/A	N/A

Note 1: ~ For mentees who started with a low score at the start of the program

A note about the statistical methodology we use

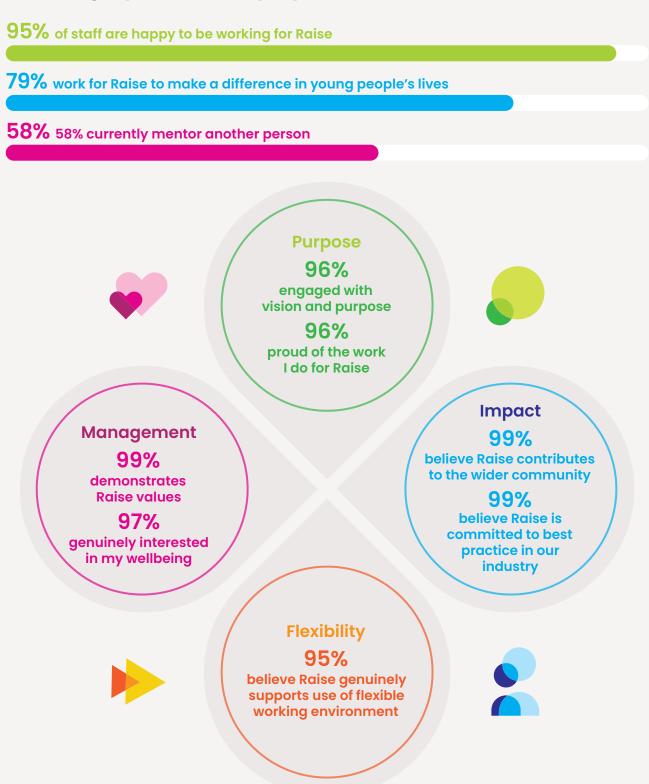
We use a repeated-sample t-test (or paired t-test) methodology to determine whether any changes in outcomes between the pre-program measure and the post-program measure are statistically significant. We test at a 5 per cent level of significance. To determine the threshold for the 'low starting score' cohorts for each outcome we use, where possible, accepted or recommended cutoff points. Where there are no recommended cutoff points (for example for Raise-designed measures) we have set cutoff points based on data characteristics and tested these using sensitivity analysis.

"My child now looks forward to going to school where beforehand it was a constant battle to get them there. He has gained heaps of confidence, not only with his school work but also with expressing when he needs help."

- Sue, Parent

Other areas of Raise that we evaluate

Fostering a positive and purpose driven team



Forging partnerships built on trust and impact



Building strong relationships with Raise philanthropists

86% of private donors were very satisfied with Raise and 10% were satisfied

68% of donors were very satisfied with the impact Raise achieves and 26% were satisfied



"I looked at many volunteer opportunities before I began mentoring with Raise but I like a grass roots approach - teenagers are our future and are still young enough to be persuaded that their life has meaning. I will invest in that human capital." - Corporate Mentor



Independent evaluation and assurance

Opportunity of the Raise Independent Evaluation

In 2023, the Melbourne Graduate School of Education (MGSE) is undertaking an independent impact evaluation of the Raise Youth Mentoring program, comparing outcomes for Raise mentees against those of other students in the same school. In collaboration, the Social Outcomes Lab Is conducting an economic evaluation looking at the cost effectiveness of the Raise Youth Mentoring program.

We expect to release the findings of these evaluations in early 2024, along with the actions Raise has taken in response to the Independent Process Review conducted by the Social Outcomes Lab in 2022. We are grateful for the support of the Australian Government Department of Health who have provided funding for the independent evaluation.



Melbourne Graduate School of Education

Australian Government Department of Health

Thank you to our Raise Research Advisory Council

The Raise Research Advisory Council provides independent advice and guidance to support our research and evaluation strategy. We are grateful for the support of the RAC and for their commitment to Raise.



Professor Lucas Walsh

As director of the Monash Centre for Youth Policy and Education Practice, Lucas is passionate about supporting young people to have the best opportunities to thrive. Mentoring is a powerful way of supporting young people – especially those in need.



Penny Dakin

ARACY CEO Penny Dakin is a change maker and systems thinker. Penny's primary focus is on child & youth wellbeing; she supports Raise because of its understanding that all aspects of a young person's experience are interconnected and can potentially impact on individual mental health outcomes.



Rachel Christie

Rachel is driven to inspire curiosity for evidence leading to actions that improve outcomes for people and communities in need. She supports Raise on the Research Advisory Council to contribute to the increased resilience and wellbeing of young people in Australia.



Suzie Riddell

Suzie Riddell is the CEO of Social Ventures Australia. Suzie supports Raise because she believes that every young person in Australia deserves the opportunity to thrive, and the evidence shows that supportive mentoring relationships can help make that happen.



Carolyn Curtis

Carolyn Curtis is the CEO of TACSI. She is supporting Raise because of the need to move beyond professional service systems alone towards leveraging the wisdom, knowledge and infrastructure of our communities as a way of building more sustainable responses to our most pressing social issues.



Getting involved

2 easy ways to donate now

In response to supporting the vital services outlined in this Annual Report, you can make a donation online by scanning the QR code below or via EFT.

Via EFT

Account: Westpac Bank BSB: 032 097 Account number: 278 223

Payment reference: Your full name

To receive a receipt for donations via bank transfer, please email donations@raise.org.au with your contact details and quote the payment reference.



Stay in touch

Raise Foundation Pty Ltd

Level 3/131 Clarence Street Sydney NSW 2000 ACN 134 207 275 • ABN 49 306 288 644 PO Box 3912, Mosman NSW 2088 Phone 02 7208 8337

Enquiries

General hello@raise.org.au

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For general inquiries **hello@raise.org.au** For information on our results **evaluation@raise.org.au** To partner with us **partnerships@raise.org.au** To run our program at your school **schools@raise.org.au** For marketing and media inquiries **marketing@raise.org.au**

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