



Understanding the experience and perceived impact of the Ready Arrive Work Program

Susanne Gannon
Danielle Tracey
Rachael Jacobs

Centre for Educational Research
Western Sydney University

WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY



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Cymbeline Buhler

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Rachel Rolfe (Lead Based Ink)

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANSTO	Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation
DoE	NSW Department of Education
EAL/D	English as an Additional Language or Dialect
ESL	English as a Second Language
EVET	External Vocational Education and Training
FRUIT	Fun, Realistic, Unbiased Industry Teaching Day
IEC	Intensive English Centre
RAW	Ready Arrive Work
SALAD	Services and Local Agencies Day
SLSO	School Learning Support Officer
STEM	Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics
SSBEN	Southern Sydney Business Education Network
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
UOW	University of Wollongong
WPSP	Work Placement Service Provider
WSU	Western Sydney University

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Ready Arrive Work (RAW) program assists high school students from refugee backgrounds to explore vocational learning pathways in a supportive and positive environment. It aims to equip them with a better understanding of employment, workplaces, career planning and the pathways which can lead to a successful career after completing school. Designed by JobQuest and the NSW Department of Education, the RAW program targets government high schools in metropolitan and regional NSW. It has been operating in NSW High schools since 2006. The program consists of 10 structured sessions, comprising 6 x 2hr, 4 x 1.5hr sessions, as well as workplace (industry) and community engagement (civic) events. Other learning opportunities conducted outside school sites are special days named FRUIT (Fun, Realistic, Unbiased Industry Teaching Day) and SALAD (Services and Local Agencies Day). These provide students with hands on and interactive opportunities to engage with guest presenters from a range of professions and industries.

For students from refugee backgrounds, careers advice has been consistently identified in policy and research as a point of vulnerability and as an ideal opportunity for intervention. A recent Victorian inquiry into school-based career advising (Parliament of Victoria, 2018) identified numerous issues faced by refugee students including: unfamiliarity with systems of education and work, inadequate knowledge of career options and prerequisites, isolation, trauma, disruptions, lack of connections and mentors, parents' limited knowledge and accompanying expectations.

More than a decade after the RAW initiative and resources were developed, and after rapid expansion of the program beyond its original site, it is timely to gather an understanding of the perceived impact, enablers and barriers of the RAW program.

THE PROJECT

Study Objectives

This research engaged students and key stakeholders in order to provide a rich account of the impact of RAW on schools, students, industry, and civic organisations. Central to this is the identification of enablers and barriers to participation in, and success of, RAW.

The central questions of the study were:

Research Question 1. What do participants report are the impacts of RAW on schools, students, industry and civic organisations?

Research Question 2. What are the enablers and barriers of participation in RAW and the perceived success of RAW?

Research methods

With an emphasis on qualitative data, interviews and focus groups with 58 key stakeholders were the primary source of data for this open inquiry investigation. A 'vertical slice' involving stakeholders from all layers of participation in RAW provided insights from those closest to and furthest from the delivery of RAW. This enabled a triangulation of perspectives in order to create a comprehensive understanding of RAW. Two case studies examined the impacts on particular schools in their local contexts.

Number of participants per stakeholder group

Participant group	Number of participants
Current students	32
Alumni students	6
School staff	6
JobQuest staff	5
Industry and civic partners	3
RAW Steering Group members	6
TOTAL	58

FINDINGS

Students and adult stakeholders reported that the Ready Arrive Work program was beneficial for students, schools, industry and civic partner organisations. All the 'impacts' reported by these stakeholders were positive. This indicates that participating RAW stakeholders hold the program in high regard and the continuation of the program should be prioritised by the NSW Department of Education. More specifically, the following impacts were reported by stakeholders for the participating groups:

For schools, RAW:

- provides an opportunity for teachers to advance their knowledge regarding:
 - the vocational needs of students from refugee and recent arrival backgrounds,
 - industry and civic organisations,
 - student-centred pedagogies,
 - careers and vocational training and pathways;
- complements and deepens current career education at the school;
- fills gaps in provisions for this cohort of students; and
- meets the Department of Education and individual school needs and priorities.

For students with a refugee background, RAW:

- increases their individual knowledge about all aspects of work and potential vocational pathways;
- increases their engagement with the content through the hands-on personalised learning approach utilised;
- prepares them for work, facilitating both hard vocational skills and soft employability skills;
- boosts their confidence in work related behaviours;
- positions them for employment and helps their resilience in applying for jobs;

- helps them to recognise the skills, personal attributes and assets they already have;
- enhances their communication skills and confidence through their visits to civic partners; and
- civics days also contribute to citizenship broadly as well as work related learning.

For industry partners, RAW:

- connects industry with schools and students to inform the future workforce about requirements for specific roles;
- industry visits emphasise diversity of employment opportunities and pathways; and
- builds and expands connections between schools, refugee communities and industry.

For civic partners, RAW:

- provides opportunities for the organisations to meet their strategic goals;
- supports students to connect with cultural organisations; and
- builds and expands connections between schools, refugee communities and these agencies.

The findings of the current study should be interpreted considering the following limitations. The stakeholders who agreed to participate in the study may have been motivated to do so as they were engaged with the program in a positive way, resulting in a somewhat biased sample. The findings represent participants' perceptions of impact rather than objective measures of impact achieved through an experimental design. Finally, the study was unable to recruit as many participating industry partners as anticipated which could also impact on the findings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this small-scale qualitative study suggest that the Ready Arrive Work program should be continued, expanded and celebrated as participants of the study not only attested to the positive impacts on students with a refugee background, but also on their schools, and the associated industry and civic partners.

Notwithstanding this high regard for the program, participants provided valuable insights which may serve to further improve the process and outcomes of RAW in future iterations. These recommendations are provided below:

- A teacher (ideally the Careers Adviser) should be actively involved in the delivery of RAW, noting the impact of the program upon students is directly related to the involvement of the teachers at the school;
- More avenues should become available for parents and carers to be involved in RAW to strengthen the impact of the program. This may include the production of targeted materials or events for parents and carers or developing strategies for their ongoing engagement in RAW;
- Similarly, sustained attention over time beyond the RAW program is important to change deep seated ideas about desirable vocational pathways held by students and by parents and carers;
- Maintain the specificity of the target student group;
- Maintain the delivery of RAW by the external organisation;

- Ensure the program continues to be offered for free to schools and students;
- Provide ongoing rather than annual funding to RAW to facilitate school uptake;
- Address the issue of retention of RAW coordinators;
- The pedagogy and curriculum were viewed as strengths, however, some specific aspects require attention;
- The resources provided to students need to be improved, through a compiled booklet and/or updated and accessible website;
- Partnerships with industry and civic organisations provide valuable benefits to the program and should be continued as a core feature of the program;
- Continue the current structure with RAW governed by the Steering Group. The active role of the Department of Education (DoE) on the Steering Group and coordinating across schools has particularly been noted as it keeps RAW relevant and responsive to DoE priorities; and
- Document the hands-on and practical pedagogies used in RAW for the purposes of sharing with educators outside of the refugee and EAL/D learning space. The overwhelmingly positive feedback on these strategies has implications for the broader field of vocational education to potentially enhance the relevance and interactivity of programs leading to greater student engagement.

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Parliament of Victoria (2018). *Inquiry into Career advice activities in Victorian schools*. Economic Education Jobs and Skills Committee Parliament of Victoria, Spring St, East Melbourne.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Successful transition from high school to work and/or further education and training is a key goal of education in Australia. For individuals and families, it means a thriving future. For governments it means economic viability. For schools, it means they have done their job preparing young people for successful futures. However, transitions are contingent on a range of factors including knowledge and understanding of workforce needs and skills; awareness of one's own needs, capacities and aspirations; recognition of educational pathways and contingencies; goal setting and futures planning; life experiences, community networks and many others. While these factors impact on work readiness and transitions for all school leavers, young people from refugee backgrounds have varying access to the components of experience that are essential for successful transitions. The Ready Arrive Work (RAW) program is the focus of this research, targeted towards students with refugee backgrounds in New South Wales (NSW) government secondary schools.

BACKGROUND

RAW is a vocational learning program designed by JobQuest (Penrith) and the NSW Department of Education that targets high school students from refugee backgrounds. It aims to enhance employability by building capacity and ensuring that students have rewarding work experience placements. It enables and resources links between schools, workplaces and communities. While RAW is unique to NSW, there is extensive research into careers and work education broadly, and education transitions for young people of refugee backgrounds in particular. This section of the report outlines some of this research and its implications for understanding the RAW program and its potential contribution to the vocational success of young people from refugee backgrounds.

Research into refugee vocational education

Early experience in the workplace during high school helps students to transition from school to the labor force. Work experience contributes to later economic success (Bailey, 1995; Bishop, 1996; Osterman 1995; Poczik, 1995). High school students enhance their future workplace aspirations by learning work-related skills and forging contacts with employers. Scholars consistently argue that along with well targeted careers advice, early work experience develops on-the-job learning skills, which are becoming more important with technological change, increased employee decision-making, and the economy's shift from high-volume manufacturing to low-volume specialised production (Baum & Ruhm, 2016; Stern & Nakata, 1989). Furthermore, it may positively impact on academic success – although this may be moderated by ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic background and other socio-cultural factors (Staff, Mortimer & Johnson, 2018). Alternatively, high school work experience might have negative effects. If a program is not a structured learning experience, the student may find themselves learning little, especially if placed in an unfamiliar environment with ad hoc learning opportunities. Students from marginalised backgrounds are particularly vulnerable to feeling socially isolated in unfamiliar surroundings. For successful transitions, it is crucial that students' first encounters with employers and sites of employment are positive and build their confidence, and that they avoid negative early experiences with the labor market (Liu & Nguyen, 2011).

For students from refugee backgrounds, careers advice has been consistently identified in policy and research as a point of vulnerability and as an ideal opportunity for intervention. Much of the published research focuses on post-compulsory vocational education, however there is scope for engagement much earlier, while young people are attending secondary school. According to Liu and Nguyen (2011), a key milestone for successful transitions is age 15, by which time

students should have a sound knowledge of career options and education and training pathways. Although this is important for all students, those from refugee backgrounds face numerous complex issues including uncertainty about their futures and their goals, and uncertainty about Australian society and its expectations of them, all of which is shaped by previous life experiences, including experiences of racism and discrimination (Victorian Settlement Planning Committee, 2008). A recent Victorian inquiry into career advising (Parliament of Victoria, 2018) identified numerous issues faced by refugee students including: unfamiliarity with systems of education and work, inadequate knowledge of career options and prerequisites, isolation, trauma, disruptions, lack of connections and mentors, parents' limited knowledge and expectations. Career advisers may have limited understanding of students' backgrounds, potentially due to a lack of engagement with their families. They may not always recognise the cultural barriers between themselves and the students, and can sometimes demonstrate an inclination to direct these students towards stereotypical and limiting career pathways. The inquiry stressed that rather than focus on deficits or generalised responses, careers advice should focus on students as individuals, specifically highlighting their capabilities and potential to achieve. Further, it noted that teachers are 'vital to helping them find work' (2018, p. 130) as they are likely to be among the few adults outside their own communities that students know. Assistance from teachers and mentors is crucial for these students' successful transition to higher education, including application processes and building confidence (Naidoo, Wilkinson, Langat, Adoniou, Cunneen & Bolger, 2015). However, there is often inadequate support for this transition and a tendency for teachers and support staff in schools to see students in deficit terms, as lacking the means to succeed.

Many researchers in refugee education, both in Australia and internationally, recommend strengths-based approaches. Some researchers suggest that too much focus on trauma and the past can be a hindrance to future success. Rather than focusing on what students lack, these approaches emphasise languages, skills and experiences as assets that young people bring into workplaces and higher education, and acknowledge that these continue to develop because transition 'is a process not a point in time' (Naidoo et al., 2015, p. 18). With a positive and supportive environment that aims to enhance social, cultural and educational outcomes, schools can become 'spaces of hope' for young people (Wrench et al., 2018, p. 1197). Recognition of capabilities and strengths is a crucial foundation for successful settlement, acculturation and transitions of young people from refugee backgrounds (Sellars & Murphy, 2017). Daniels (2019) outlines a program that enabled refugee students to develop and articulate their goals, envision their future selves, affirm their identities, increase their self-belief and gain a greater sense of agency as they imagined and wrote about their desired futures (Daniels, 2019). Researchers working with adult refugee job seekers also identify agency and empowerment as crucial for long term positive vocational outcomes (Abkhezr et al., 2015) and career adaptability (Zacher, 2020). Approaches that are based on 'positive appreciative mindsets' enable job seekers to build confidence and adaptability, move through obstacles, develop curiosity and explore their dreams (Wehrle et al., 2019, p. 107).

Much of the research regarding refugee vocational education makes reference to the varying impacts of parents and community. Family attachments can contribute to resilience and cohesion for young people from refugee backgrounds (Sellars & Murphy, 2017), and the social resources that family and community networks provide can sometimes assist with job searching, but these networks may have little value in the wider labour market (Zacher, 2020). While family expectations of higher education vary widely, parents tend to have high aspirations for their children which may be unrealistic (Naidoo et al., 2015). Parents may perceive university education as the only valid pathway to future success (Abkhezr et al., 2015). Their expectations may be too high or too low and they may be unable to engage with career development for their child because of language barriers, financial or time pressures, and

unfamiliarity with the education system (Parliament of Victoria, 2018). Successful transitions require networks that extend beyond the family and immediate community, expanding the 'social capital' of young people which contributes to wellbeing and educational outcomes, achievements and participation and has the potential to offset the effects of disadvantage (Liu & Nguyen, 2011). While social capital can be expanded 'horizontally' amongst peers and within familiar communities, Zacher (2020) argues that 'vertical bridging social capital' where networks are established that can connect people from very different social backgrounds is the most important type of capital for improving employment outcomes for people of refugee backgrounds. More broadly, expanding social capital leading to positive vocational pathways contributes to successful integration as economic self-sufficiency via employment is the most common and most important measure of refugee integration into Australian society (Squires, 2018).

Ready Arrive Work: RAW

RAW is a vocational learning program targeting high school students from refugee and new arrival backgrounds, assisting students to explore vocational learning pathways in a supportive and positive environment. It supports participants to gain a better understanding of employment, workplaces, career planning and the pathways which can lead to a successful career after completing school. This program is important in the current Australian migration context as a significant proportion of refugees and humanitarian entrants are defined as 'adolescents' and 'youth' (Centre for Multicultural Youth, 2014, p. 3). In addition to their pre-migration experiences (Naidoo, Wilkinson, Adoniou & Langat, 2018), newly arrived young people and their families face significant challenges including housing, health, language provision, and sense of belonging (Schechter & Otoide, 2010; Sidhu & Taylor, 2012). The Australian education system and labour market are new and unfamiliar, as are the networks that can facilitate them in finding employment. There are indications that many young people of refugee backgrounds are falling through the gaps in the current system. For this reason, pre-employment programs, skills based training, preparation for employment, and practical support with securing work (Centre for Multicultural Youth, 2015) are beneficial for this group. These provide practical steps to address their disadvantage, providing them with tools to become familiar with job markets and networks that facilitate finding employment.

RAW is offered to government schools with significant numbers of students from the targeted population. Each school nominates a RAW contact person from among their staff who works with external facilitators from JobQuest to co-deliver the program. Students are invited by the RAW contact in each school to participate in the program. Participants range from Years 9-11 and are in mainstream classes.

The RAW program comprises 10 structured sessions, consisting of 6 x 2hr, 4 x 1.5hr sessions usually delivered inside the school, as well as workplace (industry) and community engagement Civic events which take place away from the school. A RAW Resource Kit has also been developed and includes all materials required for program delivery – information handouts and worksheets, planning tools and templates, sample detailed instructions for all interactive components. Activities are mapped against employability skills identified by the Business Council of Australia (BCA) and the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) in the *Employability Skills for the Future* Report (2002). The program can be delivered weekly across a term or in an intensive block, according to the school's preferences and location of the site.

RAW includes industry visits for students where they become immersed in the various operations of sites including leading hotels, clubs and local industry. Students have the opportunity to meet people performing a variety of roles and learn about the range of work opportunities they might consider for their future. Other learning opportunities conducted outside school

sites are FRUIT and SALAD days. FRUIT (Fun, Realistic, Unbiased Industry Teaching) days provide students with hands on and interactive opportunities to engage with guest presenters from a range of professions and industries. Students have the opportunity to ask questions of presenters and also interact with RAW students from other schools. SALAD (Services and Local Agencies Day) allows student to engage in small group activities, visiting local service providers. The interactive and collaborative nature of FRUIT and SALAD days ensures that students' learning about Australian culture and workplaces is conducted in settings they find comfortable. All presenters are made aware of the unique challenges and also interests of the students they are presenting to.

RAW originated in Western Sydney in 2006 as a local partnership between JobQuest (Penrith) and the Department of Education Office. Initially only a small number of secondary schools were selected to participate. The program was made available to all interested western and south western Sydney secondary schools in 2010. It has since expanded to include regional schools in Coffs Harbour, Armidale, Albury, Wagga Wagga and the Illawarra. In 2019, over 400 students from 26 schools were participants in the RAW program.

More than a decade after the RAW initiative and resources were developed, and after rapid expansion of the program beyond its original site, it is timely to gather an understanding of the perceived impact, enablers and barriers of the RAW program. Existing data sets include annual statistical data on scale and reach, partners, schools and demographic information about students. Information has also been collected by DoE from participants via program tools and worksheets (e.g. pre-/post- RAW surveys). However, there is a significant gap in qualitative understandings of the experience and impact of RAW, which the NSW Department of Education and JobQuest wish to address.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHOD

AIMS

The research aimed to interview key stakeholders in order to provide a rich account of the impact of RAW on schools, students, industry and civic organisations, and identify the enablers and barriers to participation in, and success of, RAW. These provide the basis for recommendations for future iterations of RAW. In identifying key stakeholders, it was critical that participants had their own personal experience with RAW to draw on and that participants represented a vertical slice of stakeholders so that perspectives from all levels of involvement were considered in producing the findings and making recommendations.

The research addressed the current impact and delivery of the program in terms of the program emphasis on employability skills. It also documented the evolving needs of stakeholders, particularly in the context of the scaling up of the program.

KEY QUESTIONS

The central questions of the study were:

Research Question 1. What do participants report are the impacts of RAW on schools, students, industry and civic organisations?

Research Question 2. What are the enablers and barriers of participation in RAW and the perceived success of RAW?

METHODOLOGY

The project adopted a developmental open inquiry ‘bottom up’ approach to identify what was of value to stakeholders from their points of view and facilitated an improvement-oriented inquiry to inform the future delivery of RAW (Wadsworth, 2016). With an emphasis on qualitative data, the investigation began with broad questions such as: How are we going? What is happening? What is its value, and to whom? The researchers asked questions that were problem posing and problem solving such as: What is working now? How can the program be improved? (Wadsworth, 2016, p. 71). The answers were not predetermined but developed through an iterative process of asking the widest range of stakeholders: Why are we doing this? How is it effective now and how can it be made more effective and impactful? The aim of the research was to generate comprehensive explanations about the impacts and current contexts of program delivery, and anticipate future directions. This approach is oriented towards improvement and change in program delivery and enables the development of new evaluative criteria pertaining to goals, objectives, aims and activities which extend upon and differ from those that are currently in place (Wadsworth, 2016). Informed by these considerations, interview protocols were drafted and revised in consultation with the Steering Group. They comprised open ended questions about purposes, effects and benefits of the RAW program in a range of work-related domains; evaluations of change as a result of RAW; recommendations for program design, delivery and management; and advice for other schools and students about RAW. In order to facilitate cross-cohort analysis, each cohort was asked by the researchers to respond to a similar set of questions. Their interpretations of the questions varied depending on their perspective in the study. For example, they may have been students considering their own experiences and futures, members of the Steering Group who had observed the evolution of RAW over time, or teachers considering the impact of RAW in their own schools.

Reporting of results also includes two case studies of local impacts. The case studies represent a deep dive into two RAW school sites in which the program had been successfully operating for a number of years. These case studies allowed for a detailed examination of the potential impact of RAW when it is implemented successfully and of the adaptations that can be made to suit local circumstances.

Methods

Interviews and focus groups with selected key stakeholders were the primary source of data for this open inquiry investigation. A 'vertical slice' involving stakeholders from all layers of participation in RAW provided insights from those closest to and furthest from the delivery of RAW and enabled a triangulation of perspectives in order to create a comprehensive understanding of RAW and to validate the accuracy of findings across multiple sources. Responsibility for conducting interviews and focus groups was shared between the three members of the research team.

Focus groups were held with participating students (current and alumni) and with groups of adults involved in delivery – JobQuest, the RAW Steering Group and school staff. Individual interviews were held with adult stakeholders including industry and civic partners, and individuals from JobQuest and the Steering Group who were unable to attend the focus groups. These enabled the researchers to enquire into the participants' impressions of the program, the benefits and challenges they experienced during the program, and any subsequent reflections on the program that had arisen since its conclusion. Focus groups and interviews utilised semi-structured interview protocols and were undertaken in a conversational manner, allowing the participants to dictate the pace and flow of the interaction beyond provisional question prompts. Semi-structured interviews/focus groups allowed the facilitating researcher to pause when required, ask for more details where necessary, ask for participants' recollections and specify where they need more information. Focus groups were more suitable for the student participant cohorts in each school as they allowed young people to build on each other's memories of the program and add further pertinent details of their experiences and aspirations. As the purpose of the study was to gather an understanding of participants' perspectives, the self-report format of the interview and focus group was deemed most appropriate.

To facilitate the production of a small number of case studies, a small sample of participants were purposefully selected to be involved in more detailed interviews. This data was further analysed to produce a detailed narrative about that specific school's engagement with RAW. These two case study schools have had an ongoing commitment to the RAW program, each having engaged their students with RAW over a number of years. They offer insights into implementation of RAW, local challenges, adaptations and potential areas for growth.

Participants

Participant groups were organised into adult and student cohorts in order to meet ethics requirements. Young people in schools were all interviewed in focus groups, rather than individually, and had their parent's or carer's written permission to participate. A total of 38 school students across three schools contributed to the study, compared to the anticipated 24 students in the original study design. The researchers were encouraged by the students' interest in participating and contributing their insights and were able to organise additional focus groups to accommodate this. Students came from diverse language backgrounds and all were ESL learners from refugee and/or recent arrival backgrounds. These were prerequisites that schools used to nominate students for RAW. Two of the schools were unable to make contact with alumni who had since left the school, however the third school organised a focus group of RAW alumni.

In each school, adult participants included the RAW coordinator and, where possible, one or two other teachers who had intimate knowledge of RAW. Overall, six school based teacher participants contributed to the study. Individual interviews were undertaken with three representatives from different industry and civic partner organisations, each individual speaking to their organisation’s involvement in and perspective on RAW. The third stakeholder group comprising people involved in designing, delivering and managing RAW, included eleven participants altogether from JobQuest and the RAW Steering Group.

Table 1. Number of participants per stakeholder group

PARTICIPANT GROUP	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
Current students	32
Alumni students	6
School staff	6
JobQuest staff	5
Industry and civic partners	3
RAW Steering Group members	6
TOTAL	58

Research sites

Three clusters of stakeholders were of interest in this study: schools, industry and civics partners, and RAW organisers. Three secondary schools that each had extensive involvement with RAW were selected as research sites for the school-based component of the study. There were two metro high schools and one regional high school. One school implemented RAW within within its Intensive English Centre (IEC), another made RAW available to Year 11 and 12 students only. Each of the schools had insights not only from their experiences over time, but also because of the adaptations to delivery that they had made to suit their contexts and the needs of their students. The industry and civic partners cohort included a business networking organisation, and two of the growing number of civic organisations that partner with the program, the Museum of Contemporary Arts and the Department of Environment and Heritage. Each of these partners is involved in Civics Days and the FRUIT and SALAD activities away from schools that are a crucial component of the RAW program. The final stakeholder group comprised organisations, groups and individuals who were directly involved in auspicing, managing and advocating for RAW. These included JobQuest and the RAW Steering Group. Their rich insights into the origins, purposes and evolution of RAW as it has extended beyond its original region were essential for deep understanding of the program.

Data Collection

The sampling procedure was purposeful in order to recruit stakeholders with extensive involvement with RAW who were well positioned to provide insight into their experience of the program. Ethical approval to conduct the study was received from Western Sydney University and the NSW Department of Education. Approval required anonymity of individual participants and results were required to be reported in aggregated form to the Department of Education.

The adult participants were initially approached by the research team and asked to participate in the study. They received the participant information sheet and consent form by email. Student participants were invited to participate by the RAW coordinator in their school who distributed the participant information sheet and consent form for them to take home to their parents or carers. For students, prior to participating in the research, parental written consent was acquired. Additionally, verbal consent was obtained from the young person at the beginning of each focus group. Students were assured that if they did not wish to participate, or they chose to stop the interview, there would be no consequences for their relationship with the staff at their school or with RAW.

Interviews and focus groups were conducted by a member of the research team in situ in schools and other workplaces at a time that was convenient for participants. With permission of participants, digital audio recordings were made for later transcription and analysis. In each school, two focus groups were held with different groups of students. Sizes ranged from four to eight students ensuring a diversity of insights and opinions. As the RAW program was running within the schools at the time of the focus groups, most student participants were part way through the RAW program at the time of the focus group and while their insights were fresh and immediate, they had not yet experienced all components of the program. In order to get a sense of the culminating components of the program, one member of the research team attended the FRUIT Day when participating schools came together on one site for a full day after the in-school component of the program. Additionally, in one school, a focus group was conducted with a cohort of alumni who were able to reflect on the program as a whole and its ongoing impacts. In each school a focus group or interview was also held with between one and three teachers, including the RAW coordinator at the school. In total, interviews and focus groups from school-based participants totalled 332 mins (just under 6 hrs). Individual interviews were held at workplaces of the people within industry organisations who had been most closely involved in partnering with and facilitating connections with the RAW program. The three interviews with industry and civic partners totalled 144 mins (almost 2 ½ hours). The final stakeholder group of organisations, groups and individuals involved in RAW participated in individual and focus group interviews at suitable times, for example to coincide with scheduled RAW Steering Group meetings and JobQuest training. Individual interviews were held with the JobQuest CEO and a key member of the RAW Steering Group who had been unable to attend the scheduled focus group. In total, the final group of stakeholders produced 338 mins (almost 6 hrs).

Data Analysis

Focus group and interview digital recordings were transcribed and analysed for meanings that contributed to the findings of the study in response to the central research questions. While the research questions of the study focused specifically on the impact of the RAW program, research literature on school-to-work transitions also alerted the researchers to further important issues relating to young people from refugee backgrounds. The research questions and literature generated provisional codes which were then compared with the actual data and refined (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2013). Therefore, the process of coding transcripts for significant themes and patterns drew on both a priori or pre-set 'top-down' coding from concepts in the literature, and emergent 'bottom-up' codes that were derived from the data and unique to this study. Coding the data involved labelling and grouping small sections which were initially allocated a descriptive code. This form of content analysis (McNiff, 2016) creates a type of 'open coding' (Strauss & Corbin, 2008; Urquhart, 2013) to allow for easier interpretation and to enable theory to be generated from the data as well as imposed on the data. Once codes were assigned and tested manually, all transcripts were entered into NVivo qualitative data analysis software. The next layer of interpretation of the data applied selective analytical coding (Strauss & Corbin,

2008) to move beyond description or summaries of what participants had said, for themes that allowed for interpretation and understanding. Provisional themes were identified from research literature and further themes emerged from the transcripts. Nvivo software enabled clustering of particular themes and subthemes across and between cohorts of participants. Codes were adjusted and refined through the process of analysis, which led to precise sub-themes being identified. Each of these was coded and tracked through the individual interviews with sub themes identified and annotations made to identify ambiguities, interesting comments and exemplary quotes.

Analyses have been undertaken within groups (students, schools, industry and civic partners, RAW stakeholders) as well as across groups in order to examine how perspectives may differ.

Findings are reported according to themes, in the Findings chapters below.

An additional pass through data enabled the researchers to produce a small number of narrative case studies. Two cases were developed representing one metropolitan site and one regional site. They were selected in order to capture distinct and unique characteristics of RAW from schools that have committed to the program over a number of years. These two sites were engaged in longer, more detailed interviews and the data was analysed in more detail to elucidate the successful characteristics of RAW, its challenges as experienced over a number of years and potential for growth in a supportive environment. These are presented in narrative form in the Findings chapters below.

CHAPTER 3: FINDINGS OF IMPACT

RESEARCH QUESTION 1: IMPACTS OF RAW

The first research question for this study addressed the *impacts* of RAW on participating individuals and organisations. Discussion in this section is organised around these groups: schools, students, industry and civic organisations.

Impacts of RAW on schools

Table 2. Summary of reported impacts of RAW on schools

RAW brokers and strengthens links between teachers, students and external organisations that lead to improved understanding of career and vocational needs of students from refugee backgrounds.

Teacher learning during RAW delivery was significant though contingent on the extent of their participation in RAW.

Teacher learning was in three main areas:

- (i) learning about active student-centred pedagogies for career education (hands-on collaborative learning approaches);
- (ii) increased knowledge of careers and vocational training, pathways, transitions and the needs and potentials of students from refugee backgrounds;
- (iii) getting to know students from refugee backgrounds as a foundation for continuing career-focused conversations

RAW complements and deepens current career and vocational education at the school.

RAW is tailored for students from refugee and new arrival backgrounds and fills in gaps in provision for this cohort of students.

As a program that is codesigned and funded by Department of Education, RAW meets Department of Education and individual school needs and priorities.

The impact on schools was the most reported outcome across all our cohorts. This included impacts on teachers' approaches to learning, knowledge, confidence, skills and understanding of issues around careers advice and vocational education. Positive impacts on schools reinforce and extend impacts on students.

Most significantly the RAW program was positioned as *brokering links* at many levels. Within schools it forged and enhanced links between teachers and students, between teachers with different responsibilities and expertise, between students and students, and between teachers and students and executive staff. All of these led to improved outcomes for young people from refugee backgrounds and to rich ongoing conversations about post-school pathways that continued beyond the program. RAW also facilitated important networks amongst schools, and between schools, industry and civic partners.

Teacher learning and involvement

Teacher learning during RAW delivery was significant though contingent on the extent of their participation in RAW. Impacts on teachers varied according to their backgrounds and the extent of involvement in the delivery of the RAW program in schools. Teachers are always involved to the extent that duty of care, permissions, timetables, rooms and so on must be organised

within the school, and usually teachers are present in order to monitor behaviour, however participation within the delivery of the program can vary widely. Where teaching staff are consistently present throughout the RAW program, actively involved and seen to be interested by participating students, the impact was greatest and continued well beyond the program. The more 'proactive' teachers are during the delivery of the RAW program, for example by helping with group activities, the greater the impact is likely to be on them and on their students. In some locations, particularly in regional schools, engagement was even higher with teachers involved in co-facilitating or leading the RAW program and designing engagement within local communities as part of the RAW program.

In regional areas it's been more successful, and I think what we've concluded is that they're used to doing things a bit more by themselves and also that they have a smaller, more identifiable community to call on.

(RAW Steering Group member)

Teachers involved in RAW tended to fall into two main groups with different specialisations, careers advisers or vocational education teachers, and EAL/D specialist teachers. This led to different learnings from the program for each of these groups. While career or vocational education teachers involved in RAW may already have good understandings of career pathways and trajectories, including pathways into higher education, their new learning was often pedagogical. The RAW program differed in its approach to learning from usual school-based learning and, through experiencing RAW activities and observing high levels of student participation in them, these teachers learned how hands-on and collaborative learning could be harnessed for vocational education.

Seeing how much the kids were engaged while learning by doing instead of just talk and talk all the time was really good as well. (JobQuest)

Careers advisers, who are responsible for vocational education in NSW secondary schools, tend to work with students across a school so the RAW program brought them closer to students they may not have previously known well, and they were able to better cater for their particular needs. This can have an ongoing impact in the school. As students' commitments to their future pathways become more visible, and they have increased understanding of the processes and requirements for job seeking, the engagement of these students with teachers continues:

Now we've got [RAW] – I've been inundated with students; can you please help me? In terms of, what do I need to ask when I go to the employer? Or, what do I need to include in my resume? If they haven't got it up to date. So for me to have that learning was really significant and something that I'm interested in anyway. (Teacher)

The involvement of careers advisers in program delivery varies from school to school, but their presence, at least part of the time, can be 'a vital key' as students are more likely to follow up with them when they are familiar with them. In contrast, students are reluctant to approach 'a faceless careers adviser that sits in a room that they've never spoken to' (JobQuest).

The second group of teachers who are involved in RAW delivery are EAL/D specialist teachers. These teachers increased their knowledge significantly about aspects of vocational education including career pathways and transitions, job seeking skills and employment requirements. As they tended to know their students very well, they were often the teachers to whom this cohort of students will go to with concerns about their futures, some too 'shy' to go to the careers adviser initially. RAW provides EAL/D teachers with greater confidence in recognising and addressing vocational education as an important focus for their students' learning. While EAL/D teachers are often focused on improving proficiency in academic English to ensure good outcomes for

the HSC, their better knowledge of vocational pathways and alternative pathways can be highly beneficial for students:

[Students] might want to go to uni but, in the short-term, there might be a better way for them to go. So, it helps – because they often have close relationships with students, and so it would, I imagine help them to sort of calm – to alleviate some of the pressure that’s on some students to do well in Years 11 and 12.

(RAW Steering Group member)

An important intention of the RAW program since its inception has been the active involvement of teachers and schools in delivering the RAW program. Currently JobQuest delivers RAW in each school site, with teachers usually present and often active in the delivery. However, it is also feasible that the RAW program could be delivered by teachers. A representative from JobQuest describes this as ‘always part of the design’ and explains that they had envisaged that, after it has been delivered several times in the school ‘then by the second year, the schools should be able to have their own teachers or their own personnel to deliver the RAW Program’ (JobQuest). JobQuest intended to ‘work ourselves out of the direct delivery’ and instead to become ‘the support and the resource agency’. Reflecting on that initial intention, the JobQuest representative sees that it may have been ‘naïve’ or not taken sufficient account of the complexity of schools and their unique cultures and ways of doing things. In any case schools have not taken up that option, and where teachers have been trained to deliver RAW, staff turnover has meant that schools have continued to depend on JobQuest as the direct deliverers of the program. As the researchers did not speak to any teachers or school personnel who had delivered the RAW program without JobQuest, we were unable to ascertain what difference this intentional gradual release of responsibility might have meant. There is a clear preference across schools for RAW to ‘complement and supplement’ what schools are doing in work education, rather than to be incorporated directly into existing programs. Potentially, funding that enables RAW implementation and workload factors within schools favour external delivery arrangements. However, all RAW resources are available on the JobQuest website to assist schools that may want to use materials independently.

Complementing career education

RAW complements and deepens current career and vocational education at the school. Importantly, participation in RAW promotes purposeful conversations around the future that continue well beyond the program. It can contribute to teachers’ understanding of the impact of refugee experiences. Participating teachers are more effective in their interactions with students, including understanding the implications of subject selection in senior school on future options. RAW can ‘relieve a bit of the burden’ for schools in terms of helping students and teachers better understand these choices. This means that:

[Students are] making more informed decisions and it means they’re going to do less chopping and changing and ... less time spent for the school in terms of having those conversations with them again and again until they understand. (JobQuest)

Teachers noted that usual processes for subject selection in year 10 are ‘manifestly inadequate’ for these students, with consequences that can ‘have a massive ripple effect across the next two years’ (Teacher). Doing RAW early in Year 10 enables students and teachers to develop and maintain a clear focus on future goals.

Many of the resources and tools that teachers acquire through the participation of industry and civic partners in the FRUIT and SALAD days also have direct impact back in the school. Executive at the school are also impacted when they attend the final presentation day, where

they are able to observe and recognise the capacities of these students as they engage with external organisations. Overall, involvement in RAW is perceived as a ‘win for everybody involved’.

RAW can also complement career education in terms of preparation and refinement of careers related documents such as resumes. However, there was some ambivalence about using RAW for this purpose expressed by providers and by the Steering Group. Preparing a resume is an activity that is likely to be repeated in different curriculum contexts in secondary schools. Schools that are overly focused on a product, such as a resume, as an outcome of RAW may take time away from the hands-on learning through interaction that is a powerful component of RAW. This may risk the integrity and difference of what RAW is able to offer in a school. This is a matter of the limited time available for RAW delivery. One RAW facilitator said that:

I’ve got no problem with – we show them what a resume is, get them to write on a proforma, then they ... take that back to your careers adviser the next day, the next week and work with your careers adviser to do that; versus [during RAW delivery] it’s nigh on impossible for us even with multiple staff to make that happen quickly.

What RAW offers in terms of interactive learning about careers and job preparedness is distinct from the usual activities that all students engage in during career education at school.

Specific focus on students from refugee backgrounds

Teachers remarked on the different focus that RAW brought beyond conventional approaches to vocational training. As this is a tailored program for students from refugee and new arrival backgrounds, no assumptions about prior knowledge of workplace cultures are made. Aspects which may seem ‘obvious’ or be covered ‘superficially’ in conventional vocational training are directly addressed in the RAW program, which fills ‘gaps’ in young people’s knowledge about Australian workplace environments. This cohort of students was identified as ‘a very vulnerable group’ that schools often struggle to support. A ‘blanket’ approach may not adequately meet their needs.

Selection of students for RAW from refugee backgrounds is important, however schools vary in terms of the data that is made available to teachers when they are selecting participants. Participation in EAL/D (English as an additional language or dialect) classes may be proxy for both recent arrival and refugee backgrounds. While teachers working in Intensive English Centres tend to have the most detailed information about their students, the transition from an IEC into a mainstream school can mean that information is less reliable or detailed. Schools may also make decisions that EAL/D students who may not be from a refugee background are also in need of the targeted support that RAW offers. The program’s focus on students from refugee backgrounds is a strength that was identified by many participants in this study. Targeted selection increases its impact:

They don’t really know what to do for refugee kids. You’re like, what do I do for you? What do you need? I think that after a program like this, you can go, that kid’s definitely going to uni because they – you can see that. Then you can go, okay, now I know that Mohammed really needs a bit of transition. It gives you that idea and you get to know the kids better. I didn’t realise what a luxury it was here. (Teacher)

One of the participating schools ran a weekly career lesson on Wednesdays for year 10 students and RAW was seen as a complement that took students ‘to the next level’, particularly through hands-on student-centred activities such as role-plays. This approach enabled them to develop workplace skills beyond their usual careers education which emphasises delivery of information.

RAW also supports messages that students may have received from their teachers, as external providers involved in RAW are ‘from the outside real world’ and have a different sort of authority to teachers.

Meeting Department of Education and school priorities

RAW meets Department of Education and individual school needs and priorities. Importantly RAW was initiated by the Department of Education to meet an identified challenge that schools were facing, and was co-developed with the external provider JobQuest to respond to that challenge. At its inception, there were concerns that EAL/D students were ‘falling by the wayside’ when it came to work experience (Teacher). Now schools apply for RAW each year, and have some opportunity to modify the delivery for their students, it is seen to respond to identified needs, and is in line with curriculum and school strategic planning. With the RAW Coordinator being a school-based teacher and the RAW Steering Group including senior Department of Education members, all of these factors contribute to the continuing relevance of RAW and the impact that RAW has in any particular school.

This sounds so great and it’s from the department. I was like, I don’t have to worry about it, it’s a department program and it is something which is in line with our curriculum and it is for our students’ benefit and we need that. It targets a lot of our school’s needs. It meets our school’s needs so it’s fantastic. (Teacher)

Impacts of RAW on students

Table 3. Summary of reported impacts of RAW on students

RAW increases students’ knowledge about all aspects of work.

Students’ understandings of potential vocational pathways are broadened through RAW. It is unclear whether this understanding is filtering through to families.

Sustained attention over time beyond the RAW program is important to change deep seated ideas about desirable vocational pathways.

Flexibility of routes to university, and perceptions of time required to get to their goals are important outcomes from RAW.

The hands-on personalised learning approach of RAW increases its impact on students.

The ongoing impacts of RAW are influenced by family perceptions.

Student choice and agency is central to RAW.

Students’ work preparedness is enhanced through RAW, including hard vocational skills and soft employability skills.

Through participation in RAW, students increase their confidence in work related behaviours and more broadly.

RAW positions students for employment in the open market and helps their resilience in applying for jobs.

RAW helps students to recognise the skills, personal attributes and assets they already have.

The current RAW students at the three schools in this study were in year 10 and year 11. A small group of alumni at one school provided some insights into the impact of RAW over time. All the groups in the study spoke extensively about the impact of the program on participating students.

Expanding knowledge of all aspects of work

Participants agreed that RAW increases students' knowledge about work. It helps students learn 'how you get work, how you stay in work, and different kinds of pathways that you can get to where you want to go' (RAW Steering Group member). This information is crucial for making effective decisions and transition plans for the future. Knowledge acquired through RAW ranged from pragmatic and immediate matters, such as expectations of punctuality and personal presentation in the workplace, through to more complex appreciation of a much wider ecology of vocational opportunity.

Expanding vocational pathways

Expanding understandings of vocational pathways was the most significant impact, mentioned by all participants. RAW students tend to fix their sights on a narrow range of high-status occupations with demanding academic prerequisites reflecting a lack of knowledge of the diverse occupational opportunities in Australia. Rather than misplaced aspirations, this could reflect the significance of economic and cultural factors or limited education opportunities (if they were based in refugee camps for an extended period of time) prior to settlement:

We talk to a lot of RAW students, [we] say, what do you want to do? They say, I want to be a lawyer or doctor. Because those are the only occupations they know. (JobQuest)

The risk is then that students are locked in to linear and narrow pathways which may set them up for failure or may not be a good match for their individual interests, skills and dispositions. Risks of poor decisions that were mentioned by participants include 'massive HECs debts', wasted time, disappointment or 'desolation' and loss of motivation.

As the pinnacles of professional aspiration, doctors and lawyers appeared repeatedly through the project interviews. These pertained to teachers' discussions of students' aspirations and also to teachers' perceptions of the views of students' families.

Their parents have very high expectations that they're just automatically going to be able to go to university and become doctors or lawyers, and having those conversations, both with students and, if possible, with parents around what work looks like in Australia and the opportunities that are available. (Teacher)

However it is more complex than merely having high expectations. One teacher explained that parents tend to have a binary view of careers shaped by their experiences in their countries of origin, that is, they see just two routes to the future:

You got into uni or you didn't get into uni, there was no in between. The whole notion of a pathway to university for their parents makes no sense, you either work with your hands or you go to university, there's no pathway in between (Teacher).

Life in Australia was seen to entail the promise of a prestigious occupation: 'Because you're in the lucky country now, you can be a doctor, why can't you be a doctor?' (Teacher).

This was perceived by career advisers to be unrealistic and unsuitable for many students, not only those from refugee backgrounds. Workplace providers also mentioned that parents did not recognise that part time work could support students while they are studying, or that apprenticeships and traineeships can lead to successful transitions into the workforce. Both part-time work and supported vocational experience pathways appear to be under-valued within the families of young people from refugee backgrounds.

Sustained attention over time

Expanding horizons and opportunities in the imaginations of young people and their families requires sustained attention over time. Notions of social status, professional hierarchies, security and the academic pathways that lead to high status professions are 'deep seated beliefs' and, as one teacher noted, 'you can't change someone's mind just by telling them'. Rather, schools need to keep focus on career education for these young people and their families:

You need to chip away at it. You plant the seed and then you come back and water it and you keep doing that. I think that the RAW program's really crucial in growing that plant (Teacher).

Another teacher talked about this as a 'termite' process, where you keep on 'nibbling away' with understandings about vocational diversity. Teachers insisted that an alternative career path should not be considered as a 'consolation prize' to be offered half way through Year 12 but as a worthwhile aspiration in itself, with rewards and opportunities commensurate with a successful transition to the future. This requires continuing opportunities to emphasise and expose students to diverse pathways, such as previous students from refugee backgrounds visiting to talk about their career trajectories. Although the RAW program has some immediate effect, the impact on students depends on the work that is done back at school to reinforce and extend the learning.

Flexible routes to the future

Flexible approaches to careers are important for students from refugee backgrounds. RAW helps students to understand and navigate personalised routes to their desired futures. Teachers at all schools mentioned previous students who had articulated pathways towards their desired professions through university College entry, EVET and TAFE. A teacher described the consequences of a poor choice for one student:

[She is] just finding university too hard, doing a course that is too challenging for her, that she wasn't ready for ... I was pushing for her to go to UOW College, which was a much more realistic pathway and would have gotten her ready for that. Their first exposure to UOW College, which some of them are at now, was through the RAW program. (Teacher).

These alternative and well scaffolded post school routes into university entered the awareness of the students through learning that started with RAW. Teachers also mentioned that students need to understand that it may take a little longer to reach their goal, and that lifelong learning allows people to study and re-enter the workforce at different times that can better suit their lives, and to adjust their career intentions over time.

For current RAW students, a rapid expansion in their understandings of possibilities for the future was apparent. Even after just two days in RAW, students were able to talk confidently about career pathways. They appeared to have rethought processes of career choice so that they could consider clusters of related careers in a sector (for example 'Health and Medical' rather than 'Doctor') and were able to evaluate their own interests and skills as a starting point for thinking about career paths. Some students in the regional school had become more attracted

to trades pathways such as plumbing and building after completing their RAW program at the local TAFE. Students in the IEC described a wide range of potential careers including: doctor, dentist, nurse, surgeon, plumber, mechanic, accountant, police, accountant, engineer, make-up artist, flight attendant, mechanic, and entrepreneur. They began to describe pathways, rather than just naming career endpoints, and TAFE/EVET qualifications were understood as steps in the route towards university and their career rather than as an alternative:

Student 1: It depends [on what year I should go]. If I'll go to Year 10, I will finish everything and I will go to TAFE, I will do accounting ... So, I will do Certificate III and IV and then I will go to uni. But if I ... [stay on at school into Year 11], I would complete Year 11/12 and then go to uni directly.

(Year 10 student)

Student 2: I want to go to TAFE and I want to finish off my Certificate III pathology. After TAFE I want to enter into the uni for medicine, nursing programs ... Yeah, blood test in the lab. (Year 10 student)

Students also had a better understanding of the process of seeking work through RAW and had developed 'work place literacy.' The program steps them through how work-related skills and career choices connect to personal attributes. They learn about career pathways, practice skills and create work-related items like resumes. It is important for the students to understand that developing and implementing a career plan involves a sequence of steps that build systematically on one another:

Understanding things as a bit of a sequence or as a trajectory, so knowing where you want to go first to study. Then knowing how you're going to look for this job and then knowing how you're going to apply for it, and then how you're going to interview for it. So understanding that as a whole process, as a step by step thing, rather than it being disjointed or out of sequence.

(JobQuest)

Students also acquired greater knowledge about the job market in Australia, in terms of where jobs might be available and what those jobs might be. Job Quest staff suggested that students would be more likely to move beyond their 'comfort zone' and consider visiting and working in different parts of Australia, or taking up professions that might be unconventional in their countries of origin. For example, after meeting a female police officer during RAW, and recognising that multilingualism could be a career asset in that profession, four girls expressed interest in pursuing policing as a career.

Personalised and hands-on learning

The impact of RAW on students is enhanced by the personalised approaches of FRUIT and SALAD days and Civics/Industry Day visits when students meet people from various professions and hear their career stories. For example, a visit to Parliament house and meeting with a female MP from an immigrant background led to a RAW student expressing the desire to school staff that she wanted a career in politics. Personal stories from industry also dispel misperceptions for example that a head chef 'has got it together and knew, from when they were 15 that they were going to be a head chef' (Industry partner). Instead students learn to recognise that career pathways and trajectories emerge through a combination of planning, work and opportunity.

On-going impacts of RAW

Current students were able to articulate their change in thinking about career pathways as a result of the RAW Program. The alumni group in Year 11 at one school who had completed RAW in the previous year had not changed their intentions and still intended to go to university.

They now understood that for some jobs, TAFE or College was more suitable than a university pathway. However, they thought that university would make it 'easier' to get a job, would lead to a 'better' job, and would mean a 'high income'. They all felt that they had gained practical work-related skills as result of RAW, including communication and problem solving skills, presentation skills and resumes.

As one student pointed out, she had needed real life practical information about the world of work and she had not previously received it or even realised that she needed it. Before RAW, 'No one told me about this. I didn't ask about this. I didn't care about it too much' (Yr11 student).

The continuing impact of RAW on students is also influenced by family perceptions. Although students may learn more expansive notions of career pathways, these were not necessarily understood by parents. Students in RAW may be conduits of information to their families but decisions about the future are made collaboratively. One student described a discussion with a parent:

Like my mum really stressed about university. Go to university, you should finish school, go university. So, I just – I told her about the TAFE. Maybe I can do nursing course at the TAFE and then I can move to university. ... She said oh no, but you should go to university. (Yr 10 student)

Communications with families about the expanded opportunities and likely road to success that alternative pathways provide should be prioritised in order to support the learning students gain through RAW. Parents should not perceive that students are being redirected to less ambitious pathways or diminished aspirations through RAW. The 'seeds' that RAW plants and that the school continues to cultivate with students could also be nurtured with parents and community. While this is not a responsibility of the RAW program, developing communication strategies to better engage parents from refugee backgrounds will be of benefit to schools. It is crucial that what teachers see as 'realistic' pathways for their children are not positioned as lesser pathways by parents.

Student choice and agency

Throughout RAW, student choice and decision making about their futures is respected. Adults involved with RAW both in and out of schools emphasised that students are not discouraged from setting and pursuing their own career goals. Rather, RAW provided opportunities to learn more about the parameters surrounding those choices. Students become better informed about those choices.

It's not that we want to talk them out of their aspirations either, it's not, but once you explain to them even the pathway after school in terms of getting towards these careers – what's needed, what pre-requisites are, what examinations you have to sit to get entry into course, the length of the course – getting into those sort of details can be a bit of a eye-opener. (JobQuest)

This information may suggest to students that they recalibrate their intention or their timeline, that they adjust their focus in their senior years at schools, or that they expand the breadth of possibilities across the vocational field of interest. RAW could be understood as enhancing student agency about their futures by equipping them for better informed decision-making.

Work Ready

The impact of RAW on students was enhanced because of the program design. Current students described it as having a different emphasis than their other career education experiences. Employment had been perceived at a distance, as an outcome of university completion, in

‘a conventional approach’ which assumes that during school, a student should concentrate on studying for university entrance, then on university studies once they have been accepted, and then move into a job after university. However, RAW shifted the emphasis to ‘make you think more in detail, not just vaguely about your plans’ (Year 11 student). It also encouraged them to think about work alongside study, not just after they had finished studying. Students immersed in the RAW program talked about how they were now considering ‘human attributes’, attitudes and career suitability. One student described how the career quiz had reinforced his interest in animation and made him ‘more certain’ and more willing to ‘push through’ any difficulties, and also to explore ‘more ideas in that category’. The need to ‘research your industry’ in order to understand its requirements and gauge how your interests and skills might match these, was a strong message from the industry partners.

Importantly, RAW emphasises diffuse or ‘soft employability skills’, such as communication, collaboration, and problem-solving¹, as well as specific vocational skills. Students described the important skills they had practiced through the RAW program such as answering interview questions, role-plays, team building and communication challenges. These were ‘easy and fun ways’, in which they could better understand work-related learning. This meant they felt ‘happy that you know what you’re doing’ (Yr 10 student). Students described the active hands-on learning of skills they may have already touched on at school as now being ‘covered physically this time which is better’ (Yr 10 student), or ‘not just actually saying it but practically, actually making them alive’ (Yr 11 student).

Confidence

An increase in confidence was an important consequence and intention of RAW. Many examples were given by teachers and confidence was mentioned repeatedly by students and others involved with RAW. Even in short visits to civic partner organisations, students who are timid on arrival are ‘amazing’ in the capacities they demonstrate to open up and share their ‘really important’ and ‘extremely diverse stories’ with peers and strangers.

Increased confidence was described in the success stories about current and previous RAW participants. For example, a student who is now in a university pathway college acquired skills and confidence in public speaking that contributed to his current success.

xxx will tell you “before RAW I couldn’t get up and speak in front of people and now I do it all the time” and I bet you he’s even more so now. So, I know he got skills from RAW that would have put him in a much better place to start at The College. ... I heard him being interviewed and I thought, hard to believe you could never stand up and talk in front of a class’. (Teacher)

Students’ oral skills and competence develop through the RAW program so that they are better able to approach potential employers and seek out information. One student reported her successful approach to a local business during the RAW program:

The same day I went to café and asked if they able to take students and she asked me why you want it. So, I said because I like it, I want to do it, the same day ... She said ah okay. (Yr 10 student)

Another aspect of confidence-building is related to reassuring students that it is normal to be nervous. Having exposure to workplaces, industry visits, and opportunities to ask questions in a supportive environment helps students to recognise:

¹ Also called transferable skills, enterprise skills and 21st century skills by participants.

Yep, this is what I need, or I can work here. I can do this, doesn't matter if I'm male or female, doesn't matter if my English is not great at the minute, I can learn, I can communicate, I can get those skills. (Industry partner)

Increasing students' confidence in their capacities to succeed is also important for maintaining and deepening student engagement in education broadly. From this perspective, RAW can be understood as an educational intervention that is targeted to a potentially vulnerable cohort of students:

For a minority of the students, they may not be able to succeed without the RAW program ... they may just give up and they may not be able to adapt at all. Those are the problems that we need to avoid, because we would be really worried if they drop out, they could lose a lot of the opportunities that are afforded to them in the school system. (JobQuest)

Employability and resilience

RAW increases students' employability and resilience in the market. Some current RAW students already work for family or friends of family from within the same migrant community, for example in restaurants and pharmacies. However, these word-of-mouth strategies for securing employment did not provide students with skills to compete in the open job market. Some students had completed school sponsored work placements but not known how to follow these up to secure ongoing part-time work. For example, after a successful week working at Coles, one student said that he didn't get a job there because he didn't know how to do a resume and covering letter. Students who had unsuccessfully applied for part-time work, learned how to contextualise the experience:

A few months ago I had an interview with KFC, but I didn't get the job because I didn't [do] proper research ... But this RAW program, they tell me the importance of communication, research and stuff. (Yr 11 student)

This student decided to try again with KFC after the RAW program had taught him more about workplace communications and protocols.

Assets-oriented approach

RAW is not only about acquiring skills, it is also about recognising and reconfiguring skills and interests that students already have. It helps students to see that their previous experiences can be made relevant in a workplace. In this regard it could be described as having an assets-based approach to what young people from refugee backgrounds bring with them to their education and to the workforce. Through the RAW activities, they come to understand that 'they already have some of the skills, it helps them identify the skills that they already have that they can sell' (RAW Steering Group member). When students practice articulating these in an interview situation or resume, or framing these in the context of a particular profession, they become more confident and adept at promoting themselves. They also become better at evaluating and accounting for weaknesses. They begin to build industry contacts through the FRUIT and SALAD days as they meet employers, and are encouraged to follow through with them.



FRUIT Day 2019

Impacts of RAW on industry partners

Table 4. Summary of reported impacts of RAW on industry partners

RAW helps businesses reach out to schools to inform students accurately about requirements and reassure and encourage them.

Industry visits emphasise diversity of employment opportunities and pathways.

Industry visits can provide pathways directly into employment.

Reaching to families is important to ensure that families understand the breadth of work opportunities that are available.

Work experience is important for the RAW program. The original intention of RAW was to better prepare students from refugee backgrounds for their individual work experience placements. However, work experience provision varies from school to school in NSW. It can be arranged at any time across years 9, 10, 11 or 12. It may be a discrete work experience placement (usually one week full-time) or a mandatory work placement over time for students studying HSC vocational or VET courses (Department of Education, 2016). Benefits for employers include promotion of their industry, career paths, promoting workforce attitudes and skills, raising the quality of entrants to industry and identifying young people with potential (Department of Education, 2016, p. 4). For students, work experience provides an introduction to the 'world of work' (p. 3). Students are evaluated and provided with feedback on their performance, and employers are advised that first experiences of work should be 'both challenging and rewarding' (p. 2). The quality of a young person's work experience is pivotal to their relationship with employment in the future, their motivation and engagement with their studies, their career choices and plans, and their overall confidence and sense of themselves as future workers. This is particularly so for students from refugee backgrounds who have had limited exposure to work in the Australian context. The RAW program incorporates exposure to the workplace through the FRUIT and SALAD days, where groups of students visit interesting work places and where employers come together with students for a centralised exposure to the diversity of career possibilities.

Industry partners had been an intended target of the research design, and the researchers had initially planned to interview employers and workplaces attached to each of the case study schools. However, as work experience was organised separately from RAW, within the broader provision of workplace learning opportunities for school students, this was not possible

Southern Sydney Business Education Network arrange work place visits and excursions at businesses and local industries for for students participating in the RAW program. Tours typically are a day event with students visiting up to three businesses. The interview with the SSBEN provided many insights into the industry perspective. Additional information about the impact of industry visits on RAW students was provided by email.

Industry reaching out to schools and students

Academic achievement is not the only important aspect of work readiness. Exposure to industry is also important for teachers so they are better informed of opportunities for their students. SSBEN stressed that industries often have difficulties connecting with schools and with students. Work placement programs provide opportunities for these connections to develop. Employers rely on 'exposure within schools' so they can say:

Here we are, this is what you need, these are the skills you need. We're happy to train you, but if you turn up on time, have a positive attitude, we'll guide you, we'll put you through your apprenticeship.

Communication with industry representatives also means that students are reassured and informed about many aspects of work. For example, hearing first hand experiences from industry leaders that 'they really didn't know what they wanted to do when they were 16 or 17', until a work placement 'opened their mind up to an industry' can leave a lasting impression on students.

Industry visits reinforce key messages such as that a positive attitude and willingness to learn are considered to be more important than background or level of English, as language will improve over time. Students are able to ask direct questions about practical aspects of work like salary, working days and hours from people who are in those jobs, who can then emphasise the importance of passion for the job. Students learn about the potential for job satisfaction from people who love their jobs. They learn about how to apply for these jobs, on the job training and progress through a career. This direct exposure can help cut through the 'white noise' of websites, and confusing information about colleges, certificates and training costs.

SSBEN were also able to provide participants with ongoing information about traineeships and apprenticeships. SSBEN was keen to provide ongoing support to students and their teachers, in the form of career packs and resume building tools.

The RAW program industry tours can be a way of reaching interested young people and encouraging them into the profession. The students from refugee backgrounds involved in RAW are therefore assets for industry. SSBEN stressed that students from such backgrounds have already taken a 'huge step' in moving between countries, and they are 'really going to work hard and maximise that opportunity'. Employers who recognise that they are hosting students from refugee backgrounds can develop a little more empathy and patience. Teachers' knowledge of the students can also help broker a suitable placement. For example, a student who is shy or nervous might be placed in a business that is not too busy and the employer has time to help, while a very outgoing, confident student might be placed at the Hilton.

Diversity of opportunities

Industry visits have included a wide range of sites that students would not otherwise be able to experience from the hospitality industry through to large retailers like Coles and Woolworths

through to scientific organisations. They have visited ABC studios, metal fabrication companies, Accor group Novotel, Miranda RSL and the Bankstown Sports Club. At the ABC they had experiences as mock presenters of news, sports and weather. In the hospitality sites, they toured venues and kitchens, and spoke to people in a range of positions from CEO or manager through to apprentices. They have visited Australia's Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) at Lucas Heights and learned about careers in Science, and programs that are offered to encourage women into STEM. Testimonials from schools provided additional detail about the impact of these visits. Students were described by their teachers as having had an 'amazing experience', being 'happy and thankful' and 'excited' at the new possibilities they had learned about, the realisation that a degree is not required for all jobs, recognition that their ESL backgrounds could be advantageous in the labour market, and being impressed at the accessibility and kindness of the people they met.



Industry visit 2019

Pathways into employment

On the industry visits, SSBEN emphasise to students that industry placements can be pathways directly into employment. This can also be encouraging and confidence building for students who are yet to do a formal work placement. SSBEN advises students that:

If you ever go out on work experience, or work placement and you love it, at the end of the week, tell your supervisor, or your chef, I want a job. Are there any opportunities? ... Be direct. Do you have any jobs, are you looking for casual workers?

Work becomes something that does not appear only on a distant horizon, after school is finished. It is normalised so that casual work might be possible for students who are still studying. It can provide a taster of an industry they might be interested in pursuing. They look forward to future work placements and the opportunities to undertake vocational training in year 11 and 12.

Although SSBEN organises individual work placements for students in year 11 and 12, they note that industry is asking for contact with students in year 10 or earlier. SSBEN prepares students for successful work experience through 'are-you-ready' sessions. The messages that they emphasise to students are that host employers look forward to having them on placement and

that they don't expect students to know everything. They encourage students to be positive and to want to learn, and to ask questions, and understand that it is normal to be nervous.

Reaching families

SSBEN also commented on the importance of reaching through to students' families. They noted that parents don't understand the opportunities that work placements offer, both for securing short term, casual or part time work while they study, and for securing pathways to permanent rewarding work through apprenticeships and traineeships. Getting the message to parents about these opportunities is also important for industry. Student networks within their own communities extend through their parents, uncles and aunts, and may also lead to employment opportunities.

Impacts of RAW on civic partners

Table 5. Summary of reported impacts of RAW on civic partners

Civics days are a unique component of RAW and provide civic organisations with opportunities to meet their strategic goals.

Hands-on learning opportunities enable students to build communication skills and confidence.

Civics days emphasise diversity of career opportunities.

RAW civics days also contribute to citizenship broadly as well as work related learning.

Civic partners have become a central component of the RAW program and provide highly motivating work-related activities, information and experiences away from schools within a significant public institution. Civic partners include the State Parliament of NSW, Taronga Zoo, ABC, Museum of Contemporary Arts, Art Gallery of NSW, NSW State Library, the Opera House, and Field of Mars Environmental Education Centre. The NSW Department of Environment and Heritage has also supported the Civics Day events at both Taronga Zoo and the Field of Mars centre. The purpose of the Civics Days is to increase understanding of Australian culture both within workplace and wider social contexts, and to further develop employability skills. Civic partnerships and the out-of-school visits of the FRUIT and SALAD days were not part of the original RAW program but have become an important part of its evolution. These days have become high impact opportunities to 'wrap up' what has been done through RAW at each school.

The researchers interviewed staff from the MCA and Department of Environment and Heritage. They described, from their perspectives, the impacts of RAW on their organisations and offered observations about the conduct of the day and RAW overall.

Contribution of RAW

Opportunities to go out into the community and into workplaces are the 'more unique and the more important parts' of RAW, according to a member of the RAW Steering Group. Motivations for both industry and civic partners to become involved were considered by a JobQuest spokesperson to be initially 'out of the kindness of their hearts' because media accounts of refugee experiences mean that 'people tend to feel a specific obligation, duty to want to help.' However, this leads to more pragmatic outcomes as it becomes possible to identify good future employees. Both the MCA and DEH representatives noted the focus of their organisation's involvement with the RAW program was to provide an affirming and

enjoyable new experience for the students and where possible recognising ‘qualities and skills’ that students have.

Almost all Civics partners have a public program charter to increase engagement of communities who do not traditionally visit them. At the MCA, RAW fits into the ‘school access’ umbrella – making art available to all students and schools regardless of financial or travel barriers, and ‘debunking the whole myth of art as this intellectualised kind of world’ (MCA). Most of the participating RAW students had never attended the MCA prior to the organised civics visits, and the MCA is hopeful that they will return with family members in the future.

For the Department of Environment and Heritage, the RAW program contributes towards actions in state plans that were directed to environment and community capacity building. Building understanding and care for the environment, custodianship, respecting each other and the environment all entail ‘soft skills’ that are part of the goals of the Department. Further, the DEH representative noted young people from refugee background and their families provide challenges and opportunities for cultural institutions which are meant to be for all Australians. He asks: ‘How do organisations create ‘invitations’ along the lines of ‘these young people are part of your community now. What’s your message to them?’. The message, he suggests, should not only be about access and engagement with the institution but also about employment opportunities.

Hands-on learning building communication and confidence

Hands-on learning is facilitated during the visits. This facilitates ‘connecting’, which the MCA representative felt was the most valuable part of the experience – connecting with other people and with ‘the whole environment’ including the art, the institution and the location. Initially it can be ‘overwhelming’ for the students, so the first step is to ‘make them feel welcome and comfortable’ (MCA). It may take a little time for students who are shy or in quite unfamiliar locations or cultural institutions to warm up, however when they do, they become very engaged. Well scaffolded and highly motivating activities are important. At the MCA, the students have a ‘creative learning experience’ based on a current exhibition, where they work with an artist-educator to look at an artwork, consider how it resonates with them and ‘bring their story’ to it. This corresponds to the interactive and communicative thrust of many of the RAW learning activities as students are encouraged to ‘share their own personal stories and communicating, all in a creative context’. They don’t have to share, but ‘immersion in the creative process’ has the effect of opening up and creating connections. Stories from RAW students are often about travelling to Australia and settling in to a new area. Art-making in the MCA studios is part of the day. The impact of this process on students that are observed by MCA staff is increased confidence, relationships and social connectedness. All of these are crucial to the RAW program.

The DEH supported Civics days take place at Environmental Education Centres and Taronga Zoo where students have the opportunity to interact with animals and they explore the bush with the intention of ‘giving them an experience’ so they can consider: ‘What have I experienced today? Am I excited by this experience? Is it something that makes me feel great and fulfils me? Does it give me a future pathway somewhere?’. Hands-on interaction with animals is a really important part of the experience. DEH commented on a certain ‘magic’ that happens when young people and animals are brought together, promoting a ‘healing and calming’ atmosphere and powerful learning. Through a kind of ‘safe danger’ students can have transformative experiences. For example, students who have had limited experience of Australian insects would change from ‘Oh my God I cannot touch that’ to allowing a leaf insect to crawl all over their hands. The focus is on ensuring that students have ‘really fantastic experiences’ and that they can learn ‘a little bit about the world around them and something about themselves’. Civic partners felt that there was a need for RAW in schools, and that it met a current gap in school level resourcing.

Another example of hands-on learning was provided by a Steering Group member who visited NSW Parliament on a RAW civics day visit. Students participated in a highly structured role-play of debate and decision-making, with roles outlined on cards for each participant. They learned about democratic representation and processes, and met an MP from a migrant background who spoke about her journey and experience of becoming a working Member of Parliament.

Diversity of jobs

Diversity of job opportunities is a theme that runs through all aspects of the RAW program and is reinforced further during the civics days. At the MCA, students meet and speak to different people from throughout the organisation including curators, artist educators, digital marketing team, kids and families coordinator, and managers. They give 'spotlight talks' of about 5 minutes, stripped of jargon, about what their jobs involve day-to-day. As they tour the site, the MCA representative points out to students: 'This whole upstairs area ... there's like 100 roles, that are all so different'.

Citizenship

RAW can also be framed in broader terms through citizenship. Through RAW they 'get a little window into a whole range of things' (DEH). The approach that is taken by the DEH also emphasises the breadth of career opportunities in the environment sector. They looked at everything from veterinary medicine, through to working on a farm, in a pound or for the national parks. His aim was to cover the whole range of outdoor, environment, animal, plant related opportunities in his discussions with RAW students. Sometimes this connected with students directly, for example, when a student came up at the end of a session and said 'I used to live on a farm. I really love animals. I would like to work with animals'. The student brought his previous knowledge and experience into connection with the present and saw potential for the future. This 'little bit of hope' contrasts with a sense that they might have as refugees that there is no place for their past in this 'new world'.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS OF ENABLERS AND BARRIERS

RESEARCH QUESTION 2a: ENABLERS THAT FACILITATE PARTICIPATION IN, AND OF THE SUCCESS OF RAW

Interviews with the stakeholder groups identified the positive impacts of RAW. To assist with directing future development of RAW, an analysis was conducted of the critical aspects reported by participations that they believed fostered the participation in, and success of, RAW. These factors are discussed below and presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Summary of the identified enablers of participation and success

The pedagogy and curriculum are distinct and foster skill acquisition, fun and comprehension of key work-related concepts.

Exposure is provided to Australian workplaces and culture through partnership with industry and civic organisations.

Teacher and school involvement is crucial.

RAW is distinct from school, yet complementary.

The specificity of the student group means that the participating students felt more comfortable and understood.

RAW is available at no cost to students and schools.

Distinct pedagogy and curriculum

The most common enabling feature of RAW, identified by members of each stakeholder group, referred to the excellence in pedagogy and curriculum that resulted in student engagement, skill acquisition and comprehension. The comments here refer to the component of the RAW program that is delivered directly by JobQuest facilitators.

Firstly, the pedagogy was considered to be hands-on, student centred, fun and engaging. Current students felt that the tasks were experiential, group based, and hands-on. As a result, their learning and engagement were enhanced, as several students labelled the RAW program as 'fun':

We didn't actually get to write about them instead we actually experienced them.

They did cover a lot of stuff, like because we already covered it at school, but we covered them like physically this time which is like – was more better.

The usual same routine every day we come to school. We get the pen and paper out and we start writing. Then when we went there it was like some were challenges and stuff.

We have fun and we learn at the same time. I mean, who wants more than that?

Similarly, school-based teachers commented on the uniqueness of the pedagogy compared to the classroom:

I think because there's more activity, so there's more hands-on activities and they develop their workplace skills more so than just information delivery. So in a high school situation you might have more information delivery.

Because I think the RAW program is really student centred. The focus is on the students and how they learn and how they develop their skills, whereas in the classroom, as everyone has mentioned, you've just got the teacher delivering the content.

One teacher identified that a lot of games are used, which increases student engagement but also 'there's a good purpose behind these games.' Finally, another teacher appreciated that the pedagogy was able to meet the specific learning needs of students who have English as a second language:

It's that uptake that takes them longer. They need to hear and see and use things in many different ways. You need a multimodal approach for students to be able to retain that information and to be then able to use it. I think the RAW program makes that happen as well.

Secondly, the curriculum delivered was highly valued and regarded as skills based. Most students felt that they had learnt new skills such as: 'how to write a resume, cover letter, how to do an interview – good and bad interviews' (Alumni student) as well as having acquired new information such as understanding which jobs require University or TAFE qualifications. Importantly, two examples were provided where alumni students had already applied these new skills: 'I helped my sister put her resume together' and 'In class when we work as a team and how to communicate with the team. In careers class – in an assessment we had to make a resume.'

Two teachers expressed their appreciation that RAW provided students with the opportunity to build vital skills:

Building confidence in terms of being able to approach employers, in terms of being able to get up and speak publicly. So part of the RAW program is about building those skills. It's not just about giving the information. So the activities within the program get them up presenting to whole groups, get them speaking in front of other people. They do mock interviews and so on. So they actually have to be developing orally, I suppose, and building those skills. (Teacher)

The program might build on what they might have done at school, but in doing so it takes them to the next level in terms of fine tuning their resumes and their cover letters ... done some work with them on cold calling and ringing up and asking to speak to people and those sorts of things, that role-play that would not happen in a high school careers class. (Teacher)

Thirdly, the RAW program was reported to provide access to the complex and Australian-centric language used for work. One teacher explained that work-related language is 'lexically dense and sometimes will go over the heads of students, whereas the RAW program has been written specifically for refugee students with the idea of ... building that vocabulary.' One current student commented that 'there was a lot of new words and vocabulary we learned ... It was good because only us as an ESL group went and did it which is like we don't cover this in our countries.' Whilst another reported that they 'felt like the use of language they used wasn't as hard ... it was a bit easier.'

Exposure to Australian workplaces and culture

The partnerships with industry and civic organisations that are facilitated through RAW provide exposure to Australian workplaces and culture. JobQuest, the RAW Steering Group and school-based teachers all acknowledged the contribution made by participating organisation to optimise outcomes for students.

The level and quality of support offered by industry was emphasised by JobQuest:

We are really appreciative of the employers. They are very supportive. I can't hope for better support from the local business in offering us anything from coming to the talk, coming to the events, interviewing the students, offering work experience, getting involved in the delivery of the program. They are very, very supportive.

This highly valued component of RAW provided students with, at times, their first opportunity to connect with Australian workplaces and broaden their experience and understanding of workplaces.

Exposure to industry was highly valued by teachers and students. One story recounted by a teacher told of how a student who was interested in pursuing a career in hospitality met with a chef during the industry visit. After learning of the student's interest, the chef provided additional contacts about how to get a part time job. The teacher noted that:

This opportunity for that student would not happen without that facilitation, without something like this [RAW Industry visits]. Because it's not like he's going to walk down to the local club and say, hi, can I speak to the chef?

Finally, the civic organisation partnership was not just valued for its workplace focus but its connection to community, as highlighted by a RAW Steering Group member:

I think it's gone beyond that. It always did have a community connection component, and I think that's broadened. I think that's one of the really valuable things [about the] the program, so it's not just about vocational learning.

Examples included having students gain a greater awareness of support services outside school, recreational cultural experiences that are available (e.g. museums, art galleries, zoo), and breaking down pre-conceived ideas such as being fearful of police or politicians, or only particular genders being able to work in particular occupations. In all, the civic engagement experience 'takes them beyond the school into the community and gives them a bigger picture of life in Sydney and Australia' (RAW Steering Group).

Partnering with civic and industry organisations to take students outside the classroom was cast as a central ingredient for the success of RAW, as demonstrated by one teacher:

Making those connections and going out to different places and seeing that there are job opportunities available and the different types of roles and positions that exist in society in Australia. I think that's a really worthwhile part of the program as well.

Teacher and school involvement

An analysis of the interviews conducted with the adult participants identified both negative and positive examples of teacher and school involvement in RAW. While recognising that there is a wide variation in how teachers and schools are effectively involved with RAW, there was agreement that their involvement was central to maximise the impact on students. As expressed

by a member of JobQuest, 'to make RAW successful, especially in the school environment, we really need the active involvement of the schools.'

Three main reasons were presented as rationale for why teachers and schools should be involved in RAW. Firstly, the engagement of students would be enhanced as:

When they see you [a teacher] being involved or they see you take an interest, they want to be more involved. They were very proactive because having that presence of the teacher walking around, they think, well, this is actually beneficial. (Teacher)

Secondly, there is more likely to be follow-up and continued conversations after the cessation of RAW. Beyond identifying teacher-presence as a duty of care issue, there was general agreement that having a school-based teacher attend and actively participate in RAW would benefit students as they already have a relationship with and know the students, and most importantly, can maximise the impact of RAW as school-based teachers 'can then continue those conversations and that learning back at school afterwards, because as we said before, just getting that information once is not going to be sufficient.' (Teacher)

Two teachers who had attended the RAW program with students attested to their follow-up with students saying 'they'll be in and out of my office all the time now. But that's good, they – I may not have come across them as easily as a lot of other students' and 'I'm constantly in students' ears asking them questions. Have you found work experience? What do you want to do? What are you interested in? Just trying to get them on the right path.'

JobQuest explained that having a teacher, especially the careers adviser, attend RAW with the students 'helps build that relationship, where they might not have had much experience with this person before' and thus they can continue the conversations that have been initiated by RAW long after the program has been completed.

Thirdly, representatives from the civic partner organisations valued the attendance of the teachers as they felt it would maximise the value of their time and translate into benefits for the school. For example, one representative explained:

When they go back to their schools they've had these amazing experiences and these transformations and they go back to school, some of them, some schools then take on that learning and then they share it within the rest of the school community. (MCA)

Another felt that teachers' knowledge could also be enhanced through their attendance: 'when I present information through the program – well, to those students – I'm actually trying to talk to the teachers from the school as well.'

Finally, JobQuest and school-based teachers deliberated on the best practice protocol for how teachers should actively participate in RAW to benefit students. It was recognised that there is a wide variation in how schools involve their teachers in RAW: 'the bulk of the schools are very supportive ... some of the schools are a little bit less involved ... a more consistent operating protocol would be really beneficial' (JobQuest). Although it was acknowledged that 'if you've got too many teachers involved it changes the whole atmosphere of the program'. One teacher commented on resourcing issues:

I think it should be mandatory and I think that the program should not be delivered unless teachers have a buy-in. That's the way it is supposed to be, but in some schools it isn't ... The funds aren't available to provide relief with the RAW program. I suppose if you wanted to be absolutely successful, then

if RAW could provide some relief to schools for teacher release so that they could be part of the program, that would be beneficial or helpful.

The careers adviser was cast as the most appropriate teacher to attend the RAW program alongside students and it was advocated that their attendance is consistent and they make their 'presence felt across the room' and didn't just sit at the back on their laptop. More specifically:

I actually think that's a vital part. Wherever possible the careers adviser needs to be in the room. They need to come in and show their face and for us to be able to say if you need more information please go and see this person; they will happily help you. (JobQuest)

Although presented here as an enabler, a JobQuest member identified that a 'missing piece of the puzzle is having careers advisers actively involved in RAW', which suggests that although it is happening well in some locations, action could be taken to ensure it happens across more locations and thus the success of RAW would be maximised.

RAW is distinct from school, yet complementary

Although it appears that there were initial plans to have RAW delivered, at least in part, by school personnel, all adult stakeholder groups highlighted the external delivery of RAW (whilst complementing the school agenda) as a strength.

Members of JobQuest and the RAW Steering Group explained that it

has always been that we wanted to build the capacity of schools to be able to do something like this themselves ... But eventually we worked out, no, they want us to be quite separate. To complement and supplement what they are doing, rather than to incorporate it into their operation.

One school-based teacher reported that the careers classes at school and RAW 'work hand in hand' and together 'fill in some gaps' as 'there were some things that they weren't able to do in their careers lessons which they were able to access through the RAW program, and vice versa as well.'

Implementing RAW in schools was able to complement and meet objectives of schools and the NSW Department of Education:

This sounds so great and it's from the department. I was like, I don't have to worry about it, it's a department program and it is something which is in line with our curriculum and it is for our students' benefit and we need that. It targets a lot of our school's needs. It meets our school's needs so it's fantastic. (Teacher)

Some schools if they have a high portion of refugee students they have a school plan, and this potentially is able to tick some boxes on their school plan... It also works to the New South Wales state education plan. (JobQuest)

Additionally, some teachers reported that students benefited from having an external organisation deliver RAW as they felt this facilitated students asking more questions and they 'get an insight into the real world, as they call it'. Similarly, engagement seemed to be elevated through this arrangement:

I think going to a different venue and having external presenters who are professionals in this gives it a little bit more weight and generates a little bit more buy-in from the students than a normal class lesson might be. (Teacher)

Specific student group means that students feel comfortable and understood

The adult stakeholders signalled that a program like RAW was needed for other groups of disadvantaged students, not just those who have a refugee background. Notwithstanding, it was recognised that one of the features that seeds success for RAW was its specific focus on students with a refugee background and new arrivals. Both alumni and current RAW students identified this as an important enabling feature, stating that being with other students with similar backgrounds provided common ground and made them feel 'more comfortable'. One alumni expressed 'If they put the whole Year 11 we might not feel comfortable to say things and comment on things and say our opinion.' While a current student explained:

You're a lot more open ... Don't hold back ... Maybe like we understand each other more because we are all from different cultures. The other thing was like the language. If you actually like mistaken a word, no one would actually laugh at you. We're all the same.

No cost for schools or students

One of the participants (a school-based teacher) appreciated receiving the RAW program free with no fee incurred by either the school or the student. The participants felt that having an external organisation running RAW meant 'the costs are kept lower because you don't have to staff it with your own people'. Importantly, the fact the service was funded and therefore was free to students appeared quite unique and enabled participation:

I greatly appreciate the fact that this costs my students nothing, that they'll pay for the bus to get them where they've got to go, that JobQuest can run it and my students don't have to pay for it. Not often I can give a permission note out and say there's no cost, so you can bring this back tomorrow. It's brilliant, the way that we don't have to fund it and that they can run it for us.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2b: BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION IN, AND THE SUCCESS OF, RAW

An analysis of the interviews with all stakeholder groups identified that, although the RAW program is held in high regard, there are some factors that may limit the participation in, and success of, the program. These factors are presented below and summarised in Table 7.

Table 7. Summary of the identified barriers to participation and success

Aspects of pedagogy, resources and curriculum require improvement.

The impact of RAW could be strengthened by involving parents.

Continuity of coordinators impacts on resourcing and communication.

Annual, rather than ongoing funding of RAW, undermines school uptake.

Civic organisations could be further involved in supporting students.

Improvements to pedagogy, resources and curriculum

The distinct curriculum and pedagogy of RAW was identified as a strength and enabler for engagement and success. Nonetheless, some participants offered suggestions for how aspects could be improved.

Some of the current students and teachers identified limitations in the teaching practice used in the RAW program. A few students felt that not enough time or scaffolding was provided to produce a cover letter and resume, tasks that they obviously valued. For example, one student commented that:

They gave us very short time for the resumes and cover letters. I don't think we even got to actually write the whole script down. They can like just spend more time on specific stuff.

One teacher agreed that 'they usually come out with a résumé and we need a big skills section in their résumé. But I don't think they have time to write that as part of RAW anymore.' One JobQuest member explained that the intention of RAW is not to produce a full cover letter or resume within the program delivery as it is an introductory course to many terms and topics. This should be communicated to students and teachers so their expectations are aligned with the program goals.

Another student felt that more scaffolding was required to learn these skills:

When we did the resume and the cover letter, she only gave us like a script and she's like follow it. She didn't go through it step by step. I think it would be a good idea if she actually went through it and we did one together.

One teacher supported this view:

Something that would have been really beneficial was, before they did the resumes, just a five-minute, hey, this is what it looks like on the screen, projecting it, showing them, so when they have to do it, they know what

they're aiming for ... But just having that element of a model or something there for them, because they had paper copies, but that didn't really mean anything because they had to create something.

Other teachers felt that although the presenters 'had some really great strategies' they may benefit in receiving some training around working with students with refugee and EAL/D backgrounds. One illustration included ensuring concrete examples, explicit instructions and models were provided as when we work with these students we often 'have preconceptions; we think that they should as well.'

Secondly, ways to improve the resources provided to students in RAW, and thus enhance the programs' impact, were discussed. The school-based teachers believed that although students were provided with numerous handouts, the handouts should be collated into a booklet and produced to a higher quality. One teacher felt that this would provide the students with an ongoing resource to guide their future decisions as 'it becomes a living resource beyond that [program delivery].' More specifically, one teacher advocated that the students could:

Look back on it when they've forgotten it in a term or so, or they're about to go into work experience ... They're going to go for an interview, where's my interview checklist?

The benefits of a website were also discussed when it became apparent that one indeed had been created but was not currently being updated, promoted or used:

The website was created the year before last. Part of that website was to also have a section for teachers and for students and to have the resources there that students would need. Now, that is not part of JobQuest's delivery at this point in time. They don't introduce them to the website. So either we need a paper booklet that goes out to students so that they've got that follow-up ... or they need to be actually stepped through the website and shown where the resources are and actually use them.

One of the teachers who had seen the website was impressed and felt that it should be updated and used:

The website looks amazing and works quite well, but it's not being updated at all and so I don't think it's really having much impact ... I feel like all the hard work's gone into the website.

Finally, two current students felt that the curriculum covered should include information about how to apply to university. One of the students felt the RAW program should have been more tailored to the participating students' future goals:

We could have more information and resources about university applications, because they did ask us the first day about our plans after school, and every single one of us intends to go to university, pursue more academic careers. So I think they could tailor the program towards the students that they have in the group.

A focus on university entry does not align with the goals of RAW. These two comments, however, may highlight the need to make the focus of RAW explicit to the students.

Involvement of parents

Representatives from the school-based teachers, the RAW Steering Group and JobQuest agreed that the positive impact of RAW would be greater if the program could successfully

involve the parents of participating students. It is important to recognise that there are positive examples of times where families have been involved (e.g. attending an event where certificates were presented to RAW students) and these successes could be mirrored and extended.

Firstly, the involvement of parents in RAW was highly valued as participants recognised the central influence of the parent-child relationship over the career choices of students. One teacher commented that often 'unrealistic expectations come from the parents' so it became vital 'having parents on board and having those conversations'.

Within the RAW curriculum, JobQuest reported that students are encouraged to talk with their parents and take home pieces of work to discuss. Nonetheless, JobQuest casts parent involvement as important and 'would love to be able to crack that nut in the future'. Similarly, a representative from the RAW Steering Group signalled the value of parent involvement by explaining:

We've often said that it would be really good to somehow work out a way to engage parents, guardians into the program somehow. So, I think if we were looking at something extra to add, that that would be an important thing that we could look at.

Likewise, one teacher felt that 'trying to get them [parents] involved, and maybe even different levels of the program - would be worthwhile'.

Secondly, although parent involvement was widely supported, participants acknowledged the challenge of achieving this goal and at times cited previous attempts that were less than successful. JobQuest identified that the language barrier with parents, 'who often do not go through IEC generally', created additional complexities and challenges for schools:

It's difficult getting the buy-in from schools because it takes a lot of organisation. Just inviting parents along doesn't necessarily mean that they'll come, so we often need SLSOs to ring parents and invite them individually. It needs a lot of repetition from schools in terms of, have you told your parents about it? Are they coming? Follow-up, in order to get parents there.

Importantly, although the language barrier was identified as a challenge for the resources of the school, engaging communities was viewed as broader issue for education: 'this isn't a refugee-specific issue. This is a high school-specific issue unfortunately ... some schools are fabulous at engaging communities and some schools really struggle' (JobQuest).

Notwithstanding the challenge, the importance of involving parents in RAW to maximise the positive impact on students was emphasised as 'otherwise then we're just talking to these students, getting their hopes up, to have that barrier and that blockage with their parents or their community' (JobQuest).

Continuity of program coordinators in schools

Continuity of RAW program coordinators in schools was identified as an issue impacting on resourcing and communication. JobQuest and school-based teachers proposed that the effective implementation, and success, of RAW had been challenged by aspects of the partnering and communication between schools and JobQuest. It is notable that given the longevity and reach of RAW that these relationships are evidently very successful. Participants, however, recognised the complex nature of these relationships and offered suggestions for specific aspects that would seed success for future iterations of RAW.

Significant program resources are expended on recruitment and training of the RAW coordinator inside each school to ensure communication with schools is maintained, however the changes in staffing mean that JobQuest felt 'we can't keep up with the turnover'.

Improved communication would involve having a consistent coordinator that is trained properly, understands and has seen the program in action and has positive and close communication with schools about RAW.

Annual vs ongoing funding

JobQuest noted that the funding provided for RAW is on a year by year basis. There is always the risk that as funding priorities change or if funds were to be reduced the program would be at risk.

This lack of certainty of ongoing funding served as an impediment to school involvement as it resulted in inconsistency in the RAW coordinator roles in schools and therefore impacts on communications between schools and other parts of RAW program:

If we had that consistent funding, that consistent person, schools would then know that this is something they can consistently access and then potentially lock in and go right, yes, I'm going to have that program often.
(Teacher)

Further involvement of civic organisations

The participating civics organisations did not identify specific barriers to the participation in, or success of, RAW. Encouragingly, two representatives spoke about the possibility of providing more support to the students of RAW beyond what is currently provided. For example, one representative pondered: 'If there's a handful of kids that walk away and go ... I really loved going to the [civic visit] ... How do we support those kids to follow those things up?' Similarly, another representative questioned:

The next stage for me would be if there are apprenticeship, or traineeship opportunities, how do we get those to the school directly? ... Through the RAW program there's so many opportunities to expand and after the industry tour.

The civic organisations who agreed to participate in the study are engaged organisations with a positive relationship with the RAW program. Nonetheless, these suggestions are notable for future delivery.

CHAPTER 5: CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY SCHOOL 1

Case Study School 1 has participated in RAW for three years. It describes itself as a 'small' metropolitan high school with a high degree of racial diversity, with most students from refugee backgrounds. Around 600 students are currently enrolled in the school, with 90 percent from a language background other than English.

Case Study School 1 considers themselves one of the homes of refugee education in Australia, and has had several programs for refugee students piloted at their school. Each year the school has around 20 students engaged in RAW. Most of the students engaged in RAW are Arabic or Farsi speakers, many from Afghani backgrounds.

Two teachers from Case Study School 1, along with two groups of students, were interviewed for this study. The teachers discussed the unique and complex challenges of their students' lives, particularly those aged over 15 years old.

I couldn't imagine being in a new country and having to enter the country at a level where you've got to decide whether you're getting a job ... or you're going to continue education. It's also the fact that you're learning a whole new system of how Australia's workforce works and what kind of jobs and how you get those jobs and things like that. I think that's where RAW really fits in.

Teachers describe RAW as 'exciting', and able to meet the aforementioned challenges through a focus on skills, practical learning and highly engaging experiences for students. Students similarly told the researchers that they find the practical aspects of RAW challenging and fulfilling. Students are easily able to connect the skills developed in RAW lessons to their own lives to become ready for the world outside of schooling. Students mentioned *collaboration*, *communication* and *problem solving* as key skills developed during RAW lessons. They understand the tacit lessons of RAW strategies, for example they mention learning about body language, gesture or eye contact through a range of games and collaborative projects. Others say they were enriched by the simple act of helping each other.

Students also reflected positively on the concrete aspects of workplace learning. They thoroughly enjoyed participating in mock interviews, learning how to dress for interviews and learning about the nature of Australian workplaces. *Teamwork* featured prominently in their reflections on their RAW learning; they understand that their future workplaces will feature a lot of collaborative or cooperative structures. In interviews teachers concurred, stating that cultural idiosyncrasies of working in an Australian context were quite new to some of their students, but demonstrated in RAW lessons in an engaging way. Issues of formalities and relationships with colleagues were covered, as were the myriad of roles performed in the workplace. Both teachers and students also spoke highly of the civics and industry visits in which students visited hotels, television studios and parliament house. As well as seeing the range of roles performed by professionals, the teachers were pleased that students had 'opened their horizons to another industry'.

Teachers reported that the students were fascinated by the range of professions open to them, as presented through RAW industry days and work placements. In interviews, students discussed their fascination at seeing sound engineers, librarians and hotel managers at work. RAW also offered the students an opportunity to play high status roles. For example, they took turns presenting the weather at the ABC or playing the boss in a mock interview. For students living in disadvantaged circumstances with the myriad of challenges that refugee status brings, this is significant.

Industry visits were arranged by a Work Placement Service. The network was able to personalise the experience as they are aware of the students' challenges and try to tailor an experience that is going to be relevant, welcoming and inspiring. While being a wonderful experience for the students, these days also provide an opportunity for employers to connect with young people. A representative from the work placement service provider said:

A lot of industries need exposure within schools. They want to reach out to students ... say, hey, here we are, this is what you need. These are the skills you need. We're happy to train you, but if you turn up on time, have a positive attitude, we'll guide you. Employers give up their time because they find it extremely important to link in with young people.

This is just one example that attests to RAW's relationship with industry being reciprocal. The motivation to connect school students and industry goes beyond kindness or superficial good will to a mutually beneficial relationship that sees students from refugee backgrounds valued in the community. Additionally, students can relate more to a workplace when they see friendly, non-intimidating people taking an active interest in their futures. More workplace tours for Case Study School 1 have been planned for the future, having received positive feedback on previous industry days.

Teachers also reflected on the unique opportunity that RAW provides to uncover students' personal dreams, ambitions and hopes. Teachers were pleased they had an opportunity to get to know more about their students apart from their marginalised refugee status: 'you get to know kids on a really personal level that you wouldn't have in school'.

The feedback on RAW was overwhelmingly positive from both students and teachers. Students said they would 'definitely' recommend RAW to new students arriving in their school. When asked for recommendations to improve the program, students could not think of anything but said it's 'all amazing'. The teachers mentioned holistic benefits for the students in a way that would help facilitate their integration into post-school life and integration among community members as well. As a result, RAW students were able to become community leaders of sorts as well, mentoring their peers with their new found skills. One teacher said:

They see themselves in the community ... if they can leave school with the skills of how to talk to a stranger, how to have pride in yourself, how to approach someone for a job, how to work as a team, make a decision ... you start to find that those skills build the community. Those skills will never break down a community ... and not only that, but I think that when you've gotten those skills, you're very interested in giving them to someone else ... Then the student then becomes the person who's teaching.

CASE STUDY SCHOOL 2

Case Study School 2 is a regional school with a whole school enrolment of around 900 students with 69 staff members. 40% of students have language backgrounds other than English. Case Study School 2 has a long history of involvement with the RAW Program. The program began at the school over 10 years ago, filling a need for targeted workplace education for refugees in the region. Three teachers, one group of current students engaged in RAW and two RAW alumni students were interviewed as part of this study.

The three teachers interviewed had extensive engagement with RAW, with two of them having served on the RAW Steering Group in current or previous years. One teacher's involvement went back 10 years to when a gap had been identified in careers education for refugees:

At that time there was not a lot being done by the careers advisers in schools for students from non-English-speaking backgrounds. They were falling by the wayside, especially when it came to things like work experience and getting involved and getting part-time work. The delivery that did take place by the careers advisers often went over their head, so they often missed out on a lot because they just did not understand what was going on.

RAW was the first program the teachers had encountered that introduced the cultural context of workplace education to students from refugee backgrounds. This included the vocabulary of workplaces, expectations, collegial practices and processes involved in job search:

That's not me criticising careers advisers, but you don't need to teach kids who've grown up in Australia, well, on the whole you don't need to teach them about basic culture around work. But we do actually need to cover that with other students who've come from different places where that culture might be completely different. So I think the program fills quite significant gaps in that regard.

The students at this school also reflected positively on the benefits of a targeted workplace learning program to suit their unique needs. They learned 'new words' and vocabulary that was workplace specific. They referenced their ESL (English as a Second Language) status, mentioning that so many terms were new to them, and they were grateful for the space to have targeted instruction on these concepts. They also mentioned several specific workplace cultural practices that were different to practices in their home country. Without RAW they said would not have acquired this fundamental knowledge until they arrived in the workplace.

Teachers and students reflected on an interesting facet of the RAW program; to broaden students' horizons about the range of educational and training opportunities, particularly outside of the university sector. Often students aspire to a university education, and tend to be steered towards university by their parents, but do not yet have the skills to allow for success in a university course. RAW fills a gap in that it allows for sustained and regular exploration of options appropriate to their skill and language abilities that will create a pathway to success. One teacher explained the complexity around the post-school choices available to them:

If we just turn up halfway through Year 12 and go, 'oh, hey, there's this', it's like a consolation prize. No. When we're talking about deep-seated beliefs, potentially, around work culture, around social status of certain professions, around the pathways they need to take, you can't change someone's mind just by telling them. You need to chip away at it.

Students concur that this is a crucial function of RAW. One student's story confirms this critical factor:

In my family in my country it was like, you have to go to uni ... But I actually learned something else. It's not just everything about uni ... So, I had another idea of when I finish school I don't have to go to university. It's like not my only opportunity. I can go to TAFE too.

The RAW teachers at this school demonstrated a strong ethic of care when teaching students about the range of post-school options available to them. They discuss options such as local university preparatory pathways for post-school study. Parental engagement in the decision making for students was also seen as critical.

I think having parents on board ... because often those unrealistic expectations come from the parents and they're placing the pressure

on the students ... because the parents think, okay, you've got this great opportunity. You're in a new country. Why can't you go to university? That – the expectation can be that every child has to go to university. Realistically, that's not going to be possible.

Parents or carers need to hear the information they are receiving about the myriad of post-school study options available to them. There is a TAFE next door to the school, which they mention could be a rich site for these conversations. Teachers acknowledged however, that engaging parents in activities around RAW was difficult.

The other benefits of RAW, mentioned by teachers and current and past students include:

- Development of confidence to speak with and approach employers
- Skills development using pedagogy appropriate for refugee students
- Authentic, student-centred learning experiences that students find relevant

These findings have been mirrored across other school sites as part of this review. Teachers at this school also discussed an additional benefit of RAW with regards to workplace learning; workplace rights, responsibilities and legalities were taught, which is critical to students from marginalised backgrounds. As a teacher said:

The other thing that just crossed my mind is also protecting them in terms of their rights in the workplace. So we have a lot of students who will get part-time jobs for cash in hand and are sometimes asked to do things that really they shouldn't be asked to do. So having them aware of their rights and responsibilities in the workplace can help protect them in terms of being exploited by employers. What might happen [in their home country] can be very different to what's allowed in Australia. Sometimes their employers know that and they can abuse that situation.

It is an important reminder that refugees and young people could also be vulnerable to exploitation in the workplace (WEstjustice Western Community Legal Centre, 2016). RAW offers uniquely targeted information for refugee students, arming them with knowledge to protect them against those who wish to exploit their vulnerable status.

Finally, RAW impresses upon refugee students the value of planning for the future and making considered decisions about post-schooling work and study options. RAW students, despite the challenges of their lives as refugees, emerge inspired by the possibilities before them, less daunted and more determined to choose a path that allows them to achieve success in the future:

Well my dad has the idea of like when a girl has her own certificate, like uni certificate or high certificate, it's actually like a weapon in your hand ... So, like whatever happens to you in the future, you're actually independent and you will actually get a job no matter what happens. He wants it to be like – we're doing something in the future. We're not actually lost.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FINDINGS

Students and adult stakeholders reported that the Ready Arrive Work program was beneficial for students, schools, industry and civic partner organisations. All the 'impacts' reported by these stakeholders were positive. This indicates that participating RAW stakeholders hold the program in high regard and the continuation of the program should be prioritised by the NSW Department of Education. More specifically, the following impacts were reported by stakeholders for the participating groups:

For schools, RAW:

- provides an opportunity for teachers to advance their knowledge regarding:
 - the vocational needs of students from refugee and recent arrival backgrounds,
 - industry and civic organisations,
 - student-centred pedagogies,
 - careers and vocational training and pathways;
- complements and deepens current career education at the school;
- fills gaps in provisions for this cohort of students; and
- meets the Department of Education and individual school needs and priorities.

For students with a refugee background, RAW:

- increases their individual knowledge about all aspects of work and potential vocational pathways;
- increases their engagement with the content through the hands-on personalised learning approach utilised;
- prepares them for work, facilitating both hard vocational skills and soft employability skills;
- boosts their confidence in work related behaviours;
- positions them for employment and helps their resilience in applying for jobs;
- helps them to recognise the skills, personal attributes and assets they already have;
- enhances their communication skills and confidence through their visits to civic partners; and
- civics days also contribute to citizenship broadly as well as work related learning.

For industry partners, RAW:

- connects industry with schools and students to inform the future workforce about requirements for specific roles;
- industry visits emphasise diversity of employment opportunities and pathways; and
- builds and expands connections between schools, refugee communities and industry.

For civic partners, RAW:

- provides opportunities for the organisations to meet their strategic goals;
- supports students to connect with cultural organisations; and
- builds and expands connections between schools, refugee communities and these agencies.



Industry visit 2019

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The current study sought to gather the perspectives of various stakeholders involved in the RAW program to determine reported impacts, enablers and barriers for success. It is likely that the individuals that provided informed consent to participate in the study had largely positive experiences with the program and were engaged more so than others who did not express interest in participating. This should be considered when interpreting the findings of the study.

Additionally, the number industry partners interviewed was less than initially desired. As such, the study may not have adequately captured the perspective of these key stakeholders.

Finally, the current study does not claim to attest to the impacts of RAW, as identified by an experimental design where objective impacts are measured for participants before and after their participation in RAW. The study was interested in understanding the experience reported by those involved in RAW, and findings should be interpreted through this lens.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this small-scale qualitative study suggest that the Ready Arrive Work program should be continued, expanded and celebrated as participants of the study not only attested to the positive impacts on students with a refugee background, but also on their schools, and the associated industry and civic partners.

Notwithstanding this high regard for the program, participants provided valuable insights which may serve to further improve the process and outcomes of RAW in future iterations.

These recommendations are provided below:

- A teacher (ideally the Careers Adviser) should be actively involved in the delivery of RAW, noting the impact of the program upon students is directly related to the involvement of the teachers at the school;
- More avenues should become available for parents and carers to be involved in RAW to strengthen the impact of the program. This may include the production of targeted materials or events for parents and carers or developing strategies for their ongoing engagement in RAW;
- Similarly, sustained attention over time beyond the RAW program is important to change deep seated ideas about desirable vocational pathways held by students and by parents and carers;
- Maintain the specificity of the target student group;
- Maintain the delivery of RAW by the external organisation;
- Ensure the program continues to be offered for free to schools and students;
- Provide ongoing rather than annual funding to RAW to facilitate school uptake;
- Address the issue of retention of RAW coordinators;
- The pedagogy and curriculum were viewed as strengths, however, some specific aspects require attention;
- The resources provided to students need to be improved, through a compiled booklet and/or updated and accessible website;
- Partnerships with industry and civic organisations provide valuable benefits to the program and should be continued as a core feature of the program;
- Continue the current structure with RAW governed by the Steering Group. The active role of the Department of Education (DoE) on the Steering Group and coordinating across schools has particularly been noted as it keeps RAW relevant and responsive to DoE priorities; and
- Document the hands-on and practical pedagogies used in RAW for the purposes of sharing with educators outside of the refugee and EAL/D learning space. The overwhelmingly positive feedback on these strategies has implications for the broader field of vocational education to potentially enhance the relevance and interactivity of programs leading to greater student engagement.

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