

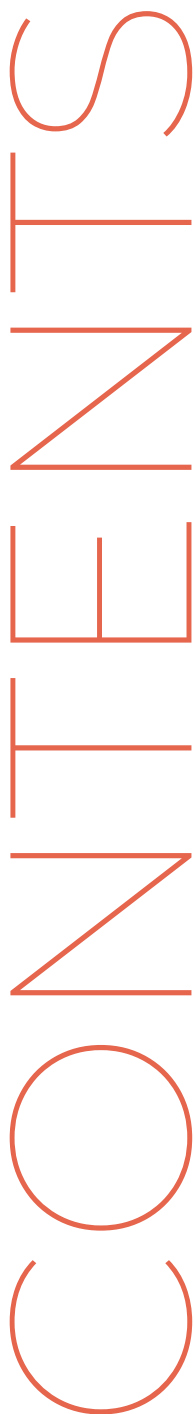


RAISE OUR VOICE
AUSTRALIA

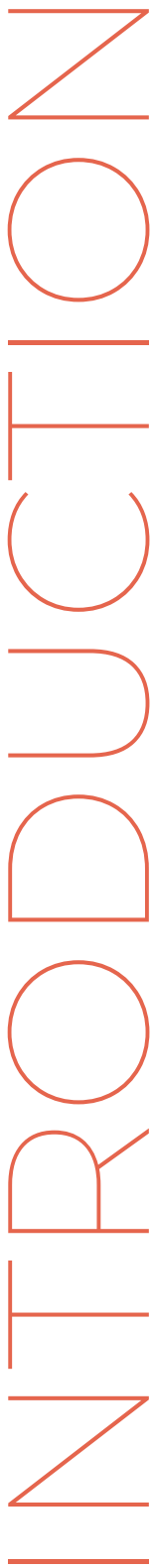
Raise Our Voice Australia training report

2021

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Despite being the custodians of our future, the voices of young women and non binary persons are missing from our public decision making. This has got to change.

The importance of diversity in decision making is becoming increasingly recognised. While this discussion is more mature in the private sector, it is still at an early stage in the public sector.

The Australian Public Service Review (APS, 2019) reported *"To be fit for purpose...the APS must ensure a diverse and inclusive environment that accepts individuals' differences, embraces their strengths and provides opportunities for all employees to achieve their potential."* (p 216) It acknowledges the APS has made progress in promoting women and in First Nations employment, but is behind in gender equity, the retention of culturally diverse employees, and employing disabled persons. Women also remain over-represented at lower job levels.

This trend is reflected within State Public Service bodies, and the make-up of our foreign policy leaders. In response, the Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy 2021-2026 was launched in 2021.

However, none of these plans take an intersectional approach.

It's not enough to ask "where are the women?"

We must ask "which women and gender diverse persons?" This question will progress discussions from a focus solely on women, towards the achievement of true gender equality, diversity and inclusion in all its forms. In doing so, we create better public policy outcomes, and everyone wins.

Young people - young women in particular - have always been on the forefront of change. It's time we invited them to design their futures through public policy and politics, with a seat at the table.

Our introductory training provides an oversight of policy and politics and pairs participants with mentors working in public policy. It's not enough to have targets, we need the next generation to feel confident in engaging with government, waiting in the wings, and leading discussions around their future.

It's excellent to see our public decision makers work towards change, but there's no time like the present.

AN OVERVIEW

The training spans eight weeks of content, covering politics, domestic policy, foreign policy and leadership.

123

Applicants

37

Participants

8

Workshops

18

Mentors

22

Scholarships offered

5

Volunteer facilitators

4

Career changes
During the program

21

hours of content delivered

I now believe I can be successful in this area, without completing a university degree. The ROVA team, guest speakers and other members of the cohort have provided me an invaluable sense of confidence through sharing their knowledge, experiences, networks, opportunities, resources and time. I am eternally grateful to the team for creating this extraordinary program, and am most thankful for this course being the starting point of me leaving property development to hopefully move into the NSW Department of Education.

- 2021 participant

WHERE ARE YOUNG WOMEN AND GENDER DIVERSE PEOPLE IN PUBLIC SERVICE?

Every State and Territory Public Service has a gender equality plan. None of them adopt an intersectional lens, or focus on the next generation.

Despite one in five Australians being under 25 years of age, there is little being done to nurture the next generation of public servants. Overwhelmingly, young people care about actively creating a positive future, but are turning away from traditional institutions for one key reason: they do not feel represented. Our public decision making institutions (government and politics) are responsible for making policy for *all* Australians, both now and into the future. It is critical that our public decision making has the participation of young people from all backgrounds, and that we are proactively encouraging the next generation of public servants.

We have a duty to support young people to learn more about our traditional systems of power, and how they can leverage their voices for change. Despite elements of policy and politics being taught in the Australian school system, significant knowledge gaps remain. This is exemplified for those who have not have attended school in Australia.

Raise Our Voice Australia is the only organisation currently providing training focused on public service, specifically for diverse young women and non binary people.

Our training is offered to those who will benefit the most - those who are not currently studying politics or policy, who might be new Australians, those who have less opportunities to organically expand their networks, and those who are eager to get involved and create positive and lasting change. In particular, we look to uplift the voices of those who are under-represented in current discussions, and decision making institution.

This training not only creates and cultivates a space in which young women and gender diverse persons can learn more about policy and politics and can ask questions, but serves to create a community which will challenge the Old Boys Club. By inviting diverse female and non-binary speakers who are already leading in public policy and social change, we embrace the notion of "you can't be what you can't see," while helping participants to expand their networks and ensuring they can see themselves reflected in our politics and policy.

I joined this course wanting to expand my knowledge of politics, policy, decision making and government...This course has equipped me with the skills, knowledge, network and confidence to to leave the corporate property developing industry after 9 years, and to use my existing skills to pivot into the public sector.

- 2021 participant

THE TRAINING

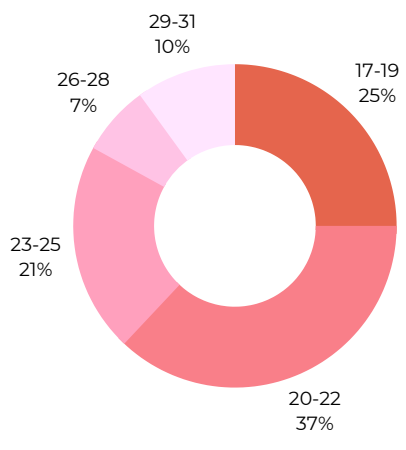
37 participants participated in the 2021 training. The sessions ran over an eight weeks, with a break in the middle during which participants were encouraged to meet with their mentors. The program aimed to achieve four key outcomes:

- increase participant knowledge of politics, domestic policy and foreign policy;
- increase participant confidence in their leadership style;
- increase participant networks, particularly within politics and policy; and
- create a community which will prevail and support the journey of participants following conclusion of the training.

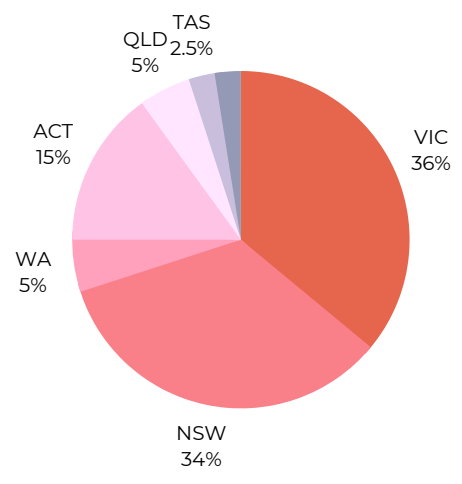
Session outline	Key learnings
Week 1: Intro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's the problem? • Intersectionality
Week 2: Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion: What is leadership • Panel: Leadership in practice (Yasmin Poole, Ritu Clementi, Pauline Siteaud, Janaia Winmar)
Week 3: Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop: Politics 101 • Panel: Politics in practice (CR Jami Klisaris, Jacqui Munro, Anne Nygaard, Hamsa Farah)
Week 4: Domestic policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop: Domestic policy 101 • Speed date a policy maker (Susan Harris Rimmer, Aditi Malhotra, Noah Erlich, Judy Kuo)
BREAK - Meet with your mentor	
Week 5: Foreign policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop: Foreign policy 101 • Panel: Foreign policy in practice (Ruth Adler, Claire Woo, Lisa Sharland, Su Lew)
Week 6: Leadership cont.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop: Leadership in practice (Rose-Anna Selhorst, Generation Politics) • Workshop: capturing media attention (Heather McNab) • Workshop: write to your MP
Week 7: Crisis diplomacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop: Crisis Diplomacy simulation run by the US Consulate, Melbourne
Week 8: Self care & wrap up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop: self care in theory and practice (Helen Babb, Yes Get It) • Discussion: reflections on the program

Who participated?

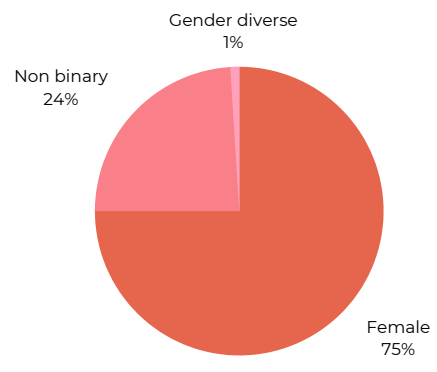
Age



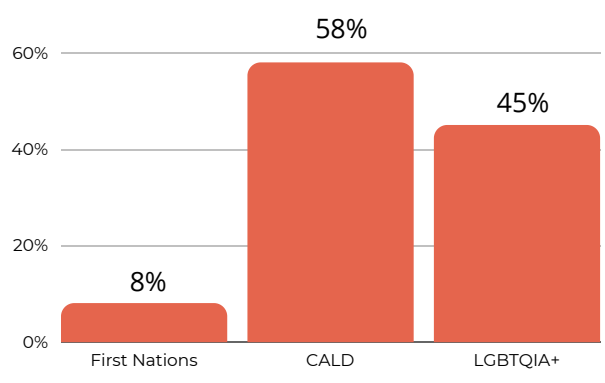
State



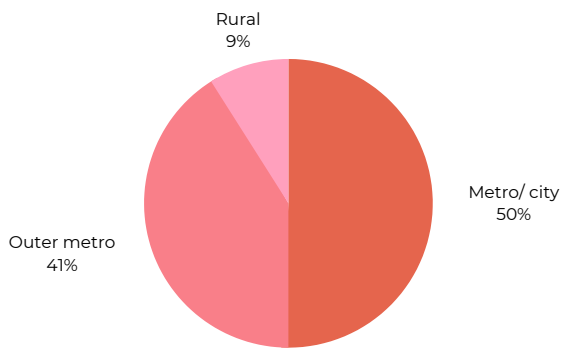
Gender breakdown



Diversity



Location



Prior knowledge

25%

Of participants reported the program was their first time engaging with either policy or politics

Impact

In the pre-training survey, participants were asked to self-report on:

- their knowledge of politics and policy;
- their confidence in their leadership abilities and leadership style;
- their interest in a career in policy and politics; and
- the reason for their rating.

At the end of the training, the survey was repeated to record changes in knowledge and confidence.

Highlights

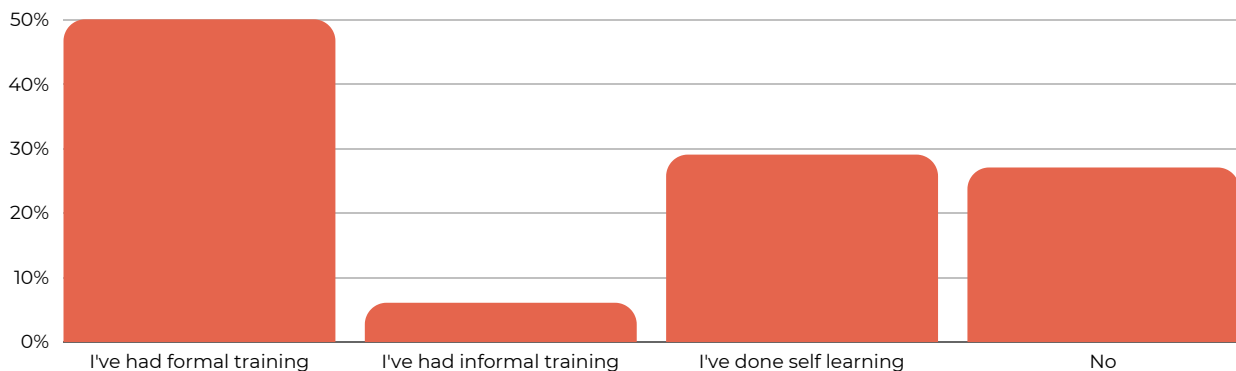
Knowledge increased in all areas, most notably in policy, which saw a 55% improvement in understanding.

Confidence in personal leadership style increased by 47%.

The number of participants who reported seriously considering a career in federal politics increased by 105%, with an increase of 107% for those seriously considering a career in policy.

Impact breakdown

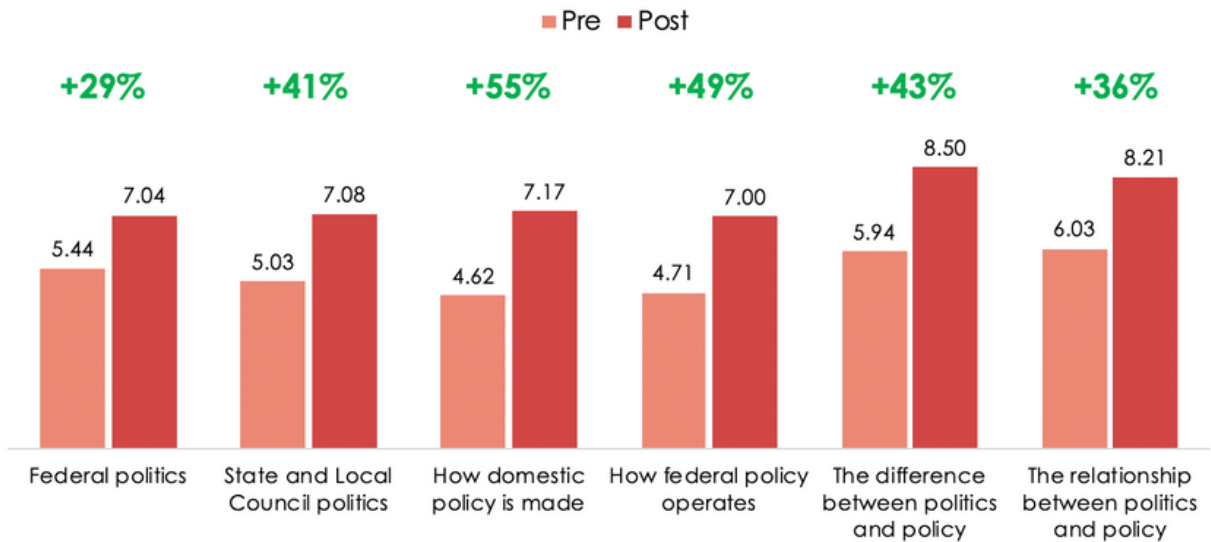
Have you had any previous training on policy and politics?



Among our participants there was a mix of previous training, both formal and informal, with 1 in 4 being learning about policy and politics for the first time

Impact breakdown continued

How would you rate your current knowledge on the following topics?



Through the training, there were uplifts in knowledge across the board. This was more pronounced in domestic and foreign policy and bringing politics and policy to parity.

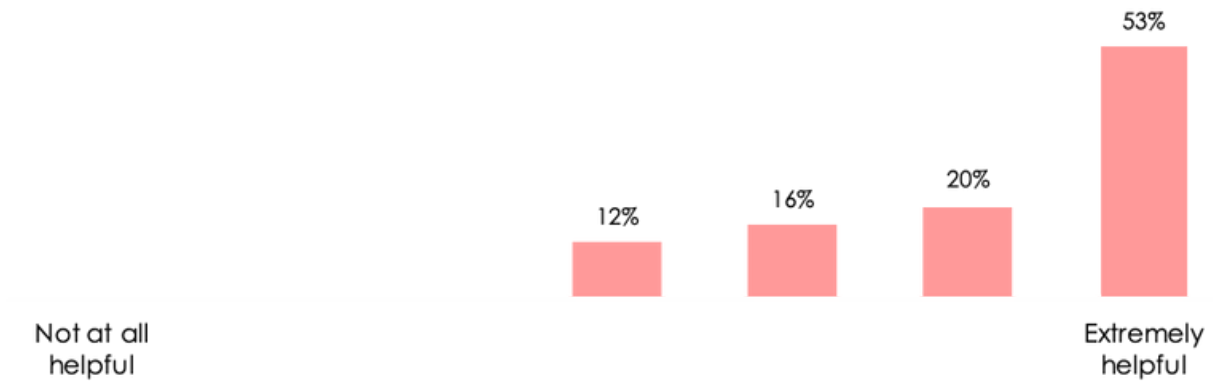
Thinking about leadership, how would you rate your confidence in the following areas:



The training lifted confidence on all leadership related areas, most notably a +47% uplift on personal leadership

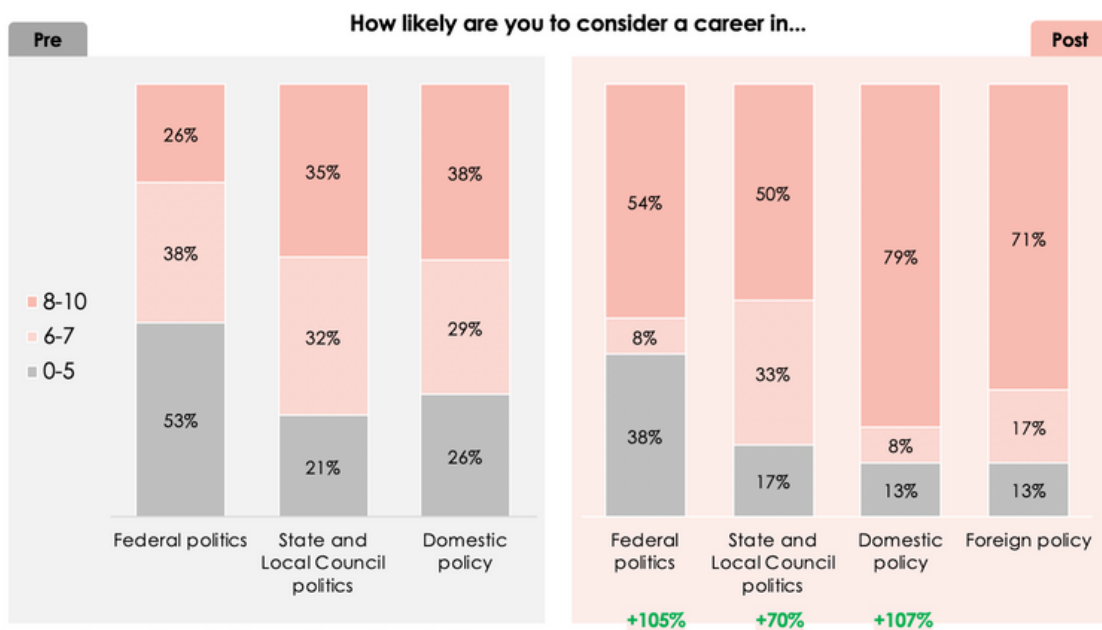
Impact breakdown continued

How helpful was your mentor in building your knowledge and confidence in policy and politics?



All participants rated their mentoring session as being mostly useful, with over half of participants rating it extremely helpful.

How likely are you to consider a career in:



The number of participants who reported seriously considering a career in federal politics increased by 105%, with an increase of 107% for those seriously considering a career in policy.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

At the end of the program, we asked participants what the experience meant to them.

"To contribute to positive change & have a career in policy doesn't necessarily require a Bachelor degree. I thought that to be able to participate and operate in policy, politics and government a uni degree was an entry level requirement. This has completely reshaped my future career steps and prompted me to act now and participate in the public sector."

"A career in public policy is possible and I have the ability to take up that space."

"The public service is an option that allows me to make change! Im so excited!"

"It's never too late for me to start my career in policy and politics."

"This was WONDERFUL!!! This program is an absolute asset to Australia and I wish that we could keep doing it for longer."

"I can do this & there is a place for me, as my authentic self, in politics and policy."

"The space that we all created together to celebrate each other's wins and experience. I came out of this program very empowered and inspired."

"I am not alone in not know what the fuck I am meant to be doing. But by turning up as I am in the spaces I inhabit I am actually making meaningful change, and for now where I am at that is enough."

"I AM capable of making change."

"Nobody fully has their shit together- it's ok to be at different stages in your studies/ career, there's no rush and at each stage there's an opportunity to create change and make a difference."

"I can do this and there is a place for me, as my most authentic self, in politics and policy."

"There are different pathways to get into leadership. There were people who studied relevant qualifications or those who worked their ways in through other respectable routes. And - Australia needs more diversity we have got a long way to go."

"My life is mine for the taking. I have been so very inspired - by the team, the speakers, and my remarkable fellow participants. I feel ready to go and kick absolute ass out there - do the things that I want to, make the career jumps, chase what I'm good at - no matter how daunting or male-dominated the table might look. The fire is in my belly, and I ultimately just feel like my confidence has been reinstated. I wish I could do it all over again!"

"Wow so much has happened for me in the short time of this program. I have joined a political party and also am about to start a job in policy in the public service. Being able to openly and discuss my fears/ethical dilemmas and hear how others faces those too and worked through them was so valuable for me."

TESTIMONIALS

"To be surrounded by like minded civic leaders, intelligent individuals, and women with ideas was such a privilege! Australia has incredible emerging leaders. The program made me realise that I'd like to continue in decision making spaces for years to come!"

"This was a truly invaluable experience. It allowed me to recognise and develop the skills to pursue my dream career in politics and policy-making, and showed me that as a young queer person my voice is not only welcomed but imperative in order to create change in these spaces."

"These eight weeks have been an incredible personal and professional boost. It has been a brilliant experience and something everyone with an interest in how the world works should do!"

"It was such an inclusive group and highly recommended for others to apply."

"Can't recommend this enough - you will 100% get more out of this than you ever imagined whether it be knowledge, confidence or inspiration."

"ROVA has been such an incredible program that's empowering to women and non-binary people who are interested in participatory democracy. ROVA is such a great program to learn all about politics and policy, and to grow within a supportive community space."

"I was confused and lost before I joined this program. The resources, mentorship and community supported my career path into the public sector. I landed a job during the last week of ROVA in Public Service. The self- confidence tips and the honest support helped me."

"ROVA has increased my confidence and knowledge in a way that I was not expecting! Learning from this community of like-minded peers has been the highlight of my weeks for the last 2 months."

"Absolutely amazing. Great for networking and meeting like-minded women and gender-diverse people. Very professionally run program with lovely leaders."

"I found this when I wasn't in my best place. As an immigrant, I was confused about my career in Australia and was doubting myself. Through this training, I learned about Australia's politics and public policy structure and the opportunities ahead. But more importantly, I found myself, my strength and weakness and I could think better about the future. And the fact that it's never late to do what you love."

"The training was brilliant, from beginning to end. If you want a fire in your belly, a comprehensive understanding of decision-making systems at every level, and some remarkable networking opportunities - this program is for you! I feel confident + determined, ready to tackle the next steps in my life/career. There is no greater gift than confidence and community - and this program provides both in spades. I would recommend it a thousand times over!"

"I wasn't sure what to expect from the Program but I'm so grateful to have been a part of this incredible cohort of change-makers. The 8 weeks have been so progressive and insightful. The team did an incredible job curating the program and were so supportive all along. The end of this program is just the beginning of stepping into the world of diplomacy and foreign affairs."

NEXT STEPS

01

Follow up conversations

Invite participants to have a follow up call with one of the Raise Our Voice Australia facilitators to share any additional feedback and to chat more about how Raise Our Voice Australia can support them in their career and leadership journey.

02

Incorporate the feedback

Incorporate the feedback into the design of future training programs, including the split between online and offline program delivery.

03

Consider the next level of training

Consider a skills training to build upon the knowledge-based program to further support participants in their public decision making journeys.

CONCLUSION

Young women and non binary people are interested in public decision making

The volume of applications submitted for the program demonstrates that young women and non binary people have an active interest in creating change through public decision making.

Hearing from experts in the field is key

Feedback confirmed that the mixture of lecture-style presentations, panels and workshops was effective in increasing participant knowledge across the four subject areas, and the careers in those spaces.

In particular, sessions which allowed discussion with leaders (particularly the speed-date-a-mentor session and the crisis diplomacy simulation run by the US Consulate Melbourne) were highlighted by participants as stand outs.

These sessions allowed participants to learn more about the skills needed to commence a career in public decision making, and were powerful in dispelling myths and prior assumptions. This was demonstrated by the significant increase in participants seriously considering a career in politics or policy, and feedback on the impact of the speakers.

This is just the beginning

Throughout the program, a number of participants commenced roles in public policy, or expressed a strong intent to change career. Participants credited this change to the knowledge and confidence instilled from the training and the support from the cohort.

But this is just the beginning.

As well as supporting our alumni on their personal and professional journeys and considering additional programs, we must continue to work with public decision making institutions (public policy bodies and politics) to expand the discussions on gender equality and diversity. This will ensure that these young leaders are recognised for the value that they bring, and can take their seat at the table.

After all, the future depends on it.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A huge thank you to our volunteer facilitator team Wendy, Arleen, Manasi and Jaslin - and for Nat, for being on the journey with us.

Thank you to every speaker and mentor who donated their time to support this incredible group of change makers. We're incredibly grateful for your support.

But most of all, thank you to each of our 2021 participants. It has been such a pleasure being part of your year, and we can't wait to continue supporting your journey.

CONTACT

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