

RAR Yass and the 40 Hour Famine Backpack Challenge

Globally there are 68.5 million refugee and displaced people - more than half are under 18.

Between 17-19 August 2018 thousands of Australians took up the challenge and committed to living out of their backpack with only essentials for 40 hours.

RAR Yass, Yass High School and the 40 Hour Famine Backpack Challenge

On Friday, 17 August, as part of the National Backpack Challenge, Yass RAR joined with Yass High School to do a Q&A with the Social Justice program students.

We asked the students to prepare their questions - everything they wanted to know about refugees, asylum seekers, displaced people around our world.

These were the questions:

Refugee Q & A

- How many refugees are there seeking asylum in Australia?
- How can we tell the difference between a refugee and someone entering to do us harm (e.g. terrorist, spy, criminal)? How do we vet people?
- How long does it take to get here from where they're from?
- How long does it take for them to be established in a community and have a stable life (e.g. income, connections to the community etc.)?
- What are the benefits of Australia having more open borders?
- What is the most common form of transport for refugees coming to Australia?
- What countries are they coming from (what are the major countries)?
- How can we help? What are the best things we can do?
- How many people die on the journey? What percentage of a group would die?

We formed a panel of five, including a member of a Syrian refugee family, a member who worked with Companion House Canberra, (a centre for assisting refugee families who experienced trauma and torture) and three of us who researched the general questions.

The students were very engaged and we aimed to make it interactive where possible.

It was terrific.

Just thought it might be an idea for other RAR groups when the next Backpack Challenge comes up - or even before. We loved the engagement of the students.

We supplied teachers with a summary of our sources and we've been invited back to work with their senior students in their legal studies. Quite exciting really!