



Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN Australia)

Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Migration Inquiry into Settlement Outcomes

March 2017

1. Executive Summary

The Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN) is Australia's national peak body representing multicultural youth issues. MYAN works in partnership with young people, government and non-government agencies at the state and national levels to support a nationally consistent approach to addressing the unique particular needs of multicultural young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in policy and service delivery.

MYAN works with the mainstream youth and broader settlement sectors in order to achieve good settlement outcomes for young people. MYAN has partners in each of Australia's states and territories through which it facilitates a national approach to youth settlement and a multicultural youth specialist approach across Australia. MYAN works directly with young people to build their leadership and advocacy skills and support a national Youth Ambassador's Network, with representatives from each of Australia's states and territories.

MYAN welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Senate Inquiry into Migrant Settlement Outcomes. We have responded to each area in the terms of reference, and included good practice case studies and young peoples' perspectives (see Appendices 1 and 2). MYAN welcomes a robust, evidence-based conversation about how Australia's settlement and migration processes can better support the outcomes for young people, including those who arrive in Australia as refugees and migrants and those born in Australia to refugee or migrant parents.

MYAN believes that a national conversation about migration in Australia is an opportunity to reinforce the evidence-based and valuable economic, social and civic contributions migrants and refugees continue to make to Australia, and to strengthen our globally recognised settlement services. Such a conversation also requires conscientious leadership, from government, from the media, from the community and civil society. This leadership must be reflective of the power of words to influence public sentiment – both for promoting community harmony and social cohesion, and undermining it.

Considering the effectiveness of services and structures for promoting positive settlement outcomes of young people is a positive step towards determining how we best prevent young people's disengagement and marginalisation. However, we also note comments from the Centre for Multicultural Youth, that "the approach of utilising our well regarded settlement programme to manage and deal with adolescent anti-social behavior goes against the deep practice and research on ways of intervening with young people who engage in activity that includes anti-social behavior, criminal activity and group conflict."¹

The most effective responses to supporting young people to settle well in Australia are those that fully invest in and support services and systems to remain flexible and responsive to the changing needs and challenges facing newly arrived young people over time. While Australia's settlement services system is globally recognised, MYAN would like to see a stronger focus on more targeted, coordinated and nationally consistent support for young people across settlement services.

¹ CMY (2017). *Submission to the Senate Inquiry into Migrant Settlement Outcomes*. Carlton: Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY), p.5

2. Key messages

Australia is a migrant nation that continues to benefit from diversity

1. Australia has a well-established and valued Migration Programme that aims to strike a balance between both national interest and international responsibility, recognising migrants and refugees make significant social, cultural and economic contributions to Australia. Australia's migration and settlement programmes are generally working well to achieve this balance and these programs are generally well supported by those who they directly service and the broader community.
2. Australia also has a highly-regarded (domestically and internationally) and robust settlement service infrastructure that includes both the commonwealth-funded settlement services and a broader network of programs and supports. On the whole, settlement support is working effectively and young people, their families and communities, are settling well.

Young people face particular and often complex set of challenges in settling in Australia

3. Young people migrate to Australia with enormous strengths and capabilities, and are remarkably resilient in negotiating the various challenges of building a new life in Australia. They also play an important role in supporting successful settlement of their families. We know that most young people are doing well and navigate the settlement journey successfully. However, young people face particular challenges in accessing the support and opportunities they need to navigate the demands of settling in a new country and require targeted support to ensure their particular needs are addressed.
4. It is important to take a long-term view of settlement, recognising that the needs of refugee and migrant young people continue beyond the first five years of settlement. This requires an investment in structures, policy and programs that ensure all young people, regardless of cultural background or migration history, can access the support and opportunities they need to feel they belong, and be active participants in and contributors to all aspects of Australian society.
5. While there have been some important developments in recent years, a more targeted approach to young people in settlement systems and supports is required. This should include:
 - a. A focus on youth-centred and youth development approaches in policy and service delivery, in the first five years after arrival and beyond
 - b. Improved measurement of outcomes to support settlement services to identify and target young people's needs, and measure their impact.
6. The National Youth Settlement Framework², developed by the MYAN, is a key tool for supporting and measuring a more targeted approach to meeting the settlement needs of young people.
7. Multicultural youth specialist services play a critical role in delivering and supporting a targeted and coordinated approach to the settlement of young people.

² MYAN (2016). *National Youth Settlement Framework*. Melbourne: Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN).

Pre-migration English language ability is not a predictor of settling well

8. English language ability is an essential tool that supports participation and engagement in a society where English is the dominant language. However, it is only one of a range of tools that enable the active citizenship of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in Australia.
9. The use of pre-migration English ability to “assess a migrant’s, or prospective migrant’s, settlement prospects”³ is not supported by evidence and risks a return to a “White Australia” style policy setting that would undermine the non-discriminatory approach of Australia’s Migration Programme – and potentially diminish broader commitment to social cohesion.
10. Young people generally acquire new languages quite rapidly and are more likely to eventually be more adept at using English than older migrants, regardless of English language ability prior to arrival.
11. Young people must have access to targeted and appropriate English language learning, including a range of models responsive to age and proficiency, to ensure educational engagement and facilitate transitions to training, higher education and employment. Australia has many examples of this being delivered well. MYAN believe some targeted policy adjustments could improve outcomes in this area.

Adequacy of current migration processes

12. The successful settlement of refugees and migrants is a two-way process, requiring active commitment both by new arrivals and also by the Australian community. Negative experiences such as racism and discrimination can have a devastating impact on individuals and their chances of achieving successful settlement in Australia. The impact of leadership statements on community harmony and social cohesion should not be underestimated. It is therefore crucial that all Australian leaders focus on the successes and positive contributions that migrants make to Australian society, rather than focusing on the actions of a very small group; recognise the role that Australian settlement services play in achieving this and; consider areas for improvement.
13. Existing migration processes include a robust array of checks and balances designed to ensure that newly arrived migrants and refugees meet public interest criteria. There is no evidence to indicate that these need to be strengthened or, as far as we have seen, that provide clear evidence of a pattern of character traits or group attributes Australia could screen for to guarantee national security. While it is a matter of state sovereignty that governments decide who enters and remains in their community, MYAN is concerned that there is a potential shift in policy and practice in order to exclude some groups of people that it determines should not be settled in Australia, and in so doing is discriminatory.

Disengaged and marginalised youth in the justice system

14. Current powers under the Migration Act with regard to the use of the character test to cancel or revoke visas are already broad and far-reaching. Recent changes have further expanded these powers. While Australia’s national interest must be upheld, these powers have the potential to not only harm individual young people caught within their remit, but also undermine Australia’s national interest. They do so by potentially undermining social cohesion and threaten to undermine Australia’s global standing or, at worst, fuelling negative sentiment towards Australia.

³ Joint Standing Committee on Migration (2016). *Inquiry into Settlement Outcomes, Terms of Reference*. (Parliament of Australia). Available at www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Migration/settlementoutcomes/Terms_of_Reference

15. The available evidence shows that it is a very small proportion of refugee and migrant young people who are engaged in the youth justice system, although some groups are overrepresented. Targeted, evidence-based responses are required to address the complex, underlying factors influencing this.
16. Youth justice issues require a youth justice response. In Australia, youth justice approaches are based on human rights principles and a considerable evidence-base that recognises effective practice with young people includes early intervention and prevention, diversion and rehabilitation. These approaches are built on evidence that shows punitive measures are likely to worsen the likelihood of reoffending among young people by further isolating them from the community - rather than addressing the underlying factors impacting offending behaviour.
17. Underlying circumstances associated with youth offending and criminal behaviour are shared across all young Australians, regardless of ethnicity, cultural background or length of time in Australia. While the migration and settlement journey may weaken some protective factors for refugee and migrant young people that may prevent engagement in criminal activity, this is a diverse group who are immensely resilient and come to Australia with an array of strengths and resources.
18. Refugee and migrant youth disengagement and marginalisation (key factors associated with increased risk of offending behavior among young people) highlights the importance of broader social cohesion and how we support the participation and engagement of all young people to be active participants in and contributors to Australian society. In order to reduce risk factors and increase protective factors we need to look at how we build a society where all young people feel they belong and can contribute, and where Government and community play critical roles in (i) removing the barriers that prevent active citizenship and (ii) implementing the activities that support it.

3. Recommendations

3.1 Mix, coordination and extent of settlement services available and the effectiveness of these services in promoting better settlement outcomes for migrants

Develop a national youth settlement strategy to support a more targeted, consistent and coordinated approach to meeting the settlement needs of young people.

Improve consistency in youth settlement services through benchmarking that is embedded in national guidelines, based on the National Youth Settlement Framework.

Improve nationally consistent data collection to monitor and measure settlement outcomes for young people – to allow comparative analysis across sites and over time and build a robust evidence-base.

Invest in research that examines the factors that contribute to and support successful settlement outcomes for young people.

Invest in multicultural youth specialist services in each state and territory to facilitate a nationally consistent and coordinated approach to youth settlement.

Expand the eligibility criteria for the Settlement Services Program, so that support can be based on need rather than a defined time period or visa sub class.

Expand the definition of youth in settlement services to include young people between the ages of 12 and 15 years.

Improve youth-focused support in the Humanitarian Settlement Services through capacity building and more meaningful completion of the Youth Sub-Plans.

Invest in support to assist families and communities to help young people in their settlement journey.

Ensure the mainstream sector is well-equipped to support young people to settle well through investing in initiatives that:

- Facilitate collaboration between the settlement and mainstream sectors and
- Build the capacity of mainstream services to ensure they are effectively responding to the needs of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

Increase investment in youth-centered support in particular areas, including:

- Health:
 - Culturally appropriate mental health and sexual and reproductive health programs.
- Education:
 - Bridging programs that support educational transitions in every state and territory.
 - Programs that support parent/carer engagement in young people's educational journey.
 - Existing models of multicultural youth workers based in schools – expand to all states and territories.
- Employment:
 - Programs that support young people's transition from education/training to employment
 - Targeted programs that develop young people's social capital and build networks with potential employers (including volunteer and internship opportunities)
 - Education and employment programs that target supports to at risk and disengaged young people, including investment in programs that utilise mentors to support young people.
- Sporting and recreational engagement for young people:
 - Invest in initiatives that foster social cohesion and community harmony, including activities and programs that bring together diverse groups of young people to build their social connections and strengthen a sense of belonging in Australian society.

3.2 National and international best practice strategies for improving migrant settlement outcomes and prospects

Continue to identify models of best practice strategies across Australia and facilitate links between resettlement countries and those supporting the integration of migrants, to share knowledge and practice.

3.3 The importance of English language ability on a migrant's, or prospective migrant's, settlement outcomes

That the government does not use pre-migration English ability to screen for potential settlement outcomes as it is not substantiated by a sound evidence-base.

That the Australian Government maintain its commitment to delivering appropriate English language programs for all recent arrivals that require it, and enhance this with more targeted investment in young people's English language learning. This includes:

- Increase investment into programs that support young people's transition from intensive English language programs into mainstream secondary schools or from AMEP into further training/higher education.
- Invest in initiatives that support young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in and outside the classroom, e.g. homework support groups.
- Develop nationally consistent definitions, measurements and cost structures for English language provision to newly arrived young people that are tied closely to the education needs and outcomes of students.
- Establish school accountability mechanisms to ensure that loadings for students with limited English skills are firmly tied to the educational needs of this cohort.

That the Australian Government develop a national measure of English language proficiency to direct loadings to the most vulnerable students.

3.4 Whether current migration processes adequately assess a prospective migrant's settlement prospects

That the Australian government do not make changes to Australia's migration processes to assess a person's likelihood of successfully integrating before their arrival but continue to invest in the settlement or integration capacity of Australia to support successful settlement.

That governments invest in developing an evidence-base for what contributes to successful settlement for young people, their families and communities.

That conversations about settlement outcomes are conducted in respectful and constructive ways, are evidence-based and include the voices of young people.

Extend investment in initiatives that support the development of young people's leadership skills and facilitate their civic and social participation.

3.5 Social engagement of youth migrants, including involvement of youth migrants in anti-social behavior such as gang activity, and the adequacy of the Migration Act 1958 character test provisions as a means to address issues arising from this behavior

That the Australian government make no further changes to the Migration Act 1958 character test provisions. Current checks and balances, including security screening, are adequate and a commitment to a fair, impartial and non-discriminatory migration system is best for Australia and all Australians.

That all levels of government to avoid misrepresentations and stereotyping of refugee and migrant young people in public narratives and ensure strong leadership to support rather than undermine social cohesion.

Invest in early intervention and diversion programs to ensure their sustainability and effectiveness.

Ensure more detailed and nationally consistent data is collected on young people engaged in criminal activity, including program outcomes, to inform program delivery and to build an evidence base on 'what works'.

Ensure that youth justice responses are culturally appropriate and provide support that responds to the specific needs of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

Invest in initiatives that facilitate opportunities for young people to have their voices heard and contribute to change in their communities.

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4. Introduction

4.1 About this Submission

MYAN welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Senate Inquiry into Migrant Settlement Outcomes. We welcome a robust, evidence-based conversation about how Australia's settlement and migration processes can better support the outcomes for young people, including those who arrive in Australia as refugees and migrants and those born in Australia to refugee or migrant parents. Good settlement outcomes are clearly beneficial to refugees and migrants, as well as in Australia's national interest.

This submission will respond to each of the areas identified in the Inquiry's Terms of Reference:

- The mix, coordination and extent of settlement services available and the effectiveness of these services in promoting better settlement outcomes for migrants;
- National and international best practice strategies for improving migrant settlement outcomes and prospects;
- The importance of English language ability on a migrant's, or prospective migrant's, settlement outcome;
- Whether current migration processes adequately assess a prospective migrant's settlement prospects; and
- Any other related matter.

We also respond to the direction in the terms of reference that the Committee give particular consideration to:

- Social engagement of youth migrants, including involvement of youth migrants in anti-social behavior such as gang activity, and the adequacy of the Migration Act 1958 character test provisions as a means to address issues arising from this behavior.

This submission provides a national perspective, drawing on the MYAN's breadth of experience working with young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds, their communities, and the youth and settlement sectors across Australia.

In preparing this submission MYAN has drawn on a number of key resources, including:

- *National Youth Settlement Framework*⁴
- *Speaking Up: The Global Refugee Youth Consultations in Australia*⁵
- Consultations with the sector and MYAN network.

Also included are the voices of young people and program examples of good practice in youth settlement in Australia.

4.2 Australian Migration and Settlement Context

Since 1945, more than seven million people have migrated to Australia, contributing to one of the most diverse nations in the world. Migration has been of mutual benefit to the nation and to individual migrants and refugees, resulting in a richly diverse population that continues to produce dividends.⁶

⁴ MYAN (2016).

⁵ MYAN & RCOA (2016). *Speaking Out: The Global Refugee Youth Consultations in Australia Report*. Available at www.myan.org.au

⁶ Australian Government (2015). *Snapshots from Oz: Key features of Australian settlement policies, programmes and services available for humanitarian entrants*. Available at www.dss.gov.au

Multiculturalism is a central tenet of Australian national identity and is a valuable asset to the country in an era of globalisation. As Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull confidently told the UN General Assembly in September 2016, ‘Australia is one of the most successful multicultural societies in the world’⁷.

Much of the success of multiculturalism can be attributed to Australia’s migration programme and a well-supported settlement programme, as well as established policy and legislative frameworks and the remarkable contributions of migrants and refugees over many years. Australia’s achievement rests in large part on the effectiveness of its post-arrival settlement program. ‘No country has integrated newcomers as well as we have,’ says former immigration department head John Menadue AO⁸.

The positive effects of migration on the Australian economy have been substantial. New migrants add to economic activity by increasing demand for products and services. By bringing new skills, knowledge, capital investment and innovative work and business practices, they also contribute to increases in production and improvement in productivity.⁹ The positive effects have also been significant with regard to the social impact of migration, with research affirming “the social benefits of migration far outweigh the costs, especially in the longer term”.¹⁰

Australia has a strong history of promoting and celebrating cultural diversity, with well-established policy and legislative frameworks to support social cohesion and a successful culturally diverse, multicultural community. For ethnic communities, cultural expression and intra-ethnic bonds are important for creating strong, supportive networks, positive identity formation and wellbeing, which all support new arrivals to settle well. They have also been found to “prevent problematic behaviour and encourage civic engagement”.¹¹ Cultural diversity has been found to benefit Australian society as a whole, increasing global connectedness, fostering innovation and opening up new opportunities – and is likely to be of growing benefit as the world becomes more interconnected in the future.¹²

Migration Programme

Each year the Australian Migration Programme allocates almost 200,000 places for permanent entrants under one of three programmes (or streams): Humanitarian Programme, Family Programme and the Skilled Programme. Young people aged between 12 and 24 generally make up around one fifth of all arrivals to Australia each year.¹³

Australia’s Migration Programme is carefully managed to meet a complex range of needs and responsibilities - from labour market requirements to ensuring opportunities for family reunion and meeting Australia’s humanitarian commitments and other international responsibilities. Overall, Australia’s Migration Programme is well regarded and supported.¹⁴

However, the weighing up of costs and benefits, of determining what is in the national interest in terms of state and individual rights and responsibilities, is a complex task. This is made more difficult in a

⁷ CPD & the Boston Consulting Group (2017). *Settling Better Report: Reforming refugee employment and settlement services*. (CPD for the Australian Government). Available at www.cpd.org.au, p.5

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Productivity Commission (2016). *Migrant Intake into Australia*. (Inquiry Report No. 77). Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

¹⁰ Carrington, McIntosh and Walmsley (ed.) (2007). *The social costs and benefits of migration into Australia*. Available at www.dss.gov.au

¹¹ Flanagan & Faison, 2001 in Mansouri & Skrbis (2013). *Migrant Youth in Australia: Social Networks, Belonging and Active Citizenship – Summary report*. Carlton: Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY), p. 18

¹² Community Relations Commission (2011). quoted in VicHealth & CSIRO (2015). *Bright Futures: Megatrends impacting the mental wellbeing of young Victorians over the coming 20 years*. Melbourne: Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, p. 25; Joint Standing Committee on Migration (2013) *Inquiry into Migration and Multiculturalism in Australia Report*. (Parliament of Australia). Available at www.aphref.aph.gov.au-house-committee-mig-multiculturalism-report-fullreport.pdf;

¹³ MYAN (2016a). *Humanitarian and Migrant Youth Arrivals to Australia 2014/15: A snapshot of the data*. Melbourne: Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN).

¹⁴ Markus (2016). *Australians Today: The Australia@2015 Scanlon Foundation Survey*. Available at <http://scanlonfoundation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Australians-Today.pdf>; Productivity Commission (2016).

world where human mobility is increasing and changing. In particular, we are presently witnessing not only increases in migration flows, but growth in temporary migration and significant increases in the cross-border movement of asylum seekers and refugees. Additionally, the threat of terrorism and extremism, from outside and from within, and the continual shifts in our domestic economy, population and environment, have a significant impact on security and stability.

For more than three decades successive Australian governments have been guided by principles of transparency and fairness in their successful management of our migration programme. Since the major overhaul that allowed for the discarding of discriminatory criteria used to exclude (the dismantling of the “White Australia” Policy), the Migration Act 1958 has been frequently amended. Over the last four decades, Australia has responded to specific changes, internal and external, by amending the checks and balances we have in place to ensure this system delivers the best outcomes for the Australian community.

However, there has been a concerning shift in the last few years which has seen unprecedented moves to utilise the Migration Act as a tool for addressing perceived risks to community safety, and potentially as a deterrence measure, to the detriment of principles central to our migration system - namely transparency, fairness, and justice.¹⁵ This includes changes to the character test and powers of the Minister to revoke and cancel visas, the use of indiscriminate policy directives and the retrospective nature of some changes, and their application to Australian residents who have spent the vast majority of their lives in Australia.

MYAN is concerned that we may be moving in a direction that could tip the scales of our long-standing, successful migration programme towards an over-protective system based on fear. The basis of our successful migration program has been a celebration of cultural diversity and a recognition of the contributions that our Migration Programme has made to Australian society.

Settlement Services

The terms of reference for this inquiry refer broadly to the role of settlement services. MYAN recognise that settlement is an all-of-community responsibility. As such, in addition to the (Commonwealth funded) programs delivered by service providers on behalf of the Australian Government¹⁶, settlement services include a broad range of actors. These actors deliver formal and informal supports through all three tiers of government, the not-for-profit and community sector, philanthropy and communities themselves, including families and individuals.

The Australian Government’s national settlement services system is broadly based on several key principles, including: providing support based on need, fostering participation in Australian society as soon as possible, fostering welcoming communities; drawing on the valuable skills and expertise of civil society to provide services and support; and, recognition that some new arrivals, notably those with refugee backgrounds, require additional supports to settle well.¹⁷ The provision of on-arrival settlement support services underpins Australia’s commitment to providing a path and a means for eligible migrants and new arrivals to achieve full participation and adjust to their new society. These principles have played a key role in the success of our multicultural society, supporting the economic benefits of diversity and maintaining high levels of social cohesion.¹⁸

¹⁵ These principles have been articulated in successive multicultural policy statements, most recently the People of Australia, and in numerous statements and policies guiding practice and approaches in this area, including the The Multicultural Access and Equity Policy Guide (p. 14) and the DIBP Client Service Charter (p. 4). Australian Government (2011). *The people of Australia: Australia’s Multicultural Policy*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia; Department of Social Services (2015). *The Multicultural Access and Equity Policy Guide*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia; Department of Immigration and Border Protection (2015). *Client Service Charter*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

¹⁶ Foremost among these are the Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS), Complex Case Support (CCS), and the Settlement Services Program (SSP). See www.dss.gov.au/settlement-and-multicultural-affairs/programs-policy/settlement-services

¹⁷ Australian Government (2015).

¹⁸ Australian Government (2015).

This service system and the supports and programs it delivers are largely well-regarded both by those who use and deliver them, and other stakeholders.¹⁹ Recent reviews have indicated that they are generally working well and are achieving their objectives; are broadly meeting client needs; and, are having a clear and lasting impact on client outcomes and wellbeing.²⁰ The Settlement Council of Australia notes that “Australia is rightly considered a world leader in provision of settlement services to recently arrived refugees”.²¹

Through MYAN’s engagement internationally, we also note that no other comparative country has the scope and focus of Australia’s settlement services, including a comparable investment in youth settlement support. Indeed, the MYAN, and the investment in its work, are globally unique.

The National Settlement Framework

MYAN welcomes the recent release of a National Settlement Framework, developed in consultation with all state and territory governments. It is a high level structural blueprint for the three tiers of government, Commonwealth, state and territory and local government. It provides a framework for government to work in partnership to effectively plan, regularly engage and deliver services that support the settlement of migrants and new arrivals in Australia. It is intended to guide the planning decisions on the provision of settlement and support services by governments and stakeholders.²²

The Framework notes that:

“Settlement is multifaceted and complex. With the right support targeted to need, people coming to live in Australia can become active community members benefiting themselves and the nation as a whole. They bring valuable skills and experiences, which can help to meet labour force needs and contribute to the nation’s productivity and development.”²³

MYAN notes that the National Settlement Framework provides no detail on how settlement outcomes might be measured beyond ‘active community membership’.²⁴

4.3 Young People in Australia’s Migration Programme

Young people comprise around 20% of all migrants and refugees settling permanently in Australia each year. At the 2011 census, 25% of Australia’s 3.7 million young people are from a refugee or migrant background.²⁵ People from refugee and refugee-like backgrounds, coming to Australia through the Humanitarian Programme, are substantially younger than the national Australian population and arrivals under most other migration categories.²⁶ In 2015-16, 27% of all arrivals through Australia’s Humanitarian Programme were aged between 12 and 24, compared to 20% and 14% through the Family and Skilled programmes respectively. Three in five recipients of Humanitarian Settlement Service between 2011 and 2014 were under 29 years old.²⁷

¹⁹ Productivity Commission (2016).

²⁰ Ernst & Young (2015). *Evaluation of the Humanitarian Settlement Services and Complex Case Support programmes*. Canberra: Australian Government, Department of Social Services.

²¹ SCOA (2015). *Submission: Productivity Commission Migrant Intake Inquiry*. Available at www.pc.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/190611/sub055-migrant-intake.pdf

²² Australian Government (2015).

²³ Australian Government (2016). *National Settlement Framework*. Available at https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/11_2016/the_national_settlement_framework.pdf

²⁴ Australian Government (2016).

²⁵ MYAN (2016a); MYAN (2014). *The CALD Youth Census Report*. Carlton: CMY

²⁶ Hugo (2011). *A Significant Contribution: The Economic, Social and Civic Contributions of First and Second Generation Humanitarian Entrants*. Canberra: Australian Government, DIAC

²⁷ MYAN (2016b). *Federal Election Policy Platform 2016*. Available at <http://www.myan.org.au/file/file/MYAN%20ELECTION%20PLATFORM%202016.pdf>

Young refugees and migrants have distinct settlement needs

Young Australians from refugee and migrant backgrounds are a diverse population group who commonly display immense resilience. They come to Australia with an array of strengths and capabilities and are often highly motivated to succeed in education and embrace the opportunities available to them.²⁸ However, they also face particular challenges in accessing the support and opportunities they need to navigate the demands of building a new life in a new country.

Their settlement needs are distinct from adults (due to their age, developmental stage, position within the family and role they often play in supporting the settlement of family members) and they commonly face additional and more complex transitions than their Australian-born counterparts. The challenges young people face navigating the settlement journey are compounded by the developmental tasks of adolescence and include:

- Learning a new language and negotiating unfamiliar education and employment pathways (sometimes with a history of disrupted or no formal education)
- Understanding and negotiating a new culture/cultures and cultural values
- Establishing new peer networks; navigating unfamiliar and relatively complex social systems and laws, including new rights and responsibilities
- Negotiating new or changed family structures, roles, responsibilities and relationships in the context of new concepts of independence, autonomy, freedom and child and youth rights
- Negotiating (multicultural) identity
- Juggling family and community expectations;
- Managing grief and loss associated with separation from peers or family, and
- Building social capital as a young person in their new context.

These particular challenges often go unrecognised as the needs of this group of young people are commonly considered a sub-set of the broader youth and settlement sectors.

Unaccompanied minors are a particularly vulnerable subgroup within the refugee and migrant youth population. Separated from their families, they face additional settlement challenges associated with their unaccompanied status, primarily, navigating the challenges of settlement in a new country as adolescents without the immediate support and care of family and/or significant others.

While young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds share common experiences as a result of the migration process, important differences exist between the two groups. Migrants may not be fleeing persecution or experiencing threats to safety and security and have generally made the planned decision to move to Australia, often for employment or educational opportunities,. (Although it is important to note that many young people migrating as part of a family unit may not have had a choice to migrate).

In contrast, those arriving in Australia through the Humanitarian Programme have been forced to flee their country of origin and have been recognised as refugees. The refugee experience is defined by the forced nature of the migration. Young people, who arrive in Australia as refugees or with refugee-like backgrounds, are likely to have experienced: a dangerous escape from their country of origin as well as extended periods living in unsafe and insecure environments; extreme human loss; traumatic experiences; disrupted family roles and relationships; and disrupted education.²⁹ Young people with refugee or refugee-like backgrounds are also unlikely to be able to return to their country of origin and may face uncertainty about the possibility of maintaining links with family and home.³⁰

²⁸ See Gifford, Correa-Velez & Sampson (2009). *Good Starts for recently arrived youth with refugee backgrounds: Promoting wellbeing in the first three years of settlement in Melbourne, Australia*. Melbourne: La Trobe Refugee Research Centre, p, 15

²⁹ CMY (2014a). *Negotiating Adolescence in Australia*. Carlton: CMY, p. 5

³⁰ Beadle (2014). *Facilitating the Transition to Employment for Refugee Young People*. Carlton: CMY.; Taylor & Sidhu (2007). Educational provision for refugee youth in Australia: left to chance?, *Journal of Sociology*, 43: 283-300.

Recognising and understanding the difference between young refugees and migrants (and their pre-arrival experiences) is important to facilitating their successful settlement and providing targeted support - responsive to their pre and post- arrival experiences. Not all settlement services are available to both refugees and migrants. Eligibility varies considerably, determined by visa class and time in Australia. Many young people arriving in Australia via the Family and Skilled Programmes are ineligible for settlement support services, even though their settlement needs may be similar to young people arriving through the Humanitarian Programme.

The Australian government has recognised for some time that the needs of young people in settlement are unique and addressing them requires a targeted approach. There have been some important youth initiatives in Australian settlement services in recent years, including: the introduction of Youth Sub-Plans in the Humanitarian Settlement Services Programme; youth specific services in the Settlement Grants Programme; the Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors Programme; funding for MYAN as one of three peak bodies in settlement services (a globally unique model); and, more recently, investment in youth focused-approaches through Complex Case Support, the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP), and the Youth Transitions Support Pilot (YTSP).

The Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors Programme is an important example of the Australian government's response to the often complex needs of a particularly vulnerable group of young people. With provision for varying models responsive to different cohorts, in the five states where it is delivered, this is a program not replicated internationally.

Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors programme

Department of Immigration and Border Protection, Australian Government

The Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors (UHM) Programme facilitates the provision of relevant care, supervision and support services to minors on certain visas in Australia without a parent or legal guardian, who fall under the auspices of the *Immigration (Guardianship of Children) Act 1946 (IGOC Act)*, and for whom the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection is the legal guardian. In certain circumstances, the Programme also assists minors who do not fall under the IGOC Act.

Initially the Programme catered for minors entering Australia through Australia's offshore Humanitarian Programme. The eligibility has since expanded to include minors holding other visas. It now assists eligible minors that have either permanent resident, temporary humanitarian/temporary protection/equivalent substantive temporary visas.

Minors are provided with services through contracted service provider arrangements and/or in partnership with State/Territory Government Child Welfare Agencies.

Support services for minors includes access to the following:

- Torture and trauma services
- Medical services
- Provision of English language classes
- Case management or case coordination provision (for example site visits and client monitoring)
- Access to education and relevant community services
- Mentoring services for the purposes of transitioning to adulthood
- Community networks.

UHM Programme service principles are based on the following:

- The respect, protection and general observation of the rights of minors in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
- The taking into account of the age, gender, culture, safety, privacy, level of development and any specific needs of minors in the provision of care and support

- The support of minors to reside in a safe and stable environment, including meeting their basic needs, such as the provision of food, shelter, education and access to health care
- The provision of service that builds on the strengths of minors and promotes their independent living capabilities.

The Programme is delivered in five states through a partnership between DIBP and the NGO providers: Centre for Multicultural Youth, MDA Inc., BaptCare, Marist Youth Care and Life Without Barriers. The Victorian government also provides care and support through the Refugee Minor Program.

Recognising the unique needs of young people in the settlement journey is evident in some settlement (integration) programs internationally. The Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees (IGC) has developed a report looking at examples of policy and practice in relation to the education and integration of 16-25 year old refugees and humanitarian migrants.³¹ The Canadian government has also recently acknowledged the need for targeted programs to support the settlement and integration of young people.³²

One of the many ways Australia has distinguished itself as a world leader in settlement has been the investment in youth approaches in settlement services, and structures that support this. While these are important developments, improvements could strengthen and better coordinate this investment.

The National Youth Settlement Framework

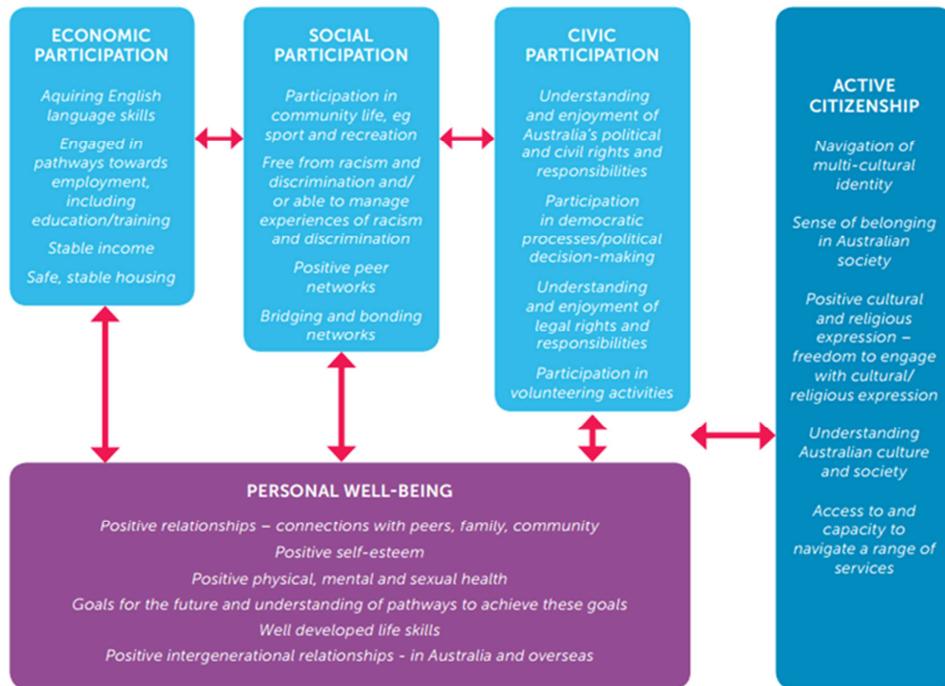
A key tool for supporting and measuring good youth settlement in Australia is the MYAN's National Youth Settlement Framework (the Framework). The Framework is the first of its kind in Australia and internationally. Developed through consultations with young people, government and the youth and settlement sectors, it is designed to equip policy makers and service providers with the knowledge and tools for achieving and measuring good settlement outcomes for young people. Good youth settlement is understood as active citizenship - where young people are supported to build social capital and agency (across 4 domains) to become active participants in and contributors to Australian society.³³

³¹ Küchenhoff & Lourie (2016) *The Education and Integration of 16- to 25-Year-Old Refugees and Other Humanitarian Migrants: Examples from Policy and Practice in IGC Participating States*. Geneva: Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum & Refugees (IGC).

³² The Canadian Government Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights reported on Syrian Resettlement in 2016 and concluded that "youth had the most difficult time integrating because they are at a challenging age. They struggle to cope with the traumas of war and they are faced with a steep learning curve to adapt to a new culture... programs tailored specifically to this age group are essential for their future success in Canada." Munson & Atallahjan (2016). *Finding Refuge in Canada: A Syrian Resettlement Story* (Report of the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights). Available at https://sencanada.ca/content/sen/committee/421/RIDR/Reports/RIDR_RPT_SyrianResettlement_FINAL_E.pdf

³³ MYAN (2016), p. 15

Figure 1. Domains and indicators of active citizenship



In addition to these indicators, the Framework provides a set of eight Good Practice Capabilities for application in service delivery. These can be applied across all sectors, including the health, youth, education, employment and settlement sectors, in both government and non- government settings. When applied, they address the range of barriers young people face in accessing the support and opportunities they need to achieve active citizenship. The capabilities are:

1. Cultural competency
2. Youth-centred and strengths-based
3. Youth development and participation
4. Trauma informed
5. Family-aware
6. Flexibility and responsiveness
7. Collaboration
8. Advocacy

The Framework provides support for a targeted and consistent service and policy approach that young people need to settle well over time. MYAN has recently delivered training workshops across Australia on the Framework and will continue its work to support the application of the Framework to practice, across sectors.

The National Youth Settlement Framework is based on the work of the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) and Multicultural Youth South Australia (MYSA) – Australia's longest established multicultural youth specialist organisations. It reflects the core elements of a multicultural youth specialist approach, bringing together good practice in youth work and settlement support.

5. Response to the Inquiry Terms of Reference

5.1 The mix, coordination and extent of settlement services

Australia's settlement services typically perform well and are well-regarded nationally and internationally.³⁴ Settlement services delivery to young people must be flexible, tailored and responsive in order to be able to recognise and respond to their particular and individual needs. Progress has been made in Australia to address the particular settlement needs of young people in recent years, but more is required.

Fundamentally, this involves a more targeted focus on youth in settlement policy, systems and programming, recognising that multicultural youth specialist services play a critical role in delivering and supporting this targeted approach. It also requires all service providers to build their knowledge and skills for engaging meaningfully with refugee and migrant young people, and to work collaboratively in their approaches in order to meet discreet and intersectional needs.

To achieve this MYAN believe we need:

- 5.1.1 A more strategic approach to supporting young refugees and migrants in the settlement journey, including:
 - o Youth-centred and family-aware approaches in policy and service delivery
 - o Increased flexibility
 - o Improved coordination and referral pathways across the settlement services continuum and between settlement and mainstream services
 - o Consistency in youth settlement service delivery
- 5.1.2 Investment in youth centred support in particular areas, including:
 - o Health programs for humanitarian youth arrivals
 - o Education
 - o Employment
 - o Recreational and sporting opportunities
- 5.1.3 Increased focus on outcomes measures and nationally consistent data (utilising the *National Youth Settlement Framework* as a key tool to support this).
- 5.1.4 Improved collaboration between settlement and mainstream services and capacity building of mainstream services
- 5.1.5 A multicultural youth specialist approach in each state and territory

³⁴ There have been no less than three Federal reviews of settlement services in the past decade: Ernst & Young (2015); Richmond (2007). *Review of Humanitarian Settlement Services*. Available at https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/02_2014/review-of-hss-richmond_acc.pdf; Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (2003) *Report on the Review of Settlement Services for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants*. Canberra: Australian Government. See also, CPD & the Boston Consulting Group (2017).

5.1.1 A more strategic approach to supporting young refugee and migrants in the settlement journey

Youth-centred and family aware approaches in policy and service delivery

While similar in some respects, the needs of young people in settlement differ from those of adults and this must be reflected within the current suite of Australian Government funded settlement services. Current approaches in key services like Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) favour a family casework model that place adults at the centre of service provision. Such approaches can result in young people feeling unable to access key supports and the services they need during early settlement.

While Youth Sub-Plans within HSS have been a welcome initiative, MYAN is aware of ongoing concerns among services of the persistent challenges with implementing the Sub-Plans and actualising targeted supports to young people within current settlement services funding and program structures.³⁵ The Youth Sub-Plans are not sufficient in themselves to ensure young people's needs are met in the early stages of settlement. To ensure the Sub-Plans are completed in a meaningful way, services need to adjust their service delivery models and responses and invest in building the skills and knowledge of staff to engage directly with young people (this may include outreach and/or communicating with parents/carers about the Youth Sub-Plans).

MYAN also commends the Complex Case Support (CCS) programme for allowing a flexible and responsive approach. However MYAN is concerned that young people are best supported through this programme in those states where multicultural youth specialist services are contracted as panel providers (VIC, SA and QLD). With the merging of HSS and CCS in the new Humanitarian Services Program, MYAN is concerned that young people's needs will remain largely unmet in the early stages of settlement – a time when more focussed and intensive supports are often most needed.

The Settlement Services Program (SSP) provides for youth-specific settlement services and there are many services delivering youth-specific programs nationally. Some services have structured their settlement support to include a youth-centred approach, with the employment of youth workers and investment in systems and supports that cater to the particular needs of young people. While the inclusion of youth-specific services was certainly a welcome development in the last SSP funding round, MYAN would like to see improved transparency in relation to which organisations are delivering youth-specific settlement services across Australia, as well as better planning, consistency of service delivery and outcomes measurements in the SSP.

Case study: Settlement Services Program (SSP) with a youth focus and youth workers Youth Program, Migrant Resource Centre Southern TAS Inc. (MRC), Tasmania

The MRC Youth Program delivers services to address the specific settlement needs of young people in Tasmania. A key feature of the MRC approach includes recruitment of bicultural youth workers.

The designated Humanitarian Settlement Service (HSS) provider in Tasmania has no dedicated youth programs or staff. In cases where young people need youth specific support separate to that provided through HSS family casework, SSP programs that cater to young peoples' specific needs fill an important gap. Young people are particularly drawn to youth SSP that are led by their peers. The MRC offers such youth specific support through their SSP programs.

The MRC Youth Team coordinates an annual Multicultural Youth Leading Program that employs young people from emerging communities as Bicultural Youth Workers to lead a series of summer holiday activities. The Bicultural Youth Workers undergo training around the National Youth Settlement Framework (NYSF) and Circle of Courage youth work principles. They then consult with young people from their community in both formal and informal settings. The information gathered through these

³⁵ MYAN (2016c). *Submission to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection on Australia's Humanitarian Programme 2016-17*. Melbourne: MYAN.

consultations is used to set the program direction for the year. Weekly programs are flexible and responsive to ongoing input and advice from the Bicultural Youth Workers.

The Bicultural Youth Workers act as bridging agents between multicultural youth and mainstream youth services, as well as strengthening access to SSP support for eligible young people. Connections are also facilitated with peers from both CALD and non-CALD backgrounds.

Bicultural workers link newly arrived young people with peers already settled and have supported positive peer role modeling for recent arrivals. Some of the key outcomes achieved by the second year of employing Bicultural Youth Workers are:

- Increased access to settlement programs for young people at risk of disengagement
- Regular recreation programs initiated to facilitate increased access to intensive casework support if needed
- Increased engagement with families
- Increased family and community trust in MRC as a service provider
- An increase in young people signing up for volunteering and leadership roles at MRC and other community service organisations.

The program also offers subsequent positive outcomes for Bicultural Youth Workers themselves. To date, four Bicultural Youth Workers have gained full-time employment, two have enrolled fulltime at university, and two have been re-employed by MRC as bicultural workers in 2017 to lead and support new workers.

Family-aware approaches are critical to supporting young people effectively. Positive relationships are a key protective factor supporting young people in settlement. However, parenting in a new culture can be challenging and the settlement experience can place significant pressures on families. Factors known to impact family relationships and disrupt family dynamics include:

- Varying rates of acculturation between children and parents and language barriers (children and young people commonly have a faster rate of acculturation and language acquisition)
- Conflicting/divergent values, (influenced by a new set of legal rights for young people and expectations of independence)
- Economic stress and disadvantage), and
- The change in expectations on parents (recognising there is a wide diversity of parenting approaches in families of diverse cultures).³⁶

Intergenerational conflict, and in the worst cases family breakdown, is experienced more acutely by families that encounter multiple and complex settlement barriers.³⁷

All families and communities have strengths which they use to their best abilities to nurture and support their children and young people. But families, and parents and carers in particular, need support to manage the challenges of settlement and maintain positive relationships with their young people during settlement.³⁸ This includes access to services and supports that can help them manage the role of parenting in the settlement context, including understanding and engaging with the services and systems with which their young people are engaged (such as schools and youth services or programs), but also to understand how their young people may be experiencing settlement in ways different to themselves, and how they can best support them.

Supporting the young person in the community context is equally important. Positive connection to community and identity are critical to young people managing the challenges of settlement. Bonding relationships – the close connections with those of similar backgrounds – and intra-cultural

³⁶ MYAN (2011). *Policy Briefing Paper*. Melbourne: MYAN.

³⁷ CMY (2011). *Youth Work in the Family Context*. Carlton: CMY.

³⁸ CMY (2014a), p. 11

connections are important for creating strong, supportive networks and a sense of identity for young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.³⁹

“A positive sense of cultural identity and heritage, especially if accompanied by strong community affiliations, can be a protective factor which increases the resilience of young people. Conversely, confusion and insecurity about cultural identity, especially if accompanied by feelings of alienation and marginalisation from the dominant culture, can be a risk factor for mental illness.”⁴⁰

Increased flexibility

In addition to the need for more support for youth-centred systems and approaches within settlement services, there are many young people who currently cannot access settlement services upon arrival to Australia due to their visa class and/or time in Australia. Informed by the views of young people and services providers, the MYAN believes that providing structured and targeted support early in the settlement period is an important factor contributing to active participation and engagement.

Expanding eligibility for settlement services and supports to all newly arrived young people with identified needs is one way to promote participation and decrease the likelihood of disengagement and marginalisation early. It can also improve long term outcomes. Added to this, many of the barriers to successful settlement do not disappear after the first five years of arrival, which is when settlement supports ceases. For those young people who are experiencing challenges after their first five years, there are few services or supports targeted to their particular needs.

MYAN believes Australia should base eligibility for targeted settlement supports and services on need rather than a defined time period or visa class. The settlement sector has the expertise and experience to respond to the particular challenges settlement presents, and we should be looking at ways to expand this expertise beyond the initial settlement period. Access to programs and services for those who need it should be considered to support social cohesion and meaningful participation of all young people, their families and their communities over time.

MYAN is also concerned about a current gap in settlement services funding for youth programs and supports for young people aged 12 to 15. Most youth services and support programs in Australia provide assistance to this age group⁴¹, but for the purposes of settlement services young people are currently defined as those between the ages of 15 and 24. The restriction of youth program funding under settlement services to young people over the age of 15 means that young people in the early phase of adolescence (a critical phase of emotional, social and physical development) are specifically excluded from programs and supports available to other young people in their settlement journey.

Young people in the 12-15 age group are increasingly presenting to services with complex and challenging needs. However under current program guidelines, their particular needs are potentially overlooked. This is especially relevant to the assessment of individual needs and provision of targeted supports to young people currently captured in Youth Sub-Plans, which are not currently undertaken with the 12 to 15 year old age group.

Improved coordination and referral pathways

After Humanitarian Settlement Support (HSS) ceases, some young people require no further support, while others will be referred to the Settlement Services Program (SSP) and mainstream services to meet ongoing or future needs. MYAN is aware that the transition from HSS can be especially

³⁹ Putnam (2000), cited in Kellock (2016). *The Missing Link? Young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, social capital and the transitions to employment*. Carlton: CMY

⁴⁰ Commonwealth of Australia, 2010 cited in CMY (2014b). *Mind Matters: The Mental health and Wellbeing of Young People from Diverse Cultural Backgrounds*. Carlton: CMY.

⁴¹ For example, the Reconnect Specialist Program includes the 12 to 15 age group.

challenging for young people, leading to disengagement, poor service utilisation and some young people falling through service gaps.

There is currently no overarching plan or strategy to guide services in a coordinated approach to the support and referral of newly arrived young people as they settle over time (i.e. from 'on-arrival' through to the 5-year limit of Commonwealth settlement services). This is particularly apparent for young people who have transitioned out of HSS and are in the early stages of needing multifaceted support interventions.

While there is scope for targeted youth programs within SSP, this is primarily an information, referral, and advice service that does not have scope to provide the more intensive support some young people require over time. In contrast, Complex Case Support (CCS) delivers specialised, intensive case management services that extend beyond the scope of other settlement services, under a flexible and responsive model, to those with identified exceptional needs. However, MYAN has concerns that in the states and territories where there are no multicultural youth specialist providers, young people are not being referred into this important source of support.

In instances where young people are identified as needing intensive supports, but do not meet the criteria for CCS or have engaged a mainstream provider who is not funded or equipped to understand, identify and respond to their needs, they often return back to SSP programs (which are funded and resourced to refer them on again) or disengage.

Alternatives models, based on collaboration and coordination across and within settlement systems and mainstream services, do exist and provide a continuity of services to young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds throughout their settlement journey, preventing and reducing crisis events. However, these multicultural youth specialist models (like the MYQ case study below) are not nationally consistent.

Case Study: Using relationships between current settlement support programs to inform new, targeted responses to assist young people

Youth Programs, MyQ & Access Community Services Limited, Queensland

Access Community Services has a youth-centred approach that supports young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. The approach aligns with the National Youth Settlement Framework to ensure that Access's services are responsive, targeted and flexible to the needs of young people.

Over the past 18 months, Access has been progressively introducing an integrated approach through deploying available resources and developing new services to meet the needs of young people.

From the time that young people commence receiving settlement support, a Youth Engagement Team responds by referring them according to their needs as identified through the various settlement planning and assessment processes delivered by Access (through HSS Youth Sub Plans, CCS Case Management Plans, Youth Transitions Youth Assessment Tool and SSP casework). The aim is to ensure that design and delivery of programs address the needs and issues identified.

Across the range of services all youth case management, casework, engagement and support services are centrally coordinated through the Youth Engagement Team.

As a result of the needs assessment process, young people are either referred to existing services offered by Access or, alternatively, new services are created to meet emerging needs. New services can be created by combining aspects of the various available settlement programs, while at the same time reducing duplication.

In this way, Access is able to provide additional meaningful activity on top of the immediate casework support provided through the usual range of settlement services.

An outcome of Access' youth-led practice is the establishment of Multicultural Youth Queensland (MyQ), to provide targeted services, programs and projects to support young people aged between 12 and 30 years.

Under the banner of MyQ, a Multicultural Sports Club has been created to assist engagement and provide support services through a range of sports opportunities targeted at young people. A new initiative to meet the needs identified through this process is a sports program offering specific responses such as a Volleyball Program for young women.

5.1.2 Investment in youth-centred support in particular areas

Increased focus on health programs for humanitarian youth arrivals

Young people from refugee backgrounds face a number of mental health risk factors in addition to those of the general population. These include experiences of racism and discrimination, negotiating issues of belonging and identity in a cross-cultural context, as well as possibly pre-settlement experiences of trauma or torture (or both) and periods spent in immigration detention in Australia.

Young refugees can arrive with very specific health concerns and language or cultural barriers, making it difficult for them to settle healthily and happily into the community. Although migrants usually have access to health services and refugees have access to more intensive health assistance such as trauma counselling, young people continue to report that the level of understanding of health providers and other service providers is often inadequate to meet their particular and often complex needs.⁴² Building a young person's sense of social connection and inclusion in the Australian community is an important component of building wellbeing and resilience in relation to mental and overall health.⁴³

Case study: Enhanced mental health supports for young people from refugee backgrounds

Refugee Health Service (RHS), The Princess Margaret Hospital for Children, Western Australia

The Princess Margaret Hospital for Children Refugee Health Service is the tertiary health provider for refugee and asylum seeker children and adolescents under 16 years of age in Western Australia.

The Refugee Health Service, established in 2005/6, is funded in by the WA State Government Department of Health and is designed to:

- Provide culturally appropriate holistic health care to refugee and asylum-seeker families
- Assess, co-ordinate and manage the complex care needs of recently resettled refugee children and adolescents aged under 16 years including those in detention or those released on Bridging Visas
- Link families to appropriate community supports
- Help establish successful transition to primary health care and/or specialist services as required
- Advocate for refugee and asylum-seeker children
- Undertake clinical research and audits that will change policy and practice for this cohort
- Educate staff regarding health barriers for limited-English proficiency cohorts

The RHS aims to meet the medical, developmental, educational and psychosocial domains of refugee children and adolescents. Children are assessed in family groups wherever possible to minimise disruption to the settlement process.

⁴² Spinks (2009). *Australia's settlement services for migrants and refugees*. (Social Policy Section, Research Paper no. 29 2008–09). Canberra: APH

⁴³ VicHealth & CSIRO (2015).

The RHS is a national leader in the field of holistic paediatric refugee health. Staff engage with, support, educate and advocate for refugee and asylum-seeking families using a multidisciplinary service delivery model. Initial consultations are standardised and family-based. The RHS staff include a range of staff from medical staff and Community Refugee Health Nurses to social workers, clinical researchers, interpreters and volunteers.

Referrals to the service are made by the Humanitarian Entrants Health Service, wider Medical Practitioners, Refugee Health Community Nurses, IHMS, caseworkers and school services (School Nurses and/or Psychologists).

As part of a targeted strategy to reduce the cultural stigma associated with mental health concerns, the RHS has embedded psychological screening as part of the routine RHS assessment since 2014. The screening has demonstrated that almost 60% of adolescents had unidentified issues of concern requiring further management.

The Refugee Health Service has established strong links across government and non-government sectors to optimise health service delivery and contribute to state and national policy development. Deliberate partnerships with education, child development, child protection, justice, dental and mental health services, expedites resolution of inequities and strengthens health outcomes. The RHS maintains care coordination and advocacy until families are safely transitioned to proximal primary healthcare providers or specialists within the first 12 months of engagement.

Education

Early disengagement from school is a key factor impacting youth participation and marginalisation.⁴⁴ Most young people and their families arrive in Australia with high aspirations and a good education as a key goal. However, succeeding in mainstream education and training can be quite challenging.

Younger people typically spend their first twelve months in Australia in an English Language School (ELS) or Intensive English Language Centre (IELC), designed to help prepare them for mainstream schools or further study, training or work. The rationale behind this model is to provide necessary English skills to be able to make a successful transition into mainstream education and employment.⁴⁵

Many young people from refugee backgrounds have experienced disrupted education prior to Australia, commonly resulting in a particularly difficult transition into an education system where age is the marker for skill level. Additionally, many young people report that they have not yet acquired a sufficient level of English to enable them to engage successfully when they transition, while experiences of racism and discrimination have been found to decrease enjoyment in attending school.⁴⁶ Research also shows that some young people can struggle to understand and navigate the Australian education system making meeting educational requirements a challenge, while those transitioning into mainstream schools from English language programs can feel less supported by their teachers and often experience a drop in their levels of perceived achievement at school.⁴⁷

As outlined in the case study below, bridging programs can be a key factor in young people making successful educational transitions.

⁴⁴ CMY (2014). *Fair and Accurate: Migrant and Refugee Young People, Crime and the Media*. Carlton: CMY.

⁴⁵ Beadle (2014).

⁴⁶ Gifford et al. (2009).

⁴⁷ Gifford et al. (2009).

Case study: Supporting transitions to mainstream education

Refugee Bridging Program, Dickson College, Australian Capital Territory

Dickson College, a senior secondary college situated in the inner north of Canberra, is committed to providing a supportive, innovative and educationally enriched learning environment to its 800 students. Dickson College developed a Refugee Bridging Program almost a decade ago to support refugee students and increase their opportunity for success.

The Refugee Bridging Program was established in response to the needs of refugee students. Although many refugee students are determined to complete college and have academic aspirations, they face a number of challenges in navigating secondary school – including social and cultural adaptation, interrupted education prior to Australia, English language learning, adoption into an unknown school system.

The program is open to students 16 years and older with a refugee experience. Students must meet a minimum standard of written English before they can enter the program, although they will still have significant ESL and literacy needs.

The program is a Year 11 and 12 course allowing students to fulfil the requirements of a Year 12 senior school certificate. Many of the students continue their education after graduating from the college, entering university, Canberra Institute of Technology and apprenticeships.

Students who aspire to gain their Year 12 certificate are given the opportunity to study units that are more appropriate to and support their past educational and life experiences. The flexible nature of the program allows more able and experienced students to move into mainstream units when appropriate in order to continue their individual education pathway.

From initially small numbers, by 2011 the Refugee Bridging Program was catering for 30 students a year, with three specialist English and maths teachers and links into other specialisations ranging from IT to media and construction. Dickson College reports that young people now travel from all regions of the ACT to attend the program.

The Refugee Bridging Program at Dickson College was awarded the 2012 Multicultural Award for Education in the ACT.

Supporting parent/carer engagement in young people's educational journey can promote their engagement and participation, and improve educational success.⁴⁸ Additionally, schools are an important site for bringing together a key array of services and supports. Young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds have particular needs and experiences that can require experienced workers/services in order to be identified and addressed effectively. Community hub models based in schools and/or placement of specialist workers in schools with high numbers of students from a refugee and migrant background can be an important tool for ensuring the appropriate supports and services are available to young people early.

MYAN is aware of significant concerns about the continuity of education for young people turning 18 while in high school. There are currently few of alternative options for finishing high school outside of the school system for those capable but unable to pay the high cost of fees or to enrol due to their age. For young people over the age of 18, current school education policy gives schools the discretion over the enrolment, re-enrolment and payment of fees. While MYAN understands that the majority of schools continue to enrol and waive fees for students up to the age of 21, this is not guaranteed. It is generally not the case for those who are over 21 years.

⁴⁸ This is true for all children and young people. Department of Education and Training (2016). *State of Victoria's Children Report – 2015*. Melbourne: DET.

Inflexibility within schooling systems and a lack of support to schools to identify and respond early to the needs of newly arrived young people, can result in young people leaving without completing secondary school and making it more difficult to seek further technical training or employment.⁴⁹ Education success can be significantly impacted by how well a family understands the systems and is connected into networks important to support their young people to do well.

The following case study highlights a model implemented in Canada, where settlement workers are based in primary and secondary schools, to provide settlement support to children, young people and families.

International case study: Settlement Workers in Canadian Schools

Although education is an area of provincial jurisdiction in Canada, the Federal Government is also involved in promoting the integration of children and youth in approximately 3,000 schools (both elementary and secondary) with high numbers of immigrant and/or refugee students, through a program called Settlement Worker in Schools. The program offers culturally-appropriate services and short term counselling relating to settlement, education and mental health.

The Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) program places settlement workers from community agencies in elementary and secondary schools that have high numbers of newcomer students. The SWIS worker:

- Proactively contacts newcomer parents and students to assist them with their settlement needs
- Refers the families to more specialized community resources as needed
- Provides group information sessions for newcomer youth and parents, often in partnership with school staff
- Provides orientation about the settlement needs of newcomers for school staff

In addition, newcomer orientation sessions take place in schools before the start of the school year to prepare new students for the transition into the Canadian school system.⁵⁰

Similar approaches have been undertaken in Australia, but none that MYAN are aware of on a national scale.

Employment

Employment is recognised as a key indicator of migrants' economic integration.⁵¹ However Australia ranks low on migrant labour market mobility compared to other similar settlement countries.⁵² According to the Productivity Commission, the labour market outcomes of migrants "depend critically on their age, education, skills — including English-language proficiency — and time spent in Australia. Domestic policies, such as recognition of qualifications and occupational licensing, and the efficiency of labour markets more broadly, also influence these outcomes."⁵³ Equally as important as human capital and structural factors is a young person's social capital – or the quality and diversity of their social networks and connections.⁵⁴

In the absence of a national employment strategy focusing on refugee and migrant young people, employment assistance for young job seekers is through generalist or 'mainstream' service providers.⁵⁵ Studies suggest that mainstream employment services are not responsive to the specific needs of refugee and migrant communities impacting refugee and migrant community utilisation of these key

⁴⁹ Gifford et al. (2009); Beadle (2014).

⁵⁰ Munson & Ataullahjan (2016).

⁵¹ OECD (2015). *Indicators of immigration integration: Settling in*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

⁵² Migration Integration Policy Index (MIPI) cited in Productivity Commission (2016), p. 8

⁵³ Productivity Commission (2016), p. 8

⁵⁴ Kellock (2016).

⁵⁵ Beadle (2014); RCOA (2012). *Job Services Australia: Refugee community and service provider views*. Sydney: Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA)

services.⁵⁶ The *jobactive* system in particular has been criticised for being unable to provide the necessary level of assistance required by people from refugee or migrant backgrounds and for a lack of cultural sensitivity.⁵⁷ Reports suggest *jobactive* has sought to avoid ‘difficult cases’, while seeking to prioritise assistance for clients who are easier to place.⁵⁸ Both refugee and migrant communities and community or non-government organisations providing services to refugees and migrants have also expressed frustration at the lack of targeted support offered by employment services and the poor outcomes experienced by refugee and humanitarian entrants in particular.⁵⁹

A significant factor contributing to employment disadvantage for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds is their lack of social and professional networks beyond their own (cultural or ethnic) community.⁶⁰ Community feedback has consistently shown that mainstream employment services fail to address the complex needs of young jobseekers from diverse backgrounds, noting they lack targeted and tailored programs or strategies to identify and address their specific needs.⁶¹

Many young refugees and migrants seek employment within their own (cultural or ethnic) communities, often as a response to a lack of access or support from mainstream services. While seeking employment through one’s own family or ethnic community may have positive employment outcomes in the short-term, the lack of systematic settlement support for employment seeking does not support wider integration into the Australian community.⁶² Lack of employment opportunities in the wider community can undermine active citizenship and social cohesion and as such, it is not in the interests of young people or the broader Australian community.

By contrast, programs that include a focus on supporting young people to establish networks into the wider community (for example through mentoring and work placement opportunities) are known to foster better community relationships and understanding and increase young people’s social capital with regard to employment.⁶³ Programs that have made a concerted effort to include the wider community (e.g. local businesses and volunteers) have reported benefits not just for the young participants but to the community as well.⁶⁴

One important Government initiative focused on supporting young people from refugee and migrant background to transition into training and employment is the Youth Transition Support Pilot (YTSP). This pilot is trialling a range of employment and employment preparation supports and strategies designed to assist young refugees and vulnerable migrants. Strategies include working in partnership with local government Economic Development units, corporate mentoring projects, industry bodies, and social enterprises, as well as tailored employment preparation strategies.

⁵⁶ FECCA (2016). *Submission on Employability Skills Training*. Available at <http://fecca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Employability-Skills-Training.pdf>; FECCA (2016). *Digital access and equity for multicultural communities*. (Digital Transformation Office). Available at <http://fecca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/feccadigitalconsultationreport.pdf>

⁵⁷ RCOA (2016). *Jobactive: Refugee community and service provider concerns*. Melbourne: Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA)

⁵⁸ RCOA (2012).; MDA (2010). *Employment and Training Advocacy Position Paper*. Brisbane: Advocacy and Social Policy Unit, Multicultural Development Association (MDA).; Beadle (2014).

⁵⁹ RCOA (2016).

⁶⁰ Beadle (2014).; Kellock (2016).

⁶¹ FECCA (2014). *Fact Sheet 3: Youth Employment in New and Emerging Communities*. Canberra: FECCA; RCOA (2016).

⁶² Beadle (2014).; Kellock (2016).; Colic-Peisker (2003). “Active” and “passive” resettlement: the influence of support services and refugees’ own resources on resettlement style. *International Migration*, 41: 61-91; Olliff (2010). *Finding the right time and place: Exploring post-compulsory education and training pathways for young people from refugee backgrounds in NSW*. Sydney: Refugee Council of Australia.

⁶³ Beadle (2014).; Kellock (2016).

⁶⁴ Beadle (2014).

Case study: Youth Transitions Support Pilot

Department of Social Services

In 2015 the Department of Social Services (DSS) announced the Youth Transition Support Pilot (YTSP) programme to trial new approaches to helping young refugees and vulnerable migrants develop the skills and networks to support their economic and social participation. The key elements of the pilot involve employment preparation, access and support to engage in education and training, and social engagement through sporting participation as participants extend their networks.

Vulnerable migrants are defined as those permanent residents who have arrived in Australia in the last five years that are:

- Humanitarian entrants and/or
- Family stream migrants with low English proficiency and/or
- Dependents of skilled migrants in rural and regional areas with low English proficiency.

The \$22 million programme YTSP forms part of a \$330 million jobs package for young people at risk of long-term welfare dependency. The six pilot service providers are:

- Access Community Services (Queensland)
- MDA Ltd. (Queensland)
- Community Migrant Resource Centre (NSW)
- Lebanese Muslim Association (NSW)
- Foundation House (the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture) (Victoria)
- The Brotherhood of St. Laurence (Victoria)

Through partnerships developed both to provide local services and to facilitate referrals, or build on existing initiatives, providers are taking innovative measures to improve participant's job seeking opportunities as well as using sports programs as pathways to employment and stronger social engagement.

The YTSP is demonstrating the value of having trained youth support workers planning and providing services in partnership with employment and settlement service specialists. It is also highlighting the ways in which government funded employment services fail to respond to the needs of refugee and migrant young people.

The pilot is also utilising sports training and participation as a means of strengthening networks, exploring potential employment pathways, and as an entry point to other forms of support.

DSS has commissioned an independent evaluation of the Pilot, to assess effectiveness of the various Pilot models and measure outcomes for young people.

The MYAN has been engaged to support the implementation of the Pilot and oversee an independent evaluation. The MYAN supports a national Community of Practice between providers to facilitate collaboration and sharing of knowledge and good practice between providers, government and the evaluators.

In addition to targeted approaches and the provision of specialist services, there is a need to work directly with employers to build their knowledge and skills in employing young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds - to reinforce the value of workforce diversity and open up pathways to opportunity for young people from diverse communities.⁶⁵ In light of growing evidence of labour market discrimination and unconscious bias in employment practice in Australia, there is much work to be done.⁶⁶ Working with local business and other employers in community-based programs has been

⁶⁵ Olliff (2010a). *What works: employment strategies for refugee and humanitarian entrants*. Melbourne: RCOA.

⁶⁶ Booth, Leigh & Varganova (2012). Does Ethnic Discrimination Vary Across Minority Groups? Evidence from a Field Experiment. *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics*, 74(4): 547-573; Mansouri, Jenkins, Morgan & Taouk (2009). *The impact of racism on the health and wellbeing of young Australians*. (For the Foundation for Young Australians). Melbourne: The Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Faculty of Arts and Education, Deakin University; Olliff (2010a); CMY (2014).

shown to be a strategic first step.⁶⁷

Case Study: Recruit Smarter

Victorian Government

A Victorian Government initiative targeting unconscious bias in recruitment and helping employers to take advantage of the full breadth of skills, experience and talent that exists across the Victorian workforce

An example of the direct role that government can play in addressing broader societal level barriers to economic participation is a trial initiated by the Victorian Government, Recruit Smarter, is removing personal details from job applications to rule out discrimination or unconscious bias.

The trial is based on research that has shown that people from culturally diverse backgrounds with the same qualifications and experience often have to submit many more job applications than people with Anglo-Saxon sounding names.⁶⁸ The 18-month Victorian trial will assess which personal details - including name, gender, age and location - should be removed during a job application process. Major government departments, agencies such as WorkSafe and Victoria Police, and private companies such as Westpac have volunteered to take part.⁶⁹

Sporting and recreational engagement for young people

Sport and recreational opportunities provide an important context for engagement of young people in the wider community, and there is potential to extend settlement service activity in this area. Sports and recreational activities allow young people to 'take a break' from the considerable worries of settlement, while also providing opportunities to develop wider networks, connections to other communities, and can have additional benefits in leading to increased access to employment pathways.⁷⁰ Sporting participation is also particularly important during adolescence as a developmental experience and for providing engaging, safe alternatives to anti-social behavior.⁷¹

Young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds are often keen to participate in sports and recreation, but have lower rates of engagement than their Australian-born counterparts emphasising the presence of a range of barriers to their participation. These can include:

- A lack of parental engagement or support, often driven by a lack of awareness of the many benefits of participation in sport, the demands of other settlement priorities, as well as financial and time constraints
- Inaccessible clubs and competitions, marked by a lack of appropriate facilities and a lack of culturally accessible programs can also present as challenges
- Practical barriers such as transport, lack of knowledge of what is available and how to get involved, and prohibitive costs.⁷²

A number of program providers have been using sport and recreation programs in various ways as a means of strengthening the settlement experience for young people. Examples range from services supporting family engagement and subsidising costs, to development of local community competitions

⁶⁷ Olliff (2010).

⁶⁸ Perkins (2016 May 20). Victorian government trials blind job applications to overcome hiring bias. *The Age*. Accessed online www.theage.com.au

⁶⁹ Perkins (2016).

⁷⁰ CMY (2014c). *Active Citizenship, Participation and Belonging: : Young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds in Victoria*. Carlton: CMY; Kellock (2016).

⁷¹ Young (2017). Iceland knows how to stop teen substance abuse but the rest of the world isn't listening. Mosaic (2017 January 17). Available at www.mosaicscience.com

⁷² CMY (2004). *Involving migrant and refugee young people in social and recreational activities, Information Sheet*. Carlton: CMY.

in different sports and the use of sport as a tool to facilitate social cohesion, economic participation and civic engagement.

These initiatives not only engage young people, their families and communities, but involve sporting clubs, sports organisations, coordinating bodies and sponsors, as well as the broader community, extending the network of actors coming into contact with young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds and opening up opportunities.

Important lessons from those using sport and recreation to broker opportunities and support the settlement of refugee and migrant young people include:

- The importance of supporting clubs, organisations and spaces to be inclusive, including providing training, resources and capacity building opportunities and information involving families and communities.
- Brokerage with schools, local councils and other organisations to identify and promote sport and recreation as a pathway to other opportunities.⁷³

Sandra's story below illustrates the value of youth engagement opportunities.

Sandra's Story

"We all need a helping hand."

"The world sometimes expects so little from us young people, but there is no reason why we should prove them right!"

Moving to Australia when I was only 14 made it hard for me to make friends initially at school. The issue wasn't that no one wanted to be my friend; the issue was I didn't find people who I could really be myself with until four months into the year. For a 14 year old that was hard. Other than that, my time at school was fine, I had learned English before I moved to Australia and eventually I became comfortable in my own skin and had friends that I got along well with.

From my experience of settling in Australia I have learnt that there are so many different opportunities, and as young people we should get involved and make an effort to be participants in our communities. It not only helps us grow as people, but it blesses other people around us and makes our communities better places.

Being part of a church community helped us a lot when we settled in Australia, we felt like we belonged because church was like home. So, if we needed help in any way, or if we had questions to ask, we could just get in touch with people at church and that was very helpful.

Now I aim to finish my Masters in Community and International Development and hopefully work in a community development organisation with youth. I have a passion for youth engagement and I want young people from all backgrounds to be key participants in their societies and be the best they can be.

My advice for someone who has just arrived in Australia would be that they should use the opportunities they have in this country to better themselves as well as those around them. The world sometimes expects so little from us young people, but there is no reason why we should prove them right. Australia has a lot to offer and no matter where you are from, you have something to give and your story and experience is valuable. I would also advise them to know that they can't do all this on their own; we all need a helping hand along the way.

⁷³ CMY (2004).

5.1.3 Increased focus on outcomes measures and nationally consistent youth settlement services

The National Settlement Framework identifies the necessity for “a robust evidence base (that) assists in the measurement of settlement outcomes and helps to identify the settlement and mainstream policies and programmes that are working well as well as where improvements can be made.”⁷⁴ The Framework also acknowledges that the current evidence base informing continuous improvement and targeted investment is inadequate. MYAN believes the existing body of knowledge about successful approaches to supporting settlement needs to be further developed and refined through research and evaluation. Specifically, the MYAN believes more thorough and consistent monitoring and evaluation of current services and approaches are required to inform the evidence base around what works. The MYAN has developed the National Youth Settlement Framework to address this gap in relation to youth settlement.

The MYAN notes a number of research initiatives have been funded to explore factors associated with successful outcomes. Government investment has ranged from longitudinal studies of broad outcomes such as the current BNLA, to the measurement of specific social outcomes of migrants,⁷⁵ the tracking of psychosocial health and wellbeing indicators overtime⁷⁶, and the assessment of the economic, social and civic contributions of migrants and their children.^{77/78} Interestingly, in a review of the many studies of indicators conducted in Australia, Khoo has noted that there has been an overwhelming focus in Australia on the individual characteristics of migrants, with little attention to measuring and assessing the impact of the settlement context on outcomes.

More recently, investment has also been made into developing a youth-specific evidence base. This includes the development of the National Youth Settlement Framework by the MYAN, and commissioning of an independent evaluation of the Youth Transitions Support Pilot. The MYAN is also a partner in the Australian Research Council Linkage Project *The Status of CALD Youth in Australia*. Led by Melbourne University and the Centre for Multicultural Youth, and in collaboration with nine Australian organisations, the project aims to critically define the status of CALD youth; develop the first national status reporting framework for the group that will generate new social, economic and cultural indicators; and build a knowledge hub to store and curate CALD youth data. Data and understanding from this project is intended to enable governments to better meet the specific needs of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds and enhance their opportunities.

Additionally, the Settlement Council of Australia released the *National Settlement Services Outcomes Standards*, which provide guidance to organisations in measuring how settlement supports are impacting outcomes of new arrivals across a number of key areas.

5.1.4 Improved capacity of mainstream services and collaboration between settlement and mainstream services

MYAN is aware that some young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds ‘fall through the gaps’ of existing systems and supports because services are not funded or equipped to work with particular groups of young people. MYAN also hears too frequently that referrals are not effective. This may be because young people are referred to supports after they are already in crisis, or because the referral did not ‘stick’ (usually because the young person was not supported in this referral pathway). Collaboration between settlement and mainstream services is essential to ensuring young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds have access to effective, timely and appropriate service systems and supports, and that they are supported to take these up.

⁷⁴ Australian Government (2016), p. 6

⁷⁵ Carrington, McIntosh & Walmsley (ed.) (2007).

⁷⁶ Gifford et al. (2009).

⁷⁷ Hugo (2011).

⁷⁸ Khoo (2012). *Key research questions for longitudinal survey of refugees and other humanitarian migrants*. (Department of Immigration and Citizenship). Available at https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/08_2014/khoo-paper_access.pdf

Increased collaboration would not only strengthen referral pathways, but would also provide a two-way communication of specialist information – ensuring the service in contact with the young person, mainstream or settlement, can identify and address the young person’s needs, while also enabling young people to build on the trusting service relationships they have established and to benefit from the input of specialised knowledge and support early.

It is important that adequate time and resources are allocated to develop strong and effective partnerships and investment is made to support young people to navigate the transition from one service system/provider to another.

Mainstream services need to ensure they have a workforce skilled in cultural competency and youth-focused approaches that is well-equipped to identify and meet the diverse and complex needs of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. Young people should not be disadvantaged by their location or the type of service they are accessing. If the expectation is that young people are to be serviced by mainstream programs, then this needs to be universal and services previously underutilised by refugee and migrant young people need to be equally equipped with the skills and resources to work with refugee and migrant young people. This includes mental health, sexual and reproductive health or LGBTQ services, those in regional and rural areas, as well as areas with less concentration of new arrivals.

This currently is not happening, despite the creation of policies and guidance to direct culturally responsive practice and improve service accessibility for refugee and migrant communities. An example of where clear policy exists, but is not routinely followed, is the use of interpreter services. While there are industry standards and guidelines around the use of interpreters and the provision of translated materials, including in the national Multicultural Access and Equity Policy, communities and young people continually report a failure of basic practice in this regard across most sectors, from health and education to justice.⁷⁹

MYAN recognises that many mainstream services are already experiencing challenges meeting need (with often extensive waiting lists) and that often a reluctance to adapt practices in order to be more culturally relevant and responsive is related to not having the capacity or support to invest in this. However, a quarter of Australian youth are from a refugee or migrant background and the failure to address barriers to service utilisation for this group is unacceptable. It will likely have long term consequences for young people, their families, and the broader Australian community, and thus must be a priority.

Case study: Collaboration between specialist and mainstream agencies – the value of capacity building to improve outcomes for young people

SHine and Multicultural Youth of South Australia (MYSA), South Australia

MYSA works collaboratively with a wide range of government and non-government organisations raising the profile of culturally and linguistically diverse young people. Areas of involvement include physical, sexual and mental health, employment, education and training, housing, law, and family and social relationships.

MYSA aims to facilitate linkages to mainstream services to assist refugee and migrant young people engage with these services over time. MYSA also provides information training and support to

⁷⁹ As a result of this young people are often required to be stand-in interpreters for their parents, impacting this relationship negatively, and repeatedly report that they experience challenges accessing the information and level of detail they need because translated information and interpreters are not utilised consistently. FECCA have reported that this is a key barrier to CALD community utilisation of mainstream services such as Centrelink and jobactive. FECCA (2012). *Opening the door to access and equity: FECCA Access and Equity Report 2011/12*. Canberra: FECCA; Australian Survey Research Group (2011). *Settlement outcomes of new arrivals*. (DIAC). Available at https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/01_2014/settlement-outcomes-new-arrival_access.docx; VFST (2013). *Promoting the engagement of interpreters in Victorian health*. Melbourne: VFST.

mainstream organisations to increase cultural awareness, promote understanding and develop and strengthen cross cultural knowledge and skills.

One example of this active engagement is with sexual health services. Sexual health is an ongoing issue for many young people and many refugee and migrant young people lack very basic knowledge around safe sexual practices and healthy relationships.

SHine (Sexual Health information networking and education) is a leading not-for-profit provider of primary care services and education for sexual and relationship wellbeing. SHine's service and education delivery model provides sexual health education, early intervention, health promotion, clinical services and therapeutic counselling. Drop-in clinics provide free responsive access to young people under the age of 25.

In the beginning, MYSA social workers began accompanying young people to SHine and were able to support them with advocacy, particularly around cultural issues that SHine workers may have been unaware of. As the partnership developed, many young people assisted by MYSA began to independently accessing SHine, or came to their social worker at MYSA asking to make a SHine appointment. Many of the young people who access MYSA have received treatment for sexually transmitted infection and have obtained contraception.

MYSA has a very positive working relationship with SHine and the two organisations now co-facilitate workshops together. Sometimes SHine staff will attend workshops at MYSA to provide information, and sometimes MYSA will take a group of young people to visit and make introductions to SHine staff and programs.

This approach has strengthened SHine's provision of culturally appropriate sexual health services for young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and increased access to their services by those young people assisted by MYSA. In response to an increase in the numbers of MYSA clients accessing sexual health services, SHine appointed a CALD Youth Project Officer to coordinate and run workshops in partnership with MYSA.

5.1.5 Multicultural youth specialist approach in each state and territory

A multicultural youth specialist approach supports a targeted and responsive approach to meeting the needs of young people in settlement. The MYAN has supported the development of multicultural youth specialist organisations and networks in each state and territory in order to facilitate a nationally consistent approach to youth settlement. These organisations and networks facilitate coordination and networking and referral pathways within and between settlement and mainstream organisations, as well as engaging in advocacy on issues facing young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds and undertaking sector development activities across the youth and settlement sectors. These specialist organisations and networks also support the development of young people's advocacy and leadership skills. They are guided by the principles and practice outlined in the National Youth Settlement Framework.

Case study: Strengthening coordination and capacity in NSW through a multicultural youth specialist organisation

MYAN NSW, New South Wales

MYAN NSW is a statewide, independent multicultural youth specialist organisation in New South Wales. It engages, connects and builds the capacity of the youth and multicultural sectors so all young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in NSW can access the support and opportunities they need to be active citizens in Australian society.

MYAN NSW is a hub for a large and diverse network of members, partners, services and young people, spanning youth and multicultural organisations and government agencies. It supports a range of events and activities from sector development forums and training workshops to providing resources and updates to the sector.

MYAN NSW's role is to:

- Respond to social and political agendas relating to young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds;
- Enhance the capacity of services working with young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds to provide high quality services;
- Build capacity in young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds to speak out and take action of issues that affect them;
- Collaborate, coordinate and take action on issues that affect young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

MYAN NSW supports a youth Ambassador's Network, supporting the development of young people's leadership and advocacy skills, and facilitating their engagement with decision-makers.

As highlighted in the previous section, Australia's on-arrival settlement programme funded by the Australian Government is generally running well. Improvements can nevertheless be found for all systems, and some specific examples are given here. However, MYAN stress that changes to this system alone are likely to be relatively ineffective in improving the outcomes of refugee and migrant young people overall. This is because the needs of refugee and migrant young people extend beyond the reach of this service system and its supports.⁸⁰ The needs of refugee and migrant young people must be understood in the context of young people in Australia more broadly.

MYAN believe that in order to address factors related to refugee and migrant youth disengagement and marginalisation, and to ensure services and systems are effectively supporting outcomes, there is a need to take a long-term view of settlement that goes beyond Federally-funded (settlement) services during the first five years to how the broader systems and supports facilitate social cohesion and empower young people to become active citizens.

In the current service system there remains a need for stronger generalist youth support that is culturally relevant and capable of responding to the needs and concerns of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. In addition to delivering targeted programs for young people, and supporting training and capacity building with mainstream and settlement services, multicultural youth specialists are also well-placed to offer complimentary specialist service support within mainstream youth programs and systems.

⁸⁰ A case in point for the need to look beyond the first five years are efforts to address issues arising from recent patterns of refugee and migrant youth offending. Most of the young people overrepresented in the Victorian crime statistics were likely ineligible for Commonwealth funded settlement support when they arrived in Australia. Most New Zealand born young people arrive on a Special Category Visa, making them ineligible for most Government supports, including settlement services. While almost 50% of young people (aged 12 to 24) born in South Sudan and arriving in Australia over the last 10 years arrived via the Family Programme, making them also ineligible for key settlement supports. See Appendix 3.

The case study below presents an example of this – the Specialist Reconnect Program. This is a specialist program for young people from refugee and newly arrived backgrounds within the mainstream Reconnect program.

Case study: Multicultural Youth Specialist approach within mainstream services

Specialist Reconnect, Centre for Multicultural Youth, Victoria

Funded by the Federal government, the Reconnect program uses community-based early intervention services to assist young people aged 12 to 21 years who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness. Reconnect assists young people to stabilise their living situation and improve their level of engagement with family, work, education, training and their local community.

CMY delivers Reconnect as a specialist provider supporting the particular needs of newly arrived (in Australia for less than 5 years) and refugee young people who are at risk of homelessness.

CMY's Reconnect program is delivered across some of the most diverse and fastest growing areas of metropolitan Melbourne. The program incorporates family centred approaches and culturally responsive casework utilising a variety of strategies targeted to the unique needs of the young person.

A key element to Reconnect that works well for refugee young people is the flexibility to target assistance to individual young people's needs (including the capacity for providers to purchase services depending on a client's needs).

The model also enables CMY to provide secondary consults to assist other services in supporting young people in need of culturally responsive and targeted assistance. This supports a 'no wrong doors' approach, which works to guarantee that young people receive the help they need regardless of what service they approach for assistance. Secondary consults also build relationships across the sector and streamline and enhance referral pathways. The advantage of 'joined up' services and the 'no wrong doors' approach is that young people benefit from continuous support as their needs change.

Case management undertaken with young people through Reconnect also informs other areas of CMY's work, supporting the identification of emerging or persistent trends and issues and the development of initiatives and programs that are targeted to issues young people are experiencing.

CMY have been delivering Reconnect for more than 10 years. During this time outcomes identified by young people and their families have included:

- Increased engagement with school and other education facilities
- Better family relationships and improved support for families
- Increased awareness of the service system and options for support
- Increased knowledge of the housing system and improved access to housing
- Increased links to counselling or other therapeutic support
- A growing awareness of self, both mentally and physically, which has led to self-control, assertive communication and conflict management
- Increased access to sport and recreation activities
- Improved management of health issues, and
- Better resolution of legal issues.

Recommendations

Develop a national youth settlement strategy to support a more targeted, consistent and coordinated approach to meeting the settlement needs of young people.

Improve consistency in youth settlement services through benchmarking that is embedded in national guidelines, based on the National Youth Settlement Framework.

Improve nationally consistent data collection to monitor and measure settlement outcomes for young people – to allow comparative analysis across sites and over time and build a robust evidence-base.

Invest in research that examines the factors that contribute to and support successful settlement outcomes for young people.

Invest in multicultural youth specialist services in each state and territory to facilitate a nationally consistent and coordinated approach to youth settlement.

Expand the eligibility criteria for the Settlement Services Program, so that support can be based on need rather than a defined time period or visa sub class.

Expand the definition of youth in settlement services to include young people between the ages of 12 and 15 years.

Improve youth-focused support in the Humanitarian Settlement Services through capacity building and more meaningful completion of the Youth Sub-Plans.

Invest in support to assist families and communities to help young people in their settlement journey.

Ensure the mainstream sector is well-equipped to support young people to settle well through investing in initiatives that:

- Facilitate collaboration between the settlement and mainstream sectors and
- Build the capacity of mainstream services to ensure they are effectively responding to the needs of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

Increase investment in youth-centered support in particular areas, including:

- Health:
 - Culturally appropriate mental health and sexual and reproductive health programs.
- Education:
 - Bridging programs that support educational transitions in every state and territory.
 - Programs that support parent/carer engagement in young people's educational journey.
 - Existing models of multicultural youth workers based in schools to all states and territories.
 - Employment:
 - Programs that support young people's transition from education/training to employment
 - Targeted programs that develop young people's social capital and build networks with potential employers (including volunteer and internship opportunities)
 - Fund education and employment programs that target supports to at risk and disengaged young people, including investment in programs that utilise mentors to support young people.

- Sporting and recreational engagement for young people:
 - Invest in initiatives that foster social cohesion and community harmony, including activities and programs that bring together diverse groups of young people to build their social connections and strengthen a sense of belonging in Australian society. The importance of English language ability on a migrant’s, or prospective migrant’s, settlement outcome.

English language skills play a critical role in successful settlement, but competency prior to settlement should not be a condition of entry for all migrants and refugees. Australian research has demonstrated that English language ability does not predict settlement outcomes.⁸¹ While English language ability is an important tool that supports participation and engagement in a society where English is the dominant language, it is only one factor of many that enable people from refugee and migrant backgrounds to actively participate and contribute to Australian society.

The use of pre-migration English ability to screen for potential settlement outcomes is not supported by evidence and risks a return to a “White Australia” style policy setting that would undermine the non-discriminatory approach of Australia’s Migration Programme – and potentially diminish broader commitment to social cohesion. MYAN does not support any shift to strengthen migrant intake requirements with regard to English language ability and would not support any change in the level of English language required by Australia’s citizenship test.

The Australian Government should maintain its commitment to delivering appropriate English language programs for all recent arrivals that require it, and enhance this with more targeted investment in young people’s English language learning.

Recognising the important role English language plays in facilitating settlement, the Australian Government invests considerably in English language education as a major component of Australia’s national settlement programme. Importantly, in addition to acquiring language, these programs offer considerable additional benefits to new arrivals, including learning about Australian cultural norms and society, practical guidance on living in Australia such as shopping and using public transport and helping new arrivals find a job and make friends.⁸²

In general, over time younger people from refugee and migrant backgrounds are significantly more likely to speak, read and write English at a higher level than older age groups.⁸³ Young people who come to Australia as refugees or migrants commonly demonstrate remarkable capacity to learn English language and succeed in education and higher education opportunities, often regardless of English language capability prior to arrival.⁸⁴ However, many young refugees will have minimal prior schooling and subsequent limited literacy in their first language. This means that many refugee young people understandably make slower progress in English language schools than other newly arrived young learners.⁸⁵

It is important to note that while English language is an important key to unlocking opportunity in Australia, bi- or multi-lingualism, and the maintenance of a bicultural (or multicultural) identity, also has significant economic, social and cultural benefits for individuals and for the nation in a globalised world.⁸⁶

⁸¹ Australian Survey Research Group (2011), p. 63

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 15

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 12

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 12

⁸⁵ Olliff (2010); Moore, Nicholas & Deblaquiere (2008). *‘Opening the Door’: Provision for Refugee Youth with Minimal/No Schooling in Adult Migrant English Program* (Project 2.1: ‘Modes of Delivery for SPP Youth’). Canberra: AMEP Research Centre, Commonwealth of Australia.

⁸⁶ Bi- or multi-lingualism can enhance cross-cultural interaction, reinforce connection to identity, improve employability, and support global connectivity. Mehisto & Marsh (2011). Approaching the economic, cognitive and health benefits of bilingualism: Fuel for the CLIL in Ruiz de Zarobe, Sierra & Gallardo del Puerto (eds.) *Linguistics Insights. Content and Foreign Language Integrated Learning*, 108 (2011): 21-48.

While there are many examples of good practice in English language learning, there are a number of gaps in and improvements to be made to the structure and accessibility of English language learning that would enhance outcomes for young people in this area in Australia.⁸⁷ These include:

- Appropriate and consistent funding and structures to ensure:
 - Sufficient hours and supports are available to enable young people to attain levels of English sufficient to engage in further study or work, and
 - Places are available in English language programs for all new arrivals who are identified as in need
 - Supports in and outside the classroom to support EAL learning and sustained engagement in education and training pathways
- Delivery or expansion of youth-specific AMEP options in all states and territories
- Targeted resources for EAL support in schools
- National standards and/or reporting frameworks to ensure consistent delivery of EAL/ESL support in schools.⁸⁸

5.1.6 Appropriate and consistent funding and structures

Insufficient hours

While many young people have clear aspirations and determination to transition into work and further education or training, current English language opportunities do not adequately support all young people to achieve these goals.⁸⁹ A 2015 review of the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) reported that the expectation of attainable functional English after 510 hours of tuition was ‘unattainable and unrealistic’ given the low-level of English that some migrants possessed.⁹⁰ Further, a 2011 report on Settlement Outcomes of New Arrivals found that 15% of humanitarian entrants believed English language classes (AMEP) provided were not appropriate, the main reason being that 510 hours of study was not enough.⁹¹ For young people, this was found to be because the proficiency level at which they become ineligible for further AMEP assistance (i.e. functional English) was generally considered insufficient for employment, VET or higher education.⁹²

Additionally, while participants are eligible for up to 510 hours of tuition, clients who commence with higher levels of proficiency are likely to stop being eligible for AMEP before they reach 510 hours if they achieve functional English, yet often still do not have sufficient English language skills to enter employment or further education.⁹³

Assefa’s story below illustrates the importance of targeted, flexible and responsive support in English language learning through TAFE.

Assefa’s story

“I have been through hard times, but I am strong and I will never give up.”

My name is Assefa and I have been in Australian for one year. I was born in Ethiopia but I grew up in Sudan. My mum came to Australia with my sisters in 2011, but I stayed with my uncle and only got a visa to come to Australia one year ago.

⁸⁷ Australian Survey Research Group (2011), p. 12

⁸⁸ Report to the Canadian Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights noted: “It is imperative that the Government of Canada fund language classes appropriately and secures spaces for all refugees upon arrival.” Munson & Atallahjan (2016), p. 8

⁸⁹ Liddy (2012). Multicultural Young People in Australia: Exploring structural barriers to education and employment, *Australian Mosaic*, 32(Summer 2012/13):6-9.

⁹⁰ Productivity Commission (2016), p.281

⁸⁵ Australian Survey Research Group (2011), p. 12

⁹² ACIL Allen Consulting (2015). *AMEP Evaluation*. (Department of Education and Training). Melbourne: DET.

⁹³ ACIL Allen Consulting (2015).

The biggest challenge I faced when I arrived in Australia was language. When I arrived here I couldn't speak English and I couldn't explain myself. Some of the other challenges I faced included understanding the rules and laws of Australia, understanding the culture and the system, and I missed my family who were still living in Sudan and Ethiopia.

School helped me to deal with this a lot. I started studying at the Young Migrant Education Program (YMEP) in my new city. It is at TAFE. It is an intensive English program for young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. YMEP is full time and we do lots of different topics. For me, it has helped me to work out how I can fit in to Australia and what I should study and what I should focus on.

Some students have to go straight into college when they arrive, and then they fail and have to come back to our course. This makes them feel like they have wasted their time. I wanted to improve English before I started a mainstream course and I needed time to settle and learn about the different way of doing things in Australia. I learned a lot from this course and I was able to ask people from my country about different things and they were able to explain it in my language. Now I feel like I have the English skills to do a mainstream course and be successful.

I have learnt many valuable lessons from settling in Australia. For example, you should never rush to achieve your goals because if you rush and jump straight in to things you might crash because you need to have the foundation skills. I have also learnt about human rights and how you can change things if you think they are wrong. I know about democracy and I feel that I can do something to give back to Australia. I have been through hard times, but I am strong and I will never give up.

The most important advice I would give to people arriving in Australia is to never think it is going to be like heaven and that everything will be free and perfect. Moving to a new place is hard and you must go through this and work hard so you can achieve your goals.

Accessing English language programs

From 2011, AMEP services were extended to 15 to 17 year olds who have left school in the first year after arrival in Australia. AMEP counsellors are responsible for liaising with local schools to facilitate the transition of young people who have dropped out of the school system into AMEP. However, to be eligible for AMEP, young people aged 15 to 17 years are required to enrol and commence a course within 12 months of their visa commencement date or arrival into Australia. Attendance at AMEP classes is voluntary, and there is no formal referral process.⁹⁴

The MYAN is aware of concerns about a growing number of young people in this 15 to 17 age group who have been enrolled in school upon arrival, but who have disengaged and not been referred to AMEP or who have been referred to AMEP more than 12 months later, only to find that their eligibility for the program has expired. Greater engagement with and information for schools about this important eligibility requirement and adequate assessment and identification of English language needs early (pre-enrolment in mainstream education) is required. This would help ensure that young people can access appropriate English language supports and education options from the beginning.

The MYAN also supports a review of the necessity for a time limit on eligibility for 15 to 17 year olds within which enrolment could take place, given all AMEP classes must cease five years after arrival or visa commencement date anyway.

In addition, MYAN is concerned about the lack of consistent funding and structures to ensure all young people have access to appropriate English language supports on arrival. For example, MYAN is aware that in Victoria there is a shortfall in places in EAL classes for young people, while in Tasmania EAL in schools is not available as the preferred system is 'immersion' into mainstream schools. MYAN believes that in order to support the best possible outcomes for all newly arrived young people, there is a need to consider the development of nationally consistent guidelines or standards around the delivery of English language programs for young people. This would ensure a base standard of English language

⁹⁴ ACIL Allen Consulting (2015).

education is available to all young people who require it. Such guidance or standards should continue to allow providers flexibility to deliver services that meet the specific needs of their local students and communities.

5.1.7 Delivery or expansion of youth-specific AMEP classes in each state and territory

Studies have found that young people from refugee backgrounds:

- Learn faster than their elders;
- Need teaching that extends their generally rapid but superficial acquisition of oral English and that focuses on written English;
- Need the basic knowledge, skills and discipline that come with formal schooling if they are to embark on educational and employment pathways that realise their potential;
- Have high energy levels and require more active teaching and activities than those acceptable to older learners;
- Have different emotional needs, including a generally intense need to interact with their peers;
- Benefit from sharing their problems with peers in and out of class;
- Need productive relations with adult mentors and thus relate differently to their teachers than do older adults; and
- Generally require and are more responsive to a more interventionist approach to attendance and punctuality, and to more explicit socialisation into appropriate behaviours.⁹⁵

Additional hours of English language classes are available to young people under the age of 25, and this has been a positive development. Prior to the introduction of these additional hours research with refugee and humanitarian young people (aged 16 to 25 years) found that 58% remained at the level at which they entered the program.⁹⁶ However, while additional hours are helpful, some young people find it difficult to remain engaged in classes designed for the adult cohort.

In response to this, youth specific language classes have been operating in several locations across Australia for a number of years. Experience suggests that these programs can be particularly effective as young people have better learning outcomes when they are placed in targeted youth programs that are specifically tailored to their ESL/EAL, educational and socio- emotional needs.⁹⁷ These classes also offer peer-to-peer learning opportunities, support development of social connections and relationships, and provide opportunities for young people to undertake other important processes in the settlement journey, including establishing intercultural relationships and networks, learning new skills, and building knowledge about life in Australia.

Youth-specific language classes are a positive example of Government investment in youth settlement. However, these youth-specific options are not available to all young people and vary across jurisdictions. The key challenge to expansion of youth-specific classes to other sites has been in obtaining sufficient minimum numbers to run youth-specific classes under current funding criterion. MYAN supports investigation into the expansion of youth specific classes to all states and territories.

MYAN also supports greater flexibility within English language programs to respond to the varying needs and skills of young people, both in terms of teaching and learning styles and in terms of the eligibility period for AMEP tuition. However, MYAN believes AMEP funding guidelines should stipulate that provision to young people should be delivered in this way, rather than availability of classes occur at the discretion of providers.

⁹⁵ Olliff (2010).

⁹⁶ Moore, Nicholas, & Deblaquiere (2008).

⁹⁷ Olliff (2010).

Further, a 2015 AMEP evaluation recommended that consideration should be given to introducing a personalised AMEP entitlement based on need – to be determined by third party assessors.⁹⁸ MYAN supports such an approach, which could be highly beneficial for young people of school age who require additional support in the transition to mainstream schooling. In light of the upcoming tender of AMEP services, MYAN looks forward to this opportunity to strengthen a focus on addressing young people's needs in program guidelines and delivery.

5.1.8 EAL in schools

Education is largely the responsibility of state and territory governments in Australia, with some resource allocation decisions further delegated to schools in certain jurisdictions. MYAN believes that the absence of a national framework to guide and direct funding allocations for English as an Additional Language (EAL) potentially limits access to this important support program.

MYAN believes that English language provision in schools with newly arrived students should operate within nationally consistent definitions, measurements and cost structures that reflect the education needs of students. Specifically education funding allocations must ensure:

- Loading for students with limited English skills is targeted to those students who are most vulnerable
- The current loading for all students of Language Background Other Than English (LBOTE) sufficiently targets English as an Additional / Second Language (EAL/ESL) students who are vulnerable and more likely to experience disadvantage.

Recommendations

That the government does not use pre-migration English ability to screen for potential settlement outcomes as it is not substantiated by a sound evidence-base.

That the Australian Government maintain its commitment to delivering appropriate English language programs for all recent arrivals that require it, and enhance this with more targeted investment in young people's English language learning. This includes:

- Increase investment into programs that support young people's transition from intensive English language programs into mainstream secondary schools or from AMEP into further training/higher education.
- Invest in initiatives that support young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in and outside the classroom, e.g. homework support groups.
- Develop nationally consistent definitions, measurements and cost structures for English language provision to newly arrived young people that are tied closely to the education needs and outcomes of students.
- Establish school accountability mechanisms to ensure that loadings for students with limited English skills are firmly tied to the educational needs of this cohort.

That the Australian Government develop a national measure of English language proficiency to direct loadings to the most vulnerable students.

⁹⁸ ACIL Allen Consulting (2015).

5.2 Adequacy of current migration processes

Australia has a well-developed and targeted migration intake programme managed by a series of comprehensive checks and balances that are working well, with most migrants across all streams settling well. MYAN would not recommend further changes to this system given there is currently no available evidence to better inform assessment of new migrants settlement prospects. MYAN believe any change in this area should focus on strengthening the integration capacity of Australia and building a sound evidence base for improving settlement outcomes. This includes removing structural and systemic barriers to participation and fostering social cohesion as key to facilitating successful settlement.

In recent years, as a result of international and domestic events, there has been a heightened focus on how well intake processes and policy ensure national interests, particularly security. This is despite there being little reported evidence on the impacts of migration on national security and public order beyond a few isolated incidents.⁹⁹

The 2016 Productivity Commission report has noted:

“...it would be hard to separate out any risk posed by security-screened new immigrants relative to the broader sources of risk in the existing population, including those arising from global conflicts. Incidents of public disruption related to specific groups of immigrants tend to be localised, but the associated publicity can fuel wider negative sentiment toward immigrants. Illegal behaviour of a small group of immigrants (or second generation immigrants) has provided a focal point for tensions, which can be difficult for a community to resolve if it lacks bridging capital. Multicultural attitudes provide an environment that will minimise tensions in the community.”¹⁰⁰

In contrast to a focus on the characteristics and attributes of new arrivals the report frames integration as both economic integration and social inclusion and highlights that it is not just the skills and efforts of individual migrants that are key to promoting integration, but the societal attitudes, and government policies and programs that support settlement and remove barriers to integration.¹⁰¹ Despite this, there has been an overwhelming focus in Australia on the individual characteristics of migrants, with little attention to measuring and assessing the impact of the settlement context on outcomes.¹⁰²

A sense of inclusion and belonging is critical to young people’s health and wellbeing, and their active participation in Australian society.¹⁰³ This includes how young people understand the broader community’s attitude towards their family and community.¹⁰⁴

In particular, MYAN is concerned about reports of increased incidents of racism and discrimination in recent years.¹⁰⁵ While, overwhelmingly, Australia is welcoming of new arrivals and generally supportive of the migration system, increasingly vocal negative (and often unfounded) attitudes towards migration and particular communities threatens to challenge this long-standing social compact. According to young people, statements (or silence) and actions in relation to policy and legislation, especially those that label specific groups as the ‘problem’, can contribute to feelings of isolation and marginalisation.¹⁰⁶ Negative public sentiment and media can significantly influence young people’s views of themselves, their inclusion or exclusion within Australian society, and their self-worth.¹⁰⁷

⁹⁹ Productivity Commission (2016).

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Khoo (2012).

¹⁰³ MYAN (2016).

¹⁰⁴ Gifford et al. (2009).

¹⁰⁵ AHRC (2015). *Freedom from discrimination: Report on the 40th anniversary of the Racial Discrimination Act – National Consultation Report*. Sydney: AHRC.

¹⁰⁶ MYAN & RCOA (2016).

¹⁰⁷ CMY (2014).

MYAN believes there is a critical need for leadership to ensure that national conversations take place in respectful and constructive ways, are evidence-based and include the voices of young people. There is also a need for initiatives that actively promote the documented benefits of diversity to all of Australia and reiterate that successful settlement is a two-way process - equally dependent on the host communities 'reception' or welcome as it is on new arrivals skills and attributes. Government focus and continual referral to broad characteristics and groups as problematic reinforces inaccurate stereotypes, harming young people, their families and communities.

Young people also need opportunities for positive influence and involvement in their local community – to make new friends, develop new skills, and contribute positively to their new homeland.¹⁰⁸ This is important both for overall well-being and a positive sense of inclusion and belonging in Australian society.

Sam's story

"I felt like an outsider... now I want to empower my African community."

Some of the biggest challenges for me when arriving to Australia were racism in school, like being called names and teased about my identity. I also faced the challenge of balancing my cultural beliefs and culture with Australian culture. Not being able to communicate to others about the norms of our culture, for example not making eye contact with someone older than you when you're in trouble, was also difficult for me. I was challenged in communicating with others too, as I couldn't speak English. I dealt with racism by keeping my emotions to myself and by only hanging out with students from my culture.

The most valuable thing I have learnt from my experience settling in Australia is resilience. I have also learnt the importance of asking questions when I don't understand something and of being open-minded, as Australia is filled with many different cultures.

What I have learnt, that I would share with someone who has just arrived in Australia, is this: being different in someone else's eyes isn't all the time a bad thing, as the world continues to expand globally everyone is going to have to learn to work with, and get along with, people from different backgrounds and beliefs, and will continue to be exposed to more cultures, personalities, talents, customs, religions, races, ethnicities, attitudes and opinions. I would also advise people settling in Australia to learn from other cultures, it will enable you to become a broader person. Finally, I would say be grateful that you're in a safe country with many opportunities, make the most of it and ask as many questions as you can, because there is no such thing as a stupid question.

Recommendations

That the Australian government should not make changes to Australia's migration processes to assess a person's likelihood of successfully integrating before their arrival but continue to invest in the settlement or integration capacity of Australia to support successful settlement.

That governments invest in developing an evidence-base for what contributes to successful settlement for young people, their families and communities.

That conversations about settlement outcomes are conducted in respectful and constructive ways, are evidence-based and include the voices of young people.

Extend investment in initiatives that support the development of young people's leadership skills and facilitate their civic and social participation.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

5.3 Disengaged and marginalised youth and the justice system

In recent months, the anti-social and criminal activity of a small number of young people, including some from refugee and migrant backgrounds, has attracted a great deal of media attention and community concern. In particular, concerns for community safety in Victoria have risen amid an increase in the violent nature and frequency of certain offences among a small group of young repeat offenders.

MYAN recognises the need to address community safety concerns with appropriate, targeted responses and welcomes public consultations as part of the process for determining both the problem and the solutions required. MYAN does not support the use of the character test as a tool for addressing issues arising from refugee and migrant young people’s engagement in criminal offending. MYAN is concerned that the focus of the current inquiry on migration intake and the character of young migrants (along with already publicly announced proposals for how the perceived ‘problem’ should be addressed) are disproportionate to the size of the issues, misrepresent the nature of the problem, and are potentially harmful to refugee and migrant young people, their families and communities – and to Australian social cohesion and community harmony.

5.3.1 Use of the character test provisions as a means to address ‘issues arising’ from involvement of youth migrants in anti-social behavior such as gang activity

MYAN believes current powers under the Migration Act regarding the use of the character test to cancel or revoke visas are already broad and far-reaching and does not support further changes to these provisions.

Further, MYAN recognises that research into character testing has found that, outside of its benefit for scrutinising individuals for various public interest reasons, “it is safest to judge people according to what they do rather than any prejudicial view of whom they might become or associate with.”¹⁰⁹ MYAN believes that the use of broad attributes, such as group membership or “shared common characteristic or circumstance”,¹¹⁰ to exclude not only contravene human rights but are completely contrary to prevailing understandings of the factors known to influence youth offending. They may serve to do more harm than good by undermining social cohesion and broad community faith in the fairness and impartiality of our migration system. MYAN believes that current tools for managing non-citizens with criminal records are strong enough, and in some cases may over-reach.

Changes introduced in 2014, and most recently in February 2017, have sought to further broaden the character grounds upon which visas may be revoked and cancelled. These changes, particularly lowering of the threshold, had swift consequences with the number of visas cancelled rising sharply from 2013/14 to 2015/16. But these changes raise concerns that young people, who may pose no threat to the community, are being implicated in this system with scant regard for their particular circumstances as young people.

Of particular concern is the introduction of mandatory cancellations, the removal of aspects of judicial oversight and increased Ministerial powers. These developments mean consideration of the merits of individual cases is less likely in the first instance and, where cancellation may be later revoked, a young person will have already spent time unnecessarily detained. MYAN is also concerned that there is little in the existing legislation and guidance that calls on the Minister to consider the circumstances of an individual young person.

¹⁰⁹ “Character was intended to be a last-resort safeguard, not to constitute the system itself... The development of character tests with the purpose of aligning people as ‘like us’ or ‘not like us’, should be rejected... It might be necessary for Australia to continue to conduct inquiries into the character of individuals for various public interest reasons. However, research into character testing concludes that it is safest to judge people according to what they do rather than any prejudicial view of whom they might become or associate with.” Rimmer (2008). *The Dangers of Character Tests: Dr Haneef and other cautionary tales, Discussion Paper* (Discussion Paper Number 101). Canberra: The Australia Institute, pp. vii & 45

¹¹⁰ Australian Government (2017). *Migration Amendment (Visa Revalidation and other measures) Bill 2016, Explanatory Memorandum*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

Consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (to which Australia is a signatory), all young people should be treated as young people first under the law, which in Australia includes consideration of diversion and rehabilitation options. A young person’s visa or residency status should not negate or minimise consideration of these options first.¹¹¹

While we defer exploration of the specific legal and justice ramifications of these issues to those with legal expertise, MYAN is concerned about the impact of these changes upon young people and join others in raising our concern that there is significant potential for visas to be cancelled or revoked unjustly and unnecessarily under recent changes.

MYAN reaffirms its belief that current checks and balances are working well and that commitment to a fair and impartial migration system is what is best for Australia and all Australians.

Misrepresentation of the size and nature of youth crime in Victoria

Drawing on available evidence, MYAN reaffirms assessments of recent events, such as those being made by Victoria Police and others, that:

- This is a small group of repeat offenders committing a high number of increasingly violent crimes – not a wide-scale youth crime emergency – that has coincided with a youth justice system experiencing unprecedented stresses

“...the number of young offenders in this state is actually decreasing. What we are seeing is a rise in a smaller number of repeat youth offenders committing more serious and violent crimes.” Andrew Crisp, Deputy Commissioner, Victoria Police¹¹²

- Despite reports from numerous sources to the contrary, the offending at the heart of current public security and safety concerns in Victoria is **not** based around ethnicity

“We have seen offenders come together from all parts of Melbourne... Not just Sudanese from Dandenong. It is the United Nations of offending — we are seeing those of African background, we are seeing Pacific Islands youth, and we are seeing those of a very strong Anglo (Saxon) background and some others thrown in as well.” Andrew Crisp, Deputy Commissioner, Victoria Police¹¹³

- This offending is not evidence of a ‘youth gang’ crisis

“They don’t have a club house, they don’t have colours. These are a group of young people committing these offenses, engaged in thrill-seeking behaviour.” Robert Hill, Assistant

¹¹¹ Additionally, the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth.)* Part II, Section 5, adds to the broad prohibition of racial discrimination the term ‘immigrant status’. This provision makes it possible for persons who experience unfair treatment due to their immigrant status, a relatives or an associates, to obtain protections under the Act.

¹¹² Crisp (2016). *Youth Crime: A Deputy Commissioner’s Perspective*. Victoria Police News, 17 November 2016, Available at <https://www.vicpolice.com.au/cops-and-bloggers/blogs/youth-crime-a-deputy-commissioners-perspective>. The Crime Statistics Agency 2006 - 2015 figures show that the number of offenders under 25 years of age has decreased over the past five years. (Sutherland & Millstead (2016). *In Fact: Downward trend in number of young offenders, 2006 to 2015*. Published online by CSA. Available at www.crimestatistics.vic.gov.au. Note: The vast majority of young offenders (89%) commit few crimes (an average of 0.4 % at the peak of their criminal offending). Sutherland & Millstead (2016). *Patterns of Recorded Offending Behaviour Amongst Victorian Young Offenders*. Available at www.crimestatistics.vic.gov.au/research-and-evaluation/publications/youth-crime.

¹¹³ Deputy Commissioner Crisp quoted in Wallace (2016, 2 December) At the Apex of a Crime Wave in Melbourne. *The Australian*. Available at <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/inquirer/at-the-apex-of-a-crime-wave-in-melbourne/news-story/2e8f7eebd29a5d7484bf77e3bc868ecb>; See also Farnsworth & Wright (2016). Victoria youth crime: Statistics raise questions about calls to deport youth offenders. *ABC News Online*. 6 December 2016. Available at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-12-04/statistics-raise-questions-about-calls-to-deport-youth-offenders/8087410>

Commissioner, Victoria Police¹¹⁴

- This offending is not unique to young people born overseas

“Commentators have linked a recent spate of crimes to the so-called Apex gang, heightening anti-migration rhetoric, but police statistics show most home invasions, car thefts and aggravated robberies are committed by people born in Australia.” Sarah Farnsworth and Patrick Wright, ABC Online¹¹⁵

MYAN supports taking action that ensures the safety of the community, but does not support an approach that allows the actions of a small number to determine broader policy and programming. MYAN is concerned that the framing of recent events in Victoria as a migrant or refugee youth ‘problem’ not only misrepresents the nature of the problem, impacting the identification of effective solutions, but also unfairly and inaccurately targets young members of the community.

MYAN’s concerns are reinforced by a review of available evidence, which suggests that despite continuous reference to ‘migrant youth gangs’ and the ethnicity of young offenders, the level of overseas born young people participating in criminal activity in Victoria is not indicative of a large-scale migrant youth problem or endemic issues within Australia’s migration programme or settlement system.¹¹⁶ In fact, overseas born young people are actually underrepresented in Victorian crime statistics, with just 12% of young offenders born overseas in 2015/16 while overseas born young people make up 17% of Victoria’s youth population.¹¹⁷

Participation of refugee and migrant young people in criminal activity

Evidence from available Victorian crime statistics show that among the young alleged offenders born overseas some refugee and migrant communities are over-represented. This is true with reference to overall alleged offender numbers in Victoria and with regard to certain types of offending. It is also specific to South Sudanese-born young people and young people born in New Zealand.¹¹⁸ Further evidence shows that young people from Pasifika backgrounds largely make up the New Zealand-born cohort.¹¹⁹

While young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds may experience heightened risk and reduced protective factors as a result of their settlement experience, the majority settle well and Australian research into youth offending makes clear that it is misleading to suggest that being a member of a particular ethnic, religious or racial group is causally related to criminal activity.¹²⁰

While not an area of specific expertise for MYAN, we believe it is important to highlight here that research in Australia reveals that young people most overrepresented in crime statistics include young people with disabilities, with mental health concerns, Indigenous young people and young people who have lived in out of home care.¹²¹ However, rather than focusing on the individual characteristics or ethnicity of these young offenders, the broad literature on youth offending (and anti-social or violent behaviour) recognises that these young people may be more vulnerable to experiences of socio-economic disadvantage and exclusion due to a complex interplay of individual and

¹¹⁴ Quoted in 9News (2016). Apex gang filmed violently ambushing teenager in Melbourne car park. *9news Online*. 28 April 2016 . Available at <http://www.9news.com.au/national/2016/04/28/18/58/apex-gang-filmed-violently-ambushing-teenager-in-melbourne-car-park>

¹¹⁵ Farnsworth & Wright (2016).

¹¹⁶ MYAN would also add that reference to the newly arrived status of young offenders is not supported by any evidence we were able to review or the feedback and advice of our network.

¹¹⁷ Based on data from Census 2011 in MYAN (2014).

¹¹⁸ Farnsworth & Wright (2016).

¹¹⁹ Victorian Youth Parole Board (2016). *Annual Report 2015/16*. Melbourne: Department of Health and Human Services.

¹²⁰ Baur (2006). cited in Bartels (2011). Crime prevention programs for culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Australia. *Research in practice*, 18. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology.

¹²¹ Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee (2008). *Inquiry into strategies to prevent high volume offending by young people*. (Discussion Paper). Melbourne: Parliament of Victoria, p. 34

environmental factors.¹²² These factors can place them at increased risk of offending behaviour, and targeted interventions are required to address their underlying vulnerability.

Approaches are thus informed first by recognition that disengagement and marginalisation are key underlying drivers for youth offending. Addressing these requires investigation of risk and protective factors associated with the participation in, or abstinence from, criminal activity or other anti-social behaviour among young people.¹²³ These have been identified at various levels:

- Community (e.g. risk – poverty / protective - connectedness),
- School (e.g. risk - academic failure / protective - sense of belonging),
- Family (e.g. risk - family conflict / protective – maintenance of rituals) and
- Individual or peer (e.g. risk – alienation / protective – work success during adolescence).¹²⁴

Alongside the identification of these factors is evidence showing that “the greater the number of risk factors in the young person’s life, the more likely they are to engage in problem behaviours.”¹²⁵ For example, one study from 2009 found that with each additional risk factor the likelihood of violent behaviour in the previous year increased by 80% and the likelihood of antisocial behaviour doubled. In contrast, violent behaviour decreased significantly with increases in socioeconomic status.¹²⁶

This literature also recognises adolescence itself as an associated factor, with adolescents more susceptible to peer influence and risk-taking behaviour as a result of their stage of physical, mental and emotional development.¹²⁷ As a result however, most young offending is episodic, transitory and unlikely to continue into adulthood.¹²⁸ As such, approaches to addressing offending among young people focus on diversion and rehabilitation – recognising that young people are likely, with appropriate intervention, to be successfully diverted from this behavior, especially if underlying factors placing them at risk are addressed.

A similar breadth of knowledge has emerged in relation to the causal factors linked to the emergence of gangs. While the literature is broad, of note is recognition within this field that “gang violence is produced within specific social, economic and cultural contexts, and that to understand this violence requires consideration of forces and factors outside of the conscious control of those participating in the violence”.¹²⁹ Supporting this, Australian research has highlighted the ways in which racism in particular permeates the lives of ethnic minority youth engaged in gang-related behaviour because of its influence on feelings of exclusion and marginalisation.¹³⁰

In a 2011 study of crime prevention programs for CALD communities in Australia, it was noted that socio-demographic factors and social disadvantage can better explain criminality than membership in an identified group.¹³¹

“One of the key questions that arises in the context of cultural diversity and crime is whether people from different ethnic groups are more likely or less likely to offend than the general Australian population. Although there are a number of limitations to the data on ethnicity and

¹²² See for example: Sutherland & Millsteed (2016a).; Hephill and Smith (2010). *Preventing youth violence: What does and doesn't work and why? An overview of the evidence on approaches and programs*. (Prepared for the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth). Melbourne: Centre for Adolescent Health, Department of Paediatrics, University of Melbourne; Sentencing Council of Victoria (2016). *Reoffending by children and young people in Victoria*. Melbourne: Victorian Government; JSS (2014). *Youth Justice: Strengthening our approach*. Melbourne: Jesuit Social Services (JSS).

¹²³ Sutherland & Millsteed (2016a).

¹²⁴ Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee (2008), p. 34

¹²⁵ Williams, Toumbourou, Williamson, Hemphill, Patton (2009). *Violent and antisocial behaviours among young adolescents in Australian communities An analysis of risk and protective factors*. (Prepared for the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY)). Canberra: ARACY.

¹²⁶ *ibid.*

¹²⁷ Hephill and Smith (2010).

¹²⁸ JSS (2015). *An escalating problem: Responding to the increased remand of children in Victoria*. Melbourne: JSS.

¹²⁹ White (2007). *Youth gangs, violence and anti-social behaviour*. (Prepared for Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth). Hobart: School of Sociology & Social Work, University of Tasmania.

¹³⁰ White (2007).; CMY (2014).

¹³¹ Baur (2006). cited in Bartels (2011), p. 2

*crime, including those as a result of recording practices by police and corrections agencies on ethnic background of offenders, the available evidence seems to suggest that overall, migrants have the lowest rates of criminality in Australia, followed by first generation Australians”.*¹³²

This position is informing current arguments in Australia for a shift away from simply identifying trajectory groups and their characteristics towards a detailed examination of the risk and protective factors impacting on youth offending behavior. This allows a more complete picture of what is really happening and where interventions are likely to be effective.¹³³

Taking this approach, a glance at available evidence reveals that many people in the South Sudanese and Pasifika communities in Australia are facing particular challenges significantly increasing their levels of disadvantage and marginalisation, although for very different and complex reasons.¹³⁴ In order to understand and address overrepresentation of young people from these communities’ in the criminal justice system we need to explore not only the individual risk and protective factors, but the role of “forces and factors outside of the conscious control of those participating in the violence”.¹³⁵

5.3.2 Youth justice issues require youth justice responses

MYAN reinforces the importance of drawing from the strong evidence informing youth justice research and practice in Australia. The broad youth justice literature referred to above has driven the development of a very specific and targeted approach to responding to youth offending in Australia that focuses on early intervention, diversion, rehabilitation and age-appropriateness. These approaches are built on evidence that shows punitive measures are likely to worsen the likelihood of reoffending among young people by further isolating them from the community, rather than addressing the underlying factors impacting offending behaviour.¹³⁶ Such approaches are also consistent with the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other associated human rights covenants to which Australia is a party, and thus apply equally to young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

Shifts in youth offending over time, including downward trends in overall youth crime in Victoria and across Australia, demonstrate that while youth justice systems may experience challenges and crises, these are not new and in the main current approaches have demonstrated that they are flexible and capable of responding.¹³⁷ MYAN works closely with young people from a range of backgrounds. We see the positive contribution that young people can make. The way forward is a multi-faceted approach that works from the ground up to ensure our full range of systems and supports are well-equipped to understand, identify and respond to the complex and challenging concerns of refugee and migrant young people.

MYAN believes that an appropriate response to current concerns and ‘issues arising’ from involvement of youth migrants in anti-social behavior is to be found in the current youth justice system. MYAN strongly supports greater collaboration between those working with young people from refugee and

¹³² Bartels (2011), p. 2

¹³³ Sutherland & Millsteed (2016a).

¹³⁴ For a Pasifika Community Profile and overview of key issues see CMY (2014d). *Towards a Multicultural Youth Strategy for Victoria Election Platform*, Media Release. Available at www.cmy.net.au/sites/default/files/CMY%20Election%20Statement%202014%20%20%5BFULL%5D.pdf and for an overview of the New Zealand born see Department of Social Services (2016). *New Zealand - Community Information Summary*. Available at <https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/settlement-and-multicultural-affairs/programs-policy/a-multicultural-australia/programs-and-publications/community-information-summaries/the-new-zealand-born-community>. For a South Sudanese Community Profile and overview of key issues see Department of Social Services (2016a). *South Sudan - Community Information Summary*. Available at <https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/settlement-and-multicultural-affairs/programs-policy/a-multicultural-australia/programs-and-publications/community-information-summaries/the-south-sudan-born-community>. Experiences of discrimination and racism are particularly marginalizing for South Sudanese Australians, see Markus (2016), p. 5

¹³⁵ White (2007).

¹³⁶ Sentencing Council of Victoria (2016); Williams et al. (2009).

¹³⁷ Victorian youth offending rates have fallen significantly among some groups previously singled out as ‘problematic’, such as those born in Somalia (see Appendix 3). For overview, see Sutherland & Millsteed (2016).

migrant backgrounds across all sectors and service systems to support targeted approaches with a focus on rehabilitation. MYAN also encourages targeted investment in early intervention and prevention approaches that are tailored to young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds who are disengaged or at risk of disengagement.

Early intervention to prevent disadvantage and marginalisation

Early intervention and prevention strategies should work to provide stronger and earlier access to youth programs that address the causes of disadvantage. To address the underlying challenges and vulnerabilities placing some refugee and migrant young people at greater risk will require targeted responses.

Drawing from the expertise and knowledge of the network of multicultural youth specialists across Australia MYAN has identified the following key areas for investment in early intervention and prevention:

- Programs that keep young people in school
- Supporting successful education to work transitions
- Initiatives that mend relationships between young people and their communities
- Opportunities to get involved in sport and recreation
- Investment in youth-centred and family-aware approaches in policy and service delivery.¹³⁸

Young people need to feel safe and secure. The focus on policy changes to delay or prevent access to permanent residency for everyone, as a means to punish the small minority who 'do the wrong thing', has the potential to negatively impact settlement for many young people. A lack of security about the future and sense of belonging are key factors contributing to social isolation and disengagement.

Young people also need opportunities to have their voices heard by decision-makers in their communities, as well as at the state and national levels. Through our direct work with young people across Australia, the MYAN knows that young people need space to share their concerns, challenges, hopes and aspirations for the future. An over-reliance on stereotypes and misinformation, and negative media reports¹³⁹, has added considerably to the perception that young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds are a 'problem'. As a result, it is no longer only the outcomes of this inquiry, but the very conversation it has facilitated, that will have significant impacts on the lives of young people from refugee and migrant background. Opportunities need to be created purposefully to include and to hear from young people, recognising that the voices of young people generally, and minority youth particularly, are rarely heard in public debate.

¹³⁸ These are discussed in detail in Section 5.1.

¹³⁹ Chingaipe (2016). Race, stereotyping and Melbourne's Apex gang. *The Saturday Paper*. (25 February 2016)

Case study: Amplifying the voices of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds nationally

FUSE, MYAN Australia

FUSE is a three-day national summit brings together emerging young leaders from refugee and migrant backgrounds from across Australia to build their leadership, advocacy and community organising skills.

FUSE is designed for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds from across Australia to:

- Learn from and share perspectives with peers from around Australia,
- Build the skills, confidence and networks to engage in advocacy, active citizenship and leadership opportunities at the local, state and national levels,
- Build human rights awareness,
- Explore and strengthen leadership capabilities and aspirations,
- Engage with experienced advocates and decision-makers to have an immediate experience of active citizenship and apply newly acquired skills and knowledge, and
- Develop plans for action at the local, state and national levels.

FUSE involves a range of skill development workshops, fun activities and team building, sharing of ideas, networking with young emerging leaders from across Australia and presentations to MPs.

FUSE is designed to build a national network of young advocates and change-makers and equip young people with the skills, confidence and networks to become influential Australians.

The MYAN works from the premise that young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds have unique experiences and knowledge, including personal/lived experiences of human rights issues, and should be supported to articulate the issues impacting on their lives and identify solutions. FUSE is designed to facilitate this.

Case study: Supporting and inspiring future leaders

Catalyst Youth Summit, MYAN WA

Supported by MYAN WA and led by a group of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds, (including the WA delegates to the MYAN Australia FUSE Summit in 2014 who wished to provide similar opportunities for young people in WA), Catalyst Youth Summit was a 2-day statewide summit held in February 2016.

The aim of the summit was to bring multicultural young people together to talk about the issues that are important to them, to work together to create solutions and to have chance to speak directly to politicians and decision makers about these issues and solutions. As part of the summit attendees also received training on leadership and advocacy as well as opportunity to present and network with Federal and State politicians and key stakeholders.

The summit was held at the Edith Cowan University – Joondalup campus. It was supported and guided by MYAN WA, sponsored by YACWA with additional sponsorship sourced from the Office of Multicultural Interests, the Lotterywest and the Edith Cowan University.

MYAN WA are planning to hold a follow-up summit in June 2017..

Youth justice diversion and rehabilitation responses for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds

A study of refugee and migrant youth diversion options in Victoria found that key factors supporting diversion included:

- Reducing barriers to access support
- Providing holistic support earlier
- Minimising the long term impact of justice system involvement, and
- Involving young people in solutions.¹⁴⁰

Investment has been made into a range of programs and responses for working with refugee and migrant young people who are over-represented in the youth justice system over many years.¹⁴¹ In addition to ensuring programs are culturally appropriate and responsive to the specific needs of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds, some identified areas for targeted investment include:

- Programs that promote youth leadership and build connectedness, including peer-to-peer, youth-led and group activities
- Programs that build positive relationships between police and particular groups of migrant and refugee young people, this includes approaches that avoid an over-reliance on traditional policing styles, especially an emphasis on zero-tolerance, as this can diminish trust in police and undermine long term community engagement strategies¹⁴²
- Engagement with family and community leaders to ensure they are involved and informed around young people's interactions with the justice system¹⁴³
- Targeted, culturally appropriate supports that enable young people to remain engaged in education, supporting their future economic and social participation, and that identify and (where possible) address underlying factors associated with offending behaviour
- Employing bicultural or ethno-specific workers in youth justice services who are well-equipped and supported¹⁴⁴
- Providing training and cultural support to court services.¹⁴⁵

Additionally, for the justice system to be equitable, everybody should have an understanding of the legal process and the options available to them. Young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds must be supported to understand and enact their rights and responsibilities.¹⁴⁶

Recommendations

That the Australian government make no further changes to the Migration Act 1958 character test provisions. Current checks and balances, including security screening, are adequate and a commitment to a fair, impartial and non-discriminatory migration system is best for Australia and all Australians.

¹⁴⁰ CMY & YACVIC (2013). *Practical lessons, fair consequences: Improving diversion options for young people – Consultation Report*. Available at <http://www.cmy.net.au/sites/default/files/publication-documents/Improving%20Diversion%20Options%202013.pdf>.

¹⁴¹ For a detailed list of programs and interventions with CALD communities in Australia, see Bartels (2011).

¹⁴² Scambary & Merydyth (2013). Policing the Melbourne Heroin Trade: Perspectives of Vietnamese Australian Social Justice Professionals. *Policing* 7(1):72-78

¹⁴³ In 2012, a number of young people refugee and migrant backgrounds who had been engaged with the justice system noted that the involvement of family had a strong positive impact on them and recommended that more of an effort to involve family, where possible, would have been helpful in reducing their offending behaviour. CMY & YACVIC (2013).

¹⁴⁴ Skilled, bi-cultural workers can play a powerful role in effectively engaging with 'difficult to reach' young people, strengthening connections to family and community, whilst acting as a broker to coordinate with relevant services and police. CMY & YACVIC (2013), pp.34-35

¹⁴⁵ CMY (2014); Bartels (2011).

¹⁴⁶ Research has shown that youth from culturally diverse backgrounds can struggle to comprehend their rights, legal systems and the processes involved and are therefore less likely to feel that they were treated fairly. For more on this see CMY & YACVIC (2013).

That all levels of government to avoid misrepresentations and stereotyping of refugee and migrant young people in public narratives and ensure strong leadership to support rather than undermine social cohesion.

Invest in early intervention and diversion programs to ensure their sustainability and effectiveness.

Ensure more detailed and nationally consistent data is collected on young people engaged in criminal activity, including program outcomes, to inform program delivery and to build an evidence base on 'what works'.

Ensure that youth justice responses are culturally appropriate and provide support that responds to the specific needs of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

Invest in initiatives that facilitate opportunities for young people to have their voices heard and contribute to change in their communities.

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7. Appendix 1: Case studies

Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors programme

Department of Immigration and Border Protection, Australian Government

The Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors (UHM) Programme facilitates the provision of relevant care, supervision and support services to minors on certain visas in Australia without a parent or legal guardian, who fall under the auspices of the *Immigration (Guardianship of Children) Act 1946 (IGOC Act)*, and for whom the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection is the legal guardian. In certain circumstances, the Programme also assists minors who do not fall under the IGOC Act.

Initially the Programme catered for minors entering Australia through Australia's offshore Humanitarian Programme. The eligibility has since expanded to include minors holding other visas. It now assists eligible minors that have either permanent resident, temporary humanitarian/temporary protection/equivalent substantive temporary visas.

Minors are provided with services through contracted service provider arrangements and/or in partnership with State/Territory Government Child Welfare Agencies.

Support services for minors includes access to the following:

- Torture and trauma services
- Medical services
- Provision of English language classes
- Case management or case coordination provision (for example site visits and client monitoring)
- Access to education and relevant community services
- Mentoring services for the purposes of transitioning to adulthood
- Community networks.

UHM Programme service principles are based on the following:

- The respect, protection and general observation of the rights of minors in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
- The taking into account of the age, gender, culture, safety, privacy, level of development and any specific needs of minors in the provision of care and support
- The support of minors to reside in a safe and stable environment, including meeting their basic needs, such as the provision of food, shelter, education and access to health care
- The provision of service that builds on the strengths of minors and promotes their independent living capabilities.

The Programme is delivered in five states through a partnership between DIBP and the NGO providers: Centre for Multicultural Youth, MDA Inc., BaptCare, Marist Youth Care and Life Without Barriers. The Victorian government also provides care and support through the Refugee Minor Program.

Case study: Settlement Services Program (SSP) with a youth focus and youth workers
Youth Program, Migrant Resource Centre Southern TAS Inc. (MRC), Tasmania

The MRC Youth Program delivers services to address the specific settlement needs of young people in Tasmania. A key feature of the MRC approach includes recruitment of bicultural youth workers.

The designated Humanitarian Settlement Service (HSS) provider in Tasmania has no dedicated youth programs or staff. In cases where young people need youth specific support separate to that provided through HSS family casework, SSP programs that cater to young peoples' specific needs fill an important gap. Young people are particularly drawn to youth SSP that are led by their peers. The MRC offers such youth specific support through their SSP programs.

The MRC Youth Team coordinates an annual Multicultural Youth Leading Program that employs young people from emerging communities as Bicultural Youth Workers to lead a series of summer holiday activities. The Bicultural Youth Workers undergo training around the National Youth Settlement Framework (NYSF) and Circle of Courage youth work principles. They then consult with young people from their community in both formal and informal settings. The information gathered through these consultations is used to set the program direction for the year. Weekly programs are flexible and responsive to ongoing input and advice from the Bicultural Youth Workers.

The Bicultural Youth Workers act as bridging agents between multicultural youth and mainstream youth services, as well as strengthening access to SSP support for eligible young people. Connections are also facilitated with peers from both CALD and non-CALD backgrounds.

Bicultural workers link newly arrived young people with peers already settled and have supported positive peer role modeling for recent arrivals. Some of the key outcomes achieved by the second year of employing Bicultural Youth Workers are:

- Increased access to settlement programs for young people at risk of disengagement
- Regular recreation programs initiated to facilitate increased access to intensive casework support if needed
- Increased engagement with families
- Increased family and community trust in MRC as a service provider
- An increase in young people signing up for volunteering and leadership roles at MRC and other community service organisations.

The program also offers subsequent positive outcomes for Bicultural Youth Workers themselves. To date, four Bicultural Youth Workers have gained full-time employment, two have enrolled fulltime at university, and two have been re-employed by MRC as bicultural workers in 2017 to lead and support new workers.

Case Study: Using relationships between current settlement support programs to inform new, targeted responses to assist young people

Youth Programs, MyQ & Access Community Services Limited, Queensland

Access Community Services has a youth-centred approach that supports young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. The approach aligns with the National Youth Settlement Framework to ensure that Access's services are responsive, targeted and flexible to the needs of young people.

Over the past 18 months, Access has been progressively introducing an integrated approach through deploying available resources and developing new services to meet the needs of young people.

From the time that young people commence receiving settlement support, a Youth Engagement Team responds by referring them according to their needs as identified through the various settlement planning and assessment processes delivered by Access (through HSS Youth Sub Plans, CCS Case Management Plans, Youth Transitions Youth Assessment Tool and SSP casework). The aim is to ensure that design and delivery of programs address the needs and issues identified.

Across the range of services all youth case management, casework, engagement and support services are centrally coordinated through the Youth Engagement Team.

As a result of the needs assessment process, young people are either referred to existing services offered by Access or, alternatively, new services are created to meet emerging needs. New services can be created by combining aspects of the various available settlement programs, while at the same time reducing duplication.

In this way, Access is able to provide additional meaningful activity on top of the immediate casework support provided through the usual range of settlement services.

An outcome of Access' youth-led practice is the establishment of Multicultural Youth Queensland (MyQ), to provide targeted services, programs and projects to support young people aged between 12 and 30 years.

Under the banner of MyQ, a Multicultural Sports Club has been created to assist engagement and provide support services through a range of sports opportunities targeted at young people. A new initiative to meet the needs identified through this process is a sports program offering specific responses such as a Volleyball Program for young women.

Case study: Enhanced mental health supports for young people from refugee backgrounds

Refugee Health Service (RHS), The Princess Margaret Hospital for Children, Western Australia

The Refugee Health Service, established in 2005/6, is funded in by the WA State Government Department of Health and is designed to:

- Provide culturally appropriate holistic health care to refugee and asylum-seeker families
- Assess, co-ordinate and manage the complex care needs of recently resettled refugee children and adolescents aged under 16 years including those in detention or those released on Bridging Visas
- Link families to appropriate community supports
- Help establish successful transition to primary health care and/or specialist services as required
- Advocate for refugee and asylum-seeker children
- Undertake clinical research and audits that will change policy and practice for this cohort
- Educate staff regarding health barriers for limited-English proficiency cohorts

The RHS aims to meet the medical, developmental, educational and psychosocial domains of refugee children and adolescents. Children are assessed in family groups wherever possible to minimise disruption to the settlement process.

The RHS is a national leader in the field of holistic paediatric refugee health. Staff engage with, support, educate and advocate for refugee and asylum-seeking families using a multidisciplinary service delivery model. Initial consultations are standardised and family-based. The RHS staff include a range of staff from medical staff and Community Refugee Health Nurses to social workers, clinical researchers, interpreters and volunteers.

Referrals to the service are made by the Humanitarian Entrants Health Service, wider Medical Practitioners, Refugee Health Community Nurses, IHMS, caseworkers and school services (School Nurses and/or Psychologists).

As part of a targeted strategy to reduce the cultural stigma associated with mental health concerns, the RHS has embedded psychological screening as part of the routine RHS assessment since 2014. The screening has demonstrated that almost 60% of adolescents had unidentified issues of concern requiring further management.

The Refugee Health Service has established strong links across government and non-government sectors to optimise health service delivery and contribute to state and national policy development. Deliberate partnerships with education, child development, child protection, justice, dental and mental health services, expedites resolution of inequities and strengthens health outcomes. The RHS maintains care coordination and advocacy until families are safely transitioned to proximal primary healthcare providers or specialists within the first 12 months of engagement.

Case study: Supporting transitions to mainstream education

Refugee Bridging Program, Dickson College, Australian Capital Territory

Dickson College, a senior secondary college situated in the inner north of Canberra, is committed to providing a supportive, innovative and educationally enriched learning environment to its 800 students. Dickson College developed a Refugee Bridging Program almost a decade ago to support refugee students and increase their opportunity for success.

The Refugee Bridging Program was established in response to the needs of refugee students. Although many refugee students are determined to complete college and have academic aspirations, they face a number of challenges in navigating secondary school – including social and cultural adaptation, interrupted education prior to Australia, English language learning, adoption into an unknown school system.

The program is open to students 16 years and older with a refugee experience. Students must meet a minimum standard of written English before they can enter the program, although they will still have significant ESL and literacy needs.

The program is a Year 11 and 12 course allowing students to fulfil the requirements of a Year 12 senior school certificate. Many of the students continue their education after graduating from the college, entering university, Canberra Institute of Technology and apprenticeships.

Students who aspire to gain their Year 12 certificate are given the opportunity to study units that are more appropriate to and support their past educational and life experiences. The flexible nature of the program allows more able and experienced students to move into mainstream units when appropriate in order to continue their individual education pathway.

From initially small numbers, by 2011 the Refugee Bridging Program was catering for 30 students a year, with three specialist English and maths teachers and links into other specialisations ranging from IT to media and construction. Dickson College reports that young people now travel from all regions of the ACT to attend the program.

The Refugee Bridging Program at Dickson College was awarded the 2012 Multicultural Award for Education in the ACT.

Case study: Youth Transitions Support Pilot

Department of Social Services

In 2015 the Department of Social Services (DSS) announced the Youth Transition Support Pilot (YTSP) programme to trial new approaches to helping young refugees and vulnerable migrants develop the skills and networks to support their economic and social participation. The key elements of the pilot involve employment preparation, access and support to engage in education and training, and social engagement through sporting participation as participants extend their networks.

Vulnerable migrants are defined as those permanent residents who have arrived in Australia in the last five years that are:

- Humanitarian entrants and/or
- Family stream migrants with low English proficiency and/or
- Dependants of skilled migrants in rural and regional areas with low English proficiency.

The \$22 million programme YTSP forms part of a \$330 million jobs package for young people at risk of long-term welfare dependency. The six pilot service providers are:

- Access Community Services (Queensland)
- MDA Ltd. (Queensland)
- Community Migrant Resource Centre (NSW)
- Lebanese Muslim Association (NSW)
- Foundation House (the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture) (Victoria)
- The Brotherhood of St. Laurence (Victoria)

Through partnerships developed both to provide local services and to facilitate referrals, or build on existing initiatives, providers are taking innovative measures to improve participant's job seeking opportunities as well as using sports programs as pathways to employment and stronger social engagement.

The YTSP is demonstrating the value of having trained youth support workers planning and providing services in partnership with employment and settlement service specialists. It is also highlighting the ways in which government funded employment services fail to respond to the needs of refugee and migrant young people.

The pilot is also utilising sports training and participation as a means of strengthening networks, exploring potential employment pathways, and as an entry point to other forms of support.

DSS has commissioned an independent evaluation of the Pilot, to assess effectiveness of the various Pilot models and measure outcomes for young people.

The MYAN has been engaged to support the implementation of the Pilot and oversee an independent evaluation. The MYAN supports a national Community of Practice between providers to facilitate collaboration and sharing of knowledge and good practice between providers, government and the evaluators.

Case Study: Recruit Smarter

Victorian Government

A Victorian Government initiative targeting unconscious bias in recruitment and helping employers to take advantage of the full breadth of skills, experience and talent that exists across the Victorian workforce

An example of the direct role that government can play in addressing broader societal level barriers to economic participation is a trial initiated by the Victorian Government, Recruit Smarter, is removing personal details from job applications to rule out discrimination or unconscious bias.

The trial is based on research that has shown that people from culturally diverse backgrounds with the same qualifications and experience often have to submit many more job applications than people with Anglo-Saxon sounding names.¹⁴⁷ The 18-month Victorian trial will assess which personal details - including name, gender, age and location - should be removed during a job application process. Major government departments, agencies such as WorkSafe and Victoria Police, and private companies such as Westpac have volunteered to take part.¹⁴⁸

Case study: Collaboration between specialist and mainstream agencies – the value of capacity building to improve outcomes for young people

SHine and Multicultural Youth of South Australia (MYSA), South Australia

MYSA works collaboratively with a wide range of government and non-government organisations raising the profile of culturally and linguistically diverse young people. Areas of involvement include physical, sexual and mental health, employment, education and training, housing, law, and family and social relationships.

MYSA aims to facilitate linkages to mainstream services to assist refugee and migrant young people engage with these services over time. MYSA also provides information training and support to mainstream organisations to increase cultural awareness, promote understanding and develop and strengthen cross cultural knowledge and skills.

One example of this active engagement is with sexual health services. Sexual health is an ongoing issue for many young people and many refugee and migrant young people lack very basic knowledge around safe sexual practices and healthy relationships.

SHine (Sexual Health information networking and education) is a leading not-for-profit provider of primary care services and education for sexual and relationship wellbeing. SHine's service and education delivery model provides sexual health education, early intervention, health promotion, clinical services and therapeutic counselling. Drop-in clinics provide free responsive access to young people under the age of 25.

In the beginning, MYSA social workers began accompanying young people to SHine and were able to support them with advocacy, particularly around cultural issues that SHine workers may have been unaware of. As the partnership developed, many young people assisted by MYSA began to independently accessing SHine, or came to their social worker at MYSA asking to make a SHine appointment. Many of the young people who access MYSA have received treatment for sexually transmitted infection and have obtained contraception.

¹⁴⁷ Perkins (2016 May 20). Victorian government trials blind job applications to overcome hiring bias. *The Age*. Accessed online www.theage.com.au

¹⁴⁸ Perkins (2016).

MYSA has a very positive working relationship with SHine and the two organisations now co-facilitate workshops together. Sometimes SHine staff will attend workshops at MYSA to provide information, and sometimes MYSA will take a group of young people to visit and make introductions to SHine staff and programs.

This approach has strengthened SHine's provision of culturally appropriate sexual health services for young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and increased access to their services by those young people assisted by MYSA. In response to an increase in the numbers of MYSA clients accessing sexual health services, SHine appointed a CALD Youth Project Officer to coordinate and run workshops in partnership with MYSA.

Case study: Strengthening coordination and capacity in NSW through a multicultural youth specialist organisation

MYAN NSW, New South Wales

MYAN NSW is a statewide, independent multicultural youth specialist organisation in New South Wales. It engages, connects and builds the capacity of the youth and multicultural sectors so all young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in NSW can access the support and opportunities they need to be active citizens in Australian society.

MYAN NSW is a hub for a large and diverse network of members, partners, services and young people, spanning youth and multicultural organisations and government agencies. It supports a range of events and activities from sector development forums and training workshops to providing resources and updates to the sector.

MYAN NSW's role is to:

- Respond to social and political agendas relating to young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds;
- Enhance the capacity of services working with young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds to provide high quality services;
- Build capacity in young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds to speak out and take action of issues that affect them;
- Collaborate, coordinate and take action on issues that affect young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

MYAN NSW supports a youth Ambassador's Network, supporting the development of young people's leadership and advocacy skills, and facilitating their engagement with decision-makers.

Case study: Multicultural Youth Specialist approach within mainstream services

Specialist Reconnect, Centre for Multicultural Youth, Victoria

The Reconnect program is a Federal program that uses community-based early intervention services to assist young people aged 12 to 21 years who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness. Reconnect assists young people to stabilise their living situation and improve their level of engagement with family, work, education, training and their local community.

CMY delivers Reconnect as a specialist provider supporting the particular needs of newly arrived (in Australia for less than 5 years) and refugee young people who are at risk of homelessness.

CMY's Reconnect program is delivered across some of the most diverse and fastest growing areas of metropolitan Melbourne. The program incorporates family centred approaches and culturally responsive casework utilising a variety of strategies targeted to the unique needs of the young person.

A key element to Reconnect that works well for refugee young people is the flexibility to target assistance to individual young people's needs. For example, providers can purchase services depending on a client's needs.

The model also enables CMY to provide secondary consults to assist other services in supporting young people in need of culturally responsive and targeted assistance. This supports a 'no wrong doors' approach, which works to guarantee that young people receive the help they need regardless of what service they approach for assistance. Secondary consults also build relationships across the sector and streamline and enhance referral pathways. The advantage of 'joined up' services and the 'no wrong doors' approach is that young people benefit from continuous support as their needs change.

Case management undertaken with young people through Reconnect also informs other areas of CMY's work, supporting the identification of emerging or persistent trends and issues and the development of initiatives and programs that are targeted to issues young people are experiencing.

CMY have been delivering Reconnect for more than 10 years. During this time outcomes identified by young people and their families have included:

- Increased engagement with school and other education facilities
- Better family relationships and improved support for families
- Increased awareness of the service system and options for support
- Increased knowledge of the housing system and improved access to housing
- Increased links to counselling or other therapeutic support
- A growing awareness of self, both mentally and physically, which has led to self-control, assertive communication and conflict management
- Increased access to sport and recreation activities
- Improved management of health issues, and
- Better resolution of legal issues.

Case study: Amplifying the voices of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds nationally

FUSE, MYAN Australia

FUSE is a three-day national summit brings together emerging young leaders from refugee and migrant backgrounds from across Australia to build their leadership, advocacy and community organising skills.

FUSE is designed for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds from across Australia to:

- Learn from and share perspectives with peers from around Australia,
- Build the skills, confidence and networks to engage in advocacy, active citizenship and leadership opportunities at the local, state and national levels,
- Build human rights awareness,
- Explore and strengthen leadership capabilities and aspirations,
- Engage with experienced advocates and decision-makers to have an immediate experience of active citizenship and apply newly acquired skills and knowledge, and
- Develop plans for action at the local, state and national levels.

FUSE involves a range of skill development workshops, fun activities and team building, sharing of ideas, networking with young emerging leaders from across Australia and presentations to MPs.

FUSE is designed to build a national network of young advocates and change-makers and equip young people with the skills, confidence and networks to become influential Australians.

The MYAN works from the premise that young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds have unique experiences and knowledge, including personal/lived experiences of human rights issues, and should be supported to articulate the issues impacting on their lives and identify solutions. FUSE is designed to facilitate this.

Case study: Supporting and inspiring future leaders

Catalyst Youth Summit, MYAN WA

Supported by MYAN WA and led by a group of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds, (including the WA delegates to the MYAN Australia FUSE Summit in 2014 who wished to provide similar opportunities for young people in WA), Catalyst Youth Summit was a 2-day statewide summit held in February 2016.

The aim of the summit was to bring multicultural young people together to talk about the issues that are important to them, to work together to create solutions and to have chance to speak directly to politicians and decision makers about these issues and solutions. As part of the summit attendees also received training on leadership and advocacy as well as opportunity to present and network with Federal and State politicians and key stakeholders.

The summit was held at the Edith Cowan University – Joondalup campus. It was supported and guided by MYAN WA, sponsored by YACWA with additional sponsorship sourced from the Office of Multicultural Interests, the Lotterywest and the Edith Cowan University.

MYAN WA are planning to hold a follow-up summit in June 2017..

International case study: Settlement Workers in Canadian Schools

Although education is an area of provincial jurisdiction in Canada, the Federal Government is also involved in promoting the integration of children and youth in approximately 3,000 schools (both elementary and secondary) with high numbers of immigrant and/or refugee students, through a program called Settlement Worker in Schools. The program offers culturally-appropriate services and short term counselling relating to settlement, education and mental health.

The Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) program places settlement workers from community agencies in elementary and secondary schools that have high numbers of newcomer students. The SWIS worker:

- Proactively contacts newcomer parents and students to assist them with their settlement needs
- Refers the families to more specialized community resources as needed
- Provides group information sessions for newcomer youth and parents, often in partnership with school staff
- Provides orientation about the settlement needs of newcomers for school staff

In addition, newcomer orientation sessions take place in schools before the start of the school year to prepare new students for the transition into the Canadian school system.¹⁴⁹

Similar approaches have been undertaken in Australia, but none that MYAN are aware of on a national scale.

¹⁴⁹ Munson & Ataullahjan (2016).

8. Appendix 2: Young peoples' stories

Sandra's Story

"We all need a helping hand."

"The world sometimes expects so little from us young people, but there is no reason why we should prove them right!"

Moving to Australia when I was only 14 made it hard for me to make friends initially at school. The issue wasn't that no one wanted to be my friend; the issue was I didn't find people who I could really be myself with until four months into the year. For a 14 year old that was hard. Other than that, my time at school was fine, I had learned English before I moved to Australia and eventually I became comfortable in my own skin and had friends that I got along well with.

From my experience of settling in Australia I have learnt that there are so many different opportunities, and as young people we should get involved and make an effort to be participants in our communities. It not only helps us grow as people, but it blesses other people around us and makes our communities better places.

Being part of a church community helped us a lot when we settled in Australia, we felt like we belonged because church was like home. So, if we needed help in any way, or if we had questions to ask, we could just get in touch with people at church and that was very helpful.

Now I aim to finish my Masters in Community and International Development and hopefully work in a community development organisation with youth. I have a passion for youth engagement and I want young people from all backgrounds to be key participants in their societies and be the best they can be.

My advice for someone who has just arrived in Australia would be that they should use the opportunities they have in this country to better themselves as well as those around them. The world sometimes expects so little from us young people, but there is no reason why we should prove them right. Australia has a lot to offer and no matter where you are from, you have something to give and your story and experience is valuable. I would also advise them to know that they can't do all this on their own; we all need a helping hand along the way.

Assefa's story

"I have been through hard times, but I am strong and I will never give up."

My name is Assefa and I have been in Australian for one year. I was born in Ethiopia but I grew up in Sudan. My mum came to Australia with my sisters in 2011, but I stayed with my uncle and only got a visa to come to Australia one year ago.

The biggest challenge I faced when I arrived in Australia was language. When I arrived here I couldn't speak English and I couldn't explain myself. Some of the other challenges I faced included understanding the rules and laws of Australia, understanding the culture and the system, and I missed my family who were still living in Sudan and Ethiopia.

School helped me to deal with this a lot. I started studying at the Young Migrant Education Program (YMEP) in my new city. It is at TAFE. It is an intensive English program for young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. YMEP is full time and we do lots of different topics. For me, it has helped me to work out how I can fit in to Australia and what I should study and what I should focus on.

Some students have to go straight into college when they arrive, and then they fail and have to come back to our course. This makes them feel like they have wasted their time. I wanted to improve English before I started a mainstream course and I needed time to settle and learn about the different way of doing things in Australia. I learned a lot from this course and I was able to ask people from my country about different things and they were able to explain it in my language. Now I feel like I have the English skills to do a mainstream course and be successful.

I have learnt many valuable lessons from settling in Australia. For example, you should never rush to achieve your goals because if you rush and jump straight in to things you might crash because you need to have the foundation skills. I have also learnt about human rights and how you can change things if you think they are wrong. I know about democracy and I feel that I can do something to give back to Australia. I have been through hard times, but I am strong and I will never give up.

The most important advice I would give to people arriving in Australia is to never think it is going to be like heaven and that everything will be free and perfect. Moving to a new place is hard and you must go through this and work hard so you can achieve your goals.

Sam's story

"I felt like an outsider... now I want to empower my African community."

Some of the biggest challenges for me when arriving to Australia were racism in school, like being called names and teased about my identity. I also faced the challenge of balancing my cultural beliefs and culture with Australian culture. Not being able to communicate to others about the norms of our culture, for example not making eye contact with someone older than you when you're in trouble, was also difficult for me. I was challenged in communicating with others too, as I couldn't speak English. I dealt with racism by keeping my emotions to myself and by only hanging out with students from my culture.

The most valuable thing I have learnt from my experience settling in Australia is resilience. I have also learnt the importance of asking questions when I don't understand something and of being open-minded, as Australia is filled with many different cultures.

What I have learnt, that I would share with someone who has just arrived in Australia, is this: being different in someone else's eyes isn't all the time a bad thing, as the world continues to expand globally everyone is going to have to learn to work with, and get along with, people from different backgrounds and beliefs, and will continue to be exposed to more cultures, personalities, talents, customs, religions, races, ethnicities, attitudes and opinions. I would also advise people settling in Australia to learn from other cultures, it will enable you to become a broader person. Finally, I would say be grateful that you're in a safe country with many opportunities, make the most of it and ask as many questions as you can, because there is no such thing as a stupid question.

9. Appendix 3: Data

9.1.1 Table 1: Visa category by mean age, 2005–06 to 2015–16

Category	Mean Age ¹⁵⁰
Total Settler Arrivals	27.0
Humanitarian	25.2
Family	31.6
Skilled	24.9
Other / Unknown	32.6
Australian 2011 Census	37.3 ¹⁵¹

9.1.2 Table 2: Youth Arrivals by state, age band and migration stream¹⁵²

Current State	Age Group	Humanitarian	Family	Other	Skilled	Grand Total
Australian Capital Territory	12-15	15	17	0	18	50
	16-17	6	10	0	7	23
	18-24	18	76	0	121	215
Australian Capital Territory Total		39	103	0	146	288
External Territories	16-17	0	1	0	3	4
External Territories Total		0	1	0	3	4
New South Wales	12-15	262	456	0	292	1,010
	16-17	141	274	0	88	503
	18-24	359	1,955	1	2,152	4,467
New South Wales Total		762	2,685	1	2,532	5,980
Northern Territory	12-15	10	15	0	25	50
	16-17	4	13	0	7	24
	18-24	6	60	0	49	115
Northern Territory Total		20	88	0	81	189
Not Recorded	12-15	0	9	0	55	64
	16-17	0	7	0	12	19
	18-24	0	112	0	87	199
Not Recorded Total		0	128	0	154	282
Queensland	12-15	189	232	0	173	594
	16-17	86	160	0	57	303
	18-24	263	665	0	663	1,591
Queensland Total		538	1,057	0	893	2,488
South Australia	12-15	133	110	0	124	367
	16-17	71	68	0	42	181
	18-24	149	361	0	376	886
South Australia Total		353	539	0	542	1,434
Tasmania	12-15	38	9	0	7	54
	16-17	12	3	0	2	17

¹⁵⁰ Department of Social Services (2016c). Settlement Reporting Facility. Accessed 15 August 2016. Available at www.dss.gov.au

¹⁵¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016). *Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia, 2015 (cat no. 3235.0)*. Available at <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3235.0>

¹⁵² Department of Social Services (2016c).

	18-24	61	25	0	45	131
Tasmania Total		111	37	0	54	202
Victoria	12-15	280	416	0	460	1,156
	16-17	137	246	0	143	526
	18-24	523	1,697	0	2,302	4,522
Victoria Total		940	2,359	0	2,905	6,204
Western Australia	12-15	81	216	0	280	577
	16-17	23	107	0	86	216
	18-24	115	663	0	698	1,476
Western Australia Total		219	986	0	1,064	2,269
Grand Total		2,982	7,983	1	8,374	19,340

9.1.3 Table 3. Arrivals by year, 2010 to 2016¹⁵³

Year	All ages	Youth
2010/11	182120	41011
2011/12	216016	43986
2012/13	204332	37825
2013/14	174910	31911
2014/15	117695	19853
2015/16	110326	19340

9.1.4 Table 4. Arrivals aged 12-24 as % of all arrivals, by migration stream and year¹⁵⁴

Year	Humanitarian	Family	Skilled	All
2010/11	28%	25%	21%	23%
2011/12	28%	24%	18%	20%
2012/13	26%	22%	16%	19%
2013/14	28%	21%	16%	18%
2014/15	27%	22%	12%	17%
2015/16	27%	20%	14%	18%

9.1.5 Table 5. Unique alleged offenders aged 10-24 by country of birth, October 2011 - September 2016¹⁵⁵

Country Of Birth	Oct 2010 to Sep 2011		Oct 2011 to Sep 2012		Oct 2012 to Sep 2013		Oct 2013 to Sep 2014		Oct 2014 to Sep 2015		Oct 2015 to Sep 2016	
AUSTRALIA	24,898	79%	23,718	78%	23,354	78%	21,866	78%	20,059	78%	19,338	76%
NEW ZEALAND	698	2.21%	715	2.35%	715	2.38%	659	2.34%	630	2.44%	650	2.56%
SUDAN	396	1.25%	369	1.22%	352	1.17%	337	1.20%	337	1.30%	397	1.56%
UK & IRELAND	292	0.93%	291	0.96%	276	0.92%	241	0.86%	225	0.87%	178	0.70%

¹⁵³ Department of Social Services (2016c).; MYAN (2016a).

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Data provided by CSA to MYAN Australia, 24 January 2017. (Crime Statistics Agency (2017). Data provided on request, 24 January 2017. Notes: Extracted from LEAP on 18th October 2016 and is subject to change.)

INDIA	305	0.97%	201	0.66%	156	0.52%	116	0.41%	104	0.40%	125	0.49%
CHINA	123	0.39%	148	0.49%	122	0.41%	124	0.44%	124	0.48%	129	0.51%
VIETNAM	102	0.32%	102	0.34%	110	0.37%	108	0.38%	104	0.40%	102	0.40%
IRAQ	78	0.25%	108	0.36%	104	0.35%	99	0.35%	85	0.33%	70	0.28%
SOMALIA	101	0.32%	103	0.34%	88	0.29%	67	0.24%	52	0.20%	47	0.19%
AFGHANISTAN	96	0.30%	89	0.29%	92	0.31%	97	0.34%	116	0.45%	107	0.42%
All other recorded countries	1,238	3.92%	1,201	3.95%	1,182	3.93%	1,139	4.05%	1,092	4.22%	1,122	4.42%
Born overseas (TOTAL)	3,429	11%	3,327	11%	3,197	11%	2,987	11%	2,869	11%	2,927	12%
Missing/Not Stated/Unknown	3,235	10%	3,324	11%	3,550	12%	3,304	12%	2,936	11%	3,119	12%
Grand Total	31,562		30,369		30,101		28,157		25,864		25,384	

9.1.6 Table 6. Youth arrivals (12-24 years) who report country of birth as South Sudan¹⁵⁶

Country of Birth	Humanitarian Stream	Family and Skilled Stream	Grand Total
2006/07	146	19	165
2007/08	85	44	129
2008/09	66	50	116
2009/10	13	29	42
2010/11	14	77	91
2011/12	10	45	55
2012/13	13	22	35
2013/14	10	24	34
2014/15	19	13	32
2015/16	8	9	17
2006/07 to 2015/16	384 (54%)	332 (46%)	716

¹⁵⁶ Department of Social Services (2016c).