

Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network Australia (MYAN)

Submission to the Independent Panel for Review into Integration, Employment and Settlement Outcomes for Refugees and Humanitarian Entrants

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About MYAN

Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network Australia (MYAN) is the national peak body representing the rights and interests of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds and those who work with them.

MYAN works in partnership with young people, government and non-government agencies at the state and territory and national levels to ensure that the particular needs of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds are recognised, and to support a coherent and consistent approach to addressing these in policy and service delivery. MYAN undertakes a range of policy and sector development activities, and supports young people to develop leadership skills and networks.

Young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds demonstrate high levels of resilience and resourcefulness and have the potential to be active participants in and contributors to Australian society. However, they can face particular barriers to accessing services and opportunities, including language, culture, limited social capital and unfamiliarity with Australian systems and processes (including the service system), racism and discrimination. These factors can place them at a social and economic disadvantage within Australian society, which can mean they are at higher risk of social and economic isolation. MYAN believes that a targeted approach to policy and service delivery is essential to addressing these barriers.

MYAN has developed the *National Youth Settlement Framework* to support a targeted and consistent approach to addressing the needs of newly arrived young people settling in Australia.

About this submission

MYAN welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Independent Panel for Review into Integration, Employment and Settlement Outcomes for Refugees and Humanitarian Entrants. 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 those born in Australia to refugee parents. Good settlement outcomes are clearly beneficial to refugees, as well as in Australia's national interest. We underline the need for political leadership to change the negative narrative around young refugees and advocate for the leadership to focus on contributions of young people to Australia.

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. This submission focuses on young people from refugee backgrounds aged 12 to 24.

1. Australian Migration and Settlement Context

Multiculturalism is a central tenet of Australian national identity and is a valuable asset to the country in an era of globalisation. Much of the success of multiculturalism can be attributed to Australia's migration and humanitarian programs and a well-supported settlement program, as well as established policy and legislative frameworks and the remarkable contributions of migrants and refugees over many years. Australia's achievement rests largely on the effectiveness of its post-arrival settlement program.

1.1 Humanitarian Program

MYAN commends the Australian Government on its Humanitarian Program and welcomes the Government's commitment to expand the number of places in the Humanitarian Program to 18,750 by 2018/19, as well as its dedication to resettlement of young people, including through increasing the intake into the Australia's Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minor (UHM) Program through the offshore component of the Humanitarian Program.

Australia has a well-established resettlement program that includes large numbers of children and young people, including unaccompanied minors. Similar to the last five financial years, in 2016-2017, almost a quarter (23%) of the people arriving in Australia as part of the Humanitarian Program was aged 12 to 24.¹ Between the 2012/13 and 2016/17 financial years, Australia resettled almost 30,000 children and young people aged up to 17 years through the Humanitarian Program.² In the same period, 19,907 young people aged between 12 and 24 were resettled.³

Australia is one of very few resettlement countries that resettles unaccompanied minors, and has a long history of providing support to this cohort to settle well. From as early as the 1970s, the Australian Government has supported unaccompanied children and young people seeking safety in Australia to receive appropriate support and care through relevant state welfare and child protection authorities.⁴

1.2 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

¹ MYAN (2018) *Youth Settlement Trends in Australia: A Report on the Data 2016-2017*. Melbourne: Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN), p. 10. Available at: [http://www.myan.org.au/file/file/MYAN%20Youth%20Settlement%20Trends_2016-2017%20Final\(2\).pdf](http://www.myan.org.au/file/file/MYAN%20Youth%20Settlement%20Trends_2016-2017%20Final(2).pdf)

² Statistics were sourced directly by MYAN from the Department of Social Services (DSS) on 25 October 2017. Data includes all permanent (or provisional) settlers who arrived between 1 July 2016 and 30 June 2017. All data presented is accurate as at this date within noted caveats of the Settlement Database (SDB).

³ MYAN (2018) *Youth Settlement Trends in Australia: A Report on the Data 2016-2017*. Melbourne: Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN), p. 9. Available at: [http://www.myan.org.au/file/file/MYAN%20Youth%20Settlement%20Trends_2016-2017%20Final\(2\).pdf](http://www.myan.org.au/file/file/MYAN%20Youth%20Settlement%20Trends_2016-2017%20Final(2).pdf)

⁴ Department of Human Services (DHS), State Government of Victoria (2014) *Refugee Minor Program*. Available at <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-service-providers/children,-youth-and-families/youth-services/refugee-minor-program>

Australian Government⁵, 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 provision of on-arrival settlement support services underpins Australia's commitment to providing a pathway for eligible refugees and migrants 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.⁶

Through MYAN's engagement internationally, we 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.

1.3 Young People in Australia's Humanitarian Program

People from refugee and refugee-like backgrounds, coming to Australia through the Humanitarian Program, are substantially younger than the national Australian population and arrivals under most other migration categories.⁷ Both in the 2016/17 financial year⁸ and in the 2017/18 financial year⁹ young refugees made up around a quarter of arrivals under the Humanitarian Program (23% and 26% respectively). Young people from refugee-like backgrounds also arrived in Australia under the Migration Program, which is utilised widely for young people to unify with their family members in Australia.¹⁰

1.4 Young refugees have distinct settlement needs

Young Australians from refugee backgrounds are a diverse population group who commonly display immense resilience. They have enormous potential to be active participants in and contributors to Australian society. 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.¹¹ However, they also face particular challenges in accessing

⁵ 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

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

⁷ Hugo (2011), *A Significant Contribution: The Economic, Social and Civic Contributions of First and Second Generation Humanitarian Entrants*. Canberra: Australian Government, DIAC

⁸ MYAN (2018), *Youth Settlement Trends in Australia: A Report on the Data 2016-2017*. Melbourne: Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN), p. 6. Available at: [http://www.myan.org.au/file/file/MYAN%20Youth%20Settlement%20Trends_2016-2017%20Final\(2\).pdf](http://www.myan.org.au/file/file/MYAN%20Youth%20Settlement%20Trends_2016-2017%20Final(2).pdf).

⁹ Based on the data provided by the Department of Social Services (DSS) to MYAN on 5 November 2018. Data presented is accurate as at this date within noted caveats of the Settlement Database (SDB).

¹⁰ MYAN (2018), *Submission to the Department of Home Affairs on 'Managing Australia's Migrant Intake'*. Available at: [http://www.myan.org.au/file/file/MYAN%20Australia%20Submission%20for%20Discussion%20Paper%20on%20Managing%20Australia's%20Migrant%20Intake\(1\).pdf](http://www.myan.org.au/file/file/MYAN%20Australia%20Submission%20for%20Discussion%20Paper%20on%20Managing%20Australia's%20Migrant%20Intake(1).pdf), p. 5.

¹¹ 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

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 either the broader youth or settlement sectors.

Young people arriving in Australia through the Humanitarian Program 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.¹² 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.¹³

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.

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:

¹² CMY (2014), *Negotiating Adolescence in Australia*. Carlton: CMY, p. 5

¹³ 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.

youth focus in the Settlement Engagement and Transition Services (SETS), funding for MYAN as one of three peak bodies in settlement services (a globally unique model); the Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors Program; and investment in youth focused-approaches through the Youth Transition Services (YTS).

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.¹⁴ The Canadian government has also recently acknowledged the need for targeted programs to support the settlement and integration of young people.¹⁵

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, reinforced through youth participation. Youth participation has significant benefits, both for the young people who are engaged in decision making processes, as well as for the organisations and communities that engage and support young people to participate and settle well in Australia. Young people have valuable opinions and insights, which they are most capable of sharing, provided they are given the space and support to do so.¹⁶

1.5 The National Youth Settlement Framework

MYAN's National Youth Settlement Framework (NYSF) is a key tool for supporting and measuring good youth settlement in Australia. The NYSF is the first of its kind, both 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.¹⁷

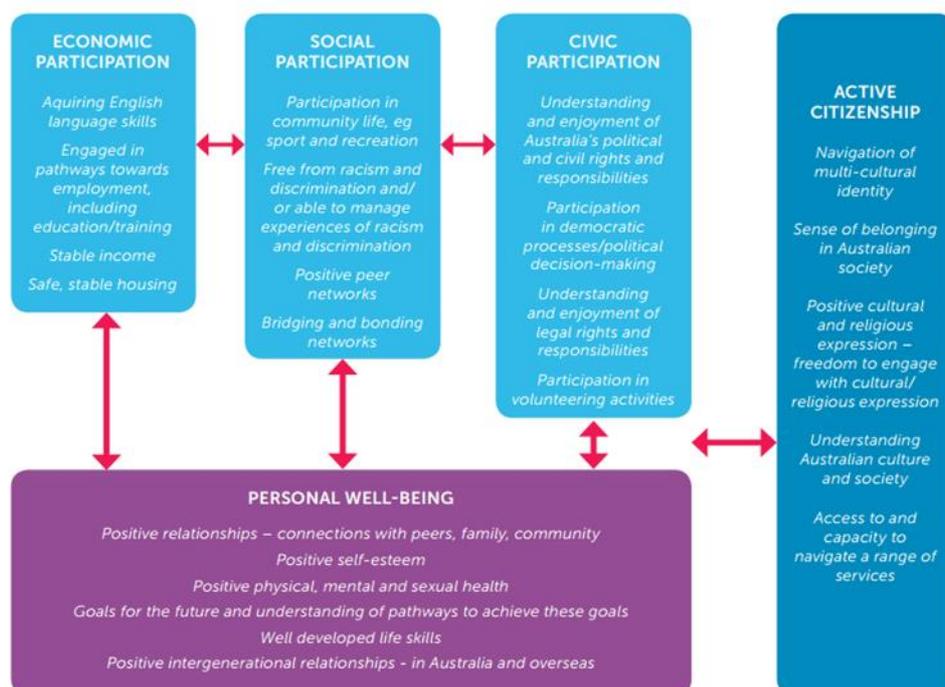
¹⁴ Küchenhoff & Lourie (2016) *The Education and Integration of 16- to 25-Year-Old Refugees and Other Humanitarian Migrants: Examples from Policy and Practice in IGC Participating States*. Geneva: Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum & Refugees (IGC).

¹⁵ 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

¹⁶ MYAN (2018) *Not "Just Ticking A Box": Youth participation with young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds*. Available at: <http://myan.org.au/file/file/MYANYouthParticipationResource.pdf>, p. 5.

¹⁷ MYAN (2016), *National Youth Settlement Framework*. Melbourne: Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN), p. 15

Figure 1. Domains and indicators of active citizenship



In addition to these indicators, the NYSF 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 NYSF supports targeted and consistent service and policy approaches that young people need to settle well over time. MYAN delivers training workshops across Australia on the Framework, and continues to support the application of the NYSF through the development of resources.

2. Policy options for improving integration and settlement outcomes of young refugees

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.

2.1 A more strategic approach to supporting young refugees in the settlement journey

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

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. The current approach in the Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) is based on the needs-based casework model. While this model recognises that different people have different needs, services need to adjust their service delivery models and responses, investing in building the skills and knowledge of staff to engage directly with young people (this may include outreach and/or communicating with parents/carers). This ensures young people are able to access key supports and the services they need during early settlement.

Settlement Engagement and Transition Services (SETS) Client Services identified youth as a priority category in the last funding round.¹⁸ 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 prioritising youth was a welcome development in the last SETS 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 SETS.

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

¹⁸Department of Social Services (2018), *Settlement Engagement and Transition Support Client Services Guidelines*. Available at: https://www.communitygrants.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05_2018/Grant%20Opportunity%20Guidelines%20-%20Client%20Services.pdf, p. 10.

significant pressures on families. Factors known to impact family relationships and disrupt family dynamics include:

- Varying rates of acculturation and language acquisition between children and parents - 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).¹⁹

Intergenerational conflict, and in the worst cases family breakdown, is experienced more acutely by families that encounter multiple and complex settlement barriers.²⁰

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.²¹ 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 young people in the context of their community 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 connections are important for creating strong, supportive networks and a sense of identity for young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.²²

2.1.2 Increased flexibility

Informed by the views of young people and services providers, MYAN believes that providing structured and targeted support early in the settlement period is an important factor contributing to active participation and engagement.

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 / supports targeted to their particular needs.

¹⁹ MYAN (2011), *Policy Briefing Paper*. Melbourne: MYAN.

²⁰ CMY (2011), *Youth Work in the Family Context*. Carlton: CMY.

²¹ CMY (2014), *Negotiating Adolescence in Australia*. Carlton: CMY, p. 11

²² 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.

MYAN believes Australia should base eligibility for targeted settlement supports on need, rather than a defined time period. 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.

MYAN is also concerned about a current gap in the provision of youth programs and supports for young people aged 12 to 15. Most mainstream youth support programs in Australia define “youth” as being from 12 to 25²³, but for the purposes of settlement services young people are currently defined as those between the ages of 15 and 25.²⁴ 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 – which is a critical phase of emotional, social and physical development - are 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.

2.1.3 Improved coordination and referral pathways

After HSP ceases, some young people require no further support, while others will be referred to the SETS and mainstream services to meet ongoing or future needs. MYAN is aware that the transition from HSP can be especially 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 HSP and are in the early stages of needing multifaceted support interventions.

While there is focus on youth and youth services within SETS, MYAN is concerned that in the states and territories where there are no multicultural youth specialist service providers, young people are not being referred into this important source of support.

Alternative 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 are not nationally consistent.

²³ For example, the Reconnect Specialist Program includes the 12 to 15 age group.

²⁴ Department of Social Services (2017), *Settlement Engagement and Transition Support, A Discussion Paper on enhancements to the Settlement Grants program*. Available at: https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/11_2017/final_settlement_grants_discussion_paper.docx, p. 3.

2.2 Investment in youth-centred support to address particular issues

2.2.1 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/or 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. According to the Building a New Life in Australia (BNLA)²⁵ research, young people show high levels of psychological distress. Addressing pre-arrival trauma and settlement stressors relevant to young people is necessary to help improve mental health outcomes in this cohort.²⁶

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.²⁷ 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.²⁸

2.2.2 Education

Education is largely the responsibility of state and territory governments in Australia. Most young people and their families arrive in Australia with high aspirations and education success as a key goal. However, succeeding in mainstream education and training can be 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.²⁹ This is particularly significant given government's increasing

²⁵ Building a New Life in Australia (BNLA) is an ongoing longitudinal study about how humanitarian migrants settle into a new life in Australia. Data is collected annually starting in 2013 with participants' early months in Australia. For more on BNLA see <https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/families-and-children/programmes-services/building-a-new-life-in-australia-bnla-the-longitudinal-study-of-humanitarian-migrants>.

²⁶ Rioseco, P & Liddy, N (2018) *Settlement outcomes of humanitarian youth and active citizenship Economic participation, social participation and personal wellbeing*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies. Available at: https://aifs.gov.au/sites/default/files/publication-documents/1804_bnla_settlement_outcomes_of_humanitarian_youth_research_summary.pdf, p. 1.

²⁷ Spinks (2009), *Australia's settlement services for migrants and refugees*. (Social Policy Section, Research Paper no. 29 2008–09). Canberra: APH.

²⁸ VicHealth, Data61, CSIRO & MYAN (2017), *Bright Futures: Spotlight on the wellbeing of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds*. Melbourne: Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, p. 13.

²⁹ Beadle (2014), *Facilitating the Transition to Employment for Refugee Young People*. Carlton: CMY.

emphasis on the 3Es (English language, Education and Employment) in the settlement and migration context.³⁰

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 out of compulsory education. Experiences of racism and discrimination have also been found to decrease enjoyment and engagement in school.³¹

Research also shows that some young people can struggle to understand and navigate the Australian education system, resulting in challenges in meeting educational requirements, 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.³²

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.³³ Early disengagement from school is a key factor impacting youth participation and marginalisation.³⁴

Bridging programs can play a key role in young people making successful educational transitions, as the case study below highlights.

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

³⁰ Department of Social Services (2015), *Pathways to participation for migrants Productivity Commission Inquiry Migrant Intake into Australia*. Available at: https://www.pc.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/190815/sub062-migrant-intake.pdf, Appendix C: Importance of the 3-Es, pp. 21-22.

³¹ 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.

³² 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.

³³ 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; Beadle (2014). *Facilitating the Transition to Employment for Refugee Young People*. Carlton: CMY.

³⁴ CMY (2014), *Fair and Accurate: Migrant and Refugee Young People, Crime and the Media*. Carlton: CMY.

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.

Young people too are commonly not sufficiently supported to understand different education pathways available to them, such as vocational pathways. Instead, they are either not encouraged to pursue further education by their schools, or only provided with the option of university education, which may not necessarily meet their needs for future employment. In 2016, the Centre for Multicultural Youth found that young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds (and their families and communities) lack critical but unseen knowledge and understanding of the links between education and employment in the Australian context.³⁵ There is an ongoing need for more guidance, counselling and access to social networks for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.³⁶

Case Study: Ucan2

Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) and Foundation House

Ucan2 recognises the need to provide additional support for young people who are newly arrived to Australia and from a refugee or migrant background. The program has three components: work skills curriculum (educational provider), psychosocial support (Foundation House) and social connections (CMY). The program has been designed to increase education,

³⁵ Kellock, W (2016) *The Missing Link? Young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, social capital and the transitions to employment*. Carlton: CMY.

³⁶ MYAN Australia (2018) *MYAN National Conference 2017: Young people in a multicultural world*. Available at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tBVtMsQYlabREXowSqMni5u3uNBN6k3/view>, p.18.

training and employment opportunities for young people from refugee backgrounds during their first fifteen months of resettlement by developing partnerships between organizations providing support in these separate areas and establishing a multi-strategic approach.

It was developed in response to the substantial number of young adults and older adolescents from refugee backgrounds who experience barriers to successful educational or employment pathways after completion of an on-arrival English language program.

The program targets young people aged 16 to 25, and are delivered in their first year of arrival to Australia while they concurrently attend a twelve-month English language program. School aged young people (up to 17) receive this language education in English Language Schools, while young people over 18 receive this education through various education providers.

The social connections component of Ucan2 is delivered by CMY with the support of volunteers to young people in education settings one day a week for 6 months (16-18 weeks) at multiple sites across Melbourne. CMY provides ongoing training and support to volunteers. The sessions are delivered for 2.5 hours once a week after school hours. Ucan2 volunteers help provide young people with encouragement, support and skill development through group activities. Volunteers are encouraged to: share their work, study and life experiences in Australia; act as role models, help young people practice English and help foster young people's confidence to make social connections in Australia by offering support in a fun and non-judgemental manner.

Families are also commonly not adequately supported and informed about vocational pathways (available from Year 11 covering young people aged 16+) as a good alternative to university. This may lead to intergenerational conflict between young people and their parents due to family's unmet expectations. 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.³⁷ Supporting parent/carer engagement in young people's educational journey can promote their engagement and participation and improve educational success.³⁸

Schools are an important site for bringing together a key array of services and supports. Young people from refugee 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 background can be an important tool for ensuring the appropriate supports and services are available to young people early.

³⁷ MYAN (2017), *Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Migration: Inquiry into Settlement Outcomes*. Melbourne: Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN), p. 24.

³⁸ This is true for all children and young people. Department of Education and Training (2016). *State of Victoria's Children Report – 2015*. Melbourne: DET.

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.³⁹

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

2.2.3 English language education

English language skills play a critical role in successful settlement. 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 backgrounds to actively participate and contribute to Australian society. Australian research has demonstrated that English language ability does not predict settlement outcomes.⁴⁰

³⁹ Munson & Ataullahjan (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.

⁴⁰ 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, p. 63.

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 program. 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.⁴¹

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.⁴²

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.⁴³

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

⁴¹ 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, p. 15.

⁴² 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.

⁴³ 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.

language learning that would enhance outcomes for young people in this area in Australia.⁴⁴ These include:

a) *Appropriate and consistent funding and structures*

- o Insufficient hours

English acquisition has an important role in Economic Participation (which is one of the four domains of MYAN’s National Youth Settlement Framework for achieving active citizenship of young people).⁴⁵ However, current English language opportunities do not adequately support all young people achieve their goals of attaining further education/training and transition to work.⁴⁶ Furthermore, limited or low English language levels may prevent young people’s access to services, supports and opportunities.⁴⁷

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.⁴⁸

Furthermore, for young people, the proficiency level at which they become ineligible for further AMEP assistance (i.e. functional English) is considered insufficient for employment, VET or higher education.⁴⁹

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.⁵⁰

The Joint Standing Committee on Migration as part of its *Inquiry into Migrant Settlement Outcomes* also made similar comments, sharing the above concerns that the AMEP focusses on delivering a specific amount of hours of English language training as opposed to ensuring migrants reach a level of proficiency that allows them to function in mainstream Australian society.⁵¹ MYAN echoes the recommendation of the Committee for AMEP to change its model through focusing on English language competency for better community engagement and improved employment prospects; and supporting clients to access additional hours of

⁴⁴ 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, p. 12

⁴⁵ MYAN (2016), *National Youth Settlement Framework*. Melbourne: Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN), p. 15.

⁴⁶ Liddy (2012), Multicultural Young People in Australia: Exploring structural barriers to education and employment, *Australian Mosaic*, No. 32 (Summer 2012/13), pp. 6-9.

⁴⁷ MYAN (2016), *National Youth Settlement Framework*. Melbourne: Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN), p. 13.

⁴⁸ Productivity Commission (2016) *Inquiry Report: Migrant Intake Into Australia*, No. 77. Canberra: Productivity Commission, p.281.

⁴⁹ ACIL Allen Consulting (2015), *AMEP Evaluation*. (Department of Education and Training). Melbourne: DET.

⁵⁰ ACIL Allen Consulting (2015), *AMEP Evaluation*. (Department of Education and Training). Melbourne: DET.

⁵¹ Joint Standing Committee on Migration (2017), *No one teaches you to become an Australian: Report of the inquiry into migrant settlement outcomes*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, p. 57.

tuition as necessary to reach that level.⁵²

- Accessing AMEP for young people aged 15 to 17

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.⁵³

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 flexibility is needed for access to AMEP through extending this eligibility and completion period for all new arrivals, including young refugees, as also recommended by the Joint Standing Committee on Migration.⁵⁴

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

Some young people find it difficult to remain engaged in AMEP classes as they have been designed for the adult cohort. Youth specific language classes have been operating in several locations across Australia for a number of years. 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.⁵⁵ 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.⁵⁶

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

⁵² Joint Standing Committee on Migration (2017), *No one teaches you to become an Australian: Report of the inquiry into migrant settlement outcomes*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, p. 57.

⁵³ ACIL Allen Consulting (2015), *AMEP Evaluation*. (Department of Education and Training). Melbourne: DET.

⁵⁴ Joint Standing Committee on Migration (2017), *No one teaches you to become an Australian: Report of the inquiry into migrant settlement outcomes*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, p. 56.

⁵⁵ 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.

⁵⁶ MYAN (2017), *Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Migration: Inquiry into Settlement Outcomes*. Melbourne: Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN), p. 38.

sites has been in obtaining sufficient minimum numbers to run youth-specific classes under current funding criterion.⁵⁷

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.⁵⁸

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.⁵⁹ 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.⁶⁰

c) EAL in schools

MYAN believes that the absence of a national framework to guide and direct funding allocations for English language learning potentially limits access to this important support program. Adequate and targeted support in English as a Second Language (ESL)/ Additional Language (EAL) learning in the mainstream school setting are critical to young people settling well in Australia. As put forward in the final report of the Joint Standing Committee on Migration as part of its *Inquiry into Migrant Settlement Outcomes*, English language, or the ability to quickly and effectively acquire the English language is an important factor in successful settlement outcomes.⁶¹

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. While there are many examples of good practice across Australia, there is also a need to ensure that all schools with an ESL/EAL cohort allocate adequate funding to meet the learning needs of young from refugee and migrant backgrounds. 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.

⁵⁷ MYAN (2017), *Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Migration: Inquiry into Settlement Outcomes*. Melbourne: Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN), p. 38.

⁵⁸ MYAN (2017), *Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Migration: Inquiry into Settlement Outcomes*. Melbourne: Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN), p. 38.

⁵⁹ ACIL Allen Consulting (2015), *AMEP Evaluation*. (Department of Education and Training). Melbourne: DET.

⁶⁰ MYAN (2017), *Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Migration: Inquiry into Settlement Outcomes*. Melbourne: Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN), p. 38.

⁶¹ Joint Standing Committee on Migration (2017), *No one teaches you to become an Australian: Report of the inquiry into migrant settlement outcomes*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, p. 55.

As detailed in the report of the Auditor-General on *Monitoring the Impact of Australian Government School Funding, ANAO Report No.18*, only New South Wales, South Australia and Australian Capital Territory has been part of the National Education Reform Agreement (NERA) of 2013, and therefore are bounded by the needs-based funding model for school education, while the rest of states and territory continue to operate under the National Education Agreement (NEA) and are not required to have in place this funding model.⁶² While MYAN recognises this, we also believe that there needs to be nationally consistent accountability mechanisms for measuring the effectiveness of English support programs delivered in schools.

There need to be better methods of identifying and reporting on EAL learners' needs and outcomes - as stated by the Joint Standing Committee on Migration in relation to a lack of transparency in school funding - especially considering that there are over 300,000 EAL students across all systems.⁶³ MYAN echoes the recommendations of the Joint Standing Committee on Migration on this issue and agrees that schools should be required to submit annual reports showing the allocation of funding to ensure that funding is specifically being used to enhance the learning of EAL students.⁶⁴ The COAG Education Council provides a forum through which strategic policy on school education can be coordinated at the national level. For better coordinated education services and outcomes for EAL students in schools and funding - as recommended by the Joint Standing Committee – the National Settlement Framework should be used as a basis for annual reporting to COAG ensuring that settlement service needs of all migrants and refugees are considered, specifically those of EAL learners in schools.⁶⁵

2.2.4 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.⁶⁶ Sporting participation is also particularly important during adolescence as a developmental experience and for providing engaging, safe alternatives to anti-social behavior.⁶⁷

⁶² Australian National Audit Office (2018) *Monitoring the Impact of Australian Government School Funding, ANAO Report No.18 2017–18*. Available at: https://www.anao.gov.au/sites/g/files/net4981/f/ANAO_Report_2017-2018_18a.pdf, p.17.

⁶³ Joint Standing Committee on Migration (2017), *No one teaches you to become an Australian: Report of the inquiry into migrant settlement outcomes*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, p. 62.

⁶⁴ Joint Standing Committee on Migration (2017), *No one teaches you to become an Australian: Report of the inquiry into migrant settlement outcomes*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, p. 62.

⁶⁵ Joint Standing Committee on Migration (2017), *No one teaches you to become an Australian: Report of the inquiry into migrant settlement outcomes*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, p. 63.

⁶⁶ CMY (2014c). *Active Citizenship, Participation and Belonging: : Young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds in Victoria*. Carlton: CMY; Kellock (2016).

⁶⁷ 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

Young people from refugee 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.⁶⁸

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 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 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.⁶⁹

2.2.5 Initiatives against racism and discrimination for improved social cohesion

MYAN is concerned about reports of increased incidents of racism and discrimination in recent years.⁷⁰ While, overwhelmingly, the Australian community 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.⁷¹ According to young people, statements (or silence) and actions in relation to policy and legislation, especially those that label specific groups as the

⁶⁸ CMY (2004). *Involving migrant and refugee young people in social and recreational activities, Information Sheet*. Carlton: CMY.

⁶⁹ CMY (2004). *Involving migrant and refugee young people in social and recreational activities, Information Sheet*. Carlton: CMY.

⁷⁰ AHRC (2015). *Freedom from discrimination: Report on the 40th anniversary of the Racial Discrimination Act – National Consultation Report*. Sydney: AHRC.

⁷¹ MYAN (2017) *Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Migration: Inquiry into Settlement Outcomes*. Melbourne: Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN), p. 40-41.

‘problem’, can contribute to feelings of isolation and marginalisation.⁷² 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.⁷³

While there has been an increased focus on the ‘likelihood of successful settlement’⁷⁴ and ‘integration potential’ in migration policies in Australia, settlement outcomes cannot be considered independent from the experiences faced upon arrival to Australia. As noted by the Productivity Commission, “... *social cohesion also depends on the extent to which immigrants themselves and the Australian-born population accept diverse ethnic identities as consistent with a common ‘national’ identity, which itself evolves over time. A high level of acceptance is conducive to better integration.*”⁷⁵ Research also suggests that integration is closely related to experiences after arriving in a country and is not solely dependent on the immigrant’s own skills or capabilities. Experiences of racism and discrimination can lead to mental health and wellbeing problems for young people, including anxiety, stress, depression and poor quality of life.⁷⁶

In the last decade, there has been a significant increase in the reported experience of discrimination based on skin colour, ethnic origin and religion to 19% in 2018 from 9% in 2007.⁷⁷ Around a quarter of young people between 18-24 years of age reported such discrimination and, people from non-English speaking backgrounds reported highest experience of discrimination (25%).⁷⁸ This is an indicator that more should be done for better settlement outcomes for young people upon arrival to Australia to ensure social cohesion.⁷⁹ Furthermore in the Multicultural Youth Australia Census 2017⁸⁰, 66% of the participants mentioned they experienced discrimination based on race and 25% stated they were discriminated because of their religion. As a multicultural society, Australia can provide more spaces for young people from refugee backgrounds to find a sense of belonging in their new country and community.⁸¹

MYAN believes there is a critical need for political leadership to ensure that national conversations take place in respectful and constructive ways, are evidence-based and include

⁷² MYAN & RCOA (2016) *Speaking Out: The Global Refugee Youth Consultations in Australia Report*. Available at: http://www.myan.org.au/file/file/GRYC%20Report_NOV2016.pdf.

⁷³ CMY (2014). *Fair and Accurate: Migrant and Refugee Young People, Crime and the Media*. Carlton: CMY.

⁷⁴ Department of Home Affairs (2018) *Managing Australia’s Migrant Intake*. Available at: <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/ReportsandPublications/Documents/discussion-papers/managing-australias-migrant-intake.pdf>, p.1.

⁷⁵ Productivity Commission (2016) *Inquiry Report: Migrant Intake Into Australia, No. 77*. Canberra: Productivity Commission, p.11.

⁷⁶ VicHealth, Data61, CSIRO & MYAN (2017) *Bright Futures: Spotlight on the wellbeing of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds*. Melbourne: Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, p. 13

⁷⁷ Markus, A (2018), Mapping Social Cohesion: The Scanlon Foundation surveys 2018. Caulfield East: Monash University, p. 67.

⁷⁸ Markus, A (2018), Mapping Social Cohesion: The Scanlon Foundation surveys 2018. Caulfield East: Monash University, pp. 68-69.

⁷⁹ Markus, A (2017), Mapping Social Cohesion: The Scanlon Foundation surveys 2017. Caulfield East: Monash University, pp. 59-60.

⁸⁰ The census is the first nation wide study of Australia’s multicultural youth with 69% of participants aged 15 to 19 and 37% aged 20 to 25. For more see, Wyn, J., Khan, R., & Dadvand, B. (2018). *Multicultural Youth Australia Census 2017 Infographic Report*. Melbourne, Australia: Youth Research Centre, Melbourne Graduate School of Education, the University of Melbourne. Available at: https://education.unimelb.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/2781535/Multicultural-Youth-Australia-Census-2017-Infographic.pdf.

⁸¹ VicHealth, Data61, CSIRO & MYAN (2017) *Bright Futures: Spotlight on the wellbeing of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds*. Melbourne: Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, p. 13. Also see, Mansouri, F & Kirpitchenko, L 2016, ‘Practices of active citizenship among migrant youth: Beyond conventionalities’, *Social Identities*, vol. 22, no. 3, pp. 307–23.

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 community's 'reception' or welcome as it is on new arrivals' skills and attributes. Government focus and continual referral to broad characteristics and particular cultural groups as 'problematic' reinforces inaccurate stereotypes, harming young people, their families and communities.

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

Australia's 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 programs that are working well as well as where improvements can be made."⁸² 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.

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.⁸³

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

MYAN is aware that some young people from refugee 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 young person was not supported in the referral pathway. Collaboration between settlement and mainstream services is essential to ensuring young people from refugee backgrounds have access to effective, timely and appropriate service systems and supports, and that they are supported to take these up.

Increased collaboration would strengthen referral pathways, and provide two-way communication of specialist information – ensuring the service in contact with the young

⁸² Australian Government (2016), p. 6

⁸³ 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

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 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 young people need to be equally equipped with the skills and resources to work with refugee 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 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.⁸⁴

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 backgrounds 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.

2.5 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

⁸⁴ 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.

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.

MYAN believes 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 facilitated 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.

2.6 Nationally consistent data collection and dissemination specific to young people

Australia has been a global leader in the area of data collection and dissemination in relation to its multicultural communities. Some of Australia’s practices have been recognised as good practice in the International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics of March 2018.⁸⁵ This has been made possible through inclusion of refugees in data collection exercises such as census and various surveys undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. However, it has been increasingly challenging to access nationally consistent data about young people from refugee backgrounds in Australia.

2.6.1 Data on young people as a distinct cohort

MYAN reiterates the importance of data collection on youth⁸⁶ with specific data gathered to capture the experiences of young people as a distinct population group (12 to 24 year olds).⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Expert Group on Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons Statistics (2018) *International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics: Final post Global Consultation February 2018*. Available at <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/49th-session/documents/BG-Item3m-RefugeeStat-E.pdf>.

⁸⁶ Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN) Australia (2018) *Advocacy Brief Youth Rights in the Global Compact on Refugees*. Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/events/conferences/5a562f9a7/myan-australia-advocacy-brief-youth-rights-global-compact-refugees.html>, pp. 14-15, 18-20.

The absence of such data results in a lack of targeted age and developmental stage appropriate protection and assistance programs, and capacity to measure impact and outcomes. This includes initiatives to ensure their engagement in secondary and tertiary education, and vocational training opportunities, on the pathway to employment.⁸⁸

While there are various surveys of Australian Bureau of Statistics collecting data in areas concerning young people, it is not possible to find publically available data specific to refugee youth in those surveys disaggregated by age and visa status for the youth cohort. Department of Home Affairs (DHA), while reporting on migration categories of arrivals, does not report on different age cohorts, including the specific youth cohort (aged 12 to 24) which hampers efforts to ensure better planning and programming for the needs of young refugees arriving in Australia.

While various filters exist to capture multicultural communities in Australia such as ‘overseas born’ and ‘speaking language other than English at home’ categories, such filters remain vague to capture specific information on current immigration status in Australia, including visa status, which could be broadly categorised as temporary migrant, permanent migrant and humanitarian arrival (i.e. arriving with refugee and other humanitarian visas).

There is publically available data provided under the Settlement Reporting Facility (SRF) by the Department of Social Services (DSS). However, it is impossible to compare the data provided by DSS with the data of the DHA as different criteria are being used in data collection. DSS collects and reports under SRF on data compiled from a number of sources including DHA, other Commonwealth agencies and service providers, as stated in its caveats.⁸⁹ DHA on the other hand, collects and reports on data on visa grants and not on arrivals in a given period. For example, DHA reported 20,257 visa grants under the Humanitarian Program in 2016-17 financial year and nothing on arrivals to Australia.

This lack of data on the exact number of arrivals to Australia in a given period makes it difficult for the settlement sector to adjust its planning and programs for the new arrivals to Australia to assist them to settle well. Such reporting of arrivals by the DHA, alongside the data provided under the SRF, would complement each other and strengthen the Australian Government’s response to the humanitarian arrivals to Australia. International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics also recommend collection of data on ‘date of arrival in country’.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ For statistical purposes UN defines youth as persons aged between 15-24 years. UNHCR (2016) *Executive Committee of the High Commissioner’s Programme conclusion on Youth, 31 May 2016, EC/67/SC/CRP.17*. Available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/5800cdea4.html>, p.3.

⁸⁸ UNHCR (2016) *Executive Committee of the High Commissioner’s Programme conclusion on Youth, 31 May 2016, EC/67/SC/CRP.17*. Available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/5800cdea4.html>, p.3.

⁸⁹ For full list of stated caveats for this data, see <https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/settlement-and-multicultural-affairs/programs-policy/settlement-services/settlement-reporting-facility/help-for-settlement-reports/caveats>

⁹⁰ Expert Group on Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons Statistics (2018) *International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics: Final post Global Consultation February 2018*. Available at <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/49th-session/documents/BG-Item3m-RefugeeStat-E.pdf>, p. 40.

Access and reporting on data to reflect the arrival date is vital for preparing and/or adjusting policies and programs for young people arriving under the Humanitarian Program - including but not limited to education, vocational training and language training.

2.6.2 Data on access to settlement services by young people

MYAN understands that information on access to settlement services, both HSP and SETS, is collected by service providers and shared through the Data Exchange⁹¹ database of the DSS (DEX). However, this database does not collect information at the visa subclass level. The information collected through DEX is also not available through DSS' Settlement Reporting Facility (SRF). In the absence of data on access and utilisation of services across the settlement services continuum by visa subclass in DEX and the SRF, it is difficult to understand whether the increased number of SHP visa arrivals, are accessing the settlement support they need and are entitled to – particularly in the critical early stages of settlement through HSP.

MYAN believes that collection and access to more accurate data on access by young people to the services they need across the continuum of settlement services (in both HSP and SETS), is critical to understanding both service system gaps and good practices in service delivery. This is an essential evidence-base to inform policy and programming.

3. Improving employment outcomes of young refugees

Employment is a key indicator of refugees' economic integration.⁹² 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.”⁹³ 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.⁹⁴

In the absence of a national employment strategy focusing on refugee young people, employment assistance for young job seekers is through generalist or ‘mainstream’ service providers, i.e. *jobactives*.⁹⁵ Studies suggest that mainstream employment services are not responsive to the specific needs of refugee communities impacting refugee community utilisation of these key services.⁹⁶ The *jobactive* providers in particular has been criticised for

⁹¹ According to its website, the Data Exchange represents the Department of Social Services' new approach to grants program reporting reflecting a two-way focus on a smarter and more efficient way of collecting data from service providers, and a more useful reporting back of data about the outcomes achieved for individuals, families, and their communities. See <https://dex.dss.gov.au/>.

⁹² OECD (2015). *Indicators of immigration integration: Settling in*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

⁹³ Productivity Commission (2016) *Inquiry Report: Migrant Intake Into Australia, No. 77*. Canberra: Productivity Commission, p. 8.

⁹⁴ Kellock (2016), *The Missing Link? Young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, social capital and the transitions to employment*. Carlton: CMY.

⁹⁵ Beadle (2014), *Facilitating the Transition to Employment for Refugee Young People*. Carlton: CMY; RCOA (2012). *Job Services Australia: Refugee community and service provider views*. Sydney: Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA)

⁹⁶ 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*

being unable to provide the necessary level of assistance required by people from refugee backgrounds and for a lack of cultural sensitivity.⁹⁷ Reports suggest *jobactive* has sought to avoid ‘difficult cases’, while seeking to prioritise assistance for clients who are easier to place.⁹⁸ Both refugee communities and community or non-government organisations providing services to refugees 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.⁹⁹

A significant factor contributing to employment disadvantage for young people from refugee backgrounds is their lack of social and professional networks beyond their own (cultural or ethnic) community.¹⁰⁰ 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.¹⁰¹

3.1 Changing nature of work in Australia and its impact on young refugees

While structural changes in the economy and consequently, the composition of employment have changed over the years¹⁰², the future of work in Australia will also be impacted by the new technology and automation impacting every job and occupation.¹⁰³ According to the World Bank, demand for advanced cognitive skills, socio-behavioural skills, and skill combinations associated with greater adaptability will rise.¹⁰⁴ In the last two decades, almost half of the employment growth occurred in jobs at highest skill level, while the jobs at lowest skill level was less than 10% of the total increase in employment.¹⁰⁵

OECD refers to a link between lower family education levels and skill levels of migrants, which impacts employment opportunities, meaning a risk for migrants from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds.¹⁰⁶ This may mean additional risks and hardship for access to employment by young people from refugee backgrounds that arrive in Australia through the Humanitarian Program. Compared to other migrants, refugees are more likely to never attend school and to have lower education levels, with fewer numbers of humanitarian

communities. (Digital Transformation Office). Available at <http://fecca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/feccadigitalconsultationreport.pdf>

⁹⁷ RCOA (2016). *Jobactive: Refugee community and service provider concerns*. Melbourne: Refugee Council of Australia.

⁹⁸ RCOA (2012). *Job Services Australia: Refugee community and service provider views*. Sydney: Refugee Council of Australia; MDA (2010). *Employment and Training Advocacy Position Paper*. Brisbane: Advocacy and Social Policy Unit, Multicultural Development Association (MDA); Beadle (2014), *Facilitating the Transition to Employment for Refugee Young People*. Carlton: CMY.

⁹⁹ RCOA (2016). *Jobactive: Refugee community and service provider concerns*. Melbourne: Refugee Council of Australia.

¹⁰⁰ Beadle (2014), *Facilitating the Transition to Employment for Refugee Young People*. Carlton: CMY; Kellock (2016), *The Missing Link? Young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, social capital and the transitions to employment*. Carlton: CMY.

¹⁰¹ FECCA (2014). *Fact Sheet 3: Youth Employment in New and Emerging Communities*. Canberra: FECCA; RCOA (2016).

¹⁰² Australian Government (2018) *The next generation of employment services discussion paper, Appendix G – Labour market data and information*, p.103. Available at:

https://docs.jobs.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/the_next_generation_of_employment_services_appendices_acc.pdf

¹⁰³ Foundation for Young Australians (FYA) (2017) *The New Work Smarts: Thriving in the New Work Order*, p. 6. Available at:

https://www.fya.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/FYA_TheNewWorkSmarts_July2017.pdf

¹⁰⁴ World Bank (2018) *World Development Report 2019: The Changing Nature of Work*, p. 6. Washington, DC: World Bank.

¹⁰⁵ Australian Government (2018) *The next generation of employment services discussion paper, Appendix G – Labour market data and information*, p.105. Available at:

https://docs.jobs.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/the_next_generation_of_employment_services_appendices_acc.pdf

¹⁰⁶ OECD (2017) *Building Skills for All in Australia: Policy Insights from the Survey of Adult Skills*, OECD Skills Studies, OECD Publishing, Paris. p. 33.

arrivals having a university degree.¹⁰⁷ According to Building a New Life in Australia (BNLA)¹⁰⁸, 16% of humanitarian arrivals never attended school and 16.2% had a university degree or a trade or technical qualification.¹⁰⁹

3.2 Access to employment for young refugees: Barriers and Facilitators

While the above mentioned changes in work life impact all young job seekers in Australia, indicating a higher bar for them to reach life conditions similar to that of their parents, this bar is higher for young people from refugee backgrounds, due to extra barriers they face to gain employment.¹¹⁰

These barriers indicate the need for targeted support for young people. Barriers include:

- School to work transitions - Young people often come from families that place a strong emphasis on education, and can be under family pressure to excel academically, and may make career choices in line with their family's desires, rather than their own interests.¹¹¹ They can also struggle to access full time work upon graduation in the absence of specific career guidance and relevant work experience gained at school preparing them to access job market¹¹²
- Mainstream employment services are not responsive to individual situation and needs of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds – Mainstream employment services are not considered helpful by the young people, as they operate on a 'tick the box' basis rather than offering meaningful engagement¹¹³
- Young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds lack of social and professional networks beyond their own (cultural or ethnic) community¹¹⁴
- 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 services¹¹⁵ - While this may have positive employment outcomes in the

¹⁰⁷ Department of Social Services (2017), *Building a New Life in Australia (BNLA): The Longitudinal Study of Humanitarian Migrants – Findings from the first three waves*. Canberra: Department of Social Services, p. 32.

¹⁰⁸ Building a New Life in Australia (BNLA) is an ongoing longitudinal study about how humanitarian migrants settle into a new life in Australia. Data is collected annually starting in 2013 with participants' early months in Australia. For more on BNLA see <https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/families-and-children/programmes-services/building-a-new-life-in-australia-bnla-the-longitudinal-study-of-humanitarian-migrants>.

¹⁰⁹ Department of Social Services (2017), *Building a New Life in Australia (BNLA): The Longitudinal Study of Humanitarian Migrants – Findings from the first three waves*. Canberra: Department of Social Services, p. 32.

¹¹⁰ VicHealth, Data61, CSIRO & MYAN (2017) *Bright Futures: Spotlight on the wellbeing of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds*. Melbourne: Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, p. 17.

¹¹¹ VicHealth, Data61, CSIRO & MYAN (2017) *Bright Futures: Spotlight on the wellbeing of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds*. Melbourne: Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, p. 9.

¹¹² VicHealth, Data61, CSIRO & MYAN (2017) *Bright Futures: Spotlight on the wellbeing of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds*. Melbourne: Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, p. 9.

¹¹³ MYAN Australia (2018) *Submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment on The appropriateness and effectiveness of the objectives, design, implementation and evaluation of jobactive*, p. 9. Available at: <https://www.aph.gov.au/DocumentStore.ashx?id=c2bdd7be-be0c-44d5-9bde-eb3fbc352e62&subId=660357>.

¹¹⁴ Beadle (2014), *Facilitating the Transition to Employment for Refugee Young People*. Carlton: CMY; Kellock (2016), *The Missing Link? Young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, social capital and the transitions to employment*. Carlton: CMY.

¹¹⁵ Beadle (2014), *Facilitating the Transition to Employment for Refugee Young People*. Carlton: CMY; Kellock (2016), *The Missing Link? Young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, social capital and the transitions to employment*. Carlton: CMY; 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.

short-term, there continues to be a need for targeted employment support to facilitate broader networks for employment outside young people’s own community

- Poor understanding of rights and laws, resulting in young people experiencing workplace harassment and exploitation
- Discrimination - Racial discrimination has steadily increased in the Australia in the last ten years with young people aged 18 to 24 being most impacted.¹¹⁶
- Lack of recognition of qualifications – One in seven young people who arrived in Australia in 2016 was unsuccessful in having their overseas obtained qualification recognised, leading to underutilisation of young people’s previously gained skills¹¹⁷
- Limited English language skills – The level of local language acquisition is an important factor in accessing employment, however for some young people supports through EAL/D programs are not sufficient and do not ensure that young people have adequate language skills to successfully transition to mainstream schools and then to employment.¹¹⁸
- Lack of familiarity with technology for those cut off from technology for significant periods – Young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds most often are underexposed to digital and online technologies. Digital inclusion is linked with social inclusion, and lack of access to/familiarity with digital technology can lead to limited access to employment opportunities for young people¹¹⁹
- Need to adjust to expectations regarding work in Australia.¹²⁰

Employment opportunities in the wider community can contribute to active citizenship and social cohesion and as such, it is not in the interests of young people or the broader Australian community.

Factors that facilitate access to employment are:

- Schools that support parents/carers of young people and assist them with getting familiarised with the Australian education system and employment market, while contributing to school to work transitions through providing students with opportunities to learn more about different professions, jobs and employers, including through work experience programs.
- 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

¹¹⁶ VicHealth, Data61, CSIRO & MYAN (2017) *Bright Futures: Spotlight on the wellbeing of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds*. Melbourne: Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, p. 13.

¹¹⁷ VicHealth, Data61, CSIRO & MYAN (2017) *Bright Futures: Spotlight on the wellbeing of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds*. Melbourne: Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, p. 9.

¹¹⁸ MYAN (2018) *English Language Acquisition for Young People from Refugee and Migrant Backgrounds, Reflections from Youth Transition Support Service Providers*. p. 3.

¹¹⁹ VicHealth, Data61, CSIRO & MYAN (2017) *Bright Futures: Spotlight on the wellbeing of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds*. Melbourne: Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, p. 15.

¹²⁰ In 2016, MYAN conducted consultations with 550 young people from across Australia as part of the Global Refugee Youth Consultations. Young people in Australia also mentioned difficulties they face when accessing employment in Australia. Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (Australia) and Refugee Council of Australia (2016), *Speaking Up: the Global Refugee Youth Consultations in Australia Report*. Available at: http://www.myan.org.au/file/file/GRYC%20Report_NOV2016.pdf, p. 16.

understanding and increase young people’s social capital with regard to employment.¹²¹

- 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.¹²²
- Programs that 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.¹²³
- 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 services (YTS). Strategies utilised in these services 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.

4. Recommendations

4.1 Recommendations specific to improved integration and settlement outcomes

1. Develop a national youth settlement strategy to support a more targeted, consistent and coordinated approach to meeting the settlement needs of young people.
2. Improve consistency and transparency in youth-specific settlement services through better planning and benchmarking that is embedded in national guidelines, based on the National Youth Settlement Framework.
3. Invest in research that examines the factors that contribute to and support successful settlement outcomes for young people, their families and communities.
4. Invest in multicultural youth specialist services in each state and territory to facilitate a nationally consistent and coordinated approach to youth settlement.
5. Expand the eligibility criteria for the settlement services (i.e. HSP and SETS), so that support can be based on need rather than a defined time period.
6. Expand the definition of youth in settlement services to include young people between the ages of 12 and 15 years.
7. Improve youth-focused support in the Humanitarian Settlement Program through capacity building.
8. Invest in support to assist families and communities to help young people in their settlement journey.
9. Ensure the mainstream sector is well-equipped to support young people to settle well through investing in initiatives that:
 - a. Facilitate collaboration between the settlement and mainstream sectors and

¹²¹ Beadle (2014), *Facilitating the Transition to Employment for Refugee Young People*. Carlton: CMY; Kellock (2016), *The Missing Link? Young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, social capital and the transitions to employment*. Carlton: CMY.

¹²² Beadle (2014), *Facilitating the Transition to Employment for Refugee Young People*. Carlton: CMY.

¹²³ Olliff (2010). *What works: employment strategies for refugee and humanitarian entrants*. Melbourne: RCOA.

- b. Build the capacity of mainstream services to ensure they are effectively responding to the needs of young people from refugee backgrounds.
10. 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.
 - English language education:
 - Commitment to delivering appropriate English language programs for all recent arrivals that require it, and enhancing this with more targeted investment in young people’s English language learning. This includes:
 - Increased 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.
 - Investing in initiatives that support young people from refugee backgrounds in and outside the classroom, e.g. homework support groups.
 - Developing 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.
 - Establishing school accountability mechanisms to ensure that loadings for students with limited English skills are firmly tied to the educational needs of this cohort.
 - Development of a national measure of English language proficiency to direct loadings to the most vulnerable students.
 - 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.
 - Initiatives against racism and discrimination for improved social cohesion:
 - Ensure national conversations take place in different domains (including in schools, work places, local councils, etc.) in respectful and constructive ways, are evidence-based and include the voices of young people.
 - 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.
- End continual referral to broad characteristics and particular cultural groups as 'problematic', avoiding inaccurate stereotypes, harming young people, their families and communities.
 - Ensure involvement of youth and peer facilitation for young people from refugee backgrounds to have their voices heard and a role in representing themselves in local communities.
 - Extend investment in initiatives that support the development of young people's leadership skills and facilitate their civic and social participation.
 - Continue to celebrate different cultures and create regular opportunities to bring different communities living in Australia together.
11. Ensure nationally consistent data collection and dissemination specific to young people through;
- Report on young people from refugee backgrounds as a distinct group (12 to 24 year olds) in all data collection and dissemination-related exercises undertaken and/or funded by the Australian Government(while also recognising the need to continue to capture data specific to children, adolescents and young people under the age of 18 as a distinct group).
 - Department of Home Affairs to report on the 'date of arrival to country' alongside visa lodgements and visa grants, to strengthen the Australian Government's settlement services and ensure planning for adequate delivery of language courses, education and training and other services. This would ensure complementarity with settlement-related data reporting by the Department of Social Services.
 - Department of Social Services to collect data (disaggregated by age, visa subclass and type of service provided) through the Data Exchange database and report this data through the Settlement Reporting Facility on access by young people to settlement services - including Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) and Settlement Engagement and Transitions (SETS).

4.2 Recommendations specific to employment

1. Invest in programs that support young people's transition from education and/or training to employment, including providing one-on-one careers advice and practical support to young people tailored to their individual situation, and with a long-term view of future pathways.
2. Introduce specialised employment services for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds that provide individual support to meet their needs and aspirations through a culturally responsive lens.
3. Fund the national rollout of the Youth Transition Support (YTS) program beyond the pilot phase ensuring that the program is available in every state and territory.
4. Ensure schools provide additional English language support (including with interpreters) when needed. making sure their aspirations and interest are considered in careers advise processes.

5. Initiate bridging programs for young people to access ongoing careers advice and support while they look for work, by establishing links with employment services as well as further education institutions, ensuring a continuity of support delivered to young people from refugee backgrounds.
6. Incorporate 'soft skills' training into school curriculums for students assisting them to gain the skills that would be needed in their future employment journey, in line with changing nature of work, and provide them with more practical information, including but not limited to job search, resume building, work place culture and work rights
7. Provide young people with more work experience (as well as internship and volunteer) opportunities in different fields of employment based on their aspirations and interests.
8. Provide young people with regular and structured opportunities to network and interact with employers while introducing young people to different fields and sectors of employment and professions (such as employment/jobs fairs, forums, networking events, etc.).
9. 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.