

Bright Futures **Spotlight on the wellbeing of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds**



In a rapidly changing world characterised by increasing competition for tertiary education, decreasing job security, globalisation, technology, cultural diversity and over-exposure to the internet, young people are increasingly required to be skilled, digitally connected, resilient and adaptable.

These challenges were identified in 2015 by the report *Bright Futures: Megatrends impacting the mental wellbeing of young people in Victoria over the coming 20 years*. VicHealth has partnered with Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN) and CSIRO's Data61 to explore what this work means for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

The rising bar: Rising education and skill levels are creating a more competitive job market.



- Young people in Australia are more highly qualified but less likely to find a job than previous generations. Refugee and migrant young people face additional challenges, even though they may come from families who strongly value and promote educational success.
- 38% of young people whose parents were born overseas were in some form of tertiary education in 2016. This compares with 25% of young people whose parents were born in Australia.
- Only 45% of university students born outside Australia find full-time employment after graduation, compared with 69% of Australian-born university students.

Global reach: Digital technology and globalisation are changing all facets of society.



- Young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds might be more globally networked than their Australian-born peers but they lack the local networks that lead to employment opportunities.
- First-generation migrants aged 15–24 are much more likely to be employed in part-time than full-time work, compared with Australian-born young people. The 'gig economy' can expose refugee and migrant young people to precarious work conditions and other risks.

Life's richer tapestry: Culture and society are increasingly diverse.



- In 2016, one in five Australians aged 12–24 was born overseas. A further 25% of young people had at least one parent born overseas.
- Young people in Australia are significantly more accepting of multiculturalism than older age groups.
- The incidence of racial discrimination has been rising steadily over the past 10 years. Young people aged 18–24 years are most likely to be impacted.

Overexposure online: The virtual world has changed relationships and ideas about privacy.



- More than half of all young people aged 15–17 years, and around 45% of 18–24 year olds, spent 15 or more hours online per week in 2014–15.
- Some refugee and migrant young people may have poor digital literacy skills or limited access to the internet, which can impact their connectedness and participation in Australian society.
- Refugee and migrant young people may be more digitally literate than their parents.
- Cyber-racism is a key threat for refugee and migrant young people in Australia. One study found that Muslims, asylum seekers and refugees are the most frequent targets of harmful race-based online content.

Out of the shadows: Scientific research will improve understanding of mental health and wellbeing, and service delivery models will change.



- Growing awareness about mental illness has reduced stigma.
- Mental health resources designed for refugee and migrant young people must be co-designed with young people in order to adequately reflect their diverse needs.
- Migrants to a developed economy are known to have better health on arrival than native-born populations, so further research into this resilience could have society-wide benefits.