

# How can the AMEP better support English language learning for young people?

Discussion Paper



# Acknowledgements

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We also acknowledge our engagement with the Department of Home Affairs in the preparation of this paper, and our ongoing discussions to progress the recommendations.

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## About MYAN

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Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network Australia (MYAN) is Australia's 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 rights and interests of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds are recognised and addressed in policy and service delivery. MYAN provides expert policy advice, undertakes a range of sector development activities, and supports young people to develop leadership skills. Our vision is that all young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds can access the support and opportunities they need to be active citizens in Australian society.

MYAN developed the National Youth Settlement Framework (NYSF) in 2016, to support a targeted approach to strengthening and addressing the rights and needs of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds settling in Australia. The NYSF is Australia's first evidence-based guide to supporting and measuring good practice in youth settlement. MYAN released the NYSF 2020 (revised edition) in July.

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# About this Paper

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MYAN has prepared this discussion paper to highlight the benefits of a youth focussed approach to English language classes, and provide guidance on how this can be achieved in order to strengthen the responsiveness of AMEP to the youth cohort. While this paper has been prepared in the context of a number of reports assessing the effectiveness of the AMEP, none has given any focused attention to the youth cohort.

This paper presents findings from consultations with AMEP providers and other sector representatives held in late 2019 and 2020, and more recently through regular online meetings in response to COVID-19. It includes examples of good practice in the Appendix, and a set of recommendations MYAN prepared for government as they consider the future direction of the program.

## Key Points

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- During 2018-19, less than 6% of all young people arriving under the Humanitarian stream had 'good' or 'very good' English language proficiency.
- English language acquisition is crucial to successful settlement and full, equal and equitable participation in social, economic and civic life in Australia.
- Youth-specific AMEP classes are highly valued, but not delivered consistently across Australia.
- COVID-19 has affected the delivery of AMEP classes, presenting new challenges for providers and students, and opportunities for innovation.
- The best way for young people to acquire English language skills is through a targeted approach.
- To ensure that the learning requirements of young people are met in the AMEP, a targeted and nationally consistent approach is needed.

# 1 Context

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**MYAN supports greater flexibility within English language programs as essential 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.**

Proficiency in English is critical to achieving successful settlement outcomes in Australia, and the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) is an important part of Australia's settlement service system to deliver on this. The AMEP provides English language tuition to new migrants in each of Australia's states and territories.<sup>1</sup> However, recent reports have suggested that the AMEP is not adequately meeting the English language education needs of certain groups, including young people.<sup>2</sup>

Amid concerns that AMEP participants were not leaving with a 'functional level' of English at the completion of 510 hours, the Australian Government has been considering how to improve the AMEP to better meet the needs of diverse client groups, and support the improvement of English language outcomes. The aim

is to tailor AMEP tuition to better meet client needs and goals, and allow service providers greater flexibility in program delivery.

In August 2020, the Minister for Immigration announced some positive changes to the AMEP, including lifting a cap on 510 class hours and removing the five year time limit on eligibility. Although it is unclear at this stage what this means specifically for the program, we understand government will continue to engage with service providers on the changes.

The 2019 findings from the *Review into Integration, Employment, and Settlement Outcomes for Refugees and Humanitarian Entrants in Australia* highlighted a need for more innovative approaches to the delivery of English language services provided by the AMEP.<sup>3</sup> The report identified a need to focus on delivering better English language outcomes for particular groups, including young people, who may not be accessing or benefitting from the AMEP program as intended.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Young people from humanitarian background get an extra 400 hours of AMEP hours so are technically entitled to 910 hours of English. If they do a SPELT program that is another 200 hours so young students from humanitarian background can access 1110 hours in total.

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this paper, and based on eligibility for the AMEP program, 'young people' refers to young people aged between 15 and 24.

<sup>3</sup> Shergold, P, Benson, K & Piper, M (2019) *Investing in refugees, investing in Australia: the findings of a review integration, employment settlement outcomes refugees humanitarian entrants* Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Canberra

<sup>4</sup> The AMEP's stated intention is to allow participants to 'learn basic English skills that will assist them to successfully and confidently participate socially and economically in Australian society.'

One of the key observations from AMEP stakeholders identified in the Review was the lack of flexibility in the program, particularly when meeting the needs of young people, and the lack of a nationally consistent framework for engaging young people. The *2019 Evaluation of the Adult Migrant English Program New Business Model* emphasises the need for specific AMEP classes tailored to younger migrants, and a 2019 report by the Scanlon Group identified young refugees as a key group at risk of missing out on English language learning.<sup>5</sup>

Young people aged 15-25 make up approximately 15% of AMEP clients, and school aged youth (under 17 years) make up just 0.6 per cent of AMEP clients.<sup>6</sup> While this should be taken into account when considering the degree of youth focus for AMEP, these reports acknowledge the importance of youth-specific AMEP classes to best meet the needs of the youth cohort. While the availability of youth programs has increased, and have been available in some states and territories for a number of years, there is no national programming consistency or funding imperatives to provide youth-specific AMEP. This can affect young people's access to and engagement in English language learning.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Button, J (2019) *Australia's English problem: how to renew our once celebrated Adult Migrant English Program* Scanlon Institute narrative no. 3, Scanlon Institute for Applied Social Cohesion Research. Melbourne.

<sup>6</sup> Department of Home Affairs (2020) AMEP dashboard.

<sup>7</sup> Button, J (2019) *Australia's English problem: how to renew our once celebrated Adult Migrant English Program* Scanlon Institute narrative no. 3, Scanlon Institute for Applied Social Cohesion Research. Melbourne.

## 2 Introduction

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**Given the critical role English language acquisition plays in facilitating social, economic and civic participation in Australian society, and the particular needs, learning styles and aspirations of young people, there is a crucial need for the AMEP to deliver more youth-specific offerings – building on existing good practice models. These models should be strengthened and expanded nationally, across all AMEP providers.**

English language acquisition is a key policy area for MYAN. The NYSF identifies ‘acquiring English language skills’ as a key indicator of active citizenship, and our paper English Language Acquisition for Young People from Refugee and Migrant Backgrounds provides an overview of recent research, policy and programming into the acquisition of English language skills in Australia by recently arrived young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. Our response to several key inquiries including our Submission on the Evaluation of the AMEP New Business Model (NBM) highlights that English language skills are essential foundations for social, economic and civic participation and critical for young people’s successful settlement in Australia.

Young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds arrive in Australia with strengths and capabilities, including high educational aspirations. They have enormous potential to be active and engaged participants in Australian society but need targeted support in policy and service delivery to achieve this potential and facilitate their economic, social, and civic participation. Young people experience settlement differently to older migrants due to their age, developmental stage and the role they play in supporting their family and community in the settlement journey.<sup>9</sup> As such, a targeted approach in policy and service delivery is critical to ensuring successful youth settlement.

This paper provides a profile of young people who have arrived in Australia under the Humanitarian and Migration visa streams, a brief overview of the AMEP, and insight from those AMEP providers delivering youth-specific classes in Australia. It highlights examples of key challenges and good practice in the provision of AMEP to young people.

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<sup>9</sup> MYAN (Australia) 2019 Submission on the Evaluation of the AMEP New Business Model (NBM) Available at: [myan.org.au](http://myan.org.au)



# 3 Key findings from MYAN consultations

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MYAN has been liaising with the Department of Home Affairs, AMEP providers, and other (settlement/non-AMEP) sector representatives since late 2019 to better understand, and document how the AMEP is responding to the youth cohort, to consider the key elements of good practice in meeting the needs of young people in the AMEP and identify areas for improvement. Most recently, MYAN has convened a number of national consultations to discuss the COVID-19 context and implications for service delivery. **These findings are summarised below.** See Section 7 for more detail and Section 8 for recommendations that are more specific.

## 3.1. Models of good practice for youth-specific AMEP classes

Good practice models adopt a holistic approach, recognising young people have complex and diverse needs and are eager to connect with, and participate in the wider community. Youth specific programs take a considered focus on settlement as well as education and employment pathways, and include these key elements:

- Young people are in classes with their peers.
- Programs are responsive to individual circumstances/challenges and young people's strengths – understanding and responding to the youth settlement context.
- Programs are flexible and responsive to local contexts – e.g. links with secondary schools, community organisations/NGOs/youth settlement cohort.
- Programs use project and activity based/applied learning in class, complemented by activities delivered outside the classroom through community partnerships.
- Programs collaborate with local schools, community orgs/NGOs for complementary activities (including training and employment pathways).

## Areas for improvement

- Referral processes need to be better informed and more streamlined. Some states and territories have good referral processes in place with high schools - others do not.
- Reviewing the current AMEP funding model in order to keep small classes viable.
- Ensuring providers have the resources to provide counsellors to provide vital individual pathway and well-being support to young people in AMEP programs.

## 3.2 The impact of COVID-19

The widespread closure of educational institutions in response to COVID-19 had an enormous logistical and emotional impact on young people who, along with their teachers, navigated significant disruptions in the transition to online education. This came at a time where they were also navigating sudden and massive disruptions to other areas of their lives – including restricted access to public/community spaces, sudden job loss, financial and housing stress, and increased mental/physical health concerns. (At the time of writing, Victoria remained the only state who continued to have restrictions to on-site learning in place.)

Some of the specific educational challenges for young people throughout this period have included:

- Limited or no access to data and technology at home.
- Increased caring responsibilities in the home-particularly for young women resulting in missed classes.
- Increased financial stress through loss of income, and increased pressure to find work in order to support themselves/their families.
- Prioritising the educational needs of younger siblings and parents before their own.
- Online interaction has affected the capacity for young people to improve their English language skills, or receive more personalised attention.

# 4 Young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in Australia, English language and settlement

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## **English language skills and education are essential foundations for social, economic, and civic participation.**

In 2016, 45% of all young people in Australia aged 12 to 24 were from refugee and migrant backgrounds.<sup>10</sup> Young people make up a significant proportion of Australia's Humanitarian Program, and a sizeable percentage of the Migration Program. Ensuring the AMEP is responsive to the specific learning needs of young people is a critical factor in their successful English language acquisition, and positive settlement outcomes more broadly.

In the 2018-19 financial year, young people aged 12 to 24 made up 22% of all arrivals under the Humanitarian Program, 15% of the Skill stream, and 11% of the Family stream of the Migration Program. Young people comprise 14.5% of total arrivals under all migration categories.

In the same period, young people aged 15 to 17 made up 10% of youth arrivals in all migration categories and almost a quarter (22.5%) of all humanitarian youth arrivals.<sup>11</sup> Young people aged 18 to 24 made up 38% of youth arrivals in all migration categories and 51% of all humanitarian youth arrivals.

Some young migrants arrive in Australia with good levels of English language proficiency, but many do not. In the 2018-19 financial year, less than 6% of 4,054 humanitarian arrivals aged 12 to 24 had 'good' or 'very good' English language proficiency on arrival.<sup>12</sup>

Core settlement frameworks, including *MYAN's National Youth Settlement Framework*, the Australian Government's National Settlement Framework, and the Settlement Council of Australia's (SCOA) *National Settlement Services Outcomes Standards (NSOSS)* identify proficiency in English language via the provision of integrated and intensive English language as a key indicator for positive settlement outcomes.

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<sup>10</sup> 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. 6.

<sup>11</sup> Statistics were sourced directly by MYAN from the Department of Social Services (DSS) in November, 2019. Data includes all permanent (or provisional) settlers who arrived between 1 July 2018 and 30 June 2019. All data presented is accurate as at this date.

<sup>12</sup> Statistics were sourced directly by MYAN from the Department of Social Services (DSS) in November, 2019. Data includes all permanent (or provisional) settlers who arrived between 1 July 2018 and 30 June 2019. All data presented is accurate as at this date. The Humanitarian stream is the only visa category where English language proficiency is recorded. The English proficiencies of young people in the Family and Skilled Migration categories are not compared.

*After 18 months in Australia, refugees and migrants with good English skills are 70% more likely to have a job than those with poor English. 85% of refugees who speak English very well participate in the labour market compared to 15% who cannot speak English*

*(Centre for Policy Development, 2017).*

Young people's success in education and access to employment is highly dependent on successfully developing English language skills.<sup>13</sup> Refugees' and migrants' employment prospects are determined by a combination of '...their level of education or technical skills, and their ability to communicate in the local language, as well as other aspects of settlement, including their social capital, diversity of their networks and family dynamics.'<sup>14</sup>

While English language proficiency can improve the employment and education and training opportunities available to young people, limited English language skills can '...impact on young people's capacity to develop bridging social capital (networks outside of their own linguistic and cultural community) and limit their opportunities for access to diverse friendship groups. This can in turn impact on successful social, economic, and civic participation.'<sup>15</sup>

In order to support refugees and migrants to fulfil their aspirations, intensive and well-coordinated support in the early years of settlement is critical. Since implementation, the AMEP has evolved through a number of changes to the program's policy guidelines and service delivery but English language acquisition remains the key outcome.<sup>16</sup> Currently, there is no nationally consistent approach to data collection on the young people who are accessing AMEP classes; however, recent report findings suggest that English language outcomes for humanitarian entrants overall remain poor, with too few participants achieving functional English at the conclusion of the program.<sup>17</sup> The *Review into Integration, Employment, and Settlement Outcomes for Refugees and Humanitarian Entrants in Australia* proposes that there is significant underutilisation of the program, suggesting most humanitarian entrants not completing their available hours; however, MYAN is not aware of national data that captures this.

<sup>13</sup> MYAN Australia (MYAN), BSL, MDA, ACS, CMRC, LMA, Foundation House (2018) *English Language Acquisition for Young People from Refugee and Migrant Backgrounds: Reflections from Youth Transition Support Providers*. Carlton: Melbourne.

<sup>14</sup> MYAN (2017) *Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Migration: Inquiry into Settlement Outcomes*. Melbourne: MYAN, p. 12

<sup>15</sup> MYAN Australia (MYAN), BSL, MDA, ACS, CMRC, LMA, Foundation House (2018) *English Language Acquisition for Young People from Refugee and Migrant Backgrounds: Reflections from Youth Transition Support Providers*. Carlton: Melbourne. P.1

<sup>16</sup> Australian Government, Department of Home Affairs

<sup>17</sup> Shergold, P, Benson, K & Piper, M (2019) *Investing in refugees, investing in Australia: the findings of a review into integration, employment settlement outcomes refugees humanitarian entrants* Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Canberra

# 5 Potential barriers to English language acquisition

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It is important to note that a range of highly variable factors can affect English language acquisition, including age on arrival, previous education, and literacy in first language. Young people may find it challenging to remain engaged in English language education for additional reasons including:

- Having a limited understanding of and familiarity with Australian education and training systems and pathways.<sup>18</sup>
- Having had highly disrupted, minimal, or no previous formal education.<sup>19</sup>
- Their experiences of racism and discrimination, which affects student confidence, wellbeing, and learning.<sup>20</sup>
- Experiencing difficulties finding the space and time to study – including supporting family in the resettlement process, and/or pressure to earn an income.<sup>21</sup>
- Having limited opportunities to develop interpersonal skills with their peers until they have learnt sufficient English.<sup>22</sup>
- A lack of support for learning at home due to family members having limited English skills.<sup>23</sup>
- Their capacity to travel from home to school.<sup>24</sup>
- The level of knowledge and information a young person and their networks have about English language programs and study options.<sup>25</sup>

In addition, the experience of trauma and loss can significantly affect young people's ability to function and learn in educational settings. Both exposure to traumatic events and the need to acquire a new language are factors that educators need to consider in order to provide appropriate educational approaches and pathways for young people.<sup>26</sup> For young people to reap the benefits of the AMEP, programs must be responsive to these factors in design and delivery.

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<sup>18</sup> CMY (2018) *State of the Sector: Out-of-school-hours learning support 2018*. Carlton: Centre for Multicultural Youth. [https://www.cmy.net.au/sites/default/files/publication-documents/State%20of%20the%20Sector%20Report%202018\\_digital.pdf](https://www.cmy.net.au/sites/default/files/publication-documents/State%20of%20the%20Sector%20Report%202018_digital.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> The Multicultural Youth Australia Census 2017-18 found that almost half of multicultural young people had experienced some form of discrimination or unfair treatment in the last 12 months (48.7%) MYAN Australia (MYAN), BSL, MDA, ACS, CMRC, LMA, Foundation House (2018) *English Language Acquisition for Young People from Refugee and Migrant Backgrounds: Reflections from Youth Transition Support Providers*. Carlton: Melbourne. P. 13

<sup>21</sup> CMY (2018) *State of the Sector: Out-of-school-hours learning support 2018*. Carlton: Centre for Multicultural Youth. [https://www.cmy.net.au/sites/default/files/publication-documents/State%20of%20the%20Sector%20Report%202018\\_digital.pdf](https://www.cmy.net.au/sites/default/files/publication-documents/State%20of%20the%20Sector%20Report%202018_digital.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> CMY (2018) *State of the Sector: Out-of-school-hours learning support 2018*. Carlton: Centre for Multicultural Youth. [https://www.cmy.net.au/sites/default/files/publication-documents/State%20of%20the%20Sector%20Report%202018\\_digital.pdf](https://www.cmy.net.au/sites/default/files/publication-documents/State%20of%20the%20Sector%20Report%202018_digital.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> Identified in consultations.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

*'Failure to acquire English proficiency affects school completion, further learning opportunities, employment prospects, civic participation and personal wellbeing. It also imposes long-term costs on society through impaired social cohesion and mobility, reduced productivity and increased welfare support'*

*(Australian Council of TESOL Associations, 2017).*

## 5.1 Potential for disengagement

Because of these challenges, there is potential that young people may find it difficult to remain engaged in AMEP classes designed for an adult cohort.<sup>27</sup> When young people are not engaged in learning, they are at risk of disengagement in the form of low attendance, not completing homework or withdrawing from class altogether.<sup>28</sup>

Disengagement has important consequences for a young person's social and academic development and for settlement outcomes more broadly. Disengagement also has important implications for the lives of young people outside of school, for their families and communities more broadly.<sup>29</sup> While we have not been able to source national data on the number of young people who withdraw from adult AMEP classes, research more broadly highlights the impact of the disengagement and withdrawal of all young people from school. Long-term impacts can include:

- Difficulty entering and sustaining a place in the labour market.<sup>30</sup>
- Lower than average income levels.<sup>31</sup>
- Social exclusion, at three times the rate of those who complete Year 12.<sup>32</sup>
- Increased engagement in risky health behaviours, such as smoking, being overweight and low levels of physical activity, along with poorer health and mental health outcomes.<sup>33</sup>
- Increased engagement in crime.<sup>34</sup>
- More limited pathways to higher education.

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<sup>27</sup> MYAN Australia (MYAN), BSL, MDA, ACS, CMRC, LMA, Foundation House (2018) *English Language Acquisition for Young People from Refugee and Migrant Backgrounds: Reflections from Youth Transition Support Providers*. Carlton: Melbourne.

<sup>28</sup> Hancock, K and Zubrick, S (2015) *Children and young people at risk of disengagement from school*. Commissioner for Children and Young People WA Perth: Western Australia

<sup>29</sup> Olliff, L. (2010) *Finding the right time and place: Exploring post-compulsory education and training pathways for young people from refugee backgrounds in NSW*. Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA).

<sup>30</sup> Lamb, S., Walstab, A., Teese, R., Vickers, M. and Rumberger, R. (2004) *Staying on at school: Improving student retention in Australia*. Brisbane: Queensland Department of Education and the Arts.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Azpitarte, F (2012) *Social exclusion monitor bulletin* Brotherhood of St Laurence Fitzroy: Melbourne.

<sup>33</sup> Hancock, K and Zubrick, S (2015) *Children and young people at risk of disengagement from school*. Commissioner for Children and Young People WA Perth: Western Australia

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

# 6 AMEP for young people

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Some AMEP service providers offer youth-specific courses for clients under the age of 25 years, designed to provide a greater level of support for young people who require more intensive English language tuition. Youth-specific courses are tailored programs with both a social and educational focus, which target the specific needs of young people. Ideally, AMEP service providers develop these courses in partnership with local schools, community groups, youth services and the vocational education sector.<sup>35</sup>

Although the AMEP introduced a new business model in 2011, which allowed youth aged between 15-17 years access to the program, youth-specific AMEP classes do not exist in all areas of the country, and without them, stakeholders report that it is hard to keep young people motivated and engaged in the program.<sup>36</sup>

As there are only a limited number of youth-specific AMEP courses available across Australia, most young people are placed in mixed-age classes based on their assessed learning level.<sup>37</sup> However, as highlighted by the Australian Council of TESOL Associations (ACTA), the learning needs, social needs, motivations, and aspirations of young people are different to those of adults.<sup>38</sup> Placing young people in classes with adults creates particular challenges, for example:

- Providers have limited resources to tailor a program that meets the needs of both young people and adults.
- Young people from refugee backgrounds have different emotional needs than older learners, including a generally intense need to interact with their peers. Young people can often find themselves in the classroom with their parent/s, or other older relatives, rather than their peers.<sup>39</sup>
- Divergence in learning ability results in classes being dominated by students with greater learning challenges. Young people often learn at a much faster pace than their adult counterparts and the pace of mixed classes have the potential to frustrate younger learners. Different motivations and aptitudes can affect the cohesiveness of a group.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> MYAN Australia (2019) *Submission on the Evaluation of the AMEP New Business Model (NBM)* Carlton: Melbourne

<sup>36</sup> Button, J. (2019) *Australia's English problem: how to renew our once celebrated Adult Migrant English Program* Scanlon Institute narrative no. 3, Scanlon Institute for Applied Social Cohesion Research. Melbourne

<sup>37</sup> Olliff, L. (2010) *Finding the right time and place: Exploring post-compulsory education and training pathways for young people from refugee backgrounds in NSW*. Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA).

<sup>38</sup> Australian Council of TESOL Associations (2019) *Submission to the Evaluation of the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) "new business model"*

<sup>39</sup> Moore et al (2008) as cited in Olliff, L. (2010) *Finding the right time and place: Exploring post-compulsory education and training pathways for young people from refugee backgrounds in NSW*. Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA).

<sup>40</sup> AMEP Research Centre (2005) *Fact Sheet-Youth in the AMEP* available at [http://www.ameprc.mq.edu.au/docs/fact\\_sheets/07Teachingissues.pdf](http://www.ameprc.mq.edu.au/docs/fact_sheets/07Teachingissues.pdf)

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- Issues around respect/cultural norms e.g. young people can feel disrespectful towards their elders if they are progressing more quickly, and older people can feel embarrassed if they do not progress at the pace of young people. Similarly, students can feel uncomfortable expressing themselves freely around younger/older peers.<sup>41</sup>
  - Young people have high energy levels and can require more active teaching and activities than those acceptable to older learners. <sup>42</sup>

Studies show that youth-specific English classes are more effective in supporting young people to learn English and to transition to further education. Young people have better learning outcomes when placed in targeted youth programs, as they are specifically tailored to the young people's language, educational and socio-emotional needs.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Moore et al (2008) as cited in Olliff, L. (2010) *Finding the right time and place: Exploring post-compulsory education and training pathways for young people from refugee backgrounds in NSW*. Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA).

<sup>42</sup> Moore et al (2008) as cited in Olliff, L. (2010) *Finding the right time and place: Exploring post-compulsory education and training pathways for young people from refugee backgrounds in NSW*. Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA). P.53

<sup>43</sup> MYAN Australia (MYAN), BSL, MDA, ACS, CMRC, LMA, Foundation House (2018) *English Language Acquisition for Young People from Refugee and Migrant Backgrounds: Reflections from Youth Transition Support Providers*. p. 7



# 7 MYAN National consultations on AMEP youth classes

MYAN consulted with a number of AMEP providers across Australia who are currently delivering youth-specific classes, who highlighted good practice in delivering classes to young people, the challenges they have experienced in keeping young people engaged in the AMEP, and the structural barriers to providing youth-specific classes. They also shared examples of successful initiatives (those that have generated positive results for the young people in their programs), and the factors that contribute to these successes. Youth centred, strength based pedagogy, consistent and considered staffing of skilled and committed teachers who understand the importance of building rapport and generating enjoyment in learning, and the establishment of collaborative partnerships are key to AMEP youth programs.

Overall, feedback from these providers is that these classes are effective in meeting the English language learning needs of young people - that young people have better learning outcomes in targeted programs specifically tailored to their developmental, learning, and social requirements. Service providers were clear that there is a need for ongoing AMEP youth classes in order for the program to be inclusive of the young people and therefore maximise the benefit of the program. Although the mode of delivery of AMEP to young people may differ across S/T's, they share commonalities in good practice and constraints, which include the following elements:

## 7.1 Good Practice

### Peer-based learning environments

Youth-specific classes are the optimal learning environment for young people. Social connectedness is a prime settlement need of young migrants, including connections with peers.<sup>44</sup> The acquisition of social capital<sup>45</sup> via the establishment of positive peer networks supports young people to become active agents of change and shape their own futures.<sup>46</sup> Yet forming social networks can be one of the most difficult factors in settlement for young people, due to linguistic and cultural barriers. This is especially so for young people in AMEP who often do not experience the same opportunities for interaction with peers as their counterparts in high schools or places of higher education.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> AMEP Research Centre (2005) *Fact Sheet-Youth in the AMEP* available at [http://www.ameprc.mq.edu.au/docs/fact\\_sheets/07Teachingissues.pdf](http://www.ameprc.mq.edu.au/docs/fact_sheets/07Teachingissues.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> Defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as "networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups"

<sup>46</sup> MYAN (Australia), 2016, *National Youth Settlement Framework*.

<sup>47</sup> AMEP Research Centre (2005) *Fact Sheet-Youth in the AMEP* available at [http://www.ameprc.mq.edu.au/docs/fact\\_sheets/07Teachingissues.pdf](http://www.ameprc.mq.edu.au/docs/fact_sheets/07Teachingissues.pdf)

The feedback from AMEP providers reflects this, as they were unanimous in their agreement that young people respond best and have better learning and retention outcomes when in a learning environment with their peers. Similarly, skilled and committed trainers and teachers who are aware of the needs and interests of young people are able to better cater classes to the needs and interests of young people, which results in good retention rates.

### **Responsive to personal circumstances**

A broad range of issues, including: mental health, the impact of torture and/or trauma, carer obligations, family and/or community obligations, cultural barriers, pregnancy and childcare obligations, disrupted learning and financial pressures impacts the motivation for young people to attend classes. Programs should be prepared to respond to these issues in order to keep students engaged. Programs that are equipped to be flexible, tailored, and responsive to these challenges are better able to respond to the particular needs of young people and build on their strengths.

Some young people have access to *Pathway Guidance Advisors*, who provide personalised support with personal, emotional, and practical problems students may experience, including assistance in finding employment post AMEP such as support with resumes and job applications, and exploring post AMEP education options and support with university and scholarship applications. Other examples of pastoral care and settlement support include referrals to other personal support services or programs including housing, pregnancy, legal and domestic violence support.

### **Activity based, practical learning**

Young people are keen to learn in environments that closely resemble 'regular' high schools. Providers have stressed that in order to maximise the benefit of AMEP classes for young people, diversify future opportunities and maximise the interest of young people themselves, the program should be expanded to include classes that reflect a high school curriculum. For example, many TAFE courses require a level of maths to access certificate courses and diplomas but also to access VET student loans.

AMEP providers agree that classes are most effective when they are multi-layered and engage students outside of a classroom. There is consensus that a contextualised learning experience, which involves relevant and appropriate recreational activities of a broad range, is necessary to keep young people engaged and connected. The need for teaching methodologies that include contextual, experiential learning for employment and academic purposes is clear, and opportunities to involve young people directly in the design of the programs is also beneficial.

*‘Youth-specific classes 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 ’*

*(MYAN, BSL, MDA, ACS, CMRC, LMA, Foundation House, 2018).*

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## Partnerships

Partnerships with community organisations, local schools, and NGOs for complementary activities (including training and employment pathways) are an effective way to ensure that students have opportunities to access practical learning outside of the classroom. Providers gave numerous examples of program activities that give their student’s real-life, practical experiences within which to develop their English-language skills.

These include:

- computer coding classes
- intercollege excursions
- opportunities for students to interact with youth from other colleges and organise inter-college events
- fishing excursions
- learning about Indigenous culture
- opportunities to volunteer in the local community
- road-safety skills
- personal well-being workshops, and
- engaging with local soccer and football teams.

Some providers are collaborating with local organisations to provide classes in:

- art
- driving lessons
- photography
- cooking
- barista skills
- beauty, and
- provide opportunities to engage in policy work and research, youth peer mentoring.

## 7.2 Constraints

The consultations identified the following constraints in delivering the AMEP program to young people:

### Counsellors

Previous AMEP models assigned counsellors to each student. Counsellors were engaged to advise students on educational and vocational pathways, and counsellors provided advice on a range of issues, including housing and well-being. Providers see this role as vital, but changes to funding mean this is no longer viable for many providers.

### Referrals

While some providers have strong relationships with local schools with good referral systems in place, other providers had concerns that schools tend to retain disengaged students rather than refer them to local AMEP classes. For example, one provider in NSW shared that only 1% of their youth cohort in AMEP is under the age of 18. Settlement services may not always be aware of the availability of youth specific classes that can affect referrals. Some providers noted that some schools and settlement services need clearer understandings of pathways and the role of AMEP. The perceived lack of demand for youth classes in some areas may be linked, at least in part, to the referral systems or lack of awareness mentioned above. This could be more of an issue for regional areas, where student numbers are lower overall. An additional observation is that young people and/or their parents sometimes perceive AMEP centres within a TAFE institute as substandard to secondary schools.

Greater engagement with schools and settlement services about the AMEP and the referral process is required with schools undertaking adequate English language assessments of students early enough to ensure they are receiving the most appropriate form of English language support as early as possible.

### Class sizes

A key challenge to the expansion of youth-specific classes has been in obtaining sufficient minimum numbers to run youth-specific classes. Under current funding criterion, AMEP providers require a minimum of 16 participants for classes to remain viable. Providers spoke of the need to explore a different funding model so each site can sustain a youth class that is able to respond to enrolment peaks and troughs. It is important to keep these smaller classes viable to maintain established stakeholder relationships, and ensure consistency for students.

## Assessments

The AMEP program is very assessment driven. The introduction of the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) has resulted in increased workloads and less time to prepare lessons for some providers. The assessment requirement for every 200 hours is reportedly stressful on both students and teachers, because the assessment tasks are not always aligned with curriculum. The lack of flexibility to choose units and assessment tasks means that these are not always appropriate for young people's needs and prioritise academic rather than settlement outcomes.<sup>48</sup>

## 7.3 COVID-19

Building on previous discussions and our work with AMEP providers in late 2019, MYAN has hosted several national consultations in response to the specific challenges to service delivery raised by COVID-19. These discussions have explored the impact this has had on service providers and young people, innovative approaches to service adaptation, and considered how AMEP can best support young people into the future.

### 7.3.1 Findings

Broadly, the pandemic has exaggerated the socioeconomic divide, isolated young people, and put students at risk of learning loss. The rapid changes imposed by the public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a number of upheavals to the delivery of AMEP. The nationwide closure of educational institutions has had an enormous logistical and emotional impact on young people, particularly those who have low English language skills, as they navigate significant disruptions in the transition to online education, as well as a (complex) public health crisis and public health messages. There are concerns about how this will affect skills acquisition and learning in both the short and long term.

Rapid transition to online learning has been challenging for both staff and students, and has required innovative and flexible learning approaches – some of which may become important initiatives into the future, particularly for cohorts with more limited mobility (including young parents and those with a disability).

Due to the high number of students facing educational challenges in the context of COVID-19, MYAN is concerned that many of the most vulnerable young people are falling through the gaps and not engaging in any education/learning at all. The AMEP program is dependent on immigration, a system that has been completely disrupted due to COVID-19, and there are serious concerns about what this means for the future of the program.

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<sup>48</sup>ACSF assessments at every 200 hours for all AMEP students are currently on hold so the assessment load is reduced, with ACSF currently being used only for initial assessment.

### 7.3.2 Key challenges in the response to COVID-19

#### Online learning, digital access & literacy

COVID-19 has resulted in a radical and unprecedented reliance on digital technology. Access to digital technology is one of the key factors that moderate the effectiveness of remote learning, meaning the transition to online learning is a particular struggle for those without proper technology and access to devices. On-line schooling is challenging for teachers too, being harder to oversee the work of students, conduct written assessments and give face to face feedback. While AMEP providers are being as flexible as is practicable in their approach to ensure students can adapt to the changes wrought by COVID-19, the effectiveness of online learning varies, and providers have reported that the impact of COVID-19 has resulted in particular challenges for this group of young people.

- Contrary to popular opinion, not all young people have access to technology/ devices/smartphone or data, or are sufficiently digitally literate, particularly if they are more newly arrived in Australia from refugee backgrounds or experiencing socio-economic disadvantage. Young people often have experience in using phone technology and social media but are not necessarily technology literate in relation to lap tops, computers etc. They require these technological skills to enable them to be successful in their future studies. Furthermore, households are likely to be sharing very limited digital resources.
- The absence of face-to-face engagement makes it harder to remain engaged with students. As time goes on, it can be harder to keep students engaged, and it is easy for students to slip through the cracks and stop contacting teachers and peers.

#### Competing priorities intensified

Many students are juggling classes with family and personal responsibilities that have intensified now that they are at home full-time, making it difficult to keep up with their classes. For example, young people may have increased caring responsibilities for family members with chronic health needs, or need to prioritise the care, supervision and/or schooling of siblings who are also at home. Further:

- Young women in particular are more likely to be managing additional caring responsibilities (for younger siblings and/or older family members), particularly as childcare is not available when studying from home, as well as responsibilities for home schooling/supporting young siblings in home schooling.
- Due to the economic impact of COVID-19, many students are attempting to balance English language classes with work commitments. Students in acute financial distress cannot prioritise schooling while they are trying to find work in order to support themselves/their families.

## Employment

As young people are already over-represented in unemployment and under-employment statistics, young people are likely to be disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 economic downturn, with increased youth unemployment- in particular as competition increases for entry level jobs. There's an increased need to work collaboratively with industry partners and service providers to offer opportunities for youth to prepare for work this new landscape, and highlights the critical need for AMEP programs to embed work ready projects. This requires constantly building and maintaining networks and relationships. The work needed to build partnerships has to be considered as part of the funding model.

## Impact on educational outcomes

Isolation and absence from the physical classroom is resulting in reduced opportunities for young people to practice spoken English language, with the risk that English competency may be impacted. Further:

- Work experience placements are on hold.
- Young people are disconnected from their peers, missing out on crucial social interaction, and opportunities to converse in their first language and practice their English skills.
- Logistics of doing written assessments very challenging on-line-providers are working on solutions.
- For students who are struggling with technology, video calls can be challenging, preventing them from sharing their opinions, and asking questions.

## Impact on well-being

Young people from refugee backgrounds face additional risk of mental health deterioration during the COVID-19 crisis due to the intersection of many developmental, social, cultural, and psychological factors. Areas that intersect with mental health and well-being have been significantly impacted by COVID-19, including housing and homelessness, family conflict and violence, loss of household income, and engagement in employment and education. At a time when access to social and support networks have dramatically decreased, these factors are compounding the mental health risk factors of young people, and can affect their ability to engage with or fully participate in their studies.

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### 7.3.3 Service innovation

Even prior to COVID-19, a perceived lack of flexibility in the AMEP delivery model compounded challenges with AMEP delivery to young people. Despite these challenges, there have been some unexpected upsides in innovation and service delivery. While online learning has presented multiple challenges for many, the response to COVID-19 has shown that there is a diversity of ways to deliver the AMEP in online and distance learning, with great potential for more adaptive learning methods to meet the diverse needs of a diverse student body. For example:

- AMEP students greatly benefit from opportunities to converse with native English speakers. The Volunteer Tutor Scheme has benefited from the shift online because the clients and tutors are not meeting face to face – their geographical location is no longer an issue. Constraints such as distance, lack of/cost of transport, and time factors are not an issue when meeting on-line, and has led to a reduced waiting time in matching students and volunteers.
- For young people with mobility/transport issues, not having to travel to class has made it easier to engage with their learning.
- Young people who have had their work experience cancelled are engaging in innovative online solutions. Some students have Employment Mentors supporting them with virtual work experience programs. Materials are adapted to support the fact that students are not Australian graduates and need targeted support. Completing programs give students real skills professionals use daily and connects them to the firms themselves.

When teachers and students are adequately prepared and supported, and when the necessary technology and learning resources are available, lessons learnt from the COVID-19 response may prove to be effective in engaging more young people. Opportunities for online, distance and 'blended' English language learning and work experience may increase engagement among students who are constrained for various reasons, e.g. lack access to transport or who are struggling to balance English language acquisition with work and/or family responsibilities.

Identifying what has worked throughout this period is critical and finding ways to embed this in classroom teachings once students and providers have returned to the classroom is a key settlement priority.

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# 8 Recommendations

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Young people from refugee backgrounds have, and will continue to contribute greatly to Australia's economy and society. Pragmatic investment in and support of an AMEP that meets the English language learning needs of young people benefits not just individual young people, but the Australian community overall.

The COVID-19 crisis has posed some significant challenges but also provided an opportunity to consider what the future of education/training will require after COVID-19, and whether this is back to "normal" or a path that takes lessons from this period and leads to new ideas and imperatives within the AMEP. In the short term, ensuring this model is sustainable may be a key challenge as numbers decrease due to closed borders.

Strategies to address the impact of COVID-19 now and in the future require a good understanding of the challenges facing all student cohorts, teachers, and the education/training sector more broadly, as well as good practice in service delivery for young people. This will best ensure that AMEP incorporates strategies (funding and service delivery models) that best meet specific needs in the settlement context, and that resources are more strategically directed. This will in turn ensure that young people can access the support they need to acquire meaningful English language skills - giving young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds more equitable education/training opportunities and the foundations for successful settlement outcomes in the long term.

MYAN welcomes greater flexibility within the AMEP to support the varying needs and skills of young people, both in terms of the eligibility period for AMEP tuition and in terms of teaching and learning styles. We welcome changes to the AMEP recently announced by the Minister for Immigration – in particular the removal of time limits for enrollment and completion, including the 510 hours cap, and a new emphasis on 'vocational' rather than just 'functional' English.<sup>50</sup>

**MYAN has developed the following recommendations for Government to consider in future service planning and design. These recommendations are intended to strengthen the AMEP to meet the particular needs of young people - embedding youth specific approaches in service planning and delivery.**

## The recommendations:

- Build on existing (and established) good practice – recognising that many providers are delivering youth-focused support and have done so for some time.

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<sup>50</sup> Tudge, A (Acting Minister for Immigration, Australia) 2020 *Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) Reform Announcement* media release, National Press Club, Canberra, 28 August, 2020 <http://www.https://tesol.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/AMEP-Reform-Announcement-General-Communications.pdf>

- Acknowledge the diversity across Australia in youth settlement numbers and the service system landscape - recognising that not all jurisdictions warrant adjustments to AMEP service delivery as young people's English language learning needs are met outside of AMEP by other organisations (i.e. secondary schools in WA and SA) who fulfil the AMEP function.
- Strike a balance between prescriptive funding models/guidelines, incentives and flexibility to allow providers to respond to local contexts.
- Recognise the importance of mandated requirements (through guidelines and contracts) as the most effective way to incentivise providers to deliver services that best meet the needs of young people.

## 1. AMEP youth strategy and outcomes framework

1.1 Develop an AMEP youth strategy and outcomes framework, working with MYAN and utilising the National Youth Settlement Framework. The strategy and framework should include:

1.1.2 Clearly defined goals for the delivery of youth specific classes and specifically the factors that further social integration and English language and related upskilling.

1.1.3 Mandatory minimum requirements, which require providers/contractors to commit to either contract-based or organisation-based youth participation/engagement targets.

1.1.4 Established metrics against which impact performance will be audited, monitored, measured, and learnt from over time.

1.1.5 Deliverable services, service standards, or key performance indicators.

1.2 Align new contracts with these key migrant youth strategy outcomes and objectives (based on existing good practice) and ensuring there are appropriate provisions to deliver these.

## 2. Contracts

2.1 Prescribing one or more outcomes from the framework/strategy as an Innovation Target Outcome, and invite service providers to submit proposals addressing one or more of the High Level Innovation Target Outcomes e.g. improved English language proficiency, literacy, and numeracy for humanitarian entrants.

2.2 Improve national data collection on AMEP student demographics and outcomes (both English language acquisition and education/training/employment pathways/outcomes).

### **3. Funding model**

3.1 Review the current funding model to ensure small class sizes are viable.

3.2 Provide support for models where AMEP providers can collaborate and combine their small class sizes, particularly in regional areas where class sizes are small/fluctuate.

### **4. Service delivery model**

4.1 Ensure strong links between AMEP and youth settlement services as essential to successful referrals, delivery, and program outcomes.

4.2 Maintain flexibility in service delivery models, including online options for some cohorts (determined by best outcomes for young people).

4.3 Where online program delivery continues, ensure all young people are equipped with the data and technology/devices they need to undertake/continue their studies remotely.

### **5. Careers and training/employment pathways**

5.1 Provide adequate funding for a youth-focused casework component to AMEP, including the provision of more 'pathways' and well-being counsellors (separate to the role of AMEP teachers) to assist with settlement challenges, and provide career and vocational support.

5.2 Embed work experience into all AMEP classes CSWE 2 level and above<sup>51</sup> (work experience for part-time, career and volunteering).

### **6. Links to other (community-based) organisations**

6.1 Ensure support for greater coordination between AMEP providers, schools, and community services organisations as complementary 'wrap-around' supports to achieve holistic outcomes, including pathways to training and employment.

6.2 Strengthen referral processes and pathways through proactive and targeted engagement with referral sources (e.g. secondary schools and settlement services) to: (i) promote the program through clear, accurate information about youth-focussed AMEP offerings), (ii) ensure streamlined referral processes and (ii) accurately assess and respond to need.

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<sup>51</sup> Difficult to ensure people's safety if their English levels are pre or 1 .

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## 7. Capability building

7.1 Invest in organisational capability building to deliver youth-focused services (including youth-centred approaches and partnerships with community services, including settlement, torture and trauma, housing and mainstream youth services).

7.2 Establish an AMEP youth-focussed Community of Practice (COP) to strengthen national youth-focussed service delivery (including implementation of the youth strategy and development of an outcomes framework) and support provider collaboration.

## 8. Curriculum

8.1 Ensure that digital literacy is included as a core component of AMEP curriculum.

8.2 Explore potential for AMEP providers to tailor programs so that English classes can be delivered within a broad and accessible curriculum, similar to that provided in secondary school (e.g. with subjects including art, sport, music and maths).

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# APPENDIX: Case studies

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**These three case studies are examples of delivery of AMEP to young people – prepared by service providers for this paper.**

## 1. Navitas -South West Sydney

### **How we deliver AMEP to young people**

Navitas aims to have youth dedicated classes at each of our colleges in South West Sydney- Fairfield, Liverpool, Bankstown and Cabramatta. This is dependent on numbers – when there were a lot of new arrivals (2016/17) we had 2 classes at the bigger colleges (Fairfield, Liverpool) and one class at each of the smaller colleges.

At present we have one class at Liverpool and one class at Fairfield. We are looking to attract more disengaged youth in the community who have not used their AMEP hours.

Our delivery for youth revolves around tapping into their needs and interests with Project Based Learning, a range of activities to develop skills and provide opportunities to enhance settlement, language acquisition and digital literacy. Key elements of our approach

- A recognition of the unique needs of youth, alongside the challenges they face
- A consultative and collaborative approach
- Listening to what the students want
- Taking a flexible approach to adapting lessons and activities
- Providing engaging, stimulating activities that cover all skill areas
- Providing opportunities for students to present e.g. recent youth from an Innovative Project – REACH – presented at the NSW MYAN quarterly meeting
- Providing opportunities for students to interact with youth from other colleges by organising inter-college events
- Being open to work with other organisations to provide further opportunities re: short courses, pursuing other interests, participating in community activities e.g. community garden, fund raisers, march against DV
- Building awareness of, and providing training to staff on the MYAN National Youth Settlement Framework and how it can be incorporated into programs/ activities

### **Supports we provide to young people**

- Youth classes – peer support
- Youth specific teachers
- Youth coordinator/facilitator to ensure a different approach than for mainstream adult AMEP students

- Access to Pathway Guidance Advisors (PGA) – workshops and support from PGA and opportunity for individual appointments - including support with resumes, job applications, university applications, scholarship applications etc
- PGA support with personal problems
- University ‘taster’ days and follow up workshops
- We encourage youth to have a volunteer tutor (from AMEP Volunteer Tutor Scheme)

### **Our average class size and age group**

Average class size – 12-15

Average age – 22/23

In order to run youth classes we have sometimes needed to include students up to 30

### **Our key challenges in delivering this model**

- Retention of youth – often they have conflicting commitments which clash with classes (carers, children)
- Having enough youth participants to ensure viability of class
- Engaging passionate and skillful teachers
- Awareness of needs of youth, varying delivery, providing opportunities
- Identifying activities that resonate with youth

### **What is needed to continue delivering our model?**

- Recognition that youth need a specific program within AMEP
- Ongoing training of teachers – e.g. MYAN NYSF – workshops and similar professional Development
- Establishment of Community of Practice for youth teachers
- Showcasing of success stories – testimonials from youth, short videos of projects/activities etc.
- A youth syllabus – Inc. guidelines
- Greater communication with other organisations around the benefits of AMEP, how to reach more disengaged youth e.g. those dropping out of IECs, those that are carers, young parents, – developing more short course/part-time options to respond to their needs
- Funding for extra youth hours for Innovative Projects that can be piloted and shared nationally
- If necessary re needing numbers combine AMEP and SEE

### **We work/partner with:**

- Thrive LMA – to co-deliver short courses e.g. barista, universal Cooks, beauty, sewing, and photography. At present we are meeting with Thrive LMA to organise a youth soccer tournament in South West Sydney to include our students, which will be open to other disengaged local youth and students from local IECs

- We will also be meeting with SSI and CORE Community Services regarding strategies to engage more youth – those not using their AMEP hours
- We have worked with Western Sydney University and will continue this partnership for University Taster Days for higher level English language youth students

## 2. TAFE Queensland

### How we deliver AMEP to young people

To facilitate continued engagement and retention of young people in the AMEP, TAFE Queensland provides a youth-centered and multi-faceted youth program including:

- Targeted youth-specific classes (where there are sufficient youth clients), enabling youth to undertake a more intensive tuition program to accelerate outcomes
- Partnering with agencies and other TAFE Queensland faculties, for example, UCan2 with Queensland Program of Assistance for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT), and the drama, music, hospitality and horticulture departments of TAFE Queensland
- Incorporating digital literacy and project-based learning opportunities so that youth are working collaboratively on projects which have a specific and achievable outcomes
- Providing pathway guidance with a focus on transition into other education pathways

### Key elements of our approach

The TAFE Queensland youth program draws from MYAN's National Youth Settlement Framework for supporting the settlement of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in Australia. The key elements of this approach focuses on 4 domains of economic, social, civic participation and personal well-being. Our youth programs focus on these 4 domains through program planning and resource development and implementation strategies.

### Supports we provide to young people

In addition to specialised English language tuition program and pathway guidance services with a focus on transition into other education pathways, young people in TAFE Queensland youth specific classes are offered extra-curricular activities including, sport, music, art and mindfulness programs. Young people also have access to TAFE Queensland student counselling services for education, settlement, mental health and wellbeing.

### Average class size and age group

The average size of TAFE Queensland youth-specific classes are 16 and age group comprises of young people age 16-24.

### **Our key challenges in delivering this model**

The demands of the settlement process including jobactive or Centrelink appointments, and supporting elder family members in the settlement process sometimes result in young people struggling to commit to language learning. It has been reported that some vocational education and training (VET) service providers sign up AMEP students for courses which often are not suitable for the students in terms of English language proficiency and future education or career goals.

### **What is needed to continue delivering this model?**

Provision of mixed-mode delivery model and additional resources will enhance provision of AMEP youth-specific services.

### **We work/partner with:**

The local settlement, multicultural and youth service agencies provide valuable touch points to deliver AMEP information and encourage enrolments from eligible clients. TAFE Queensland works closely with community partners including Youth and Family Services, RACQ, Brisbane Youth Service, Your Town, Harmony House, HELP Enterprises, Relationships Australia, Brisbane Refugee and Asylum Seeker, local high schools and Queensland Program of Assistance for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT).

## **3. Melbourne Polytechnic**

Melbourne AMEP youth specific classes are delivered at Kangan Institute (Broadmeadows), Chisholm Institute (Dandenong), Swinburne University of Technology (Croydon) and Melbourne Polytechnic (Epping).

Youth Programs like YAMEC (Young Adult Migrant English Course) offered at Melbourne Polytechnic in Melbourne's Northern corridor are courses that are designed especially for young people.

All adopt a holistic approach, recognising young people have complex and diverse needs and are eager to connect and participate in the wider community, leading to a considered focus on settlement as well as education and employment pathways.

Youth centered, strength based pedagogy, consistent and considered staffing of skilled and committed teachers who understand the importance of building rapport and generating enjoyment in learning is key to all Melbourne AMEP youth programs.

This approach is enhanced by the collaborations with external service providers, local and state organisations and industry partners who collaborate on providing:

- Settlement Support (SPECTRUM, MiCare, Migrant Information Centre (Eastern), local youth services such as the Youth Hub in Broadmeadows)



- Projects (BSL-Youth Transitions, L2P- Learner program, Arabic Welfare- Youth Matters)
- Training (e.g. Foundation House- UCAN2 psychosocial training, Jesuit Community College-Barista)
- Incursions as guest speakers (Centre for Culture Ethnicity and Health CEH, Lifesaving Victoria, CFA, ATO)
- Excursions (Reclink- Sports programs, First Hike)
- Pre-employment skills and information (Migrant Workers Centre), and
- Co-located at Melbourne AMEP sites to provide easy access to settlement support (e.g. Whittlesea Community Connections, Legal aid, Arabic welfare)

Some providers such as Kangan Institute have a very successful model of engagement with stakeholders through their quarterly 'Wrap Around network' meeting.

Internal supports within the TAFE sector such as community engagement and liaison officers, youth specific Pathway Guidance Officers (PGOs), Skills and Jobs Centres, pathway opportunities through dual-courses (English for bricklaying) and tasters and Student Services complete this support structure.

The average class size is approximately 20 students. Where needed, mixed funding models are arranged to ensure youth programs remain viable and delivered in key areas in the regions so that youth programs remain available and accessible to young people.