



MYAN 

multicultural youth
advocacy network (australia)

'Counting us in'

MYAN report on the settlement
experiences of LGBTQI+ refugee
& asylum seeker young adults



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MYAN acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands on which we work. We acknowledge that First Nations Sovereignty was never ceded and recognise that it always was, and always will be Aboriginal Land. We work towards reconciliation with, and self-determination for, the First Peoples of this country.



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Many thanks to the Forcibly Displaced People Network, Australia's first registered LGBTQI+ refugee-led organisation, who contributed several questions included in our survey. The provided questions were from the FDPN National Survey on the settlement experiences of LGBTQI+ refugees and migrants.

Note: Comments from participants may have been edited for clarity and length.

Executive summary

This study sought to gain a better understanding of the settlement experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex and other identities (LGBTQI+) refugee and asylum seeker young adults (18-30) living in Australia, situated within the broader context of their lives post-migration.

In doing so, we aimed to contribute to an improved evidence base of how young LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers are being supported post-arrival in Australia to inform future policy work and service improvement.

This report is intended to provide insights into how LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults (18-30) arriving in Australia are faring in their settlement journey, including good practice and gaps in support. It provides a summary of key findings from a national sector consultation and individual interviews with LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults and service providers.

The report is further informed by available literature on LGBTQI+ young adults settling in Australia and identifies several measures for MYAN, the federal government and the youth, LGBTQI+ and settlement sectors to consider in improving responses that address the complex needs of LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults, to improve the wellbeing and settlement outcomes of this cohort.

LGBTQI+ young people from asylum seeker and refugee backgrounds face additional challenges in their migration and settlement journey compared to their non-LGBTQI+ peers due to additional safety risks, lack of family/community social support, and multiple layers of discrimination and face additional barriers to accessing services including health care services, housing, and meaningful employment. As a result, LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers require specific settlement supports in their host countries.

Australia is recognised for having world-class settlement services which have been built up over the last few decades, and to ensure we retain this success, settlement services must be responsive to the unique support needs of specific groups, including LGBTQI+ young people to optimise settlement outcomes. Achieving good settlement outcomes for young people benefits the whole of society – individuals, families and communities – and supports cultural diversity, and social cohesion and inclusion more broadly. Supporting effective youth settlement approaches and service improvement is critical to ensuring that LGBTQI+ young people from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds reach their potential as active citizens, and can fully contribute to, and benefit from, Australian society.

It is intended that the findings from this report can build on existing research and contribute to a more targeted and inclusive approach to supporting LGBTQI+ young people from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds. The report provides a national perspective, with key findings of this report informed through consultations across Australia, and a national survey.

Key findings:

- LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults can face challenges in navigating the intersections of their identity, including their LGBTQI+ identity while settling in Australia and challenges about seeking inclusion in various aspects of society. This can be attributed to the invisibility of their experiences, not having the language to come out, challenges in self-acceptance due to past experiences, perceived or real threats to their safety and well-being and fears of being outed to their family/ community.
- LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults may not be able to rely on family/ cultural community/religious and faith connections common to other newly arrived young people for support. They may face stigmatisation, shame and even violence from these groups and choose not to disclose their identities to them as a result. Experiences of discrimination and abuse can differ across the varying identities within the LGBTQI+ umbrella.
- LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults can have varying experiences of finding acceptance/belonging, depending on where they are settled within Australia. Metropolitan areas were found to be more accepting of LGBTQI+ people, with rural and regional areas being particularly challenging for newly arrived LGBTQI+ people to settle in.
- Barriers to service provision include the lack of visibility of LGBTQI+ service users, inadequate data collection methods and limited resources and staff capacity in support services.
- While LGBTQI+ spaces can be sources of support and acceptance, LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults can feel discouraged from accessing these spaces. This can be due to their fears/discomfort of being visible in such spaces and/or a lack of culturally appropriate services in mainstream LGBTQI+ services.
- There is a lack of services tailored specifically to LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults' needs. While facilitating trust and privacy were deemed important, service providers experienced challenges in building rapport with LGBTQI+ service users. Despite the lack of appropriate and safe support services, LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults were found to be resourceful and proactive in seeking out support when needed.
- The COVID-19 pandemic was found to exacerbate LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults' settlement challenges. Support services may have been harder to access during this time and those ineligible for government support faced additional challenges in finding support.
- To address the existing gaps in service provision, it is necessary to build a more comprehensive understanding of young people's experiences and needs, implement sector-wide changes, build organisational capacity, connect with communities and improve service accessibility for LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker service users.



Glossary^{1 2}

Asylum seeker	A person who has applied for recognition as a refugee under the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees but whose application for protection has yet to be determined.
Bisexual	A person who experiences romantic and sexual attraction to people of more than one gender
CALD	Refers to culturally and linguistically diverse (people who were born overseas or who are Australia-born with one or both parents (or grandparents) born overseas.
Cisgender/cis	A person whose gender identity is consistent with their sex assigned at Birth
Gay	A person whose gender is male, and who experiences romantic and sexual attraction to other men. (It may also be used as an umbrella term to refer to all people in same-sex relationships)
Heterosexual/straight	A person who experiences romantic and sexual attraction to people of the opposite gender to themselves
Homosexual	A person who experiences romantic and sexual attraction to people of the same gender as themselves
Intersex	A person born with variations in sex characteristics that do not align with medical and social norms for female and male bodies
Lesbian	A person whose gender identity is female and who experiences romantic and sexual attraction to other women
LGBTQI+	Refers to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex and other identities
Newly arrived person	A person who was born overseas and has lived in Australia for a relatively short amount of time (under 5 years, according to the Federal Government). This can include international students in tertiary education.
Non-binary	A gender category used by people whose gender identity is not one of the two usual options of women or men.
Queer	A reclaimed term increasingly used as an umbrella term for people of all kinds of sexual and gender diversities, and sometimes used to imply a more radical perspective
Refugee	According to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, of which Australia is a signatory, refugees are people who are both: - Outside their country of nationality or their usual country of residence and are - Unable to return or to seek the protection of that country due to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion
Transgender at birth	A person whose gender identity does not match their sex assigned
Young adult	For the purposes of this research project, young adults were defined as those between the ages of 18 and 30 years old

1 Sources: STARTTS Inclusive Practice Training

2 MYAN (2020) National Youth Settlement Framework, 2nd Edition Available at: https://myan.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/myan0004-revised-nysf_fa_low-res.pdf

About Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN)

MYAN is Australia's national peak body representing the rights and interests of young people aged 12-24 from migrant and refugee backgrounds. We work to ensure they are valued for their expertise, engaged in decision-making, and supported by a strong settlement sector.

One in four young people living in Australia aged 15 to 24 years were born overseas, and each year young people aged 12-24 make up significant arrival numbers under each Migration Stream in Australia³. This group of young people have enormous potential to be active participants in Australian society, but often face particular challenges in accessing the support and opportunities they need. Their particular needs, distinct from adults and many of their Australian-born counterparts, often go unrecognised as they are seen as a subset of the broader youth and settlement sectors.

Their success as active and engaged participants in all aspects of Australian society is dependent on the ability of policymakers and service providers to design and deliver services and programs targeted to build on their capabilities, meet their needs and fulfil their potential.

MYAN works in partnership with young people, government, and non-government agencies across the youth, settlement, and multicultural sectors at the state and territory and national levels to ensure the experiences and particular needs of these young people are recognised in youth and settlement policy and service delivery. We provide expert policy advice to the government, deliver sector development activities, and support the development of young people's leadership and advocacy skills so that their voices are heard at the regional, state, and national levels.

MYAN has representatives across Australia's states and territories and facilitates a national approach to youth settlement through its affiliated state/territory-based networks and organisations. The structure, activities and capacities of each MYAN state/territory network varies across Australia.

Our vision is that all young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds are supported, valued, and thriving in Australia.

Youth settlement in Australia

The Australian Governments continued investment in and support of settlement services has ensured that Australia delivers some of the world's best settlement practice.

A noteworthy evolution in Australia's settlement service system is the development of youth-specific settlement programmes to support positive settlement outcomes for young people; a response made in recognition of the complexity of adolescent development and, it is complementary to settlement programmes for adults⁴.

Young people have comprised approximately one-third of Australia's Migration Program over the last 10 years. They will spend the majority of their lives in Australia and make significant contributions to the economic, social, and civic fabric of Australia. Young people have specific needs and strengths in the settlement context and without a targeted response across the settlement services continuum; they risk long-term social, economic, and civic marginalisation.

LGBTQI+ young people from asylum seeker and refugee backgrounds can face additional challenges in their settlement journey compared to their non-LGBTQI+ peers due to additional safety risks, lack of family/community social support, multiple layers of discrimination and face additional barriers to accessing services including health care services, housing and meaningful employment.

Learnings from the settlement experience of LGBTQI+ young people and those that work with them need to inform a more responsive and supportive approach in policymaking and service provision to achieve optimal settlement outcomes for this group of young people.

A specialist and targeted approach in settlement support is the most effective way to capitalise on young people's strengths, address their particular needs, and ensure they can realise their full potential as active contributors to Australian society⁵.



⁴ The first five years of permanent residence in Australia after arrival is generally considered the settlement period. This is a time of adjustment as migrants and new arrivals seek to become oriented, established, integrated and independent in their communities.
⁵ MYAN (2020) National Youth Settlement Framework, 2nd Edition Available at https://myan.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/myan0004-revised-nysf_fa_low-res.pdf

Background to the project

In Australia, data collection and disaggregated demographic data on LGBTQI+ young people from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds, including sexual orientation and gender identity, experiences of discrimination, and experiences with settlement services are sparse. Data capturing the experiences of this group of young people is important.

The intersection of being young, LGBTQI+, and from a refugee/asylum seeker background means that their experiences and needs differ from those of both their non-migrant LGBTQI+ peers and the general youth migrant cohort. They are likely to face additional risks to safety; experience discrimination and/or abuse based on their sexuality and/or gender identity; may lack crucial social support from family members and/or communities of the same ethnic background; and face additional barriers to accessing settlement, health and social services, which heighten the risks faced by this group of young people.

When data doesn't accurately capture the specific experiences and insights of this group of young people, services lack a sound evidence base on which to design and deliver policy and service responses to address their specific needs and contexts. It can also act as a disincentive to the development of more specialised services for this group.⁶

Given our national reach, MYAN saw an opportunity to respond to this gap and contribute to an improved evidence base of how young LGBTQI+ asylum seekers are being supported post-arrival for future policy work and service improvement. We envisioned that this project would support settlement, youth, migrant and LGBTQI+ sectors to become better aware of the particular settlement experiences and challenges of young LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers including good practices and gaps in youth

support and how gaps can be addressed. This work was made possible by the generous support of the Pride Foundation Australia and the Sidney Myer Foundation.

This report uses the term 'LGBTQI+' to capture members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex communities, including people with diverse gender identities, sexual orientation or sex characteristics who do not identify with the terms listed above.

Further, this report uses the term 'LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults' to refer to individuals between the ages of 18-30 with recognised refugee status due to anti-LGBTQI+ persecution, those who have been resettled for other protection reasons and identify as LGBTQI+ persons, including young adults who arrived with members of their family, and LGBTQI+ individuals who claimed asylum upon arrival to Australia.

Project Methodology

Parameters regarding the research cohort were first defined. It was decided that study participants must meet all of the following requirements to participate as LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker background young adults:

- Participants must be between the ages of 18 and 30 years old (inclusive)
- Participants must reside in Australia
- Participants must identify as LGBTQI+
- Participants must be from a refugee and/or asylum seeker background (including those who arrived on a protection visa due to persecution based on sexuality/gender identity, arrived as international students and made a claim for asylum, or arrived alone or with families for other protection reasons and identify as LGBTQI+).

MYAN works with young people aged 15 to 24 years old. However, limitations were placed on the participation of minors in this study to protect their privacy (e.g. – parental consent would have to be sought for minors interested in participating, thus increasing the risk they may be outed to parents and guardians without their consent). Instead, the age range was set to 18- 30 years old to capture the experiences of those who may have "aged out" but could provide retrospective insights.

Migrant-background participants were not eligible to participate in this study due to a specific focus on settlement support and funding conditions that specified the scope of the project should include refugee and asylum seeker participants only.

MYAN conducted the following research activities from July to November 2022:

Research activity	Audience	Timeframe
Literature review	Internal	2021
National sector meeting	Staff and professionals from the settlement, youth, LGBTQI+, etc. support services sectors	July 2022
Stakeholder meetings	Staff and professionals from the settlement, youth, LGBTQI+, etc. support services sectors	July 2022 - September 2022
National survey	18-30-year-old LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults	September 2022 - October 2022
Individual interviews	18-30-year-old LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults	October- November 2022

⁶ Carman, M., Farrugia, C., Bourne, A., Power, J., & Rosenberg, S. (2020) Research Matters: How many people are LGBTIQ? Rainbow Health Victoria.

Literature review

Before commencing this project, MYAN undertook an initial review of the existing information regarding LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults' settlement experiences. In 2021, MYAN worked alongside the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) to engage a university student to conduct a literature review about the settlement experiences of LGBTQI+ young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. The resultant key findings formed the basis of this research project and its aims:

- LGBTQI+ asylum seeker young people face additional challenges to their straight, cisgender and non-asylum seeker peers as a result of intersecting identities across the subgroups of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, religion and migration status.
- These challenges include a lack of social support from their families and ethnic/cultural communities; discrimination, abuse and persecution based on their LGBTQI+ identities; and additional barriers to accessing healthcare services, housing and meaningful employment.
- There is a lack of data accurately capturing the demographic size and specific experiences of LGBTQI+ asylum seeker youth in Australia. This is understood to act as a barrier to the design and delivery of effective policies and services.

National sector meeting

MYAN's national sector meeting provided an opportunity to meet virtually with professionals from the settlement, youth and LGBTQI+ support service sectors and gather information about their experiences of working with this cohort. The online meeting was promoted through Eventbrite with approximately 80 people across Australia registering to attend. Discussions were centred around settlement challenges faced by this cohort, the role of COVID-19 in exacerbating these challenges, the limitations and gaps service providers face to respond to these challenges and recommendations to build on good practice.

Stakeholder meetings

After the national sector meeting, select stakeholder meetings were organised on an ad-hoc basis to collect additional information from key stakeholders across the settlement support services sector. Individual meetings were held with staff members from CMY and Red Cross Australia. MYAN was also invited to present at a Victorian Youth Settlement Network (VSYN) meeting where attendees from the network, including Many Coloured Sky and Three for All, were consulted on this topic. Questions used for these meetings were similar to those used for the national sector meeting.

National survey

MYAN's national survey was developed to gain insights about the settlement experiences of LGBTQI+ young adults (18-30) from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds and collect data on the size of this demographic on a national scale. The survey included questions about the following:

- General demographic information
- Support service use (including settlement services)
- Work and study
- Connection to community (ethnic, religious, etc.)
- Housing and homelessness
- Health and wellbeing
- Stigmatisation, harassment and abuse
- COVID-19
- Recommendations for service improvement

Before releasing the survey, the survey content and questions were sent to professionals in the settlement support services sector and select LGBTQI+ CALD young adults in MYAN's network for feedback regarding the appropriateness of the questions, their wording, the terminology used and other feedback. Feedback was received from 2 LGBTQI+ CALD young adults and 3 CMY staff members.

Jotform was selected as the survey platform as it provided options to include a captcha and to minimise repeat submissions. Screening questions were included to help ensure the survey questions were only accessible to those who met the research criteria, however, some users circumvented this by providing misleading information.

The survey was promoted through MYAN's social media accounts (LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) and the MYAN e-Newsletter. The survey link was also emailed to national sector meeting attendees and members of MYAN's youth network.

The survey received a large number of responses, although the vast majority were identified to be fake. The survey received 321 responses, and 194 were removed from the survey through the screening questions. Of the remaining 127, 124 were deemed to be fake/irrelevant via a stringent screening process, leaving only three genuine responses.

Individual interviews

Individual interviews with those with lived experience were organised to supplement the survey responses and collect additional data. The interviews were promoted within MYAN's youth network and to those from the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS) LGBTQIA + Steering Committee. 4 interviews were held, with two being eligible for this research project. Two interviews were categorised as 'ineligible', due to participants not meeting the prerequisites for participation in this research project (identifying as LGBTQI+/being a young adult/being from a refugee or asylum seeker background).

Limitations and caveats

Please see Appendix 1. (page. 36)



Introduction

“Human rights are universal: every human being is entitled to the same rights, no matter who they are or where they live. While history, culture and religion are contextually important, all States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, have a legal duty to promote and protect the human rights of all persons without discrimination.”

United Nations for LGBTQI Equality

Global context

Around the world, discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) remains a source of profound inequality and violence. Inadequate legal protection against discrimination, discriminatory laws against LGBTQI+ people, and the criminalisation of private, consensual relationships expose LGBTQI+ people to egregious human rights violations, including the risk of physical and sexual violence, conversion practice, honour killings, arrest, prosecution, imprisonment and, in at least eleven countries⁷ —, the death penalty.⁸ Young people may also be kicked out of their homes by their parents, forced into psychiatric institutions or forced to marry based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation and/or gender identity.⁹

7 Afghanistan, Brunei, Iran, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, U.A.E., Yemen, Mauritania, Nigeria, and Somalia. Source: Human Dignity Trust

8 Human Dignity Trust (2022) Map of countries that criminalise LGBT people Available at: https://www.humandignitytrust.org/lgbt-the-law/map-of-criminalisation/?type_filter_submitted=&type_filter%5B%5D=death_pen_applies

9 United Nations (n.d.) LGBTQI equality: frequently asked questions (Factsheet) Available at: <https://www.unfe.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/FAQs-English.pdf>

10 Human Dignity Trust (2022) Map of countries that criminalise LGBT people Available at: https://www.humandignitytrust.org/lgbt-the-law/map-of-criminalisation/?type_filter_submitted=&type_filter%5B%5D=death_pen_applies

11 Human Rights Watch (n.d.) #OUTLAWED: The love that dare not speak its name Features.hrw.org. https://internap.hrw.org/features/features/lgbt_laws

12 Human Dignity Trust (2022) Map of countries that criminalise LGBT people Available at: https://www.humandignitytrust.org/lgbt-the-law/map-of-criminalisation/?type_filter_submitted=&type_filter%5B%5D=death_pen_applies

13 World Policy Centre (2020) Constitutional Equal Rights Across Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity(Factsheet) <https://www.worldpolicycenter.org/constitutional-equal-rights-across-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity>

14 Ibid.

15 Wareham, J. (2021) This Is Where LGBTQ “Conversion Therapy” Is Illegal. Forbes. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jamiewareham/2021/03/08/this-is-where-lgbtq-conversion-therapy-is-illegal/?sh=783ca09b4ae0>

16 Miller, R. L., & Tohme, J. (2022) LGBTQ+ human rights evaluation in

A Global Snapshot

- **There are currently 11 countries where the imposition of the death penalty for same-sex sexual activity is possible.**
- **67 countries criminalise LGBTQI+ people.¹⁰**
- **38 countries criminalise same-sex conduct regardless of sex or expressly criminalise sexual conduct between women¹¹**
- **13 countries currently have laws that criminalise the gender expression of transgender people.¹²**
- **Just 3 countries—Cuba, Ecuador, and Bolivia— explicitly guarantee equality or non-discrimination across sexual orientation and gender identity in their Constitutions¹³**
- **South Africa, Mexico, Portugal, and Sweden explicitly guarantee equality or non-discrimination in their Constitutions for sexual orientation only.¹⁴**
- **Conversion therapy is banned in just 4 countries - Brazil, Ecuador, Germany and Malta.¹⁵**
- **16 countries possess harsh anti-gay propaganda laws that restrict freedom of expression and impose legal barriers on the registration of civil society organizations working on LGBTQI+ issues¹⁶**

These laws violate fundamental human rights to non-discrimination, freedom of expression and freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention. In addition to violating basic rights, these discriminatory laws lead to and exacerbate hostile attitudes towards gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people, feeding violence and discrimination.¹⁷

Even in countries where the law may not be ‘officially’ against them, LGBTQI+ people are persecuted by various religious and political institutions, and, due to social norms, traditions and customs, their own families and communities as well.¹⁸ Too often, when sexual orientation or gender identity does not conform to social norms, vulnerabilities increase which include

- ridicule, intimidation and even physical abuse
- discrimination at school, in hospitals, in sporting teams, in employment
- denial of services
- exposure to the use of homophobic and transphobic messages in nationalist propaganda¹⁹
- abandonment and rejection by family, community or society
- forced marriage, hate-motivated physical and sexual violence, including murder
- increased health risks owing to a lack of access to appropriate life-skills education and health services.²⁰

The findings of a recent Report of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity²¹ provides some insight into the status and treatment of gender diverse and LGBTQI+ persons in the spheres of education, employment, housing, health, religion, and political and public discourse globally. A snapshot:

Educational settings:

- LGBTQI+ pupils and the children of LGBTQI+ parents face abuse including teasing, name-calling, intimidation, physical violence, social isolation, cyberbullying, physical and sexual assault, and death threats, all in a manner disproportional to that affecting the general

17 Ibid.

18 Shidlo, A., & Ahola, J. (2013) Mental health challenges of LGBT forced migrants. *Forced Migration Review*, (42)

19 Madrigal-Borloz, V., Secretary-General, U., & Identity, U. H. R. C. I. E. on P. against V. and D. based on S. O. and G. (2022) Protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity :: note /: by the Secretary-General. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3985589?ln=en#record-files-collapse-header>

20 UNICEF (2014) Current issues eliminating discrimination against children and parents based on sexual orientation and/ or gender identity. <https://www.unicef.org/media/91126/file>

21 Madrigal-Borloz, V., Secretary-General, U., & Identity, U. H. R. C. I. E. on P. against V. and D. based on S. O. and G. (2022) Protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity :: note /: by the Secretary-General. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3985589?ln=en#record-files-collapse-header>

population. LGBTQI+ students are further isolated and demonised through negative portrayals and the active exclusion of gender diversity in educational materials, infrastructure and uniforms.

Employment settings:

- LGBTQI+ workers widely reported being unfairly denied training and job advancement opportunities, as well as promotions. Because of discriminatory treatment, many LGBTQI+ people are forced to conceal their sexual orientation and gender identity, which can lead to considerable anxiety and loss of productivity.

Access to housing:

- LGBTQI+ people face discrimination in access to housing as a result of unfair treatment by public and private landlords, estate agencies and credit providers. LGBTQI+ individuals and same-sex couples may be denied leases and mortgages and be harassed by neighbours and evicted from their homes. These exclusionary processes lead to a disproportionate representation of LGBTQI+ within the homeless population.

Young persons:

- LGBTQI+ youth experience additional disadvantages connected with economic dependence and reliance on family and community networks. They are disproportionately affected by homelessness.

Access to healthcare:

- The criminalisation, disease mongering and stereotyping of LGBTQI+ people have created barriers that have made health services unavailable, inaccessible or unacceptable for them. Very few medical education curricula, health standards and professional training programmes have incorporated a comprehensive approach to LGBTQI+ health

care and discrimination by health workers is widespread. This can deter individuals from seeking services and can make LGBTQI+ people reluctant to share personal and medical information, jeopardizing their overall health and access to health services.

Religion:

- Organised religions have a powerful role when it comes to the dynamics of social inclusion/exclusion of LGBTQI+ people. Exclusion from their faith group also impacts the ability of an individual to seek happiness through spirituality. Many LGBTQI+ people feel forced to choose between their faith and their sexuality and/or gender expression.

Political and public discourse:

- Across the world political campaigns, referendums, policies and parliamentary debates reveal entrenched social prejudice and misconceptions about LGBTQI+ people, which contributes to violence, hatred, exclusion and discrimination and increased psychological distress for LGBTQI+ people.

LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers

Criminalisation, persecution and discrimination against LGBTQI+ people around the world continue to drive forced displacement of people in search of a safe environment in which they can live authentically and fully exercise their rights. Although LGBTQI+ individuals have the same rights and basic needs as, and face similar challenges as, other displaced persons, they encounter distinct protection risks because of their LGBTQI+ identity.²² Among the 100 million people²³ who are currently forcibly displaced worldwide, LGBTI and gender-diverse migrants who are recognized refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced and/or stateless are among the most vulnerable and marginalised people on the move today due to protection risks. While there is a lack of accurate data on the number of LGBTQI+ people displaced worldwide, however, many reside in countries that do not provide strong human rights protections for LGBTQI+ people, actively discriminate against them or legally persecute them.²⁴

The UN Geneva Convention is clear: sexual orientation and gender identity constitute solid grounds to claim refugee status. Article 1A(2) of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951 Convention) and/or its 1967 Protocol recognises the right of people fleeing persecution for reasons of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity to apply for protection.

“The combination of social prejudice and criminalization has the effect of marginalizing lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender nonconforming persons and excluding them from essential services, including health, education, employment, housing... and access to justice... The spiral of discrimination, marginalization and exclusion may start within the family, extend to the community and have a life-long effect on socioeconomic inclusion. Through this process, stigmatization and exclusion intersect with poverty to the extent that, in many countries, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender non-conforming persons are disproportionately affected by poverty, homelessness and food insecurity.”

United Nations Independent Expert for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, Victor Madrigal

LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers are often subjected to continued harm and discrimination while they are in transit and/or once they arrive in countries of asylum or resettlement. The intersection of age, nationality, ethnicity/race, religion, social or economic status and/or HIV status can further contribute to violence, harassment, and discrimination.

At all stages of their displacement journey, they may be at particular risk of violence, abuse and exploitation from numerous actors, including though not limited to immigration and security authorities, traffickers, and smugglers, as well as from fellow displaced people and not from those who are responsible for their security and wellbeing upon arrival in asylum locations.²⁵ For example:

- Transgender asylum seekers can be placed in immigration centres based on their recorded gender at birth placing them at significant harm and psychological distress and find it impossible to access the drugs required to continue their transition
- LGBTQI+ asylum seekers can be expected to provide witness statements corroborating their sexual orientation or gender identity
- LGBTQI+ asylum seekers are often unable to exercise their right to family reunification

- LGBTQI+ asylum seekers in immigration detention experience discrimination, harassment and violence from other detainees and members of staff.²⁷
- Immigration and detention staff often lack a basic understanding of LGBTQI+ issues²⁸

Many people attempt to hide their sexuality and/or gender identity to avoid being targeted for abuse, making it difficult for UNHCR and its humanitarian partners to facilitate their access to asylum procedures and humanitarian services. Some may not be aware that they can request assistance from UNHCR on issues related to how they are treated due to their LGBTQI+ identity. This is often the case for LGBTQI+ youth, older persons, and women, people with a disability and members of ethnic and/or faith minorities.²⁹

Under international law, Australia is required to protect asylum seekers who face persecution based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Australia has a long and proud history of working closely with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) by resettling refugees, however, Australia has come under intense scrutiny for its treatment of LGBTQI+ asylum seekers for reasons including but not limited to:

22 UNHCR (2021) Need to Know Guidance: Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer Persons in Forced Displacement Available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4e6073972.html>

23 United Nations (2022) Year in Review: 100 million displaced, “a record that should never have been set” | UN News. (2022, December 26). News.un.org. Available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/12/1131957#:~:text=A%20hundred%20million%20people%20were>

24 UNOCHA (n.d) LGBTI and Gender-Diverse Persons in Forced Displacement OHCHR. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/ie-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity/lgbt-and-gender-diverse-persons-forced-displacement> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/ie-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity/lgbt-and-gender-diverse-persons-forced-displacement>

25 Migration Council Australia and Forcibly Displaced People Network (2021) Gender Responsive Settlement: Broader Learnings from LGBTIQ+ Refugees (Australian Capital Territory: Migration Council Australia and Forcibly Displaced People Network, 2021), <https://fdpn964079271.files.wordpress.com/2021/07/lgbtiq-refugees-report-v2-mob.pdf>

26 Bachmann, C. L. (n.d.) NO SAFE REFUGE Experiences of LGBT asylum seekers in detention. Stonewall. Available at: https://www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/no_safe_refuge.pdf

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.

- Sending LGBTQI+ asylum seekers offshore to countries where they are at risk of harm due to the country's anti-LGBTQI+ attitudes and laws
- The kinds of stereotypical and deeply personal questions LGBTQI+ asylum seekers are forced to answer to tribunal officers to prove their eligibility for a protection visa

Due to the vulnerability experienced by LGBTQI+ young people on the move, their experience of the refugee journey and settlement in a new country will likely differ from that of their non-LGBTQI+ adult counterparts.

Young LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers require settlement support assistance that is responsive to their particular needs. Australia has long been committed to delivering high-quality settlement support for newly arrived refugees, however, though there have been efforts to address this for others, including for unaccompanied minors and women at risk, not enough has been done to identify and respond to the issues they face.³⁰

LGBTQI+ rights in Australia

Same-sex marriage legalised in 2017.

Federal law recognising same-sex couples since 2009 as de facto relationships.

States and territories began granting domestic partnership benefits and relationship recognition to same-sex couples from 2003 onwards.

Joint and stepchild same-sex adoption are legal nationwide. The NT was the last jurisdiction to pass an adoption equality law in 2018.

Discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity or expression is prohibited in every Australian state and territory, with concurrent federal protections for sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status since 1 August 2013.

Only a small minority of Australian states criminalise hate crimes explicitly based on sexual orientation, and none does so explicitly based on gender identity and intersex status.

QLD and ACT banned conversion therapy in 2020.

VIC banned conversion therapy from 2022.

Transgender rights in Australia and intersex rights in Australia vary between jurisdictions, with QLD and NSW legally requiring a person to undergo sex reassignment surgery - before changing the legal sex on birth certificates.

Non-binary Australians can legally register "non-specific" sex on federal legal documents and in the records of some states and territories.

In 2013, discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex people became illegal for the first time under national law.

LGBTQI+ Immigration Policy

In 1985, changes were made to the Migration Act 1958 (Cth) to create an interdependency visa for same-sex couples.

Australia is a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, which obliges member states to offer protection to those seeking asylum due to a well-founded fear of persecution in their home countries due to, among other things, their membership of a particular social group. Australia first recognised "sexual preference" as a "social group" for refugee protection in 1992.

²⁹ UNHCR (2021) Global Roundtable LGBTQI+ Persons in Forced Displacement and Statelessness: Protection and Solutions – Discussion Paper. UNHCR Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/611e33704>

³⁰ Zapulla, A. (2018) The untold story of LGBT refugees World Economic Forum Available at: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/01/lgbt-refugees>

Delivering strong and responsive settlement services to young LGBTQI+ people must be a priority and will equip Australia to continue meeting the needs of our diverse population and to respond in ways that support well-being, inclusion and respect.

The vulnerabilities of LGBTQI+ youth

The general LGBTQI+ youth population in Australia experience unique challenges, and increased risks compared to their heterosexual and cisgender peers. Negative experiences of LGBTQI+ youth can be influenced by myths and misinformation, such as that homosexuality is a 'sin', 'against traditional culture', 'un-natural', or 'a western agenda,' harmful views often espoused by the very people who are central to the lives of young people, such as their parents, teachers, peers and religious leaders. For adolescents, the challenges related to being LGBTQI+ often combine with – and make worse – other general issues experienced by their age group which is why it is important to account for the intersectionality of their experiences including racism, discrimination and economic status and also consider age, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability and migration status.³¹

Coming out

While research on the specific experiences of LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults in Australia is sparse, we know that, for the general youth population, disclosing one's sexuality and/or gender identity to family can be a stressful experience. In Minus18's Young & Queer study, many LGBTQI+ young people reported negative reactions from family members when they came out, particularly if their families were religious.³² Some young LGBTQI+ people reported being told that their identities were "just a phase" – especially if they were bisexual, non-binary and/or asexual – and some were sent to

conversion therapy.³³ Another study found that 42.7% of LGBTQI+ young people did not feel that their family was supportive of their sexuality and/or gender identity.³⁴ Hostile home and family environments contribute to homelessness among LGBTQI+ young people. 23.6% of LGBTQI+ young people surveyed had experienced homelessness, with 44% claiming that rejection from family was the cause of their homelessness (the second most reported cause, behind mental health issues at 62.4%).³⁵

Education

LGBTQI+ young people may face homophobic and/or transphobic harassment, exclusion and bullying in schools from their peers and, in some cases, teachers. Minus18's 'Young & Queer' report details the following challenges faced by LGBTQI+ youth in schools.³⁶

- Being the targets of homophobic and transphobic slurs from other students
- Being outed without their consent (by other students or their school)
- A lack of support from teachers in enforcing anti-bullying policies when they were being bullied
- Being excluded from school events, like school formals (e.g. – not being able to bring their same-gender partners)
- In the case of transgender students, being required to wear gendered uniforms, using gendered facilities they were uncomfortable using and their teachers refusing to use their correct pronouns
- Secondary school sexual health education that is centred around heterosexual and cisgender experiences
- A lack of support for LGBTQI+ students in rural areas in particular

³¹ Edge Effect (2020) Evaluation of the project Strengthening Plan International's Support for LGBTQI+ Adolescents Available at: https://www.edgeeffect.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/edge_effect_plan-lgbtqi-evaluation_-_full_report.pdf

³² Minus18 (2019) Young & Queer Report (Melbourne: Minus18, 2019), 25, https://res.cloudinary.com/minus18/image/upload/v1585280334/Young_Queer_Report_Online_Version_yz8hed.pdf

³³ Minus18, Young & Queer Report, 25.

³⁴ Hill AO, Lyons A, Jones J, McGowan I, Carman M, Parsons M, Power J and Bourne A (2021) Writing Themselves In 4: The health and wellbeing of LGBTQI+ young people in Australia (Melbourne: Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, 2021), 41. Available at: https://res.cloudinary.com/minus18/image/upload/v1613351553/Docs/Writing-Themselves-In-4-National-report_ua6oza.pdf

³⁵ Hill et al., Writing Themselves In 4, 98-102.

³⁶ Minus18, Young & Queer Report, 15.

Employment

LGBTQI+ youth can face challenges in finding employment and, when they are employed, may face harassment from colleagues and/or customers/clients. The Australian Youth Barometer found that LGBTQI+ youth are 29% more likely to be unemployed and face longer periods of unemployment.³⁷ LGBTQI+ young people are also less likely to be satisfied with their jobs, which the Australian Youth Barometer suggests may be attributed to stressful social relationships in the workplace.³⁸ LGBTQI+ youth report being 58% more likely to categorise social relationships in the workplace as being a significant source of stress (either 'often' or 'very often').³⁹ Minus18's 'Writing Themselves In' report found that 55.5% of LGBTQI+ young people in full-time work reported hearing negative language regarding sexuality either 'sometimes' or 'often' in the past 12 months.⁴⁰

37 Cutler B, Gallo Cordoba B, Walsh L, Mikola M and Waite C, (2022) Queer Young People in Australia: Insights from the 2021 Australian Youth Barometer (Melbourne: Centre for Youth Policy and Education Practice, Monash University, 2022), 10, DOI: 10.26180/19719532
38 Cutler et al., Queer Young People in Australia, 11.
39 Cutler et al., Queer Young People in Australia, 11.
40 Hill et al., Writing Themselves In 4, 62.
41 Cutler et al., Queer Young People in Australia, 12.
42 Hill et al., Writing Themselves In 4, 78.
43 Hill et al., Writing Themselves In 4, 78.
44 Cutler et al., Queer Young People in Australia, 13.
45 Cutler et al., Queer Young People in Australia, 13.

Mental health

The Australian Youth Barometer reports that LGBTQI+ youth are 1.4 times more likely to rate their mental health as 'poor' or 'very poor', in comparison to their heterosexual and cisgender peers.⁴¹ Compared to the general population, LGBTQI+ youth are at a higher risk of major depression, generalised anxiety disorder, suicidal ideation and suicide attempts.⁴² Research indicates that there is variation in the types and severity of mental ill-health within the LGBTQI+ community, with a higher proportion of transgender individuals reporting very high levels of psychological distress, compared to their cisgender peers.⁴³ In one study, LGBTQI+ young people were found to be 84% likelier to seek and receive support and 71% more likely to seek and not receive support (compared to heterosexual and cisgender young people).⁴⁴ While LGBTQI+ youth report being as satisfied as heterosexual and cisgender peers with the mental health support they have received, they are 27% less likely to be satisfied/very satisfied with the mental health support received from their educational institution.⁴⁵

Existing research in this area

There exists a small number of studies regarding the experiences of LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers, with only some of these being conducted in Australia. Some research in this space explores the experiences of CALD LGBTQI+ individuals, which can include those from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds but does not focus on them exclusively. One study by the Australian GLBTIQ Multicultural Council (AGMC) sought to explore racism and other forms of discrimination in settings like LGBTQI+ settings, cultural/religious settings, higher education, healthcare, workplaces and the media⁴⁶. Several studies focusing on LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers either did not focus on the Australian context⁴⁷, or did not focus on youth participants⁴⁸.

Mejia-Canales and Leonard's *Something for them* study, however, does focus on LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young people in Australia, specifically. Using interviews with LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young people, the study identified several factors promoting or hindering this cohort's sense of belonging: connection to culture and community of origin, family relationships and faith and religious affiliation.⁴⁹ The report recommends that further research on LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young people's lived experiences and service-seeking behaviour be conducted (with a focus on greater participant recruitment, especially for those who identify as female and same-sex attracted, and as sex and gender diverse).⁵⁰

Despite current available studies, quantifying the number of LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers in Australia also remains a challenge. Rainbow

Health Victoria claims that accurately estimating the number of LGBTQI+ people in Australia is a critical gap in research and estimates that 3-4% of the Australian population have reported identifying as gay, lesbian or bisexual (with the figure being higher, at 4%, for those under 25 years old).⁵¹ Due to the lack of data available regarding humanitarian arrivals and their reported gender identity/sexuality, defining the number of LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker individuals – and the proportion of these who are young people – is a gap in existing research.

Using these existing studies as a guide, we hoped to contribute to the existing knowledge base and collect valuable data about the following research gaps:

- The settlement experiences of LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young people, in particular
- The demographic size of this cohort
- The specific challenges LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young people face when accessing and using settlement support services
- The barriers settlement, youth and LGBTQI+ support services face that limit their ability to provide safe and appropriate services for this cohort (and measures that can be taken to build on good practice)
- The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the settlement experiences of LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young people

46 Pallotta-Chiarolli M, Sudarto B and Tang, J, (2021) Navigating Intersectionality: Multicultural and Multifaith LGBTQI+ Victorians Talk about Discrimination and Affirmation (Melbourne: AGMC/MASC/DPC, 2021).

47 Yarwood V, Checchi F, Lau K, Zimmerman C (2022) "LGBTQI + Migrants: A Systematic Review and Conceptual Framework of Health, Safety and Wellbeing during Migration", International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health 19, no. 869 (2022): 1-22, doi: <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19020869>

48 Migration Council Australia and Forcibly Displaced People Network (2021) Gender Responsive Settlement: Broader Learnings from LGBTQI+ Refugees (Australian Capital Territory: Migration Council Australia and Forcibly Displaced People Network, 2021), <https://fdpn964079271.files.wordpress.com/2021/07/lgbtiq-refugees-report-v2-mob.pdf>

49 S Mejia-Canales D and Leonard W (2016) *Something for them: Meeting the support needs of same-sex attracted and sex and gender diverse (SSASGD) young people who are recently arrived, refugees or asylum seekers* (Melbourne: LaTrobe University).

50 Mejia-Canales D and Leonard W, *Something for them*, 51-57

51 Carman M, Farrugia C, Bourne A, Power J and Rosenberg S, *Research Matters: How many people are LGBTQI?* (Victoria: Rainbow Health Victoria, LaTrobe University, 2020), 3.



Key findings from MYAN

1. Key findings: settlement experiences for LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults

The report findings have been informed by LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults and people working in the settlement, youth and LGBTQI+ support services sector across Australia. The findings offer valuable learnings about the settlement experiences of LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults, and how support services can improve to better meet their needs and provide affirming, safe, and inclusive support.

Navigating identity and settling in Australia

Age can also be a factor affecting whether a person can safely navigate their identity and come out. A sector participant with relevant lived experience noted that many refugee and asylum seeker 18-25-year-olds may be scared to come out due to fears of persecution, familial backlash and, in the cases of young women in particular, the pressure to get married. This participant had come out when they were 27 years old and suggested that studies involving LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker people have a broader age range for participants (with the option to provide retrospective insights).

LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults can face significant challenges in navigating their identities while settling here. One sector participant highlighted that LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults who have not had the freedom to explore their identities in their home countries may begin/continue that process in Australia. Additionally, one sector participant with lived experience as an LGBTQI+ refugee reported valuing inclusive habits represented in Australian society, including a lack of judgement

of others and respect for an individual's privacy and confidentiality.

Research participants identified the following challenges LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults may face when navigating their identity:

- The internal struggle associated with accepting and understanding one's LGBTQI+ identity (this was understood to potentially be daunting and detrimental to their self-esteem)
- The invisibility of their experiences and a lack of role models from their own cultural background (the lack of representation was said to affect this cohort's mental health and have long-lasting effects on self-perception and identity)
- Not having the language to come out or positive labels to describe their identities/experiences in their own language (with the understanding that these terms are even harder to find in a second language)
- Fear of being outed to friends, family, community or peers/colleagues
- Having to determine how to express/be in their identity (one sector participant reported a newly arrived LGBTQI+ young adult asking them "how do I dress as a lesbian?")

“Language is a huge barrier but in the sense of terms translating into languages. With young people not knowing that their identity is valid and exists if there's [no] words for what they want to express, in their language.”

Sector participant

One sector participant noted that LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers arriving from countries where their identity is ostracised and/or criminalised may prioritise their settlement needs and only after they feel settled and have made new friends address settlement in a new country first, before exploring their identity.

Connection to family and cultural communities

Relationships with family and community play an important role in young people's settlement journeys, often providing them with a sense of belonging and support (especially when navigating challenges and in decision-making) and a connection to shared values/history/culture. While one bisexual refugee-background young adult reported that her family had been accepting of her identity, many LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults may not be able to rely on family connections due to rejection and/or fear of discrimination.

Participants from the sector noted that LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults may have to hide their identity from family and members of their cultural communities due to a variety of reasons including:

- Traditional expectations of heterosexuality and the stigma associated with LGBTQI+ identities
- Fearing discrimination from family and members of their cultural community
- Families being dependent on the wider cultural community for support (especially early on in their settlement journey) and not wanting to disrupt this relationship
- Feeling more 'seen' than they are comfortable with due to their cultural community being smaller and more concentrated in Australia
- Having to navigate a new cultural community to fit into and needing time to build trust with community members

One sector participant noted that newly arrived LGBTQI+ young adults may have 'dual identities' and stories they use to hide their LGBTQI+ identities from their families that they then have to try and keep separate.

Those that do disclose their identities to family may have to deal with shame or a lack of understanding from family members. One sector participant noted that LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults can face challenges in expressing their identities to their families as an 'ongoing' matter, rather than a result of 'bad influences' picked up from moving to the West.

“I don't think [my family] would understand or accept my LGBTQ+ identity. There is generational difference and cultural norms that makes it harder for me to open myself up to my family... I am not afraid of being left out of my ethnic or cultural community but I don't want to deal with their judgment because I care a lot about what other says about me and although these people don't hold a place in my life I would still obsess about things they could possibly say to me and ruminate.”

20-year-old bisexual cis woman from a Turkish and Kurdish background



The lack of social connections and isolation from family/community was understood to have flow-on effects that negatively affect LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults' settlement outcomes. Participants from the sector noted the following risks associated with isolation, ostracism and discrimination:

- A lack of confidence to engage with the broader cultural community
- Feeling conflicted due to the expectation that things would be better for them in Australia
- Disengagement from study and recreational activities, as well as from friendships
- Experiencing violence, which could then have negative effects on mental health and wellbeing
- Increased vulnerability to experiencing homelessness

When asked if the challenges they face affected their sense of belonging in Australia, LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adult participants expressed the following:

“I don't feel like I have a place that I can call home or I don't feel belong to anywhere. I feel stateless. The challenges I have affect my connection to Australia and sometimes it makes me feel like an outlander.”

20-year-old bisexual cis woman from a Turkish and Kurdish background

“No- at the end of the day I know that whatever challenges I face will never remove me from the fact that I am Australian.”
19-year-old bisexual cis woman from a Vietnamese background

Varying experiences within the LGBTQI+ umbrella

Participants with relevant lived experience reported differing levels of acceptance by their communities/families, in some cases, according to their specific identities within the LGBTQI+ umbrella. When asked if they felt pressure to hide their LGBTQI+ identity from members of their ethnic/cultural community, one asylum seeker-background young adult answered:

“Not really- as a bi woman I actually have only dated men in the past which isn't a cultural issue for me.”

19-year-old bisexual cis woman from a Vietnamese background

(However, this experience cannot be used to generalise the experiences of all bisexual refugee and asylum seeker-background people, as another bisexual survey participant reported feeling pressure to hide their identity from their family.)

A sector participant with lived experience as a refugee-background transgender woman reported facing transphobic harassment and abuse from family, employers and the wider community, both in her home country and in Australia. This included having her hair cut and being forced to present as male (i.e. – by wearing 'male' clothes) by family members, being mistaken for a sex worker, suffering verbal abuse and transphobic slurs and having her gender disclosed to clients by an employer without her consent.

LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker men were also understood to have unique experiences. One sector participant noted that it is not immediately obvious to support service providers that someone may be LGBTQI+, unless they are assumed to be, like in the case of 'camp' or 'flamboyant' men. Another sector participant reported that younger men most commonly disclose their identities. It is, however, important to note that visibility may not always be advantageous. While our study did not have any male participants, one bisexual asylum seeker-background young woman attributed the lack

of barriers she faced when accessing support services to the fact that she preferred not to disclose her identity.

Connection to faith and religious communities

The freedom to engage with religious expression is an indicator of active citizenship.⁵³ One survey participant reported that although members of their religious community generally hold negative views of LGBTQI+ people – and are not accepting of their LGBTQI+ identity – it was important for them to maintain a connection to their religion and they would feel comfortable approaching a religious leader for support. An interview participant commended the support services they had used for being accepting of her intersecting identities, as well as her faith background.

For some LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults, however, engagement with religious communities was found to be fraught. Of the survey participants who did not practice a religion, both reported not feeling comfortable approaching a religious leader for support. A sector participant with relevant lived experience as an LGBTQI+ refugee noted that, although there exist policies for non-discrimination, in their experience, faith-based organisations could be very discriminatory.

“I am not part of a religious community but my parents are and their community is not acceptable or inclusive of members of the LGBTQ+ community. So yes I do feel pressured to hide my identity”

20-year-old bisexual cis woman from a Turkish and Kurdish background

Participants from the sector claimed that religious leaders can often be LGBTQI+ young adults' first point of contact in the settlement process. This was said to be problematic due to shaming and blaming LGBTQI+ people and delegitimising the LGBTQI+ experience.

“Respect to cultures and religion cannot be permission to discriminate”
30-year-old non-binary person from a South American background

Participants from the sector highlighted the importance of being willing to engage with faith-based groups (even if they are flawed), as refugee and asylum seeker young adults may feel more comfortable/safer in these environments. Sector participants also noted that, since faith-based community groups are likely to be uncomfortable with open conversations about LGBTQI++ issues, there is a need to work on connection and integration between LGBTQI++ and faith-based groups to avoid amplifying division within communities.



The impact of geographic location on settlement

LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers were found to have varying experiences of acceptance and belonging depending on where they settle in Australia. Several participants described that some cities (like metropolitan Sydney) are understood to be more accepting of LGBTQI+ people. In contrast, a sector participant with lived experience as a refugee-background transgender woman described the difficulties she faced when moving to Queensland, where she faced transphobic harassment from her employer and a lack of responsiveness from support services when she tried to reach out for help. This participant ultimately moved to New South Wales, where she feels safer.

Rural and regional settlement for this demographic was understood to be problematic as well. While one sector participant highlighted that some LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults choose to isolate themselves from unsafe communities by seeking refuge in remote areas (e.g. – fruit picking in rural areas), most professionals across the sector expressed concerns that issues related to settlement experienced by LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum

seeker young adults would be exacerbated in rural and regional areas. This includes discrimination and ostracism. One settlement support service provider that worked specifically with LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers described a case where a young girl who presented as “butch”⁵⁴ was settled in a small regional community and experienced shame from the community, leading her mother to avoid sending her to school.

Appropriate and accessible service delivery in rural and regional was also understood to be lacking. While proactive outreach and services tailored to LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young people are limited in metropolitan areas, sector participants noted they were particularly lacking in rural and regional Australia. Sector participants also highlighted that settlement staff were particularly under-resourced in these areas. Although online methods of outreach and service provision were identified as possible solutions to offer support to those living in hard-to-reach areas, one sector participant noted that challenges like limited opportunities for social connection and access to support groups must be taken into consideration when planning regional settlement of LGBTQI+ newly arrived people.

54 “Butch” refers to a person who identifies as masculine, whether physically, mentally or emotionally. It is sometimes used as a derogatory term for lesbians but can be reclaimed as an identity label. Source: <https://www.dpvhealth.org.au/app/uploads/2020/12/DPV-Health-LGBTIQ-Glossary.pdf>

Using support services

Lack of specific services, accessibility and outreach

A lack of services tailored specifically to the unique needs of LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults were found. Existing services were also said to lack accessibility and inclusivity. When asked if settlement services had made them aware of LGBTQI+-specific services they could access, all survey participants responded with either ‘Disagree’ or ‘Tend to disagree’.

The following barriers to accessing support were also identified by those in the sector:

- Orientation content is predominantly heteronormative (geared towards heterosexual couples and their families). There is also a lack of content regarding consent, sexual health and well-being norms for this age group (18-30 years old)
- Support services that are targeted to ‘the vulnerable’ do not usually include LGBTQI+ individuals as part of the population their services are targeted to
- Mainstream services may provide services relevant to LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults, but do not advertise that they are a safe/inclusive space
- There is a general lack of representation and visibility of LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker experiences in services
- Fear of contact with ethnic community members also acts as a barrier for LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers to access services
- LGBTQI+ services may be unwelcoming to those from refugee/asylum seeker backgrounds, while mainstream settlement services may not be inclusive of LGBTQI+ service users
- Information about available services is not always properly tailored to an audience of LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults. The environment in which this information is being shared may not be the most conducive either

- Despite facing barriers like the lack of knowledge of systems, lack of familiarity with English and minimal social capital and mobility, there are no proactive outreach services for this cohort
- This cohort’s first point of contact in the settlement process is often religious/cultural leaders, who may delegitimise and shame them for their LGBTQI+ identity
- Services often take a ‘surface level’ approach – one that is not user-centric and does not usually allow for case management to be tailored
- There is limited cooperation/collaboration across the settlement, LGBTQI+, youth, etc. sectors. Smaller (often LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker-specific) grassroots organisations are sometimes gatekept from engaging with mainstream settlement services, potentially resulting in a lack of referrals and overall responsiveness

One survey respondent highlighted the challenges they faced when seeking out relevant mental health support as someone from an asylum seeker background:

“I saw a school counsellor and a CASA⁵⁵ counsellor when I was in year 12. They were both helpful but they struggled (to) understand my experience as an asylum seeker and they were both not very familiar with my culture. I am seeing a university counsellor at the moment and although it is helpful to talk with someone, my counsellor is not really teaching me any mental health strategies.”

20-year-old bisexual cis woman from a Turkish and Kurdish background



Building trust & privacy

Building trust and respecting service users' privacy and confidentiality were found to be critical to effective and appropriate service provision. Several sector participants highlighted that LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults would be unlikely to disclose their identity – and might be concerned about being outed – if family members are present with them during sessions with case managers, GPs, etc. Service users may also lack trust in translators/interpreters due to the perception that they may not be accepting of their identity, translate inaccurately or that translators/interpreters may know their families (particularly relevant for those in small communities).

Sector participants noted that building rapport can

“Regarding front facing staff and also the open planning design that many offices/ organisations now adapt, it doesn't provide a safe space to people to comfortably or safely disclose their needs”

Sector participant

be challenging with intake periods being short. Most agreed that it is important to understand the harms that placing the burden of disclosure on service users may cause, particularly when there is no indication that services are inclusive and/or equipped to deal with their unique needs. Given the likelihood that LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults may feel shame associated with their identity – and have spent much of their lives hiding it – they may choose not to disclose this to staff members, especially if they are uncertain that staff can help with their specific needs or be concerned that disclosure will affect their ability to continue accessing services.

LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum young adults' support-seeking patterns

Despite a lack of services specific to them, all study participants with a lived experience of being LGBTQI+ and from a refugee or asylum seeker background were found to seek out support from services. The most common areas survey participants reported seeking and receiving support for include:

- Physical health (all participants)
- Mental health (all participants)
- Employment support
- Educational support
- Disability support
- Lack of basic amenities (food, toiletries, etc.)

The following types of services were most commonly found to be accessed by survey respondents (i.e. – accessed at least several times, if not regularly):

- Asylum seeker and/or refugee services (including settlement services)
- Migrant services
- Education services
- Health services
- Mental health services
- Sexual assault services
- Youth services
- Legal services

Participants were also shown to seek out support in less traditional settings. One asylum seeker-background LGBTQI+ young adult reported attending their local library's youth group, extracurricular student groups at their university and the university's general student wellbeing services for assistance with building employment skills, receiving mental health support and forming social connections. One LGBTQI+ refugee-background sector participant emphasised the importance of being able to access support in

settings where young people generally are – like in educational settings. This participant noted that schools need to better understand the needs of LGBTQI+ students and offer support without alienating them, especially when young people are not able to speak to their parents.

The variety of ways LGBTQI+ young adults report seeking support for their diverse needs demonstrates this group's resilience and resourcefulness in the absence of services tailored to them. Support service providers need to ensure that when LGBTQI+ service users approach them for support, they are met with services that are accessible, safe and relevant to their needs.

Limitations and barriers to service provision

Lack of visibility of LGBTQI+ service users

Many sector participants referenced their lack of knowledge about potential and existing LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker services users – and their specific requirements – as a barrier to providing appropriate support for this cohort. While one sector participant from an LGBTQI+ youth support service highlighted that LGBTQI+ support organisations may need to learn what information needs to be included in visa applications 'on the go', participants from settlement support services identified internalised heteronormativity, unconscious bias and making assumptions about a service user's identity as key issues. A sector participant noted that if staff lacked knowledge about the specifics of their experiences, LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults may have to educate them.

Inadequate research and data collection were identified as contributors to service providers' lack of knowledge. A sector participant reported that LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers are not represented in their data, in comparison to the caseload. Several sector participants claimed that organisations do not ask or collect data about identity (e.g. – in surveys and forms, where only 'Male' and 'Female' gender options are listed). Sector participants also reported a lack of effort and investment in finding ways to address the ethical challenges associated with collecting this type of data.

Collecting this information from service users themselves was understood to be important for service improvement. One sector participant noted that a lack of information results in services that are ill-informed and lack the foundation to provide adequate support.

“LGBTQI+ services, in general, do not have enough bi-cultural workers to support a CALD cohort effectively”

Sector participant

Several sector participants reported that their organisations required capacity building and dedicated funding. A sector participant from an LGBTQI+ youth support service reported lacking funding for their work, with limited staff juggling multiple responsibilities to deliver services across the state. Another sector participant claimed that staff in settlement support services are expected to address a variety of issues with limited time and funding.

Even when funding was available, the limitations placed on organisations by funding bodies posed challenges to work service providers could do for this cohort. One sector participant claimed that there are too many limitations on what is considered essential for service users and that this strict criterion prevents organisations from having the flexibility to use funds for key equipment, etc. Another sector participant expressed that funding is often time-limited, with outcomes that can feel tokenistic, making it difficult to set up projects with uncertain funding futures.

Finding support in LGBTQI+-friendly spaces

Finding social support in LGBTQI+-friendly spaces can pose challenges for LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults. One sector participant noted that a fear of hearing others' experiences of struggling may discourage participation in LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker spaces, even if these spaces do not actually operate in this way. Some LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults may also fear being seen accessing these spaces.

“[There can be a] difficulty accessing spaces where people are much more open about sexuality or gender, [an] expectation to be across terms and act in more public ways, where that wouldn't be conceivable in [their] home country”

Sector participant

When asked what LGBTQI+ organisations can do to improve their services for this cohort, survey respondents suggested training for staff and having better recognition of service users' cultural and religious needs.

Survey respondents also expressed the following when asked whether they felt accepted within the LGBTQI+ community in Australia:

“Yes- I have friends and leaders that have supported me.”

19-year-old bisexual cis woman from a Vietnamese background

“No, because of racism”

30-year-old non-binary person from a South American background

“I don't have a lot of interactions with the LGBTQ+ community in Australia but I do feel accepted. Most of us feel the same way and fear from the same thing.

So it's a lot easier for me to put myself in their shoes and vice versa.”

20-year-old bisexual cis woman from a Turkish and Kurdish background

The COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic was understood to exacerbate the settlement challenges faced by LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults. Survey respondents reported experiencing the following impacts due to COVID-19:

- Significant worsening of their mental health (experienced by all survey respondents)
- Worrying about family overseas (experienced by all survey respondents)
- Lockdown triggering trauma associated with their migration journey
- Feeling very isolated
- Reduced hours or very insecure work
- Losing work
- Being unable to connect with other LGBTQI+ friends during lockdowns due to privacy concerns using their phone/computer in the family home
- Delaying of visa application
- Delaying of visa status resolution

When asked whether they faced additional settlement challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic and whether they found it harder to access services during this time, all survey participants responded with either 'Agree' or 'Tend to agree'.

One interviewee highlighted the differing levels of access to support services. While some services became more accessible due to videoconferencing and telephone outreach becoming more normalised, the lack of human contact and isolation from social networks and communities was said to be harmful. Some services also became unavailable as a result of the pandemic.

“Services delivered online or by phone may be challenging to access if needing privacy”

Sector participant

Most survey respondents reported not being eligible to receive income support, with one reporting that they received support from a refugee/migrant/asylum seeker organisation.

This was echoed by staff from a support service specifically for LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers, who reported a significant growth in service users that lacked support from the federal government during the pandemic (e.g. – those ineligible for Medicare). These service users were said to feel less comfortable/able to access support from mainstream services. Sector participants noted that LGBTQI+ services may not be as well equipped to respond to the needs of those on temporary visas, while mainstream settlement support services may be inaccessible to LGBTQI+ service users due to harassment and discrimination.



2. Key findings: Addressing gaps and building on good practice

Both sector participants and LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults survey/interview participants provided suggestions for service improvement. These are grouped according to the following key themes:

Building a more comprehensive understanding of service user needs

One sector participant noted that it is necessary to 'take a step back' before deciding on solutions as the current evidence base is not clear enough on what the issues for this cohort are (i.e. – existing information is too anecdotal) and more research is needed.

Sector participants highlighted that LGBTQI+ identity may not always be self-evident; LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker service users may be unlikely to disclose this information without prompting, and organisations should consider asking them.

Sector-wide changes to service provision

Sector participants reiterated the importance of taking a 'top-down' approach to addressing current inaccessibility in services, claiming that it is not the role of LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults to 'fix' these issues.

A 'restructuring' of the settlement services system was suggested, particularly concerning intake/orientation. Sector participants showed interest in restructuring intake to make it more thorough (so that the service users' specific needs are more clearly identified) and to implement mechanisms to have service users' case management tailored to their specific needs. Orientation changes – to make it more inclusive of LGBTQI+ communities – were also deemed necessary.

Sector participants recommended introducing programs/services targeted at specific cohorts (including LGBTQI+ and youth populations) to better meet their needs. Developing a comprehensive list of existing relevant services/how to contact them/available funding sources was also said to help promote connections between funding bodies and service providers.

Building organisational capacity

Both participants from the sector and LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults themselves highlighted the importance of mandatory training for staff members so they can engage with LGBTQI+ service users and refer them to appropriate services. Sector participants agreed that staff who work with this cohort as a first point of contact need to be able to tailor their approach to them and recognise the appropriate time and place to discuss certain topics. Ongoing training was deemed particularly important for established services.

Sector participants supported ensuring that training was undertaken across the board (i.e. – by receptionists, etc.) as they are critical points of contact for service users when interacting with service providers.

Recruitment of staff with relevant lived experiences was said to allow service users to connect and feel understood. Also suggested was advocating for training on working with LGBTQI+ service users to be included in relevant university courses (psychology, social work, community development, etc.) as a mandatory part of the course, to ensure that the next generation of support service staff are better equipped.

Implementing an action plan to ensure organisations hold themselves accountable to LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker inclusion policies, recruitment strategies and service delivery was also recommended.

Connecting with communities

Participants from the sector showed strong support for creating connections with cultural communities, LGBTQI+ allies and those with relevant lived experience to address stigma, create more welcoming environments and improve services. Specific recommendations from those working in the sector included:

- Creating a National Advisory Group with LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults as members
- Involving allies in the community when receiving grants and running services
- For larger, more established support service providers: making efforts to partner with smaller, grassroots organisations and tackling gate-keeping
- Providing avenues for people with lived experience to not only inform the work that the sector does but also create their own space within the sector
- Equipping peers with the skills/knowledge to support LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults in their networks

Sector participants also highlighted the importance of working with cultural communities to address the stigma associated with LGBTQI+ identities, while also understanding the nuance and sensitivity required when undertaking this work. Service providers would have to be cognisant of any biases/assumptions they may have of certain cultural communities being homophobic/transphobic – and take care not to alienate faith-based groups – to avoid creating divisions between LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults and their communities/families/faith and severing ties between community groups and services themselves.

Working with allies within communities was understood to be important, along with ensuring staff have developed the skills necessary to communicate effectively with communities. Sector participants noted that different communities will have varying attitudes towards LGBTQI+ identities and needs will also vary according to how 'normalised' LGBTQI+ people are. Supporting LGBTQI+ inclusion may attract backlash (one sector participant reported being discouraged from showing overt support for Pride, etc.) and addressing this will need to be considered by service providers. One sector participant reported that their organisation created a 'backlash script' to deal with negativity.

Facilitating accessibility and building rapport

Building rapport with service users was identified as an important step in making support services accessible to LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults. One sector participant with lived experience as an LGBTQI+ refugee described 'good' service providers as those who can connect with them on a human level and have empathy. This participant emphasised that it is not often appropriate to treat LGBTQI+ service users differently (and thus alienate them).

When asked what a settlement service provider had done that made them feel welcome/accepted/safe, survey participants responded with the following:

“Shown enthusiasm and a small intro about themselves made me feel welcomed.”

19-year-old bisexual cis woman from a Vietnamese background

“When they don't treat me as just another case or file in their system but as a human being and actually listen what I am saying I feel more welcome and accepted.”

20-year-old bisexual cis woman from a Turkish and Kurdish background



There was significant support from sector participants for the inclusion of visual cues/resources – like pride flags, brochures, signage indicating LGBTQI+ support service provision, etc. – in service locations and on organisations' websites. Also important was ensuring that service staff use inclusive language/practices in interactions with all clients (not just those that are perceived to be LGBTQI+) so that LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults can identify that spaces are accepting and inclusive. However, if signage like the Rainbow Tick is used, service providers should understand what it means and how these symbols work in practice (what expectations are associated with them, etc.).

Sector participants also expressed interest in having government agencies and city councils more visible in LGBTQI+ outreach, particularly in highlighting the intersecting experiences of their populations (e.g. – integrating pride month and refugee week events, rather than celebrating them as discrete events).

Service user voice was identified as being critical to building trust. As well as providing ways for service users to give feedback about their experiences anonymously – to limit concerns about retribution/judgment/services being withdrawn – sector participants recommended establishing ways for potential service users to contact services providers anonymously, so they can ascertain whether a service is safe for them to use before sharing more personal information. Service providers would also need to provide information about how privacy and confidentiality are maintained (as well as potential limitations).

Next steps for MYAN

MYAN is committed to continuing our work in this space and building on the findings of this report.

1. Share the findings of this report with key youth, settlement and LGBTQI+ organisations in Australia.
2. Establish a National Sector Working Group with members from the youth, settlement and LGBTQI+ support services sector including young people, to proactively address service improvement by eliminating silos and sharing resources.
3. Establish a youth LGBTQI+ reference group made up of young people with lived experience, including members of MYAN's youth networks to provide advice to decision-makers, and co-lead future research activities.
4. Partner with organisations working directly with LGBTQI+ people from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds to collaborate in joint initiatives and research projects aimed at supporting this demographic, and assisting with providing a 'youth voice'.
5. Work with young people to determine how our current consultation methods can be changed – and what new methods should be introduced – to ensure engagement with 'hard to reach' demographics is safer and more accessible.
6. Review the National Youth Settlement Framework (NYSF) to embed LGBTI+ inclusive practices.



Recommendations for government and the support service sector

1. Support tailored service provision for LGBTIQ+ refugees and asylum seekers by improving national data collection practices regarding sexual orientation and gender identity and funding research on the specific experiences of (and barriers faced by) this group.
2. Provide ongoing funding for services that are delivering target support for LGBTIQ+ refugees and asylum seekers (including young people).
3. Review existing HSP and SETS policies to ensure that considerations for the needs and safety of LGBTIQ+ young people from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds are embedded.
4. Ensure that LGBTIQ+ young people from asylum seeker, refugee and migrant backgrounds are meaningfully and continuously included when developing subsequent policies and programmes affecting this group and that they are involved in decision-making processes that affect their lives.
5. Require settlement support workers to be trained in the experiences and needs of LGBTIQ+ refugees and asylum seekers (including LGBTIQ+ refugee and asylum seeker young people) and ensure workers and agencies overseas are aware of Australia's obligations toward people seeking asylum based on their minority sexual or gender identity.
6. Strengthen the state and national level legal provisions against harassment, discrimination and vilification directed at an individual or group based on their sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex traits.
7. Ensure LGBTIQ+ support services who work with young people provide resources in languages other than English, are adequately funded to provide translation services and are aware of cross-referral pathways for newly arrived LGBTIQ+ youth.
8. Ensure migrant support services who work with young people commit to not discriminating based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity, develop internal policies to promote the safety and inclusion of LGBTIQ+ service users and are aware of cross-referral pathways for newly arrived LGBTIQ+ youth.

Further research

MYAN has identified several gaps in our knowledge that would be strengthened by further research on the following:

- Demographic characteristics of LGBTIQ+ migrant, refugee and asylum seekers arriving in Australia including young people, and the children of LGBTIQ+ migrants, refugees and asylum seekers
- Experiences of LGBTIQ+ young people from migrant, refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds living in Australia
- The unique challenges and vulnerabilities of transgender and gender-diverse refugees and asylum seekers
- The unique challenges and vulnerabilities of intersex migrants.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Limitations & caveats

This research project had originally planned to have a stronger youth voice informing its key findings and recommendations. However, engaging with LGBTIQ+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults was a challenge throughout the project. A national youth consult, scheduled to take place in August 2022, was cancelled due to the overwhelming number of 'bot' responses received through the Eventbrite registration links, and concerns about safety and privacy risks

MYAN proceeded with the national survey and individual research interviews to capture youth perspectives in this research. Despite efforts to promote the survey and interviews through our extensive internal and external stakeholder networks, there were difficulties in recruiting participants from the selected population. While measures were taken to clearly flag the selection criteria, several ineligible respondents also expressed interest in participating. It is suspected that those who completed the survey/expressed interest in the interviews, despite not identifying as an LGBTIQ+ refugee and/or asylum seeker young adult, may have done so to receive the gift card reimbursement for these activities.

Though measures were taken to eliminate 'bot' responses to the survey by using authentication software, the survey received a large volume of responses flagged as being 'fake' due to:

- Multiple responses being submitted in quick succession with identical responses to open ended questions.
- Low quality answers to open-ended questions (e.g. – several respondents replied to open ended questions by simply writing "1" or incoherent phrases like "wusdnjffio").
- Inconsistencies in information provided (e.g. – several respondents listed both 'cisgender male' as their gender identity and 'lesbian' as their sexuality).
- Listing ethnic/cultural identities inconsistent with recent Australian refugee/asylum seeker migration patterns (e.g. – some respondents listed their ethnic/cultural background as "African American", "British origin" and "European American", among others).

Threats to the integrity of online surveys are becoming increasingly common. A 2021 study by the Australian GLBTIQ Multicultural Council received a total 203 responses to their survey, however, 97 of these were flagged as 'troll'⁵⁶ and 'not applicable' responses. Some responses espoused homophobic, racist, misogynistic and Islamophobic comments and slurs.⁵⁷ Similarly, an American study about the effects of COVID-19 on the LGBTQ+ population in the United States found that over 60% of survey respondents were bots.⁵⁸

We suspect that the suspicious activity in our own survey is a result of bots, as our survey exhibited the following characteristics identified by a Canadian study on bot activity in surveys to be indicative of bot infiltration:⁵⁹

- An improbable influx of responses once the survey is launched
- Multiple responses having similar/the same start and end time
- Nonsensical/contradictory/identical responses to open-ended questions
- Responses from those ineligible to participate

⁵⁶ Trolling refers to the act of posting/commenting online (often anonymously) to deliberately provoke someone or gain an emotional reaction from them. This can include posting hate comments (attacks that target someone due to their race/culture/religion/gender/sexuality/disability). Source: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/young-people/trolling>

⁵⁷ Pallotta-Chiarolli M, Sudarto B and Tang, J. Navigating Intersectionality, 30.

⁵⁸ Griffin M, Martino RJ, LoSchiavo C, Comer-Carruthers C, Krause KD, Stults CB and Halkitis PN, "Ensuring survey research data integrity in the era of internet bots", *Quality & Quantity* 56, no. 4 (2022), doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11335-021-01252-1>

⁵⁹ Storzuk A, Ashley M, Delage V and Maloney E, "Got Bots? Practical Recommendations to Protect Online Survey Data

The same study states that bot activity in research may be on the rise, due to the growing number of commercially available bots and the ease with which they can be obtained/programmed. Worryingly, bots are said to be highly realistic and capable of bypassing features such as CAPTCHAs, with some bots being able to imitate human behaviour the longer they have access to a survey.⁶⁰

For those interested in conducting online surveys for research in their own work, the study lists the following recommendations to pre-empt bot activity and protect survey integrity:⁶¹

- Screen email addresses and limit survey access: create a separate form for potential participants to register their interest in the survey, screen the email addresses listed and only send the survey link to participants that appear legitimate/relevant. Avoid sharing the survey link on social media when possible.
- Include open-ended questions: include open-ended questions and analyse responses to determine if participants are likely to be bots (e.g. – if responses are incoherent or contradictory).
- Monitor time/speed of survey completion: check individual participants' time of survey completion for signs they may be a bot (e.g. – very late evening/very early submissions can be an indicator, although some legitimate participants may choose to complete the survey at these times as well). The speed at which participants complete the survey can also be analysed according to the expected time researchers predict the survey would take to complete. However, bots may be able to 'learn' how to complete surveys in a more reasonable timeframe.

MYAN staff took care to respond to difficulties and pivot/adapt methodologies as challenges arose. Those who had originally expressed interest in taking part in the youth consult – and were identified as genuine participants – were invited to participate in individual interviews instead. The timeline for collecting data was also extended and new networks/stakeholders were sought out to encourage maximum participation. This included undertaking training with the STARTTS LGBTQIA+ Steering Committee, whose members were then invited to participate in individual interviews.

MYAN prides ourselves in our research and stakeholder engagement capabilities. The methods we had used to engage with the core demographic of this research have been used at MYAN previously, and we had trusted that they would deliver the same high-quality data that has informed our past work. We have made efforts to ascertain why engaging this population in research has been particularly challenging.

Support service sector stakeholders suggest that organisations are experiencing difficulties in establishing connections with service users due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During this, time, many LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker service users were said to have disconnected from their primary source of information: their peers. Many instead tried to connect to mainstream organisations, who usually do not have significant existing membership bases of refugee and asylum seeker LGBTQI+ people. Service users are now returning in person and many organisations are building their engagement activities up again 'from scratch'.

The importance of building networks in person to establish connections with 'hard to reach populations' has been discussed in similar studies. LaTrobe University's 'Something for them' study – aimed at studying the support needs of LGBTQI+ refugee, asylum seeker and newly arrived youth– used a variety of methods for recruitment: promoting the study on social media, distributing flyers to support service sector employees and advertising in LGBTQI+ and CALD media (publications, blogs, radio stations, etc.). However, all 5 of the study's interview participants were recruited by directly approaching support workers/caseworkers/counsellors from migrant, refugee and asylum seeker organisations and asking them to pass study details onto relevant clients who may be interested in participating.

These findings, along with internal discussions at MYAN about our research, have highlighted the need for us to review and update our current research and consultation practices. We know that young people are over-consulted and are likely to experience 'survey fatigue'. Prior research involving LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker people also indicates that this demographic experiences concerns around breaches of confidentiality which may affect their residency status and a lack of trust in organisations. These concerns around privacy and anonymity may act as a disincentive for participants of this demographic from participating in research activities. This shows that there is a need for us to build partnerships with organisations that work with – and are trusted by – LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers and work directly with young people to update our consultation methods (including a stronger focus on engagement, rather than online surveys).

Appendix 2: Sector consult questions

1. What unique settlement challenges do LGBTQI+ asylum seeker youth face in Australia?

2. Has the COVID-19 pandemic played a role in exacerbating these challenges?

3. What are the limitations and gaps that service providers face when responding to these challenges?

4. What can be done to address these limitations/gaps and build on good practice?

Storozuk A, Ashley M, Delage V and Maloney E, "Got Bots", 476.
Storozuk A, Ashley M, Delage V and Maloney E, "Got Bots", 474-477.

Appendix 3: National survey questions

* Response required

Screening questions

1. Are you a refugee or asylum seeker? *

- Yes, I am a refugee Yes, I am an asylum seeker
 I am not a refugee or asylum seeker **participant will not move on to survey if this chosen**

2. Do you identify as LGBTQI+ (including, but not limited to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender non-binary, gender fluid, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual)? *

- Yes No, I do not identify as LGBTQI+ **participant will not move on to survey if this chosen**

3. How old are you? *

- Under 18 years old **participant will not move on to survey if this chosen**
 18-30 years old
 31 years old or older **participant will not move on to survey if this chosen**

4. Please verify that you are human*

[reCAPTCHA indicating users must tick box stating "I'm not a robot"]

About you

1. How old are you in years? *

2. When did you first arrive in Australia? *

- 0-3 years ago 3-6 years ago 6-10 years ago 10+ years ago

3. Under what circumstances did you arrive as an asylum seeker/refugee? (Tick all that apply)*

- With my family/a family member
 On my own
 To study in Australia/as an international student
 Fleeing persecution on the basis of my LGBTQI+ identity
 Fleeing war, conflict, etc.
 Fleeing persecution based on my ethnic/religious identity
 Other: _____

4. Which state/territory do you live in? *

- Victoria ACT New South Wales Queensland Northern Territory Western Australia
 South Australia Tasmania I do not live in Australia **participant will not move on to survey if this chosen**

5. Do you live in a: *

- Metropolitan area Rural area Regional area

6. What is your gender? (Select one or more) *

- Cisgender male Cisgender female Transgender male
 Transgender female Non-binary Gender fluid/gender diverse
 Unsure/questioning Prefer not to say Prefer to self-describe (shows 6a if selected)

6a. Prefer to self-describe:

7. Do you identify as*

- Gay Lesbian Bisexual Pansexual Asexual Queer
 Unsure/questioning Prefer not to say Prefer to self-describe (shows 7a if selected)

7a. Prefer to self-describe:

Services

8. Have you ever sought/received support for any of the following: (Tick all that apply) *

- Physical health Mental health Employment support
 Housing support Educational support Disability support
 Lack of social connection Lack of basic amenities (food, toiletries, etc.)
 Communication barriers prevented me from accessing support
 Prefer not to say
 Other: _____

9. Have you ever received assistance from any of the following support services in Australia? *

	Once	Several times	On a regular basis	No	Prefer not to say
Asylum seeker and/or refugee service (including settlement services)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Migrant service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youth organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LGBTQI+ refugee organisation or LGBTQI+ youth organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Migrant youth organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LGBTQI+ organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organisation for trans and gender diverse people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organisation for intersex people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organisation for people with disability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Legal services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Education services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sexual health (including HIV/STI) services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gender-focused health clinic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mental health services (counselling, psychologist including trauma counselling)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Housing and homelessness services (both mainstream and run by LGBTQI+ or refugee organisations)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Domestic and family violence services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sexual assault services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Have you received support from any services not listed in the table above? If yes, please list what services and how often you received support from them (once, several times or on a regular basis).

11. Have you ever felt discriminated against or treated unfairly by services you approached? (Tick all that apply) *

- Yes, on the basis of my gender
- Yes, on the basis of my intersex status
- Yes, on the basis of my skin colour or ethnicity
- Yes, on the basis of my disability
- Yes, on the basis of my English language skills
- No
- Prefer not to say
- Other: _____
- Yes, on the basis of my sexuality
- Yes, on the basis of my religious background
- Yes, on the basis of my migration status
- Yes on the basis of my age

Settlement services

12. Please select the response option that most closely represents your view and experience (either past or present) *

	Agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Disagree	No opinion/ not applicable
I find settlement services accessible and welcoming to LGBTQI+ refugee & asylum seeker youth	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am usually satisfied with the support I receive from services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like I can disclose my LGBTQI+ identity to staff without fear of discrimination	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The support I receive from service providers is respectful of my identity and relevant to my circumstances	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have felt discouraged from using a settlement service because I felt staff wouldn't understand my needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have experienced homophobia and/or transphobia when accessing settlement support services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Settlement services made me aware of LGBTQI+ specific services I could access	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My disability/disabilities make it harder for me to access the additional supports I need	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
During, the COVID-19 pandemic, I faced additional settlement challenges	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
During the COVID-19 pandemic, I found it harder to access services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. What barriers (e.g. – uncertainty regarding acceptance of LGBTQI+ people, concerns about privacy when disclosing identity, etc.) have you faced when accessing support services? *

14. Have you ever chosen not to access a support service due to concerns about LGBTQI+ discrimination? *

- Yes No

15. Have you ever experienced discrimination or prejudice (e.g. – homophobia, transphobia, racism, etc.) from staff or other clients when accessing a support service? *

- Yes No

16. (Only shows if 'Yes' selected in 15) Did you make a complaint about any of these experiences or somehow else seek to address them? (Tick all that apply) *

- Yes No I did not know how I did not feel comfortable doing so
 I was too worried about repercussions of this (e.g. – I was worried that my visa would be cancelled)

17. (Only shows if 'Yes' selected in 16) Did you feel that your complaint was taken seriously or that action would be taken on your complaint? *

- Yes No I don't know

18. What has a settlement service provider done that made you feel welcome/accepted/safe? *

19. Have you ever been disappointed by the support you received from a settlement service provider? Why? *

Work and study

20. Are you engaged in work and/or study?*

- Yes, I attend school/university/TAFE
 Yes, I am employed in work
 Yes, I work and study
 No

21. Have you experienced any barriers to finding work in Australia? (Tick all that apply)*

- No
 Yes, my previous education and work experience is not recognised
 Yes, I do not speak English well enough to work where I want
 Yes, my visa status is a barrier to getting secure employment
 Yes, I was discriminated against as an LGBTQI+ person
 Yes, I have issues with my documents (e.g. – my name or gender on documents do not match who I am)
 Other: _____

22. (Does not show if 'No' selected in 20) Do your work colleagues/classmates know that you identify as LGBTQI+? (Tick all that apply) *

- Yes, I am out I would tell someone if I am asked
 No, I worry that I will be discriminated against No, it is not safe for me to be out
 Other: _____

23. (Does not show if 'No' selected in 20) Do you know what LGBTQI+ support services are available at your workplace/school/university/TAFE? *

- Yes No

24. (Does not show if 'No' selected in 20) Please select the response option that most closely represents your view and experience *

	Agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Disagree	No opinion/ not applicable
My school/university/TAFE is a place where I can safely disclose my identity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My workplace is a place where I can safely disclose my identity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My school/university/TAFE has support services for LGBTQI+ people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The LGBTQI+ support at my school/university/TAFE is useful for my needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My school/university/TAFE is well equipped to respond to the needs of LGBTQI+ young people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My workplace has support services for LGBTQI+ people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My workplace is well equipped to respond to the needs of LGBTQI+ young people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have experienced homophobia and/or transphobia at my school/university/TAFE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have experienced homophobia and/or transphobia at my workplace	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would feel comfortable accessing the LGBTQI+ support services at my school/university/TAFE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would feel comfortable accessing the LGBTQI+ support services at my workplace	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Community

25. What is your ethnic/cultural background? *

26. Do you feel pressure to hide your LGBTQI+ identity from your friends? Why? Why not? *

27. Do you feel pressure to hide your LGBTQI+ identity from your family? Why? Why not? *

28. Are you able to talk about LGBTQI+ issues openly with your family? *

Yes No

29. Do you feel pressure to hide your LGBTQI+ identity from members of your ethnic/cultural community? Why? Why not? *

30. Are you worried about being 'outed' in any areas of your life? (Note: outing is the act of someone disclosing an LGBTQI+ person's sexual orientation or gender identity without that person's consent) *

Yes No

31. Please select the response option that most closely represents your views and experiences *

	Agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Disagree	No opinion/ not applicable
My concerns of being outed have a significant impact on my mental health and wellbeing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My ethnic/cultural community that I belong to is accepting of LGBTQI+ people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have faced homophobia and/or transphobia from members of my ethnic/cultural community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have felt discouraged from being a part of my ethnic/cultural community due to homophobia and/or transphobia	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

32. What would make you feel more safe/accepted in your ethnic/cultural community? *

33. How would you describe your religious beliefs? *

- None
- Islam
- Christianity (including Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)
- Hinduism
- Buddhism
- Judaism (ethnically or religiously)
- Baha'i
- Other: _____

34. Please select the response option that most closely represents your view and experience

	Agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Disagree	No opinion/ not applicable
I practice my religion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My religious community is accepting of my LGBTQI+ identity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would feel comfortable approaching a religious leader for support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have faced homophobia and/or transphobia from members of my religious community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is important to me to maintain a connection to my religion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have felt discouraged from practicing my religion due to homophobia and/or transphobia	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In general, members of my religious community hold negative views about LGBTQI+ people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

35. Do you feel pressure to hide your LGBTQI+ identity from members of your religious community? Why? Why not? *

36. What would make you feel more safe/accepted in your in your religious community? *

37. Are you connected with other young LGBTQI+ refugees, asylum seekers and/or migrants in your state or territory? (Tick all that apply) *

- Yes,
- No, I don't know any other LGBTQI+ young adults from migrant/refugee/asylum seeker backgrounds
- No, I see no need to be connected with people with similar experiences
- Other: _____

Housing

38. Have you ever experienced homelessness in Australia (including couch surfing, living in a homeless shelter, living rough, living with a friend on a temporary basis)? *

- Yes No Prefer not to answer

39. (Only shows if 'Yes is selected in 38) What were the circumstances that led to your homelessness?

(Tick all that apply) *

- Being LGBTQI+
- Financial stress
- Mental health issues
- Unemployment/underemployment
- Rejection from family
- Family violence
- Violence/harassment in previous accommodation
- Alcohol or drug use
- Discrimination (such as from school, employment, services)
- Disability
- Rejection from peers
- Chronic illness
- Insecure migration status
- Unable to rent as no previous rental history
- Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic
- Prefer not to answer
- Other: _____

40. (Only shows if 'Yes is selected in 38) Have you sought support from any housing services?

(Tick all that apply) *

- Yes, from an LGBTQI+ organisation
- Yes, from a refugee service
- Yes, from a mainstream housing service
- Yes, from a faith-based service
- Yes, but not sure from which organisation
- No
- Prefer not to answer

41. (Only shows if any of the 'Yes' options are selected in 40) Were the support services you used useful? Why? Why not? *

Health and wellbeing

42. How do the following impact your mental wellbeing on a daily basis? *

	A lot	A little	Not at all	Not applicable
Insecure visa status and immigration delays	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fear of being 'outed'	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Housing insecurity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your migration journey to Australia	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Previous trauma	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not having a community in Australia, being isolated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disability or chronic illness (including accessibility barriers)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not being connected to an LGBTQI+ community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial stress (including insecure employment, no government income support, no employment support)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Worrying about family back home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of access to support services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experiences of discrimination	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
COVID-19 pandemic, including lockdowns	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experiences of homophobia	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experiences of transphobia	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

43. Are there any other issues that impact your mental wellbeing not listed in the table above? If yes, please list them and how often they impact your mental wellbeing on a daily basis (a lot or a little):

44. Have you ever sought support for mental health issues? (Tick all that apply) *

- Yes, I used general mental health support services
- Yes, I used LGBTQI+-specific mental health support services
- No, I haven't needed to use mental health support services in the past
- No, I wanted to use a mental health support service but haven't been able to
- Other: _____

45. (Only shows if 'Yes' or 'Other' options are selected in 44) Were the support services you used useful? Why? Why not? *

Stigmatisation, harassment and abuse

Content warning: the following questions contain references to harassment, abuse and violence (including sexual violence)

46. Have you experienced racial discrimination, bullying or prejudice in Australia? *

- Yes, but rarely Yes, sometimes Yes, on multiple occasions
 No Prefer not to say

47. Have you experienced religious discrimination, bullying or prejudice in Australia? *

- Yes, but rarely Yes, sometimes Yes, on multiple occasions
 No Prefer not to say

48. Have you experienced discrimination on the basis of disability in Australia? *

- Yes, but rarely Yes, sometimes Yes, on multiple occasions
 No Prefer not to say

49. Have you experienced homophobic and/or transphobic discrimination, bullying or prejudice in Australia?*

- Yes, but rarely Yes, sometimes Yes, on multiple occasions
 No Prefer not to say

50. Since coming to Australia, have you faced stigmatisation due to your sexual orientation/ gender identity? (Tick all that apply) *

- Low level harassment Threats to life
 Threats to freedom/restrictions on freedoms Emotional abuse
 Physical abuse Financial control/abuse
 Sexual harassment Sexual violence
 Slurs Verbal abuse
 Deliberate misgendering Prefer not to say
 Other: _____

51. (Does not show if 'Prefer not to say' is selected in 50) Where did the stigmatisation, threats, harassment and/or abuse come from? (Tick all that apply) *

- Immediate family Extended family Migration officials
 Healthcare workers Settlement support workers In a school/university/TAFE setting
 In a work setting On the street
 Prefer not to say Other: _____

52. (Does not show if 'Prefer not to say' is selected in 50) Did you seek support as a result?

(Tick all that apply) *

- Yes
 No, I did not feel the need to seek support
 No, I didn't know where to go for support
 No, I felt too uncomfortable to discuss this issue with others
 No, I was too worried about the repercussions of seeking support
 Prefer not to say
 Other: _____

53. (Only shows if 'Yes' or 'Other' is selected in 52) Where did you go to seek support?

(e.g. – an LGBTQI+ support service, a refugee support service, etc.)

54. (Only shows if 'Yes' or 'Other' is selected in 52) Was the support you received adequate?

Why or why not?

COVID-19

55. Over the pandemic, what have been the impacts of COVID for you? (Tick all that apply) *

- My visa application was delayed
 The resolution of my visa status was delayed
 My mental health got significantly worse
 I lost work
 I had reduced hours or very insecure work
 I felt very isolated
 I was worried about my family overseas
 I became homeless at some point
 I could not continue or start my education
 The lockdown triggered trauma associated with my migration journey
 I was hospitalised
 I was unable to connect with other LGBTQI+ friends during lockdowns due to privacy concerns using my phone/computer in the family home
 I was unable to access mental health support due to privacy concerns during lockdowns
 I did not have access to the devices I needed (phone, computer, Wi-Fi, etc.) to connect with support services during lockdown
 I did not have access to the devices I needed (phone, computer, Wi-Fi etc.) to connect with friends during lockdown
 I was at increased risk of emotional/physical abuse due to LGBTQI+ identity as a result of the lockdowns
 Other: _____

56. Were you receiving any income support, material aid or groceries during this time?

(Tick all that apply)*

- Yes, from a refugee/migrant/asylum seeker organisation
- Yes, from an LGBTQI+ organisation
- Yes, from an LGBTQI+ refugee organisation or group
- Yes, from the government
- Yes, from a religious organisation
- Yes, from a foodbank
- No, I did not need income support because I had enough
- No, I was not eligible for any income support
- No, I could not get any even though I needed
- Other: _____

Recommendations

57. What could settlement service providers do differently to improve their services for LGBTQI+ refugee & asylum seeker young people? *

58. What could LGBTQI+ service providers do differently to improve their services for young people from refugee & asylum seeker backgrounds? *

59. What could youth organisations do to be more welcoming of LGBTQI+ young people? *

60. Do the challenges you face affect your ability to feel like you belong in Australia? Why or why not? *

61. Do you feel accepted within the LGBTQI+ community in Australia? Why or why not? *

62. Do you have any other comments you would like to share?





MYAN 

multicultural youth
advocacy network (australia)

304 Drummond St. Carlton, Victoria 3053

myan.org.au