

Navigating Youth Settlement in Australia: Challenges and Opportunities

MYAN 
multicultural youth
advocacy network (australia)

Report of national consultations conducted by the
Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN)





Contents

Executive Summary	6
Introduction	11
Part 1: Youth settlement services and regional settlement today	13
1.1 Youth settlement services today	13
1.2 Regional settlement today	16
Part 2: Key ongoing issues faced by young people settling in Australia	19
2.1 Education	20
2.2 Employment	22
2.3 Health and wellbeing	23
2.4 Social connectedness, belonging and identity	24
2.5 Navigating Australian services, systems and laws	26
2.6 Racism and discrimination	27
Part 3: Snapshots of local communities, challenges and opportunities	28
3.1 Australian Capital Territory – Canberra snapshot	29
3.2 New South Wales – Armidale snapshot	32
3.3 Northern Territory – Darwin snapshot	34
3.4 Queensland – Brisbane and Toowoomba snapshots	36
3.6 South Australia – Adelaide snapshot	39
3.6 Tasmania – Hobart snapshot	41
3.7 Victoria – East Gippsland and Melbourne snapshots	43
3.8 Western Australia – Perth snapshot	46
Part 4: Opportunities, recommendations and next steps	49
4.1 Settlement services: A co-ordinated approach to strategy, investment and implementation	49
4.2 Regional settlement: Planning, co-ordination and services	52
4.3 Opportunities and ideas from young people, settlement sector advocates and MYAN	53
4.4 MYAN next steps	62



Who we are

The Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN) is Australia's peak body for refugee and migrant youth. We are an advocacy non-profit body that provides advice to the government, capacity building to those who work with multicultural young people and supports young people to develop leadership skills.

Since our formal inception in 2007, we have been working in partnership with young people, government and civil society to promote the rights and interests of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds and ensure these are recognised in policy and practice.

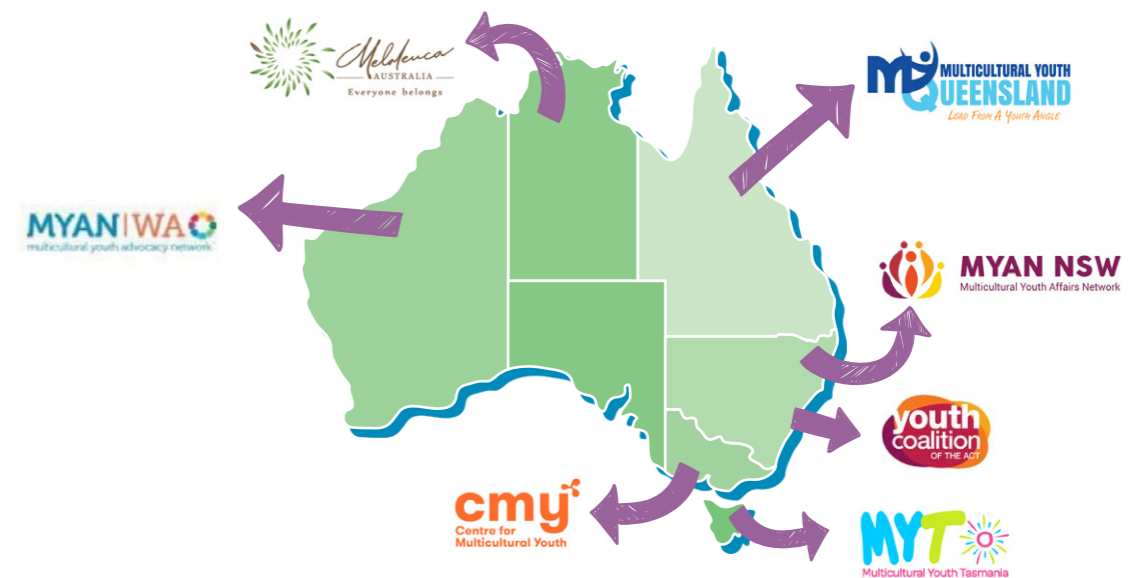
We facilitate national connections between young people, academics, policy makers and practitioners, provide policy expertise and youth leadership opportunities, and develop capacity building resources.

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

Acknowledgements

MYAN would like to thank all the young people across Australia who took time to talk to us, and to share their stories and ideas. We appreciate you.

MYAN would like to also thank our partner organisations who supported the planning and delivery of these consultations:



The MYAN team acknowledges and pays respects to the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation. We also acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the various lands on which MYAN partners operate across the country, and pay our respects to all Elders past, and present.

Executive Summary

One in four young Australians is from a refugee or migrant background.¹ Their engagement as active citizens in Australian society, including their meaningful socio-economic participation, has significant and long-term benefits for them, their families and communities, and for a diverse, socially cohesive Australia.

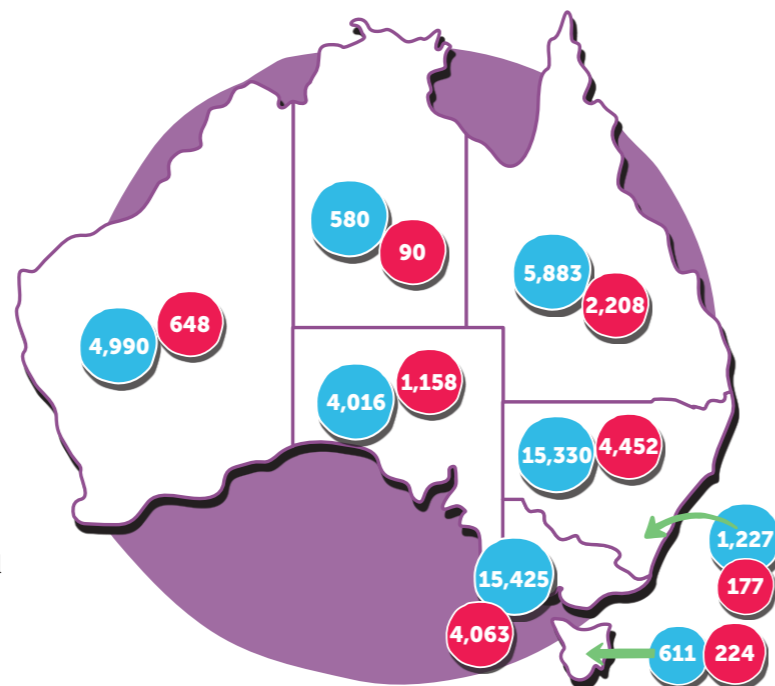
MYAN's 2023 national consultations provide an essential foundation for the development of effective policies, services, and outcomes for these young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds, particularly in the context of the post-COVID-19 pandemic era.

This report highlights some of the key settlement challenges faced by the young people and settlement sector advocates we engaged with, as well as some of their ideas for solutions. We share the report to fuel the ongoing development of relevant policy, service improvement and program design: to be effective and fit-for-purpose to meet the real experiences and needs of young people and to maximise their potential.

Who we consulted:

100 young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, including international students.

90 people working across the settlement, migrant and youth services sectors.



Legend

- 12-24 year olds who arrived in the past five years on migrant and skilled visas.
- 12-24 year olds who arrived in the past five years on humanitarian visas.

Where we went:

LARGER CITIES: populations over one million

12-24 year olds who arrived in the past five years on migrant and skilled visa

Adelaide	572
Brisbane	4,355
Melbourne	2,222
Perth	183

12-24 year olds who arrived in the past five years on humanitarian visas

Adelaide	69
Brisbane	534
Melbourne	80
Perth	76

SMALLER CITIES: populations under one million

12-24 year olds who arrived in the past five years on migrant and skilled visa

Canberra	2,256
Darwin	697
Hobart	467

12-24 year olds who arrived in the past five years on humanitarian visas

Canberra	185
Darwin	61
Hobart	21

REGIONAL SETTLEMENT AREAS

12-24 year olds who arrived in the past five years on migrant and skilled visa

Armidale	2,256
East Gippsland	18
Toowoomba	333

12-24 year olds who arrived in the past five years on humanitarian visas

Armidale	185
East Gippsland	-
Toowoomba	722

*The figures in these tables relate to the number of people who settled in the specific local government areas in which we conducted consultations. We also heard from people outside these areas.



¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016) The Census of Population and Housing (Census) at <https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/censushome.nsf/home/2016>

What we found:

The population of young people born overseas in each of the locations we consulted in had a unique composition. Each area had different proportions and mixes of countries of origin and visa streams.

The locations with the highest number of young people who had arrived on humanitarian visas within the last five years were Toowoomba, Brisbane, Armidale and Canberra. In all other surveyed locations, fewer than 100 young people on humanitarian visas had settled in the past five years.

Youth settlement services

MYAN heard how settlement programs tailored for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds play a crucial role in supporting positive outcomes, including fostering a sense of belonging, social connection, and good health, education, and employment prospects.

At the same time young people and settlement advocates identified significant challenges:

- **Too many young people, with unmet needs, are still falling through the cracks:** Some groups of young people are not eligible for support; there is a shortage of multicultural youth-focused services; and parts of the youth sector and mainstream services lack the specialist capability required to respond to the particular needs and/or experiences of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

“I felt welcomed and supported”

In the regional areas where we conducted consultations, the overall population had a notably lower proportion of people born overseas compared to the cities we surveyed. In regional local government areas (LGA), people born overseas constituted 12-15% of the total population, whereas in cities, this ranged from 26-34%.

Unemployment rates for people born overseas aged 15 years+ were 0.2% to 3.7% higher than the overall population aged 15+ in seven of the ten surveyed locations. In the remaining three locations, specifically East Gippsland, Perth, and Darwin, unemployment was 0.4% to 0.8% lower for people born overseas compared to the overall population.

- **Gaps in collaboration and co-ordination between local service providers are resulting in inefficiencies in service funding, design, and delivery.** Key barriers to greater collaboration include: gaps in local coordination and leadership; no strong incentives to co-ordinate mainstream and settlement services, nor for those services to collaborate; and ‘gate-keeping’ cultures and inefficient competition within the settlement sector.

In response to these challenges, there is growing interest among settlement sector advocates to further explore place-based opportunities. Examples of initiatives include: improving local collaboration and better allocating and sharing resources within the sector; assisting to build the capability of mainstream service providers to support multicultural young people; and piloting new models with centralised collaboration and case management to focus on the holistic journey of young people.

Regional settlement

MYAN supports regional settlement for migrants and refugees, recognising its potential economic and social benefits. Despite these potential benefits, significant limitations exist, with only 14% of migrants residing outside capital cities, compared to 34% of the overall Australian population, and a quarter of migrants leaving regional areas within five years.² To improve regional settlement outcomes, MYAN has consistently highlighted the importance of careful planning and understanding local capacity to address young people’s needs including in areas like employment, education, housing, social connection and health.

In the current consultations, young people and settlement sector advocates identified the following significant challenges with regional settlement:

- **Major gaps in health services and education** including chronic shortages in doctors, dentists, mental health professionals, and teachers leading to missed opportunities for early intervention and poor outcomes.
- **Critical gaps in English language training and support.**
- **Limited infrastructure,** including in particular, with respect to housing and transport, making it difficult to find accommodation and make social connections.
- **Disengagement of young people and desire to move to urban areas,** driven largely by limited options and support with respect to employment, education and social connection.

“There’s nothing for young people. No entertainment, no employment, no good education. Young people want to go to the city.”

Key issues faced by young people settling in Australia

In MYAN’s consultations with young people across the country, some strong themes emerged. One of the most notable was the similarity of issues raised by many of these young people, and the consistency of these issues over time. This suggests that these issues are deeply ingrained in the experiences of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds, and that they require targeted attention from those working in this field.

At the same time the young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds with whom we spoke were not a homogenous group, varying widely according to their cultures, identities, experiences and abilities, and it is crucial to take these differences into account when designing programs or policies aimed at supporting them.

Consistent issues young people face across the country and over time

The consultations identified that the key issues young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds face relate to the following 5 topics:

- 1 **Education,** including issues facing international students, as well as other young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds: *“I am really focussed towards my education and the only things that I want at the moment is to get good grades, learn new skills and I really want to be a leader.”*
- 2 **Employment:** *“I had a company withdraw my job offer once they realised I was on a working visa-even though I’m totally able to work.”*
- 3 **Health and well-being:** *“I’m in survival mode. My mental health and health are coming second.”*
- 4 **Social connectedness, belonging and identity:** *“A third culture is not one or the other, it’s everything. It’s not subtractive. It’s additive to identity.”*
- 5 **Navigating Australian services, systems and laws:** *“I feel the burden of a broken system”*



Racism and discrimination also consistently and persistently continued to cause harm to young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds across each of these issues.

These issues are not exhaustive and our description of them cannot purport to describe the individual diverse experiences of all young people. It is also vital to understand and tailor interventions to the diverse and intersectional experiences of, and challenges faced by, young people as individuals.



Local issues

MYAN's consultations also identified that the lives of, and issues facing, young people were very specific to the area in which they lived. Examples of specifically local issues identified include:

- **In Toowoomba:** Integration opportunities and challenges in the relatively large Yezidi community in Toowoomba who arrived on humanitarian visas.
- **In Hobart:** No access to youth tailored English training because there is no Intensive English Language Centre (IELC) or youth specific Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP).
- **In Armidale:** Very limited options for post school training or education.

Local issues such as these, along with the unique composition in the demographic profile of young people and existing social infrastructure and services in each location, **underscore the importance of place-based research, planning, and service design and delivery.**

Opportunities

There are rich opportunities to address the challenges identified in MYAN's consultations by aligning and connecting the issues and ideas presented by MYAN with the Federal Government's proactive policy agenda, and the strong interest and capacity of settlement sector advocates to drive improvements and developments in settlement services on the ground.

To support and advance the exploration of these opportunities, Part 4 of this report outlines:

- The key pillars that MYAN considers are essential to drive improvement in:
 - **Settlement services:** within a coordinated approach to strategy, investment, and implementation
 - **Regional settlement:** Better planning, coordination, and services.
- **Options for specific programs, policies and initiatives** to address issues related to education; employment; health and well-being; social connectedness; and navigating Australian systems and services including:
 - Ideas and opportunities identified by the young people and sector advocates MYAN consulted; and
 - Existing examples of effective local good practice initiative (which could be scaled up nationally and/or adapted to other locations).

We also include links to, and summaries of, relevant MYAN reports that provide a further supporting evidence base, and proposals for reform and improvement on the range of issues raised in these consultations.

MYAN looks forward to using this report to inform our ongoing working partnerships, and our networks of young people, government and community policy makers and practitioners to contribute to the continued enhancement of services and development of settlement policies.

Introduction

Australia is home to an estimated 3.2 million young people between the ages of 15 and 24, constituting 12% of the total population.³

A significant portion of this demographic includes young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. These young individuals bring unique strengths, skills, and experiences, including international and cross-cultural knowledge, multilingual abilities, adaptability, resilience, and a strong sense of family and community.

The successful settlement of these young people is vital for their well-being and future prospects. When settlement services and policies are tailored to their specific needs and concerns, it greatly aids their integration into their new environment, fostering a sense of belonging. This, in turn, promotes positive health, mental well-being, and social connections, which are crucial, especially for those grappling with feelings of isolation and disconnection due to the challenges of adjusting to a new culture and environment during adolescence, a critical and complex developmental stage.

The outcomes of this settlement process have far-reaching implications, affecting employment opportunities, economic security, and overall health and well-being for these young individuals in the long term.

Furthermore, good settlement outcomes have broader societal implications, including contributing to increased productivity, social cohesion and reduced discrimination within communities. Conversely, poor settlement outcomes pose significant risks, including social exclusion, intercultural conflicts, and economic challenges. Inadequate integration may lead to isolation and disconnection from peers, resulting in mental health issues, decreased academic performance, and limited civic engagement. Economically, poor settlement outcomes may limit employment prospects and educational opportunities, contributing to poverty, social marginalisation, and reduced social mobility.

To address these issues effectively, government policy and settlement services must understand and respond to the unique needs of young people from diverse backgrounds.



³ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2023) Health of young people at <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/children-youth/health-of-young-people>, current as at June 2022.

Consulting with young people and sector advocates

Consulting with both young people and settlement sector advocates is essential. It is integral to MYAN's mission, ensuring that our work authentically reflects the diverse settlement experiences and needs of young individuals throughout all Australian states and territories.

Consulting with young people is critical to shape the policies, programs, and services that directly affect their lives. It grants young people a voice, allowing them to share their experiences and contribute to decisions that shape their future. This involvement empowers young individuals to become active stakeholders in their communities, validating their perspectives and demonstrating that their opinions matter. Furthermore, youth consultations provide a platform for newly arrived young people to interact with peers from diverse backgrounds, promoting the exchange of ideas, mutual respect, and the dismantling of stereotypes and prejudices. In doing so, these consultations contribute to a more inclusive and cohesive society.

Consulting with sector advocates—including MYAN's state and territory partners, community leaders, non-government organisations, and service providers—provides essential insights about the needs of young newly arrived people in Australia and the challenges they face. The sector consultations also generate valuable perspectives on the policy and practical challenges in the settlement sector and ideas for how to improve and better coordinate youth settlement efforts in Australia.

MYAN's consultations included separate meetings with young people and sector stakeholders. Our consultations were designed to be interactive and engaging, with a focus on encouraging participants to share their perspectives, experiences and ideas. Techniques such as small group discussions, surveys, and interactive activities were used to ensure that all participants had the opportunity to contribute to the conversation. The consultations were also inclusive to ensure that the voices of all participants were heard, regardless of their background or English language familiarity.

We invite our policy and practice partners to listen to these voices and to collaborate to build them into your work.



Part 1: Youth settlement services and regional settlement today

Two key elements to the successful settlement of young people in Australia are:

- **A strong, youth tailored settlement services sector** (including in collaboration with mainstream and youth services); and
- **Well planned and supported regional settlement.**

This part of the report shares an update on both elements through the perspectives and experiences of young people and settlement sector advocates.

1.1 Youth settlement services today

Youth settlement programs essential

The Australian Government's 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 programs (complementary to its settlement programs for adults). This initiative is a response to the:

- recognition of the specific, diverse, intersectional needs of young people from the refugee and migrant backgrounds; and
- the need for a youth informed and tailored approach to support positive settlement outcomes for young people.

Most providers of settlement services across

Australia do an outstanding job in their highly complex task of supporting young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. For instance, they have collectively assisted more than 62,000 young people aged 12 to 24 who arrived in Australia on family, skilled and humanitarian visas over the last five years.⁴

12-24 year olds who arrived in the past five years on migrant and skilled visas

New South Wales	15,330
Victoria	15,425
Queensland	5,883
Western Australia	4,990
South Australia	4,016
Canberra	1,227
Tasmania	611
Northern Territory	580

12-24 year olds who arrived in the past five years on humanitarian visas

New South Wales	4,452
Victoria	4,063
Queensland	2,208
Western Australia	648
South Australia	1,158
Canberra	177
Tasmania	224
Northern Territory	90

The essential assistance the settlement service sector provides includes to build social connection and facilitate access to health services, education, skills, training and employment.

⁴ This information is derived from statistics collected by the Department of Home Affairs based on the records of people arriving in Australia via the Humanitarian, Family and Skilled Migrations Programs from July 2018 to June 2023.

Settlement services, programs and policies that are responsive to, and reflective of, the key needs and concerns of young people, generate good settlement outcomes for young people including a sense of belonging and social connection, positive health, mental health and well-being, and good educational and employment outcomes. These good settlement outcomes⁵ in turn promote social cohesion and good domestic economic outcomes.⁶

Many of the young people MYAN consulted acknowledged and appreciated the support they have received from these organisations.

“I felt welcomed and supported”

Key challenges

At the same time, MYAN’s consultations with youth settlement services advocates across Australia highlight some complex challenges within the sector.

Some young people, with unmet needs, fall through the cracks

Some young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds fall through the cracks in available settlement and mainstream services and systems; and/or receive inadequate support:

- **Settlement services are not funded or equipped to support particular groups of young people.** This includes, for example, some asylum seekers on bridging visas⁷; international students (who are denied access to Medicare); and ‘forced migrants’ who may not secure refugee status, but have experienced events similar to those driving refugee movement.⁸

- **Parts of the youth sector and mainstream services lack the specialist capability required to respond to the needs of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.** It is also an ongoing challenge for all support services to understand and meet the intersectional needs of young people including with respect to gender, disabilities, LGBTQI+ youth and family roles, responsibilities and structures.
- **Gaps in funding for youth programs create service gaps.** For example, Settlement Engagement and Transition Support program providers often received less in grant funding than they tendered for, creating a barrier to effective service delivery. Examples of service gaps include inability to recruit and to respond to clients presenting with more complex needs.⁹ There are also cases where the funding has not matched the extended eligibility for these programs and the growing demand for longer access.
- **In many areas, there is a shortage of youth-focused services.** For example, there are fewer services in metropolitan Queensland, the Northern Territory, Tasmania and rural and regional Australia than in other areas. There are also gaps in services focussed on health and social supports, meeting tangible skills needs (for example, driving and computer skills) and to address housing needs for young people.

These challenges intersect with the ongoing priority issues for young people outlined in the following sections of this report.¹⁰

Gaps in collaboration and co-ordination

Limited collaboration among local service providers (multicultural and mainstream) can lead to inefficiencies in service funding, design and delivery. These inefficiencies are a significant factor contributing to why some young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds do not receive adequate or holistic support.

In practice, collaboration only occurs irregularly and usually only in relation to specific issues. For instance, there is a need for greater co-ordinated collaboration with community organisations to extend resources beyond the individual organisational capacity, to support larger initiatives like mentoring programs or access to social services.

Key barriers to greater collaboration include:

- **Gaps in local coordination and leadership.** Collaboration is usually limited to occasional co-operative meetings and more frequent multicultural networking meetings.
- **No strong incentives to co-ordinate mainstream and settlement services, nor for those services to collaborate.** For example, participants recognised the missed opportunity to align programs for mainstream students and culturally diverse students, which could better address the unique needs of diverse young people
- **‘Gate-keeping’ cultures and inefficient competition within the settlement sector.** For instance, the system of short-term grants drive competition among service providers when collaboration would be more efficient. This can lead to funds being allocated inefficiently and may result in missed opportunities when effective programs run out of funding. Short term grants also impose a heavy and inefficient administrative burden on small organisations with limited staff.

Settlement sector call to action

In response to these challenges, there is **growing interest among settlement sector advocates in exploring place-based opportunities** to:

- Improve local collaboration and better allocate and share resources within the sector
- Provide inclusive and appropriate settlement services.
- Assist in building the capability of mainstream service providers to support multicultural young people and the youth focussed support in the Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP).
- Pilot new models, especially in multicultural settings with smaller groups, such as Hobart and Darwin. Central collaboration and case management hubs could be established to focus on the holistic journey of young people, integrating housing, education, and employment support.
- Continue fostering national coordination between states and territories to expand or adapt successful one-off programs in areas facing similar challenges.

⁵ See for example, Department of Home Affairs (2022), Young people with refugee and migrant background at <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/settlement-services-subsite/files/young-people-evaluation.pdf>

⁶ See for example, National Skills Commission (2021) State of Australia’s Skills 2021: now and into the future at <https://www.nationalskillscommission.gov.au/reports/state-australias-skills-2021-now-and-future>; and Refugee Council of Australia (2010), Economic, civic and social contributions of refugees and humanitarian entrants: A Literature Review at chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/settlement-services-subsite/files/economic-civic-social-contributions-refugees-humanitarian-entrants-literature-review_access.pdf

⁷ See for example, Refugee Council of Australia (2019) Barriers to education for people seeking asylum and refugees on temporary visas at <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/barriers-education-seeking-asylum/>

⁸ For example, many young people arriving through the Family stream of the Migration Program are arriving in Australia to unite with their families who have been humanitarian arrivals in the past and who may not be in a position to support them. Others who arrive under the Family Stream are from the same

country of origin as many young people arriving under the Humanitarian Program, and may have experienced similar vulnerabilities relating to their pre-migration experiences, including exposure to trauma. See MYAN (Australia). National Youth Settlement Framework: A guide for supporting and measuring good practice with young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in Australia. (2020).

⁹ Deloitte (August 2023) Evaluation of the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) Grants Program

¹⁰ Department of Home Affairs (October 2022) Meeting the needs of migrants and refugee youth: Service Mapping.

1.2 Regional settlement today

MYAN has consistently supported the idea of regional settlement for migrants and refugees as offering multiple potential benefits to individuals and communities, both economic and social.¹¹ We agree that regional settlement can offer:

- **benefits for host communities** through the valuable contribution that the skills, experience and resilience of migrants can make, including through increased economic transactions, bridged labour gaps and increased diversity,¹² and
- **benefits for all people who live in regional areas including migrants and refugees**, including community connection, access to nature and, in regional cities, ease of travelling within the city particularly for work.¹³

However, MYAN has also consistently advocated that, in order to realise these benefits, careful planning is required, as well as a strong understanding of what works and what is needed with respect to the capacity of local community and settlement services to respond to the needs of young people, particularly within the domains of employment, education and training, housing and health and well-being.¹⁴

At this stage, limitations to the scale and outcomes of regional settlement remain significant. For instance, **only 14% of migrants live outside capital cities, compared to 34% of Australians overall who live in these areas; and one out of every four migrants living in regional areas moves away within five years.**¹⁵

To better understand the current impact on, and experience of regional settlement for, young people, MYAN included in our consultations:

- regional areas: Gippsland, Armidale and Toowoomba, and
- smaller cities: Canberra, Hobart and Darwin.

Key challenges

The key challenges identified by young people and sector workers in regional areas were:

Major gaps in education, health services and employment opportunities

- **Constraints on availability and quality of education.** Key here is the chronic shortage of teachers, and in particular, experienced teachers in high schools and to deliver TAFE courses. This includes both teacher recruitment and retention. There are also few post-school practical training courses available because of teacher shortages and small youth populations resulting in fewer opportunities for individuals seeking to enhance their practical skills after completing their formal education.
- **Critical gaps in English language training and support.** Some regional areas, including in Tasmania, do not have face-to-face intensive language programs and youth focussed AMEPs, which are essential for both language acquisition and social connection. MYAN notes that online programs are useful to sit alongside face-to-face programs when young people are not able to attend in person, however they are not sufficient on their own.
- **Critical gaps in health care:** Chronic shortages of, and long waiting periods for, essential health services including General Practitioners (GPs), dentists and mental health providers limit opportunities for preventative health care and lead to poorer health outcomes.
- **Limited meaningful employment opportunities** including challenges finding jobs for a range of reasons including insufficient jobs that meet career aspirations and existing skills; and racism and discrimination in recruitment processes.
- **Limited capacity of settlement service to provide targeted and flexible support tailored to the diverse needs of young people.**

Inadequate infrastructure

- **Difficulty finding housing in some areas and increased risk of homelessness** because of lack of rental properties and stable long-term housing in regional areas; and because of peoples' concerns about lack of security and safety in some areas. There is also a gap in services available to support young people at risk of homelessness.
- **Restrictions to the positive socio-economic engagement of young people due to limited transport infrastructure.**

Disengagement of young people and desire to move to urban areas

- **Disengagement from education.** The lack of intensive language programs and support in schools can lead to disengagement from education being a particularly significant issue.
- **The desire of young people to relocate after completing their education including, in particular, urban migration.**

“There’s nothing for young people. No entertainment, no employment, no good education. Young people want to go to the city.”

We note that many of these issues are broadly consistent with those faced by other people living in regional areas. For example, living in regional cities often means dealing with limited job and career opportunities, lower incomes, reduced access to specialised services (particularly healthcare), and more limited social and recreational events, all while contending with limited public transportation.¹⁶ These challenges can then be amplified for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds because of their specific complex needs and circumstances.

Our findings also corroborate existing research and echo the concerns voiced by MYAN and other advocates for refugees and migrants. For instance, a recent report by Settlement Services International (SSI) highlighted issues such as an excessive reliance on visa conditions and new regional visas to promote regional settlement, without enough focus on helping newcomers establish themselves and encouraging urban residents to move to regional areas. SSI also identified how inflexible funding models for settlement programs make it harder to address regional constraints that affect refugee settlement, and a shortage of resources makes it difficult to initiate the community engagement initiatives that are vital to foster inclusion and a sense of belonging.¹⁷

The findings are particularly concerning because they undermine the potential for:

- **good individual outcomes for the young people.** For example, MYAN has previously found that settlement challenges are exacerbated for young people settled in areas facing persistent issues around housing affordability, high rates of youth unemployment and low numbers of humanitarian migrants;¹⁸ and
- **good regional outcomes associated with long term settlement.**

¹¹ See for instance MYAN Australia (2022) Submission to Discussion Paper: Next steps to improve Australia's settlement and integration of refugees at <https://myan.org.au/policy-advocacy/#1678348027130-3bbadd73-b15f>

¹² Piper, M (2017), Refugee Settlement in Regional Areas: Evidence based good Practice. Published by the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Available at http://multicultural.nsw.gov.au/about_us/publications/others/

¹³ AHURI (2022) Understanding the lived experience and benefits of regional cities at <https://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/final-reports/377>

¹⁴ See for instance MYAN Australia (2022) Submission to Discussion Paper: Next steps to improve Australia's settlement and integration of refugees at <https://myan.org.au/policy-advocacy/#1678348027130-3bbadd73-b15f>

¹⁵ Department of Home Affairs (2023), Review of the migration system at <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/reports-and-publications/reviews-and-inquiries/departamental-reviews/migration-system-for-australias-future> based on 2016 ABS data.

¹⁶ AHURI (2022) Understanding the lived experience and benefits of regional cities at <https://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/final-reports/377>

¹⁷ Settlement Services International (SSI) 2023, Regional migration and settlement: putting down roots to revitalise regional communities in Australia at <https://apo.org.au/node/322957>

¹⁸ MYAN & MCA (2021) Women at Risk Visa Holders (Subclass 204) Consultation Report Available at: <https://myan.org.au/reports-publications/women-at-risk-visa-holder-subclass-204-myan-consultation-report-in-collaboration-with-migration-council-australia-mca/>



Part 2: Key ongoing issues faced by young people settling in Australia

A strong theme to emerge from MYAN's consultations were how many of the young people across the country raised similar issues; and how consistent these issues were over time. This resonates deeply with MYAN's experience working with young people over many years. The key ongoing issues faced by young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds relate to education; employment; health and wellbeing; social connectedness, belonging and identity; and navigating Australian services, systems and laws. Racism and discrimination also consistently and persistently continues to cause harm to young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in relation to each of these issues.

The consistency and persistence of these issues raised by young people and sector advocates reported in this section speaks to the complexity of the issues and the challenge in designing and implementing workable effective solutions. All issues intersect and overlap, and many also present challenges for the broader Australian population.

At the same time, young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds are not a homogenous group, and their settlement experiences vary greatly. It is essential to understand and respond to the specific needs of, and distinct challenges faced by, different groups, including according to where they live and the diversity in their cultures, identities, experiences and abilities.



2.1 Education

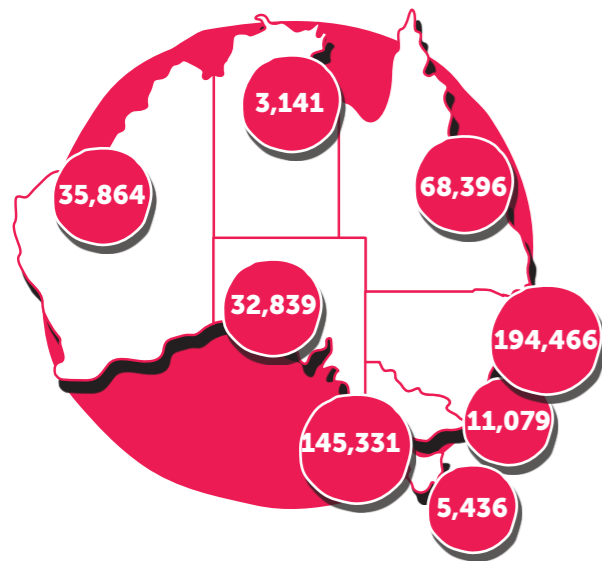
Many of the young people MYAN consulted with identified education as a priority in their settlement journey, recognising that it is the key to realising their aspirations, enabling social, civic, and economic participation, fostering personal well-being, and forging successful lives in Australia.

“I am really focussed towards my education and the only things that I want at the moment is to get good grades, learn new skills and I really want to be a leader.”

Yet, education related challenges were raised as significant issues by both international students and other young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds with whom MYAN consulted.

International students - challenges

There are currently more than half a million (522,444) international students enrolled in Australia, with wide variation in how many are enrolled in each state and territory.¹⁹



Too many of these international students are experiencing sometimes acute situational vulnerability impacting both their educational experience and overall well-being. Some of the challenges identified by international students MYAN consulted include:

- **Financial scarcity and strain** driven by the high cost of living and employment challenges
- **Employment challenges:** Some international students have found it difficult to secure employment (essential to meet the rising cost of living), and others, who were able to work, have found it difficult to manage work and study commitment
- **Challenges finding suitable accommodation and associated risks of homelessness,** particularly in cities where rental prices are high and student accommodation is scarce.
- **Feelings of isolation, loneliness and marginalisation** negatively impacting mental health and sense of belonging.

“ I feel no motivation; I get no encouragement, or targeted support; It has a big impact.... I want to drop out, but if I do, I know it's hard to get back into the system.”

- **Inadequate access to healthcare services:** International students are denied access to Medicare and can face difficulties accessing private health insurance. Some international students also found the counselling support available on campus to be insufficient.

We also note that many other young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds engaged in higher education face consistent challenges.

“ There isn't enough counselling on campus and it's not culturally responsive. It leads to distrust because no-one responds to my needs.”

Challenges for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds:

Some of the education related challenges identified by young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds that MYAN consulted include:

- **Lack of transitional support for students coming into mainstream high schools from Intensive English Language Centres (IELC).** Local schools not set up to provide the transitional support needed to ease students into mainstream schooling also contribute to disengagement and early leaving from school.

“ We really need peer support and coordination to support the transition process and ease the students into a new environment. It's an issue with long term negative consequences and we're seeing the disengagement happening.”

- **Some settlement areas (for example Tasmania) have no IELCs or youth specific AMEP; and existing IELCs lack basic literacy foundation.**
- **Limited options in available technical/ vocational TAFE courses in regional areas** due to the lower numbers of students and difficulties engaging qualified teachers in regional locations.
- **Difficulty engaging or retaining teachers, particularly experienced teachers, and particularly in regional areas.**

- **Limiting assumptions made by teachers because of a student's cultural and/or religious background.** Reported incidents include:

- Being placed in the wrong English language level;
- Being discouraged from certain academic pathways or units of study;
- Assuming a student could not participate in swimming classes or sex education classes; and
- Lacking an understanding about the contexts young people have arrived from.

“ I was placed in an ESL [English as a Second Language] class without assessment or conversation, based solely on my appearance and background.”

¹⁹ Department of Education, PRISMS and Department of Home Affairs, Student Visa Program data at <https://www.education.gov.au/international-education-data-and-research/data-visualisation-location-enrolled-international-student>. Numbers include those international students who are confirmed as being outside Australia or whose location is unknown (between five and ten percent depending on the state or territory). Current as at 1 July 2023.

2.2 Employment

Economic participation in the form of secure employment is fundamental to successful settlement outcomes for all migrants and refugees, and particularly for young people, who will spend most of their working life in Australia.

The aspirations of our consultation participants were as diverse as the participants themselves. Like most young people, those who attended our consultations dream of being financially self-sufficient, independent and living in their own homes. They aspire to be professional sports players, teachers and doctors, pop stars and to run their own non-government organisations. There is pressure to succeed, from the individual, the family or a combination of both, with many expressing they feel restricted in these expectations or are motivated to succeed in recognition of the sacrifices and lost opportunities of their parents.

Yet, too many young migrants and refugees in Australia (around 20% from non-English speaking households aged 15 to 29) are not engaged in education, employment, or training. Closing this gap could boost the economy by \$44 billion and create 54,000 jobs.²⁰

The costs associated with poor employment outcomes for young people include low income and poverty with reliance on government income support payments, out of reach health care costs, feelings of exclusion and the loss of social and community integration. Though all young people in Australia can face challenges related to high levels of unemployment and underemployment upon leaving high school, young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds face additional barriers that can exclude them from engaging meaningfully with Australia's labour market.

It is clear from our consultations that employment challenges for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in Australia persist and stem from a complex range of interconnected factors.

Some of the employment challenges identified by participants in the current MYAN consultation include:

- **Barriers in skilled migration assessments:**

Young people who seek to work under skills migration are significantly hampered by the failure to recognise their qualifications and experience together with the difficulty they face gaining local work experience.

- **Discrimination and bias** within recruitment processes and in the workforce, perpetuating systemic inequality:

- **The high cost of living,** which is forcing young people to take up more working hours, often at the cost of their education, volunteering opportunities and other recreational activities:

- **Employer reluctance to hire young people on visas:**

Employers who often unaware about different working visas/work entitlements are can be unwilling to hire young people on any type of visas:

- **Lack of support** for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds to get job ready.

“Employers take advantage of our lack of knowledge”

“I’m working every single day”

“I had a company withdraw my job offer once they realised I was on a working visa—even though I’m totally able to work.”

2.3 Health and wellbeing

The health and wellbeing of young people during adolescence is important in establishing strong foundations for their futures. Health and wellbeing for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds is a critical aspect of settlement that requires careful consideration and tailored approaches from policy makers and health professionals. These individuals often face unique challenges in their journey to adapt to a new culture and healthcare system.

Many persistent issues faced by young people navigating the primary healthcare system could be eased if they had timely and affordable access to healthcare professionals who possess the expertise and cultural sensitivity necessary to provide effective services.

Access to mental health support is particularly important for young people, including because adolescence is such a critical developmental stage. In 2021–22, people aged 12–24 made up 23% (663,000) of all people receiving Medicare-subsidised mental health-specific services.²¹

Although research indicates that young people from refugee backgrounds experience much higher levels of psychological stress than the general Australian youth population, they are consistently underrepresented in mainstream youth mental health services data. National data shows that young people from humanitarian backgrounds have much higher levels of psychological stress—31% of young men and 37% of young women compared with 5% of men and 12% of women from the general youth population of Australia²²—however there are lower than expected numbers of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds presenting to mental health services²³

“We’ve been waiting five years for a clinical psychologist to come to the town”

“There’s a three year waiting list for the dentist here.”

Physical and mental health was highly valued by young people in our consultations, who see it as an important part of their lives. However, most reported that they were feeling increasingly stressed about the current cost of living crisis and described multiple ways this was impacting negatively on their well-being. Additional concerns related to well-being included responsibilities and pressures to support family, support for LGBTQI+ young people and racism and discrimination.

Some of the health and wellbeing challenges identified by participants in the current MYAN consultation include:

- **Lack of access to appropriate, affordable and timely (early intervention) mental health support by skilled practitioners.** There are high levels of acute unmet need, including due to the chronic shortage of culturally sensitive mental health services tailored specifically for young refugees and migrants.

“I haven’t had access to good mental health care. The cost is too high and there is no cultural sensitivity.”

- **Insufficient access to essential health care services:** Limited dentists, doctors (including in particular female doctors) are resulting in delayed or inadequate medical care (particularly in regional settlement areas), sometimes leading to long term serious physical and mental health consequences.

21 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2023) Health and Young People at <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/children-youth/health-of-young-people>

22 National Mental Health Commission (2019) National report 2019: Monitoring mental health and suicide prevention reform at <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/getmedia/f7af1c9b-d767-4e22-8e46-de09b654072f/2019-national-report.pdf>

23 Colucci, E. Minas, H. Szwarc, J. Guerra, C. & Paxton, G. (2015). In or out? Barriers and facilitators to refugee-background young people accessing mental health services. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 52(6):766-90

- **Complexity of the role young people play in family and community resettlement.** The support young people offer to family and community members includes translating, interpreting, social support, referrals, providing financial assistance and care and support for their younger siblings comes at a high cognitive, emotional and health cost. Many young people are also unidentified/informal carers of parents with serious health issues.
- **Lack of support for LGBTQI+ young people:** LGBTQI+ young people may not be able to rely on family, cultural, community, religious and/or faith connections common to other newly arrived young people for support, and there can be barriers to appropriate support and service provision from settlement organisations due to a lack of visibility of LGBTQI+ inclusive services, inadequate data collection methods and limited resources and staff capacity/knowledge in support services.
- **High impact of cost of living crisis on health and wellbeing:** Young people report trouble paying bills, missing school to work more hours, increasing stress and feelings of pressure particularly if they are supporting others, food insecurity, chronic housing stress, overwork, and pressure to participate in exploitative work practices.

2.4 Social connectedness, belonging and identity

Social connectedness, a sense of belonging, and a strong sense of identity are critically important to the lives of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. When young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds experience a strong sense of belonging, identity and social connectedness, it positively impacts their self-esteem, mental health, and overall life satisfaction. Yet each pose significant challenges, particularly in the complex context of the balance between family, community and broader cultures and individual intersectional diversity.

Data from the Multicultural Youth Australia Census Status Report 2017-2018 (MY Australia Census) suggests that young people are not bound by simple ethnic categories and that identity is 'intersectional, multi-layered, place-based and influenced by a range of ethnic, religious and cultural attachments'.²⁴ Some of the multiple intersecting factors that underlay the diversity of this cohort include country of origin, cultural background, migration stream, socioeconomic status, gender, sexuality, faith, and age on arrival, level of English proficiency, prior education, family structures and workforce experience.²⁵

Recognising and accommodating these diverse experiences and identities including in shared spaces is paramount in creating an inclusive and cohesive society where social connectedness, belonging, and identity are celebrated and embraced.

The young people MYAN consulted across the country consistently called for more recreational spaces, activities, and opportunities to connect

with each other. They expressed a keen interest in their well-being, physical fitness and social lives but many encountered obstacles when attempting to participate in recreational activities, primarily due to issues related to transportation, finances, and limited options.

Some of the challenges to social connectedness identified by participants in the current MYAN consultation include:

- **The need for a shared identity that considers intersection and diversity and creates spaces to foster a third culture.** As articulated in our consultations with young people, a third culture is responsive to the core challenge faced by many young multicultural people of how to 'reconcile' their cultural heritage with the broader mainstream Australian culture:
- **The lack of youth specific spaces to dance, connect, and gather** which contributes to social isolation, disengagement and/or more destructive behaviour:

"A third culture is not one or the other, it's everything. It's not subtractive. It's additive to identity."

"I really want to make more friends."
"I don't feel like there are any safe spaces to hang out...except maybe for school."

- **Limited transport options, which are a major barrier to socio-economic engagement and wellbeing:** Parents lack the time and means to transport young people as needed, public transportation is often irregular or unreliable, community organisations are only able offer limited transport for specific events, and the presence of racism on public transport acts as a significant deterrent.
- **Practical barriers to learning to drive,** with being unable to drive limiting opportunities for some young people to socially connect, particularly in regional areas, and so compounding isolation, disengagement and poor mental health. High financial costs and the absence of interpreters or available adults to instruct them prevent many young people from learning to drive.
- **Prohibitive financial costs:** The costs associated with some sport and recreation activities (club fees, class costs, gym memberships, equipment, transportation and accommodation etc.) is prohibitive:
- **Lack of facilities or programs to engage local youth, and/or the short term funding cycles of many programs can** hinder long-term settlement objectives.

"We were offered art classes as an activity but the cost per class was too high to attend."

2.5 Navigating Australian services, systems and laws

Young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds often encounter a complex and multifaceted challenge in navigating the web of Australian systems, services, and laws. Navigating the multitude of unfamiliar regulations, social structures, and bureaucratic processes poses a significant cognitive and emotional challenge for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. The level of accessibility and relevance of these institutions and processes have a profound impact on their daily lives.

Some of the challenges in navigating Australian services and systems identified by participants in the current MYAN consultation include:

- **Significant challenges with Centrelink** including:
 - **Language barriers** that make it challenging for newly arrived young people to understand Centrelink requirements and communicate effectively, often leading to misinformation within communities.
 - **Complex eligibility criteria**, compounded by a lack of knowledge of the Australian welfare system, that make it difficult for young migrants to determine their eligibility for various benefits.
 - **Many young migrants lack necessary documentation** for Centrelink applications, including proof of identity, residency, and income.
 - **Delays in processing claims**, often due to language barriers and lack of documentation, create financial difficulties for young people and can burden their families.

- **Complex, unfair skills assessment processes** including failure to recognise overseas qualifications and work experience.
- **Young people bear an unfair burden as 'life brokers'**, assisting family and community members in navigating Australian services and systems. This includes tasks such as translating, interpreting, submitting applications, making referrals, and providing financial assistance. This work can inappropriately expose them to private and sensitive information about their families and communities; and reduce the time and resources they need to navigate their own complex settlement and life journeys. One significant reason why this work falls to young people is that the assumption that they will take on this role is built into many mainstream and settlement services for older adults and younger children.
- **Low awareness of laws and regulations:** The newfound freedom and rights young people experience in Australia can lead to engagement in risky behaviours due to a lack of awareness about laws and regulations.

“I feel the burden of a broken system.”



2.6 Racism and discrimination

Racism and discrimination are significant and entrenched social issues in Australia, causing great harm at an individual, community and societal level.

It was clear from MYAN's consultations that racism and discrimination continue to have a profound and detrimental impact on the lives of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds, persisting in relation to every one of main issues covered in this section of the report, causing harm and undermining good outcomes. Constant exposure to discrimination, prejudice, and systemic racism takes a toll on their mental health, leading to higher rates of anxiety, depression, and prolonged stress. It chips away at their self-esteem, creates feelings of inferiority, and erodes their sense of belonging in society. It also impacts on physical health and can have long term negative socio-economic consequences for young people.

Some of the instances of racism and discrimination identified by participants in the current MYAN consultation include:

- **Racism in schools:**
 - **Racism and discrimination prevalent in school, from both students and teachers:** Many young people believe that it is becoming worse, and that schools are ill equipped to deal with this. Many young people and stakeholders report that schools see racism as 'too political' to address.
 - **Existing anti-bullying policies in schools fail to address racial discrimination and racism:** Young people who are targets of racist verbal or physical abuse are can be punished the same way as perpetrators under existing school bullying policies:

“Calling out racist behaviour in my school means you just get punished as well.”

“I feel like my school only cares about its reputation, not our well-being.”

- **Racism on public transport:** Young people regularly experience racism and discrimination on public transport. This is distressing, causes anxiety and is a deterrent to young people's mobility.
- **Discrimination in recruitment and workplace interactions:** Young people face countless instances of subtle and outright discrimination when searching for job opportunities or during workplace interactions.
- **Burden of speaking about racism and discrimination:** Many young people are tired of being asked to talk about their personal experiences of racism and discrimination, including because it can be triggering or distressing to continue to recall these experiences for other people (for example, during consultations).

Part 3: Snapshots of local communities, challenges and opportunities

The local snapshots in this part of the report highlight both the common issues faced by young migrants and refugees across Australia and the specific challenges and opportunities unique to each area. The following table summarises some of the key local challenges and opportunities identified in each of the areas in which MYAN consulted:

	LOCAL CHALLENGES	LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES
Canberra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing & transport costs - Limited social connections - Racism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expanding number & role of youth workers - Mentorship programs - Transition initiative
Armidale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Job anxiety & language barriers - Limited access to health care - Support gaps in schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved coordination & collaboration - Mentoring programs - Youth-specific activities & services
Darwin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safety concerns & racial targeting - Complex cultural & family dynamics - Desire to leave after completing studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaboration with First Nations peoples Holistic pilot models - Connecting international students with work, including in settlement sector
Brisbane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Young people disengaged & at risk - Lack of access to timely, appropriate mental health support - Employment barriers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunities across Queensland: - Enhanced language support - Diverse and inclusive youth settlement strategies - Social integration with youth-informed decision-making
Toowoomba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integration challenges in the Yezidi community - Racism in schools - Poor housing conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Place based approaches like hubs in schools and community based hubs
Adelaide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Challenges facing young women at risk of forced marriage & LGBTQI+ - Complex family dynamics - Housing challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of a community of practice - Improved collaboration among service providers - Creation of a network for young people
Hobart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of tailored English language program - Limited access to GPs & mental health workers - Gaps in access to translators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved collaboration & case management - Further improvements to the existing good practice referral system between settlement and mainstream services - Proactive sector development
East Gippsland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited community engagement - Limited transport accessibility - Young people feel restricted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunities across Victoria: - Greater inclusion of people seeking asylum in mainstream services - More timely accessible support including in particular at important transition points - Reimagining volunteering
Melbourne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coping with traumatic life experiences - Overburdening of young people as translators - Gaps in timely, accessible services and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reimagining volunteering
Perth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preventable disengagement from schools - Exclusion from employment - Diverse experiences in connections to cultural and broader communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bridging service gaps during the transition period when young people arrive in Australia - Improving accessible information - Better employment pathways

We note that some of our consultations also brought in people beyond the borders of the LGA within which we held our meetings. For instance, our consultations in Brisbane also involved people from Logan and the Gold Coast.

3.1 Australian Capital Territory – Canberra snapshot

Data snapshot (for ACT, not specific to Canberra)

HIGH LEVEL DATA ABOUT PEOPLE BORN OVERSEAS LIVING IN ACT IN 2021:²⁶

130,274 people living in the ACT were born overseas; that is **29%** of total population of ACT

Young people **aged 10-24** born overseas made up **12%** of total number of people born overseas living in the ACT

Young people **aged 10-24** born overseas made up **19%** of total young people in same age group living in ACT

4.4% of 15+ year olds born overseas were unemployed (compared to **3.8%** all people aged 15+)

More detailed data about young people who arrived in Australia in the past 5 years and are currently living in the ACT as at September 2023:²⁷

MIGRANT VISAS (FAMILY/SKILLED):

Number of young people aged 12-24: **2,246**

Age on arrival: **15%** 12-17 years, **85%** 18-24 years

Top 3 main language spoken: **Mandarin, Nepali & English**

Top 3 countries of origin: **China, India & Nepal**

HUMANITARIAN VISAS

Number of young people aged 12-24: **185**

Age on arrival: **15%** 12-17 years, **56%** 18-24 years

Top 3 main language spoken:

Arabic, Dari, Farsi

Top 3 countries of origin:

Afghanistan, Iran, Syrian Arab Republic

Top 3 place-specific challenges

Young people and settlement advocates identified the following three top place-specific challenges in Canberra:

- **Housing and Transport Costs:** Both housing and transportation are costly and neither are easily accessible. For example, a lack of affordable on-campus accommodation forces many international students and other young people to live in areas far from their institutions. This, in turn, limits access to affordable public transportation, making it difficult for young people to reach classes and important appointments like job interviews on time. It also drives up the cost of living, especially for

those who rely on driving due to high petrol expenses.

- **Limited social connections and educational/job opportunities:** There are significant constraints on the availability of social connections, education, and employment in certain areas, leading to social exclusion and prompting some young people to relocate to NSW and Victoria. Issues reported in Canberra include racism in recruitment and employers being reluctant to hire individuals on certain visas; a lack of inclusive and safe spaces for young people to form social connections; gaps in teachers trained in teaching English as a second language; insufficient awareness

²⁶ ABS data by region (November 2022) at <https://dbr.abs.gov.au/region.html?lga&rgn=89399> presents data on ASGS Edition 3 (2021) for Main Structure, Greater Capital City Statistical Areas (GCCSA), Indigenous Structure and Local Government Areas (LGAs). The LGA data available in this product are based on 2021 Local Government Area boundaries. Remoteness Areas remain on ASGS Edition 2 (2016).

²⁷ Information derived from data provided by the Department of Home Affairs based on records of people arriving in Australia under the Humanitarian, Family and Skilled Migration programs as at 4 September 2023.

among teachers about available services and programs; a shortage of translators (resulting in children often having to serve as translators for their parents); and students feeling disengaged when transitioning from IELCs to high schools due to a lack of transition support.

- **Racism:** Young people consistently report encountering racism in schools, in recruitment and the workplace, by service providers, on public transportation, during sporting events, and in the community at large. This includes incidents where students and international students feel unsafe and excluded, often as a result of false assumptions being made about their level of education or English proficiency. There are not enough conversations about racism because it is an uncomfortable space. There was also significant concern with this reluctance to talk about racism and engage in any proactive way, including because of the misperception in the broader community that racism is not a significant issue and there is hence no “need” to address it.

Top 3 local opportunities

Young people and settlement advocates identified the following three top opportunities to improve settlement outcomes in Canberra:

- **Increasing Youth Workers:** Boosting the number of youth workers, including those specialising in multicultural youth support, in Intensive English Language Centres, mainstream primary and high schools, and settlement services. This expansion would aim to build on the progress made in increasing the presence of youth workers within schools. It could include enhancing the awareness of youth workers of the diverse range of issues faced by multicultural young people and expanding their roles to help coordinate access to available programs and support, as well as to proactively run programs themselves. Potential programs could include practical life skills like navigating public transport, budgeting and preparing for job interviews.
- **Mentorship Programs:** Developing platforms that enable more settled young people to mentor newly arrived young individuals from similar backgrounds, providing them with guidance, information, and support. These programs should be specifically youth focused and tailored.
- **Transition Programs:** Establishing transition initiatives for students moving from Intensive English Language Programs (IELP) to local high schools. These programs would aim to address the disengagement that can occur when students shift from supportive environments to new environments lacking equivalent support.

Good practice examples across the ACT

The Multicultural Hub Canberra drives improvements in the support available for multicultural young people, strengthens multicultural youth services, and strengthens connections between ‘mainstream’ and multicultural youth services. It has a focus on sector development to improve the capacity of services from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The Multicultural Hub Canberra is supported by the Youth Coalition of the ACT.

Good Practice Case Study: Research on young people’s experiences of racism

The Multicultural Hub Canberra collaborated with Curijo Pty Ltd and the ACT Children and Young People Commissioner to research the level and nature of racism experienced by children and young people in the ACT.²⁸ They found that over 80% of ACT children and young people have witnessed racism and 44% have experienced racism themselves. This racism occurred in schools, on public transport, in local communities and sporting events and in workplaces.

“Racism isn’t good it makes me mad. It really stabs me to know that adults GROWN ADULTS are racist even though they are smarter than children. This stabs me because kids learn from this and it affects their future and ruins it.”

This collaborative research is a valuable initiative to quantify and understand racism, and provide a platform for potential solutions suggested by children and young people.



28 ACT Human Rights Commission (in partnership with Multicultural Hub Canberra and Curijo Pty Ltd), 2023, ‘It really stabs me’: From resignation to resilience – children and young people’s experiences of racism in the ACT’ at [chrome-extension://efaidnbmninnbpcajpcgiciefindmkaj/https://hrc.act.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/It-really-stabs-me_2023.pdf](https://hrc.act.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/It-really-stabs-me_2023.pdf)

3.2 New South Wales – Armidale snapshot

Data snapshot

HIGH LEVEL DATA ABOUT PEOPLE BORN OVERSEAS LIVING IN ARMIDALE IN 2021:²⁹

4,321 people living in the Armidale were born overseas; that is **15%** of total population of Armidale

Young people **aged 10-24** born overseas made up **17%** of total number of people born overseas living in the Armidale

Young people **aged 10-24** born overseas made up **11%** of total young people in same age group living in Armidale

6.8% of 15+ year olds born overseas were unemployed (compared to **5.3%** all people aged 15+)

More detailed data about young people who arrived in Australia in the past 5 years living in Armidale as at September 2023:³⁰

MIGRANT VISAS (FAMILY/SKILLED):

Number of young people aged 12-24: **49**

Age on arrival: **18%** 12-17 years **82%** 18-24 years

Top 2 main language spoken: **Nepali & English**

Top 2 countries of origin: **Nepal & India**

HUMANITARIAN VISAS

Number of young people aged 12-24: **242**

Age on arrival: **50%** 12-17 years **50%** 18-24 years

Top 3 main language spoken:

Kurdish **Arabic** **Assyrian**

Top 2 countries of origin:

Iraq

Syrian Arab Republic

Top 3 place-specific challenges

Young people and settlement advocates identified the following three top place-specific challenges in Armidale:

- **Job Anxiety and Language Barriers:** Many young people were concerned about limited job opportunities and language barriers when seeking employment. Sector advocates suggest that part of this issue may stem from a disconnect between the expectations of young people and the types of entry-level job opportunities available.
- **Limited Access to Preventative Health Care:** There are gaps in timely access to preventive

healthcare services, including clinical psychologists, crisis intervention for mental health care, doctors (with a particular shortage of female GPs), and translators (especially for the Yezidi community).

- **Support Gaps in Schools and limited TAFE options:** There are deficiencies in support within schools, transitional support to mainstream schools, and youth-specific AMEPs. There are also only limited options for TAFE courses because of the gap in TAFE educators available in the area and the low number of students wanting to undertake courses making it difficult to make the courses financially and practically viable.

Top 3 local opportunities

Young people and settlement advocates identified the following three top opportunities to improve settlement outcomes in Armidale:

“Armidale is such a nice rural area with beautiful people. The weather is nice and it's full of nature.”

- **Coordination and Collaboration:** Build upon the strong existing collaboration and coordination between youth and community services. Enhance wrap-around support for multicultural young people through mainstream and youth services. Consider collaborating with community organisations in urban areas to guide local organisations on best practices in settlement.
- **Mentoring:** Establish more platforms for settled young people to mentor newly arrived young refugees and migrants from similar backgrounds. These services should provide them with advice, information, and support, particularly in high school settings and upon their arrival, helping them navigate the gap between their expectations and their actual likely experiences and opportunities in Australia. One potential opportunity could involve inviting speakers from programs like “SPEAK UP/SHOUT OUT” to visit Armidale and other regional areas.
- **Youth-Specific Activities and Services:** Expand the availability of youth-specific activities and services including creating opportunities for mainstream and newly settled youth to connect and form relationships. This should include youth-specific English language classes that aim to promote social inclusion, and create more opportunities for social connections and to foster life and employment skills.

Good practice examples across NSW

MYAN NSW is a state-wide specialist youth organisation supporting young people from diverse cultural communities across NSW. MYAN NSW has supported hundreds of young people from refugee and migrant communities to build their social networks, access skills, training and employment, and lead conversations on issues that impact them. They do this by supporting governments and the community services sector to collaborate with young people, and by using their unique culturally specific approach to engage newly arrived young people.

Good Practice Case Study:

KAIROS

KAIROS is an 18-month program co-designed by young people aiming to address and support young women and gender diverse young people from cultural communities as they learn to locally address global events that harm women, feminine identifying people, and queer communities.

KAIROS teaches young women ways to connect and create networks, and rediscover long standing community practices used to bring people together, all while answering the questions “Who gets to talk about us, and how?”

Good Practice Case Study:

Social inclusion through physical activity

*The **Driving Social Inclusion through Sport and Physical Activity (DSISPA)** project led by the University of New England is aimed at enhancing the well-being of Yezidi refugees in Armidale.³¹ Its focus has been holistic health through physical activity, fostering a sense of community belonging, promoting social inclusion, and strengthening partnerships. The program led to increased social connections within the Yezidi community, improved life skills, and better relationships, particularly for those who have experienced trauma. It has also inspired spin-off programs, with DSISPA partners collaborating to offer after-school programs for children from diverse primary schools in the region.*

²⁹ ABS data by region (November 2022) at <https://dbr.abs.gov.au/region.html?lyr=lga&rgn=10180> presents data on ASGS Edition 3 (2021) for Main Structure, Greater Capital City Statistical Areas (GCCSA), Indigenous Structure and Local Government Areas (LGAs). The LGA data available in this product are based on 2021 Local Government Area boundaries. Remoteness Areas remain on ASGS Edition 2 (2016).

³⁰ Information derived from data provided by the Department of Home Affairs based on records of people arriving in Australia under the Humanitarian, Family and Skilled Migration programs as at 4 September 2023.

³¹ O'Neill, Kristy; Serow, Penelope (2021) 'Driving Social Inclusion through Sport and Physical Activity (DSISPA) – the Armidale newly arrived migrant, refugee and friends regional sport network' Linking Research to the Practice of Education, 5(1), p. 4-6 at <https://hdl.handle.net/1959.11/52197>

3.3 Northern Territory – Darwin snapshot

Data snapshot

HIGH LEVEL DATA ABOUT PEOPLE BORN OVERSEAS LIVING IN DARWIN IN 2021: ³²

27,485 people living in Darwin were born overseas; that is **32%** of the total population of Darwin

Young people **aged 10-24** born overseas made up **13%** of total number of people born overseas living in Darwin

Young people **aged 10-24** born overseas made up **24%** of total young people in same age group living in Darwin

3.6% of 15+ year olds born overseas were unemployed (compared to **4.4%** of all people aged 15+ living in Darwin)

More detailed data about current young people who arrived in Australia in the past 5 years living in Darwin as at September 2023:³³

MIGRANT VISAS (FAMILY/SKILLED):

Number of young people aged 12-24: **697**

Age on arrival: **22%** 12-17 years **78%** 18-24 years

Top 3 main language spoken: **Nepali, English & Bengali**

Top 3 countries of origin: **Nepal, India & Philippines**

HUMANITARIAN VISAS

Number of young people aged 12-24:

61

Age on arrival:

56% 12-17 years

44% 18-24 years

Top 2 main language spoken:

Urdu

Swahili

Top 3 countries of origin:

Pakistan

Democratic Republic of Congo

Burundi

Top 3 place-specific challenges

Young people and settlement advocates identified the following three top place-specific challenges in Darwin:

- **Concerns about safety and racial targeting** particularly on public transport with participants reporting instances of racial targeting and physical assault. Also relevant here is the cultural differences in the communication styles of different communities living in Darwin.
- **Complex issues of cultural identity and family dynamics**, with a need to support multicultural young people who can feel disconnected from their families, communities and cultures. In acute cases this can involve inter-family and

inter-generational conflict including domestic violence and alcoholism. Associated with this is the need for better access to culturally responsive health care including to build the well-being of young people who face understandable challenges to mental health created by concerns about safety, the cost of living, employment prospects and social isolation.

- **Desire to leave after finishing education** because of social isolation and limited employment opportunities and educational support.

Top 3 local opportunities

Young people and settlement advocates identified the following three top opportunities to improve settlement outcomes in Darwin:

- **Collaborations with First Nations Communities:** Strong potential for collaboration between Melaleuca and First Nations organisations was identified, with opportunities to create inclusive and impactful initiatives. This could include, for example, involving First Nations people in induction programs for new arrivals and creating initiatives based on shared interests such as sport to encourage greater interaction and bridge cultural gaps between young First Nations and newly settled people. Care must be taken to avoid tokenism and foster initiatives that are meaningful and sustained.
- **Trial and implement holistic pilot models:** This would build on the existing strong holistic approach taken by Melaleuca, which acts as an effective facilitator, advocate and connector, integrating housing, education, and employment support; and the constructive collaboration between the Youth Affairs Office and multicultural organisation. Further work could be undertaken to create more opportunities for collaboration between government, the sector and young people. For example, a sustainable coordinator forum or network could be established to better address the needs of multicultural young people and ensure their voices are heard.
- **Connecting international students with work opportunities including in the settlement sector** to use their skills and experience to support others settling in Darwin, while at the same time supporting international students to be able to stay in Darwin while, and after, they complete their studies.

Good practice examples across the NT

Melaleuca Australia (MyNT) is youth led and collaborates with various key organisations across the NT concerned with the needs of young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. With support from Melaleuca Australia, MyNT works to promote the development and implementation of effective policy to attend to the diverse needs of these communities. Melaleuca works with schools and connects with people through various workshops and programs, focusing on supporting individuals with refugee and migrant backgrounds. They provide assistance in finding accommodation, support in schools, and community integration.

Good Practice Case Study:

Kindness festival

The annual Kindness Festival held in Darwin celebrates international students and multicultural communities. The festival is organised by international students as an affordable inclusive and creative event designed for everyone in the NT who wants to learn and embrace diversity and the importance of international students and multicultural communities in Australia.

Note: Events such as the Kindness Festival can be positive and important but are not, in themselves sufficient to drive social inclusion, address racism and develop inclusive cultural identities. One-off events must be part of a larger sustained collaborative strategic approach to address these issues.

Good Practice Case Study:

Embrace CaLD Youth Project: Resources for Mental Health and "Hear Us Out" Podcast

This project is a Melaleuca Australia partnership with Embrace Multicultural Mental Health, with funding provided by the Australian Government Department of Health. The youth-led, co-designed project resulted in the creation of a series of podcasts and videos, the content control of which was entirely in the hands of the young people involved. The resulting resources are their response to mental health and wellbeing themes they identified. Primarily, their collective focus was on producing resources which reduce isolation for multicultural youth through personal storytelling and which should also be used as educational pieces in schools as catalysts for conversation.

³² ABS data by region (November 2022) at <https://dbr.abs.gov.au/region.html?lyr=gccsa&rgn=7GDAR> presents data on ASGS Edition 3 (2021) for Main Structure, Greater Capital City Statistical Areas (GCCSA), Indigenous Structure and Local Government Areas (LGAs). The LGA data available in this product are based on 2021 Local Government Area boundaries. Remoteness Areas remain on ASGS Edition 2 (2016).

³³ Information derived from data provided by the Department of Home Affairs based on records of people arriving in Australia under the Humanitarian, Family and Skilled Migration programs as at 4 September 2023.

3.4 Queensland –Brisbane and Toowoomba snapshots

Brisbane Data snapshot

HIGH LEVEL DATA ABOUT PEOPLE BORN OVERSEAS LIVING IN BRISBANE IN 2021:³⁴

685,394 people living in Brisbane were born overseas that is **26%** of the total population of Brisbane

Young people **aged 10-24** born overseas made up **13%** of total number of people born overseas living in Brisbane

Young people **aged 10-24** born overseas made up **18%** of total young people in same age group living in Brisbane

5.7% of 15+ year olds born overseas were unemployed (compared to **5.5%** of all people aged 15+ living in Brisbane)

More detailed data about current young people who arrived in Australia in the past 5 years living in Brisbane as at September 2023:³⁵

MIGRANT VISAS (FAMILY/SKILLED):

Number of young people aged 12-24: **4,355**

Age on arrival: **11%** 12-17 years **89%** 18-24 years

Top 3 main language spoken: **Mandarin, English, Vietnamese**

Top 3 countries of origin: **China, India, Vietnam**

Toowoomba data snapshot

HIGH LEVEL DATA ABOUT PEOPLE BORN OVERSEAS LIVING IN TOOWOOMBA IN 2021:³⁶

23,996 people living in Toowoomba were born overseas; that is **13%** of the total population of Toowoomba

Young people **aged 10-24** born overseas made up **16%** of total number of people born overseas living in Toowoomba

Young people **aged 10-24** born overseas made up **11%** of total young people in same age group living in Toowoomba

5.9% of 15+ year olds born overseas were unemployed (compared to **5%** of all people aged 15+)

More detailed data about current young people who arrived in Australia in the past 5 years living in Toowoomba as at September 2023:³⁷

MIGRANT VISAS (FAMILY/SKILLED):

Number of young people aged 12-24: **333**

Age on arrival: **57%** 12-17 years **43%** 18-24 years

Top 3 main language spoken: **Nepali, Malaysian, Punjabi**

Top 3 countries of origin: **India, Nepal, Philippines**

HUMANITARIAN VISAS

Number of young people aged 12-24: **534**

Age on arrival: **53%** 12-17 years **43%** 18-24 years

Top 3 countries of origin:

Democratic Republic of Congo
Afghanistan
Syrian Arab Republic

Top 3 main language spoken:

Mandarin
English
Vietnamese

HUMANITARIAN VISAS

Number of young people aged 12-24: **722**

Age on arrival: **55%** 12-17 years **45%** 18-24 years

Top 3 countries of origin:

Iraq
Democratic Republic of Congo
Syrian Arab Republic

Top 3 main language spoken:

Kurdish
Swahili
Arabic (but note most did not record language)

Brisbane: Top 3 place-specific challenges

Young people and settlement advocates identified the following three top place-specific challenges in Brisbane:

- **Young people disengaged and at risk:** Some young people, including those who arrive on humanitarian visas, are disengaged from education and employment and facing issues including racism, homelessness, acute mental health challenges and intergenerational trauma and conflict.

- **Lack of timely appropriate mental health support** to deal with issues including anxiety and trauma related to issues in countries of origin, disconnect within families and communities, values conflicts between immediate and broader communities and difficulties in settling in Australia.
- **Employment barriers** including that some young people on temporary visas are not able to get employment, and the persistence of racism in recruitment.

Toowoomba: Top 3 place-specific challenges

Young people and settlement advocates identified the following three top place-specific challenges in Toowoomba:

- **Complex issues in Yezidi community integration:** Some Yezidi young people and young families with small children are moving from other regions to Toowoomba. Some have felt driven out of previous locations by racism and discomfort and are drawn towards Toowoomba because it has a growing Yezidi community. With this critical mass, community growth is naturally fostered, but government intervention and support is lacking. The growing community leads to the creation

of job and business opportunities for some people, but at the same time the perception of low employment opportunities is driving some young people (particularly teenagers) to consider moving away from Toowoomba. Family violence is an issue among Yezidi and Kurdish Communities and the topic of LGBTQI+ is still considered taboo in the community, but there are efforts to address both issues through meetings, conversations and education.

- **Racism in schools:** Racism within school environments is a consistent issue for many young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. Both students and teachers

³⁴ ABS data by region (November 2022) at <https://dbr.abs.gov.au/region.html?lyr=gccsa&rgn=3GBRI> presents data on ASGS Edition 3 (2021) for Main Structure, Greater Capital City Statistical Areas (GCCSA), Indigenous Structure and Local Government Areas (LGAs). The LGA data available in this product are based on 2021 Local Government Area boundaries. Remoteness Areas remain on ASGS Edition 2 (2016).

³⁵ Information derived from data provided by the Department of Home Affairs based on records of people arriving in Australia under the Humanitarian, Family and Skilled Migration programs as at 4 September 2023.

³⁶ ABS data by region (November 2022) at <https://dbr.abs.gov.au/region.html?lyr=lga&rgn=36910> presents data on ASGS Edition 3 (2021) for Main Structure, Greater Capital City Statistical Areas (GCCSA), Indigenous Structure and Local Government Areas (LGAs). The LGA data available in this product are based on 2021 Local Government Area boundaries. Remoteness Areas remain on ASGS Edition 2 (2016).

³⁷ Information derived from data provided by the Department of Home Affairs based on records of people arriving in Australia under the Humanitarian, Family and Skilled Migration programs as at 4 September 2023.

contribute to these instances of racism, with some teachers failing to address complaints when students report discriminatory actions, such as theft, and occasionally directing punishment towards the complaining young person. There are also sometimes conflicts between different cultural groups, including First Nations people, the Yezidi community, and other students.

- **Poor housing conditions and limited public transport:** Young people reported their homes being in poor repair, with some houses requiring significant renovation. There are limited public transport options (buses only) and some young people and children feel unsafe to walk.

Top 3 local opportunities across Queensland

Young people and settlement advocates identified the following three top opportunities to improve settlement outcomes in Queensland:

- **Enhance language support and education:** Expand language support programs and resources for young people from refugee backgrounds in Brisbane, including intensive language classes, tutoring, and language acquisition to facilitate their settlement journeys.
- **Diverse and inclusive youth settlement strategy for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds across Queensland.** This strategy should include building up the capacity of mainstream services and increasing collaboration between mainstream and settlement services. Strong mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of policies and programs aimed at supporting young refugees and migrants should also be built in, driving services to constantly improve by incorporating outcome assessments and feedback from these young people.
- **Social integration with youth-informed decision making across Queensland:** Invest in programs and initiatives that promote social integration, fostering connections between young refugees and the broader community, while actively involving young people in decision-making spaces.

Good practice examples

Multicultural Youth Queensland (MyQ) actively shapes state policies and advocates for multicultural youth, providing essential policy and program advice to work towards better outcomes for young people from diverse backgrounds. They deliver training, guidance, information, resources, and other support to enhance the capacity and cultural responsiveness of systems, sectors, and organisations. Additionally, they empower young individuals through Youth Leadership training, equipping them with essential skills in leadership, project management, public speaking, storytelling, youth facilitation, and teamwork to actively engage and thrive in their communities.

Good Practice Case Study: Multicultural Sports Club

The Multicultural Sports Club (MSC) provides sustainable participation opportunities for the community through sport and recreation by providing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment. It creates place based spaces, facilitating strong community leaderships, connections and identity, as well as providing young people with mentorship and experience to support future employment and employability. As an inclusive culturally responsive community sports club, MSC uses a soft entry approach to engage young people and community into social and physical activity. The club currently engages 13 staff and contractors from ten different countries and has created more than 16,900 engagements with people aged from one to 80 years old from 56 cultural backgrounds. The MSC earned the 2020 Play by the Rules Award for clubs for their work partnering with health, community and local organisations.

3.6 South Australia – Adelaide snapshot

Data snapshot

HIGH LEVEL DATA ABOUT PEOPLE BORN OVERSEAS LIVING IN ADELAIDE IN 2021: ³⁸

382,079 people living in the Adelaide were born overseas; that is **27%** of total population of Adelaide

Young people **aged 10-24** born overseas made up **10%** of total number of people born overseas living in the Adelaide

Young people **aged 10-24** born overseas made up **28%** of total young people in same age group living in Adelaide

6% of 15+ year olds born overseas were unemployed (compared to **5.5%** all people aged 15+ living in Adelaide)

More detailed data about young people who arrived in Australia in the past 5 years, living in Adelaide as at September 2023: ³⁹

MIGRANT VISAS (FAMILY/SKILLED):

Number of young people aged 12-24: **572**

Age on arrival: **17%** 12-17 years, **83%** 18-24 years

Top 3 main language spoken: **Mandarin, English, Vietnamese**

Top 3 countries of origin: **China, Malaysia, Vietnam**

HUMANITARIAN VISAS

Number of young people aged 12-24: **69**

Age on arrival: **71%** 12-17 years, **29%** 18-24 years

Top 3 countries of origin:

Syrian Arab Republic

Afghanistan

Pakistan

Top 3 main language spoken:

Arabic

Spanish

Farsi (Afghan)

Top 3 place-specific challenges

Young people and settlement advocates identified the following three top place-specific challenges in Adelaide:

- **Specific needs and challenges:** There are a number of specific cohorts among multicultural youth in Adelaide who face specific challenges. For instance, young women who have experienced or are at risk of forced marriage face unique challenges in terms of belonging, isolation, and trauma. Some LGBTIQ youth also face limited acceptance and social isolation within their cultural communities, where there is lack of acceptance.
- **Challenges with Family Dynamics:** Young people often feel challenged by their changing roles within families as they become more

independent and engage with Australian society. These challenges include balancing cultural expectations and family responsibilities with personal growth and development. Some young people also struggled with the role they must sometimes play as interpreters for family members.

- **Housing Challenges:** Housing affordability, availability, and suitability are major challenges. Some people have specific location preferences, and are hesitant to move due to perceptions of certain areas. There is also sometimes over-crowding, with temporary short-term accommodations provided with the aim of helping individuals transition to more permanent housing.

³⁸ ABS data by region (November 2022) at <https://dbr.abs.gov.au/region.html?lyr=gccsa&rgn=4GADE> presents data on ASGS Edition 3 (2021) for Main Structure, Greater Capital City Statistical Areas (GCCSA), Indigenous Structure and Local Government Areas (LGAs). The LGA data available in this product are based on 2021 Local Government Area boundaries. Remoteness Areas remain on ASGS Edition 2 (2016).

³⁹ Information derived from data provided by the Department of Home Affairs based on records of people arriving in Australia under the Humanitarian, Family and Skilled Migration programs as at 4 September 2023

Top 3 local opportunities

Young people and settlement advocates identified the following three top opportunities to improve settlement outcomes in South Australia:

- **Community of practice:** establish a committee or advisory group to bring together insights from various perspectives and generate ideas and recommendations and ideas for programs and initiatives to support young people, especially those facing challenges linked with disabilities, women at risk, and new arrivals.
- **Collaboration among service providers:** Identify and progress opportunities to improve collaboration among service providers and organisations to provide holistic support for young people, especially those from marginalised backgrounds.
- **Network for young people:** create a formal network or platform for young refugees and migrants including a regular forum or workshop to facilitate communication, collaboration, networking, capability building and social inclusion.

Good practice examples across South Australia

Good Practice Case Study:

City West Hub

Multicultural Youth South Australia (MYSA) operates the City West Hub as an after-hours crisis service, aiming to bolster protective factors and ensure a secure environment for young people navigating the Adelaide central business district on Friday and Saturday nights. This program provides culturally sensitive drop-in, assessment, and transport services for young individuals from diverse backgrounds, prioritising younger children and those involved in offending and health risk behaviours. MYSA conducts thorough assessments for each referred child or young person, coordinating tailored transport and case management support throughout the week to address unmet needs. Following up on all referrals, MYSA ensures the comprehensive well-being of children and young people, coordinating alternative support when necessary.

3.6 Tasmania – Hobart snapshot

Data snapshot

HIGH LEVEL DATA ABOUT PEOPLE BORN OVERSEAS LIVING IN HOBART IN 2021: ⁴⁰

15,728 people living in Hobart were born overseas; that is **13%** of the total population of Hobart

Young people **aged 10-24** born overseas made up **11%** of total number of people born overseas living in Hobart

Young people **aged 10-24** born overseas made up **17%** of total young people in same age group living in Hobart

10.7% of 15+ year olds born overseas were unemployed (compared to **7%** of all people aged 15+)

More detailed data about young people who arrived in Australia in the past 5 years, living in Hobart as at September 2023: ⁴¹

MIGRANT VISAS (FAMILY/SKILLED):

Number of young people aged 12-24: **467**

Age on arrival: **8%** 12-17 years, **92%** 18-24 years

Top 3 main language spoken: **Mandarin, Nepali, Vietnamese**

Top 3 countries of origin: **China, India, Nepal**

HUMANITARIAN VISAS

Number of young people aged 12-24: **21**

Age on arrival: **43%** 12-17 years, **57%** 18-24 years

Top 3 countries of origin:

too few to capture in the data

Top 3 main language spoken:

too few to capture in the data

Top 3 place-specific challenges

Young people and settlement advocates identified the following three top place-specific challenges in Hobart:

- **No access to appropriate/tailored English language programs for young people.** There is currently no IELC program nor youth specific AMEP in Hobart. Access to these programs and to broader educational support is essential for young people who have experienced interrupted schooling or have limited English proficiency. The cut off for youth participation in programs is also an ongoing challenge, particularly as some young people prefer to remain in youth programs rather than transitioning to adult programs.

- **A shortfall in the number of available GPs and mental health workers** has led to issues including poor access to, and continuity of, care. Some of the health care challenges young people have faced include accessing doctors, particularly GPs, and accessing mental health workers. For instance, it is difficult to find GPs who are accepting new patients and who use interpreters for non-English speaking patients.
- **Gaps in access to translators that are independent of local communities.** Essential public service staff, including police officers and doctors, do not always use translators, instead sometimes inappropriately relying on young people to act as translators for their



⁴⁰ ABS data by region (November 2022) at <https://dbr.abs.gov.au/region.html?lyr=lga&rgn=62810> presents data on ASGS Edition 3 (2021) for Main Structure, Greater Capital City Statistical Areas (GCCSA), Indigenous Structure and Local Government Areas (LGAs). The LGA data available in this product are based on 2021 Local Government Area boundaries. Remoteness Areas remain on ASGS Edition 2 (2016).

⁴¹ Information derived from data provided by the Department of Home Affairs based on records of people arriving in Australia under the Humanitarian, Family and Skilled Migration programs as at 4 September 2023.

families and communities. Some people from migrant and refugee backgrounds were reluctant to request translators because they have felt concerned about breaches of privacy (in a context where most translators are members of their local communities). This issue has led to situations where young people have been asked to interpret for others during medical appointments, placing them in a vulnerable position.

Top 3 local opportunities

Young people and settlement advocates identified the following three top opportunities to improve settlement outcomes in Tasmania:

- **Explore potential for piloting an innovative model, using a centre or similar entity as a hub for collaboration and case management, and focusing on the holistic journey of young individuals.** Hobart was identified as a good multicultural setting for this pilot, because of the relatively small size of the sector and familiarity among organisations.
- **Further develop the referral system between settlement and mainstream services.** This initiative could build on the current referral system in Tasmania, which is already an example of good practice, with the Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania (MRC Tas) effectively communicating with other relevant sector support services to coordinate efficient and holistic case management for young people.
- **Proactive sector development, particularly in regional areas with less diverse populations.** This includes coordinating services and developing policies and training to prepare schools to support young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. All young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds must have access to youth-focused face to face English language programs.

Good practice examples across Tasmania

Multicultural Youth Tasmania (MYT) is a program of MRC Tas. MYT provides targeted services and programs to support young people aged up to 25 years from multicultural backgrounds to reach their full potential and thrive as active members of the Tasmanian community. MYT services include direct client work as well as sector development in the youth, education and community spaces to ensure the needs of multicultural youth are being met within mainstream services. MYT delivers youth Settlement Engagement Transition Support (SETS) for Southern Tasmania as well as a range of state-wide individual and recreation programs.

Good Practice Case Study: Training and Professional Development

MRC Tas delivers training on-site, as well as in workplaces and other community venues, to community sector and government employees, industry, volunteers, students, and others who are interested in understanding how to increase their awareness of cultural diversity and capacity to provide support to young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. Bicultural workers are a key element in the success of this training. One of the training sessions, titled "Working with CaLD Youth," covers various aspects, including the demographics of CaLD youth in Tasmania, discussion of the humanitarian settlement program, exploration of cultural identity, introduction to the National Youth Settlement Framework, examination of young people's experiences in the settlement journey, identification of common challenges faced by all young people, improvement of understanding to facilitate good youth settlement through active citizenship, application of good practice capabilities, and provision of information on services and resources available in the Tasmanian youth sector.

Good Practice Case Study: Career Coaching

MYT hosts a weekly Career Coaching series which helps young people from migrant and refugee or asylum seeker backgrounds to develop job-seeking skills and enhance their cultural knowledge and career management skills. Topics include interviewing, resume writing, using LinkedIn, transferable skills and answering selection criteria.

3.7 Victoria – East Gippsland and Melbourne snapshots

In Victoria MYAN conducted consultations in East Gippsland and Melbourne.

East Gippsland Data snapshot

HIGH LEVEL DATA ABOUT PEOPLE BORN OVERSEAS LIVING IN EAST GIPPSLAND IN 2021:⁴²

5,766 people living in East Gippsland were born overseas; that is **12%** of the total population of East Gippsland

Young people **aged 10-24** born overseas made up **4%** of total number of people born overseas living in East Gippsland

Young people **aged 10-24** born overseas made up **3%** of total young people in same age group living in East Gippsland

4% of 15+ year olds born overseas were unemployed (compared to **4.4%** of all people aged 15+)

More detailed data about young people who arrived in Australia in the past 5 years, living in East Gippsland as at September 2023:⁴³

MIGRANT VISAS (FAMILY/SKILLED):

Number of young people aged 12-24: **18**

Age on arrival: **61%** 18-24 years

Top 3 main language spoken: **numbers too small to identify languages**

Top country of origin: **China**

HUMANITARIAN VISAS

Numbers too small to capture in the data

East Gippsland: Top 3 place-specific challenges

Young people and settlement advocates identified the following three top place-specific challenges in East Gippsland:

- **Community outreach and engagement:** There is a need for more activities and safe spaces for young people to build relationships and trust. There is also a need for more engagement and collaboration to effectively support young people and their communities.
- **Transport** is a significant challenge for engagement, with some young people finding it hard to access activities and events. Particular

issues that were identified as raising barriers to participating in sport including funding, affordability and transport.

- **Desire to leave after finishing education** because of social isolation and limited employment opportunities and educational support.

⁴² ABS data by region (November 2022) at <https://dbr.abs.gov.au/region.html?lgr=lg&rgn=22110> presents data on ASGS Edition 3 (2021) for Main Structure, Greater Capital City Statistical Areas (GCCSA), Indigenous Structure and Local Government Areas (LGAs). The LGA data available in this product are based on 2021 Local Government Area boundaries. Remoteness Areas remain on ASGS Edition 2 (2016).

⁴³ Information derived from data provided by the Department of Home Affairs based on records of people arriving in Australia under the Humanitarian, Family and Skilled Migration programs as at 4 September 2023.

Melbourne Data snapshot

HIGH LEVEL DATA ABOUT PEOPLE BORN OVERSEAS LIVING IN MELBOURNE IN 2021:⁴⁴

1,751,536 people living in Melbourne were born overseas; that is **31%** of the total population of Melbourne

Young people **aged 10-24** born overseas made up **14%** of total number of people born overseas living in Melbourne

Young people **aged 10-24** born overseas made up **30%** of total young people in same age group living in Melbourne

6.1% of 15+ year olds born overseas were unemployed (compared to **5.3%** of all people aged 15+)

More detailed data about young people who arrived in Australia in the past 5 years, living in Melbourne as at September 2023:⁴⁵

MIGRANT VISAS (FAMILY/SKILLED):

Number of young people aged 12-24: **2,222**

Age on arrival: **11%** 12-17 years, **89%** 18-24 years

Top 3 main language spoken: **Mandarin, English, Vietnamese**

Top 3 countries of origin: **China; India and Malaysia**

HUMANITARIAN VISAS

Number of young people aged 12-24:

80

Age on arrival:

15% 12-17 years

85% 18-24 years

Top 3 countries of origin:

Myanmar

Ethiopia

Iraq

Top 3 main language spoken:

Burmese

Oromo

English

Melbourne: Top 3 place-specific challenges

Young people and settlement advocates identified the following three top place-specific challenges in Melbourne:

- **Overburdening of young people as translators and connectors:** Young people are often over-burdened with responsibilities beyond their age, including translating for their families and community members and connecting these people with services and programs. As well as raising issues including privacy and dependence, this overburdening of young people also has an emotional and cognitive cost. Concerns were also raised about some poor practices within the interpreter sector including unprofessional translating and inappropriate judgments.

- **Challenging life experiences and inequitable outcomes:** Many young people feel the cognitive and emotional cost of having childhoods impacted by trauma and lower educations, life skills and opportunities than many other non-migrant and refugee young people and children. These young people also face high barriers and poor outcomes related to poverty, financial hardship, employment issues.
- **Some young people are in 'survival mode'.** Discouraged by inequitable outcomes such as the overrepresentation of young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds in the criminal justice system,⁴⁶ some young people go into 'survival mode'. This can dampen their aspirations (including education and career) and increase their anxiety (including about financial security).

Top 3 local opportunities across Victoria

Young people and settlement advocates identified the following three top opportunities to improve settlement outcomes in Victoria:

- **Greater inclusion of people seeking asylum and other temporary visa holders in mainstream services** to reduce the prevalence of poverty, hardship, health disparity, and mental health needs. Additional support is also needed to aid potential transition into permanent residency and citizenship. Continuing and further developing partnership with, and funding of Refugee Led Organisations is vital because of their strong established connections and trust with the relevant communities on the ground.
- **Timely, accessible engagement, services and support:** There is a need to focus on transition points, when some young people fall through the cracks. Greater flexibility in communication channels can also increase accessibility. For example creating smaller spaces or using phone calls to ensure people who are less inclined to attend workshops or larger events can still have their voices heard and receive support.
- **Volunteering:** There are opportunities to reimagine volunteering, including engaging with young people about its benefits and influencing employers to recognise its value as work experience. Some young people also endorsed the value of volunteering and community work, both as valuable experience in and of itself, and as a useful way to help getting a job. At the same time it essential to manage the risk of volunteering as unpaid labour exploitation.

Good practice examples across Victoria

The Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) supports young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds to build better lives in Australia. Through a combination of specialist support services, training and consultancy, knowledge sharing and advocacy, CMY works to remove the barriers young people face as they make Australia their home. CMY is also the auspice body that supports MYAN.

Good Practice Case Study:

Gen-G on the Go

The Gen-G on the Go program collaborates and partners with local stakeholders. It is an intensive early intervention program for marginalised youth aged between 12-17 across the six local government areas of Gippsland. These young people participate in weekly activities including street games, pop-up sport and arts activities, alongside after school activities and arts clubs. In addition to weekly activities, there are three residential outdoor school holiday activity camps designed to build on learning and skill development. An educational program is integrated throughout, focusing on literacy skills and active citizenship. Each program concludes with youth-led community events to share their achievements and contributions. The young people are supported to design and lead as many elements of the program as possible so they can develop and practice life skills, including problem solving, and interpersonal skills.

Through providing opportunities for young people to engage in attractive and rewarding activities, the program aims to provide young people with holistic life skills that they will carry with them through life. By using safe and welcoming spaces for young people to come together, the program aims to cultivate purpose and hope for the young people.

Good Practice Case Study:

L2P Driving program

The L2Ps driver program in Victoria is an initiative designed to support and educate young drivers aged between 16 and 21 facing barriers in learning to drive, as they transition from a learner's permit (L-plater) to a provisional license (P-plater). It is aimed at providing them with the necessary skills and experience to become safe and responsible drivers on the roads. The program consists of a number of requirements that learners must complete before progressing to the next stage, including logging at least 120 hours of supervised driving practice, undertaking hazard perception tests, and attending workshops or seminars that cover topics such as defensive driving techniques, road rules, and alcohol and drug awareness. Eligible young people are offered a minimum of one hour of supervised driving each week. The program is funded by TAC and managed by the Victorian Government.

⁴⁴ ABS data by region (November 2022) at <https://dbr.abs.gov.au/region.html?yr=gccsa&rgn=2GMEL> presents data on ASGS Edition 3 (2021) for Main Structure, Greater Capital City Statistical Areas (GCCSA), Indigenous Structure and Local Government Areas (LGAs). The LGA data available in this product are based on 2021 Local Government Area boundaries. Remoteness Areas remain on ASGS Edition 2 (2016).

⁴⁵ Information derived from data provided by the Department of Home Affairs based on records of people arriving in Australia under the Humanitarian, Family and Skilled Migration programs as at 4 September 2023.

⁴⁶ Shepherd, S & Masuka, G. (2022) Working With At-Risk Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Young People in Australia: Risk Factors, Programming, and Service Delivery Criminal Justice Policy Review Vol 32 No 5.

3.8 Western Australia – Perth snapshot

Data snapshot

HIGH LEVEL DATA ABOUT PEOPLE BORN OVERSEAS LIVING IN PERTH IN 2021:⁴⁷

759,641 people living in the Perth were born overseas; that is **34%** of total population of Perth

Young people **aged 10-24** born overseas made up **12%** of total number of people born overseas living in the Perth

Young people **aged 10-24** born overseas made up **23%** of total young people in same age group living in Perth

4.9% of 15+ year olds born overseas were unemployed (compared to **5.3%** all people aged 15+)

More detailed data about young people who arrived in Australia in the past 5 years, living in Perth as at September 2023:⁴⁸

MIGRANT VISAS (FAMILY/SKILLED):

Number of young people aged 12-24: **183**

Age on arrival: **17%** 12-17 years **83%** 18-24 years

Top 3 main language spoken: **Mandarin; Cantonese; Nepali**

Top 3 countries of origin: **China, India, Malaysia**

HUMANITARIAN VISAS

Number of young people aged 12-24: **76**

Age on arrival: **58%** 12-17 years **42%** 18-24 years

Top 3 countries of origin:

Syrian Arab Republic

Afghanistan

Honduras/Guatemala

Top 3 main language spoken:

Arabic

Spanish

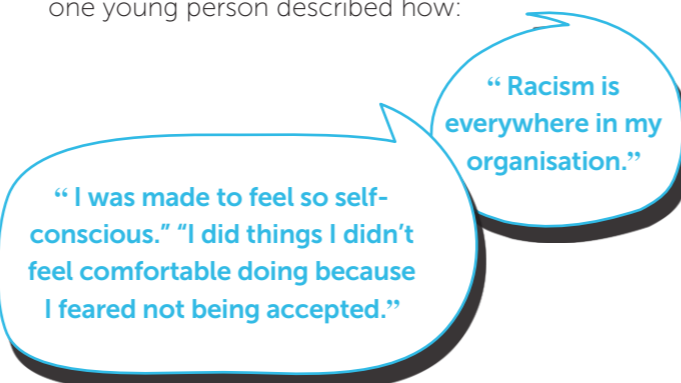
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Top 3 place-specific challenges

Young people and settlement advocates identified the following three top place-specific challenges in Western Australia:

- **Gaps in appropriate services during the transition period when young people arrive in Australia** has resulted in poor outcomes associated with disengagement including mental health challenges, criminal activity and substance abuse.
- **Exclusion from employment and racism in employment:** Young people are needing to work more hours in order to meet the high

cost of living. However, some young people in certain visa classes are excluded from employment. Other young people who are employed experienced racism where they work. With little diversity in their workplace, one young person described how:



- **Diverse experiences in connections to cultural and broader communities:** Some young people feel a stronger connection to their own community than to the broader Australian community, whilst others felt disconnected from relatives who arrived later in Australia. Young people have felt excluded in numerous different ways, such as being excluded from social activities like alcohol-related gatherings, experiencing gender-based exclusion, facing false assumptions about religion, and dealing with imposter syndrome due to tokenistic diversity. This can also include wellbeing challenges such as disappointment with the inability to achieve goals or complete pathways because of the compounding systemic issues. Homophobia and transphobia also pose challenges, with some young people hesitant to come out to their communities due to safety concerns, including unintentional homophobia.

Top 3 local opportunities

Young people and settlement advocates identified the following three top opportunities to improve settlement outcomes in Western Australia:

- **Comprehensive support services for school students:** Improve support services available for school students including specialised support for diverse learners including those with trauma and/or language barriers; mental health services that emphasise the well-being of young people; and practical measures to address racism in classrooms. This additional support should include greater collaboration among government, community organisations, schools, and families to tackle the challenges faced by young people. It should also engage young people in decision-making processes and actively involve parents in their children’s education.

- **Improving accessible information:** Provide accessible information and centralised platforms or apps for young people and their families, along with dedicated staff for guidance during the settlement process. Improving accessible information will also require establishing effective networks and fostering collaboration among all levels of government, including local councils, community networks, and settlement and mainstream services.
- **Better employment pathways:** Improve the support available to young people transitioning into the workforce, including by equipping young people with the skills to apply for jobs successfully, knowledge about available pathways, and accessing and creating useful employment networks. This support should also include building the broader set of skills necessary to increase the likelihood of employment such as driving lessons with interpreting support, and how to navigate Australian service administration and bureaucratic systems.

⁴⁷ ABS data by region (November 2022) at <https://dbr.abs.gov.au/region.html?lyr=gccsa&rgn=5GPER> presents data on ASGS Edition 3 (2021) for Main Structure, Greater Capital City Statistical Areas (GCCSA), Indigenous Structure and Local Government Areas (LGAs). The LGA data available in this product are based on 2021 Local Government Area boundaries. Remoteness Areas remain on ASGS Edition 2 (2016).

⁴⁸ Information derived from data provided by the Department of Home Affairs based on records of people arriving in Australia under the Humanitarian, Family and Skilled Migration programs as at 4 September 2023.

Good practice examples across Western Australia

Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network of Western Australia (MYAN WA) provides a voice to the unique issues faced by young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds, and ensures that they are integrated into the engagement platforms. MYAN WA works to strengthen youth engagement in policy making and advocacy including through projects that enhance the skills of multicultural youth and amplify their voices and experiences in Australia.

Good Practice Case Study: Seat at the Table
The Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia (YACWA) and MYAN WA have partnered with the Centre for Multicultural Youth to deliver the Seat at the Table program in Western Australia. This program aims to address the under-representation of young women from refugee and migrant backgrounds in leadership roles. Seat at the Table provides an opportunity for young women to undertake a 10-month Board Observership, coupled with a facilitated leadership and governance professional development program that includes guest presentations from high-profile professional women from refugee and migrant backgrounds. In WA there are eight boards engaged to facilitate the observerships for eight young women participants. Program successes include three young women obtaining ongoing positions on not-for-profit Boards.

Good Practice Case Study: Roads2Respect
YACWA and MYAN WA partnered this year with the Australian Red Cross through the WA Department of Communities' Family and Domestic Violence (FDV) Primary Prevention Grants Program. This project has a focus on planning and delivering the Roads2Respect FDV primary prevention education program to students across high schools in Perth that have proportionally higher enrolments of students from culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) backgrounds. This program specifically addresses the intersectionality of the migrant and refugee experience with gendered drivers of violence, noting that 'although evidence does not suggest that victims from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are more likely to experience violence, evidence shows they are less likely to receive the supports they need'.⁴⁹ We have a small team of youth peer educators who are trained to deliver this content in a culturally safe way to students in schools.

Part 4: Opportunities, recommendations and next steps

There are rich opportunities to address many of the challenges identified in MYAN's consultations including within and between:

- The Federal Government's strong, timely relevant policy agenda including the Multicultural Framework Review, the National Anti-Racism Framework and the Review of the Migration System
- The youth settlement sector's existing good practice initiatives and ideas for service and program improvements and sector collaboration, and
- MYAN's ongoing work in partnership with young people and both government and non-government stakeholders to embed the rights and interests of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in policy and practice.

This part of the report sets out some of MYAN's ideas to drive improvements and next steps in relation to the issues that were highlighted in our consultations.

4.1 Settlement services: A co-ordinated approach to strategy, investment and implementation

"We need a whole of government approach to youth settlement: One that is youth informed and youth led."

MYAN considers that many of the placed-based challenges and opportunities identified in this consultation could be

better managed by further maturing of, and connections between, strategy, investment and implementation.



Strategy:

- **Leadership for local alignment:** Strong leadership is needed to support a coordinated approach between settlement and mainstream services at the local level. This includes a combination of central leadership with strong place based communication and coordination. It also requires involvement and cooperation between all levels of government. This collaborative and efficient approach is crucial for tackling local issues effectively. This is consistent with The National Youth Settlement Strategy, which emphasises that coordination and collaboration are essential to prevent young people from falling through the gaps and to streamline service delivery.⁵⁰ **MYAN is well placed to assist with this strategy, which should include greater communication between governments of all levels and local service providers. There is also an opportunity to work more and better with local councils.**
- **Place-based youth engagement:** Local youth engagement strategies must be place-based, taking into account the unique characteristics, demographics, and preferences of different communities within a given area.
- **Strategic settlement:** Settling young people in areas equipped with the necessary services and infrastructure to support their settlement and ongoing lives is vital. Anticipating, establishing, and maintaining such services locally is key to overcoming barriers and ensuring positive outcomes, as is involving local organisations from the outset, consulting with them in the decision making process about where to settle people.

- **Youth-focused Services, co-designed and youth-informed:** It is essential to provide services tailored specifically to the needs of young people, as adult-focused services are often inaccessible or unsuitable for young people. This work should be co-designed and youth-informed to ensure it embeds the diverse needs of young people including intersectionality with gender, disabilities, LGBTQI+ youth and family roles, responsibilities and structures.
- **Enhanced collaboration:** This includes improved youth-informed collaboration between:
 - the youth sector and mainstream services to better understand and meet the needs of young people, and
 - among settlement services in different areas, including the expansion of successful local programs nationally.

Investment:

- **Efficient resource allocation:** Funds should be distributed efficiently to address the most significant challenges, as identified by young people and sector advocates. This includes focusing on opportunities that can have the most substantial impact on essential settlement outcomes. There is also a need for greater co-ordinated collaboration among community organisations to extend resources beyond individual organisational capacity to address broader issues like access to social services.
- **Sustained funding:** Ensuring the continuity of funding is necessary to avoid program interruptions and the associated costs, such as loss of momentum, missed improvement opportunities, and start-up costs for new programs. This is especially important when existing programs have previously demonstrated success either locally or elsewhere.

Implementation:

- **Outcome-oriented reviews:** Funded programs should undergo thorough reviews that prioritise outcomes over outputs. This approach aligns with the outcomes-focused best practices defined in the National Youth Settlement Framework.⁵¹
- **Collaboration and coordination:** Encouraging collaboration and coordination, rather than competition, among local settlement services and between settlement and mainstream services for young people is essential for efficient and comprehensive on-the-ground service design and delivery.



⁵⁰ MYAN (2020), 'National Youth Settlement Framework: A guide for supporting and measuring good practice with young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in Australia' at <https://myan.org.au/resources/national-youth-settlement-framework/>

⁵¹ MYAN (2020), 'National Youth Settlement Framework: A guide for supporting and measuring good practice with young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in Australia' at <https://myan.org.au/resources/national-youth-settlement-framework/>

4.2 Regional settlement: Planning, co-ordination and services

For regional settlement to be a long-term success, reform is needed to encourage migrants to settle and stay in regional Australia, and to help ensure that communities can provide the essential services and support needed.

Consistent themes in what is needed to make regional settlement work well over the long haul include adequate employment opportunities, housing, healthcare and English language classes. It is also clear that it is essential that the regional community welcomes people from refugee and migrant backgrounds and that people from refugee and migrant backgrounds feel a sense of belonging.⁵² A consistent theme from MYAN's consultations was that this essential social, economic and community infrastructure is not always well established in the regional locations where migrants and refugees settle.

MYAN considers that in order to improve the outcomes of regional settlement:

- **Improvements must be made to pre-settlement planning and post-settlement outcomes analysis by thoroughly assessing regional locations to identify optimal youth resettlement sites.** This should include developing and applying a common set of criteria:
 - Assessing regional settlement locations to determine availability of stable and affordable housing, and schooling and employment opportunities.
 - Identifying service gaps and response strategies.
 - Measuring community attitudes, and concerns towards refugees and migrants.
 - Involving First Nations communities in planning and decision making.

- **Regional settlement service providers should be funded to provide analysis on settlement outcomes of migrants and refugees in suggested migration locales,** to ensure that settlement support and programs in regional towns are prepared for new migrant settlement and are as effective, responsive, and efficient as possible.
- **Coordination must be improved between all levels of government (from federal government to local councils), receiving communities, local organisations and settlement and service providers** including to innovate and plan place-based solutions and innovations.
- **Tailored, flexible responsive resources and services must be developed in rural and remote areas to increase the support available to young people who live there.** As with young people who settle anywhere in Australia, it is important to take into consideration that the settlement needs of young people will differ from those of adults and children, and young people will need targeted, specialised support to assist in the navigation of their settlement journeys.

Good Practice Case Study: Central Queensland University (CQU)

To support a high-quality teaching workforce in regional school communities where young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds are settling, innovative approaches like dual sector universities, like Central Queensland University (CQU), can offer a comprehensive range of qualifications, including vocational education and training programs as well as higher education programs, to support a high-quality teaching workforce in regional school communities. Having access to quality education in local areas can prevent the "brain drain" in regional education and provide additional opportunities for career growth and development. The TAFE Institute offers regional undergraduate teacher education scholarships, teacher scholarships for post-graduate qualifications, access to high-quality professional development, and recognition of quality teaching service in regional, rural, and remote communities to attract and retain quality teachers in these areas.

4.3 Opportunities and ideas from young people, settlement sector advocates and MYAN

Part two of this report identified the top issues that young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds face consistently across the country, and persistently over time.

In part four, we turn to two important source for innovative ideas to improve services and outcome success in relation to these areas:

1. Ideas and opportunities identified by the young people and sector advocates MYAN consulted; and
2. Existing examples of effective local good practice initiative (which could be scaled up nationally and/or adapted to other locations).

We also include links to, and summaries of, relevant MYAN reports that provide a further supporting evidence base, and proposals for reform and improvement in relation to a range of issues raised in these consultations.

Education

Opportunities identified by young people and settlement sector advocates

- **Establish transition programs for students coming out of IELCs into local high schools. This could include implementing mentorship or 'buddy' programs at mainstream high schools** to make the transition from IELCs to mainstream high school easier and lower rates of disengagement. Mentors could be older students who have already been through this journey who can offer guidance, support, and encouragement; help navigate the complexities of making friends, understanding different teaching styles, and dealing with cultural differences; and help create safe spaces where students feel comfortable expressing their struggles and fears.
- **Invest in professional development for educators** on topics related to diversity, inclusion, and social justice to equip them with tools and strategies to effectively engage and support students from refugee and migrant backgrounds.
- **Further explore the potential of online intensive language programs** to provide language instruction to students who may face barriers to attending in-person classes. These online programs must not, however, replace in-person classes, as has happened in some regional areas, to the detriment of the students.

⁵² See for instance Piper, M (2017), Refugee Settlement in Regional Areas: Evidence based good Practice. Published by the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Available at http://multicultural.nsw.gov.au/about_us/publications/others/; Phillips, M (2023) The right settings for migrant settlement in regional Australia at <https://thepolicymaker.jmi.org.au/the-right-settings-for-migrant-settlement-in-regional-australia/>

Further reading: Relevant MYAN reports

Good Practice Case Study: Melbourne AMEP

The Melbourne Youth AMEP classes play a crucial role in supporting the linguistic and social integration of young migrants living in Melbourne. These classes primarily focus on developing English language proficiency skills among youth aged between 15 to 24 years old who have recently arrived in Australia. The classes are intentionally tailored for youth, ensuring that the learning environment is engaging, supportive, and relevant to the needs of this age group. The program offers a range of comprehensive, youth-friendly services to aid their transition, such as educational resources, vocational training, mentoring, counselling, and job-readiness programs tailored to meet the specific needs of these individuals. Not only do students get the chance to advance their language abilities but they also get introduced to Australian culture through classroom activities and outings.

Good Practice Case Study: UTS Sydney "Buddy Program"

The UTS "Buddy Program" matches international students with student and teacher volunteers for conversation practice and connection with someone with shared interests. As a language exchange it helps to improve language skills and is also an opportunity to exchange university and workplace experiences, make friends and address the loneliness and isolation often faced by international students after arrival.

Education and students from refugee and migrant backgrounds: National Education Roundtable Briefing Paper⁵³

This report provides an overview of the challenges faced by students from refugee and migrant backgrounds and their families, highlighting how COVID-19 has magnified these issues. It serves as a tool for educators, policymakers, and service providers to promote more inclusive and targeted education policies and programs at local, state, and national levels. The report is part of the National Education Roundtable, established in 2018 by MYAN and the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture (VFST) to address the gap in national structures for discussing and informing policy on education for children and young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in school settings.

Key points from this report include:

- The need for stronger resourcing and accountability to ensure that educational settings and systems are accessible and responsive to the educational and wellbeing needs of children and young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.
- Increased investment in data collection and analysis related to educational and wellbeing outcomes for this population group to provide a clear evidence base for understanding, measuring, and directing current and future investment.
- Greater transparency, accountability, and funding for schools with English as an Additional Language or Dialect students.
- Increased investment in programs both within and outside the school setting, including those that support parent and carer engagement.
- A strategic, coordinated approach between all levels of government and educational stakeholders to enhance the effectiveness, reach, and suitability of policies and programs aimed at supporting refugee and migrant students.

How can the AMEP better support English language learning for young people? Discussion Paper⁵⁴

This discussion paper focuses on the importance of a youth-oriented approach to English language classes, specifically within the AMEP. While there have been numerous assessments of the AMEP's effectiveness, this paper emphasises the youth cohort, which has been underrepresented in previous reports. It draws from consultations with AMEP providers and sector representatives conducted in 2019 and 2020, as well as online meetings prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The paper highlights the limited English proficiency of many young people arriving under the Humanitarian stream and stresses the critical role of English language skills in successful settlement and participation in Australian society. Key points include that:

- Youth-specific AMEP classes are highly valued, but not delivered consistently across Australia.
- COVID-19 affected the delivery of AMEP classes, presenting new challenges for providers and students, and opportunities for innovation.
- The best way for young people to acquire English language skills is through a targeted approach.
- To ensure that the learning requirements of young people are met in the AMEP, a targeted and nationally consistent approach is needed.

Employment

Opportunities identified by young people and settlement sector advocates

- **Implement policy changes** for recognition of overseas qualifications and employment rights for young people on temporary visas.
- **Upskill young people on work related issues and rights in Australia:** Schools to work with settlement agencies, youth organisations and Fair Work Australia to deliver youth friendly sessions on work rights, payments, cultural expectations, etc.
- **Build partnerships with local business:** Settlement organisations to establish strong partnerships with local businesses, and create opportunities for internships, apprenticeships, and job placements.

Good Practice Case Study: Centre for Multicultural Youth, Employment Empowers Program

CMY's Employment Empowers program helps young people between 18-25 years old who are refugees or migrants to find meaningful employment in Australia. They connect these young people with volunteer mentors who guide them in developing job skills and readiness. The program partners with different organisations that employ the participants, benefiting both the employers by promoting diversity and the young people by providing opportunities. In the 2020-2021 period, the program supported 63 young people in finding jobs, established 96 mentor-mentee pairs, and formed seven new employment partnerships. Participants have reported increased self-confidence, professional networks, and a foundation for their working life in Australia faced by international students after arrival.

⁵³ MYAN & Foundation House (2020) Education and students from refugee and migrant backgrounds: National Education Roundtable Briefing Paper at <https://myan.org.au/reports-publications/national-education-briefing-paper/>

⁵⁴ MYAN (2020) How can the AMEP better support English language learning for young people? Discussion Paper at <https://myan.org.au/2020/amep-discussion-paper/>

Further reading: Relevant MYAN report

MYAN/DELOITTE ACCESS Report: Covid-19 and Young Migrants – Impact and Solutions⁵⁵

In this report, MYAN responds to the sparsity of Australian data collection on economic participation and employment outcomes for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds by engaging Deloitte Access Economics to contribute an evidence base to this area. Key points include that:

- Permanent migrants enter Australia through three main streams: skilled, family, and humanitarian, with two-thirds of permanent arrivals in the last decade aged under 35.
- Skilled migration has been a significant part of this program, addressing workforce gaps and contributing to Australia's economic success.
- Skilled migrants generally achieve higher labour market participation and lower unemployment, while humanitarian migrants initially face poorer labour market outcomes.
- The COVID-19 pandemic had a severe impact on the labour market, with young migrants experiencing disproportionate job losses compared to those born in Australia.
- Policies that promote higher labour market participation for young migrants, including improving English proficiency and recognition of overseas qualifications, could provide substantial economic benefits.
- Improving labour market outcomes for young migrants could increase the Australian economy by \$44 billion from 2022-23 to 2031-32 and create 54,000 Full-Time Equivalent jobs.

Health and wellbeing

Opportunities identified by young people and settlement sector advocates

- **Boost the number of trained multicultural health professionals:** Introduce culturally appropriate and incentivised recruitment schemes to increase the number of multicultural practitioners across all health professions, particularly doctors, dentists, psychologists and counsellors.
- **Incentivise health professions to relocate to settlement areas with critical shortages and increase the number of psychologist and psychiatrist appointments covered by Medicare (bulk billed)** to support the wellbeing of young people.
- **Review existing HSP and SETS policies** to ensure that considerations for the needs and safety of LGBTQI+ young people from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds are embedded.

“It's really helpful to have service providers from your own communities.”

Good Practice Case Study: Co-health bi-cultural work program

Co-health's bi-cultural work program has helped build capacity of the health services sector and deliver health and wellbeing projects in refugee and asylum seeker communities. Bi-cultural workers (BCWs) use training provided by Co-health, alongside their cultural/language skills, lived experience, and community connections, to promote community voices and deliver programs. From 2017-2022, the Bi-Cultural Work Program has engaged more than 200 BCWs, with 141,500 community members taking part in BCW-led projects.⁵⁶

Good Practice Case Study: Melaleuca Refugee Centre, NT Health Support Services

Melaleuca Australia is the designated Refugee and Migrant Health Coordinator for the Northern Territory. Health Support Services is a holistic program provided by Melaleuca that enables people from refugee, humanitarian and migrant backgrounds to access specialised health and health-related services. The program's overall aim is to improve service delivery models by bringing together the highest quality professionals in the health field to better integrate overall services. As part of this service, a GP and Nurse attend the centre once a week to visit young people and their families in the Melaleuca Office where they are known and feel comfortable.

Using a holistic model allows them to deliver important health services efficiently and effectively. It enables them to connect with Melaleuca's existing refugee and migrant services and the humanitarian services sector. A focus on the whole person means that, when they work with individuals, they can seamlessly link them with services that best support their physical, mental, emotional and social needs.

Social connectedness, belonging and identity

Opportunities identified by young people and settlement sector advocates

- **Increase funding to support accessible, affordable, culturally and gender-inclusive social and recreational opportunities for young people**, with a focus on regional areas, catering to both school-aged students and post-high school individuals. Specifically target the age group 12-17 year olds and offer funding grants to cover sports and arts costs, ensuring all young people from lower economic backgrounds can participate.
- **Facilitate opportunities for young leaders to engage with newly arrived young people**, providing guidance based on shared experiences.
- **Increase collaboration between settlement organisations and local institutions**, including schools, community centres, and other community organisations, to expand the range of opportunities available to young people.
- **In regional areas**, establish formalised youth advisory groups to facilitate direct communication with local councils, school boards, and other decision-makers. These groups could serve as platforms for young individuals to voice their concerns, aspirations, and perspectives on matters that directly impact them.

⁵⁵ MYAN & Deloitte Access (2021) Covid-19 and Young Migrants – Impact and Solutions at <https://myan.org.au/reports-publications/accessreport/>
⁵⁶ MYAN (2023) Meet us where we're at: MYAN policy brief on mental health of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds at <https://myan.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/mental-health-policy-brief.pdf>

Good Practice Case Study: Perth- LGBTQI+ Inclusive Iftars

Queer Iftar is an event that brings together members of the LGBTQI+ community focusing on asylum seekers, migrants and refugees during the holy month of Ramadan. It's a celebration of the intersectionality of being Muslim and queer. The event aims to create a safe and inclusive space for LGBTQI+ Muslims who often feel excluded during religious events due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

The traditional Iftar meal is shared, and discussions on various topics relevant to the community take place. It is also an opportunity to celebrate diversity, promote acceptance, and create a sense of community among LGBTQI+ Muslims.

Good Practice Case Study: L2P driver program

The L2Ps driver program in Victoria is an initiative designed to support and educate young drivers aged between 16 and 21 facing barriers in learning to drive, as they transition from a learner's permit (L-plater) to a provisional license (P-plater). It is aimed at providing them with the necessary skills and experience to become safe and responsible drivers on the roads. The program consists of a number of requirements that learners must complete before progressing to the next stage, including logging at least 120 hours of supervised driving practice, undertaking hazard perception tests, and attending workshops or seminars that cover topics such as defensive driving techniques, road rules, and alcohol and drug awareness. Eligible young people are offered a minimum of one hour of supervised driving each week. The program is funded by TAC and managed by the Victorian Government.

Further reading: Relevant MYAN reports

'Counting us in': MYAN report on the settlement experiences of LGBTQI+ refugee & asylum seeker young adults⁵⁷

This report describes the findings from a study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the settlement experiences of LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults (aged 18-30) in Australia, within the context of their post-migration lives. The research sought to enhance the evidence base regarding the support provided to these young individuals after their arrival in Australia, with the objective of informing future policy development and service improvements. The report offers insights into the settlement journeys of LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults, highlighting both areas of effective support and gaps in assistance. Key findings include:

- Challenges in navigating LGBTQI+ identity during settlement, due to invisibility, coming out difficulties, safety concerns, and fear of disclosure.
- Limited family and community support, with potential stigmatisation and discrimination from these groups.
- Varying levels of acceptance based on settlement location, with metropolitan areas being more accepting.
- Barriers to service provision, such as limited visibility and resources.
- Hesitancy in accessing LGBTQI+ spaces, often due to discomfort and the lack of culturally appropriate services.
- Lack of tailored services, but resourceful seeking of support by LGBTQI+ individuals.
- Exacerbated challenges during COVID-19, affecting service access for some.
- The need for comprehensive understanding, sector-wide changes, capacity building, community engagement, and improved service accessibility for LGBTQI+ refugee and asylum seeker young adults.

Women at Risk Visa Holders (Subclass 204): Consultation Report⁵⁸

This report, produced in collaboration with the Migration Council of Australia, addresses the settlement experiences of individuals arriving in Australia on the WaR visa (Subclass 204). These visa holders, particularly women and young people, face common pre-arrival vulnerabilities, including exposure to violence and trauma. The report offers insights into the settlement journey of women and youth under the WaR program, highlighting both successful practices and areas where support is lacking. The research is based on a national sector consultation and interviews with service providers. Key points include:

- Women at Risk visa holders face specific barriers to successful settlement in Australia, including high levels of unemployment, language barriers, housing issues, racism, intergenerational conflict, financial stress, and a lack of understanding of Australian systems and gender roles.
- The nature of trauma and abuse experienced by Women at Risk visa holders underscores the need for a gender-responsive and trauma-informed approach to settlement.
- Young people arriving on the 204 visa encounter challenges such as disengagement from education, language barriers, difficulties accessing stable housing, lack of trust in engaging with mental health services, and a lack of targeted and appropriate services provided in a youth-centred, culturally responsive, and trauma-informed manner.
- Women at Risk visa holders may require longer and more comprehensive settlement support, particularly in areas like housing, social support, parenting support and childcare, and English language classes.
- The absence of appropriate housing is a significant challenge, linked to financial stress, isolation, and safety issues.
- The need for fostering social connections between Women at Risk visa holders and their host communities is vital to overcome social isolation and stigma, especially in rural and regional areas.
- Limited English proficiency poses a barrier to economic opportunities, and tailored language support is essential.
- Young people face challenges such as increased adult responsibility, including caretaking roles for younger siblings, and limited sexual health knowledge, making them more vulnerable to exploitation.
- Recommendations made in the report include: A strengths-based approach to empower Women at Risk clients while supporting their independence; Prioritising family reunification; Investing in employment programs for youth-at-risk from refugee backgrounds; and Conducting targeted needs assessments.

57 MYAN (2023) 'Counting us in': MYAN report on the settlement experiences of LGBTQI+ refugee & asylum seeker young adults at <https://myan.org.au/reports-publications/counting-us-in-myan-report-on-the-settlement-experiences-of-lgbtqi-refugee-asylum-seeker-young-adults/#:~:text=The%20report%20is%20further%20informed,refugee%20and%20asylum%20seeker%20young>

58 MYAN (2021) Women at Risk Visa Holders (Subclass 204): Consultation Report at <https://myan.org.au/reports-publications/women-at-risk-visa-holder-subclass-204-myan-consultation-report-in-collaboration-with-migration-council-australia-mca/>

Navigating Australian services, systems and laws

Opportunities identified by young people and settlement sector advocates

- **Replicate Aboriginal Justice Open Day's Identification Days which are run by the Government of Western Australia Department of Justice, for young people from refugee backgrounds.** Aboriginal Justice Open Days are a 'one-stop shop' where people can access services that can help with identification, fines, driver's licence and tax and superannuation matters. Representatives on the day include: Workskill Australia, tax clinics, the Australian Electoral Commission, TAFE, Legal Aid, Births, Deaths and Marriages and others. A similar initiative tailored for young people from refugee backgrounds would be helpful in responding to some of the common Centrelink challenges faced by this group of young people.
- **Build life skills training into language programs schools and create life skills programs** that address the specific needs of young people. Topics covered should include financial literacy, digital literacy, paying taxes, positive relationships etc.
- **Ensure that there are sufficient supports in place for older adults to navigate Australian systems and services** for themselves and their children, without overburdening young people.

Racism and discrimination

Opportunities identified by young people and settlement sector advocates

- **Introduce initiatives to manage racism in schools including** anti-racism policies separate to existing anti-bullying policies that encompass various curriculum design, teacher training programs, disciplinary actions, and student engagement activities. Schools should also have clear reporting mechanisms.
- **Establish an advisory body of young people and service providers from diverse backgrounds to advise and co-design anti-racism initiatives and innovative strategies to combat racism.**
- **Strengthen educational curriculum beginning in early childhood settings,** aimed at developing the foundation knowledge and skills needed to counter racism, prejudice and discrimination and including factual and complete history of Australia.

“We need to talk about it more and educate each other. We need to identify similarities about our cultures and accept our differences.”

Good Practice Case Study: Centre for Multicultural Youth- Schools Standing Up to Racism

Schools Standing Up to Racism is a collaboration between CMY and the Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET), offering a range of resources to support schools to address racism and discrimination in their school environment. Schools Standing Up to Racism site provides a range of strategies, ideas and tools to reinforce the appropriate response of schools to racism.

The resources within this site aim to support schools to create safe spaces in which to build the intercultural awareness and understanding required to overcome the barriers to proactively talking about, and addressing, racism and discrimination. CMY offers schools three workshops to support the implementation of the Schools Standing Up to Racism resource.

Schools Standing Up to Racism encourages a whole-of-school approach, which actively promotes, encourages and supports student voices in order to create meaningful and sustainable change.

Further reading: Relevant MYAN reports

Multicultural Youth Perspectives on Racism and the Draft Anti-Racism Framework 2022 Consultation Findings⁵⁹

This report presents a summary of a national youth consultation MYAN undertook to help inform the draft National Anti-Racism Framework. The consultation was peer-led and focused on participants' thoughts on racism, exploring the spaces where young people experienced its prevalence, and identifying its impact, and key issues young people would like the framework to address, including their ideas for effective responses and solutions. Key points include:

- Young people commonly face racial abuse, prejudice, and discrimination in various aspects of their lives, including media representation, micro-aggressions, workplace hiring practices, and public racial attacks.
- People expressed frustration over the lack of acknowledgment of racism and open discussion about it, despite its prevalence.
- To effectively address racism, young people stressed the importance of recognising Australia's colonial history and centring First Nations people in the National Anti-Racism Framework.
- They emphasised the need for broader discussions on topics like race and racism, involving all levels of society, not just those from refugee and migrant backgrounds.
- Young people supported a well-designed National Anti-Racism Framework, with strong backing for meaningful involvement of people with lived experiences in its development and implementation.
- The Framework is seen as an opportunity to promote education, engage with industry, facilitate pathways to justice, and address systemic issues to create a more inclusive, equal, and harmonious Australia for people of all backgrounds.

4.4 MYAN next steps

Important next steps for MYAN following this report will include:

- **Taking a leadership role in connecting, coordinating and collaborating** within the youth settlement sector, between and youth settlement and other relevant community sectors and government agencies. This includes:
 - facilitating a national meeting to discuss key findings and provide an opportunity for networking for local service providers; and
 - identifying meaningful opportunities to shape discourse and be a conduit for conversation between the settlement and youth sectors at the local and national levels.
- **Developing good practice youth settlement models tailored to states and territories.**
- **Working with young people to examine our current consultation methods to ensure engagement with 'harder to reach' demographics is accessible,** and ensure meaningful connection with newly-arrived youth who have an opportunity to have their voices heard.
- **Working with government to progress recommendations based on information contained in this report,** and continue to contribute to the research and evidence base on youth settlement in Australia.



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