

29th January 2021

Minister for Housing and Assistant Treasurer
Hon Michael Sukkar
The Treasury
Langton Crescent
PARKES ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

Re: 2021-22 Pre-Budget Submission

Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network Australia (MYAN) welcomes the opportunity to provide this pre-budget submission. Responding to the needs of young people is central to a strong economic and social recovery in the post COVID-19 environment. We urge the government to ensure that the 2021-22 budget has a priority focus on Australia's young people - in particular, those facing structural barriers to economic and social participation, including young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds who make up almost half of Australia's youth population.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the lives of everyone in the Australian community in acute and unpredictable ways, and disproportionately so the lives of those most disadvantaged in our community - including young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. COVID-19 has exacerbated pre-existing disadvantage faced by young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds across all aspects of their lives – and in this submission we call on the government to commit funds in the following key areas:

- Employment and income support
- Mental Health
- Education
- Digital Access
- Social Cohesion

We have also included proposals for two projects:

- (i) MYAN CALD Youth Mental Health Traineeship pilot
- (ii) Strengthening state and territory responses to support young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

About MYAN

Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network Australia (MYAN) is the national peak body representing the rights and interests of young people aged 12-24 from refugee and migrant backgrounds. MYAN works in partnership with young people, government, and non-government agencies at the state and territory and national levels to ensure the particular needs of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds are recognised in policy and service delivery.

MYAN provides expert policy advice to government, undertakes a range of sector development activities, and supports young people to develop leadership and advocacy skills. We have developed the National Youth Settlement Framework which is the first and only framework to guide and measure integration and settlement

support for young people, providing an evidence-based approach to good practice. It is designed to build the capacity of government and non-government sectors, enabling them to better respond to the needs of young people in the settlement and integration context. Since its release in 2016, MYAN has worked with a range of government and non-government stakeholders to support the implementation of the Framework in policy and service delivery through a range of sector capability building activities.

About this submission

This submission has a focus on young people (aged 12-24) from refugee and migrant backgrounds. This group of young people make up almost half (47%) of Australia's youth population.¹ We call on the Federal Government to ensure the 2021-22 budget includes targeted socio-economic responses to this crisis with an intentional focus on the experiences and futures of young people, who will also bear the economic brunt of COVID-19 into the future. We encourage the government to adequately account for pre-existing barriers and disadvantages in these responses.

This will avoid further entrenchment of longstanding inequalities and disadvantage for particular groups of young people and will ensure that all of Australia's young people can access opportunities for future social, economic and civic participation.

MYAN is calling for a Budget that:

- a) Is responsive to the disproportionate impact that COVID-19 has had on young people
- b) Is responsive to the needs of young people who are at higher risk of exclusion and disadvantage due to economic, social, and civic barriers, including young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds, and
- c) Recognises the key role that young people have in the re-establishment of Australia's economic well-being and long-term stability. We know that young people are keen to participate in decision-making processes and opportunities to explore diverse responses to the issues that affect them. MYAN affirms the importance of recognising and building on young people's strengths and capabilities, and working with them as partners in service planning and delivery. This includes recognising the critical role they have to play in responding to and reimagining a post-COVID 19 world.

Investing in young people now will ensure Australia's future economic and social fabric is the strongest it can be.

Budget 2021-22 recommendations

1. Employment

Targeted investment in young people is critical for Australia's economic recovery. Young people who were already disproportionately engaged in low-skilled and insecure employment pre COVID-19 have been heavily impacted by the economic downturn due to COVID-19, with youth unemployment hitting a 23-year high in June 2020.² The long-term impact on youth employment is likely to be severe given that young people aged 15-24 in Australia are already three times more likely to be unemployed or underemployed than adults aged 25 and

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016) <https://www.abs.gov.au>

² BSL (2020) [Youth Employment Monitor 2020](http://library.bsl.org.au/jspui/bitstream/1/12338/1/BSL_COVID_the_great_disruptor_youth_unemployment_Dec2020.pdf) Available at:
http://library.bsl.org.au/jspui/bitstream/1/12338/1/BSL_COVID_the_great_disruptor_youth_unemployment_Dec2020.pdf

over³, representing a significant underutilisation of this group. The national unemployment rates for those aged 15 to 24 years are consistently double that of the average national rate for 15 to 64-year-olds⁴.

As at December 2020, one in three youth were still unemployed or underemployed. In response to the latest unemployment figures, the Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS) warns that Australia urgently needs to generate more jobs to allow for people entering the labour market, including more than 200,000 young school leavers.⁵

Significant and prolonged youth unemployment and underemployment is not only bad for the economy; it has damaging flow-on effects such as mental ill health and homelessness. Being unemployed, underemployed or Not in Education or Training (NEET) affects the ability of young people to plan for their future, and engage in civic life fully. It is likely to result in poor living conditions (in terms of housing, nutrition, and physical safety), isolation from the community and barriers to accessing health care and social services, and negative impacts on emotional and psychological well-being.⁶

Further, the lack of job availability or the lack of secure work for young people delays the typical milestones of adulthood, and potential to become independent, including the need to delay moving out of home, taking on more debt than previous generations by staying in school longer, and being less likely to secure home loans than previous generations. MYAN welcomed the increase to income support payments that pushed income support above the poverty line for the first time in years, and provided a critical social net for vulnerable young people who were dealing with multiple consequences of COVID-19. However, we are concerned that the recent cuts to the JobSeeker payment again place vulnerable young Australians below the poverty line and at risk of social disengagement and ill health at a time when the employment market has not yet stabilised. The tightening of eligibility and lowering of financial support will not incentivise people to look for work in a market that has not gone back to 'normal' and is predicted to have long term negative employment consequences for young people.

Though MYAN was pleased to see that the proposed JobMaker scheme aims to incentivise businesses to hire young people aged 18-35 who have been on JobSeeker, we are concerned that the scheme does not appear to guarantee meaningful work and structured career paths. MYAN calls for a long-term plan for meaningful youth employment that capitalises on young people's career strengths and aspirations and avoids prolonged youth engagement in temporary and insecure work.

Maintaining Australia's economic recovery and long-term economic sustainability in response to COVID-19 requires strategic economic investment to support positive, long-term employment outcomes for young people. The 2021-22 budget presents a key opportunity to support young people-particularly vulnerable young people negotiating systemic employment barriers and young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds-to overcome the impacts of COVID-19 and navigate current and future job markets. This will in turn contribute to a stronger economic recovery, and yield economic benefits for Australia as a whole.

Targeted support for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds is the most effective way for this group of young people to access and remain engaged in employment.

³ Australian Government (2018) The next generation of employment services discussion paper, Appendix G – Labour market data and information. Available at: <https://docs.employment.gov.au/documents/next-generation-employment-services-discussion-paper>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ ACOSS (2021) [Only two thirds of full time jobs lost in recession restored](#). Media release 21 January, 2021

⁶ MYAN (2020) [COVID-19 & Young People from Refugee & Migrant Backgrounds](#) Available at: <https://myan.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/myan-policy-platform-2020-26.5.20-final.pdf>

Recommendations:

1. Develop and implement a National Youth Employment Strategy that provides meaningful and secure work for all young people. This should include:
 - Committing to a youth jobs guarantee with industry, government, and community to ensure that all young people have access to meaningful and secure work.
 - Creating targeted strategies and wraparound supports for young people who face additional barriers to employment, including young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.
 - Providing localised pro-youth economic stimulus to regions and industries most affected by the pandemic, especially in the university, arts, hospitality, tourism, community, and childcare sectors.
2. Review and improve current employment services with a focus on outcomes related to sustained employment rather than job placement.
3. Continue to invest in Active Labour Market Programs that demonstrate positive outcomes for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds and ensure that investment in (generalist) youth employment programs include targeted approaches and specialist services for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.
4. Invest in community-based employment programs to include a mentoring component to help young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds build employability skills, gain work experience, and connect with employment opportunities.
5. Invest in wage subsidy programs that incentivise businesses to employ those who face disadvantage in the job market – including young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.
6. Explore opportunities to fund paid 6-12 month internships for more marginalised young people, including those who are not engaged in education or training (NEET) in a variety of industries, to prepare them for job-readiness in the absence of jobs – including a targeted focus on young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.
7. Reinstate JobSeeker to the income support levels it was at the height of the COVID-19 crisis.

1.1 Economic analysis on the economic participation of CALD youth

We also recommend that government invest in developing an empirical evidence base to guide policy and service delivery for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in recognition of the specific employment barriers they face. This includes examining the impact of existing government-funded (youth) employment programs. Young people are crucial to Australia’s economic recovery and long-term sustainability and this data will help to better understand the factors that influence the economic participation of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

There is currently no economic analysis of the economic participation of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in Australia. MYAN has recognised this as a significant gap in the data landscape and have engaged *Deloitte Access Economics* to contribute to an evidence base in this area. This project will provide expert economic analysis on employment data specific to young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. This will ensure the experiences and trends of this group are more accurately represented at national and sub-national levels.

This work will assist in better identify inequity and disadvantage, inform policy, and ensure that current and future employment services are targeted, funded and resourced accordingly. We are keen to share these results

to assist in the government's work around youth economic participation, and look forward to discussing this with you once the results are finalised.

2. Mental health

MYAN is extremely pleased to see the recent creation of the Mental Health and Suicide Prevention portfolio, in recognition of the significant and long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health, and the enormous toll this has had on young people. All young people should have access to the mental health support they need when they need it. We also welcome recent funding commitments in youth mental health in recognition of the significant impact the pandemic has had, and continues to have upon young people's wellbeing. However, we recommend that further investment to address systemic issues around access and service provision is required.

Half of all mental illnesses appear before the age of 14 and three-quarters by the age of 25, and the social and economic insecurity and uncertainty generated by COVID-19 has intensified those vulnerabilities for Australia's young people. Young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds face additional mental health risks to the general youth population, as well as structural barriers to accessing the support they need. We know that providing targeted, accessible, and youth-focused mental health services can help to address these issues.

Cultural conceptions of mental health, illness, and recovery differ for and amongst people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. Almost half (46%) of Australia's young people are first or second-generation migrants-this group of young people are not a minority, and MYAN would like to see cultural diversity regarded as an integral component of mental health practice as a whole, rather than as an adjunct to service delivery. There is an urgent need to ensure that programs are designed in response to the cultural, social and health disparities experienced by refugee and migrant communities (including health and mental health literacy). This should occur in collaboration with trusted (multicultural youth) services with expertise and networks with this youth cohort. This includes:

1. Implementing mental health literacy strategies with communities from refugee and migrant backgrounds to reduce stigma and build understanding of available youth mental health supports.
2. Implementing culturally responsive approaches in assessment and service delivery.
3. Budgeting for professional phone interpreters for mental health sessions with young people who have English as an Additional Language.
4. Investment in long-term research around the efficacy of mental health policies and mainstream youth mental health in meeting the needs of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds, specifically identifying the factors that help or hinder their use, to ensure the appropriateness of mental health services beyond COVID-19.

2.2 MYAN CALD Youth Mental Health Traineeship pilot-proposal

In 2020 MYAN worked with Minister Colbeck in his role as Minister for Youth and Sport and the Youth Taskforce in Department of Health to develop a proposal for a CALD youth mental health traineeship pilot. This is a unique and innovative, response to some of the most important current and future challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This initiative would seek to address some of the issues highlighted in this submission, namely the underrepresentation of young people from CALD backgrounds accessing youth mental health services and barriers to economic participation. It would do this by:

- (i) Responding to the existing workforce gap in the youth mental health sector of staff trained in CALD responsive support.
- (ii) Addressing the current workforce gap in youth mental health services by creating entry-level jobs.
- (iii) Addressing the urgent need for more targeted approaches in training and employment pathways to facilitate CALD youth labor market participation.

This proposed initiative intentionally builds on recent Government investment - traineeships/apprenticeships (skills package and subsidies) and youth mental health - and existing infrastructure and expertise in the VET sector, in Government and the non-government sector. We have been working with Orygen, National Centre for Excellence in Youth Mental Health, in the development of the initiative.

We are seeking \$5 million over 3 years for this national Pilot initiative to support (i) initial research and scoping to identify good practice in youth mental health and the VET sector and globally (n.b. – through our links with industry and Orygen, we have already identified similar programs in New Zealand, the UK and South Africa that warrant further investigation) , (ii) development of a model of delivery, (iv) piloting in 5 states (including regional and rural areas) and (v) evaluation.

3. Education

Supporting the transition of young people from education into work is critical to addressing employment barriers. The availability of, and equitable access to, high quality education and training, including vocational education and training (VET) is essential in preparing young people for entry into a competitive labour market. Schools are able to provide young people with crucial job-related skills and information, which support the capacity of young people to become autonomous and confident individuals, and active and informed participants in Australian society. Education correlates with crucial post-school opportunities and the transition to higher education, training, and employment, and is a significant development milestone and pathway to economic and social participation for all young people and a key priority in the settlement journey for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.⁷

Young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds are commonly highly motivated to learn, but many face specific challenges in navigating and engaging in education pathways. These include limited or no proficiency in English, age on arrival to Australia, literacy in their first language, highly disrupted/minimal/no previous formal education, limited practical support for learning at home due to limited English and digital literacy of family, and a limited understanding of and familiarity with Australian education and training systems and pathways.⁸

Young people today are more educated than ever before, with nearly 60% holding a post school qualification however, despite improving education attainment, many young people do not fare well in the current labour market and find themselves trapped in insecure 'survival' jobs that do not utilise their skills, qualifications or abilities.⁹We know that young people are able to navigate these challenges more successfully when there is

⁷ MYAN & Foundation House (2020) [National Education Roundtable: Education & students from Refugee & Migrant Backgrounds Available at: https://myan.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/education_issue_05.pdf](https://myan.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/education_issue_05.pdf)

⁸ MYAN (2020) [COVID-19 & Young People from Refugee & Migrant Backgrounds Available at: https://myan.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/myan-policy-platform-2020-26.5.20-final.pdf](https://myan.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/myan-policy-platform-2020-26.5.20-final.pdf)

⁹ Burhani. N & Sayed. J (2017) *Facilitating better employment opportunities for refugee background migrants and people seeking asylum in Australia: a policy briefing paper* Available at: https://socialequity.unimelb.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0008/2759687/Facilitating-better-employment-opportunities-for-refugee-background-migrants-and-people-seeking-asylum-in-Australia.pdf

adequate and targeted support and investment in addressing structural barriers – including the engagement of multicultural workers in schools, and adequate access to English as an Additional Language (EAL) support.

A lack of adequate support that is responsive to the learning needs of students from refugee and migrant backgrounds and/or significant disruptions to their education as we saw during the height of COVID-19 means they are at increased risk of disengagement or withdrawal from education and training. Disengagement from school, and early school leaving, has significant consequences for a young person's future social, economic, and civic participation and well-being, and settlement outcomes and social cohesion more broadly. These include lower economic growth, higher costs of public related services including health care and employment services support and increased welfare (income support) costs.¹⁰

Conversely, investment in targeted educational strategies and supports that are responsive to the unique barriers faced by young students from refugee and migrant backgrounds means that young people are better equipped to navigate these challenges more successfully. Investment into the provision of education to students from refugee and migrant backgrounds must ensure that their participation in the Australia education system is inclusive and contributes to equitable educational outcomes and opportunities comparable with that of their Australian born, non-immigrant peers.

Recommendations:

1. Reverse proposed higher education reforms to restructure university course fees and HECS/HELP coverage, which jeopardise educational access, equity, and quality.
2. Ensure that young people are accessing the EAL/S support they need to build their English Language skills, including:
 - a) Directing funding allocations for English language learning in schools.
 - b) Increasing funding transparency, accountability, and utilisation for schools with an EAL/D cohort.
 - c) Developing nationally consistent definitions, measurements and cost structures that (re)direct EAL funding to the education needs of students who need it most.
3. Invest in career advisory programs within the school sector that emphasise VET, apprenticeships and alternative post-school pathways to the same extent as higher education

Suspension of Australia's Migration Program presents an opportunity for more targeted EAL in schools.

The current pause on migration has impacted student numbers in English language schools and centres across Australia. This presents a valuable opportunity to provide additional, targeted EAL support in primary and secondary schools across Australia to support more recently arrived students. MYAN proposes that considerations be made in the budget to fund trials that would see the placement of these EAL teachers in schools to capitalise both on their expertise at a time when they cannot perform their usual teaching duties, and to enhance school's EAL programs to the benefit of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

4. Digital literacy and access

The radical and unprecedented reliance on digital technology during the height of the COVID-19 crisis exposed a clear digital divide in Australia, highlighting critical gaps in affordability, ability and access for young people and their families. Evidence of a digital divide in Australia reveals that many Australians, including young people from

¹⁰ Ibid.

refugee and migrant backgrounds, face a number of barriers to full and equal digital inclusion, mainly due to limited technical skill and the cost of equipment and data services.¹¹

For many young people, the closure of schools and education and training institutions, and the shift to online learning, caused significant disruptions that we are concerned are likely to have long-term repercussions. In addition to the education sector, COVID-19 placed significant demand on youth, settlement, and community welfare services including mental health, domestic violence, and youth justice. These essential services were also navigating and adjusting to the move to online service delivery, and as they rapidly shifted online, digital inclusion became even more critical to young people staying safe, healthy and connected. However it was clear early on that the failure to address existing inequities in digital access prior to COVID-19 left many young people without access to the data, devices and technology they needed to remain safe, healthy and connected throughout and beyond the crisis.

Those without the resources to effectively access and use digital technologies found it immediately and increasingly difficult to participate in economic, social, cultural, and civic life. For young people, this is a particularly critical issue as they navigate significant life stage transitions and milestones - education and training pathways, civic engagement, and mental and physical health issues.

The impact this had on the capacity of young people to remain connected and engaged during the COVID-19 crisis and during any future crises, exposes a significant digital inequity that has genuine potential to deepen disadvantage, not just in the education context, but also across all domains of life in our digitally connected world. COVID-19 has exposed that the existing digital divide in Australia has profound consequences for how young people and their families are able to manage a crisis. As Australia begins to prepare people for the COVID-19 vaccination roll out, access to information and communication campaigns will be critical. People must be able to understand the process properly, and as systems move to more digital integration, addressing the digital divide priority will be a vital aspect of keeping Australia safe.

Proactive government investment to reduce the digital divide will be vital to managing these impacts as much as possible, and ensuring young people are better prepared to navigate these challenges in the event that similar emergencies occur in the future.

Recommendations:

1. Fund and work with state and territory governments and the telecommunications industry to offer a package of essential telecommunications equipment and data for households without functional equipment, or for those who require additional equipment to meet the needs of school-age children.
2. Invest in community-based initiatives and programs that increase the digital literacy capacity of all young people.
3. Invest in community-based initiatives that build the digital literacy skills of parents/carers to better support children's online engagement and digital safety.
4. Invest in national research into the depth of the digital divide experienced by young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds and the impact on social, economic, and civic participation. Research should investigate the category CALD (LBOTE) to explore the intersection of factors such as EAL, length of time in Australia, visa and/or refugee or refugee-like background, with known indicators of digital inclusion.

¹¹ MYAN & CMY (2020) Submission to the Select Committee on Covid-19 Inquiry Into the Government's Response to Covid-19

5. Social cohesion

Racism and discrimination are an ever-present reality for many young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds, and more investment is needed to support efforts to combat racism and discrimination in Australia in all its forms.

Since the COVID-19 virus reached Australia, there has been evidence of escalations in racially motivated abuse towards people from Asian backgrounds occurring across Australia.¹² Young people have also reported that they are experiencing or witnessing racialised physical, verbal, and online harassment linked to COVID-19 misinformation, fear, and panic.

Experiences of racism and discrimination can have significant detrimental impacts on mental health, are a key barrier to social inclusion, diminish a young person's sense of connection and belonging, contribute to marginalisation and isolation, and diminish participation in education, employment, and recreational activities. It adds unnecessary costs to the Australian workplace and economy and works against Australia's goal of building a fair and inclusive society. Racism can also contribute to feelings of anger, depression, heightened fear, and flashbacks to trauma experienced prior to arriving in Australia.¹³

Racism can also undermine young people's ability to claim equal citizenship and develop a strong sense of belonging; factors that are particularly important for refugee and migrant young people as they develop a sense of identity and transition to adulthood in the Australian context. A strong sense of belonging is generally understood to be protective against disengagement.¹⁴

Social cohesion is vital to creating the conditions for a healthy and productive society and a stronger sense of safety for everyone. A safe and welcoming community is also critical for positive settlement and integration outcomes. Public perception of migrants can influence the settlement experience and affects the cohesion of the Australian community. Effectively addressing racism and discrimination requires ongoing investment in:

- Responses that strengthen and promote community participation and engagement.
- Laws that condemn and actively discourage racism and discrimination of all kinds.
- Leadership that actively promotes inclusion and condemns racism and discrimination.
- Measures that address structural and systemic barriers to access and participation.

Recommendations:

1. Implement a National Anti-Racism Strategy.
2. Invest in innovative strategies to combat racism and build social cohesion, including:
 - a. an online campaign led by young people and coordinated by MYAN.
 - b. local level, community building activities utilising sports and arts
3. Invest in initiatives that facilitate opportunities for young people to have their voices heard in political and civic domains to inform policy and decision making.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ MYAN (2020) [COVID-19 & Young People from Refugee & Migrant Backgrounds Available at: https://myan.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/myan-policy-platform-2020-26.5.20-final.pdf](https://myan.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/myan-policy-platform-2020-26.5.20-final.pdf)

¹⁴ Australian Human Rights Commission, *National Anti-Racism Strategy and Racism. It Stops With Me Campaign*. <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/race-discrimination/projects/national-anti-racism-strategy-and-racism-it-stops-me-campaign>

6. Strengthening state and territory responses to support young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds-proposal.

As this submission highlights, young people, including those from refugee and migrant backgrounds, are facing enormous challenges in a post COVID-19 world. Responding to the needs of young people, including young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds will be central to strong social and economic recovery post COVID-19. This requires a nationally consistent approach, one which supports young people to navigate and respond to existing barriers and the multiple challenges as a result of COVID-19, and which ensures they have a say in the decisions and responses that will affect their futures.

One way to ensure this is to strengthen existing organisations who are working with young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds at the local level. Since its inception in 2013, MYAN has built a multicultural youth national voice and sector by supporting the development of multicultural youth specialist entities and organisations in each of Australia's states and territories. An injection of funding from the Commonwealth into these existing structures will strengthen the capacity of these organisations to provide targeted, localised support to the young people they work with, provide expert policy advice to government, and ensure a nationally consistent and targeted approach to improve young people's long-term social, civic and economic participation.

As the national peak body representing the rights and interests of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in Australia, MYAN state/territory model provides expert policy advice, sector capacity building activities (including COP mechanisms to facilitate partnerships across the service delivery system/with mainstream services), youth leadership and mechanisms for government to consult directly with young people and embed their voices in decision making process at the national level.

Localised MYAN-affiliated organisations are important vehicles of this work and are the only ones delivering this mix of activities with a specific focus on young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. This work is not being duplicated by other organisations and the states/territories have a particularly important role to play as a vehicle to facilitate contributions (both in policy and supporting youth engagement) at the federal level.. This work facilitates connections between settlement services and between mainstream and settlement services – working within the settlement sector (continuum between HSP and SETS, and with related programs e.g. AMEP) and beyond, in the social cohesion area.

However, the resourcing (and therefore activities and capacities) of each MYAN-affiliated organisation across Australia vary considerably. Only some states/territories receive specific funding for MYAN-related activities, with auspicing organisations providing 'in-kind' support for activities to support MYAN state/territory-based work.

Outcomes of funding

Additional funding to support this existing infrastructure would increase the capacity of MYAN and our partner organisations to respond to the particular issues commonly experienced by young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in Australia - some of which are highlighted in this submission. Investment in a national multicultural youth specialist approach - dedicated infrastructure at the state/territory level for MYAN activities - will improve economic, social and civic outcomes for young people and strengthen social cohesion. MYAN has built a structure through which the Commonwealth government can deliver policy advice and direct engagement with CALD young people but we need additional investment to strengthen this infrastructure. Specific outcomes include:

For young people:

- Improved social, economic and civic participation (e.g. successful education, training and employment transitions).
- They are more actively connected to the broader community, contributing to a strong, socially cohesive multicultural society.
- Increased participation in forums and decision making processes on the issues that impact them.
- Improved sense of belonging and inclusion (for young people, their families and communities).

For the service system/sector:

- Improved workforce capability - a more informed and skilled youth, multicultural and settlement sector to better support good practice and youth settlement outcomes (as per the National Youth Settlement Framework).
- Improved capacity to measure outcomes and contribute to a stronger evidence base
- A more coordinated service system:
 - Within/across the settlement services system
 - Between settlement, multicultural and mainstream services
- Increased responsiveness of mainstream services to young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.
- Improved national consistency in youth settlement and social cohesion support.

Funding

MYAN has calculated a budget of \$1,000,000 for MYAN's state/territory partners to deliver MYAN activities, dependent on need and population, including the specific needs of rural and regional Australia. Even though some states receive SETS funding, this request is for specific MYAN activities, including strengthening collaboration and coordination across the settlement service system and with mainstream services. We would welcome an opportunity to discuss this proposal in further detail.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide these proposals and recommendations for consideration. MYAN would be pleased to provide further information on any part of this submission.

Yours faithfully,



Nadine Liddy

National Manager -Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN)