



MYANO
multicultural youth
advocacy network (australia)

2021 FUSE REPORT

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Executive Summary



FUSE is a national multicultural youth leadership summit hosted by the Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN), Australia's peak body representing the rights and interests of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. The theme of FUSE is 'Connect, Ignite, and Trailblaze'. FUSE is a biannual 2-day youth leadership event designed to equip a national network of emerging leaders with skills, confidence and knowledge, and networks to create change in their communities, and at the state and national levels.

Typically held in person in Melbourne or Sydney, due to ongoing COVID-19 travel restrictions, including state border closures, FUSE 2021 was transformed into an innovative, multi-city in person/online hybrid model. The hybrid model responded to the logistical challenges brought on by the pandemic, while still ensuring a national focus. The hybrid model brought together a total of 50 delegates in Melbourne, Sydney, Perth, Hobart and Brisbane, and there was also an online delegation for those who could not meet in person.

MYAN's national Youth Ambassadors Network (YAN) took the lead role in planning and delivering the program for FUSE 2021. The themes chosen by the YAN reflect some of the key issues they are particularly concerned about. The FUSE 2021 topics were:

- First Nations Sovereignty
- Mental Health
- Climate Change
- Each topic included the overarching theme of Racism and Discrimination

Across the 2 day event, FUSE delegates from across Australia explored key issues impacting young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds, engaged with decision-makers and MPs, and heard from experienced advocates working in diverse sectors. Delegates also participated in a range of skills building workshops and worked in teams to develop 'pitches' on one of the themes which they then presented to a panel of MP's, advocates, and other decision makers.

Summary of Recommendations from FUSE 2021 Delegates Pitch

First Nations Sovereignty

1. Australian primary and high schools must implement curriculum about First Nations history that is holistic, truthful, and culturally appropriate.
2. These programs must be designed and delivered by First Nations people.
3. Change the date for Australia Day in recognition that the 26th of January commemorates the plight of the First Nations people, and a step towards reconciliation is to recognise it as such.

Climate Change

1. Find practical ways for meaningful and purposeful engagement with First Nations people, utilising their environmental knowledge, conservation experience, and ways of caring for country. E.g. establishing an environmental integrity committee.
2. Embed a concrete plan to ensure that First Nations voices play a fundamental role in all stages of the climate change decision-making process.
3. Decision makers must be more attentive and receptive to the advice and warnings of climate scientists and be more proactive in designing climate change policies.
4. Allocate additional resources to grassroots climate change programs for increased capacity and better delivery, as well as legitimising their efforts and allowing them to be strategically included in climate action at a national level.
5. Create a climate change taskforce with the capacity to coordinate and oversee the provision of assistance to the people on the ground. This will help accelerate their work and expand their reach.
6. Embed more rigid policies that address climate change at a systematic and institutional level and limit reliance on volunteer action from businesses and consumers.
7. Commit to follow up meetings to create timelines for action plans proposed by youth-led groups.
8. Implement a Federal First Nations Climate Change Advisory body to specifically inform climate change policies and provide culturally safe training, with recruitment done through a consultation and recommendation process with First Nations Elders.
9. Provide support and pathways for First Nations young people to work in the renewable energy sector, including subsidised TAFE courses and designing culturally safe learning environments.
10. Reform the Australian education system to include First Nations history and knowledge of cultural rules and regulations which involve respect for animals and the environment, and care for country.

Mental health

1. Culturally responsive training that is led and delivered by PoC must be mandatory in all workplaces but especially for mental health service providers.
2. Mental health staff cohorts need to be more diverse and include those who are BIPOC, neuro-diverse, LGBTQIA+, disabled and/or have lived experienced of intergenerational trauma to contribute to a more conducive and responsive environment for sharing experiences, communicating needs, and healing.
3. Individuals with these various intersections must lead the conversation, co-designing programs and informing best practice.
4. Recognition that one size does not fit all. For instance, youth coming out of the justice system need targeted support to facilitate reconnections, to navigate their trauma and find pathways to become active citizens.
5. Mental health services need to create safe spaces for young people be vulnerable and feel connected to one another.
6. Services need more multicultural youth in positions of influence to advocate for themselves and more inclusive health professionals to provide culturally sensitive care and who can relate and empathise with the stories of young migrants and refugees.
7. Culturally responsive practices should be at the heart of mental health care and should have a more personal dimension, with meaningful conversations free from judgement. In this way, cultural competency training can be purposeful and sincere as opposed from a task done to tick a box.
8. Key mental health services should be brought to young people through existing structures such as schools. Providing support to young people within schools provides early intervention, mental health literacy and has the potential to improve mental health outcomes for youth in general.
9. Youth mental health services need to be delivered in a sustained and holistic way, with expertise drawn from community and trusted elders to allow mental health issues to be dealt through cultural and community ties to promote deeper connections, raise awareness and destigmatise mental health struggles.

1. Background



1.1 FUSE

FUSE 2021 was a national two-day youth summit hosted by MYAN 4th – 6th December 2021. Framed by the overarching themes of ‘Connect, ignite, and trailblaze’, FUSE 2021 built on the overwhelming success of three previous FUSE summits by bringing together 50 emerging young leaders from refugee and migrant backgrounds to develop their leadership skills, build networks, and learn from and engage with advocates, MP’s and decision-makers from federal and state level government.

1.2 Rationale

Young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds have a range of strengths and capabilities and enormous potential to be active participants and leaders in, and contributors to Australian society. Their engagement as active citizens in Australian society has significant and long-term individual benefits and benefits for, their families, communities, and for a diverse and socially cohesive Australia.

However, they often face challenges in accessing the support and opportunities they need to reach this potential. The specific barriers faced by young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds can place them at greater risk of social and economic disadvantage than their Australian-born counterparts. These include but are not limited to:

- accessibility (i.e. cost and transport)
- Western standards of healthcare, limited culturally safe and appropriate mental healthcare and a lack of representation within services
- social disconnection due to racism and discrimination
- a “one size fits all” approach by service providers, and
- a lack of meaningful engagement with decision makers.

These barriers often mean that their voices are marginalised, which limits their capacity to advocate for their needs, influence decision makers, and be supported as leaders in their communities.

As the national peak body representing the rights and interests of young people from refugee backgrounds in Australia, MYAN plays an important role in facilitating access to leadership and advocacy opportunities for diverse young people. We believe that young people should be supported to identify, explore, and respond to the issues impacting their lives, identify solutions, and advocate for change. FUSE is an important event that supports young people to do this.

1.3 Aims

Primary: To promote the voices, values, and aspirations of young advocates from refugee and migrant backgrounds and highlight key issues impacting young people across the country. FUSE aims to put youth voices on the agenda for policy makers.

Secondary: To promote young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds as powerful advocates — engaged, articulate and a cohort to be taken seriously in the public forum.

FUSE provides opportunities for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds from across Australia to:

- Network with and share perspectives and experiences with other young people from multi-cultural backgrounds from around Australia.
- Strengthen leadership capabilities.
- Build the skills, confidence, and networks to engage in advocacy.
- Apply advocacy and leadership skills to engage with decision-makers.
- Provide an opportunity for decision-makers to engage directly with young people from multi-cultural backgrounds from around Australia.
- Introduce national opportunities for young people through networking with organisation and advocacy bodies.

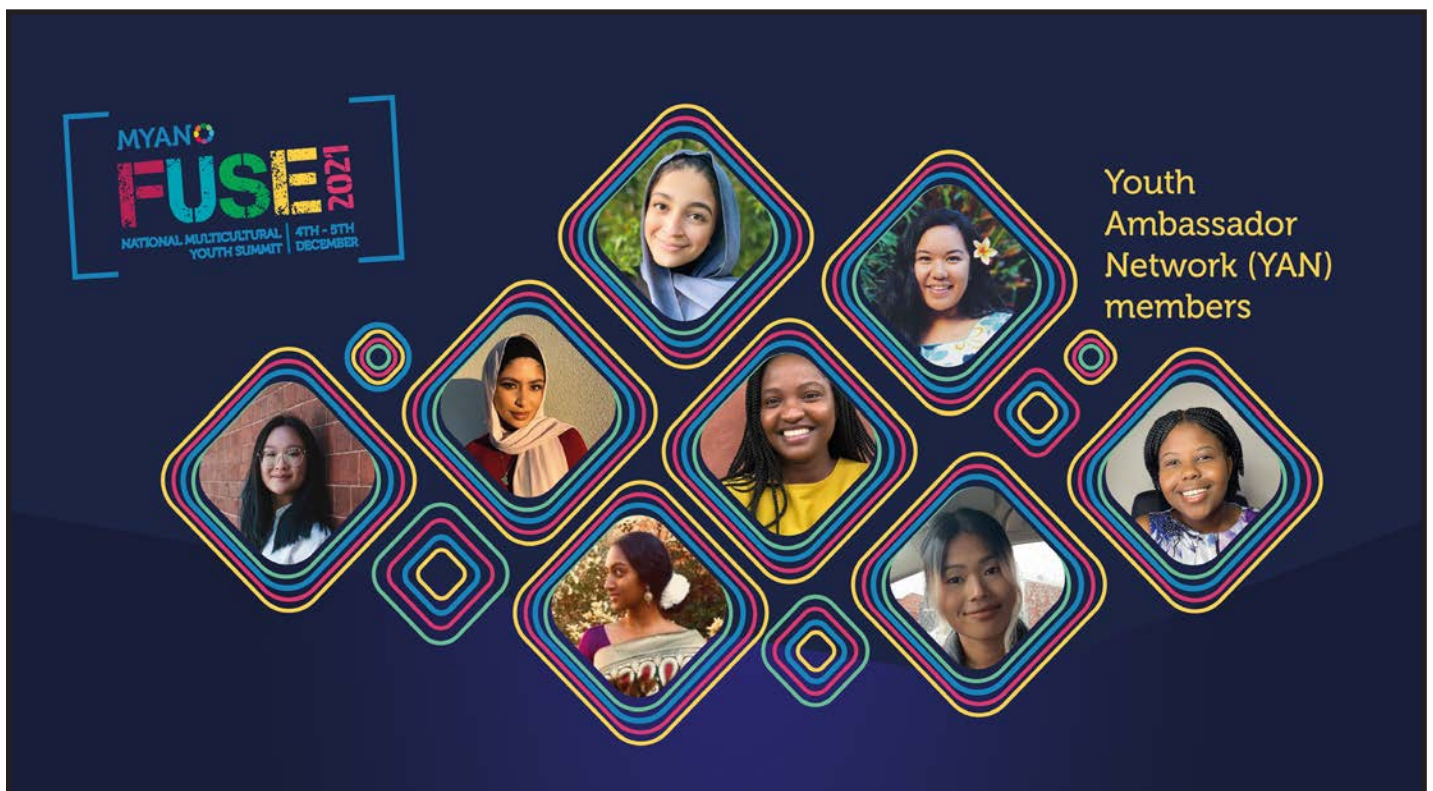
Fuse also provides an opportunity for decision-makers to engage directly with young people from multi-cultural backgrounds from around Australia.



1.4 Youth Ambassador Network (YAN)

The YAN are a group of passionate and diverse young leaders working with MYAN in a national advisory capacity. Supported through MYAN and our state and territory partners, YAN members are active advocates and actors working to influence the national agenda for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

The YAN are not representatives of all refugee and migrant young people in their state or territory, but provide a perspective of young refugee and migrant Australians to MYAN. They also work on practical activities within their state or territory and serve as advocates, amplifying the voice of others, in a range of national and state/territory forums.



Planning

The YAN played a key role in the planning and delivery of the FUSE summit and events, including a trivia night, and a social dinner. Their roles included reviewing applications and selecting delegates, workshop facilitation, ensuring the safety of delegates throughout the event, panel planning and facilitation, and event planning.

Social night

Delegates were provided with list of the topics during the online social night which took place in the weeks prior to FUSE. At this time, they were introduced to their fellow delegates and participated in various activities in games to establish a sense of connection prior to the event.

FUSE theme selection

The themes chosen by the YAN reflect some of the key issues they are particularly concerned about. The FUSE 2021 topics were:

- First Nations Sovereignty
- Mental Health
- Climate Change
- Each topic included the overarching theme of Racism and Discrimination

1.5 Delegates

FUSE 2021 delegates were selected through a competitive application process that involved submitting a written or multimedia format application. From over 80 applications, 50 young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds were selected to participate. Delegates from each state and territory were selected, including young people from regional, rural, and remote locations.

Delegates represented a broad cross section of skills, cultural backgrounds, and experience in advocacy and leadership. For many delegates, this was the first formal leadership skills development and training they had attended.

All delegates were aged between 18 and 25 years, and represented a diverse range of cultural, linguistic, and religious backgrounds.

Delegates' cultural backgrounds were identified as Sri Lankan-Australian, Vietnamese-Australian, Mauritian-Indian, Nepali, South Sudanese, Hong Kong, Persian and Scottish, Malaysian, Myanmar-Arakanese, Chinese, Fiji-Indian, Indian, Lebanese-Australian, Iranian, Palestinian-Australian, Tongan, Singaporean, Afghan, Korean, Bosnian, Ugandan, German-Thai, Congolese, Samoan, Filipino, Greek, Sri Lankan, Tamil, Pakistani, South African, and Somali.



MYAN supported delegates' attendance at FUSE 2021 by providing travel and accommodation for all participants.

2. FUSE 2021 Activities



The FUSE 2021 program was specifically tailored to the advocacy context of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. The program included interactive formal training and workshops, facilitated social and professional networking, and provided opportunities for delegates to develop and demonstrate their leadership and advocacy skills and engage with more experienced advocates and decision-makers.

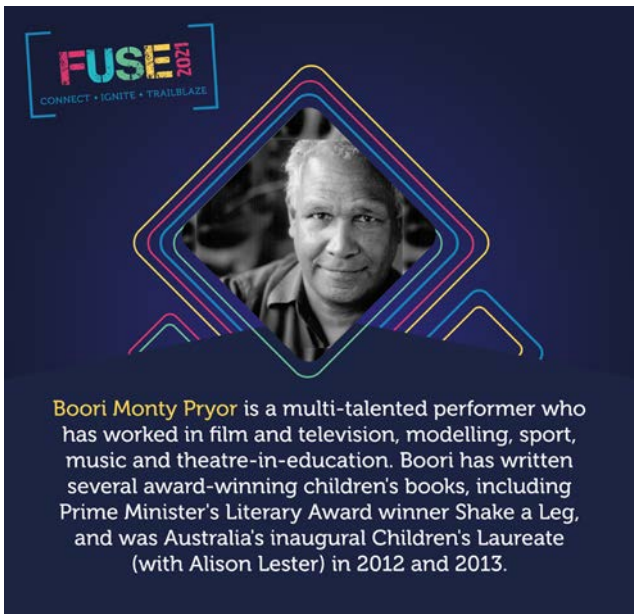
Typically held in either Melbourne or Sydney, due to ongoing COVID-19 travel restrictions, including state border closures, FUSE 2021 was transformed into an innovative, multi-city in person/online hybrid model. The hybrid model responded to the logistical challenges brought on by the pandemic, while still ensuring a national focus. The hybrid model allowed for local face to face participation in Melbourne, Sydney, Perth, Hobart and Brisbane, and there was also an online delegation for those who could not meet in person.

“ The ability to meet likeminded young people was one of my favourite things about FUSE. ”

2.1 Panel Sessions

Panels on Day 1 were facilitated by YAN members with skills and expertise in multicultural youth advocacy, community leadership, and facilitation. Each of the three panels centred on one of the key FUSE 2021 topics. FUSE delegates heard directly from experienced advocates and leaders in these spaces and were able to:

- Learn about the diversity of advocacy activities
- Learn about key elements of advocacy work
- Demonstrate and practice asking questions in public
- Increase their knowledge of these issues by hearing real life experiences
- Connect with diverse and experienced advocates
- Learn about key strategies for engaging with decision makers



Boori Monty Pryor is a multi-talented performer who has worked in film and television, modelling, sport, music and theatre-in-education. Boori has written several award-winning children's books, including Prime Minister's Literary Award winner *Shake a Leg*, and was Australia's inaugural Children's Laureate (with Alison Lester) in 2012 and 2013.

Panel 1 First Nations Sovereignty

As a commitment to building strong and respectful relationships with First Nations communities, YAN members recognised the need for migrant and refugee communities to be in solidarity with First Nations peoples. The panel focused on social justice, representation, racism, and the impact of Australian systems on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander individuals and communities.

Facilitator

Fatima Tlaa, YAN


Panellists

Alicia Johnson

Scholar, podcaster and activist

Boori Monty Pryor

Author and inaugural Australian Children's Laureate



Alicia Johnson is a researcher and writer who works on First Nation people, their movement, especially highlighting Indigenous knowledges, their lived experience, aspects of Eco-Feminism and, their identity.

Panel 2 Climate Change

Young people are concerned about the challenges and risks presented by the climate crisis and want to proactively engage in action addressing climate change and injustice in purposeful ways. The panel discussion focused on those most impacted by the climate crisis, what practical actions can be taken, and the work of young climate activists in Australia.

Facilitator

Mary Harm, YAN


Panellists

Robati Harrison



Pacific Climate Warrior

Waniki Maluwapi

Community organiser and digital storyteller for the landmark Torres Strait Climate Justice case 'Our Islands, Our Home.'



Robati is proud I-Kiribati person. He is passionate about nurturing and sharing his culture as well as mobilising youth to create change. He has been involved in community work for nearly 10 years, and organised workshops and campaigns on climate justice including 'Breaking Ground'.



Waniki Maluwapi is a Zenadh Kes and Papuan storyteller. She is a Meanjin based 350 Australia community organiser and digital storyteller for the landmark Torres Strait Climate Justice case 'Our Islands, Our Home.' Waniki is passionate about amplifying the voices of those on the frontlines of the climate crisis through different art mediums.

Panel 3 Mental Health Panel

This panel focused on how mental health care can be identified and addressed for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in new ways. Panellists shared insights from their lived experience and professional work, cultural healing and community, and suggested actions or solutions that could be implemented.

Facilitator

Chaneline Kakule, YAN

Panellists

Annukina Warda

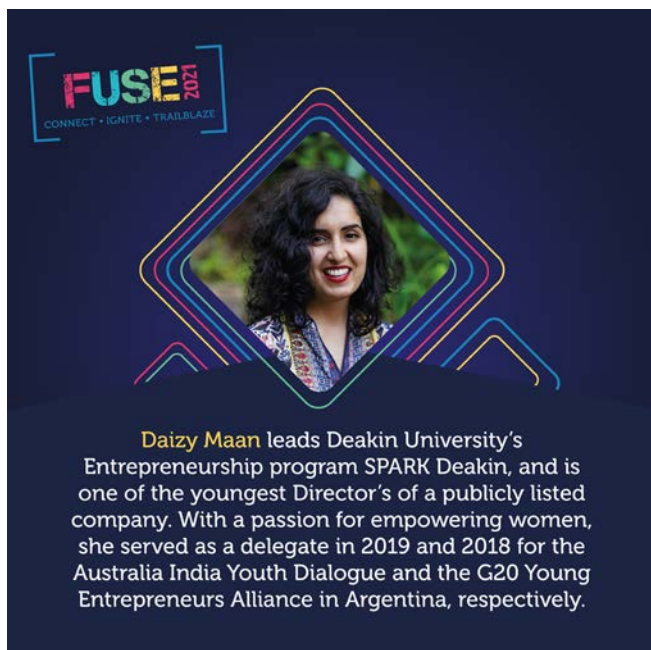
Senior Policy and Programs specialist.

Daizy Maan

Founder of the Australian Digital Job Accelerator, and founder of the Australian South Asian Centre.

Zinab Al Hilaly

Leader, storyteller, and youth mental health advocate.



The profile card for Daizy Maan features a dark blue background. In the top left corner, there is a logo for 'FUSE 2021' with the tagline 'CONNECT • IGNITE • TRAILBLAZE'. The central focus is a portrait of Daizy Maan, a woman with dark curly hair, smiling, framed by a colorful, multi-layered diamond shape. Below the portrait, the text reads: 'Daizy Maan leads Deakin University's Entrepreneurship program SPARK Deakin, and is one of the youngest Director's of a publicly listed company. With a passion for empowering women, she served as a delegate in 2019 and 2018 for the Australia India Youth Dialogue and the G20 Young Entrepreneurs Alliance in Argentina, respectively.'



The profile card for Annukina Warda features a dark blue background. In the top left corner, there is a logo for 'FUSE 2021' with the tagline 'CONNECT • IGNITE • TRAILBLAZE'. The central focus is a portrait of Annukina Warda, a woman with dark hair pulled back, looking upwards, framed by a colorful, multi-layered diamond shape. Below the portrait, the text reads: 'Annukina Warda is a Senior Policy and Programs specialist, as well as Cultural competency leader. She built and managed projects in countering violent extremism, intercultural respect programs for young, and facilitated collaborative engagement and research approaches that mobilise partnerships and create positive social changes.'

2.2 Workshop: Pitching Stories to Media

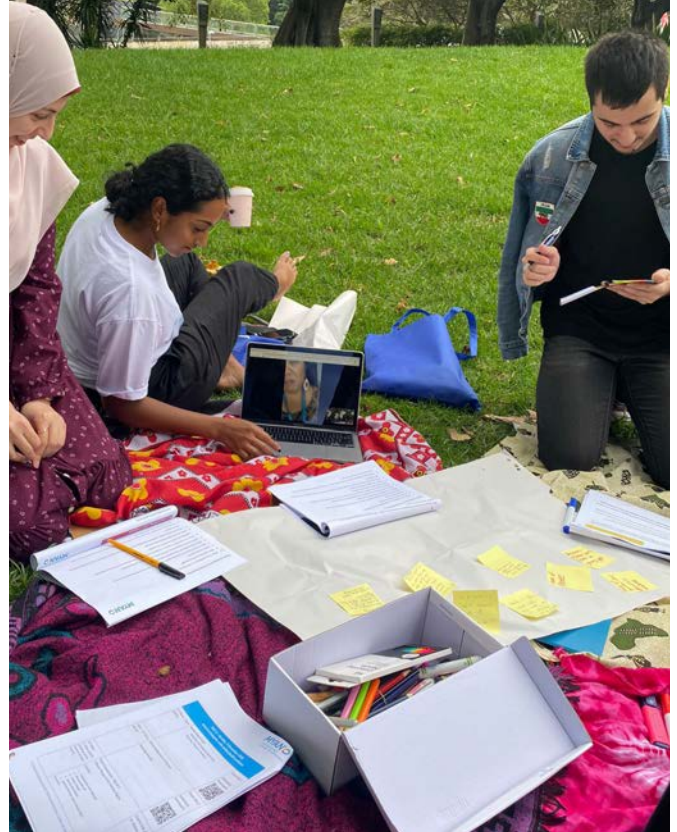
A journalist with 10+ years' experience Mike Clay is the Executive Producer of current affairs and comedy show *The Feed*, where he led a data-driven strategic transformation that doubled ratings, boosted digital audiences by 10x and won 10 major awards in three years. Mike presented a session on the how young advocates can effectively pitch to media, and the importance of storytelling in advocacy.

2.3 Networking Expo

One of the objectives of FUSE is to support young people to build networks with organisations and individuals across sectors, including introductions to organisations and advocacy bodies working in relevant areas.

The EXPO session provided a structured opportunity for delegates to learn about other organisations undertaking advocacy programs and campaigns with young people on key issues in Australia and provide an opportunity to learn about how they can get involved. The event was also an opportunity for the organisations to connect with emerging young leaders from refugee and migrant backgrounds along with other professionals in sector across Australia

These organisations were: The Australian Red Cross, MYAN's Youth Disability CaLD Collective, and Centre for Multicultural Youth, Common Purpose, HerSpace, Australian Youth Affairs Coalition, Services Australia and Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network.



2.4 Pitch Activity

The pitch activity is an opportunity for delegates to practice a form of advocacy by bringing attention to an issue that is important to young people, and proposing ways that the problem can be addressed. The pitch activity is designed to help delegates understand the process behind crafting solutions to issues to assist with future advocacy. The purpose of the pitch activity was:

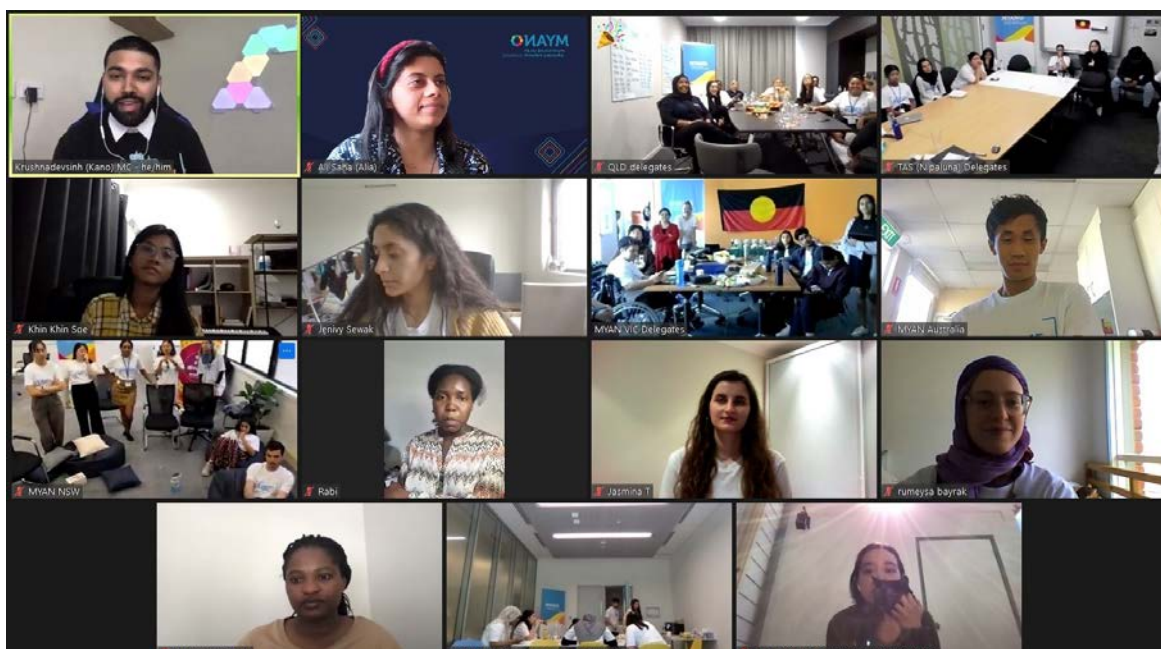
- To give young people an opportunity to talk directly to decision makers about issues that are important to young people
- Present key issues and recommendations to decision makers and receive feedback on their ideas.

Prior to delivering their 'Pitch', delegates worked in small teams with MYAN's partners and members of the YAN to explore the FUSE topics, identify key issues of concern and draft and develop solutions to put forward and to practice effective and timely delivery of their 'Pitch' to panellists.

The 'Pitch' Panel on Day 2 provided delegates with a practical opportunity to practice their public speaking and advocacy skills by engaging directly with a panel decision-makers and politicians. Delegates presented to the panel in small groups on the following topics:

1. First Nations Sovereignty
2. Climate Change
3. Youth Mental Health.

The presentations were pitched in innovative forms, including storytelling and spoken word.



Pitch Panels



First Nations Sovereignty & Climate Change

Delegates from New South Wales, Tasmania and Western Australia presented their pitches to the following panel:

Comissioner Anne Hollonds
Australia's National Children's Commissioner

Sheena Watt MP
ALP Member for Northern Metropolitan Region at Parliament of Victoria and Victorian Legislative council.

Morgan Koegel
Senior Campaigner at Climate Council of Australia and Chair of the Board at the Australian Youth Climate Coalition.

Senator Nick McKim
Deputy Leader of the Australian Greens in the Senate and Senator for Tasmania.



Mental Health & Racism

Delegates from the online group, Victoria and Queensland presented their pitches to the following panellists:

Elsa Tuet-Rosenberg

Co-founder and Director of Hue, an antiracism & social justice organisation that provides training and consulting.

Caterina Giorgi

CEO at the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE)

Shadow Minister Amanda Rishworth

Member of Federal Labour's Shadow Cabinet as Shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education and Development and Shadow Minister for Youth.

Honourable Assistant Minister Luke Howarth MP

Assistant Minister for Youth and Employment Services and Federal Member for



2.5 Pitch Overview and Solutions

First Nations Rights

Tasmania

“ The Department of education has failed to include the real history about Australia’s First Nations peoples.”

To introduce their pitch, the Tasmanian team talked about the repercussions and ongoing impacts of colonisation and dispossession within First Nations communities which have perpetuated mistreatment, inequality and intergenerational trauma. A key point of their pitch was the failure of the Australian educational system to teach the accurate history of colonialism and First Nations history, leading to an acute misrepresentation of the history of this country and lack of accurate representation of First Nations people and history. This exclusion contributes to racist stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes which continues to marginalise First Nations people.

The key policy pitch of the Tasmanian team was the need to review and reform the Australian education system in the teaching of First Nations history which would greatly contribute to shifting the negative narrative around First Nations people and consequently help address the stigma and discrimination they remain subjected to.

Solutions:

1. Australian primary and high schools must implement educational programs about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history that are holistic, truthful, and culturally appropriate.
2. These programs must be designed and delivered by First Nations people.
3. Change the date for Australia Day in recognition that the 26th of January commemorates the plight of the First Nations people, and a step towards reconciliation is to recognise it as such.



Climate Change

NSW

“There is an urgent need to build meaningful relationships with young people in the climate action space”

The NSW team prefaced their pitch by highlighting their personal experiences of the effects of climate change, including what it was like to live through the aftermath of the Black Summer Bushfires. Issues raised included the rise in respiratory complications, infrastructure damage and the record-high temperatures which were particularly difficult to deal with for the following reasons:

- Lack of green open spaces in the community limiting their opportunities to be outdoors
- Lack of facilities such as air conditioning in classrooms
- No access to beach or pools in Western Sydney

They called out the inadequate action from decision makers even when faced with not only clear warnings from environmental experts but also when offered solutions that would help mitigate the impacts of climate change. Moreover, they expressed their frustration about the lack of support to grassroots environmental organisations who are willing to implement climate actions within their communities.



Solutions:

1. Find practical ways for meaningful and purposeful engagement with First Nations people, utilising their environmental knowledge, conservation experience, and ways of caring for country.
2. Embed a concrete plan to ensure that First Nations voices play a fundamental role in all stages of the climate change decision-making process.
3. Decision makers must be more attentive and receptive to the advice and warnings of climate scientists and be more proactive in designing climate change policies.
4. Allocate additional resources to grassroots climate change programs for increased capacity and better delivery, as well as legitimising their efforts and allowing them to be strategically included in climate action at a national level.
5. Create a climate change taskforce with the capacity to coordinate and oversee the provision of assistance to the people on the ground. This will help accelerate their work and expand their reach.
6. Embed more rigid policies that address climate change at a systematic and institutional level and limit reliance on volunteer action from businesses and consumers.
7. Commit to follow up meetings to create timelines

Indigenous Liberation equals Climate Mitigation

WA

The WA team pitch focused on the link between First Nations rights and climate justice. They spoke of how climate change impacts Indigenous peoples across the world in distinct ways, and how those who contribute least to climate change are the ones most affected by its negative impacts. They spoke of how Indigenous people have particular physical, cultural, and spiritual and social connections to land, water and sky; connections that transpire in many aspects of Indigenous cultural practices and ways of life. Climate change exacerbates cultural erosion as well as displacement, and has significant social and economic repercussions.

The team highlighted the critical lack of recognition and utilisation of the wisdom, knowledge, and experience about land management and care for country that exists within Indigenous communities, and how this is a significant oversight in climate change responses. There needs to be more inclusive and intersectional dialogue about climate change policies and Indigenous people must be at the forefront of climate policy, response and justice.

Solutions:

1. Implement a Federal First Nations Climate Change Advisory body to specifically inform climate change policies and provide culturally safe training, with recruitment done through a consultation and recommendation process with First Nations Elders.
2. Provide support and pathways for First Nations young people to work in the renewable energy sector, including subsidised TAFE courses and designing culturally safe learning environments.
3. Reform the Australian education system to include First Nations history and knowledge of cultural rules and regulations which involve respect for animals and the environment, and care for country.



Mental health

National Online Group

“ There is a need to recognise the critical role of spiritual health and cultural practices as essential alongside clinical care and diagnosis. ”

This pitch focused on intergenerational trauma and the lack of cultural awareness within mental health services. The group spoke of how existing mental health support services typically lack the necessary competencies to understand how intergenerational trauma affects young peoples' social and emotional development, and overall wellbeing. Contributing to this is that the clinical mental health sector is typically built on the Western healthcare system and is not always culturally safe or appropriate for young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. They spoke of the compounding impacts of racism and discrimination which also contributes to social distress and feelings of isolation. For young people, this can be challenging to navigate when understanding and conversations about anxiety, trauma, and depression can be highly stigmatised within certain communities.



Solutions

1. Culturally responsive training must be mandatory in all workplaces but especially for mental health service providers.
2. Mental health staff cohorts need to be more diverse and include those who are BIPOC, neuro-diverse, LGBTQIA+, disabled and/or have lived experienced of intergenerational trauma to contribute to a more conducive and responsive environment for sharing experiences, communicating needs, and healing.
3. Individuals with these various intersections must lead the conversation, co-designing programs and informing best practice.
4. Recognition that one size does not fit all. For instance, youth coming out of the justice system need targeted support to facilitate reconnections, to navigate their trauma and find pathways to become active citizens.

Queensland

“ As our leaders you are running out of time. ”

The QLD team’s pitch highlighted the issue that young people from refugee and migrant background often share the repercussions of displacement and dispossession, often not by choice. This is exacerbated by experiences of racism that can cause trauma, as well as feelings of anxiety and isolation. Furthermore, the migrant and refugee experience is usually accompanied with a huge existential burden and expectations to be high achieving and conventionally successful, which can be overwhelming for young people.

The key message of their pitch was that mental health support is inaccessible to multicultural young people as mental health services are not well-equipped to address these complexities of the migrant and refugee experience. The solutions provided are on a short-term basis and there is no real ongoing care.

Solutions:

1. Mental health services need to create safe spaces for young people be vulnerable and feel connected to one another.
2. Services need more multicultural youth in positions of influence to advocate for themselves and more inclusive health professionals to provide culturally sensitive care and who can relate and empathise with the stories of young migrants and refugees.
3. Culturally responsive practices should be at the heart of mental health care and should have a more personal dimension, with meaningful conversations free from judgement. In this way, cultural competency training can be purposeful and sincere as opposed from a task done to tick a box.



Victoria

“ Mental health services often have a one size fits all approaches that do not meet our communities specific needs. ”

While acknowledging that “cultural competency” training is necessary to be better informed and deliver more culturally responsive mental health support, the VIC team highlighted that mental health and the professional development in this area is informed by settler colonial structures. Therefore, these systems of knowledge must be viewed critically and recognise their tendency to exclude, and marginalise BIPOC young people.

Beyond the othering and objectification of young migrants and refugees in the clinical mental health sector, they shared that young people struggle to overcome the stigma entrenched in their communities and often lack general mental health literacy. In addition, there are practical factors that make mental health services inaccessible. These include financial barriers, and transportation barriers. The VIC team also emphasised that a one size fits all approach to youth mental health is detrimental because every individual and community has different intersecting experiences. The VIC team advocated for lived experience-led solutions beyond conventional clinical practices in the mental health space.

Solutions:

1. Key mental health services should be brought to young people through existing structures such as schools. Because of existing relationships of trust with students, schools have great potential to foster a culturally safe environment for young people. When

supported this way, young people do not have to face additional barriers such as family and community stigma or even practical barriers. Providing support to young people within schools provides early intervention, mental health literacy and has the potential to improve mental health outcomes for youth in general.

2. Youth mental health services need to be delivered in a sustained and holistic way, with expertise drawn from community and trusted elders to allow mental health issues to be dealt through cultural and community ties to promote deeper connections, raise awareness and destigmatise mental health struggles.



3. Outcomes for Delegates



“I think we’ve built such an incredible kind of community and collaboration over the last couple of days and I hope we can really continue that meaningful engagement and collaboration (between young people and decision makers) moving into the future” - VIC delegate

This section outlines the feedback collected from delegates through group feedback sessions within each state and individually submitted online evaluation surveys at the conclusion of the summit and an online survey.

Overwhelmingly delegates reported that FUSE 2021 was a successful event and achieved a range of outcomes for all the delegates. The majority of delegates expressed interest in future advocacy work in their local communities and nationally with MYAN.

One word to describe your experience at FUSE 2021?



Top 5 Lessons from FUSE 2021



The importance of lived experience in leadership and decision making.

The importance of listening to First Nations voices and the role of refugee and migrant young people and communities as allies.

Increased knowledge about First Nations Sovereignty, Climate Change and Mental Health, and how it relates to young people.

How to get involved with community initiatives.

Increased self-confidence in pitching, storytelling, public speaking and ways to effectively plan a presentation within a limited time frame.

Engagement with parliamentarians and decision-makers



Skills and future advocacy

The majority of delegates wanted to become more involved in campaigning and advocacy efforts, apply learnt skills to promote the rights and interest of themselves and others, and connect with local youth leaders in their communities.

96% of delegates formed a better understanding of how to prepare key messages and an advocacy pitch since FUSE 2021.



84% felt more confident in public speaking.



60% of delegates found the networking event useful



88% of delegates felt an increased sense of confidence in networking.

The majority of delegates found the pitch a useful and valuable opportunity to apply and improve on leadership and advocacy skills. Comments from delegates indicated that the value in this session lies largely with the opportunity to directly engage with parliamentarians and decision-makers. FUSE delegates encouraged panellists to commit to ongoing engagement with young people, for example through roundtables, to continue to work with young people in devising and committing to solutions to some of their most pressing concerns.

“ I am so proud of our QLD delegates! They presented a phenomenal pitch to high level decision makers on the topic of Mental Health and Racism with particular focus on representation. ‘You cry the day you had no shoes, we cried the day we had no feet’ – words spoken by QLD delegate Rahim during the pitch. I feel so humbled to have been part of their FUSE experience and am so excited to support the amazing things they are already and will be doing in our communities. ” – Mary Harm, QLD Multicultural Youth Ambassador.

Youth Ambassadors Network

Approximately **60%** of the delegates expressed their interest to join the YAN following FUSE 2021. Being part of the group will give them the chance to receive ongoing support and training to build on skills learned at FUSE 2021, while also opening pathways to national and international advocacy opportunities.

Creating a National Network

The delegates showed a keen interest in wanting to remain in contact with one another, MYAN and state/territory partner organisations to continue their leadership and advocacy work. WhatsApp group chats were formed to further support this and continue their connection after FUSE.

Delegates continue to be invited to participate in MYAN opportunities such as consultations and media opportunities. MYAN continues to provide a platform to connect with other young leaders who had attended previous FUSE summits, engaged with MYAN or have an interest in the rights of young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds from across Australia.



Ongoing links with other organisations

Delegates were introduced to MYAN partner organisations in their respective states and territories during FUSE with the opportunity for delegates to meet other organisations at FUSE through the MYAN-organized networking expo. These relationships are likely to facilitate local projects and getting voices heard on a local and state level.

Advocacy and leadership opportunities for delegates post-FUSE

Delegates explicitly mentioned the kind of support they need to continue their advocacy work such as availability of leadership and youth programs in their state/territory, wanting to be offered various opportunities with MYAN and a directory of relevant contacts in their local area that would support the delegate's advocacy work.

Since FUSE concluded, MYAN has shared leadership and advocacy opportunities with the delegates, including opportunities to participate in campaigns, speak on panels about national issues and participate in national MYAN projects. This engagement has continued at a state/territory level in various ways.

