

**Fuse 2023
'Connect,
Ignite, and
Trailblaze'**

**National
Conference
2023 "Navigating
Journeys,
Empowering
Voices"**

**20
23**



Introduction

“One of the most significant attributes that young people bring to the table is their ability to imagine and ask, “What if?” and “What could be?” They possess a unique perspective and come with fresh ideas that challenge conventional thinking. Their creativity and energy are vital components that add value to our society, and we must recognise their contributions in meaningful ways.

We know that true change cannot be imposed from the outside. To be lasting, it must come from within. MYAN offers a vital space for young people, the sector and government to learn from one another. MYAN is also an important vehicle for connecting emerging leaders across Australia. FUSE, and MYAN’s National Conference is also an opportunity to hear directly from young people, and listen to them and reflect on how we can best work together towards a future they feel hopeful in, to a future they feel a part of. Through partnership and inclusive dialogue, we can agree on actions for change.” Carmel Guerra (OAM), Chair of MYAN



Carmel Guerra (OAM), Chair of MYAN

MYAN’s bi-annual youth leadership event FUSE 2023 was held in conjunction with our National Multicultural Youth Conference which brought together a wide range of MYAN stakeholders including young people from across Australia, MYAN’s youth advisory bodies and state and territory partners, and experts from the youth, migration and settlement sectors as well as members of parliament.

FUSE 2023

'Connect, Ignite, and Trailblaze'



FUSE is a bi-annual national multicultural youth leadership summit hosted by MYAN. FUSE is specifically designed to equip a national network of emerging leaders with the skills, confidence, and networks needed to create meaningful change in their communities, at the state and national levels.

Framed by the overarching themes of 'Connect', 'Ignite', and 'Trailblaze', FUSE brings together emerging young leaders from refugee and migrant backgrounds from across Australia to develop skills, expand their networks, and engage in advocacy with decision-makers.

MYAN's national Youth Ambassadors Network (YAN) plays an important role in designing and delivering FUSE. The content and structure of the program is targeted to the needs, rights and context of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds, with delegates supported to apply their skills and knowledge at local levels post-FUSE with the support of MYAN's state and territory partners.



FUSE brings together emerging young leaders from refugee and migrant backgrounds from across Australia to develop skills, expand networks, and engage in advocacy with decision-makers.



FUSE 2023 was held in Canberra for the first time, on the 26th-28th November 2023. The purpose of FUSE 2023 was to provide a platform for aspiring young leaders to engage directly with policymakers and decision-makers, to present innovative ideas aimed at resolving critical challenges affecting young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in Australia.

Rationale



FUSE is grounded in MYAN's understanding of youth participation, advocacy and leadership for young people from asylum-seeker, refugee and migrant backgrounds. MYAN believes that young people have unique experiences and knowledge as experts in their own lives and should be supported to identify and explore the issues impacting them, find solutions and advocate for positive change.

Young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds possess remarkable strengths and capabilities, with tremendous potential to contribute to Australian society. However, these individuals frequently confront challenges in accessing the support and opportunities necessary to achieve their full potential. Unfortunately, the specific barriers they face can place them at greater risk of social and economic disadvantage than their Australian-born peers.

These barriers include, but are not limited to: Western standards of healthcare, limited culturally safe and appropriate mental healthcare, 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. Consequently, their voices can be marginalised, limiting 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 and migrant backgrounds in Australia, MYAN plays a pivotal role in facilitating access to leadership and advocacy opportunities for diverse young people. MYAN believes that young people should be encouraged to identify, explore, and respond to issues affecting their lives, identify solutions, and advocate for change. FUSE is a critical event that supports young people in these endeavors.

FUSE seeks to put youth voices on the agenda for policy makers. The primary aim of FUSE is to promote the voices, values, and aspirations of young advocates from refugee and migrant backgrounds, highlighting key issues impacting young people across the country. Additionally, FUSE promotes young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds as powerful advocates—engaged, articulate, and a cohort to be taken seriously in the public forum.

Through FUSE, MYAN is committed to promoting the leadership and advocacy of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds, empowering them to drive change and contribute to a more inclusive, socially cohesive Australia.



FUSE 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 who are engaged and articulate; a cohort to be taken seriously in the public forum.

MYAN's FUSE conference provides opportunities for young Australians from refugee, asylum seeking and migrant backgrounds to:

Connect with and share perspectives, and experiences with other young people from multicultural backgrounds from around Australia

Explore and strengthen leadership capabilities and aspirations

Build skills, confidence and networks to engage in advocacy and active citizenship

Apply advocacy and leadership skills and engage with decision-makers

Access national opportunities through networking with organisations and advocacy bodies

Provide an opportunity for decision-makers to engage directly with young people from multicultural backgrounds from around Australia.

FUSE 2023 Activities

Preparation Workshops



MYAN held two online workshops to prepare young people for the upcoming FUSE event. The objective of these workshops was to introduce young people to key advocacy principles and provide them with ample opportunities to ask questions, brainstorm their ideas and practice their pitch delivery. The workshops were designed to ensure that the young people were well-prepared and had a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the pitch activity and national conference.

One of the workshops was specifically focused on developing effective pitching skills. It was framed as a pitch school where young people were taught basic principles of government relations and how to make strong recommendations. This was an important aspect of the workshops because it helped young people understand how this iteration of FUSE would be unique and how they could make an impact.



Day 1: Pitch Training

The 'pitch school' activity was an opportunity for young FUSE delegates to learn how to deliver compelling pitches to decision makers, advocate for issues that are important to young people, and gain valuable experience in crafting solutions to important issues and identifying practical ways in which problems can be addressed.

By participating in the pitch activity, delegates gained valuable insight into the process behind crafting effective solutions to issues, and using diplomacy skills to message this to decision makers, which is a crucial skill for future advocacy efforts.

To prepare for the pitch, delegates worked in small teams with MYAN's partner organisations and members of the Youth Ambassadors Network to explore the FUSE topics, identify key concerns, and develop solutions to put forward. They also practiced the art of delivering their pitch, receiving constructive feedback from their peers.



Media Training



In partnership with the Foundation for Young Australians (FYA), FUSE participants attended a workshop on how to effectively navigate the complexities of today's media landscape. Covering essential topics such as media terminology, storytelling, and the significance of media and why it matters, this training equipped FUSE participants with the necessary tools to comprehend and effectively engage with the media.

Delegates learned how to manage media interviews, frame key messages, and protect their stories. The session aimed to cultivate media-savvy leaders who can navigate and leverage the media to advance their causes and engage effectively with diverse audiences.

Day 2: “Parliamentary Speed Meeting” Event



The FUSE "Parliamentary Speed Meeting" event took place during parliamentary sitting days at Parliament House. Tailored to empower young leaders, the event aimed to offer a comprehensive understanding of parliamentary procedures and grant participants a distinctive platform to instigate change. Participants were encouraged to present their inventive solutions to prevalent challenges affecting themselves and their peers directly to parliamentarians. This interactive session facilitated an exchange of perspectives, allowing parliamentarians to gain valuable insights into issues pertinent to the youth.



The topics covered:

- Health and wellbeing
- Education
- Employment
- Youth Mental Health
- Regional Resettlement
- Climate Change
- Gender Equality
- Youth Justice
- LGBTQI+ Rights

FUSE Participants

FUSE 2023 participants were selected through established youth advisory networks and MYAN's state and territory partners. 28 young people were selected to participate. Delegates from urban, regional and rural locations across Australia attended, representing 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 18-28 years, and represented a diverse range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds including:

greek indian-australian
chinese-australian
malaysian afghan
burundian south-sudanese hazara-afghan
iranian burmese indian south-african
malay-singaporean assyrian
pakistani iranian-afghan polish
pakistani-burmese arakanese
ethiopian egyptian
sudanese



FUSE delegates met with 26 Senators, Ministers and Members of Parliament:

- Hon Dr Anne Aly MP
- Hon Dan Tehan MP
- Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham
- Senator Jordon Steele-John
- Senator Linda White
- Ms Zoe Daniel MP
- Senator Dorinda Cox
- Ms Elizabeth Watson-Brown MP
- Mr David Smith MP
- Ms Allegra Spender MP
- Mr Dan Repacholi MP
- Ms Alicia Payne MP
- Senator Andrew Bragg
- Dr Monique Ryan MP
- Hon Michael McCormack MP
- Dr Daniel Mulino MP
- Hon Dr Andrew Leigh MP
- Senator Deborah O'Neill
- Ms Libby Coker MP
- Senator Jana Stewart
- Hon Kirsty McBain MP
- Mrs Bridget Archer MP
- Senator Hon Jenny McAlister
- Dr Mike Freelander MP
- Hon Warren Entsch MP
- Mr Stephen Bates MP





These meetings facilitated an important and unique opportunity for MP's and Senators to engage in direct and focused conversations with young leaders. Their feedback and insights will undoubtedly have a lasting impact on these young leaders, inspiring them to strive for excellence in their future advocacy efforts.

By participating in this event, MP's and Senators demonstrated their commitment and willingness to hear directly from young people and made a significant contribution to nurturing the potential of these young leaders and encouraging them on their journey of positive change.

Hear from FUSE Delegates!

Anna's experience



"Going to Parliament and attending MYAN's National Youth Conference was a profoundly enriching and eye-opening experience that left an indelible impact on my perspective. The opportunity to engage directly with decision-makers and discuss the challenges faced by international backpackers on working holiday visas, such as myself, living and working in Australia, was invaluable."



"Young people need to help create solutions and being able to advocate for the recognition of our specific needs made me appreciate even more the chance to speak up. Moreover, the openness of MPs to listen to our concerns is not to be taken for granted and reflects commitment to understanding the diverse needs of the young and multicultural community."

Shifting to the conference, MYAN event was a great moment to experience the richness that arises when diverse voices and different topics converge. Engaging with a diverse array of speakers provided valuable insights into multiculturalism, health, global engagement, education, belonging, access to services, and employment. The interactive nature of the panel discussions allowed for meaningful exchanges of ideas. The conference not only broadened my understanding of all these topics but also emphasised the importance of embracing our differences to create a more harmonious and equitable society. Overall, this experience has inspired me to actively contribute to advocating in both my personal and professional spheres."

Sadeqa's Experience



"My time at Parliament House was initially nerve-racking but turned out to be an incredibly rewarding experience. Contrary to my expectations, parliamentarians were approachable, and the atmosphere was surprisingly fun. I learned a lot about the legislative process and gained insights into governance, breaking down my fear of engaging with political figures. The parliamentarians' willingness to engage during their busy schedules made me feel heard, emphasising the importance of transparent and inclusive democracy. Overall, it was a transformative experience that shattered preconceived notions and deepened my appreciation for those dedicated to public service."



Ish's Experience



"Entering parliament, I wasn't entirely sure what to expect. The experience was a mix of excitement and nerves, but being surrounded by fellow young participants eased the process. While our primary task was pitching to MPs, what stands out most in my memory is the collaborative atmosphere as we bounced ideas off each other to refine our pitches."



"The parliamentary setting itself took me by surprise. Amidst the cacophony, the pace was incredibly fast, making it almost surreal to think that some of the most pivotal decisions for our country are made under that roof. The diverse breadth of projects tackled in parliament left me in awe. Every MP we met discussed their specialised work addressing nationwide, if not worldwide, issues. It was an experience unlike any other.

This diversity made the experience even more eye-opening, providing us young advocates with a genuine taste of the challenges inherent in advocacy. My main takeaway from this encounter was the distinct difference between activism and advocacy—where the latter centers on mutual exchange."

"Navigating Journeys, Empowering Voices"

MYAN National Multicultural Youth Conference



MYAN's National Multicultural Youth Conference "Navigating Journeys, Empowering Voices" was held in Canberra on November 27-28, 2023. This event was MYAN's first national conference since 2017 and brought together a diverse group of young people and service providers, as well as government and community leaders from across the country.

The conference provided a platform for meaningful conversations and collaborative solutions, with the goal of supporting the successful settlement and active participation of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. Attendees had the opportunity to participate in a range of networking activities and team building, where they shared ideas, passions, and perspectives with young people from across Australia.

The conference was an important opportunity to share knowledge, experiences, and ideas on how to better support young people from diverse cultural backgrounds, particularly those who have experienced displacement and trauma. Through workshops, keynote speeches, and panel discussions, participants learnt about best practices, innovative approaches, and emerging trends in the sector. Furthermore, the conference provided a space for networking and building partnerships, which leads to more effective and coordinated responses to the needs of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

The conference was a resounding success, with participants leaving with renewed energy, inspiration, and a sense of community. It was a fantastic opportunity for young people to connect with others and gain valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by multicultural youth in Australia. MYAN can be proud of the work they have done to bring such a diverse group of people together and create a space for meaningful dialogue and collaboration. The conference was an important step towards building a more inclusive and vibrant society.



Conference Opening Reception

Welcome to the Country - Aunty Violet Sheridan



MYAN's National Conference Reception event began with a heartfelt Welcome to Country by Aunty Violet Sheridan, a respected Ngunnawal elder. Aunty Violet's presence and words not only honored the rich cultural heritage of the Ngunnawal people but also set a tone of respect, unity, and inclusivity for the entire gathering. Her traditional welcome served as a reminder of the importance of acknowledging and valuing the First Nations people's connection to the land, and fostering a sense of belonging and understanding among all attendees.



Hon Andrew Giles MP and Hon Dr Anne Aly MP

We were honoured to have Hon Andrew Giles MP and Hon Dr Anne Aly MP open MYAN's National Conference, highlighting their dedication to empowering multicultural youth. Their presence set a positive tone, emphasising diversity and inclusion. Their impactful remarks inspired attendees to advocate for change and foster inclusivity for all young individuals.



“As decision-makers, it is vital that we listen to and consider your perspectives when making decisions that affect your interests. Looking around this room, I am reminded of the incredible potential our country holds. We must strive to listen better and dismantle the barriers—both visible and invisible—that hinder individuals from realizing their full potential.”

Hon. Andrew Giles MP, Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs

“So my commitment to you is to work with you. I'm not here to be your voice. I'm here to raise your voice, and as long as you want to have your voice raised, and as long as you have something to say, and as long as you have a lived experience, my promise to you is that that will be valued, that will be lifted, and my door will be open to you so that we can walk together, work together, and create a better future for the next generation and the generation after that and the generation after that.”

Hon Dr Anne Aly MP, Minister for Youth and Early Childhood Education

A Welcome by Conference Co-hosts

Co-hosted by MYAN and The Social Policy Group, the reception was a night of celebration to kick off the National Multicultural Youth Conference.



Panel Discussion

Shaping the Future of Australian Multiculturalism: Realising Potential Through Multicultural Youth Participation



Dr Bulent Hass Dellal AO (Executive Director, Australian Multicultural Foundation), Ms. Christine Castley (Chief Executive Officer, Multicultural Australia), Ms. Rana Ebrahimi (National Manager, MYAN)

The reception night of the MYAN Australia's conference was a vibrant and thought-provoking event. The event was opened by Minister for Youth and Early Childhood Education Hon Dr Anne Aly MP, Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, and Multicultural Affairs, Hon Andrew Giles and the panel, titled "Shaping the Future of Australian Multiculturalism: Realising Potential Through Multicultural Youth Participation," featured a diverse group of panellists who brought their unique perspectives and experiences to the discussion. The audience was engaged and enthusiastic, asking insightful questions and participating in lively debates.



National Conference



MYAN recognises that settlement is a complex process that requires the involvement of multiple stakeholders, including young people themselves, government agencies, and community organisations. Hosting a national conference on youth settlement is important for several reasons:

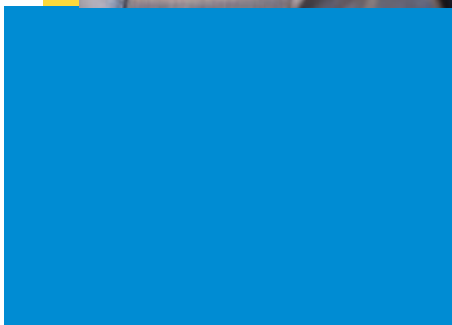
Provides an opportunity which allows stakeholders to share expertise on settling young people from diverse backgrounds, fostering new strategies and policies for improved outcomes, and breaking down silos for innovation and efficiency.

Raises awareness of challenges faced by migrant and refugee youth, fostering understanding and empathy, and dismantling stereotypes.

Provides a platform for young people themselves to share their experiences and perspectives on settlement. This is critical in ensuring that their voices are heard and that their needs are taken into account in the development of the policies and programs that affect them.

Welcome to the Country - Aunty Violet Sheridan

Aunty Violet Sheridan, Ngunnawal Elder, opened the conference by giving a beautiful Welcome to Country. Aunty Violet's welcome encapsulated a call for unity, respect, and acknowledgment of the rich heritage and contributions of First Nations people. Aunty Violet also stressed the importance of respecting diverse cultures, and advocated for inclusivity, unity, and Indigenous representation in decision-making.



Opening Remarks - Carmel Guerra OAM



Carmel Guerra OAM, Director and CEO of the Centre for Multicultural Youth

MYAN's Chairperson, Carmel Guerra OAM, opened the conference and highlighted the importance of recognising and empowering young people to create positive change. Carmel emphasised the significant role young individuals play in shaping a better future for Australia and expressed gratitude for the diverse and talented group gathered at the event, underscoring the shared commitment to supporting and advocating for young people in the country. The speech focused on the challenges faced by children and young people seeking protection, particularly those exposed to forced migration, stressing the need for adequate support upon their arrival in Australia.

Furthermore, Carmel acknowledged the resilience and potential of young refugees in Australia, despite the adversities they have encountered. She praised the Australian Government's investment in settlement services and the development of youth-specific programs aimed at facilitating positive outcomes for young individuals. Carmel emphasised the importance of tailored support to address the unique needs and barriers faced by young people from refugee backgrounds, such as accessing employment and affordable housing. Carmel emphasised the significance of providing a platform for youth voices, inviting collaboration and partnership to drive meaningful change and create a hopeful future where all young people can thrive and contribute positively to society.

MYAN Report Launch: Navigating Youth Settlement in Australia



Sandy McKiernan, YACWA CEO

“In this document we measure what counts and what counts is the voice of young people who are experiencing settlement in Australia.” Sandy McKiernan, YACWA CEO stated as she launched the new MYAN report, ‘Navigating Youth Settlement in Australia’.

MYAN conducted consultations across Australia with over 100 young people and 90 sector representatives to understand the challenges of youth settlement in the country. The report provides valuable insights and highlights potential opportunities for advocacy at both state and federal levels, highlighting common issues such as **employment, health, social connectedness, belonging, and identity**. The document emphasises the importance of the voices of young people experiencing settlement in Australia. The importance of the report was noted, acknowledging its significance in providing crucial information for advocacy work at both state and federal levels. Sandy stressed the value of such information in advocating for the needs of young migrants and refugees, especially in regions with lower population numbers, by **presenting concrete data to government officials and local authorities**.

Furthermore, Sandy underscored the significance of the report in **amplifying the voices of young people** themselves who are undergoing the settlement process in Australia. Sandy noted that the document serves as a platform to convey the realities faced by young migrants and refugees to policymakers and stakeholders across the country, ultimately aiming to effect positive change and address the pressing issues identified through the consultations.

‘Navigating Youth Settlement in Australia: Challenges and Opportunities – Report of National Consultations conducted by the Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN)

Navigating Youth Settlement in Australia: Challenges and Opportunities

MYANO
multicultural youth
advocacy network (australia)

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



Keynotes



Samah Shda is a storyteller, refugee protection and engagement specialist, and refugee education researcher. Samah delivered the conference keynote speech and provided a unique and personal insight into the challenges faced by individuals who arrive in new countries without any prior knowledge of the new systems and cultures. She shared her own journey, which began 13 years ago when she left Baghdad to pursue education in the US. Growing up in a dictatorship, Samah had to live in constant fear for herself and her loved ones.

However, her determination to succeed led her to secure a scholarship to study political science in a prestigious American university. Despite her success, navigating the system and accessing services in the US was a constant struggle, leaving her feeling isolated and alone. Her family had to seek safety in Turkey after the invasion of Iraq and part of Northern Syria by ISIS in 2014. After a 3-year journey, they were granted a humanitarian visa to Australia. Samah recounted her experiences of feeling safe and secure with the welcome and support she and her family received from the community and settlement service staff in Australia.

Through her story, Samah highlighted the need to do more to provide targeted support and assistance to young refugees to ease their transition and ensure their successful settlement into new communities.

Carla Wilshire, CEO of Social Policy Group, gave a fascinating keynote speech on the influence of AI in Education and Employment. The keynote speech on technology's impact on society through historical revolutions delved into the transformative power of technological advancements throughout history. It highlighted the significance of understanding and preparing for the implications of such changes. Beginning with a reflection on the Agricultural Revolution, which transitioned human societies from hunting and gathering to agriculture, leading to the development of cities and a more structured society.

The Industrial Revolution was also discussed, characterised by the shift from agrarian to industrial economies, bringing about major social, economic, and cultural changes such as urbanisation and shifts in labor patterns. The objective of the speech was to explore and address the profound impacts of technology on society, both historically and in the present and future, urging preparedness for the complex questions that arise from these ongoing advancements.



Panels

Multicultural Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing



Matthew Short (Assistant Secretary Mental Health Services Branch, Dept. Health) , Emily Unity (youth mental health advocate), Jason Trethowan (CEO Headspace)
Facilitators: Grace Edward and Ajar Sana

The panel stressed addressing youth mental health in multicultural communities, emphasising **personal empowerment and collaboration while cautioning against tokenism**. Service providers' challenges were acknowledged, urging community consultation for a participatory approach. Improved diversity training for government interpreters was recognised for addressing language barriers.

The concept of **"intersectionality"** was introduced for inclusive embracing of diverse identities. Capacity building amid limited funding, advocating partnerships, and sustainable practices were emphasized. Learning from lived experiences, offering leadership opportunities, and valuing experiential knowledge were key discussion takeaways.

Empowering Global Engagement



Adrian Edwards (UNHCR Regional Representative) , Noor Azizah (Co-founder and Director at the Rohingya Maiyafuñor Collaborative Network), Andrew Kiley (First Assistant Secretary of the Refugee, Humanitarian and Settlement Division)
Facilitators: Hanienah Husnah and Khushal Shah



A key theme of this panel was ***the success of Australia's resettlement programs*** and an emphasis on the need to collectively continue this momentum particularly in light of ongoing refugee crises around the world. Additionally, the panel highlighted the importance of events like the Global Refugee Forum and the UNHCR Consultations on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways being held in Australia in 2024 as important opportunities for the sector to demonstrate our leadership and share our best practice.

Navigating Education Pathways for Success



Soo-Lin Quek (Executive Manager Policy, Sector and Business Development, CMY), Dr Teresa De Fazio OAM (Director, Intersect Global Partners Chairperson, Adult Community & Further Education), Ben Rimmer (Deputy Secretary Higher Education, Research and International Group), Dr Sally Baker (Associate Professor of Migration and Education, ANU).
Facilitators: Fatima Raza and Ajar Sana

The panel discussion highlighted the importance of addressing **systemic barriers in education**, particularly the need to tackle bias and assumptions, along with implementing a whole-school approach to combat racism.

Emphasis was placed on building capacity amidst a cost of living crisis, recognising the increasing significance of vocational education, and the necessity for improved training for university educators. The panel stressed that equity should be central to educational pathways, and emphasised the **need for more comprehensive quantitative data** to effectively address challenges in the education system.



Nurturing Belonging, Fostering Connection, and Inspiring Active Participation



Zakia Patel (Regional Managing Director Multicultural Hub Canberra & Regional NSW), Sally Thompson (Executive Manager Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania), Sandy Mckiernan (CEO YACWA), Selam Kumlachew (Youth Leader, YACWA), Carmel Guerra OAM (CEO CMY and Chair Person MYAN Australia)

Facilitators: Ratu Yazid and Zaheera Casoojee.

A prominent theme of this panel was the importance of **empowering women to take on leadership positions** by providing them with the necessary training and support. In discussing the impact on women's representation in leadership roles the panel used the example of the Seat at the Table program which aims to address the issue of underrepresentation of women in decision-making roles by equipping them with the skills and confidence needed to participate effectively on boards. The program not only provides training but also connects participants with resources and mentors who understand their unique experiences and identities.

Another important panel theme was the **concept of belonging and the critical role of support networks in overcoming imposter syndrome** and other challenges faced by women in leadership roles. The panel discussion emphasised the importance of creating a supportive environment where women can feel empowered and confident in their abilities.

This panel discussion highlighted the significance of diversity and inclusion in leadership positions and the benefits it brings to decision-making processes. These themes of empowerment, belonging, and diversity are crucial in promoting gender equality and creating more inclusive leadership spaces.

Breaking Barriers in Access to Essential Service



Shabnam Safa (Community Development Training Lead Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia), Mohamed Al Abri (Board Director, Forcibly Displaced People Network), Sandra Elhelw Wright (CEO Settlement Council of Australia)
Facilitators: Cindy Lui and Mac Zamani

The panel presentation titled "Breaking Barriers - Navigating Intersectionality in Access to Essential Services" focused on strategies to overcome challenges in providing vital services. The discussion emphasised the **significance of building capacity**, especially in resource-limited settings, by consulting the community, empowering young leaders, incorporating lived experiences, and fostering collaboration to break down barriers.

Service providers were encouraged to embrace the idea of making mistakes as part of the learning process, **engaging individuals as partners, enhancing diversity training, and tailoring approaches** to the needs of specific communities while educating on broader issues. By adopting these approaches, service providers can work towards inclusivity and effectiveness in delivering essential services to all individuals.



Navigating Employment Pathways



Caitlin Figueiredo (Co-Chair,Australian Youth Affairs Coalition Founder and CEO, Jasiri Australia), Louna Ghawi (Australia and New Zealand Director of Operations Talent Beyond Boundaries), and Joseph Youhana (Country Director, Host International Facilitators: Nayonika Battacharya and Sadeqa Sarvari

The panel addressed ***cultural safety and inclusivity*** within organisations, particularly concerning First Nations peoples. It was emphasised that many organisations claim to be supportive of First Nations individuals and have internal programs in place, but in reality, they fall short in providing a culturally safe environment, leading to low retention rates and loss of talent. To address this, organisations should ***conduct surveys or seek independent assessments*** to determine the level of cultural safety within their workplace.

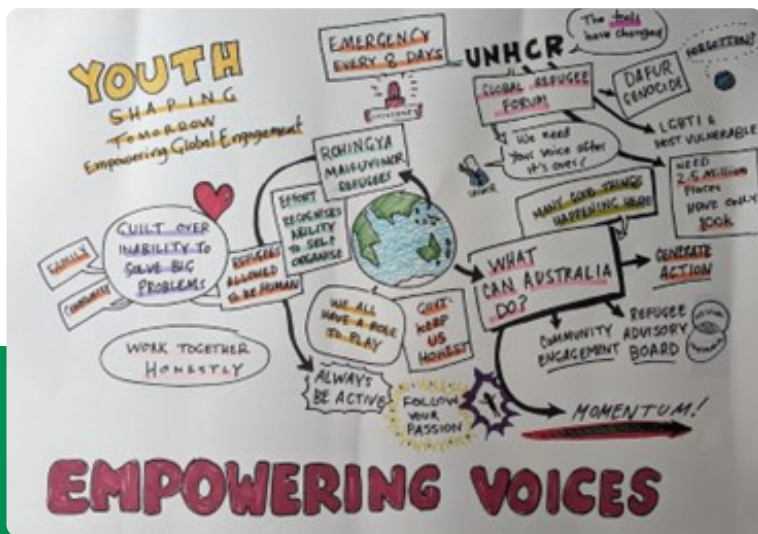
Moreover, the panel emphasised overcoming employment challenges through **broad representation and access, prioritising bias and diversity training, and fostering accountability for a more inclusive workplace culture**. Mentoring programs and addressing gatekeeping issues were highlighted as crucial for equal opportunities. Systemic change must begin at the top, with broader representation in decision-making roles to drive meaningful change.



Visual Artist: Luke Fox

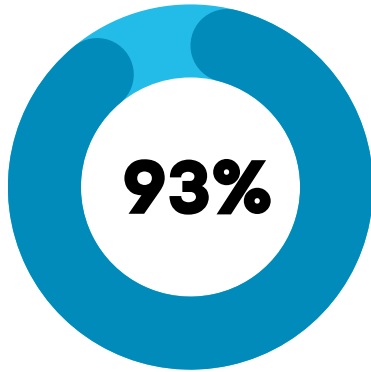
A visual presentation of the day's panels were created by Luke Fox. Luke is a freelance cartoonist. His work appears in Chaser News, Electricity Week, Gas Week, Green Markets Weekly and Energy Daily.



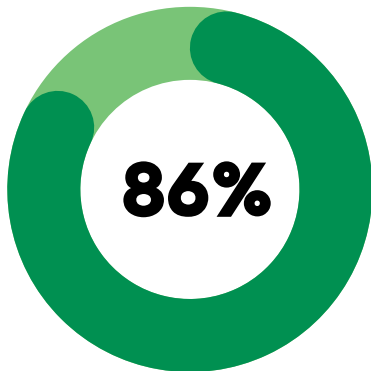


Young People FUSE Feedback

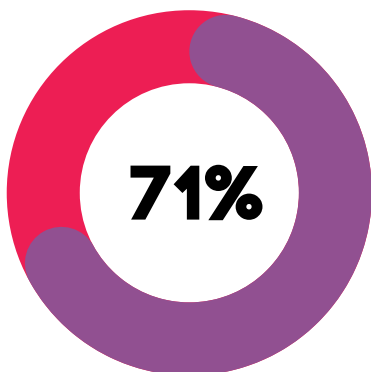
After their experience of FUSE 2023, young people shared the following feedback:



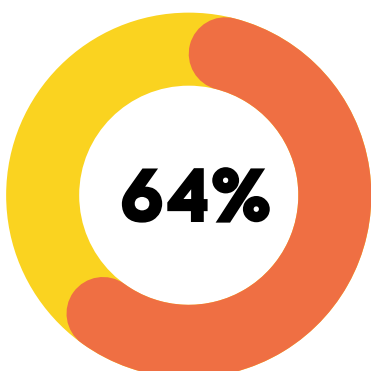
of respondents want to get more involved in **advocacy/campaigning** work.



of respondents want to be more engaged with other **youth leaders in their community**.



of respondents want to connect/stay connected with their **local MYAN partner organisation**.



of respondents want to connect with their **local MP/politician or council** on issues concerning young people.

Young People FUSE Feedback



100%

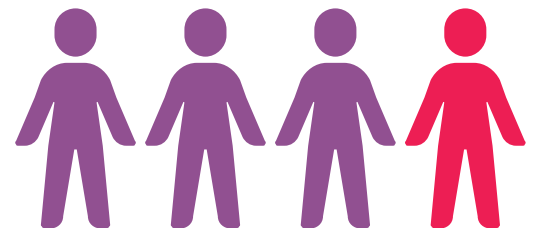
of respondents found the pre-FUSE **preparation** useful.

100%

of respondents felt **welcomed and included** by the other participants at FUSE.

3 out of every 4

Respondents noted improvement in **developing key messages and preparing pitches** after FUSE.



86%

Respondents noted a boost in their **confidence** in public speaking and networking.



multicultural youth advocacy network (australia)

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



MYAN TEAM



Rana Ebrahimi
National Manager



Shannon White
National Policy and
Advocacy Lead



Ali Saha
Communication and
Engagement Officer



Fiona Maguire
Policy Officer



Kate Yeung
Project Officer



Anna Ligorio
Project Support Officer



Ricky Do
Event Coordinator



Vicky Lee
Website Officer

MYAN's Youth Advisory Networks

MYAN engages with a diverse range of migrant and refugee young people across Australia, inclusive of regional areas through state and territory advisory structures. The 3 groups of young people who took part in FUSE 2023 and our National National Youth Conference are:

The Youth Ambassadors Network (YAN)



2022 - 2023 YAN Members

The YAN is an important mechanism for MYAN Australia to engage directly with young people and ensure that young people's voices are integral to our work. The YAN also provides a platform for young people to strengthen their leadership and advocacy skills and engage with national advocacy activities to influence the national agenda on multicultural youth issues.

The Youth CaLD Disability Collective

The Youth CaLD Disability Collective (YCDC) is a volunteer group made up of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) young disabled people. The collective aims to ensure no young people with disabilities in the CALD community are not left behind by the system and forgotten by the community. The YCDC is committed to being an inclusive, accessible, and encouraging environment for all identities, cultures, and beliefs.



2022 - 2023 Youth CaLD Disability Members

The Youth Reference Group (YRG)



2021 - 2023 YRG Members

The YRG consists of young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds who are passionate about making a change for their community through advocacy. Set up in 2021, the YRG has been delivering consultations and communications to support the uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine amongst Australia's culturally diverse communities.

MYAN State and Territory Partners



MYAN has representatives across Australia's states and territories* and facilitates a national approach to youth settlement through its affiliated state/territory networks and organisations. MYAN work closely with our partner organisations for localised case studies and information to ensure national impact; a valuable resource to avoid a homogenous approach. Our partners have played a critical supportive role in supporting MYAN young people navigate FUSE and the delivery of their pitch to parliamentarians.

MYAN acknowledges and pays respects to the custodians of the land on which we work, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people. 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.

**We thank you for your
continued support.**



Contact us

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