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Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee Inquiry into Nationhood, National Identity and Democracy

Submission by Multicultural Youth Affairs Network NSW

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About Multicultural Youth Affairs Network NSW

MYAN NSW is the first state-wide multicultural youth specialist organisation. We engage, connect and build the capacity of the youth, settlement and multicultural sectors to meet the needs of young people from refugee, migrant and asylum seeking backgrounds. We support the development of young people's skills, knowledge and confidence to access the support and opportunities they need to be active citizens in Australian society, as well as supporting young people to engage in advocacy and influence the local, state and national agenda.

MYAN NSW is a hub of networking, information and capacity building. We support and strengthen the work of our large and diverse network. Our networks, partners and young people benefit from a range of initiatives and services, including:

- Network meetings and events;
- Sector development forums;
- Skills and capacity building workshops;
- Policy development and advice;
- Fact sheets, reports and resources;
- Contributions to research on key issues;
- Regular news and information.

About this submission

MYAN NSW welcomes the opportunity to provide input into the Inquiry into Nationhood, National Identity and Democracy. We encourage a robust, thoughtful conversation about the future of the Australian nation and believe that a debate on national identity must be inclusive of both established and newly arrived Australians. In particular, the voices of young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, those born in Australia and those born overseas, will provide important perspectives in the discussion and care should be taken to ensure their views are equally represented. We hope any outcome of this inquiry be guided by principles of social justice and in the spirit of openness and inclusivity. We feel it would be detrimental to Australia and to those who have made it their home for the government to make decisions which promote exclusion and intolerance and which are guided by attitudes of bigotry and xenophobia.

This submission provides a state perspective; drawing on the MYAN NSW's breadth of experience working with young people aged 12-25 from refugee and migrant backgrounds, their communities and the youth and multicultural sectors across NSW. This submission is informed by the lived experience of young people from multicultural backgrounds. We have let young people's words speak for themselves without overly interpreting or analysing them. In order to gather young people's views and opinions, MYAN NSW held a consultation with a group of 26 young people who call Australia their home, including:

- 18 females, 8 males;
- 9 young people who arrived in the last 5 years;
- Young people from diverse cultural backgrounds: Kurdish, Anglo-Indian, Filipino, Hazara, Afghan, Iranian-Afghan, Turkish-Cypriot, Nigerian-Australian, Sudanese, South Sudanese-Ugandan, West African-Ghanaian, Ghanaian-Australian, Iraqi-Syrian, Vietnamese-Australian, Mexican, Canadian-Filipino-Australian.

We listened to their views on a range of topics, including:

- social cohesion and racism
- multiculturalism and diversity
- social media and public debate
- Indigenous recognition
- young people and civic participation

Recommendations

MYAN NSW looks forward to engaging with the Committee in relation to the issues presented in this submission. We also encourage the Committee to hear directly from young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds and we are happy to coordinate participation of young people at hearings in NSW.

1. Invest in initiatives that facilitate opportunities for young people to have their voices heard in political and civic domains so their voices help inform policy and decision making.
2. All levels of government find ways to engage in dialogue with young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds to create opportunities to challenge the existing negative narratives around refugees and migrants.
3. All levels of government create inclusive opportunities for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds to interact with and gain a deeper understanding of formal politics and the civic process in Australia. This includes investing in civic education support in schools to ensure all young people are supported to develop their knowledge of Australian society and culture, laws, regulations, policies and political landscapes and the voting process.
4. That all levels of government avoid misrepresentations and stereotyping of refugee and migrant young people in public narratives and ensure strong leadership to support rather than undermine social cohesion.
5. The Australian Government continues to provide ongoing support for the National Anti-Racism Strategy.
6. All levels of government identify new ways to promote and protect multiculturalism throughout Australia, in recognition that a public policy of multiculturalism underpins the social cohesion of the Australian nation.

Key messages

1. Young people in Australia are living at a time of widespread and rapid social change. Globalisation – the growing interdependence of the world's economies, cultures, and populations – is a key factor influencing their lives. Globalisation is adding new layers to traditional notions of nationhood, citizenship and the nation state in the 21st century. These notions are tied to the way young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds shape their identities and sense of belonging and inclusion in Australia.
2. Gaining citizenship should be an enabling, positive and welcoming process for applicants and one which is seen to contribute to building a cohesive and dynamic nation. It is viewed by young people as a critical milestone in enjoying and exercising civic and political rights and a

sense of belonging to the Australian nation. This is particularly so for people arriving through Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Programs.

3. Social cohesion is vital to creating the conditions for a productive society and a stronger sense of safety for everyone living in Australia. A safe and welcoming community is crucial for positive settlement outcomes for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. However, public perception of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants can influence the settlement experience and can have implications on the level of cohesion among the Australian community.
4. MYAN NSW remains committed to ways of protecting and strengthening Australia's multiculturalism. A strong multicultural and socially cohesive Australia is particularly significant for young people, especially those who arrive in Australia as refugees and migrants and those born in Australia to refugee or migrant parents. MYAN NSW considers that multiculturalism (as public policy framework) is the cornerstone of a meaningful social inclusion agenda.
5. In order to continue to maximise Australia's prosperity, multiculturalism must continue to be promoted. All levels of Australian government demonstrate renewed support for multiculturalism, reinforced by national policy and funding frameworks. Contemporary discussion about multiculturalism must reinforce the success of Australia as a multicultural nation, promoting the principles of mutual respect, equality and unity and denouncing racial hatred and discrimination as incompatible with Australian society.
6. MYAN NSW does not suggest that culturally diverse societies such as Australia are without current complexities and issues, but Australia's history of implementing multicultural policies and delivering strong settlement services means we are equipped to continue meeting the needs of our diverse population and to respond in ways that support social cohesion, inclusion and respect.

Young People's Voices

What do you love about living in Australia?

Young people had a range of responses to what they love about living in Australia. Many responses focused on the importance of freedom and safety, as well as valuing the opportunities for education, health care and having their voices heard. Young people also talked about the importance of being able to express their culture and valuing being surrounded by other diverse cultures.

Inclusion and diversity

- Everyone can call Australia home.
- We can never be left behind here. Whether it's the government or your community, there's always help for you even when you're old.
- I love the different restaurants.
- I love the education, food and learning about other cultures.
- We have created our own Ghanaian-Australian culture – it's unique, it's our own.
- I love the diversity in Australia.
- Australia is one of the most diverse countries in the world – you don't need to travel all over the world, because people from all over the world come here.
- We can learn about the oldest living culture in the world.
- I love the culture, diversity and meeting people – especially through all the sports you can play.

Freedom and opportunities

- I love the freedom here.
- I have an ability to have my voice heard.
- Being able to express your opinions.
- I love the opportunities my ancestors didn't have.
- I love how organised the health care system is and the fact that there's universal health care for everyone.
- There are so many opportunities that help you grow and become a better and more successful person.
- There is safety here.
- There are lots of educational opportunities.
- I love that you can go to school and be supported by the government while you're at school.
- I love Australia because I have lots of dreams that can come true here.

Natural environment

- I love the ocean.
- I love the beach culture and the community.
- Australia has welcomed me and I love that I can bring up my children in a beautiful, diverse place and I can go bushwalking whenever I want.
- I love the weather – it's so warm and sunny!

To be Australian you must have an Australian citizenship.

Young people's responses about citizenship reflect a strong desire to feel a sense of belonging, but also an understanding that citizenship can be used as a political tool to give or withhold rights. Sharing values and abiding by Australian laws was often cited as a way of proving your 'Australianness' and being deserving of citizenship.

- A sense of belonging doesn't just come with citizenship. You can be a non-citizen and still feel like you belong.
- If you're in Australia and you have the same values and abide by its laws then you're Australian.
- After two years sometimes I feel really connected to Australian society – sometimes more connected than to where I was born.
- I share Australian beliefs and values and that makes me Australian.
- I lived in Syria for 10 years but I never had citizenship and I grew up there.
- Citizenship is a political tool to identify people and give them or deny them rights, but it's not the same as identity.
- To be Australian, you don't need citizenship. It's more about connecting with others, respecting people and abiding by Australian rules – but also getting the certificate is an advantage.
- Every nation has its rules and regulations and having citizenship means you have to abide by the rules. If you've been here a long time and you abide by the rules then you should get the privileges.
- Citizenship is about being recognised.
- In Iran there are a lot of refugees from different countries. For some of them their father was born in Iran but they still don't have citizenship. How can this be? They share all the same values, they have common beliefs and common values. They should be citizens.

- If you're asked what your nationality is you're not going to say Australian unless you have the certificate.

Multiculturalism is good for Australia.

Young people were unanimous in their support of multiculturalism and its contribution to a more harmonious and tolerant world. They also pointed out that living in a multicultural country comes with a responsibility to practice tolerance and how to accept difference in others, but that this was not always easy.

- It means different foods representing different cultures.
- We are all different flowers living in a flower garden.
- Australia needs multiculturalism. Without it there's more ignorance, intolerance, racism and a lack of understanding of other people.
- Multiculturalism is important because when society is homogenous you don't learn and understand about other people's cultures.
- We have to transition to a point where we learn about other cultures.
- If you resist multiculturalism you'll stop progress in Australia.
- In a homogenous society there is a lot of discrimination, so we need multiculturalism.
- We have reached a point where we need to start accepting others.
- Sometimes multiculturalism means there are problems when people can't accept others.
- It's like what the comedian Trevor Noah says, "If you don't like migrants and you don't like multiculturalism, don't go to Mexican restaurants."

Australia is a racist country.

Many young people in the room talked about first-hand experiences of racism and discrimination and that bullying they have experienced was often based on race. They were very aware of the many barriers they face to achieving success in employment and other pursuits, but were also aware of other groups that experience racism. They were particularly aware of the injustices faced by Indigenous Australians and how government policy contributes to this.

- I don't really know if it's Australians that are the problem with racism. But when I walk into places, I can see when someone sees me in a different way. I feel like we should build a culture of different multicultural people and that IS the culture of Australia. But I don't think it will be like that for a very long time. There's some imbalance and we can feel it.
- I lived in Maitland for 6 years and I experienced a lot of racism and bullying.
- Having different multicultural people in the same place isn't the same as social cohesion. We are seeing people of colour not being able to break through bamboo ceilings, women and refugees not being able to break through glass ceilings. It's the social capital we don't have, the places we live. Even though it's not always actively racist, it's passively racist.
- There is a lot of income disparity between where there are high and low levels of migration.
- The current situation of Aboriginal people is an indication of racism in Australia.
- Aboriginal people are the poorest people in Australia and there are so many racist policies which discriminate against them.
- Our country is borne of genocide of our First Nations people and we are one of the few countries that don't recognise our Indigenous people e.g. with a treaty or in the constitution.
- The Racial Discrimination Act exists and this is a good thing.

First Nations people should be recognised in our Constitution.

Young people's responses to this question varied but the underlying sentiment was that recognition must be meaningful and reflect the views of Indigenous people. Many young people also expressed a lack of awareness about the role of the constitution and dismay that it still allows for discrimination based on race.

- Of course. They are the original Australians. It just makes sense.
- I did not realise that Aboriginals were not recognised. There is a lack of awareness about this.
- Lots of people don't know we have a constitution or what it does, but it's obvious it should be changed.
- Aboriginal people used to be discriminated against in the constitution. Even though that has changed and they're not specifically mentioned, the government can still discriminate against people on the basis of race.
- The constitution recognises Aboriginal people but in the wrong way. It recognises them in a racist way. The constitution still allows for racism discrimination.
- Also it's important to consider Indigenous views about this. There are some Indigenous communities who do not want to be recognised because they don't see it as meaningful change.
- Change needs to be led by Indigenous people.

What does it mean to be a nation of immigrants? What are the benefits?

Young people expressed satisfaction about living in a nation of immigrants. They value diversity and being able to practice and share their culture with others. Young people felt that being a nation of immigrants means more prosperity because we can be exposed to new ideas and ways of thinking. They also reported that many cultures living side by side meant they felt more accepted.

Learning and respecting

- Being a nation of immigrants means diversity and multiculturalism. It means sharing and learning and reducing ignorance.
- Multiculturalism means mixing the cultures together in one pot. But cross-culturalism means living side by side.
- It means learning about other cultures and respecting other cultures. We benefit from other cultures. It enriches our understanding of the world.
- It means living within a cross-cultural nation, yet overall there is not enough cross-cultural recognition.

Opportunity and new ideas

- A nation of immigrants means more opportunities. People bring opportunities from where they come from.
- We have an opportunity to hear different ideas and learn new things.
- Being a nation of immigrants means advancement and progress. It has amazing outcomes.

Inclusivity and acceptance

- It means being one nation regardless of where you come from.
- If someone doesn't identify with a nation, a nation of immigrants allows that person to feel accepted regardless.

- Be Australian, but in your own way.
- ‘Nations’ and ‘immigrants’ are both social constructs.

What does social cohesion mean and look like to you?

Young people expressed that social cohesion was important to them because it allowed them to practice and stay connected to their culture. They talked about having shared values and the importance of community members working together to achieve social cohesion. They felt initiatives which celebrate cultural diversity, such as Harmony Day, were important but that they should not be the only tool used to combat racism. They also noted that they would like more meaningful recognition of cultural diversity.

Shared values and working together

- Shared understanding through common language.
- Having values and morals that are compatible.
- Shared values and beliefs.
- Having common goals is important.
- Being able to work and grow together as a nation – improving the country together.
- “With courage let us all combine” – we have to live this.
- Contributing to lots of different communities, giving back to the country and the economy.

Celebrating diverse cultures

- It involves giving space to other cultures.
- It means we are socially and culturally literate.
- It means investing in initiatives like Harmony Day, but also not thinking that this will solve the problem of racism.

Opportunity and fairness

- It means a fair go for everyone – *actually* everyone.
- Social cohesion means prosperity and equal opportunities.
- It means no discrimination.
- We have to start with education.

Staying connected to culture

- Different cultures have the opportunity to stay connected to their cultures and religion. You don’t have to give that up.
- There is no expectation to assimilate.
- I don’t look the same, but I don’t feel different.
- Freedom in expressing yourself.
- It means acceptance and a sense of belonging.

In what ways can young people participate in civic life?

Young people participate in civic life in a wide variety of ways and talked about both formal and informal ways they engage. Volunteering and expressing political opinions through digital and social media are popular forms of engagement. Social media is an important tool for young people to participate and connect, and they felt this could be something more utilised by politicians and

government. Young people were aware of the tension between adults wanting them to participate in civic life, but not approving of *how* they participate. They were able to articulate many barriers to young people's civic engagement, including a lack of public space available to young people to be themselves, as well as a lack of willingness on the part of adults to hand over power to young people to lead their own activities and decide how they want to participate in community life.

What are young people doing already?

- We can volunteer – especially in non-government organisations.
- Going to community, cultural and religious events.
- Building networks of people and friends and interacting with them.
- Going to church, the mosque or a temple is part of community participation.
- Being in and using public spaces e.g. the library.
- Going to protests like the climate march.
- Young people can talk to their local MP or a minister.
- Participating in community life as a young person can mean having goals, attending school – even having career goals.

Social media

- We can participate in civic life by talking about social issues with our families and friends. But not everyone wants to talk about these things.
- We can use social media to share our opinions on social matters.
- When it comes to public life, those in power need to keep up with the technological ways. Young people are participating in podcasts, YouTube channels, Reddit. When was the last time you saw politicians going on Reddit and answering questions that young people ask them? I think young people are better at engaging in public life, but we are just doing it very differently than traditional ways.

What do young people think about civic participation?

- Young people are civically engaged in a lot of spaces but often older people shut them down. For example, lots of adults didn't want us to attend the climate march and tried to prevent us from going and taking other people out of school.
- Political and religious engagement should not be the only ways to measure youth participation.
- It's hypocritical that they want young people involved in politics, but don't want students going to the climate strike.
- We need to support young people to understand the value of being part of the community. Young people won't engage if they don't see the value.
- There needs to be more of an interest in young people's civic engagement.
- Young people ARE engaged politically and civically, but Police treat their form of engagement as criminal activity.
- In our community, most of our young generation are not that interested in the community stuff. They see it as outdated and not keeping up with technology. Some people just want to stay home and play games.
- It's hard to measure how involved young people are in community life. Those measures in the discussion paper are wrong. How can you say young people are not civically engaged because we're not joining political parties? MPs don't even listen to us. They ignore us. And most importantly, they don't represent our views anyway.

Barriers to young people's civic participation

- Youth centres are so important to deter anti-social behaviour. Why isn't there enough funding for them?
- There needs to be more safe public spaces for young people, including in regional areas.
- It's also about how many safe spaces the government are providing. There are very few free or affordable youth spaces where they can do their own groups or clubs. When these spaces don't exist, young people don't have a say on what goes on.
- Some parents and family don't want their kids to go out there. They're over protective or conservative. This makes it hard for us to get involved in the community.
- Why don't public figures and politicians make more of an effort to meet young people. They should engage in platforms that we are familiar with.
- There are spaces that are being taken over by old people who are wealthy. Some LGAs do Youth Week well, but in many other places the council just sets up what activities they want and then wonder why young people aren't going to it.
- Reducing stigma about practicing religion would help more young people participate.
- Some religions are not given as many resources or the same opportunities.
- We need to reduce stigma about religion, LGBTIQ, disability, people without citizenship. These are all barriers to young people participating and fulfilling their beliefs.
- After school, we used to go to Headspace because we met other young people that I had never met in my life. It helped me to socially develop and that was something funded by the government. But when it stopped, it just died out. Now there are issues where the government does not sponsor these places.

What ways could exist that don't exist now?

Young people wanted to see new ways to participate that are led by young people, that build on their strengths and harness technology. They expressed a desire for governments to invest in public spaces for young people, as well as in opportunities that allow their voices to be heard. Accessibility was also an area for concern for young people and they felt that many opportunities that already exist are not accessible for people from diverse religions, sexualities and abilities or those without citizenship.

Harness new technologies

- Whatever new opportunities exist need to harness social media to spread the word and get young people involved.
- Podcasts and live question time with young people on YouTube.
- Engage young people using the platforms they are already using.

Youth-led

- We want ways that are on young people's terms, not on adults' terms.
- Involve young people in planning events e.g. Youth Week but not just youth events. Lots of other areas don't involve young people in planning and don't ask young people what they want.
- Whatever new opportunities could be created should harness the talents of young people.
- Established young people could support newly arrived young people in their local area.

Public space for young people

- Governments don't value public spaces for young people to meet each other. If you see a group of young people of colour hanging out together, people assume you're a gang. Police move us on all the time – just for being in public.
- We need more social infrastructure. Governments blame young people for hanging out at train stations, but they don't provide places to hang out. The reality is that the cost of these youth services are worth it. We've had a minister for horse racing, liquor and gaming who's in charge of our nightlife, but not for a minister for young people. That tells me that gambling and nightlife is more of a priority for the government than young people.
- We need more spaces to talk about what we think, about the things that matter to us, to get educated.
- I reckon we need to have more of a public domain. Ours is pretty weak right now. We don't have a nightlife economy. We need to make more places to have incidental occurrences, a place of activity where you can accidentally bump into someone and make a memory. You can do that through farmer's markets, social community activities, community gardens. These are just various ways. It's an obvious fact that the more connected with the community the happier you are.

Youth voice

- I would like to see more opportunities to advocate about issues that are important e.g. organisations like MYAN NSW, Youth Action and initiatives like Youth Parliament.
- More protests for young people to attend to make their views heard.
- I'd like to see more programs in high schools about voting and how to be engaged in local politics. Schools should ensure young people are enrolled to vote.
- Politicians should hold forums for young people so they can hear directly from us.

Accessibility

- There need to be more ways for young people to engage in regional NSW. There are so few opportunities for young people there.
- There should be more opportunities and better access to practise your religion e.g. some regional towns don't allow mosques to be built and then you wonder why there is a rise in the number of people reporting 'No religion' on the census.
- We need to improve accessibility for newly arrived young people to participate in community life – opportunities for people who don't have citizenship yet.
- There should be accessible places for young people to learn about new cultures and religions.

What are the opportunities and challenges of using social media for public debate?

Young people were passionate about social media being a tool to enable participating in public debate. Their responses focused on the technology allowing people to be more informed, helping to get your message across and giving a voice to people and movements that previously were sidelined or on the fringes. However, they were very aware of the multitude of challenges social media presents. Young people also noted that while social media can assist more people being involved in public debate, there are still many groups for which social media is still not accessible or safe.

Opportunities	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depending on the topic, social media allows you to be more formal and respectful. • It is easy to get informed about an issue. • It can solve problems and help us find creative solutions. • You can use it to grab the government’s attention. • Social media can give you a voice when you didn’t have one before. • You can use it for organising protests and social movements to create positive change. • I’m that guy who reads the comments. I like to learn about other people’s opinions and see what other people think. But I don’t like to comment. • It’s good to get exposure. • You can reach larger audiences. • Social media is more convenient than traditional media. • We create communities online where we can connect and have meaningful discussions. • Anonymity can be good because it allows you to talk about sensitive issues. • Social media is good for raising awareness and helping others. • It gives you freedom of speech and allows you to express yourselves. • There are no age limits. • It has such a wide reach. • It gives your message directly to the people. • You can express in your own language and style on social media. • You can present yourself in the way you want to. There are online talking personalities, anonymous, and you can be more expressive online. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It can affect your career and reputation when you publicly comment. • I get scared so I don’t always write it in case I get attacked. • People use fake accounts. • There is bad language used towards you. • I use my real account so that makes me worried. • Sometimes it creates more problems. • Allows people who have negative opinions to share them online anonymously. • There is a lot of hate speech. • There is protection with no consequences. • Social media creates separation between communities. • Anyone can express an opinion and claim it as fact. There is no credibility. • There is a lot of bullying. • Social media is an echo chamber for you and your networks. • You can be offended or upset and then there is no way to reach someone to help you with that. • There are many keyboard warriors and trolls. • There are many platforms for those who are seeking notoriety e.g. far-right extremists and ISIS but also oppressed groups. • There is a filter bubble. • Media is owned by the same person. • The media is so biased. • There is parental oversight. • There are lots of trauma triggers of social media. • Social media algorithms skew which audience you reach and your post just goes to people likely to agree with you anyway. • Some public spaces aren’t actually accessible to everyone.

How can we face some of those challenges?

Young people had many ideas about how to face some of the challenges of using social media for public debate. Young people highlighted the need for education to support more civil and productive online behaviour, but also ways in which people can protect themselves and others from harmful interactions. They gave many examples of the need for better regulation and government action to protect citizens.

Supporting better online behaviour

- Educating and supporting the younger generation before they jump into social media.
- There should be a focus on teaching young people critical literacy, logic, statistics and rhetoric so that communication is more accurate, reliable and kind.
- People can be really aggressive online. We should help them learn how to be more constructive and compassionate and less combative.
- Training is very important because the young generation face so many things online. Their whole life is online.

Protecting young people from harm

- We should support young people to understand how to share things safely and what they should share about themselves or not.
- Not everyone should be able to create a social media platform – especially if they are not going to monitor it properly. Maybe people should need a licence to create a new platform. For example, you are not allowed to start your own website without something from the government. But maybe the government is not interested in giving voice to certain groups.
- People need to report harassment and bullying when it happens, not just to them but when they see it happening to other people. People need to know how to do this on all the different platforms.
- Teach young people about how to respond to bullying, racism and misogyny on social media.
- Parents also need advice.
- We need to have a filtering system, enhance security and safety for those who use social media. You can ask companies to take down negative comments.
- You can share different ideas and opportunities immediately. One of the greatest opportunities is that it is uncensored. This is also the greatest challenge. How do you identify others who are doing harm on the platforms? There are social media platforms that are for radical terrorists or white supremacists. Current laws cannot really restrain these. Because if you make a law that investigates these forums, these same bodies have the same right to investigate Facebook. How do you ensure everyone is safe but also using the platform for raising their voice?
- Teenagers are more curious, unless they haven't experienced it yet, they are not inclined to believe others who have experienced it. So, we have to balance it by allowing young people to experience hardship but knowing how to train them to deal with it.

How can Australia recognise its Indigenous cultures, people and history?

Young people were particularly passionate about this topic and discussed at length ways in which we can recognise and celebrate Indigenous culture and history, and work towards achieving social justice, Indigenous voice and sovereignty. Young people highlighted that any action taken by government or citizens needs to be meaningful and not tokenistic. They felt in many cases action should be Aboriginal-led. Young people spoke about the importance of language and the many benefits we stand to gain if we embraced Aboriginal languages. Truth telling and education featured frequently in the discussion with many young people wanting to know more about Aboriginal history, language and culture. Young people suggested there should be more culturally appropriate measures of success for Aboriginal people, as well as outlining that the government has a big role to play in ending discrimination and harmful policies that disadvantage Aboriginal communities.

Meaningful recognition and voice

- We need to recognise them for who they are.
- We need to talk about the strengths of Indigenous people, without the stigma of stereotypes or just focusing on their problems.
- We need to include them in the Constitution.
- They need a voice to have a say in policies and government and the way the country is run.
- It is the responsibility of the state to recognise Indigenous people, because a lot will follow from this.
- Learn and educate ourselves deeply about their practices beyond performativity and surface level culture.
- Advocacy and empathy rather than sympathy.

Telling the truth and raising awareness

- There are so many things we don't know about Aboriginal history. I feel we know more about the Holocaust than Aboriginal history.
- We need to start by telling the truth.
- You don't learn enough in schools and you don't learn the truth.
- Through education.
- We should implement more Aboriginal history into the school curriculum.
- We need to have discussions with them and listen to them.
- More people should understand and celebrate their importance to Australia.
- So many people aren't aware of the real history.
- Transform days which 'celebrate' the colonisation of Australia into a reflection day of the true meaning of colonisation.
- We need to have more in-depth education rather than performative activities and truly understand what it symbolises and what it means. Acknowledge the responsibility to support them and celebrate their culture internationally and nationally. Educating ourselves and being more aware of how they lived and live.

Language

- We should advertise in Aboriginal languages.
- People should learn Aboriginal languages.
- Some Australians know foreign languages but no one knows any Aboriginal languages. Why not?
- At the airport it says "G'day" but why can't we use an Aboriginal greeting? In New Zealand you see Maori greetings and language everywhere.
- Even though I am living in Australia, I don't hear or know any of their language. Hearing their language would be very nice. I saw one Aboriginal people that came to TAFE and it was a very different accent and it was very amazing.
- We need to change our language and the narratives we have use about Aboriginal people.
- We need to change the narratives that we have from the outside because that controls a lot of the emotions of the community from the inside.

Aboriginal-led

- Aboriginal people need to tell their stories. We need to hear those stories.
- Where are Indigenous people in the media and in public and political spheres?
- Aboriginal people can showcase their culture and strengths in public.

- Is 'Closing The Gap' a useful approach? All the indicators they use are decided through a Western lens. White people decide what are indicators of success for Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people should decide this. I'm not saying that Aboriginal young people not going to school is a good thing, but if school is not a place where their culture is celebrated or where they feel valued, then is school attendance really a good measure?
- We should work on improving wellbeing using a culturally comparative model using culturally appropriate indicators.
- The indicators that we use to measure Indigenous success are not the indicators we should be using because they don't mean anything to them.
- We can't measure how well Indigenous communities are doing through colonised and westernised indicators. The 'Closing The Gap' strategy is a colonised way of measuring their education and employment outcomes. Do we actually know what is good for Indigenous communities? Some people choose to live in rural areas because that's where they connect with land. They choose to share knowledge, run business, do community, differently. The way they identify employment or work is different. If someone farms in the morning and hunts in the afternoon, to them that is work and employment in their understanding. Even though it doesn't generate money, we need to recognise that it is valuable work.

Protecting Indigenous culture

- Learn about modern practices and beliefs of First Nations people, not only the traditional. Let's move with them.
- By making Aboriginal people assimilate to western culture we are breaking down their culture. We are destroying it still.
- If you look at how they treat diseases and heal and how they use their traditional ways, big companies are taking advantage of that and not enough laws are there to protect them.
- Most of their sites and artefacts are not protected. Many of their artefacts are in museums on the other side of the world.

Government action

- Allow Aboriginal people the opportunities to follow urban life or traditional life if people choose to. Government should provide these opportunities and provide support systems.
- Stop persecution in the Northern Territory intervention and the issues that still exist in the foster care system. Promote and enhance Indigenous education to schools and universities.
- Parliament is very essential and should invest in these communities.
- Government should protect artefacts and heritage sites.
- There are vast disparities between indigenous and non-indigenous people and limited opportunity for them.

What role do non-Indigenous people play in achieving justice for First Nations people?

Even though many young people who participated in the consultation experience significant disadvantage themselves, they were quick to point out the importance of recognising their privilege and using it to help others. Other suggestions focused on educating yourself about Aboriginal history, participating in celebrations of Aboriginal culture, and opening the channels of communication between migrant and Aboriginal communities.

- Recognise your privilege.
- Use your privilege to help others who don't have the same privilege.
- Participate in celebrations for Indigenous people.

- Take the opportunity to learn an Indigenous language.
- Have discussions with them.
- Acknowledge our responsibility as Australians towards Indigenous people.
- Increase your awareness of Indigenous culture, history and issues. Do your research.
- Promote Aboriginal performance and artists.
- Ask Aboriginal people what they need and meet them there.
- Be an ally and acknowledge our responsibilities.
- Reflect on your own prejudices and stereotypes.
- Show respect.
- Advocate, don't patronise. Understand the importance of why we should help them.
- We should create friendships because only one out of six people at this table has an Aboriginal friend. The migrant communities see this as an unknown area and do not know how to create bonds with the Aboriginal community.
- I would also like to know more about what it means to be an ally.
- Citizenship ceremonies should be with local Aboriginal elders, not with local council. They should incorporate Aboriginal culture.

Contact details

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