



## 2018-19 Annual Report

### Message from Executive Officer

This has been 'the year of growth' for the Multicultural Youth Affairs Network NSW. In September 2018 we were awarded funding through the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support program for three and a half years, our first significant funding as an independent organisation. This has meant we dramatically increased our ability to support young people throughout their settlement journey and advocate for the rights and interests of young people from multicultural backgrounds. From a single staff member in 2015 to a team of four in 2019, MYAN NSW continues to build its reputation as the go-to organisation for multicultural youth issues in NSW.

Without a doubt the highlight of 2018-19 was the Young Humanitarians Conference, two days of speakers, workshops, cultural performances, advocacy and mentoring designed for and by multicultural young people. Over 200 young people poured into Bryan Brown Theatre in Bankstown and the whole place was buzzing with energy and enthusiasm. Truly a career highlight!

The Welcome to Australia project continued for its second year supporting newly arrived young people with information, knowledge and opportunities to settle well in NSW. In addition to delivering training on the National Youth Settlement Framework and our quarterly MYAN meetings, this year we also delivered the Refugee Youth Peer Mentoring Community of Practice, as commenced work on the Refugee Youth Peer Mentoring program evaluation in partnership with The Sax Institute.

I want to thank my wonderful team for their skill and dedication in putting the rights and interests of multicultural young people at the heart of everything we do at MYAN NSW. Their passion and hard work ensures that the young people we work with are connected, influential and valued members of Australian society.

There is no doubt the year ahead will hold challenges, yet I am confident we have never been stronger. MYAN NSW is well placed to be a powerful ally for young people for multicultural backgrounds and a champion for the services that support them.

Alexandra Long  
Executive Officer

# Engaging Young People

## Multicultural Youth Ambassadors (MYA) program

The MYA program mentors and supports young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds to build relationships with like-minded peers, build knowledge and skills in leadership and provides opportunities to be involved in advocacy and social change initiatives.

Many youth ambassadors attended conferences, public speaking events and consultations. Their activities through MYAN NSW helped increase their civic, social and professional networks, while at the same time making long-term friendships. Online we have over 140 members active on our Facebook group and regular Instagram updates to keep other young people engaged.



*Youth Ambassadors at the Strategic Planning Day*

Highlights for MYAs this year include:

- Attending conferences such as FUSE and Progress
- Presenting at Metropolis Conference on Migration
- Going on an overnight hike
- Consultation on youth mental health and policy roundtables on refugee resettlement
- Being part of MYAN NSW's Strategic Planning Day
- Workshop on How to Talk to a Politician and an Iftar dinner

## Young Humanitarians Project and Conference

A huge highlight of this year was the successful delivery of the Young Humanitarians Conference. The YHC was a 2-day event held over 26 - 27 February in Bankstown.

Between July and December 2018, workshops were run at various TAFEs and schools in Western Sydney to introduce partner organisations and build interest. Parallel to this, MYAN NSW & Red Cross worked with

the MYAs to design a conference to engage young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds, especially those who had recently arrived. The process included holding workshops with the young people every 2-3 months to unpack conference themes such as content, vibe and turnout. By uniquely placing young people in the centre of decision making and planning of the conference, the event's speakers, workshop topics and atmosphere reflected what young people wanted.



*Cultural performers at the Young Humanitarians Conference*

In summary the conference included

- 200+ young people with over 15 schools engaged
- 3 keynote speakers: Isaiah Dawe, Sara Mansour and Sara Saleh
- Cultural performances from Aboriginal, Tamil and Nepali dance groups
- 30 volunteers
- 7 workshops & 14 speed mentors
- 14 organisations at the Opportunity Expo
- Decisions makers panel with Jenny Leong MP, Jihad Dib MP and Joseph La Posta, CEO of Multicultural NSW

After the conference, we invited participants to a Thank You event where volunteers were acknowledged for their hard work and photos from the conference were shown. It was a firm reminder to young people that there is power in diverse communities supporting each other in times of uncertain change.

You can watch a video summary of the conference here: <https://youtu.be/Dyqv3vCSmKA>

The conference was part of the Young Humanitarians Project (YHP), a partnership between Red Cross, MYAN NSW, Service and Treatment for the Rehabilitation for Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS) and State Emergency Services (SES). Funding for the Young

Humanitarians Project was made possible through the COMPACT Initiative at Multicultural NSW.

### Welcome to Australia project

From September to December 2018, MYAN NSW delivered the Welcome to Australia project, a series of weekly workshops aimed to assist newly arrived refugee students to learn about living in Australia, from peer facilitators who are also from refugee or migrant backgrounds.



*Aboriginal Elders, staff and students at Bankstown IEC*

Once again we partnered with Bankstown Senior College's Intensive English Centre. Using reflective practice, MYAN NSW built upon suggestions and strengths from the previous year. The changes made to this year included sitting in a circle and intentionally breaking the ice with the students in the first workshop rather than jumping straight into content delivery. From listening to student feedback, peer facilitators found that practicing English was a higher priority rather than obtaining information. The eight weekly sessions included:

- Introduction to peer facilitators and students
- Introduction to WEAVE Youth Advocates & Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture
- Introduction to STARTTS
- Aussie slang
- Places to visit in Sydney
- Introduction to the Australian Red Cross
- Introduction to the Fire & Rescue team & emergency preparedness
- End of term multicultural food day

A youth-centred approach acknowledged that the young people with lived experiences of moving to Australia or coming from multicultural backgrounds would have insight into the specific needs of the newly arrived students. We recruited four volunteers from

the established MYA program who would co-facilitate the workshops along with the Youth Projects Officer.

## Sector Development & Capacity Building

### Multicultural Youth Affairs Network Meetings

Our network meetings continued to engage, connect and build the capacity of the youth and multicultural sectors to effectively meet the needs of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. In 2018-19, we held four network meetings, hosted by:

- Multicultural Communities Council Illawarra (Wollongong) – 35 attendees
- Fairfield City Council (Fairfield) – 43 attendees
- Red Cross (Blacktown) – 36 attendees
- TAFE NSW (Liverpool) – 46 attendees

Each meeting focused on different themes, including:

- Family-aware multicultural youth work;
- Sport as a tool to engage multicultural young people;
- Making our services accessible for multicultural young people: World Café;
- Creating environments for multicultural young people to participate in decision making.

### National Youth Settlement Framework



*Participants at NYSF training in Parramatta*

MYAN NSW continued to deliver training and professional development on the National Youth Settlement Framework, including a 1-day training in December 2018 in Parramatta and a presentation at Cumberland Youth Interagency and Cumberland Cultural Capacity Building Forum.



## Refugee Youth Mentoring Community of Practice

In 2018, MYAN NSW was engaged to deliver the Refugee Youth Mentoring Community of Practice in partnership with Elemental Training. The COP aimed to improve the quality of mentoring programs for young people from refugee and refugee-like backgrounds in NSW. We delivered 4 sessions with participants from across civil society and government — 53 agencies in total. The sessions focused on skill building, advocacy, practitioner self-care and relationship building.

### Other highlights

- Presented at Cumberland Council Forum on the Refugee Youth Peer Mentoring Design project.
- Released 2017-18 NSW Youth Settlement Snapshot.
- Awarded contract to evaluate the Refugee Youth Peer Mentoring Program with lead partner, The Sax Institute.

## Promoting the issues facing young people from multicultural backgrounds

MYAN NSW engaged in many opportunities to promote the needs of young people from multicultural backgrounds.

- Member of Joint Partnership Working Group on Refugee Resettlement (JPWG) chaired by Peter Shergold.
- Co-chair of JPWG youth sub-working group focusing on the Refugee Youth Policy Initiative.
- Keynote speaker at Lane Cove Council's International Women's Day event.
- Guest speaker at East Hills Girls High School International Women's Day event.
- Coordinated focus groups on youth mental health.
- Facilitated a panel of young people at the Metropolis Conference.

MYAN NSW made one submission in 2018/19:

- Integration, Employment and Settlement Outcomes for Refugees and Humanitarian Entrants 2019

### Youth Mental Health Consultations

In May 2019, we ran two consultations in partnership with the Centre for Multicultural Youth. The focus groups were for practitioners and young people and aimed to contribute to developing best practice service approaches to improve the mental health and

wellbeing of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in Australia.



*Young people at the mental health consultation*

## MYAN NSW Team

### Staff team

Alex Long, Executive Officer  
Hannah Lai, Youth Projects Officer  
Henrietta Amevor, Operations Assistant (from December 2018)  
Vanessa Chavez, Sector Development & Policy Manager (from April 2019)



*L-R: Vanessa Chavez, Hannah Lai, Alex Long, Henrietta Amevor*

### Board members

Miriam Makki, Chairperson  
Valentina Angelovska, Deputy Chairperson  
Jasmina Bajraktarevic, Treasurer  
Sayed Hussainizada, Secretary  
Margaret Piper  
Annie Harvey  
Akuol Deng  
Charlie Coorey (until August 2018)