



January 2019

# Review into Integration, Employment and Settlement Outcomes for Refugees and Humanitarian Entrants

Submission by Multicultural Youth Affairs Network (MYAN) 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 members, partners, services and young people benefit from a range of initiatives and services, including:

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

## Background

MYAN NSW welcomes the opportunity to provide input into the Review into Integration, Employment and Settlement Outcomes for Refugees and Humanitarian Entrants. We encourage a robust, evidence-based conversation about how Australia's settlement and migration processes can better support the outcomes for young people from refugee and humanitarian backgrounds.

Newly arrived young people have access to a range of programs which support their settlement journey and help them achieve Active Citizenship. Active citizenship assumes the acquisition of social capital and agency, where young people are supported to become active agents of change in shaping their futures. Developing a sense of agency is particularly important for refugee and humanitarian young people as this group of young people have had their capacity for agency diminished by the refugee experience.

MYAN NSW believes the most effective responses to supporting young people to settle well in Australia are those that fully invest in support services and systems which remain flexible and responsive to the changing needs and challenges facing newly arrived young people. While Australia's settlement services system is globally recognised, we would like to see a stronger focus on more targeted, coordinated and consistent approaches to supporting young people across settlement services. Strengthening our service system to better focus on building autonomy, skills, connectedness, participation and wellbeing will ensure that young people making a new life in Australia will develop a strong sense of belonging and be able to actively participate in all aspects of society.

## The National Youth Settlement Framework

MYAN NSW supports a targeted approach to youth settlement underpinned by the National Youth Settlement Framework (NYSF)<sup>1</sup>. The NYSF is Australia's first national framework for understanding and responding to the needs of young people in the settlement context. It supports improvements in service delivery across a range of sectors – youth, settlement, health, education, employment and others. It is intended for government and non-government services, programs funded through federal, state and local governments, as well as philanthropic organisations. Of particular importance to this Review are the NYSF's Active Citizenship Indicators and Good Practice Capabilities.

The Active Citizenship Indicators are aspects of a young person's life that need to be supported in order to achieve active citizenship. This support is fundamentally about building a young person's knowledge, skills, confidence and networks. These indicators can be seen as key competencies for achieving active citizenship and help support services to conceptualise what good settlement looks like for a young person.

The Good Practice Capabilities reflect best practice in responding to the particular needs and circumstances of young people from refugee and humanitarian backgrounds in the settlement context. When applied, they address the range of barriers young people face in accessing the support and opportunities they need to become active citizens in Australian society.

The Good Practice Capabilities are:

1. Cultural competency
2. Youth-centred and strengths-based
3. Youth development and participation
4. Trauma informed
5. Family-aware
6. Flexibility and responsiveness
7. Collaboration
8. Advocacy

MYAN NSW strongly advocates that the NYSF inform the recommendations this Review makes in regards to young people's integration, employment and settlement outcomes. We acknowledge that the settlement sector has broadly embraced the NYSF and has made significant progress in adopting a youth-specific approach to the delivery of settlement services. However, young people from refugee and humanitarian backgrounds still experience significant barriers to accessing support from mainstream services. Settlement outcomes are the responsibility of all services and are not limited to the settlement sector. We emphasise the need for further initiatives which support mainstream services to adopt a targeted approach to meeting the needs of young people in the settlement context. This must include commitment, leadership and resourcing from government departments and agencies that administer mainstream programs.

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<sup>1</sup> MYAN (Australia). 2016. National Youth Settlement Framework. Melbourne: Centre for Multicultural Youth.

## Case Study – *Let's Settle In* program

This case study primarily relates to (tick any that apply):

- ✓ Integration
- ✓ Employment
- ✓ Settlement

### 1. Description of case study.

MYAN NSW first received funding from Multicultural NSW to pilot the *Let's Settle In* program in 2017, in partnership with Bankstown Intensive English Centre (BIEC). The program was highly successful in achieving its outcomes and continues to be delivered through this partnership. It is now one of the suite of activities MYAN NSW delivers as part of the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) program.

The *Let's Settle In* program aims for newly arrived refugee students to learn about living and settling in Australia, from paid bi- and multi-lingual peer facilitators who are also from refugee, migrant and asylum seeking backgrounds who have established their lives in Australia. The students engage in the form of weekly one-hour workshops at BIEC across one school term, as well as a half-day 'Amazing Race' activity which introduces students to a variety of local services. These students have been in Australia for less than 18 months and have not yet transitioned beyond Intensive English Centres into mainstream high school or tertiary education.

The eight workshops focus on:

1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture, including how to perform an Acknowledgement to Country
2. Emergency preparedness
3. Australian slang and colloquial English
4. Knowing your rights
5. Places of significance and places to visit in Sydney
6. Volunteering in Australia
7. Connecting with others through celebrating and sharing cultural foods and dances
8. Amazing Race activity and introducing young people to local services

### 2. What are the key elements that demonstrate success?

- Involvement of young people from refugee and humanitarian backgrounds in all aspects of the program.
- Collaboration between service providers across a range of sectors e.g. BIEC, WEAVE Youth Services, Red Cross Emergency Services, NSW Fire & Rescue, Bankstown Multicultural Youth Services, The Welcome Dinner Project and others.
- Increased confidence to access local services for newly-arrived young people.
- Paid employment for young people which:
  - values their life experience, language skills and cross-cultural knowledge.
  - supports their skills development by providing training in workshop facilitation and public speaking.

### 3. What structures, programs, policy and leadership supported this success?

- Youth participation, youth-centred and youth development approach to project development and implementation. This approach acknowledges that young people with lived experience of settling in Australia have insight into the specific needs of newly arrived students and can play a crucial role in designing and delivering supports which meet these needs.
- Commitment from MYAN NSW to ensuring Peer Facilitators are paid and provided with training and support.
- Program underpinned by the National Youth Settlement Framework's Active Citizenship Indicators and Good Practice Capabilities
- Initial funding by Multicultural NSW and ongoing funding from DSS to deliver program.

### 4. How would you frame a strategic response to the key areas being considered by the review?

The *Let's Settle In* program demonstrates the impact young people from refugee and humanitarian backgrounds can have when given the opportunity to be involved in designing and delivering programs to meet the needs of their peers and their community. It acknowledges that young people from refugee and humanitarian backgrounds have the skills, confidence and knowledge to support their peers. Furthermore, it shows that providing meaningful employment for young people can lead to many positive outcomes for both the young people themselves and the program beneficiaries. This program is an important example of a youth development and youth participation approach that is replicable and scalable.

### 5. Is there any research that you have undertaken that the panel should consider?

*Not Just Ticking a Box: Youth Participation with Young People From Refugee and Migrant Backgrounds*

<http://myan.org.au/file/file/MYANYouthParticipationResource.pdf>

MYAN recently launched a Youth Participation resource which aims to help organisations consider ways they can support and enable young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds to participate in decisions that affect them. The resource includes a participation model which outlines barriers and ways to address them, examples of good practice through national and local case studies and a practical top tips and checklist section.

#### Contact Details

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