

***Message from the Executive Officer, Annukina Warda***

The past 12 months has been a time of transition and change for MYAN NSW.

The end of 2021 saw the resignation of long time MYAN NSW executive officer (EO) and the departure of our Youth Programs Coordinator and Multicultural Youth Worker. By June 2022 the MYAN NSW team had permanently exited our office space at Woolloomooloo and we have been working remotely since.

With upheaval almost always comes the opportunity for inward reflection, problem solving and opportunities for transformation. The MYAN NSW team continued to respond to the unique challenges of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. We delivered a Men's Behaviour Change pilot in schools thanks to the support of the Department of Home Affairs to address male violence against women.

In April 2022 the team welcomed a new executive officer, Annukina Warda. In my first quarter as new EO, I applied for two successful grants, doubling the annual revenue of the organisation for the financial year ahead. I attracted a grant of \$200,000 and \$190,000 respectively from Multicultural NSW to deliver critical programs and offer support services to the most vulnerable communities in NSW.

Our commitment to young people remained steady and included our signature projects as well as the unique opportunity to evaluate our Youth Ambassador program thanks to the Sector Transformation Fund from the Department of Communities and Justice. We wrapped up our commitment to the Codebreakers program and for the first time applied to lead our own COMPACT program in the field of countering violent extremism. This heralds an exciting new chapter for MYAN NSW.

In a global climate of unrest, and a local environment of turmoil, MYAN NSW remained strong. It is my privilege to present the annual report for the period 2021-22.

*Annukina Warda*  
*MYAN NSW Executive Officer*

MYAN NSW Board Members

2021-22

Miriam Makki, Chairperson

Margaret Piper, Deputy Chairperson

Akuol Deng, Treasurer

Annie Harvey, Secretary

Jasmina Bajraktarevic (until February 2021)

Valentina Angelovska

Matina Sarris (from March 2021)

David Crisante (from March 2021)

Lina Ishu (from March 2021)



## ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

### MULTICULTURAL YOUTH AFFAIRS NETWORK

2021-2022

#### Introduction

The Multicultural Youth Affairs Network (MYAN NSW) is a state-wide, specialist youth organisation. We support young people from diverse cultural communities across New South Wales.

Since our inception in 2014, we have supported hundreds of young people from migrant and refugee communities build their social networks, access skills, training and employment, and most importantly lead conversations on issues that affect their lives.

Our team of youth engagement specialists utilise MYAN NSW's unique, culturally-specific approach to engage newly arrived young people. We also create opportunities for direct youth participation that build a strong evidence base. Our role as an industry leader supports governments and the community services sector alike to collaborate with young people.

#### Our Partners

##### Department of Home Affairs

The Australian government currently invests \$1.1 million in MYAN NSW. Our work equips humanitarian entrants and other vulnerable migrants in their first five years of Australia with the knowledge and the skills to identify, understand and take action to address their identified settlement needs.

MYAN NSW leads a program that has a focus on social participation, economic wellbeing and independence, personal wellbeing and community connectedness.

##### NSW Government

Multicultural NSW currently invests just under half a million dollars in MYAN NSW. This investment resources us to support young people on temporary and vulnerable visas with emergency relief. MYAN NSW is committed to the principles of social cohesion. In our upcoming *Kairos* project (launching in 2023) MYAN NSW will work with young women and non-binary people to counter violent extremist narratives online.

## Policy Objective

We equip and empower young people and communities to address their identified settlement needs to improve social participation, economic wellbeing, independence, personal wellbeing and community connectedness.

## Annual Youth Activities

- Delivered 6 information and skills building workshops per annum (bi monthly)
- Delivered 1 youth retreat (day event)
- Delivered 2 peer network building events
- Delivered 1 peer-to-peer settlement initiative in schools
- Delivered 1 training program
- Provided medium intensity individualised support to 30 young people in their first five years of settlement

## Policy Objective

We engage with services and agencies to build partnerships and referral channels that assist clients to engage and remain on pathways to achieve long term outcomes of self-reliance and equitable participation in Australian society.

## Annual Industry Leadership Activities

- Delivered 4 MYAN Network meetings per annum (3 x metro, 1 regional)
- Delivered 3 training and capacity building workshops per annum
- Delivered 2 newsletters
- Delivered 1 other publication
- Delivered 1 annual consultation with young people.
- Attended 12 networks, conferences, events and forums.

- Delivered 2 formal presentations.

## Challenges to Providing Youth Support

The way youth services are funded and structured are inherently geared to respond to young people's most pressing priorities. These are shaped by current global and local economic, public health and other social access issues. The level of urgency and need limits our ability to tackle larger, structural issues.

This results in a youth demographic that is left to navigate structural racism, over policing in poor neighbourhoods, social division, colonial curriculums and the like without adequate support.

The areas of most pressing material needs are well known and include:

1. Support for further education
2. Access to digital hardware, data and literacy services to minimise the digital divide, exacerbated by COVID19
3. The impacts of the affordable housing crisis
4. Lack of employment pathways for newly arrived young people
5. Financial support for vulnerable young people
6. Access to culturally safer mental health services
7. Access to legal services
8. Isolation and lack of social networks

The structural issues that require immediate addressing include:

- Climate crises
- Cultural safety for young people from diverse ancestries

- Gender safety and participation for girls and young women
- Generational trauma
- Structural racism
- Impacts of global conflict on local communities

### **Defining Youth Participation**

Thanks to the Social Sector Support Fund, we have quantified the true cost of young people attending leadership and other advocacy opportunities involves:

1. Specialist youth engagement and building trust
2. An administrative load of contract writing and clear communication with young people on the process
3. Facilitated pre-briefing
4. Negotiating accessible transport, ability, sensory, trauma-informed and cultural safety implications for diverse young people
5. Specialist staff briefing young people to build confidence and clarify boundaries and expectations
6. Renumerating young people's time, skills and labour
7. Offering clinical debriefing sessions in case of re-traumatising

This work continues to inform our role as an industry leader.

### **Education support**

**At MYAN NSW our team supports young people by:**

- Providing information on university scholarships
- Making referrals to university tutoring and assessment help

- Offering emergency financial support for young people to undertake courses and obtain relevant licences such as traffic control, security, first aid, forklift, Working with Children Checks and criminal police checks
- Preparing young people for public speaking opportunities
- Providing opportunities for young people to connect with peers to increase their confidence in literacy, numeracy and conversational English

### **Digital access**

At MYAN NSW we are inundated with demand for access to digital hardware and access to data.

We provided the following through our bespoke, crowd-funded program to meet the growing need of young people for technology, including:

- Laptops (refurbished by peers)
- Second-hand phones (donated)

Many young people report having to share tablets and digital devices to complete homework and access to data and network coverage continues to be a pressing priority for young people.

MYAN has had continuous involvement with *Wester.ly* — a collaborative of community organisations working in Western Sydney on issues of digital inclusion with a focus on education.

### **Housing Crisis Support**

We provide referral to housing and rental support for young people. Currently we are supporting young people on temporary visas with emergency

relief up to \$1000 to support with rental relief, cost of living, emergency medical costs, telecommunications costs, rise of bills, fleeing family violence to avoid homelessness.

### **Finance and financial rights**

This year MYAN NSW was accepted as a Work and Development Order provider by Service NSW. This personalised support allows us to assist young people in financial hardship to pay off their fines.

We are regularly requested to provide information and create learning opportunities for young people about financial programs and financial rights and obligations in Australia.

### **Employment**

We create opportunities for real job pathways with our partner Talent RISE. Young people have secured employment in the hospitality industry and marketing roles at Westfield Shopping Town through this partnership. We assist young people with job applications and resume writing in bespoke workshops. We provide references and writing support letters for job applicants when they have volunteered at MYAN NSW.

### **Mental Health**

Young people's mental health concerns continue to be a pressing priority for us. At MYAN NSW we offer:

- Individual wellbeing check-ins when working with individual and in group settings (using a self-assessment approach)
- We make regular referrals to the NSW Health Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma

Survivors (STARTTS) or Headspace Youth Service.

- We partner with mental health youth services to get newly arrived young people feeling secure in accessing local support systems.

### **Supporting Newly Emerging Community Leaders**

At MYAN NSW, we support young people to become community leaders and create bespoke, cultural events and programming that grows the capacity of newly arrived communities. We understand not all young people have safe access to their cultural, faith or gender communities and prioritise the value of newly emerging cultural leadership.



We create opportunities for young leaders to join youth reference groups and advisory bodies across NSW.

### **Legal**

Young people continue to require legal support regarding accrued fines, rental tenancies and in one case, a young person who wanted to seek a divorce. In 2021, many refugee and migrant

communities we work with experienced a heightened level of policing during the pandemic lockdowns and entire communities facing financial hardship accrued fines for breaching lockdown instructions, that were often not translated into community languages or delivered in accessible ways.

At MYAN NSW we provide personal support and make warm referrals to our partner organisations including:

- Referrals to Legal Aid NSW
- Explaining how to access support for COVID-19 fines

### **Social Networks**

Building real, local social networks is a protective factor in a young person's settlement journey. At MYAN NSW we create multiple events and group opportunities such as:

- The MYAN NSW Big Day Out – an outdoor event that included education on the Australian bush and water safety
- Drop In for Coffee sessions
- Invitations to Black Tie Gala events
- Free tickets to local theatre shows through a partnership program

### **Schools Engagement Programs**

At MYAN NSW we upskill young people to co-facilitate bespoke school workshops to newly arrived young people. All young peer facilitators are trained, paid and supported to work alongside us and their peer networks.

Our school's program includes the annual 'Welcome to Australia' program. In these fun workshops, newly arrived young people access local knowledges, learn local slang and get to ask

questions they were too embarrassed to ask anywhere else. This offering continues to be our most popular.



This year we ran the Welcome to Australia project from March to April 2022 at Bankstown Senior College continuing the partnership we established in 2017. The project was run across the English for Further Studies (EFS) classes which had over 60 students from migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds.

We recruited 3 Peer Facilitators from the established Youth Ambassador program who were employed to co-facilitate the workshops along with the MYAN's Multicultural Youth Worker.

In 2022, we piloted our first ever young men's initiative in schools. This program was focussed on supporting young men to challenge gender stereotypes, shift harmful gender attitudes and create new narratives around masculinity that are positive. We are currently seeking support to grow this offering on a fee-for-service basis.



Young Men's Program

## Leadership Opportunities

As the state's largest and only cultural youth specialist network, we support young people with training, remuneration and individualised support to participate in the following initiatives:

- Department of Communities and Justice youth event;
- Western Sydney Community Forum's industry breakfast on racism;
- TAFE NSW Refugee Week;
- NSW Health video campaign;
- Australian Human Rights Commission expert advisory group;
- Child Protection Week at Office of the Children's Guardian.
- Social impact champions for Youth Ambassador's evaluation project;
- National Youth Settlement Framework training;
- Youth Futures Summit
- ABC's Anxiety Project



Social impact measurement workshop- Jan 2022

## Engaging Young People

### Youth Ambassadors

The Youth Ambassadors program mentors and supports young people from cultural communities to build knowledge, skills, and confidence to create positive social change.

During the reporting period, we focused on online engagement and resourcing young people with technology. In addition, we continued to engage with the existing young people in our Youth Ambassador program.

### What did digital youth work look like?

- Employing young people to co-facilitate.
- Utilising the full functionality of Zoom such as the breakout rooms and whiteboards
- Connecting with people individually before inviting them to a group call.
- Asking young people how they connect online and if they have digital access needs (e.g., needing a laptop, data or device).
- Providing the option for young people to participate in the way that makes them feel comfortable.
- Having optional Zoom hangouts where young people can arrive and exit when they feel like it.

### How we supported young people?

- Providing second-hand laptops
- Referring young people to emergency relief.
- Phone calls or video calls to check in with young people.
- Providing references to potential employers.
- Referring young people to mental health, employment and education services.
- Connecting newer Youth Ambassadors to established Youth Ambassadors.
- Training young people to co-facilitate workshops or online meetings.

### Our online sessions included:

- 2 x anti-racism workshops with Democracy in Colour co-facilitated by 3 Youth Ambassadors.



- 2 x public speaking workshops co-facilitated and prepared by 2 Youth Ambassadors
- 1 x workshop at the Youth Futures Summit by National Youth Commission delivered by 2 Youth Ambassadors to discuss experiences as people of colour.
- 2 x Shisha No Thanks consultations in partnership with South East Local Health District facilitated by 4 Youth Ambassadors as a paid opportunity. This gathered feedback to inform the future of the public health campaign
- 1 x arts based session that used collage to discuss family traditions.
- 3 x Misinformation awareness and research training sessions with First Draft.

**Our face-to-face sessions (when we weren't in lockdown) included:**

- 1 x workshop on financial literacy and savings facilitated by a MYAN alumni and a financial advisor from the Afghan community.
- 1 x Afro-Aussies network building event called Dinner is Ready, Come Home and held at Little Lagos.
- 1 x art workshop facilitated by 2 Youth Ambassadors.
- 1 x group blood donation at Australian Red Cross.
- FUSE conference hosted by MYAN Australia- Dec 4-5 2021
- 1 x Storytelling and media training workshop hosted by ABC news.

**Some peer network building events this year included:**

- Facilitating two outings to see the musical Hamilton in March and June. The sessions

were attended by 60 and 20 young people respectively.

- MYAN Iftar in Bankstown, celebrating and acknowledging an inclusive, inter-faith Ramadan.
- Partnering with Darlinghurst Theatre Company to bring young people to see plays.
- End of year event facilitated by young people
- Opportunity to see Western Sydney Wanderers play at Parramatta Stadium with other Youth Ambassadors.



**Sector Development & Capacity building Industry Leadership**

MYAN NSW delivers quarterly network meetings, training sessions, forums and consultations that span the state of NSW.

In a time of widespread lockdown, extreme anxiety in a global pandemic, and the high levels of adversity faced by the large network of human service providers we support, our network turned to us to provide leadership.

**Facilitated Network Events**

During this reporting period, we led facilitated network events on the following issues:

- Lockdown 2.0 – Sustaining digital engagement with multicultural young people

- Multicultural youth voices during Covid-19 recovery
- Supporting young people from Afghanistan.
- Family-Aware Practice with young people from cultural communities.



Over 150 service representatives across settlement, education, health, sport, arts and government agencies work with us each year. We continue to build our reputation as an industry leader in refugee youth and migrant affairs.

We also offer:

- Training and Resources
- Advisory on Government Roundtables.

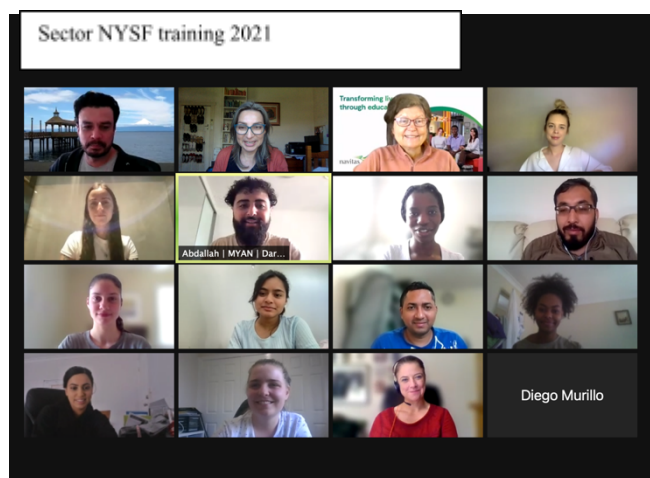
### State wide Teleconference – August 2021

Covid-19 vaccine rollout — communications strategies targeting CALD young people.

MYAN NSW partnered with the Deputy Director from Multicultural Health Communication Service and the Sydney Health Literacy Lab at the University of Sydney. Over fifty people participated in this key event representing settlement, education, multicultural, sports, arts, youth work and government agencies.

### National Youth Settlement Framework

NYSF training for community sector workers was facilitated during this reporting period including: In house training sessions on Improving Settlement outcomes for young people for SSI staff and partner agencies in March 2022 and for Salvation Army's Employment Plus program Sept 2021.



The sessions were co-facilitated with Youth Ambassadors and attended by a total of 35 workers representing settlement, education and youth sectors.

### Amplifying Young People's Voices

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

- Continued our membership of Sydney Alliance. Our focus this year was on supporting campaigns for increased humanitarian intake after the fall of Kabul in August 2021.
- Continued our involvement with *Wester.ly* — a collaborative of community organisations

working in Western Sydney on issues of digital inclusion with a focus on education.

- Member of Joint Partnership Working Group on Refugee Resettlement (JPWG) chaired by Prof. Peter Shergold.
- Interviewed for Western Sydney Community Forum (WSCF)'s Build Beyond Bricks podcast. Listen [here](#).
- Panellist on WSCF Communities of Change conference on intersectionality in the community sector.
- MYAN NSW was appointed to the NSW Police Multicultural Advisory Committee.
- Member of Department of Home Affairs Multicultural Women's Reference Group (MWRG)
- 2022 Humanitarian program consultation with Minister Hawke.
- Pre-budget roundtable with Alison Larkins.
- Endless input to a variety of Covid-19 and vaccination related roundtables, working groups and advisory committees.
- Nominating multiple young people for ZEST Awards.
- Attending Asset Based Community Development training.
- SBS Connect with Respect teacher resources. Five Youth Ambassadors were interviewed to stimulate classroom discussion about respectful relationships, navigating their social lives and being a supportive friend.



Filming for SBS learn series

- Australia Post Community Grant (10K) towards an inter-generational forum in the Afro-Australian community.
- Youth Opportunities Grant (50K) for Afro-Aussie project; Salesforce Catalyst Fund (100K).

### Young People Advocating for Change

Young people participated in a range of advocacy opportunities, amplifying what's important to them. Some of the events they participated in as MYAN Youth Ambassadors included:



Image: Young people from MYAN NSW meeting with Senator Tim Ayres—Jan 2022

- Speaking to Bankstown high school students on experiences of forced migration.
- Attending the Virtual Progress conference by Australian Progress.
- Sharing lived experience on young renter's roundtable by Youth Action.
- Speaking on opioid and pain medication use to FECCA and their peers.

### Capacity Building for MYAN Staff

There were fewer opportunities for networking and capacity building events due to Covid-19 this year. We focused instead on building new skills in digital youth work and using online training tools such as Zoom, Padlet, Mentimeter, Slido and

more. We also received mentoring on topics such as Fundraising, Financial Management and Digital Engagement. All new staff attended Sydney Alliance Foundations training in community organising.

## **MEET OUR TEAM**

### **Executive Officer**

Annukina Warda (She/Her) a social policy analyst specialising in the fields of countering violent extremism, social cohesion and multicultural affairs. Annukina is a culturally displaced person and grew up surrounded by the strength and lived experience of a community displaced by war in Iraq and Syria.

### **Youth Engagement Team**

Maria Domina Augustine (She/Her) is an early-career youth specialist in her third year of practice. She has contributed to the mental health, disability and migrant and refugee sectors. Domina has worked with vulnerable communities both through frontline work and case management.

Domina grew up living in multiple countries around the world and is a young cultural caretaker, connecting and embedding culture through community connection and through her dancing.

Izabella Antoniou (She/Her) is a researcher, community advocate, arts practitioner and youth specialist. She has a varied professional background having worked across operations, communications, policy and consulting. Her work focuses on building up culturally supportive spaces.

Aisha Mahdi (She/Her) is a Youth Engagement Specialist at MYAN NSW. Throughout her academic history and career she has worked with migrants and refugees particularly in the settlement sector, and is passionate about the wellbeing of others post resettlement.

Aisha is a Sudanese Australian who is immensely inspired by culture, history and traditions and appreciates the impact her travels have had on her experiences with multicultural communities.

### **Policy and Industry Leadership Team**

Vanessa Chavez (She/ Her) is an industry leader, training and youth settlement specialist. Vanessa speaks Spanish and acknowledges her Mayan ancestry.

At MYAN NSW Vanessa leads sector capacity building work, ensuring that government and community sector partners are resourced, equipped and supported to work with young people from diverse cultural communities.