



# Inquiry into migration settlement outcomes

MYAN WA and YACWA Joint Response

February 2017

# Executive Summary

The Youth Affairs Council of WA (YACWA) and the Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network of WA (MYAN WA) welcome the opportunity to provide a joint submission on behalf of our respective members to the inquiry into Migrant Settlement Outcomes.

In providing a response, YACWA and MYAN WA have focussed specifically on the Western Australian context, and the experiences of settlement services, as well as young people between the ages of 12 and 25. In doing so, a literature review of recent consultations with young people was completed, as well as two focus groups with relevant stakeholders. Members of both organisations were invited to submit feedback. In this regard, it is our aim to present a submission with a strong focus on direct feedback from people with experiences in the settlement services system in Western Australia, underpinned by sound evidence and research.

As a whole, the settlement services system in Western Australia is working well for the vast majority of young people, and is underpinned by strong collaboration and advocacy. Services are trying to adapt as best as possible within the constraints they face, and in that regard, some tweaks to the system would enhance the system.

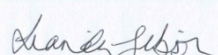
The information received, and contained within this submission, indicates that young people engaged in economic, social and civic participation, as well as having support provided to them to maintain their well-being through youth specific settlement services, are more likely to settle effectively, and less likely be involved in anti-social behaviours. Sound service delivery needs to underpin this. Further analysis of issues that have recently been suggested through the media, and parliament, as pertaining to this inquiry, have also been addressed within the terms of reference.

Both YACWA and MYAN WA hope that the opinions, experience, and research contained within this document are given due consideration, as are the recommendations made to enhance the settlement system and process for young people in Western Australia.

Both YACWA and MYAN WA will continue to advocate for the needs of young people from a migrant and refugee background, and will gladly assist the committee on matters relating to migration and Western Australia, where possible. Further input if required would be welcomed.



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# Contents

<b>Preliminary Pages</b>	3
About the Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network of WA	3
About the Youth Affairs Council of WA	3
YACWA and MYAN WA's working relationship	4
About the process of this submission	4
Contact Details	4
<b>Introduction</b>	5
<b>Findings and Recommendations</b>	6
<b>Migrant and Refugee Young People in Western Australia</b>	7
Western Australia	7
WA Settlement by age	7
Country of Birth (region)	8
WA Arrivals, Gender, 12-25 year olds	8
WA, English Proficiency, 12-25 year olds	9
Summary of Raw Data	9
<b>Literature Review</b>	11
A Catalyst for Change	11
Children and Young People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds Speak Out	12
Listening to the voices of young people from refugee & migrant backgrounds in Perth	13
<b>Response to the Terms of Reference</b>	15
1. The mix, coordination and extent of settlement services available and the effectiveness of these services in promoting better settlement outcomes for migrants;	15
2. National and international best practice strategies for improving migrant settlement outcomes and prospects;	17
3. The importance of English language ability on a migrant's, or prospective migrant's, settlement outcome;	19
4. Whether current migration processes adequately assess a prospective migrant's settlement prospects; and	21
5. Any other related matter.	22
<b>Attachments</b>	25
<b>References</b>	26

## Preliminary Pages

### About the Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network of WA

MYAN WA aims to develop the capacity of WA practitioners, service providers, policy makers and funding bodies to ensure positive settlement outcomes for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. The network was first established in 2005 as the Refugee Youth Services Network (RYSN) and since that time has grown to over 400 members from the not-for-profit sector, government organisations, young people and community members.

MYAN WA provides a voice to the unique issues faced by young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds and ensures that they are integrated into the ongoing advocacy agenda of both MYAN WA and YACWA. It has grown to become the platform for both government and non-government services providers, communities and schools to come together and tackle issues faced by the youth and settlement sectors. In the past year, MYAN WA has led a number of projects that enhance the skills of multicultural youth and amplify their voices and experiences in today's Australia.

**MYAN WA's role is to support young people from a migrant and refugee background, as well as the youth and settlement services sector that support them, to:**

- Influence key stakeholders and decision makers
- Have opportunities to develop leadership skills and the capacity of young people to effect change
- Create opportunities to build partnerships and collaborate to ensure positive settlement outcomes
- Ensure current youth settlement issues are understood and promoted throughout the sector
- Ensure the specific needs of multicultural young people in Western Australia are kept on the National agenda
- Create opportunities to advocate for the needs and visibility of migrant and refugee young people

### About the Youth Affairs Council of WA

The Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia (YACWA) is the peak non-government youth organisation in Western Australia with a membership of over 400 youth service organisations, community organisations, academics, individuals and most importantly young people themselves. Established in 1980, YACWA has worked tirelessly for over 35 years to deliver high-level representation and advocacy for the Western Australian youth sector and young people to address the exclusion of young people in a rapidly changing society.

**YACWA's role is to:**

- Provide information and support to the non-government youth sector
- Work to promote fair and positive outcomes for young people in our community

- Promote equity, equality, access and participation for young people in Western Australia
- Advocate to all levels of government on the best interests of Western Australia's young people
- Encourage the active participation of young people in identifying and dealing with issues that are important to them
- Provide a strong, united and informed voice capable of effectively advocating for the non-government youth sector and the young people with whom they work

## YACWA and MYAN WA's working relationship

Currently, YACWA acts as the auspicing agency for MYAN WA. This relationship sees MYAN WA staff work out of the YACWA offices, however MYAN WA maintains its independence from YACWA. MYAN WA's work is guided by an executive group of representatives from the youth and settlement sectors. This working relationship has been a natural fit, and led to many positive outcomes as YACWA, an established organisation of 35 years in WA already acts in an advocacy space, and amplifies MYAN WA's reach and influence significantly. Further, as MYAN WA's work falls within YACWA's remit, YACWA is able to add resources to MYAN WA's work on some occasions, increasing its effectiveness. Examples of this can be seen in the Catalyst Youth Summit, Shout Out Program, and even in writing this submission. This has worked as an effective model of delivery that would be recommended by both organisations.

## About the process of this submission

This submission was created with a consultation comprising three elements. These elements included a focus group with settlement services (**see attachment 1**), a focus group with young people (**see attachment 2**) and a background paper that was distributed across both organisations and networks with relevant questions (**see attachment 3**). Further to this, young people and community members were encouraged to submit to the inquiry directly themselves, via a template (**see attachment 4**). Desktop research was also conducted, with an emphasis on reports that consulted young people from a migrant and refugee background in a Western Australian setting. This submission was then sent to people consulted for review before submission.

## Contact Details

This submission was prepared by the staff below, and any questions regarding this submission may be directed to them accordingly.

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# Introduction

The Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network of Western Australia and the Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia welcomes the opportunity to provide a joint submission in response to the Inquiry into Migration Settlement Outcomes.

In providing a response, both YACWA and MYAN WA will focus specifically on the Western Australian context, and the responses from settlement services and young people between the ages of 12 and 25. Where recommendations have been made, they have been made in regard to a federal response which would maximise benefit locally in Western Australia.

Navigating the challenges of the services system is not always easy, but for the vast majority of young people manage to find a way to balance their own settlement processes, while supporting their family and integrating into the community. In this regard, they demonstrate astounding amounts of strength, resilience and capability.

The Settlement Services System as a whole in Australia is well regarded nationally and internationally, and in the majority of cases works for young people. However, there are areas in which it could be enhanced, and there are a minority of people who it does not work effectively for. This is reflected in the feedback we received as part of this submission.

The following submission provides a specific analysis as to the needs and wants of young people experiencing settlement, as well as a direct response to the Terms of Reference set out by the Joint Migration Committee. Both organisations have worked together to ensure that a strong voice of young people, and organisations working with young people are captured in this submission as falls within our remit.

In summary, if you keep young people engaged in economic, social and civic participation, as well as having support provided to them to maintain their well-being through youth specialist settlement services, they are more likely to settle effectively, and less likely be involved in anti-social behaviours.

# Findings and Recommendations

The below findings and recommendations are made in response to the Terms of Reference.

Finding	Recommendation
Trust is crucial to the settlement process between young people and service providers, as well as working with people who have an understanding of individual circumstances. Young people relate more easily with other young people.	Provide resources to implement a peer based mentorship program at a state based level, and provide positive role models for young people to guide them through the settlement process
The current English language courses are not long enough, and do not include some relevant content which would greatly enhance young peoples ability to settle effectively.	Extend the English Language training courses by removing time restrictions placed upon them to incorporate a capability assessment for graduation.  Assess the content of the English Language courses to maintain their ongoing relevance.
Guiding principles which steer service delivery, combined with a specific approach to working with young people, and services that address common barriers young people face greatly increases the chances of effective settlement outcomes.	Implement the National Youth Settlement Framework (NYSF) nationwide to inform planning, reporting and principles to increase effectiveness of settlement outcomes for young people
Service continuity is critical for young people, who get frustrated at retelling their stories, and take time to trust and disclose information.	Increase funding contract lengths for a minimum three years to all settlement service providers to allow continuity of services for young people
Gang related crime is not a widespread issue in Western Australia, and there is a lack of information and statistics collected to justify the requirement for such a punitive measure as deportation.	Do not change the Migration Act to deport anybody under the age of 18 as a punitive measure
A young persons settlement process varies from individual to individual, is complex, and difficult to predict accurately the likelihood or timeframe of settling effectively in advance of them migrating to Australia.	Do not add additional screening measures to the migration act that attempt to determine an individuals, particularly a young persons, likelihood of a successful settlement outcome.

# Migrant and Refugee Young People in Western Australia

## Western Australia

Western Australia faces a number of issues, which compound the difficulty in settlement services and create an environment that adds further strains to individuals trying to integrate into the community. Currently, Western Australia makes up 32% of Australia's landmass, or 252m hectares of 768m hectares.<sup>1</sup> The distribution of people and services to support them is therefore vast, and unlike any other state. Further, WA makes up 10.8% of the entire Australian population,<sup>2</sup> meaning that not only is there a large land mass, there are also few people, and thus fewer support services. This is further compounded by the unemployment rate, which is high, especially for young people at 11.8%<sup>3</sup>, as well as the high cost of living, and transport infrastructure. Having said that, according to the 2011 census, 37% of Western Australians were born overseas and 14.5% speak a language other than English at home.<sup>4</sup>

## WA Settlement by age

The following table identifies the number of young people, up to the age of 25 at the time of arriving in Australia, who were settled in Western Australia. The raw data pertaining to the last five years, has been accessed from the Settlement Reporting Facility, and includes all visa classes and migration streams of the Department of Social Services.<sup>5</sup>

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total	Percentage
0-5	4,623	4,109	3,313	2,529	1,706	16,280	33 %
6-11	3,122	2,603	1,978	1,542	1,079	10,324	21 %
12-15	1,534	1,151	870	761	530	4,846	10 %
16-17	624	463	338	296	226	1,947	4 %
18-24	4,472	3,807	3,206	2,395	1,488	15,368	32 %

<b>TOTAL (0-24)</b>	14,375	12,133	9,705	7,523	5,029	48,765
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<b>Total WA (All ages)</b>	37,663	33,615	28,255	20,901	12,051	132,485
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<b>Total Aus (All ages)</b>	223,821	216,549	197,391	167,904	124,225	929,890
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## Country of Birth (region)

The following table identifies the number of young people, between the ages of 12 and 25 at the time of arriving in Australia, who were settled in Western Australia and which country they were born in. The raw data pertaining to the last five years, has been accessed from the Settlement Reporting Facility, and includes all visa classes and migration streams of the Department of Social Services.<sup>6</sup>

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total	Percentage
South East Asia	1,670	1,414	1,220	1,180	839	6,323	29 %
North East Asia	630	574	494	415	214	2,327	11 %
Southern Asia	1,169	1,043	838	605	524	4,179	19 %
South America, Central America, & the Caribbean	86	66	59	40	21	272	1 %
North America	101	84	91	46	15	337	2 %
Europe and Former USSR	1,822	1,390	1,044	630	200	4,519	21 %
Africa (excluding North Africa)	797	571	455	334	230	2,387	11 %
The Middle East and North Africa	255	200	161	151	162	929	4 %
Oceania & Antarctica	86	67	40	43	8	244	1 %

## WA Arrivals, Gender, 12-25 year olds

The following table identifies the number of young people, between the ages of 12 and 25 at the time of arriving in Australia, who were settled in Western Australia and their level of assessed English proficiency. The raw data pertaining to the last five years, has been accessed from the Settlement Reporting Facility of the Department of Social Services.<sup>7</sup>

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total	Percentage
Male	3,090	2,392	1,875	1,428	904	9,689	44 %
Female	3,539	3,025	2,536	2,024	1,340	12,464	56 %

## WA, English Proficiency, 12-25 year olds

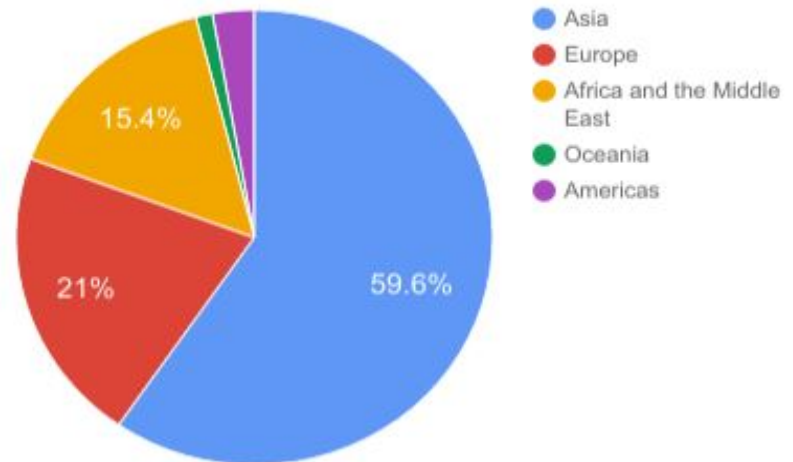
The following table identifies the number of young people, between the ages of 12 and 25 at the time of arriving in Australia, who were settled in Western Australia and their level of assessed English proficiency. The raw data pertaining to the last five years, has been accessed from the Settlement Reporting Facility, and includes all visa classes and migration streams of the Department of Social Services.<sup>8</sup>

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total	Percentage
Nil	136	145	146	141	224	792	7 %
Poor	1,714	1,558	892	316	201	4,681	40 %
Good	63	65	56	37	23	244	2 %
Very Good	1,901	1,292	1,273	1,172	298	5,936	51 %

## Summary of Raw Data

- Australia has settled 929,890 people between 2012 and 2016.
  - Of these, 132,485 or 14% were settled in Western Australia
- 48,765 young people under the age of 25 have been settled in Western Australia since January 1, 2012.
  - This accounts for 37% of all settled people in the state
    - Of those, 55% were below the age of 12
    - A further 31% were over the age of 18 and legally considered an adult
- Both Australia and Western Australia have received a declining intake of young people over the last five years with it reduced by 65% between 2012 and 2016
- The majority of young people settling in Australia are born in Asian countries, with 12,829 settling in WA between 2012 and 2016
  - This represents 59.6% of young people who settled in WA
- Over the last five years, there has consistently been a higher intake of females
  - The number of males in this age bracket has reduced by 71% from 2012 to 2016

**Percentage breakdown of settled young people (12-25) in WA, and their country of birth by region**



- Large numbers of young people are coming to live in WA who have little to no English language capabilities, immediately putting them behind all of their peers.
- It is important to note that the vast majority of migrant and refugee young people are not assessed for English proficiency when settled, which accounts for the low numbers in the table above
  - However, if the rest is indicative of the stats above it means that almost half have poor or nil English proficiency (which is likely an understatement).

# Literature Review

A number of recent reports that have consulted young people directly in relation to settlement outcomes, as well as life generally in Western Australia already exist. For the sake of ensuring their voice is captured, and considered in response to this inquiry, a summary of three such reports have been provided below. Further to this, YACWA and MYAN WA conducted two focus group sessions with young people and settlement services to help inform this submission. Reports reflecting the discussions from those focus groups are included in the attachments, and referenced throughout the report.

## A Catalyst for Change

A Catalyst for Change (**see attachment 6**) is a report formed from the outcomes of a conference held in WA with over 60 young participants from migrant and refugee background from around the state. Held over three days in 2016, the summit provided the opportunity for the young people to set the agenda and lead the conversation around what mattered most to them. This report shares the major findings from the summit. A summary of the issues and discussion attached are provided below:

### Issue 1: Discrimination

- Young people talked about the strong connection between experiences of discrimination and being able to feel a sense of belonging.
- Delegates felt that stereotypes fed into racism, and that both were perpetuated by a range of factors including:
  - A lack of exposure to a mix of races and cultures
  - Segregation of people from different cultural backgrounds
  - Media focus on negative stories of people from certain backgrounds
  - Television programs reinforcing stereotypes of people from multicultural background
  - Parents normalising racist thoughts or beliefs and influencing their children
  - People's inability to recognise their own racism or prejudices
- The young people agreed that positive personal stories are critical and should be used to tackle discrimination. They felt it was important to provide platforms for people from refugee backgrounds to speak about their experiences.

### Issue 2: Access to equal opportunities

- Young people agreed that learning English, or rather the lack of ability to communicate well in English, created significant barriers for them. They felt that there was not enough support provided to help young people learn English.
- They also felt that whilst people were still learning English, there needed to be more interpreters provided, especially when young people were attending medical appointments or seeking help from services, organisations or Government.
- In terms of improving access to education and health services, the group agreed that the solution was for service providers to be more culturally competent, and that they needed training to assist them with this.

### Issue 3: Refugees and asylum seekers

- This team talked about how the media representation of refugee and migrant people was overwhelmingly negative and that there was a lot of misuse of terminology, depersonalisation and demonising of this group of people.
- The young people talked about how community members are mostly uneducated around issues faced by refugee and asylum seekers, and that this gap in education is only filled by misinformation from the media. They felt that the stories of people need to be heard more widely and directly.
- The young people in this team identified a need for mentors to assist newly arrived (and settled) refugee and migrant young people and their families.

### Issue 4: Mental Health

- One of the main issues that came up time and again was the challenge within many multicultural communities of acknowledging that mental health problems exist. They talked about how despite this lack of acknowledgment, mental health is a huge issue and young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds are often especially vulnerable due to their experiences of trauma, displacement and discrimination.
- They felt young people were the key to not only spreading the message to other young people but also upwards, to parents, family and community members.

### Issue 5: Sense of belonging

- Beyond the issues above, one of the main things this team felt prevented young people from developing a sense of belonging was the lack of strong relationships between multicultural communities and mainstream Anglo-Australian communities.
- Young people felt that schools focused very much on English for 'school' and written work, with Intensive English Centre students not mixing with mainstream students and getting little conversational English practice.
- One of the best ways of developing sense of belonging was to create opportunities for connections between people of different backgrounds and cultures.

## Children and Young People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds Speak Out

In 2016, The Western Australian Commissioner for Children and Young People undertook an extensive consultation with a number of young people from a Cultural and Linguistically Diverse background in partnership with YACWA and other community organisations (**see attachment 7**).

A total of 296 children and young people participated in an online survey. Twenty-one interviews were conducted with children and young people by peer leaders. Fifteen survey participants also shared their personal stories as short case studies. Their stories are recorded in the companion publication *'This is Me'*.<sup>9</sup> A summary of answers and key themes from respondents is below.

When asked "How could things be improved?" common ideas raised included:

- More support settling into Australia including practical assistance, advice on the availability of services and access to social activities
- More widespread understanding about cultural difference and more culturally appropriate service delivery
- Assistance with education and learning English.

In response to a question about settling in, children and young people said:

- There were challenges to settling in Australia, but those that had been in Australia for a while said they feel they fit in much better now
- It was important, but sometimes difficult, to learn English and many felt a real sense of achievement when they felt they were able to
- Communicate effectively, but it also impacted on their ability to communicate at home in their first language
- One of the things they find most difficult about being in Australia is being separated from family, particularly if the family members overseas could be exposed to trauma or hardship
- Teachers are more supportive, school more 'fun' and teachers less 'scary'
- Because of the views and expectations of their parents, or the requirements of their culture or religion, they may not be able to do things that other children and young people can, and this can impact their friendships and social activities
- It was important for them to make friends and find people who they can trust and connect with
- A small number said they have found it hard to feel like they belong here because they are seen as different.

## Listening to the voices of young people from refugee & migrant backgrounds in Perth

This Report (**see attachment 8**) provides a summary of a consultation held with over 30 young people aged 14-31 years from refugee and migrant backgrounds in Perth in April 2014. Held at the Mirabooka Multicultural Centre, the consultation was a partnership between MYAN (Australia), MYAN WA, and the City of Stirling.

Questions were designed to elicit young people's perspectives on barriers and facilitators in the settlement journey.

Most participants mentioned recreational activities and structured programs, including leadership programs, school (and school-based programs), and access to English language classes, as important in helping the settlement process.

Participants were specifically asked: "what other things can we do to make it easier for new migrants to settle in Australia?" Their responses included:

- Receiving/attending information sessions on available services and navigating systems (i.e. public transport; health; Centrelink; education; employment; etc.)

- Assistance with bills, rent (living independently in a house)
- Projects/programs/workers - youth leaders, case workers, family support, youth workers, volunteer, sports activities, opportunities to get to know other people
- More activities/opportunities for young people to make friends (with Australian young people and others from different cultures, including Aboriginal young people) & develop skills (e.g. camps, school holiday activities)
- Support them to become a part of the community (e.g. sporting clubs, church/religious organisations, own cultural community)
- Someone to take you to basic places like the shops, teach you about Australia – can be peer or someone older person who is responsible
- Life skills workshops & learning how to be independent (not relying on caseworkers)
- Better cultural awareness – in schools (teachers - teach them about migrants) & opportunities for learning about cultures – e.g. Harmony Day activities, events at school, camps
- Family support, youth workers
- Volunteer opportunities
  - Support–showing us around (Centrelink, bank accounts, hospitals, Medicare, education)
  - Help overcome challenges with new culture e.g. learning about new culture
  - Help with shopping - discount/where to get affordable food

## Response to the Terms of Reference

1. The mix, coordination and extent of settlement services available and the effectiveness of these services in promoting better settlement outcomes for migrants;

The issues young people face when resettling are well documented. Research has been extensively conducted into the issues that emerge at a national level, and a state based level. Several issues young people have raised themselves were outlined above in our literature review.

Further to this, the Focus Group conducted with settlement service providers generally considered that services that addressed barriers to participation were most effective, and funding for these sorts of services needed to be increased in order to provide more care to young people and keep them engaged with education, training and employment opportunities. They acknowledged that although there was still further support that needed to be provided to these communities, that things had gotten slightly better.

Several barriers were explored in relation to Family/Cultural Barriers, Economic and Social Barriers, as well as Support Service barriers in a Western Australian context. The points raised in this discussion are detailed in attachment one. Some points mentioned include:

- Young people feel they have to support their parents, which sometimes takes precedent over themselves or their interests
- A lack of trust is a major barrier to accessing help. Trust needs to be present and takes time to build, which is not always afforded to service delivery.
- Lack of understanding around process and requirements of employment and other procedural matters makes settling difficult
- Transport is difficult for young people who need to get to appointments or to programs
- A lack of ongoing support and consistency creates barriers and reluctance by young people to access help - the need to be able to reengage has to be available

Participants in a separate Focus Group conducted with young people, from a migrant and refugee background, discussed general concerns with the settlement services system, and issues they felt needed to be addressed. These included:

- Young people are often left out in the settlement services sector, as there is nothing in place to help them because they're usually expected to settle into the public school system and Australian way of life.
- The sector does not approach young people in service delivery, which then makes it harder for young people to engage
- Communication, info packs and writing is difficult to understand for young people, and communication is vital to navigating settlement



- Flexibility in service delivery, and [providing services on their terms, is vital to decrease barriers that young people face in accessing services
- Participants expressed frustration at having to tell their stories multiple times to different people

One study conducted by the Australian Catholic University involving 50 interviews with families from a migrant and refugee background, and 98 service provider responses to a survey found that:

'Whilst experiencing significant disadvantages and sometimes complex issues, [migrant and refugee people] were also remarkably resilient and positive. The key issues facing families however, include: the cultural differences in parenting practices and the challenges that these presented; the difficulties children experienced learning to live bi-culturally and the concerns parents had about their children living in a new country. Nearly a third of the families participating experienced multiple and complex issues such as mental and physical health problems, intellectual disability and family violence.'<sup>10</sup>

Navigating the challenges of the services system is not always easy, but the vast majority of young people manage to find a way to balance their own settlement processes, while supporting their family and integrating into the community. In this regard, they demonstrate astounding amounts of strength, resilience and capability.

In Australia, the Settlement Services System as a whole is well regarded nationally and internationally, and in the majority of cases works for young people. However, there are areas in which it could be enhanced to better support peoples navigation through it, by tailoring youth specific service delivery that addresses the barriers young people face.

Young people that contributed to the Catalyst for Change report and Focus Group, identified that a peer-based mentoring program would support the navigation processes. This measure was supported by the settlement services Focus Group.

## 2. National and international best practice strategies for improving migrant settlement outcomes and prospects;

Currently, The National Services Framework (NSF) guides work across all tiers of Government and Community Services Sector in providing settlement services. The NSF provides structures and initiatives to lead to coordinated, client-centric services, informed by research and evaluation.

Whilst the NSF provides a good framework for settlement services generically, it is important to note that young people have additional needs. This is detailed in the following report by Lisa Roberts, who states that:

“CALD children and young people are not homogenous despite often being treated as such. CALD children and young people are a highly diverse group, and the issues and challenges they face may differ depending on: the particular cultural group with which they identify; the number of years they have been in Australia; their pathways both to Australia and once residing in Australia; and the level of community and family support they receive once they are living in Australia. This is particularly the case for those CALD children and young people from a refugee background.”<sup>11</sup>

In addressing this terms of reference, both YACWA and MYAN WA feel strongly that young people require a specific approach to service delivery because of their differentiating needs from adults.

This view was supported in the Focus Group conducted with settlement service providers who identified several core principles, and values, which led to effective service delivery when working with young people from a Migrant and Refugee background. Some of these, which were discussed, included addressing:

- Requirement to be youth specific
- Individual needs assessed and catered for
- Culturally appropriate
- Flexibility in service delivery
- One on one support and case management
- Strong collaboration to create links to other supports
- Language appropriate - Bilingual workers work well
- Outreach is important
- Trust is crucial in any service delivery, and an element of building trust
- Consistent and ongoing care

One such way to address these issues, is to implement MYAN Australia’s National Youth Settlement Framework. The National Youth Settlement Framework identifies a specific approach to providing settlement services for young people. It defines a good settlement outcome as a young person from a migrant and refugee background becoming an active citizen. To achieve this, it puts forward four domains, which lead to active citizenship, and the service delivery requirements that underpin it.

These service delivery requirements are defined as Good Practice Capabilities, and in that regard act as

indicators of best practice. These capabilities (listed below) identify the gaps from consultation throughout the document. These include:

- Cultural competency
- Youth centred and strengths based
- Youth Development and participation
- Trauma informed
- Family-aware
- Flexibility and responsiveness
- Collaboration
- Advocacy

Incorporating these good practice capabilities into planning, development and purchasing of settlement services as best practice indicators, as well as using the NYSF to evaluate current effectiveness of settlement services would be of benefit. Further to this, adding a code of ethics would support work in this area, as well as a peer based mentoring program at a state based level.

It is further worth noting, that the successful settlement of refugees and migrants is a two-way process, requiring active commitment both by new arrivals and also by the Australian community. Negative experiences such as racism and discrimination can have a devastating impact on individuals and their chances of achieving a successful settlement in Australia. Strategies that can address this not only within the settlement services sector, but more widely, greatly enhance the successful settlement of migrants and refugees.

### 3. The importance of English language ability on a migrant's, or prospective migrant's, settlement outcome;

The importance of English proficiency is crucial in the settlement outcome of any person. It is widely agreed by consultations, research reports, and personal experiences.

One focus group member stated that: "Young people I work with share that they view having English proficiency as one of the most important elements to positive settlement outcomes, as without an adequate level of English, they are unable to get a job."

Young people need access to targeted and appropriate English language learning, including a range of models responsive to age and proficiency to ensure engagement and facilitate transitions to training, higher education and employment. Australia has many examples of this being delivered well, however, both MYAN WA and YACWA believe some targeted policy adjustments could improve outcomes in this area.

Young people generally acquire new languages quite rapidly and are more likely to eventually be more adept at using English than older migrants, notwithstanding the short-term challenges many young people face due to their pre-migration experiences.<sup>12</sup>

The young participants of the Focus Group agreed, and stated very clearly that:

- There is not enough time for new arrivals to learn English
- There are different levels of knowledge/ability to learn that are not catered for
- Classes are not age specific the elderly are usually left out and feel inadequate in comparison to younger new arrivals that learn quicker.
- Classes don't include enough relevant content.

On the last point, when young participants were asked to rate their experience and usefulness of the English courses out of ten, they agreed on a score of four. They stated that the training is too formal and not useful and could be more efficient in the way it is delivered as well as its content. They would like to see:

- The current teachings explore colloquialisms, Symbolism, values, slang, conversation, politeness, and pronunciation.
- Organised events and ongoing opportunities to practice English, with wider family included.
- A bigger emphasis on the importance of learning the English language
- Gender/age separation as a way of creating community with peers
- People paid to hold informed conversations to practice
- Stronger focus on parents learning English to reduce the need for children to act as interpreters

It was further stated by the Focus Group with settlement service providers that a lack of bilingual support workers and translators makes it hard to communicate and understand what is going on, particularly in relation to health, mental health, finances, and other individual matters that require support.

In this regard, if a child or young person achieves a higher level of English proficiency, they often act as interpreters for their parents. Some children and young people even miss school in order to do this, which sees them completing tasks at a young age that most children wouldn't - for example: paying bills, liaising with a bank, reading contracts and other issues. Also, this is often seen as a priority over attending school meaning that the young person begins to fall behind. In this regard, providing more bi-lingual support workers and translators would be welcomed.

All of these points were raised consistently through our consultation, as well as the literature review of previous consultations.

#### 4. Whether current migration processes adequately assess a prospective migrant's settlement prospects; and

Existing migration processes include a robust array of checks and balances designed to ensure that newly arrived migrants and refugees meet public interest criteria. There is no evidence to indicate that these need to be strengthened or, as far as we have seen, that provide clear evidence of a pattern of character traits that are something we could screen for.

The Focus Group with settlement services expressed concern at the undertones of this particular element of the terms of reference and some of the rhetoric that has been coming through the media. There was concern held amongst the group that further screening people to determine whether or not they would be able to migrate and settle successfully was problematic and impracticable.

Participants expressed very clearly that you couldn't predict how somebody's settlement would eventuate.

While investment in young people and the services and supports they need in settlement are critical, equally essential are efforts to facilitate sense of belonging, identity and the capacity to plan for the future.

Societal level barriers to settlement for young people, including poor access to education and training, unemployment, and racism and discrimination, have an equal impact on social marginalisation and disengagement as any settlement service or migration intake test.

Further to the points raised above, YACWA and MYAN WA would like to state clearly that the use of pre-migration English speaking capacity to screen for potential settlement outcomes is not supported by either organisation, or any reputable research, and risks a return to a "White Australia" style policy setting that would undermine the non-discriminatory approach of Australia's Migration Programme – and potentially diminish broader commitment to social cohesion.

## 5. Any other related matter.

### **Deportation of Young People**

In responding to this element of the Terms of Reference, both YACWA and MYAN WA must express concern in regard to recent comments made by the Minister for Immigration, Peter Dutton, when he recently stated in relation to the Apex gang in Victoria, that:

"It's very difficult to deport children and this is one of the things that Jason Wood's committee is having a look at, whether, for example, the bar can be lowered from 18 to 17 or 16,"<sup>13</sup>

Both YACWA and MYAN WA unequivocally oppose the deportation of young people under the age of 18 as a punitive measure.

Further to Mr Dutton's comments, Mr Wood, chair of the migration committee, stated in parliament on the 7th of February:

"The Apex gang has led the wave of youth gang violence in Victoria. I am proposing a number of measures. First, a 'one strike and you're out' policy for those who are on visas and who commit serious, violent gang-related crimes such as home invasion, carjacking and serious assault, and are sentenced to any term of imprisonment. Also, I propose that the immigration minister should have the capacity to issue warning notices and increase citizenship waiting times from four to 10 years for those who commit crimes which are not of a serious, violent nature."<sup>14</sup>

In Western Australia, there is a lack of specific data pertaining to the involvement of young people in settlement services being extensively represented in criminal matters or gang activity. It is not something that is considered widely as a prominent issue, particularly in the context of other difficulties young migrant and refugee people face, or in comparison to their peers.

The risk factors that are known to increase young people's vulnerability to anti-social and criminal behaviour are shared across all young Australian's regardless of ethnicity, cultural background or length of time in Australia.

Youth disengagement and marginalisation is about broader social cohesion and how we support the participation and engagement of all young people to be active participants in and contributors to Australian society. It is about how we build a society where all young people feel they belong and can contribute, and where Government and community play critical roles in:

- (i) removing the barriers that prevent active citizenship and
- (ii) implementing the activities that support it.

Framing an issue in terms of ethnicity (or race or culture or religion) is highly problematic and undermines Australia's efforts and successes as a diverse, multicultural and socially cohesive society. It further undermines a sense of belonging among already marginalised young people – a factor critical to a socially cohesive, harmonious society.

Further, research that specifically looks at anti-gang strategies and interventions indicates that:

“A realistic, meaningful and humane response to the issues surrounding young people, gangs and group violence would have to be built upon interrelated policies which acknowledge and attempt to transcend the unequal distribution of power and resources in current socio-structural arrangements.”

“The moral panic about ethnic youth crime puts emphasis on the causes of crime as cultural. Such an emphasis puts at risk the ability of policy responses to deal adequately with the issue. As we have outlined in this chapter, the policy responses to youth crime must be very broad in scope. They cover policies related to socio-economic disadvantage, including the rebuilding of, and reinvestment in, disadvantaged neighbourhoods. They include policies related to improving the educational outcomes of youth at risk and of improving the link between school and the labour market – the school to work transition – for disadvantaged youth. Other policies related to greater investment in public infrastructure around public transport and public spaces are also required. Key here is the provision in urban planning, including the development of shopping malls, of space for youth to gather and to conduct leisure, sport and recreation.”<sup>15</sup>

Certainly in a Western Australian Context, a broader approach in a preventative and early intervention method by addressing issues raised in response to terms of reference 1 and 2 would be welcomed. We have a responsibility to support youth of all backgrounds in this way.

In assessing the comments, feedback from consultation, and research, both YACWA and MYAN WA hold significant concern for such a broad approach nationally, and in assessing any changes in a Western Australian context, point out particular concerns in relation to:

- Harm caused of any child deported without additional safeguards and protections
- Concern that a very small group of people outside of WA will lead to punishment of others
- Prevention approach should be prioritized ahead of a punitive approach
- The lack of national need identified for this national policy measure
- Such a policy measures relation to human rights, particularly in light of the fact that WA does not have a Human Rights Charter.

## Education

The Focus Group held with Settlement Services saw education as vital in supporting a young person in settling into the community, and preventing anti-social behaviour. However, participants expressed some concerns about the education system not working for current young people from a migrant and refugee background. Some problems identified included:

- Insufficient education and language support in the critical transition period to mainstream school, where many have had prior interrupted education; insufficient time in the Intensive English Centre for students that are not ready to transition to mainstream (strict two-year cut off)
- Teachers not being adequately resourced to assist students
- Suspensions; young people's being suspended from school but their needs not being addressed
- Education not being seen as a priority by some families for cultural reasons, as well as higher importance on supporting family first



- WACE certificates requiring English competency and not all young people from this background being able to obtain it in the time frame provided within IECs and then mainstream schooling
- Inability to obtain a university degree when the ambition and drive is there, but young people are unable due to lack of support in this specific area
- The lack of recognition that this is a diverse group of young people, and a diverse approach needed - there is no one size to fit all
- Age restrictions mean that older young people over the age of 18 cannot go back to school, even if they have little to no background in an education setting and TAFE Certificates in General Education are often too advanced for such young people

Further to this, it was stated by participants that participation teams currently placed in the state school system to support young people who are disengaging, are stretched and at capacity. Also, that in the experience of participants, there was confusion and low success rates with Job Active and Transition to work. It was further noted that Youth Connections worked well, but is now not resourced.

# Attachments

1. Focus Group Discussion: Settlement Services
2. Focus Group Discussion: Young People
3. YACWA Background Paper
4. Template to encourage individual submissions
5. National Youth Settlement Framework
6. Catalyst Speak Out For Change Report
7. Children and Young People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds Speak Out
8. Listening to the voices of young people from refugee & migrant backgrounds in Perth

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