



ENGAGING OUR YOUTH:

OUR FUTURE

A Report on the Victorian Multicultural Commission
Forums for Young People 2014-2015

FOREWORD

“We are committed to harnessing the potential of young people as the future leaders of our wonderfully diverse community.”

As guardians of the future, young people have enormous potential to support a cohesive society in which every Victorian feels they belong.

Eager to capture their voices, the Victorian Multicultural Commission facilitated 10 forums for young people aged 16-25 years between December 2014 and June 2015. By creating a safe and fun environment for them to express their thoughts, opinions and ideas, we were able to truly listen and begin to understand life from their perspective.

I am extremely proud to present the findings of these forums in this report and feel encouraged by the strong investment that these young people have made in their future.

Conducted by the Commission's Research and Coordination team, the forums were specifically targeted toward young Victorians with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and held across the state to ensure young people from both metropolitan and regional areas could participate. This included three regional forums in Morwell, Ballarat and Shepparton, plus two exclusively for young women in Dandenong and Sunshine, and two for young Muslims in Broadmeadows and Truganina.

The forums explored four topics that contribute to greater unity - employment, leadership and advocacy, discrimination and bias, and, marginalisation and belonging. These topics were identified through the Commission's Regional Advisory Council meetings, previous research and community consultations.

Participants expressed their opinions on the issues that mattered most to them, and shared significant insights into how they believed these issues could be overcome. I would personally like to thank each participant for their time and importantly, for their enthusiasm for social change.

Engaging Our Youth: Our Future is the first in a suite of three reports on the findings of community consultations held by the Commission in 2014-15. Reports on our forums for service providers and women will follow.

The Commission is committed to working closely with Victoria's multicultural communities to achieve social unity and cohesion. We look forward to engaging more with young people from diverse backgrounds to help their voices be heard, to capture their ideas for lasting change and to harness their potential as the future leaders of Victoria.



Helen Kapalos

Chairperson, Victorian Multicultural Commission

CONTENTS

List of Tables	6
List of Figures	6
Glossary and Abbreviations	7
1. Executive Summary	11
1.1. Engaging Our Youth Our Future	12
1.2. Key Findings and Recommendations	13
2. Introduction	19
2.1. Multicultural Forums for Young People	20
2.2. Engaging Our Youth Our Future	20
2.2.1. Context	22
2.2.2. Multiculturalism	23
2.3. Contemporary Social Conditions	25
3. Leadership and Advocacy	29
3.1. Overview	30
3.2. Discussion	31
3.3. The Qualities of a Good Leader	32
3.4. Emerging Themes	34
3.5. Key Findings and Recommendations	35
3.6. Supplementary Resources	39

4. Marginalisation and Belonging	43
4.1. Overview	44
4.2. Discussion	44
4.3. Sense of Belonging	46
4.4. Emerging Themes	49
4.5. Key Findings and Recommendations	50
4.6. Supplementary Resources	55
5. Employment	59
5.1. Overview	60
5.2. Discussion	61
5.3. Challenges and Barriers to Entering the Labour Force	64
5.4. Emerging Themes	68
5.5. Key Findings and Recommendations	70
5.6. Supplementary Resources	76
6. Discrimination and Bias	81
6.1. Overview	82
6.2. Discussion	83
6.3. Experience and Circumstances of Discrimination	85
6.4. Emerging Themes	89
6.5. Key Themes and Recommendations	89
6.6. Supplementary Resources	94
References	96
Appendix 1	100
Appendix 2	101

List of Tables

Table 1: VMC Multicultural Forums for Young People 2014-2015 – Topics and Locations	11
Table 2: VMC Forum Topics And Social Cohesion	24
Table 3: VMC Multicultural Forums For Young People – Leadership Qualities	33
Table 4: The Ideal Community	47
Table 5: Experience and Circumstances of Discrimination and Bias	86

List of Figures

Figure 1 – Socioeconomic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA)	22
Figure 2 – Leadership and Advocacy - Key Themes	35
Figure 3 – Marginalisation and Belonging - Key Themes	50
Figure 4 – Average Monthly Youth Unemployment Rate, Victorian Regions	63
Figure 5 – Average Monthly Youth Unemployment Rate, Rest of Victoria	63
Figure 6 – Extracted <i>Muslims Australia</i> , Australian Federation of Islamic Councils Inc, Issue 16; Jan 2015	64
Figure 7 – Employment – Key Themes	69
Figure 8 – OECD, Key Elements for Successful Strategies to activate Inclusive Labour Markets	70
Figure 9 – Social Exclusion	82
Figure 10 – Discrimination and Bias – Key Themes	89
Figure 11 – What is culture?	90

GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
AHRC	Australian Human Rights Commission
ATO	Australian Taxation Office
BSL	Brotherhood of St Laurence
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CMY	Centre for Multicultural Youth
DET	Department of Education and Training
EAL	English as an Additional Language
FECCA	Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia
FIFO	Fly in/Fly out workers
GFC	Global Financial Crisis (2008)
HILDA	Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey, Melbourne Institute, University of Melbourne
LGA	Local government authority
METRO WEST	Metro West refers to the first VMC Multicultural Forum for Young People in December 2014, with participants from Flemington/Footscray and surrounds.
MOU	Memorandum of understanding
NEC	New and emerging communities
NEET	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
NESB	Non-English Speaking Background
NGO	Non-government organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OMAC	Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas - Australian Bureau of Statistics product that ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage.
TFN	Tax file number
VAGO	Victorian Auditor-General's Office
VCAL	Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VEOHRC	Victorian Equal Opportunities and Human Rights Commission
VMC	Victorian Multicultural Commission
WELS	Western English Language School, Melbourne
WHO	World Health Organisation
WOVG	Whole-of-Victorian-Government

The VMC has adopted the following concept understandings for this report.

MULTICULTURALISM

The Australian notion of multiculturalism encompasses government measures designed to respond to the nation's cultural and ethnic diversity. It values cultural diversity, and enables people to practice their culture free of discrimination.¹

PRECARITY

Literally refers to those who experience precariousness, conjuring up life worlds inflected with uncertainty and instability.² A term predominantly used in Europe to refer to changed labour market conditions, especially post-GFC and the liberalisation of temporary, part-time and training contracts, and generally associated with unstable labour market attachment.

Also a general term used to describe more precarious forms of employment such as under-employment, and intermittent income, including the risk of social exclusion (and resultant loss of social capital) related to low socio-economic conditions (low income or welfare benefit, high cost of living, etc.).³

SOCIAL COHESION

According to Jensen (1998) social cohesion includes domains of belonging, inclusion, participation, recognition, and legitimacy.

The Scanlon Foundation approach, influenced by the work of Jane Jenson and Paul Bernard, incorporated similar domains of belonging, social justice and equity, participation, acceptance and legitimacy, and worth.⁴

The topics employed for the VMC Multicultural Forums for Young People were designed to be compatible with these domains and for the sake of formulating workshop discussion questions, were grouped under the following headings:-

- leadership and advocacy;
- employment;
- discrimination and bias; and
- marginalisation and belonging.⁵

1 Australian Government, Department of Social Services, 2015.

2 Waite, 2009.

3 Antonucci, Hamilton, & Roberts, 2014.

4 Markus, 2014.

5 To see how these topics align with the social cohesion domains please refer to Table 3. P.20

VMC Multicultural Forum for
Young Women, Dandenong, 2015.



1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report was developed to communicate the ideas and views of young people who participated in the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) Multicultural Forums for Young People conducted from December 2014 to June 2015. A total of ten forums were held at metropolitan and regional locations – Metro West (Flemington/Footscray), Mill Park, Morwell, Ballarat, Shepparton, Dandenong, Broadmeadows, Truganina, Sunshine and Carrum Downs.

An initiative of the VMC, the Multicultural Forums for Young People were conducted as community consultations and engaged young people aged 16-25 years from diverse backgrounds. The VMC conducts regular systematic and wide-ranging consultations to determine the needs of Victoria's diverse communities in accordance with the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2011* (s.8).

1.1 Engaging Our Youth Our Future

The overarching theme for the consultations with young people was *Strengthening Social Cohesion – Engaging Our Youth Our Future*. This theme set the context for workshop style discussions on the following topics:

- Leadership and Advocacy;
- Marginalisation and Belonging;
- Employment; and
- Discrimination and Bias.

Social cohesion is acknowledged as a multidimensional concept and each VMC discussion topic related directly to the factors that contribute to or disrupt social cohesion.⁶ Social cohesion, together with the ability to influence local environments, are also key determinants of health.⁷ This relates to adverse life experiences which impact on a persons' ability to feel accepted. Discrimination and marginalisation can result in negative consequences that affect health and wellbeing, socialisation and economic participation.

The VMC findings therefore, further inform the general discourse about social cohesion, as it relates to young people from diverse backgrounds, and provide some signposts for intervention. This was a key aim of the consultations; the need to hear from young people directly about the issues they face, together with their suggestions and ideas for early intervention, and the strategies that would help them. The recommendations have been formulated around the findings and their ideas, and are offered as opportunities for all levels of government, non-government organisations (NGOs) and community organisations to action.

The forums found that young people are thinking broadly about the issues they face such as developing their identity, finding representation in diverse communities, acquiring a sense of belonging and making the transition from formal education to employment. The young people who attended the forums provided useful and informed views, and gave generously of their time to inform the government about the issues that they face in the community, including resettlement issues.

6 Dandy & Pe-Pua, 2013.

7 Wilkinson & Marmot, 2005.

1.2 Key Findings and Recommendations

All information gathered at the forums was duly collated and analysed. This section contains the key findings and recommendations, which are informed by participants' ideas and observations. Recommendations 2 and 17 have been formulated verbatim from participants' own statements.

The key findings and recommendations that follow are not in order of priority but grouped in accordance with the forum discussion topics. The recommendations are truncated here for the sake of brevity. Please refer to the appropriate section for the full wording. Most of these recommendations are also further informed with suggestions about how they could be actioned.

LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY

CONSULTATION

Young people seek opportunities for civic engagement; participants appreciated the opportunity, provided by the VMC, to engage in conversations with other young people from diverse backgrounds about issues that were important to them.

Recommendation 1

Include Young People from diverse backgrounds and facilitate their civic engagement.

PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS

The VMC identified the importance of ensuring that young people from diverse communities have opportunities to be mentored and to learn leadership skills.

Recommendation 2

“Commit to young people (from diverse backgrounds) and believe in the capacity of young people, support them, involve them.”

INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS

Participants advised the VMC that their elders (parents, teachers, community leaders) do not listen to what they have to say and lack understanding of the environments in which they have to live their lives and make decisions about their futures.

Recommendation 3

Facilitate intergenerational relationship building through programs that bring community leaders and young people together.

REPRESENTATION

Young people from diverse backgrounds want and actively seek opportunities to engage, to be heard, and to 'have a voice' in the shaping of public discourse about the things that matter to them and affect their lives.

Recommendation 4

Include opportunities for young people from diverse backgrounds to apply and participate when formulating committees and advisory groups, including as a Whole-of-Victorian government initiative, to ensure that a broad representation of young people from diverse backgrounds is facilitated across government.

MARGINALISATION AND BELONGING

UNDERSTANDING AND INCLUSION

Participants made suggestions to promote wider understanding and inclusion; these related to multiculturalism, and the need for greater intercultural understanding that they told the VMC would help them to feel more included.

Recommendation 5

Promote multiculturalism through inclusive events and public community occasions which foster greater social participation and advance intercultural understanding.

Recommendation 6

Government departments such as Education, Health and Human Services, Economic Development and Tourism be encouraged to further promote multiculturalism under a Whole-of-Victorian-Government approach that celebrates diversity and promotes intercultural understanding.

TRUST AND EQUALITY

Stereotyping was raised regularly in discussions where forum participants told the VMC that they felt the onus was on them to prove themselves as trustworthy individuals. Participants also used the term 'stereotype', when actually what they described was racial profiling. Trust and equality also related to perceptions of what participants' deemed to be 'socially just', and instances of stereotyping and racial profiling were deemed unjust. This recommendation seeks to build a shared sense of belonging.

Recommendation 7

Seek to engage young people from diverse backgrounds through different participatory methods. This includes via sporting groups, community groups, youth service providers (including local government programs), schools and universities.

IDENTITY AND SUPPORT

Developing identity was a strong theme, raised at all VMC forums, and related directly to seeking a 'place of acceptance'. This included the need for strong support mechanisms, that included system support for parents; participants moreover raised the value of public multicultural events that reflect an openness and general 'invitation to belong'.

Recommendation 8

Support young people to develop their identity in safe and secure environments.

EMPLOYMENT

HIRING PRACTICES

Participants related their experiences of discrimination in employment situations to the VMC. This included instances of younger teenagers being employed in preference to older teenagers due to age-related pay scales, and instances of discriminatory hiring practices due to ethnic names or appearance.

Recommendation 9

That the VMC brings this information, provided by forum participants in relation to discrimination in hiring practices, to the attention of the Victorian Equal Opportunities and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC).

CAREER GUIDANCE

Career guidance was the number one idea for a helpful program, consistent at all forums. Ideas included advice about programs that included employment pathways, as well as 'different streams' - careers advice as a consistent and recurring engagement process, not a one-off token session. Career guidance needs applied at all stages and participants highlighted the importance and benefits of also including information for their parents (translated materials, sessions with interpreters, etc.).

Recommendation 10

That the Department of Education and Training consider early investment in the potential of young people from diverse backgrounds to enable them to participate fully and equitably with mainstream students who have been in the system for longer.

LIMITED OPPORTUNITIES

This related to depressed youth labour markets, the lack of entry-level jobs for young people, and career constraints posed by poor English language ability, and discriminatory hiring practices.

Recommendation 11

Develop a Whole-of-Victorian Government approach to career guidance that seeks to encompass the many and varied careers and opportunities that can be pursued by young people from diverse backgrounds, and make this information widely available through translated materials, storyboards and on Government Department websites.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Overwhelmingly participants cited lack of prior Australian work experience as a barrier to gaining interviews from prospective employers. Prior work experience was also seen as a way to circumvent discriminatory hiring practices, because this demonstrated skills and English language competence.

NETWORKS

When asked 'who could help you' to find work, participants often raised the value of networks. Rural communities at Morwell, Ballarat and Shepparton faced the greatest difficulty in this regard, but cited the enormous value of the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) program 'Journey to Work' in assisting with building access to networks.

QUALIFICATIONS

Although this arose as a key theme, discussed in terms of challenges and opportunities, it rated low overall. However, most participants were working towards gaining a qualification - either still at school, or at university. It cannot be assumed then, that the low rating relates to the value of having a qualification.

Recommendation 12

Instruct young people on how to develop networks and facilitate their work experience, including through volunteering in the local community and internships.

LANGUAGE BARRIERS

Language barriers arose as a key theme, although it also rated quite low. However, the age cohort of participants were from a broad mix of backgrounds, including some for whom English language was a real and pertinent issue, while others were born in Australia and fluent. For English as an Additional Language (EAL) students and new arrivals it was a real and pertinent barrier to social inclusion.

Recommendation 13

Strengthen access to out of school learning for students from diverse backgrounds to improve English language skills.

Coordinate homework programs to ensure that all Victorian high schools have information about providers working in the local area.

TRANSPORT

For many young people from CALD backgrounds public transport was a key barrier or facilitator of accessing local labour markets. This was especially so in rural environments, being raised at Morwell, Ballarat and Shepparton.

Recommendation 14

That the VMC brings this information, provided by forum participants in relation to public transport, to the attention of Public Transport Victoria and local bus services, and advocates for accessible information about services.

The VMC could also consider collaborating with public transport user groups for local services that meet the needs of CALD and NEC communities.

DISCRIMINATION AND BIAS

CULTURAL AWARENESS

Young people from diverse backgrounds overwhelmingly cited the need for cultural awareness, in all manner of settings; education settings, sporting activities, on public transport, in local communities, and workplaces. This was also associated with levels of trust, and related strongly to both media and the promotion of multiculturalism.

Recommendation 15

Promote intercultural understanding by facilitating cross-cultural engagements that foster mutual understandings, develop knowledge of the cultural makeup of local communities, and demonstrate that difference is valued.

MEDIA REPRESENTATION

Young people told the VMC how negative media representations impacted upon them. They suggested that these representations add to 'stereotyping' or 'racial profiling' incidents which they encountered, and which in most instances they perceived as unprovoked and unwarranted.

Recommendation 16

The VMC to seek greater engagement in informing public discourse on multiculturalism by providing timely and informed comment on matters of social cohesion and cultural importance.

PROMOTE MULTICULTURALISM

Participants appreciated the need to actively and consistently promote multiculturalism, noting that it would help all cultures, mainstream communities and community subsets, to feel included, more welcome and more accepted.

Recommendation 17

"More needs to be done about bringing people together, and to provide opportunities to meet people from other cultures."



2

INTRODUCTION

2.1. Multicultural Forums for Young People

During the period December 2014 to June 2015, the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) undertook a series of conversations with young people from diverse backgrounds, aged 16-25 years. The VMC also sought to engage collaboratively with a variety of organisations, to ensure that a broad range of young people were consulted, including from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB) and multicultural communities. Participating organisations included the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY), the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV), and local government authorities (the Cities of Greater Dandenong, Brimbank, Greater Shepparton, Whittlesea, Frankston and Ballarat), as well as other Victorian Government Departments.⁸

Operating under the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2011* (the Act), the VMC is the voice of Victoria's CALD communities and is the main link between them and the government. The VMC provides independent advice on multicultural affairs to inform legislative and policy frameworks, and service delivery to multicultural communities.

In addition to community forums, the VMC conducts regular consultations through its network of Regional Advisory Councils (RACs). At RAC meetings, members provide the VMC with a regular flow of information about matters affecting local multicultural communities across Victoria, including new and emerging communities (NEC). Ensuring multicultural communities are regularly consulted allows the VMC to be informed on all new and emerging issues that relate to policy and service delivery matters.

A key function of the VMC is to provide honest and candid advice to the government on multicultural affairs and citizenship in Victoria. In order to fulfil this function the VMC Research and Policy Unit analyses the information gathered through state-wide community consultations and RAC meetings, and provides research advice to the Minister for Multicultural Affairs regarding Victoria's multicultural communities and their needs.

“The strengths of the VMC consultations were the solutions-focused questions and the consensus decision-making.”

Brimbank Youth Services, Sunshine, 2015

2.2. Engaging Our Youth Our Future

An initiative of the VMC, the Multicultural Forums for Young People (the forums) were conducted as community consultations, designed to engage young people aged 16-25 years. Community consultations are a function of the VMC under the Act, which requires the VMC to conduct systematic and wide-ranging consultations with bodies and people to determine the needs of Victoria's diverse community (s.8). A key aim of the forums was to hear directly from young people from diverse backgrounds, about their lives, experiences, and future aspirations.

While in many respects young people from CALD backgrounds share similar challenges to mainstream groups, there is also a range of issues more specific to the CALD cohort that may place some of these young people at increased risk of personal, social and economic disadvantage.⁹ This report provides detailed findings of the challenges that face young people from multicultural backgrounds as they navigate transitions to full adulthood in Victoria.

Their experiences, of navigating risk in relation to educational trajectories, potential labour market insecurity, exposure to radicalisation, and marginalisation have become increasingly relevant in the media and in policy debates.¹⁰ Thus, the VMC sought to gain data that would inform policy instruments, to potentially mitigate some of the issues they face, informed by young people's own suggestions and ideas.

The young people who attended the forums provided useful and informed viewpoints, and gave generously of their time to inform the government about the issues that they face in the community, including education, work and resettlement issues.

8 The Office for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship (OMAC), the Office for Youth, Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Education and Training (DET).

9 Office of Multicultural Interests, 2009.

10 Antonucci, Hamilton, & Roberts, 2014.

The VMC Multicultural Forums for Young People were conducted as interactive workshops. During small group discussions, young people selected the topics that were of most interest to them.

The overarching theme for the consultations was “*Social Cohesion – Engaging Our Youth Our Future*”. The theme was broken down into four conversation topics, each with its own set of discussion questions.¹¹ Each forum discussed exactly the same questions, and participants self-selected from the forum as below.

Table 1: VMC Multicultural Forums for Young People 2014-2015 – Topics and Locations
“Social Cohesion – Engaging Our Youth Our Future”

FORUM TOPICS	FORUM TYPE	2014	2015
Leadership and Advocacy	Mixed Forums	Metro West	Ballarat
Marginalisation and Belonging		Mill Park	Shepparton
Employment (and transitions)		Morwell	Carrum Downs
Discrimination and Bias	Young Muslims		Broadmeadows
			Truganina
	Young Women Only		Dandenong
			Sunshine

Three mixed forums (young men and young women) were conducted in December 2014 at Metro West (Flemington/Footscray), Mill Park and Morwell. Between February and June 2015, seven further forums were conducted, including a further three mixed forums, two forums for young Muslim men and women, and two forums for young women only as **Table 1** above.

The forums were held in locations with diverse populations. Many of those areas also correlate with lower socioeconomic status, and are locations where recent migrants often settle, due to better housing affordability. The Commonwealth confirms that, while the majority of humanitarian settlement occurs in metropolitan areas, many humanitarian entrants have successfully settled in regional communities or have subsequently moved to regional locations.¹² The regional areas that the VMC visited are also adapting to demographic changes as newer migrants choose to settle there.

In some of the regions, local communities may be struggling to adapt to these demographic changes, especially in terms of providing services to new and emerging communities (NEC), within the health, education, housing and employment sectors. Socially, this can also prove challenging, such as in being able to provide informal community support through established ethnic specific community groups.¹³

Figure 1 following page, illustrates the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) rankings of the locations for the forums. The index ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage, based on information from the five-yearly Census. There are 1,516 areas ranked by the index within Victoria. The SEIFA percent ranking rates the suburbs from most disadvantaged to least disadvantaged. In other words the suburb of Broadmeadows is among the most disadvantaged 1% of suburbs in Victoria, whereas Mill Park, illustrates a higher level of advantage at 48%.

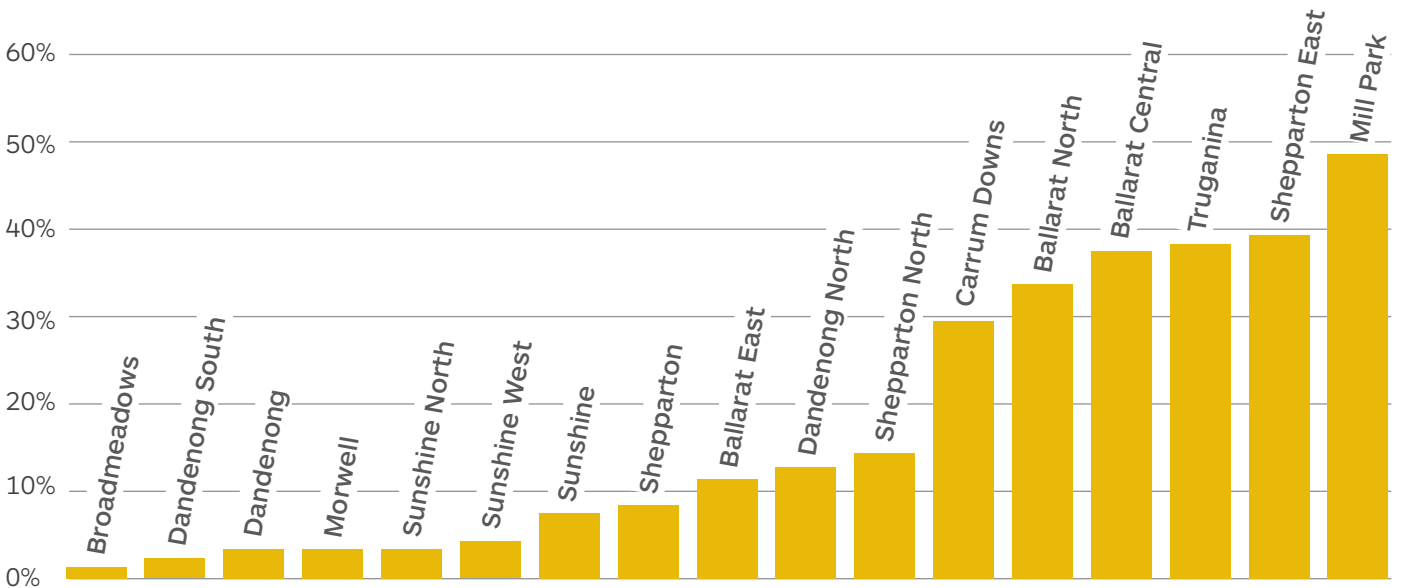
11 For the full set of questions see Appendix 1.

12 Department of Social Services, retrieved 18 September 2015: <https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/settlement-and-multicultural-affairs/programs-policy/settlement-services/humanitarian-settlement-services-hss>

13 The Regional Australia Institute, 2015.

Figure 1 – Socioeconomic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA)

SEIFA Percent Ranking



The young people who engaged with the VMC came from diverse backgrounds and communities including second and third generation migrants, recent migrants, humanitarian refugees, asylum seekers and young people with refugee ancestry.¹⁴

Overall the VMC spoke with a broad representation of young people that included the following backgrounds:-

- Arabic, Asian, African (Metro West, Broadmeadows, Truganina);
- Sri Lankan, Iraqi, Irish (Mill Park, Morwell, Ballarat, Shepparton);
- Sudanese, Somali, Pakistani (Metro West, Morwell, Dandenong);
- Indian, Nepalese, Iranian, Congolese (Shepparton, Ballarat, Dandenong); and
- Pacific Islanders (Sunshine, Carrum Downs).

2.2.1. Context

The forums were designed to empower young people from CALD backgrounds, and provide them with opportunities to share their views and ideas. Youth policy literature refers to changed policy landscapes, that have resulted in heightened complexity and an urgency related to young people’s needs generally.¹⁵ For example, the life-course phase of ‘youth’ challenges the assumptions that underpin traditional age-related divisions between dependent and independent individuals. This means that many young people face a complex period of semi-dependence, or states of fluctuating dependency.¹⁶

The ‘youth’ phase is also far from being a homogenised experience. The social and material circumstances of young Victorians varies considerably, perhaps most notably for many young people from CALD backgrounds, in terms of household incomes. In addition, over the past two years in Victoria youth unemployment has been rising. Some of the worst youth unemployment hot spots in Australia are located in Victoria. The overall unemployment rate for Victoria is 6.5%.¹⁷ However, youth unemployment in Hume (including Goulburn Valley, Wodonga, and Wangaratta) is currently 17.5%.¹⁸

14 Having at least one parent from a refugee background.

15 Antonucci, Hamilton, & Roberts, 2014.

16 Coles, 1995.

17 Australian Government Department of Employment, 2015.

18 Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015.

While, for many young Victorians, family support can play a strong role in preventing deprivation, many young people from CALD backgrounds, and most especially those of refugee ancestry and asylum seekers, may not be able to rely on family support to safeguard them against the risks they face. The goal of the VMC forums therefore was to hear about the challenges and difficulties these young people face in order to fulfil our role under the Act, and provide evidence based advice to the Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship in accordance with our statutory role.

“I had a lot of fun and met great people.”

Participant, Dandenong, March 2015

2.2.2. Multiculturalism

Australia's commitment to multiculturalism emphasises the need to affirm diversity, in accordance with the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified in Australia in November 1980.¹⁹ Although the multicultural policy framework is relatively recent, and Australia has been described as having “a history of exclusion”, Australian identity has always been diverse. Indeed Marion Dixson (1999), argued that it encompasses at least three central groups: Aboriginal Australian identities; an Anglo-Celtic “core”; and the identities of “new Australians”.²⁰

As a national policy, multiculturalism encompasses government measures designed to respond to the cultural and ethnic diversity of contemporary Australia. Multiculturalism is an approach to acculturation that values cultural diversity, enabling people to practice their culture free of discrimination. It is not assimilation which is based on the belief that ethnic groups should ‘blend in with the mainstream culture’.

The Commonwealth has identified three dimensions of multicultural policy.²¹

Cultural Identity:

the right to express and share cultural heritage, including language and religion;

Social Justice:

the right to equality of treatment and opportunity, and the removal of barriers of race, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, gender or place of birth; and

Economic Efficiency:

the need to maintain, develop and utilise effectively the skills and talents of all Australians, regardless of background.

The Victorian Government is committed to facilitating a Whole-of-Victorian-Government (WOVG) approach to multicultural affairs by ensuring that the needs of Victoria's CALD communities are conveyed to the relevant bodies and that Government is kept abreast of community concerns. The VMC fulfils this role, under the Act.

The Multicultural Victoria Act 2011 recognises that all Victorians come from diverse backgrounds, and values the richness that such diversity brings to the Victorian community. The principles of multiculturalism, under the Act, recognise that all individuals in Victoria (s.4):-

- are entitled to mutual respect and understanding regardless of their diverse backgrounds;
- are equally entitled to access opportunities and participate in and contribute to the social, cultural, economic and political life of the State;
- have a responsibility to abide by the State's laws and respect the democratic processes under which those laws are made; and
- should be united in a shared commitment to Australia and to community service.

19 Except Article 41, which came into force for Australia on 28 January 1993. Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Retrieved 11 August 2015: <http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/Info/Treaties/treaties.nsf/AllDocIDs/8B8C6AF11AFB4971CA256B6E0075FE1E>

20 Dixson 1999: 18, cited in Lentini, Halafoff, & Ogru, 2009.

21 Australian Government Department of Social Services, 2015.

Further that all individuals and institutions in Victoria should;

- promote and preserve diversity within the context of shared laws, values, aspirations and responsibilities; and
- recognise Victoria's diversity as an asset and a valuable resource benefiting Australia.

Through the forums the VMC sought to gauge how multiculturalism is functioning in local communities. The subject matter, raised in response to the discussion topics, aids understanding of multiculturalism, and the civil and political rights it seeks to uphold.

In seeking to gauge community attitudes to multiculturalism, VicHealth undertook a survey in 2013. The survey found that 40% of respondents identified one group that they believed did not 'fit in', and 41% identified a group toward whom they 'felt cold'. The groups for whom respondents held negative attitudes were identified as people from Muslim, Middle Eastern, African and refugee backgrounds.²² The VMC sought the CALD perspective, and thus engaged with all of these groups, and many others, who generously participated in the forums.

Social Cohesion and Multiculturalism

Support for the maintenance of culture among migrants, refugees and other multicultural community subsets, is a driver for belonging. Australian multicultural policy recognises that maintenance of ethnic cultural beliefs, customs and practices is important for general wellbeing. It is important to support this as an aspect of both multiculturalism and social cohesion, especially as new arrivals contribute to greater population diversity.²³

The literature suggests a strong consensus on understandings of social cohesion.²⁴ It is generally understood to include domains of:-

- Belonging – shared values and identity;
- Inclusion – equal opportunities for access;
- Participation – engagement in structures and systems;
- Recognition – respect and tolerance; and
- Legitimacy – pluralism.

Table 2: VMC Forum Topics And Social Cohesion

POLICY DOMAINS	SCANLON FOUNDATION	VMC FORUM TOPIC
Shared values, identification with Australia, trust.	Belonging	Marginalisation and Belonging
Experience of discrimination, attitudes towards minorities and newcomers.	Acceptance and Rejection, Legitimacy	Discrimination and Bias
Evaluation of national policies.	Social Justice and Equity	Leadership and Advocacy
Voluntary work, political and cooperative involvement.	Participation	Employment
Life satisfaction and happiness, future expectations.	Worth	

22 VicHealth, 2014.

23 Dandy & Pe-Pua, 2013.

24 Jensen, 1998.

The Scanlon Foundation conducts national surveys, the 'Mapping of Social Cohesion' longitudinal research project, that measure the health of social cohesion within Australia. The Scanlon Foundation describes social cohesion as:-

*"The willingness of members of a society to cooperate with each other in order to survive and prosper"*²⁵.

Their wide-ranging approach to mapping social cohesion incorporates five domains, influenced by the work of Jensen (1998). The topics, under the theme of social cohesion, adopted by the VMC for the consultations with young people broadly align with the Scanlon Foundation domains. **Table 2**, VMC Forums and Social Cohesion, illustrates the alignment.

Multiculturalism and social cohesion are also complimentary notions and operate in tandem. The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) notes that 'multiculturalism has been an important element in the making of modern Australia, and has been critical to fostering social cohesion and inclusion'. 'Through multiculturalism, the Australian experience has shown that diversity can go hand in hand with a stronger social cohesion.'²⁶

The central tenet of citizenship is recognised under *the Multicultural Victoria Act 2011* (the Act). This expression of citizenship is not limited to formal Australian citizenship, but refers to the rights and responsibilities of all people in a multicultural society. Thus, the Act recognises the positive effects of cultural diversity on social, cultural and economic life in Victoria.

2.3. Contemporary Social Conditions

The VMC sought, through its forums, to understand the lives of young people under the conditions they encounter as they embark on life transitions and pathways; with a view to informing policy and program development that can effectively progress social cohesion principles.

Transitions from education to employment, once relatively smooth and linear, have for the current generation, been altered and impacted by contemporary national and international environments following the 2008 global financial crisis (GFC).

Literature sources on youth policy caution about the ways in which social policies are framed. This relates to the importance of considering the needs of diverse populations, and avoiding the potential for new divisions to open up, especially as many who are most affected by contemporary conditions are young.²⁷ Thus, the potential to marginalise particular groups of young people needs to be anticipated.

25 Markus, 2014.

26 Triggs, 2014.

27 Antonucci, Hamilton, & Roberts, 2014.

Understanding the Policy Needs of Young People

Bauman (2007) refers to the contemporary phase of modernity as 'liquid'; a condition in which social forms can no longer keep their shape for long.²⁸ Of particular concern to policymakers is the notion that a generation of young people, 'irrespective of class and gender', are at risk of disengagement, of labour market insecurity and exclusion, and stunted career trajectories.²⁹

Young people undergo transitions that are specific to their life-stage, such as developing skills and transitioning into tertiary education, or completing a course of education and entering the labour market for the first time.³⁰ These transitions make them particularly vulnerable to the risks associated with contemporary social conditions, risks that were largely unknown to their parents' generation.

Contemporary risks include heightened exposure to social and structural changes, such as labour market restructuring, and the increasing demand for educated workers and specialised skills.³¹

Some groups of young people face added difficulty and particular vulnerability due to pre-settlement journeys, perhaps fleeing conflict or famine (either with family members or alone), time spent in refugee camps overseas or detention centres in Australia. The VMC was able to engage with young people from these sub-groups at Morwell, Ballarat, Dandenong and Shepparton.

For these young people, integrating into mainstream Australian culture can prove quite challenging. The challenges may include language barriers that make integration especially tough, or the balancing of traditional family values and cultural beliefs with those of their adopted country.³²

“Young people are endowed with access to different levels and types of social, cultural and economic resources or ‘capitals.’”

“It is the possession and convertibility of such capitals that equips young people with differentiated capacities to act to mitigate what are deemed to be common, classless, contemporary risks.”

“As such, differentiated compositions of capitals create advantages and disadvantages that underpin inequality, whilst at the same time the process of individualisation masks these structural inequalities and imbues all social actors with a sense of responsibility for their own social location.”

Antonucci, Hamilton, & Roberts, 2014.

28 Bauman, 2007.

29 Woodman & Wyn, 2015.

30 Vickerstaff, 2006.

31 Antonucci, Hamilton, & Roberts, 2014. 32 Hugo, McDougall, Tan, & Feist, 2014.

32 Hugo, McDougall, Tan, & Feist, 2014.

Social Cohesion and Social Capital

However, these challenges can also provide policy-makers with opportunities to intervene and employ support mechanisms for young people at risk in these transitional life-stages. Consulting young people directly can help to inform policy solutions that are more likely to gain traction. Consultation is important to policy development, as a participative process that provides mechanisms for community participation and civic engagement that inform policy instruments.³³

Progressing social cohesion begins with the processes that engage community members and build social capital. Social capital is a concept that begins from an interest in people's ability to associate with each other. It refers to the civic value in the connections that spring from human interaction, such as trust, reciprocity, norms and networks.³⁴ The Productivity Commission (2003) referred to this as the 'glue that binds together society in a coherent and positive manner'. A well-connected, or socially cohesive society, can leverage individuals and local communities towards higher aspirations and better outcomes through reciprocity, trust, cooperation and mutuality of support.³⁵

The VMC forums found that, in many instances, there was a lack of trust and reciprocity between community subsets and the mainstream Australian community. This was especially evident in discussions related to marginalisation and belonging, education and employment, and discrimination and bias. It also became apparent that some young people lack vital links to mainstream society, such as access to networks, and opportunities to engage via mainstream activities.

While participants appreciated the value of networks and the need to have good networks, especially in relation to gaining employment opportunities, they felt excluded simply through this lack of connection. An overall lack of opportunity to interact with mainstream groups also resulted in lost opportunities to build the contacts necessary to gain access to networks, and therefore as 'newcomers' they were at a distinct disadvantage. They were also unsure how to bridge this gap – 'its difficult to break through'.

This report adopts the Productivity Commission's view, that social capital is the 'glue' that binds us together as a society. It also posits the view that multiculturalism is critical to fostering social cohesion and inclusion in accordance with the AHRC view (as at page 25).

Further, it promotes the view of social cohesion that recognises a shared commitment to Victoria and Australia and to the people, interests and future of Victoria and Australia, in accordance with the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2011*, s.4.

**“This sort of forum
is good for young people
to give opinion.”**

Participant, Mill Park, 2014

Report Structure

The structure of this report adheres to the structure of the topics discussed at the forums, sharing young people's views and drawing together the findings of the 2014-2015 VMC Multicultural Forums for Young People.

Section 3 - Leadership and Advocacy;

Section 4 - Marginalisation and Belonging;

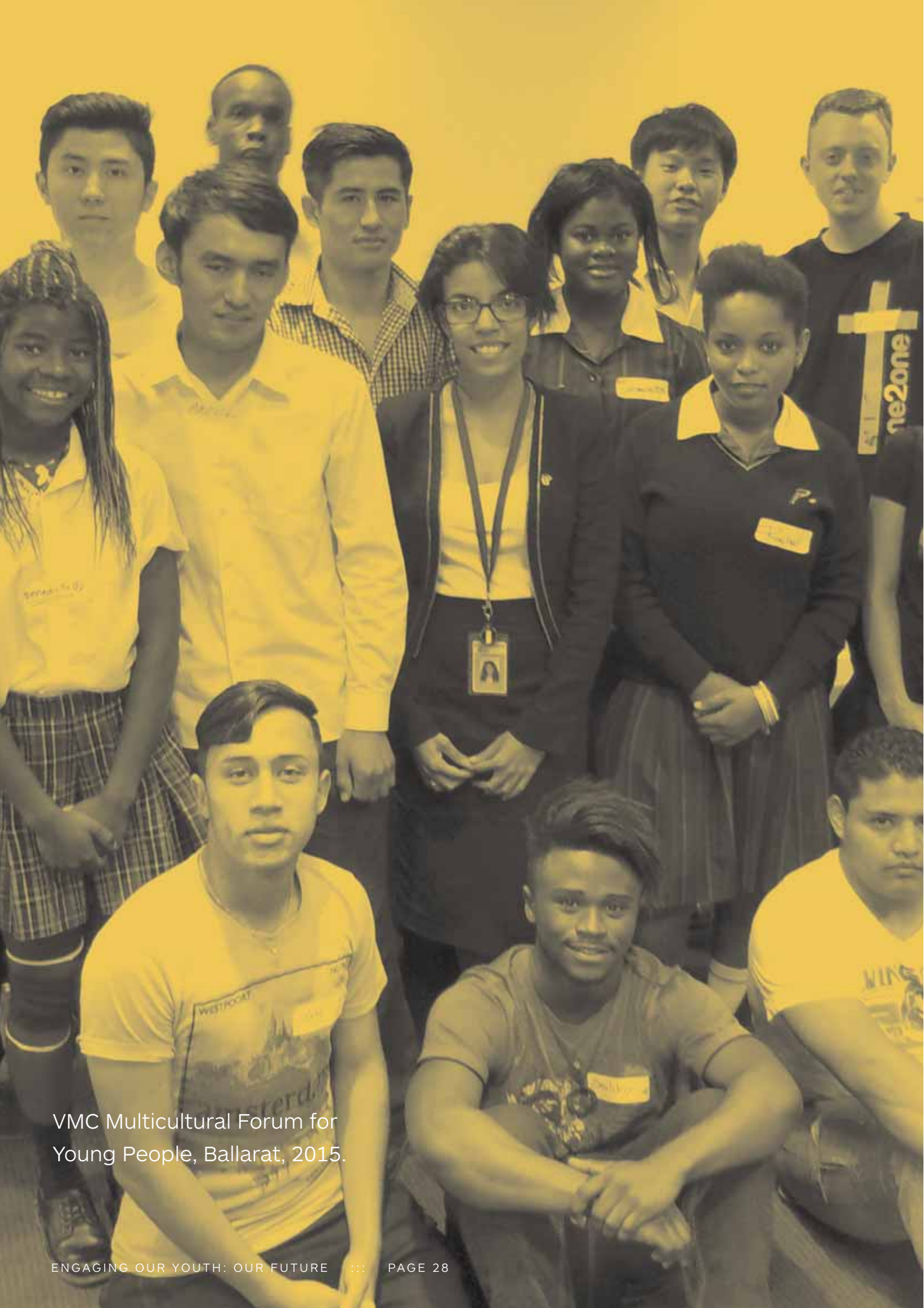
Section 5 - Employment; and

Section 6 - Discrimination and Bias.

33 Althaus, Bridgman, & Davis, 2007.

34 Putnam, 1993.

35 Althaus, Bridgman, & Davis, 2007.



VMC Multicultural Forum for Young People, Ballarat, 2015.

3

LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY

As indicators of social cohesion, notions of leadership and advocacy demonstrate the links that young people have to their families and communities. According to Dandy and Pe-Pua (2015) leadership is a factor that contributes to participation and helps to build social capital. Social capital is often seen as a precursor to, or a building block, that contributes to social cohesion, such that community members may draw upon social capital in order to become more cohesive.³⁶

3.1. Overview

The topic of Leadership and Advocacy was designed to explore the levels of community support that young people from CALD backgrounds could draw upon, including coaching, mentoring and social networks. Social support and social networks are protective factors that provide social status and aid social integration. Not only do they help people to feel supported and connected, they have additional benefits for individual health and wellbeing.³⁷ Without such protective factors young people can be at greater risk of disengagement.

“A good leader is inspirational, confident, comfy in their own skin, a role model, creative. They can listen to others, work within teams, take action in what they believe in, respect others’ opinions, problem solve and make quick decisions.”

Participants, Ballarat, 2015

Leaders and mentors are important in the lives of young people. They can foster the development of skills that young people need that, in turn, can encourage greater participation.³⁸ Young people from diverse backgrounds told the VMC that they sometimes feel excluded, and want opportunities to participate and express their views. Encouraging young people to become active citizens and providing them with opportunities to participate assists social integration, with the potential to build social cohesion through civic participation.

Participants at Morwell for example, suggested that there should be ‘more young people representing young people’. A major finding from all forums, was the appreciation expressed by participants that the VMC came to listen to what they had to say. Without the benefit of a structured community forum many observed that they lacked opportunities to contribute to public discourse. This was especially evident in discussions concerning, ‘what can be done to ensure that young people are heard?’ For example, participants at Dandenong cited negative media ‘profiling’ of young people from CALD backgrounds - ‘media pushing perceptions’ - that are unbalanced and not countered by individual success stories about young people from CALD subgroups, thus perpetuating poor stereotypes.

36 Cheong, 2006.³³

37 Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010.

38 Foster-Fishman, Pierce, & Van Egeren, 2009.

Many participants cited 'confidence' as an important leadership attribute, especially young women. Young men and young women from diverse backgrounds also told the VMC that they face barriers and difficulties perhaps not encountered by young people from mainstream groups. This might include language barriers, or gaps in formal education due to pre-settlement experiences.³⁹ Some forum participants were single young men, in Australia without parents or family support. As a result they talked about leadership and advocacy in terms that related to the struggles they experience in forging their identity, such as low levels of self-esteem, lack of confidence and the need to be included, accepted and heard.

Thus, it is important to facilitate civic participation opportunities for young people in local communities. Especially for young people from CALD backgrounds, who often have very insightful views and ideas to aid the formulation of socially inclusive and cohesive policy at all levels of government. Building specific consultations with young people from multicultural backgrounds into policy processes could prove very fruitful for all manner of policy instruments and programs, not just those that are 'youth' specific.

Fostering civic participation from early adulthood and actively engaging with young people via different consulting techniques, sends a strong message that their views and ideas are appreciated, and that they themselves are included. In terms of more adult related policy consultations, these young people are the future and need to be included in matters that will affect them.

At Truganina young Muslim women suggested opportunities for civic participation locally were available locally through community radio stations. They told the VMC local Muslim radio station 87.6FM provided opportunities for young people to participate and be heard. This suggestion is supported by the literature which also identified community radio as sources of participation and involvement in diverse communities in London and Manchester.⁴⁰

Forum participants cited the need for opportunities to express themselves and to learn and receive guidance from leaders in their communities. They listed important qualities for leaders that included good listening and interpersonal skills, understanding and leaders who serve their communities. Young women at Truganina, Dandenong and Sunshine cited diplomacy, representation, collaboration, negotiation, consideration of others, and empowering as good leadership qualities.

“Believe in yourself first, and then being confident, take personal leadership in your life.”

Participant, Ballarat, 2015

3.2. Discussion

Engaging young people in discussions about leadership and advocacy resulted in a mixed picture of existing support mechanisms, which was to be expected from such diverse groups. While some had good support networks others felt unsupported. For example, young women at Dandenong and Sunshine talked about leadership in very positive terms, using expressions such as 'approachable', 'open-minded', 'respected in the community', 'sharing experiences' and 'inclusivity' to describe leadership, perhaps reflecting their own experiences and interactions.

However, at Shepparton young Afghani men talked about 'voicing their concerns' but 'not being heard' by leaders within their own community. They explained that community leaders 'choose projects that no one is interested in' when seeking funding, due to a lack of consultation within their own community. These young men told the VMC that they were also frustrated because the leaders are 'culturally different', bringing with them 'rigid role models from the home country that do not fit the Australian cultural environment'. The young people themselves felt more in tune with mainstream culture and able to advise their elders, but were being excluded and overlooked.

39 Turnbull & Stokes, 2011.

40 Hudson, Phillips, Ray, & Barnes, 2007.

Young Muslim men at Truganina⁴¹ were quite adamant when asked, ‘do community leaders represent young people’s ideas?’, responding with an emphatic ‘no, not at all! Young Muslim women at Truganina talked about other ways to lead, rather than ‘the dominant cultural, corporate, hierarchical, idea of leadership.’ They wanted to see other forms of leadership being modelled and used terms to describe a more ‘collaborative leadership’ such as ‘negotiating skills’, ‘to represent others’, ‘consultative’, and ‘considering others’. They stated that ‘leadership does not mean to dominate others’ and discussed ways in which ‘corporate leadership’ structures appear incompatible with democratic structures (because hierarchical structures tend to be more autocratic).

There was overall convergence in the view that young people from diverse backgrounds want to see themselves and members of their communities better represented in different forms of leadership. Participants said they wanted to see people from their own ethnic communities in leadership positions. Seeing themselves better reflected they said, would help them to feel more included in the mainstream society. At Shepparton and Carrum Downs they spoke about the lack of cultural diversity in the teaching staff. This impacts negatively upon students from CALD backgrounds they said, when there are no staff members to mediate cultural understandings in high school settings.

Without cultural understandings, opportunities can be missed to fully engage with these young people. For example, at Shepparton young Afghani and Iraqi men, who were in the English as an Additional Language (EAL) stream, lamented the lack of engagement they experienced with the mainstream school population. Teachers and teachers’ aides asked the VMC to assist in this regard and as a result there is some ongoing engagement with high schools in Shepparton.

Young women at Sunshine, Dandenong and Truganina told the VMC that they want to see ‘multicultural women in the leadership and advocacy sector’. Asked to provide examples of good leaders, these young

women suggested both historical and contemporary leaders such as Indira Ghandi,⁴² Malala Yousafzai,⁴³ and Hilary Clinton.⁴⁴ When asked why they chose these particular female leaders, they responded ‘because they stood by their beliefs in the face of discrimination’, thus they saw these as strong female leaders that they might emulate.

“It is important for community leaders to have a good relationship with the community, especially young people.”

Participant, Shepparton, 2015

3.3. The Qualities of a Good Leader

In discussing what Leadership and Advocacy ‘looks like’, two questions were posed to participants in order to determine how these young people think about leadership. The main and subsidiary questions were:

1. What does “leadership” look like or mean to you?
- 1 (a). What are the qualities of a good leader?

Participants’ suggestions provided insight into what is important to young people when they think about leadership, and have been grouped under the most commonly occurring qualities in **Table 3**. For example, ‘visionary/innovator’ came out on top as the most important quality of a good leader with ‘good listener/communicator’ a close second. These qualities, together with additional quality descriptions and the rate of occurrence, are listed in **Table 3**.

“Young people must be part of the solutions they are held accountable for and they need to believe they can make a difference.”

Young women at Dandenong 2015

41 The VMC Multicultural Forum for Young People at Truganina was mixed, young Muslim men and women. However, they self-selected to divide their groups along gender lines with young men together, and young women together. Each group also self-selected the leadership topic and the two groups had very different conversations.

42 Fourth Prime Minister of India, and the first woman Prime Minister of India.

43 A young (18 yrs) Pakistani activist for female education and the youngest-ever Nobel Prize laureate.

44 Candidate for the Democratic Party nomination for U.S. President, former first lady, and former US Secretary of State in the administration of President Barack.

Table 3: VMC Multicultural Forums For Young People – Leadership Qualities

QUALITY	THIS QUALITY INCLUDES THE ABILITY TO:	OCCURRED
Visionary and Innovator	Give direction; motivate; lead by example; create change; inspire others; and put creative ideas into action.	15.1%
Good listener and Communicator	Consider other perspectives; utilise interpersonal skills; develop good relationships; engender respect; be diplomatic; and interact with a variety of stakeholders.	14.4%
Peaceful and Collaborative	Adhere to anti-violence; bring people together; serve the community; and bring negotiating skills.	11.5%
Ethical and Moral	Engender trust; have principles and values; honesty; loyalty; and promote ethical values.	10%
Wise and Well Informed	Take responsibility; accept responsibility; take ownership; be knowledgeable and self-aware.	10%
Charismatic and Influential	Be persuasive and a good facilitator.	9.4%
Mentor	Guide; empower others; encourage young people to participate; and share your intellect.	8.6%
Confidence	Speak up and be able to accept criticism.	6.5%
Fair and Just	Be open-minded, caring and able to help people.	5.7%
Sincere and Consistent	Willing to help others.	5.7%
Patient and Resilient	This quality stood alone.	3%
	TOTAL	100%

In discussing the qualities of a good leader it was also clear that young people have alternative views about the ways in which leaders should or could conduct themselves. For example, leaders can be intergenerational and not restricted to a particular homogenous age group. At Metro West and Carrum Downs participants suggested that young leaders can emerge through team oriented sporting activities.

Participants at Mill Park also talked about the value of being able to relate to someone who leads and the importance of rapport, something that can perhaps be more readily accommodated within sporting and similar activities. Through these discussions young people expressed a desire to be actively involved with leaders, and to be consulted on their views, in meaningful and ongoing dialogue.

At Mill Park and Carrum Downs participants highlighted the value of youth participation in school councils and other youth committees. For example, student representatives can sit on school councils under the community member category.⁴⁵ Participants at Carrum Downs suggested a student representative body, with representatives from each year level participating to form a 'council' at each year level. This student body would operate in a twofold manner as a mechanism to hear issues from students at each school year level, as well as higher representation to the school council. In this way, they suggested, most students could be linked in and feel:

- a) that they had a peer group to relate to,
- b) that the student council would act as an advocate for them, and
- c) they would not be wholly removed from the governance process of the school council.

45 Further information see Department of Education and Training (DET): <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/schoolcouncilelect.aspx>

The VMC was also reminded of the importance of making such interactions ‘fun and engaging’, and not to ‘turn young people off’. Participants at Ballarat suggested older people and teachers should ‘work more (collaboratively) with young people’, ‘include young people’, and ‘provide opportunities for young people to share their passion’. Young Muslim men at Truganina suggested the gaps in understanding between community leaders and young people were part of a broader malaise. For example, they suggested that the assumption that wisdom comes with age was not always accurate.

Young women at Dandenong, and young Muslim men at Ballarat, Broadmeadows and Truganina, cautioned that young people do not always feel free to speak up and volunteer their ideas, due to cultural nuances. Sometimes they said, young people are more ‘concerned about what older people want’, rather than expressing their own views or ideas. This can result in a lack of engagement, and missed opportunities to engage in more positive intergenerational discussions. However, there are also occasions when doing or saying what older people want to hear can lead to a young person also getting what they want. It was clear in these discussions that diplomacy and negotiation do take place, however there does need to be a balance so that young people do not become disillusioned.

“Nothing about us without us!
More promotion and resources for
opportunities for young people to feed
information and influence decisions.”

Young women at Dandenong, 2015

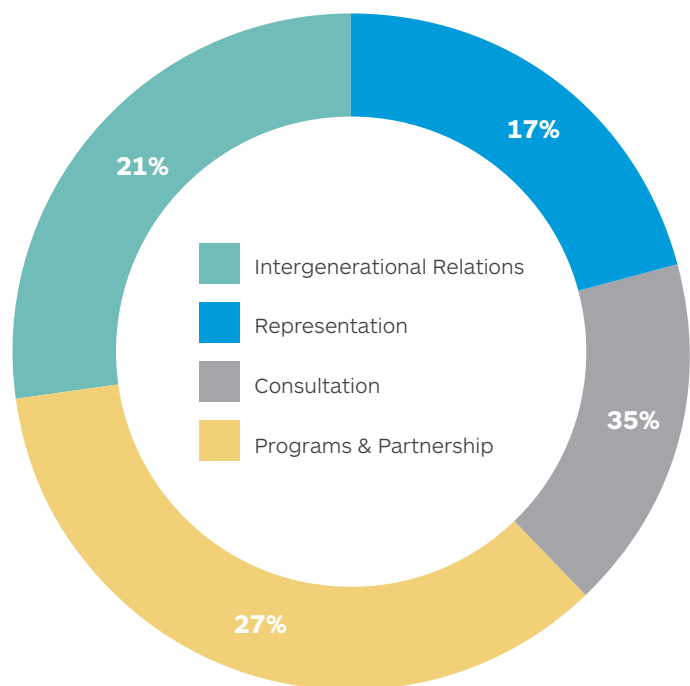
3.4. Emerging Themes

Following analysis of Leadership and Advocacy discussion data, four key themes emerged. These themes were consistent throughout all forums, and demonstrate that young people, think in similar ways about their own development despite their diverse backgrounds and experiences. They have similar aspirations for their future needs in terms of the support and programs that can help them to reach their full potential.

Key Themes:

- 1. Representation** – young people from diverse backgrounds want and actively seek opportunities to engage, to be heard, and to ‘have a voice’ in the shaping of public discourse about the things that matter to them and affect their lives.
- 2. Consultation** - listen to young people on a regular basis and provide opportunities for civic engagement; participants expressed their appreciation and told the VMC that the workshop style discussions helped them to engage in conversations with other young people from diverse backgrounds about issues that were important to them. On reflection, the forums were also an exercise in building social capital.
- 3. Programs and Partnerships** – the importance of ensuring that young people from diverse communities have opportunities to be mentored and to learn leadership skills helps them to feel supported, to know that their thoughts and ideas are valued, to gain confidence in their own ability and to gain self-esteem through knowing that the broader community values and appreciates them.
- 4. Intergenerational relations** – significantly, participants expressed the view that overwhelmingly older people (parents, teachers, community leaders) do not listen to what they have to say and lack understanding of the environments in which they have to live their lives and make decisions about their futures. This was a consistent theme throughout the forums, raised at mixed forums (young men and young women from a range of multicultural backgrounds), young Muslim forums (young men and women), and forums for young women only (at Dandenong and Sunshine).

Figure 2 - Leadership and Advocacy - Key Themes



3.5. Key Findings and Recommendations

The final aspect of leadership and advocacy discussions involved thinking about potential solutions. Young people were asked what could be done to ensure their voices were heard and their issues understood.

At all forums, young people reacted enthusiastically to the consultations. They told the VMC how they appreciated being consulted directly. For some participants, just hearing about the similarities of others' experiences was validating in itself. They enjoyed the informal style of the forums, and being able to discuss the topics openly with their peers. For example, at Sunshine participants stated that a strength of the consultation was the 'VMC's flexibility in arranging the consultation, and understanding the complexities of the lives of the young women who participated'.

The VMC also heard how important it was to young women to have this opportunity to express their opinions. The opportunity for 'civic engagement' with 'the potential to inform government policy', for young people from multicultural backgrounds, was especially meaningful. This is a significant finding which typifies the reactions of the diverse groups of young people consulted – participants gained perhaps as much through the experience as the VMC. While the VMC received a wealth of information and diverse views,

these young people gained both a sense of self-worth and a sense of attainment through the process.

Figure 2 illustrates the outcomes of discussions about Leadership and Advocacy. 'Consultation' emerged as the overriding solution to ensuring young peoples' voices are heard and their issues understood. 'Programs and Partnerships' was a close second, with 'Intergenerational relations', and 'Representation' ("nothing about us without us"), third and fourth respectively.

The recommendations that follow are formulated from the ideas and suggestions of the young people who attended at the VMC Multicultural Forums for Young People.

CONSULTATION

Young people gave the VMC information about the ways they would like to be consulted. This involved a range of pathways that included social media, making consultations fun and engaging, and partnering with other organisations to make young people's time investment worthwhile. The overall consensus from the forums was that young people from diverse backgrounds want to be consulted about the issues that matter to them. They also want to be engaged when solutions are being considered.

VMC forum participants' suggestions on how young people want to be consulted:-

- consult young people on a regular basis and go to where young people are;
- consider how young people themselves want to meet, ask what young people think;
- piggy-back on other activities and events, make it fun and bring food;
- use social media, survey monkey, give young people the opportunity to have a say;
- promote opportunities for young people to engage and be consulted;
- the VMC could construct an online information board specifically for young people from multicultural backgrounds;
- use the consultations as an opportunity to also facilitate contact with other professionals such as community leaders, local government representatives, community health services and local multicultural organisations; and

- give young people the opportunity to talk, hold open discussions and link with a socialising event.

Recommendation 1

Include young people from diverse backgrounds and facilitate their civic engagement.

This can be accomplished in a number of ways and relates, not solely to youth related policy, but to broader policy consultation processes.

- invite contributions via a designated Facebook page;
- utilise other social media avenues such as via Twitter, Tumblr, and similar;
- include notices to schools and universities for inclusion in newsletters;
- engage with local youth groups, bring them into the process;
- advertise on designated youth websites such as YacVic, Leadership Victoria, CMY, MYAN etc.;
- seek to ensure that young people know when a consultation is happening; and
- acknowledge their input in the final analysis.

PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Approaching adulthood, young people aged 16-25 years are in transition and appreciate the support and understanding that assists their growth and maturity. Forum participants were actively seeking opportunities to learn leadership skills. They provided the VMC with many useful ideas about ways to provide training opportunities such as structured peer-to-peer mentoring, activities that support young people's leadership aspirations, and designated resources to foster multicultural women's' leadership.

VMC forum participants' suggestions regarding leadership programs:-

- ensure leadership training also takes account of cultural nuances;
- encourage young people to try new things and provide a safe environment in which to do it;
- provide training and education such as CMY provides; ('the CMY program has raised my self-confidence and I am able to use the skills and knowledge in the everyday');⁴⁶
- provide leadership training opportunities through education programs and events which give young people responsibility and the opportunity to lead, such as the CMY 'Un-Conference', Ballarat, 2015;
- link young people in through community programs, such as via schools, churches and other community based organisations, make a youth group;
- engage with local government to be more receptive to the needs of young people from diverse backgrounds in the local government area (LGA), commit to engage via memorandum of understanding (MOU) or similar;
- provide the resources to develop young leaders, such as through grants programs, activities and training; and
- provide more targeted leadership training that also exposes young people to different environments.

⁴⁶ Participant at VMC Multicultural Forum for Young People, Ballarat, Feb 2015.

Recommendation 2

*“Commit to young people (from diverse backgrounds) and believe in the capacity of young people, support them, involve them”.*⁴⁷

This entails investing in the potential of young people from multicultural backgrounds by:

- providing leadership training opportunities through education programs and events;
- ensuring that young people are provided with supported opportunities to engage in community programs;
- ensuring that local government authorities have the resources to cater to the needs of young people from diverse backgrounds; and
- investing in young leaders from diverse backgrounds by providing on-going support through mentoring, and further training.

INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS

Recurring themes throughout the consultations related to addressing the generational disconnect between young people and the leaders in their communities. Participants want to be consulted and included in the decision-making processes, especially in decisions that concern them. For example, young Muslim men and women at Truganina told the VMC that they want to feel part of their respective communities.

To accomplish this they suggested that current community leaders need to be more engaged and to encourage young leaders to emerge. At Broadmeadows young Muslim men talked about a gap in understanding between the generations. At Ballarat, Dandenong, Mill Park and Morwell young people from diverse backgrounds expressed a desire to ‘bridge the communication gap’. Young Muslim men at Truganina spoke of, ‘not really knowing who their leaders are’, and also ‘not being used to being engaged in this way’. Thus they seek some direction to facilitate better ongoing relations between the generations, and seek effective strategies.

VMC forum participants’ suggestions regarding intergenerational relations:-

- have trust and faith in young people – ‘adults don’t have full on faith in us’;
- young people are not supported and need to know that their ideas are valued;
- be involved with young people, elders need to listen;
- believe in the capacity of young people, have faith in the ability of young people;
- the concept that wisdom comes with age is not always evident;
- take an interest in young people, young people want this;
- get out of your comfort zone when you have young people around;
- provide role models and support for young people to help them gain confidence and speak up;
- young people turn off when older people talk but will participate when young people talk;
- young people don’t want to be ‘lectured to’; and
- introducing bridging programs, between parents and children, would be productive.⁴⁸

Recommendation 3

Facilitate intergenerational relationship building through programs that bring community leaders and young people together.

- This might entail initial work with community leaders to prepare the ground, such as by providing support for young people to navigate initial conversations, gain traction and seek joint solutions to improve communications;
- Fostering on-going ‘pollination’ between groups. For example, invite community leaders as guests to attend a youth advisory group meeting and vice versa, invite young people from a youth body as guests to attend a community leadership group meeting; and
- Encourage community leaders to learn about the need to engage their young people and illustrate the benefits of providing opportunities for young people to participate in the discourse.

47 Participants at VMC Multicultural Forum for Young People, Dandenong, March 2015.

48 This matter is dealt with in greater depth under employment and education, see Section 5, Employment.

REPRESENTATION

'Representation' related to opportunities for young people to be mentored, to learn leadership skills and to be able to put those skills into practice, such as opportunities to serve on representative bodies. 'Representation' also involves providing 'apprenticeship' opportunities for young people where they are given responsibility, and supported so that they can exercise that responsibility in safe environments.

For example, at Metro West participants suggested simple strategies, such as including young people in community meetings. Similarly at Mill Park participants suggested having more young representatives on committees.

VMC forum participants' suggestions related to greater inclusion of young people:-

- give young people the skills and capacity to take leadership and to work inter-generationally;
- have young people representing young people;
- a good community leader may not be a good youth leader;
- work more (collaboratively) with young people, include young people, provide opportunities for young people to share their passion;
- create opportunities for young people to have a voice;
- young people need to set an example for other young people;
- invite young people to a meeting; and
- promote opportunities and provide resources to enable young people to influence and inform decisions, such as youth advisory councils, youth parliament and student representative councils.

Following the forums some participants actively sought further opportunities to engage with the VMC. As a direct result of the forums the VMC invited young people from multicultural backgrounds to apply for Regional Advisory Council (RAC) membership.

Eastern, Grampians, and Gippsland all now have young people sitting on the RACs. Other RACs are full to quota, although young people have applied. In these circumstances, the VMC is inviting young people to attend the RAC meeting in their area, in order to give them the opportunity to contribute a young person's perspective.

Having young people on committees and advisory groups links young people more generally into democratic processes and legitimates their civic engagement as a peer group. Through the consultations the VMC was able to act on an identified need, and to facilitate the civic participation of young people from diverse backgrounds, by engaging them in the RACs.

The benefits are that:

- the young people involved will gain skills and knowledge that they can draw on in future;
- they will also be able to share this experience with their peers;
- these young people are representing their peers;
- the VMC is facilitating the generations interacting together in an advisory capacity;
- the VMC is demonstrating the value of engaging young people as emerging community leaders; and
- the VMC is providing a mentoring environment that facilitates early learning in how to engage at a civic capacity.

Recommendation 4

Include opportunities for young people from diverse backgrounds to apply and participate when formulating committees and advisory groups, including as a Whole-of-Victorian Government initiative, to ensure that a broad representation of young people from diverse backgrounds is facilitated across government.

This can be achieved by:

- contacting organisations with a youth focus or youth content such as the Office for Youth/DHHS, OMAC multifaith, CMY, MYAN etc. as well as local government authority youth services, local high schools and colleges, youth groups and sporting groups;
- pairing young people on adult committees and advisory groups with a suitable adult mentor;
- applying the recommendation across all areas of government, community and civic engagement to ensure broad representation;
- allowing young people from CALD backgrounds onto all forms of committees and advisory groups to harness their innovative and creative ideas across portfolios (i.e. not solely those deemed as youth policy portfolios); and
- building capacity and expertise in young people.

3.6. Supplementary Resources

This section provides some additional resources including models and examples of successful programs. Many were successful programs that were not successful in attracting ongoing funding.

1. Building an Intercultural Soccer Hub in Melbourne's West

Brimbank City Council, Sports and Recreation Unit worked in partnership with key stakeholders to develop a Community Soccer Hub (CSH) in the area, bringing together a number of informal groups who had been participating in soccer on a casual basis. Many of the young men were from newly arrived communities and had not been able to access mainstream competitions or facilities.

Evaluated after the first year by Victoria University (Victoria Institute) focusing in particular on their experiences from informal soccer participation to the newly formed multicultural Community Soccer Hub. Includes interviews with staff and stakeholders.

The evaluation found that the CSH provided a range of benefits, with the majority of players feeling safe and supported. The majority of participants were happy with their achievements at the hub and would recommend it to others. Further information at: <http://www.vu.edu.au/the-victoria-institute/research-focus/education-health-community/a-story-to-tell-building-an-intercultural-soccer-hub-in-melbour>

2. Participation, Information and Engagement (PIE) Program - Southern Ethnic Advisory and Advocacy Council (SEAAC)

The PIE program engaged recently arrived migrants and refugees young people in an after school program with a sports focus. This program consisted of four different sports sessions and four information sessions, held in conjunction with the City of Greater Dandenong Youth Services at Y-Stop in Dandenong. Information at: <http://www.seaac.org.au/involved/item/136-pie-program-term-2-wrap-up-2014>

The program included resume writing skills, career planning, information concerning mental health and wellbeing, and ways to seek help through Headspace services. Sports sessions included rugby and hockey workshops, as well as a fitness and nutrition session. In a lead up to the world cup, students attended wearing their birth countries' colours for the final session in a mini soccer tournament.

The program also included information sessions on employment, personal community safety, rights and responsibilities in Australia. Funding for the program ceases 31 December 2015.

3. African Dads and Kids Community Program – Catholic Care

This camp program is primarily delivered to humanitarian refugee families settled in Australia. It is free for families, delivering a camp-based experience that give fathers the opportunity to spend time with one of their children for a weekend of fun, bonding and learning.

My culture is African, my child is Australian. Children have the best outcomes when they have great relationships with their dads and the camps give fathers the opportunity to have quality time with their children and to explore and discuss a range of topics. Aussie African Dads was featured on ABC television's Compass Program. Details at: <http://www.abc.net.au/compass/s3546936.htm>

4. The Many Voices of Young Australians - CMY

The Voices of Young Australians: Uniting for Social Cohesion Program provided young people with leadership training to develop their leadership skills. The program was developed and delivered by the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) over a three year period with financial support from the Scanlon Foundation.

The program provided opportunities for young people from diverse backgrounds (refugee, migrant and Australian born) to tackle issues of racism and discrimination, and to make positive changes in their schools and local communities. Young people organised and delivered their own youth-led project promoting social cohesion in their local area. Further information available at: <http://www.amf.net.au/projects/scanlon> Final Report available at: http://www.amf.net.au/library/uploads/files/Voices_of_Young_Australians_Uniting_for_Social_Cohesion.pdf

5. Our Patch – CMY and City of Casey

Our Patch Casey engaged young Afghani people living in the City of Casey. Using World Café participation methods, Our Patch gave these young people a chance to share their big ideas for their local area. An ideal leadership program with activities and training. See Information for Casey at: <https://www.facebook.com/events/615795745150832/>

The project was also available at Wyndham, see:
<https://www.facebook.com/events/607631962606114/>

Funded by the Commonwealth (DSS, 2013) for 12 months, the project tested an approach premised on creating intercultural relationships across all young people in the two growth LGAs of Casey and Wyndham. It engaged with young people from all cultural backgrounds to address inter-cultural issues.

These LGAs were selected as they represented the combination of high growth area, underdeveloped physical and social infrastructure, together with rapid population and diversity change - a combination known to create high rates of social isolation, a low sense of belonging and connectedness and a low level of networks within and across communities.

6. Multifaith Multicultural Youth Mentoring for Leadership Program – CMY

In 2006, a Multifaith Multicultural Youth Forum, attended by over 150 young people, identified a need to facilitate leadership and mentoring opportunities for young people in the government, community, faith and corporate sectors. Participants recommended a mentoring program to provide an opportunity for dialogue between young people and staff in these organisations.

The group mentoring program ran in 2008 for young people aged 18-25 years from diverse faith and cultural backgrounds. Partnerships were developed with RMIT and Victoria University where the program was provided to a total of 62 young people in collaboration with 25 mentors. An external evaluation identified it as 'a positive and successful program that achieved some significant outcomes for young people involved'.

The program was developed in partnership with the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC), Australian Multicultural Foundation and Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY). It provided greater understanding and awareness among representatives engaged in the corporate, government, community and faith sectors in Victoria, about the strengths and issues facing young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

7. Building a New Generation Youth Leadership - GMLLEN

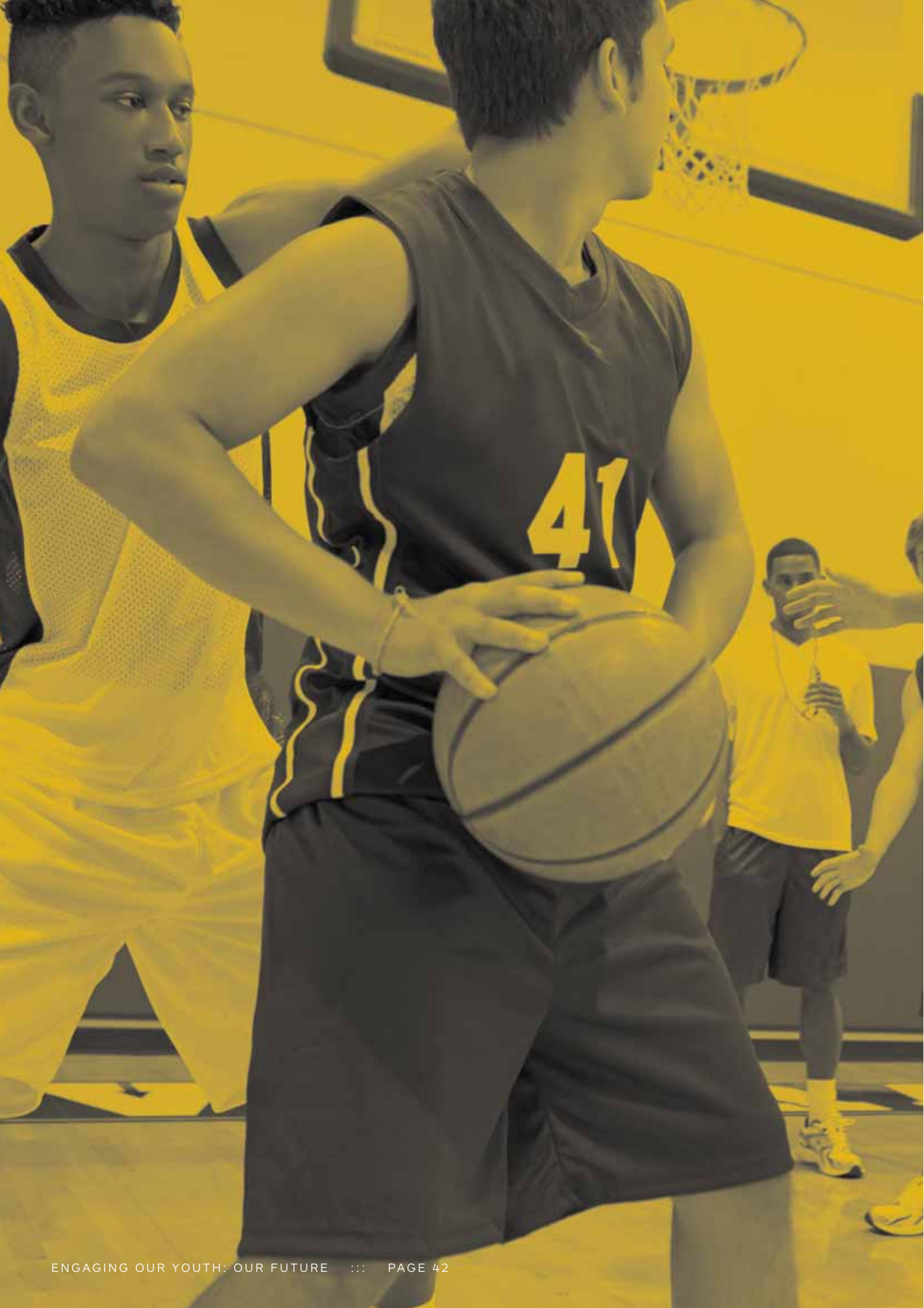
The Building a New Generation Youth Leadership Program was an initiative of African Community Leaders in Shepparton and the Goulburn Murray Local Learning and Employment Network. The Program brought together some 14 young people in Shepparton, aged 15-25 years, from diverse cultural backgrounds in 2012-2013 to develop their leadership skills and potential.

The 2013-2014 sessions had 20 young people from seven different countries. The program aims were - to address socio-economic disadvantages; to engage youth and their communities; to build and strengthen leadership skills; to build human, social and economic capital; and to mentor, coach and enhance business skills through training. Further information at: <http://www.gmlen.com.au/building-a-new-generation-youth-leadership-program>

The program gave disadvantaged young people from diverse backgrounds a sense of vision and purpose, and created opportunities that otherwise would not have been open to them without the program support. Funding for the program ceased after the 2013-14 session.

8. Additional Resources:

- School's In For Refugee's: A whole-school approach to supporting students of refugee background, 2nd edition (2011), available at: <http://www.foundationhouse.org.au/schools-in-for-refugees/>
- VICSEC New Futures - The Youth Justice Support Program is delivered in partnership with Jesuit Social Services Consortium, and contributes to the intensive case management of young offenders from African backgrounds who are supported to re-connect with their families and communities. For program details see: <http://www.vicsegnewfutures.org.au/Default.aspx?PageID=3470285&A=SearchResult&SearchID=7420003&ObjectID=3470285&ObjectType=1>



4

MARGINALISATION AND BELONGING

In seeking to measure social capital, levels of trust between diverse groups, has been identified as a strong indicator.⁴⁹

Thus, low levels of trust tend to indicate low levels of social capital. Trust also relates to a sense of belonging in which diverse groups share values and identity. A sense of belonging is also a strong indicator of levels of social cohesion.

4.1. Overview

Belonging can be measured in different terms, such as identification with a particular social, ethnic, cultural or religious group, and national identification. Thus, one's identity can be linked, not only with an ethnic or religious element, but also with being Australian. For example, research suggests that a strong bicultural identity, such as 'Italian-Australian', may be indicative of belonging.⁵⁰

The Scanlon Foundation Survey (2014), explored attitudes to multiculturalism and the integration of immigrants in Australia. The survey found that attitudes towards multiculturalism tends to be held consistent with broader views held in relation to immigration and cultural diversity.⁵¹ However, while the survey found broad acceptance of diversity, it also found clear indication that a large proportion of respondents were undecided or lacked firm views in consideration of issues of integration, an important aspect of multiculturalism which values diversity.⁵²

The survey also highlighted a gap in opinions between third generation Australians and those of non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB), finding that opinions are divided among third generation Australians, on the extent of integration to be expected of immigrants.⁵³ When considering the value of immigration from 'many different countries', third generations responded favourably at around 64%, while people from non-English speaking backgrounds responded favourably at a higher rate, 78%.

Overall, the 2014 Scanlon survey findings indicated strong levels of support for multiculturalism with 84% of respondents agreeing that 'multiculturalism has been good for Australia'. The strongest positive association of multiculturalism was with its contribution to economic development (75%) and its encouragement of immigrants to become part of Australian society (71%).⁵⁴

“Support the process of identity development.”

Participant, Mill Park, 2014

4.2. Discussion

The VMC forum topic, Marginalisation and Belonging, was designed to explore levels of trust and reciprocity as experienced by young people from diverse backgrounds. At Metro West participants suggested that 'building trust with young people' was an important aspect of an 'ideal community' where everyone is included. Interactions with the broader community help individuals to gain a sense of belonging. This also correlates with a sense of self, or identity; who you are and how you fit in.

49 Putnam, 2000.

50 Ward, 2010.

51 Markus, 2014.

52 Markus, 2014.

53 Survey respondents born in Australia with both parents born in Australia.

54 Markus, 2014.

“Create ‘listening posts’, opportunities for young people to provide information and feedback.”

Participant, Metro West, Dec 2014

Identity refers to a stable sense of who one is and the values and ideas that go along with that sense of identity.⁵⁵ Many of the teenagers (16-19 year olds) who attended the VMC forums discussed the environments in which they are seeking to develop an identity, that in many instances were challenging and informative. For example, in discussing the barriers to belonging, high school students, especially young women, stated that they often do not feel safe when there are groups of ‘Aussie kids’. This perception related to the apparent solidarity of mainstream school students that presented a barrier. Participants at Shepparton told the VMC that ‘breaking down barriers starts in the schools’, and at Ballarat participants suggested specific school activities such as hosting an ‘International Day’.

The importance of identity formation cannot be underestimated. In their examination of the scope and nature of terrorism in Australia, Bergin, et al., (2015) found three shared characteristics often found in people who radicalise, these were: a need for identity, a need to belong, and a sense of injustice (or humiliation). As a result these researchers recommended policy responses that focus on better communication and cooperation across government and society as a whole. The VMC forum findings wholly support these research findings and recommendations. Creating a socially cohesive society, that embraces multiculturalism, entails developing, learning and practising the art of living with strangers and their difference permanently and daily; a responsibility that extends to all members of a multicultural society.⁵⁶

At Morwell for example, young African women explained that during initial EAL classes they remained with their own core group, as language was a barrier to communication in the early stages of settlement. They explained further that it was also a sense of comfort and security for them to remain with their core subgroup. Unfortunately however, by the time their English language skills had developed,

they perceived an almost insurmountable gulf had been created where they were not included and felt marginalised, within the school environment.

The situation for young Afghani and Iraqi men was similar at Ballarat and Shepparton who likewise, felt marginalised from the mainstream school population. All of these groups suggested that schools could do more to aid integration of groups of newcomers in the early stages, perhaps by facilitating ways for the different groups to encounter one another and mix in more structured environments.

Participants suggested that high schools are important environments where a sense of belonging can be nurtured. Ballarat students encapsulated this aspiration in three ideas to further multiculturalism and social cohesion: harmony, cultural awareness and celebrating other cultures.

“Marginalisation is about not fitting in, feeling left out, being treated differently and being excluded.”

Participants, Morwell, 2014

Seeking to implement integration strategies in the early stages of settlement for young people from diverse backgrounds has the potential to pay long term and significant dividends, not only for the school community but the broader community.

“The ideal multicultural community is mixed, everyone together, organic.”

Participant, Dandenong, 2015

Demographic data demonstrate that the CALD youth population has grown at a faster rate than the Australian-born youth population. For example, some 58% of young people from CALD backgrounds, aged 18-24 years, are enrolled in full or part-time education compared to 39% of the Australian-born population.⁵⁷ The earlier these young people can feel that they belong within mainstream society the better. While they want to retain their own cultures, of which they are also proud, they simultaneously seek acceptance within the mainstream.

55 Eriksen, 1968.

56 Bauman, 2012.

57 Hugo, McDougall, Tan, & Feist, 2014.

What we, as a society, do in high schools, and in the public places where we meet other people is extremely important, not only for the future of local communities but for the future of Australian multicultural society as a whole.⁵⁸ The Victorian Government acknowledges that catering for the language and literacy development of EAL learners is a long-term, shared school community commitment. It advocates a whole-school approach in which EAL learners and their families are acknowledged, consulted, and included as active participants in the school community.⁵⁹

Participants discussed what an 'ideal community looks like'. They described the 'ideal community' in terms of a supportive community in which people are accepted, interconnected, trusted, respected, included and supported – 'can get help and support', and 'who are there for each other in times of need'. An ideal community was also one with 'understanding' and 'celebration' of other cultures.

Young women at Dandenong highlighted the lack of opportunities for inter-cultural interactions in safe environments – 'no chance for people to explore differences'. They suggested this was one reason why some people feel they don't belong, together with regular negative media portrayals of asylum seekers and refugees. Dandy & Pe-Pua (2013), made similar observations noting the broader negative impacts of stereotypes and misinformation about asylum seekers'.

Participants described the frequency with which these negative views are aired in the national media, and its damaging effects - 'on the news 24/7'. Although they understood that this was the 'policy of Australia' ('turn back the boats') they felt that this continuous stereotyping impacts negatively upon all CALD communities and subsets in some measure, making them feel they don't belong.

They compared this with their perceptions of Melbourne, where they observed a greater acceptance. 'They promote it', said participants, referring to the banner on St Paul's Cathedral in Flinders Street which states, "Let's fully welcome refugees".⁶⁰

Through this discussion these young women highlighted a tension that exists between media portrayals, which paint asylum seekers in terms that reinforce discrimination through stereotypes, and the repercussions for local communities, both CALD and mainstream communities. Participants at Dandenong raised an important issue about the damaging negative impacts that can result from the ways in which the public discourse is constructed. They discussed how it creates barriers to trust, damages communication and networking, and prohibits intercultural understanding and interaction. This tension actually inhibits multiculturalism and social cohesion by painting disadvantaged and vulnerable community subsets as a dangerous element.

4.3. Sense of Belonging

To generate discussion about marginalisation and belonging, two questions were posed to participants in order to determine how young people from diverse backgrounds think about community and belonging. The main and subsidiary questions were:

1. *What does an ideal community look like to you?*

1 (a). *Why do some feel like they don't belong now?*

Table 4 following, groups the comments from all forum participants relating to the 'ideal community'. Column one groups the attributes of the ideal community, column two expands on the attributes with supporting comments, and column three includes comments related to the causes people 'feel like they do not belong'. Importantly, column three highlights the issues that these young people face just at the time they also seek to develop their identity. Also some comments are directly attributed to the forums for young women only, where views were clearly gendered.

58 Adapted from Bauman (2012), whose text includes '...for the future of the whole world.'

59 Department of Education and Training, 2015.

60 On Thursday, 8 August, St Paul's Cathedral launched an awareness campaign to encourage Melburnians to welcome refugees, as part of which a 23-foot banner was installed on the Cathedral's South-West spire. See: http://www.stpaulscathedral.org.au/news/article/lets_fully_welcome_refugees

Analysis of forum data reveal that young people from diverse backgrounds face marginalisation due to their appearance and accent, in ways that cause them to feel marginalised; as if they do not belong. This in turn affects their view of themselves, and causes some uncertainty about their sense of self just at a crucial developmental phase, where identities are emerging.

At the same time these young people are undergoing transitions that are specific to their life course – some are transitioning from EAL to mainstream classes in high school, while others are either transitioning out of education and into further education or seeking employment. Thus, at these vulnerable life transitions in many respects, young people from CALD backgrounds are in need of support mechanisms that will assist them in their identity development.

Table 4: The Ideal Community

Attribute:	Belonging Means:	Impacts On Belonging:
TRUST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People in community are trustworthy • Happy, at peace, safe, friends • Socialising, meeting • Connection • Know neighbours • Good relations with neighbours • Come to each other's houses • Mixed, everyone together, organic • Place of acceptance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many community subsets, new and emerging communities (NEC) • Shop keepers disrespectful, stereotyping⁶¹ • Feeling overpowered by the people around you⁶² • Negative ideas and generalisation • Stereotyping, making assumptions • Australian government not reflecting community views, not resonating multicultural community views⁶³
UNDERSTANDING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talking, communication • Neighbours talk to each other • Helping each other • Can get help and support • Invite neighbours in – share food, language, clothes, music • Being able to connect with everyone else • Understand different cultures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complacency • People judging when speaking in own language⁶⁴ • Language barrier is isolating
IDENTITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support identity development • Figuring out an identity • Where everyone can reach their potential and be respected • Low levels of confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traumatic pre-settlement experiences, circumstances • Lack of positive role models (particularly young men from CALD backgrounds) • Need for acceptance • Lacking self-confidence • Staying in own groups, own language • In Australia without parent support

61 Participant, Morwell, December 2014.

62 Ibid.

63 Participant, Sunshine, June 2015

64 Participant, Morwell, December 2014.

Attribute:	Belonging Means:	Impacts On Belonging:
INCLUSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance into community • Less 'us' and 'them' • Everyone can reach their potential • Respect for each other • Support services • Understanding of culture • Celebrate other cultures – small scale and large scale • No stigma, acceptance for all • Accept that people can be different culture, religion • Local schools include languages of local multicultural population • Feeling wanted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People judging your accent⁶⁶ • People looking at you in a different way⁶⁷ • Verbal abuse due to appearance, i.e. stereotypes of women that wear headscarves.⁶⁸ • People say whatever they want without thinking • Mainstream groups think they are on a higher level⁶⁹ • They are all in groups (at high school), this is a barrier • Problem getting locals to engage with new arrivals (regional perspective) • Majority v minority (them and us)
EQUALITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality of opportunity and resources (for males and females)⁶⁵ • No social gap, no economic gap • No double standards, bias • No one is saying you are different • Everyone having rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visible difference • Past experiences of racism and discrimination
SUPPORTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There for each other in times of need • Help young people, helps society • Feel welcomed regardless • Respect you and show an interest • Giving and receiving support = shared success • Fight for your rights together • Be generous • Supportive family structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling unsafe on public transport⁷⁰ • Negative attention from parents, pick on faults and do not praise good points

65 Participant, Morwell, December 2014.

66 Ibid.

67 Ibid.

68 Participant, Ballarat, February 2015

69 Participant, Dandenong, March 2015.

70 Participant, Morwell, December 2014.

4.4. Emerging Themes

The key themes that emerged from discussions concerning issues of marginalisation and belonging relate to the attributes of the ideal community, as well as to the domains of social cohesion. The importance of facilitating civic participation for young people, as a precursor to building social capital and hence social cohesion, was also noted in Section 3, Leadership and Advocacy.

“The ideal community is inclusive, where everyone can reach their potential, be respected and achieve.”

Participant, Mill Park, 2014

The literature identifies the importance of ‘youth participation’ in decision-making which has a long history as a central tenet of federal social policy initiatives in Australia.⁷¹ In examining social inclusion and youth participation, Edwards (2008) identified concerns regarding young people’s commitment to their communities, with falling social capital and cohesion being signalled as a result (following Putnam, 2000).⁷²

The building of social capital can also be impaired by other factors, such as socio-cultural and economic constraints, particularly among migrant groups.⁷³ Thus, a bi-directional relationship can exist between social capital and social cohesion such that, when communities are fragmented and impoverished, they may be less able to develop strong social networks and relationships.⁷⁴ Certainly, this is not the case in every migrant community, broadly speaking however, these communities begin at a significant disadvantage when compared to mainstream populations.

The following key themes which emerged from the forum discussions on Marginalisation and Belonging correlate strongly with factors related to notions of social capital and social cohesion. For example, there is strong correlation with all Scanlon Foundation (2015) domains of social cohesion - belonging, social

justice and equity, participation, acceptance and legitimacy, and worth. This correlation also perhaps illustrates the further work required to ensure that the multicultural policy framework better enables the practice of people’s different culture free of discrimination, or at least legitimates this right more overtly.

“Belonging means smiling at people and saying ‘hello’”

Participant, Morwell, 2014

Key Themes:

- **Trust and Equality** – stereotyping was raised regularly in discussions where forum participants told the VMC that they felt the onus was on them to prove themselves as trustworthy individuals. Issues of trust and equality also related to perceptions of what was socially just, and participants sensed some injustice in this situation. Participants also seemed to use the term ‘stereotype’, when actually what they described was racial profiling. However, the VMC findings concur with the 2014 Scanlon Foundation survey which found a fall in the domain of social justice and equity (down 4.3%), from the previous year’s survey. Forum participants at Morwell described this as ‘feeling judged for the way you look and speak and dress in shopping centres, trains, at school, bus stops and on the streets’.
- **Understanding and Inclusion** – this key theme relates to an ‘us and them’ mentality that is divisive. Participants made many suggestions to promote wider understanding and inclusion that related to multiculturalism, and helping people to better understand the many and diverse cultures represented within Victoria. For example, at Dandenong participants suggested that ‘more awareness and acceptance of other people’s culture and gender’ was a way to reduce marginalisation and foster a sense of belonging.

71 Edwards, 2008.

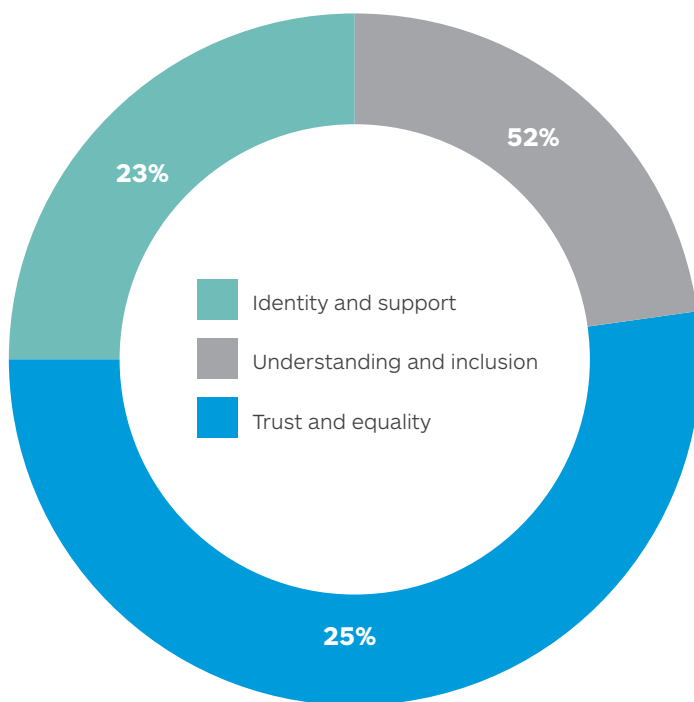
72 Ibid.

73 Cheong, 2006.

74 Parker & Karner, 2010.

- **Identity and Support** – throughout discussion on marginalisation and belonging it was evident that many of the young people who participated were going through the process of developing their identity, and that within that process they were also looking for a ‘place of acceptance’. The need for strong support mechanisms, including system support for their parents. The importance of public events that reflect an openness and general ‘invitation to belong’ cannot be understated.

Figure 3 – Marginalisation and Belonging - Key Themes



4.5. Key Findings and Recommendations

To stimulate solution focused ideas, participants were asked, ‘what would help to create a better sense of belonging for young people who feel left out?’ They were also asked to consider any barriers and how these could be overcome. The majority of suggestions were associated with inclusive activities at community level, such as public events and celebrations.⁷⁵ The types of events that participants suggested were designed to progress understanding and inclusion by raising awareness of other cultures and shared celebrations that were both fun and promoted a sense of belonging.

Figure 3 illustrates the outcomes of discussions about marginalisation and belonging in terms of solution-focused considerations. ‘Understanding and Inclusion’ came out overwhelmingly as the top solution-focused outcome, and in fact this makes absolute sense because with understanding and inclusion the rest can follow. Understanding and inclusion augurs well for the advancement of trust. Support for identity formation would also be encompassed within understanding and inclusion, with equality and social justice likewise more achievable outcomes.

UNDERSTANDING AND INCLUSION

Understanding and inclusion related to important aspects of belonging that were more than tokenistic. Participants expressed a desire to see a greater commitment to multiculturalism and the acceptance of difference being demonstrated in more tangible ways. Although this theme related to broad societal aspects of shared celebrations of culture, participants were at pains to highlight the lack of facilities for multicultural youth overall. For example, young Muslim women at Shepparton told the VMC that they are not able to learn to swim because their culture does not allow them to participate in mixed bathing sessions. They needed a ‘girl’s only’ swimming night that was not available. They commented on the ‘importance of learning to swim for Australian children’, but felt that they were not included and their particular needs not met.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ This finding was also an outcome of the Geelong CALD Youth Needs Assessment Report (2014).

⁷⁶ The *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*, S.12 Special measures allows for substantive equality measures such as “A swimming pool that is located in an area with a significant Muslim population holds women-only swimming sessions to enable Muslim women who cannot swim in mixed company to use the pool.”

Participants at Mill Park, Shepparton, Ballarat, and Dandenong said that the education system could do more to embrace diversity, and foster understanding and inclusion early in schools – ‘should start at school’, ‘schools can and should do more’, and ‘school is where it starts’.

Participants had a number of suggestions to foster greater understanding and inclusion of diverse cultures in Victoria. Some related to school programs, while other suggestions could be jointly organised by schools and community groups. Opportunities for governments at all levels to take the lead in events that foster multiculturalism and social cohesion were also raised.

Solutions that focused on the creative arts were popular with forum participants, and raised independently at different forums, especially in terms of school environments (at Sunshine, Carrum Downs, Dandenong, Ballarat and Shepparton). Intercultural understanding is a recognised general capability set out in the national standards of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).⁷⁷ Artistic expression that promotes cultural understanding can foster ‘soft’ learning outcomes such as resilience, collaboration and creative problem-solving. These learnings have also have the potential to progress social cohesion in the longer term.⁷⁸

“Speak up and express yourself in other creative ways – creative arts programs, dance, music.”

Participants, Sunshine 2015

The literature supports participants’ suggestions, describing the values expressed in public events as being reflective of an openness and general invitation to belong.⁷⁹ Such occasions provide participants with a shared focus for discussion, and facilitate thoughtfulness in neighbourhoods and communities. This, in turn, gives a sense of cohesion by also providing overlapping social networks.⁸⁰

In his examination of radicalisation in Australia Bergin (2015), posits the need to ensure that attempts to engage ‘at-risk’ people should filter down to the levels of the community where it is most needed, including the need to make messages about inclusion more accessible or tangible. Open public community events that are inclusive of local ethnicities and seek to engage all local CALD communities transmit these messages, and are a valuable means to spread the inclusive message of multiculturalism.

Public community events can also provide young people with a way to circumvent community leaders who do not seem to be concerned about or linked in to the issues facing young people in their communities. Participants at Metro West, Mill Park, Ballarat, Shepparton, Broadmeadows and Trugnanina all cited instances of a disconnect between, not only community leaders, but also parents, whom some participants included in the disconnect.

Young men from the Iraqi and Afghani communities were most critical of the community leaders:

- ‘gap between leaders and youth’;
- ‘young people use different methods of communication (social media)’;
- ‘voicing concerns but not heard’;
- ‘gap is generational, Afghani community leaders choose projects that no one is interested in’; and
- ‘community leaders don’t listen to young people, they don’t care what young people say’.

VMC forum participants’ suggestions to foster understanding and inclusion:-

- creative expression through arts – use music, rap, beat-making to communicate experiences and young people’s voices;
- start at school – be proactive, employ a whole-of-school policy and service approach;
- celebration, festival, sharing, clothes and food – to promote awareness of learning about other cultures;
- schools can and should do more, e.g. participant related the story of a student wanting to share his culture and suggested a trip to the local mosque, to meet the Imam etc.;⁸¹

77 Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2012.

78 Bentley and Cazaly, 2015.

79 Allen, Spandler, Prendergast, & Froggett, 2015.

80 Ibid.

81 Participant, Shepparton, 2015.

- 'events, communities mixing, sports events'; these provide people with opportunities to participate;
- one day festivals help to celebrate other cultures, creating awareness and learning opportunities;
- more festival events to better understand each other;
- local school canteens can be encouraged to serve international foods with parental assistance; and
- neighbourhood programs, i.e. annual day for neighbours to meet, get together, eat together.

Recommendation 5

Promote multiculturalism through inclusive events and public community occasions which foster greater social participation and advance intercultural understanding.

This can be achieved in many and varied enjoyable and imaginative ways including by:

- incorporating creative arts for all young people through school programs that engage with and celebrate the diversity of the local school population;
- ensuring that events are widely accessible to multicultural communities by engaging early with young people from diverse backgrounds in local communities when the event is being planned;
- engaging schools to promote intercultural events in their local community;
- listing your organisation or school on mailing lists for grant and funding opportunities; and
- engaging with the local chamber of commerce and business people for promotional and other philanthropic support.

Recommendation 6

Government departments such as Education, Health and Human Services, Economic Development and Tourism be encouraged to further promote multiculturalism under a Whole-of-Victorian-Government approach that celebrates diversity and promotes intercultural understanding.

This could be achieved by consideration of incorporating multiculturalism within existing programs and strategies such as:

- Tourism could consider promoting Victoria also as "the multicultural state"; consider that:-
- Victoria's population is among the fastest growing and most diverse in Australia; and
- The 'knowledge state' – Victoria ranks 2nd in Australia for international students, who contribute in the region of \$4B to the state economy.⁸⁴
- The Department of Education and Training consider incorporating images that include young people from CALD backgrounds in all literature and webpages, especially those that relate to Unity through Diversity, and any aspect of education that relates to multiculturalism to ensure that young people from diverse backgrounds feel included;
- The Department of Health and Human Services, Sport and Recreation consider strategies and programs that reach and engage with young people from CALD backgrounds, especially through the Women in Sport and Recreation Taskforce, to seek opportunities to engage with young women from African, Arabic, Vietnamese and other ethnicities underrepresented and promote their participation; and
- The Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources entity 'Visit Victoria' include major multicultural events promotion, and feature the contribution of earlier historic waves of migrants to the state of Victoria such as, the Chinese miners in the Victorian goldfields and the Vietnamese community in 'Little Saigon' Richmond.⁸²

82 ABS, Australian Social Trends, Cat.4102.0, Dec 2011; and City of Melbourne, A Great Place to Study International Student Strategy 2013–17. Available at: http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/AboutMelbourne/KnowledgeMelbourne/Education/Documents/International_Student_Strategy_2013-17.pdf

TRUST AND EQUALITY

In Australia, multiculturalism was designed to recognise diversity and prevent social exclusion. However, diversity of origins, class, religion and culture is greater now than when the policy was introduced in the 1970s. Then, Australian multiculturalism was based upon two main principles.⁸³

1. A commitment to equality, to ensure immigrant participation in all societal institutions; and
2. The right to pursue their own religion and languages, and to establish communities.

Although those principles stand, multiculturalism is now also framed by the notion of ‘unity in diversity’.⁸⁴ This notion encourages integration into Australia’s ‘core cultural values’, a core of values that was derived from the first Anglo-celtic migrants.⁸⁵ Therein lies a tension of multiculturalism, that relates to broader community understandings (and misunderstandings) of notions of ‘integration’ and ‘assimilation’. It has been reported that, in some communities there is concern that migrants are not integrating well, and not making the effort ‘to become as Australian as possible’.⁸⁶

The VMC encountered this issue from the perspective of young people from CALD backgrounds who expressed a sense of injustice at the way they were stereotyped and judged, especially by their appearance. This was an issue especially for African and Muslim communities. For example, at Morwell young African women cited ‘receiving verbal abuse, because of stereotypes of women that wear headscarves’, and ‘being discriminated for not having an Australian accent’. They also related stories of unwarranted surveillance while browsing in shopping centres and during trips to local shopping strips.

“People can help create a better sense of belonging for young people who feel left out – parents, family, local community, wider community, schools, friends, peers.”

Participants, Metro West 2014

Dandy and Pe-Pua (2013), found that equality of access to resources was a driver of social inclusion, and that trust was a central element of both social capital and social cohesion. A sense of connectedness, belonging and trust in others in one’s community is also central to most definitions of social cohesion.⁸⁷ This shared sense of belonging is a vital component of social cohesion.

According to Miller (2000), ‘for the proper functioning of the state - to ensure social justice, commitment to the common good and to avoid alienation - its citizens need to have a shared sense of belonging to each other.

VMC forum participants’ suggestions to foster trust and equality:-

- more opportunities to talk about issues affecting young people, forums like these with multiple ethnicities represented;
- provide multiple avenues for young people to provide feedback, including regular VMC youth community consultations;
- more awareness and acceptance of other people’s culture and gender;
- exposure to different cultures, especially from an early age;
- school programs, i.e. International Day – choose one day to celebrate all nationalities represented at the school;
- cultural institutions to have more ‘open days’, i.e. Sikh Temple, Afghan Mosque, African Cultural Centre, Iraqi Youth Club;⁸⁸

83 Castles, Vasta, & Oxfkul, 2012.

84 Ibid.

85 Jayasuriya, 2005.

86 Castles, Vasta, & Oxfkul, 2012.

87 Jensen, 1998.

88 Suggestions from participants at Shepparton.

- celebrating different culture, not just the typical Australian celebration, e.g. Christmas, Easter and so on;⁸⁹ and
- having stuff to do in the community and different places to go to.

Recommendation 7

Seek to engage young people from diverse backgrounds through different participatory methods. This includes via sporting groups, community groups, youth service providers (including local government programs), schools and universities.

This could entail:-

- being sensitive to cultural nuances, such as the need to seek input from young women in a separate forum to young men where appropriate;
- engage community leaders in these processes – from mainstream and community subsets;
- give young people the freedom to provide unsolicited feedback and take their suggestions on board; and
- provide avenues where young people from multicultural backgrounds can share their stories.

IDENTITY AND SUPPORT

Young people from multicultural backgrounds, and also their parents, need strong support systems that enable these young people to develop their identity in safe secure environments. Stereotypes, being judged for your appearance and racial comments impact negatively sending a message that they are not accepted and do not belong. This comes with a sense of the unjustness of racial comments, as they feel these slights are unwarranted. Overall the impacts can be negative and affect their view of themselves, who they are and how they ‘fit in’.

VicHealth (2014) notes that newer forms of racism are often expressed in terms of incompatibility between the cultures of certain groups and the national identity (or what it means to be Australian), and beliefs about which groups ‘belong’ in a community or country.⁹⁰

For some young people frustration can be compounded by intergenerational conflicts such as pressure to maintain traditional cultural mores versus peer pressure to conform to the new environment.⁹¹ In extreme instances young people can become disengaged and in any event such adverse comments and actions create distance between community subsets and the mainstream population.

Assisting young people from multicultural backgrounds to develop their identity has potential benefits, both for the individual and the broader community. For example, a secure and positive ethnic identity is an important condition for mental health.⁹² It has also been found in some studies that a positive and secure ethnic identity is associated with a greater capacity to engage in cross-cultural relationships.⁹³

Thus to enable young people to develop a healthy and positive sense of identity also requires an environment in which people can become adept at interacting with both cultures. For this to occur, a national identity that authentically values and embraces, rather than derogates, diversity and minority cultures, is necessary.⁹⁴

89 Suggestions from participants at Dandenong.

90 VicHealth, 2014.

91 Turnbull & Stokes, 2011.

92 VicHealth, 2014.

93 Phinney, Jacoby, & Silva, 2007.

94 Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001.

VMC forum participants' suggestions to support identity development:-

- guide young people towards a sense of achievement to give value and a sense of belonging, i.e. through sports and other activities;
- support mechanisms - in the formation of identity;
- provide recreational opportunities;
- for the 'hard to reach', go along to existing activity and be in their 'space';
- provide (adequate) support services;
- schools need to organise opportunities to share, teachers need to facilitate greater group interaction;
- Shepparton – planned Iraqi youth hub, for whole community where different cultures can mix;
- young women from diverse backgrounds at Shepparton and Dandenong raised the need for a girls youth club, a place for young women to go and mix together;
- education on 'speaking out', building confidence;
- provide facilities for multicultural young people, create a welcoming place where they can belong, a well-planned environment for young people; and
- inter-schools dance competition to facilitate more celebration of each other's culture.

Recommendation 8

Support young people to develop their identity in safe and secure environments.

This can be accomplished in a number of ways, such as in schools and youth clubs:

- by providing opportunities for young people from multicultural backgrounds to share their stories – begin intercultural conversations;
- by inviting local ethnic groups to visit, perform at school assembly or participate in school fete or similar event;
- by creating a welcoming place where young people can hang out and belong in a well-planned environment; and
- seek to include information on human rights instruments designed to protect against discrimination and promote acceptance of diversity.

4.6. Supplementary Resources

This section provides some additional resources including models and examples of successful programs. Many were successful programs that were not successful in attracting ongoing funding.

1. Building Relationships and Initiating Change (BRIC) - CMY

Building Relationships & Initiating Change (BRIC) was funded by the Office for Youth, and ran from 2009-2011; designed in response to a growing need for support of youth groups comprising of newly arrived and young people from diverse backgrounds.

The BRIC program established and/or supported youth groups involving newly arrived, migrant and refugee young people; provided opportunities for increased skill development; and contributed to increased confidence and connectedness (well-being) amongst participants within the community.

For a video presentations, Faces of Youth Mentoring - Building Relationships and Initiating Change, refer to the link - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uljXIHPOUrM>

2. Boyspace - CMY

CMY BoySpace used sport as an entry point for young men in Dandenong. When local services were experiencing difficulty in recruiting young Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors to conventional youth work programs, the CMY BoySpace Program succeeded in building trusting relationships by using sport as an entry point to engage and support young men (soccer, basketball and Afghan kite making). The program also provided these marginalised young men with a connection to other young people, including from the mainstream community, which assisted settlement and integration.

The program also helped to link participants with organisations such as YSAS and Victoria Police, and enabled supervisors to make appropriate referrals to emergency support and crisis services so that these young men received the supports they needed.

3. The Shared Work of Learning - Mitchell Institute for Health and Education Policy

This research identified the need to 'grow community voice', as a priority, recognising that collaboration to improve student outcomes is not solely a professional conversation, and building stronger relationships with the communities that surround schools leads to higher student achievement.

Attitudes, relationships and decisions in the wider community also have a powerful influence on what students get from their educational experience and which resources schools can access. The answers are most likely to emerge by expanding the range of methods through which local communities are engaged in talking with, and using, schools and the activities and facilities they might offer.

The research included an action, to 'include student voice in decision making', noting that there is no part of the community more invested in the success of our education system than the students themselves. Education systems need to consider ways for students to play a more active role in the governance structures of schools and how their views can be recognised in establishing learning priorities.

The Mitchell Institute research report No. 03/2015, Tom Bentley and Ciannon Cazaly, May 2015 at: http://www.mitchellinstitute.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/The_shared_work_of_learning_lifting_educational_achievement_through_collaboration.pdf



5

EMPLOYMENT

For young people aged 16-25 years of age, employment is about transitions and pathways into labour markets, as well as into further education. Many forum participants were either still at high school or studying vocational or further education at colleges and universities. In the main younger participants (16-19 yrs) were seeking some form of part-time work as students, while older participants (20-25 yrs) were seeking to enter the labour force and build career pathways. Therefore, discussions about employment also included conversations regarding the transitions specific to the youth life-course.

5.1. Overview

Involvement in education and/or the labour force are indicators of social inclusion, and also important components that contribute to social cohesion. Social inclusion also refers to the extent to which community members have equal access to resources in the community, including education, employment, healthcare and housing. The VMC was keen to explore these issues with young people from diverse backgrounds and hear about their aspirations and any difficulties they might face in reaching their goals.

Common indicators of social inclusion include measures of workforce participation, income, receipt of welfare benefit or social support, education, and occupation.⁹⁵ Education and employment are encompassed in social cohesion domains of 'participation' (which includes voluntary work, political and cooperative involvement), and 'worth' (related to life satisfaction and happiness, and future expectations).

Evidence from the literature increasingly points towards a hostile new landscape: one in which employment opportunities are precarious and marked by polarisation.⁹⁶ In this new policy landscape there

is increasing interest in 'young people', as a cohort at risk of precariousness, or 'precarity'. The impact of precarity on the lives of young people from diverse backgrounds also positions this cohort in need of specifically targeted social policies.⁹⁷

While some have argued that the shift towards precarity and uncertain transitions creates greater choice, others have suggested that for many, these transitions continue to be shaped by pervasive structural factors that create vastly different experiences and outcomes.⁹⁸ The literature also identifies that the distribution and experience of labour market precariousness among young people is heavily structured by social inequalities and 'agency inequalities', which reflect the differences in young people's range or real choices of alternative activities.⁹⁹

“Raise awareness that diversity helps, educate employers that a multicultural workforce is a benefit and not a liability.”

Participants, Mill Park, 2014

95 Dandy & Pe-Pua, 2013.

96 Antonucci, Hamilton, & Roberts, 2014.

97 Ibid.

98 Brynner, 2005.

99 Korpi, 2010.

Thus, in constrained labour markets social and agency inequalities become intensified. For example, young people entering the new economy do not have access to the types of entry-level unskilled positions that were available to earlier generations. The industrial economy has given way to a knowledge-based economy where employment is characterised by increasing demand for more highly-skilled workers.¹⁰⁰

Youth transitions also involve passages between dependence and independence including periods when a young person may be in a state of semi-independence.¹⁰¹ Semi-independent young people are able to draw upon different types and levels of support and welfare – from the state, family and the labour market. For some young people family support and welfare provides them with significant material assistance, including a psychological safety net.

Many of the young people who participated in the VMC Multicultural Forums for Young Peoples spoke about their circumstances, some could not rely on these welfare supports and could be termed ‘at risk’ simply because whole families struggle to cope with pre- and post-settlement trauma for example, and in fact whole communities may face these issues. Some participants were young men (Afghani and Iraqi) in Australia alone with no family support.

“Today many school leavers don’t get the luxury of that first ‘chance’ at a job. They are not just competing for jobs against people in their classroom, across the road, or anywhere in the state or across the country. Ultimately they are competing in a global race for the best jobs.”

John Hartigan, Former CEO, News Limited Australia

5.2. Discussion

The VMC forum discussion questions for Employment, were designed to identify the specific challenges and difficulties facing young people from diverse backgrounds in considering their futures, and looking for employment. Secondary questions sought to gauge levels of available support, and to seek ideas from young people themselves about solutions and how to improve matters for them.

While young people have traditionally entered the labour market in precarious positions, they are now in precarious work situations for considerably longer and can find it more difficult to gain secure employment.¹⁰² ‘Standardised’ transitions from education to work have also been replaced by more complex combinations of education, training, periods of work and periods of unemployment.¹⁰³

Youth transitions are also far from homogenised experiences, especially for young people from diverse backgrounds. For the mainstream society, the youth period is also characterised by inequality of opportunity and outcome. However, ‘old’ social divisions - such as socioeconomic status, gender, ‘race’, and place - continue to create differences in the experience of the transition to adulthood, both across and between nation states, but also importantly, within.¹⁰⁴ Local communities and local economies are also affected by what happens in the global economy.

“While these contemporary conditions may affect an entire generation of young people, they do not affect them equally.”

(Antonucci, Hamilton, & Roberts, 2014)

100 OECD, 1996.

101 Coles, 1995.

102 Standing, 2011.

103 Antonucci, Hamilton, & Roberts, 2014.

104 Antonucci, Hamilton, & Roberts, 2014.

To illustrate, a participant at Ballarat described personal circumstances in which he is on a 'homestay' arrangement while he completes high school. This made it difficult for him to access the local labour market and extra-curricular activities, due to limited transport options; no car and a restrictive local bus service. This participant also raised the issue of visa restrictions on hours of work, which did not always fit with employers' requirements.

According to the literature, youth is a phase of the life-course that presents several challenges to the wider traditional paradigms of social policy.¹⁰⁵ Australian society, together with many western economies, is in a post-industrial phase where the restructuring of the labour market and increasing demands for educated workers result in young people having to negotiate particular risks, where they are required to play a much more active role in the construction of their own 'biographies'.¹⁰⁶ As a result, the discourse of 'risk' is playing an unprecedented role in the actions required from individuals, groups, businesses and governments in post-industrial economies like Australia's.

At the same time the intensification of risk is also accompanied by a breakdown of the 'certainties' associated with industrialisation, resulting in the increasingly unstable or precarious nature of the traditional structures of work and the family. For young people this means that transitions have often become characterised as uncertain, fragmented, and 'de-standardised'.¹⁰⁷ Thus, for all young people the landscape of 'standardised' transitions, has been replaced by more complex and fluid transitions of education, training, periods of work and periods of unemployment.¹⁰⁸

“Not all parents are working, many are dependent on government and not able to help their young people.”

Participant, Morwell, 2014

For those community subsets who start from a position of greater disadvantage, these new transitions can be particularly difficult to navigate. The VMC found that young people from diverse backgrounds can suffer undue discrimination in the labour market – 'names are a barrier', 'name appears foreign'. Also their education has been disrupted, due to migration journeys or fleeing war zones where formal education was interrupted anyway, thus transitions can prove particularly challenging. Therefore, the 'risk' for these young people can be substantial and requires greater investment to assist the construction of their 'biographies' and to provide them with better opportunities.

Youth Unemployment

Youth unemployment in Victoria has been growing since the 1990s. In 2014, the general unemployment rate was 6.8%. However, the highest recorded yearly average youth unemployment was 14.6% for the year.¹⁰⁹ The Victorian Council of Social Services (VCOSS, 2015) also found that the distribution of youth unemployment is highest in areas of concentrated disadvantage, including Melbourne's outer urban fringe and parts of regional Victoria. VCOSS cited Bendigo, Geelong, Warrnambool, Shepparton and Melbourne's north, west and south-east, where youth unemployment rates range from 17.1% to 18.8%.¹¹⁰

These areas also coincide with the locations for the VMC Multicultural Forums for Young People 2014-2015, and the forum findings support the difficulties faced by young people in these areas. General employment difficulties impact disproportionately on young people from CALD backgrounds. The statistics illustrate the systemic nature of the issue of unemployment for young people. In other words there are no 'pockets' of youth unemployment, but a consistent picture of youth unemployment across the state. **Figures 4** and **5**, illustrate levels of youth unemployment in Victoria.

105 Ibid.

106 Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002.

107 Antonucci, Hamilton, & Roberts, 2014.

108 Ibid.

109 Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015.

110 Victorian Council of Social Services, 2015.

Figure 4 – Average Monthly Youth Unemployment Rate, Victorian Metropolitan Regions¹¹¹

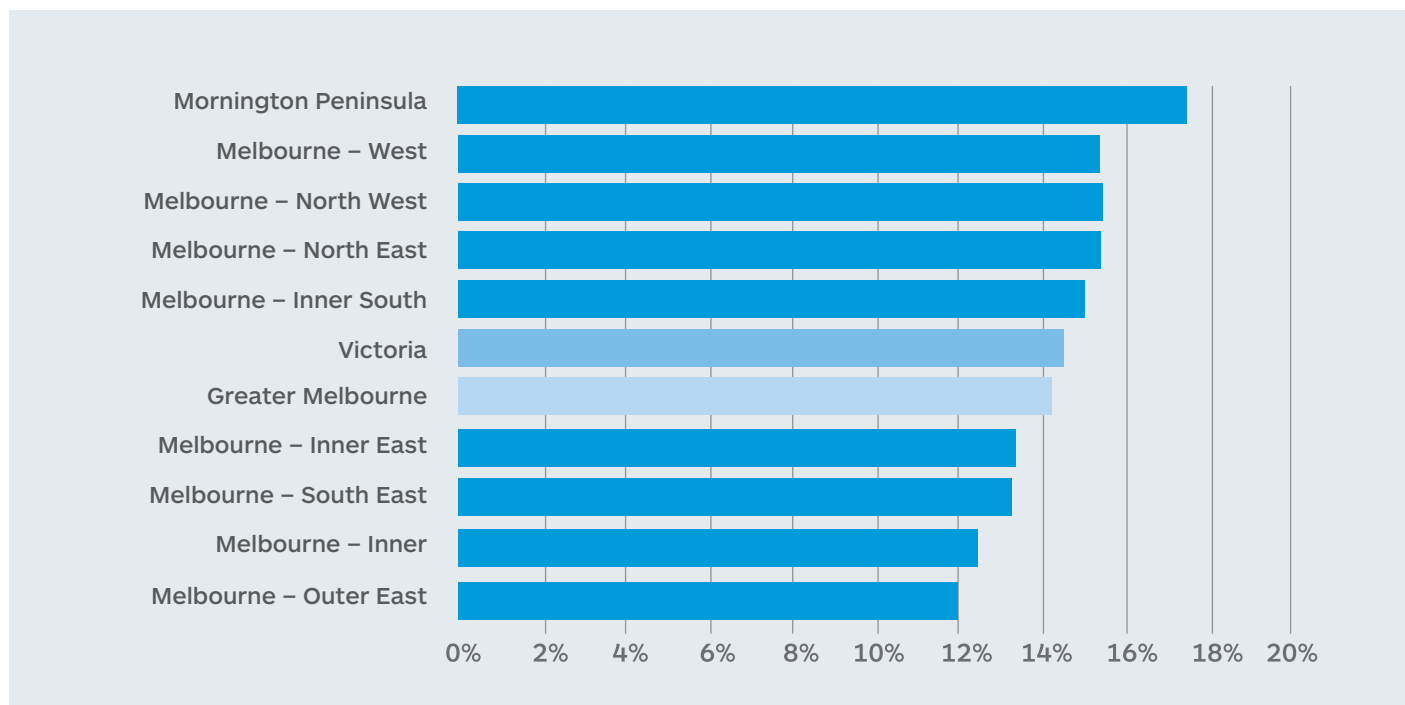
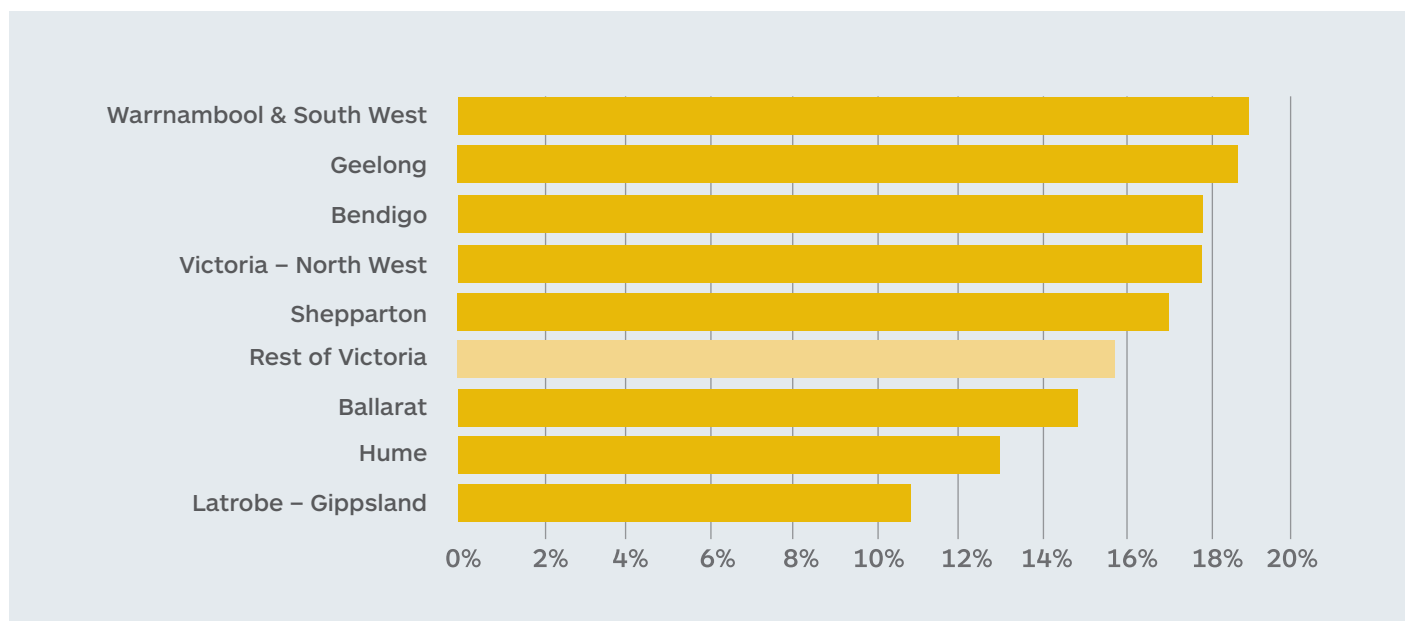


Figure 5 - Average Monthly Youth Unemployment Rate, Rest of Victorian Regions¹¹²



111 Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015.

112 Ibid.

5.3. Challenges and Barriers to Entering the Labour Force

To identify the challenges and barriers that young people from diverse backgrounds encounter when trying to find employment, participants were asked about the challenges they and others in their community faced in trying to find work? This included any instances of discrimination, information about access to social and professional networks, and any language or cultural barriers to accessing employment opportunities.

Themes identified from discussions include labour markets and hiring practices; transport issues; age related wage structures; networks, English language competency, work experience and qualifications, parental engagement; and investing in young people.

Key Themes:

Labour Markets and Hiring Practices

Participants at all forums provided instances of discrimination in local labour markets that affected them due to cultural and religious nuances, such as ethnic names and appearance. For example, at Shepparton young women cited incidences of being asked about wearing a headscarf when applying for a job. Young women in particular told the VMC that ‘cultural appearance restricts their confidence about applying for jobs’. Such incidents therefore, have capacity to impact negatively and certainly create a barrier in seeking access to employment.

At Sunshine a young Muslim woman related a story of successfully gaining a part-time job only to be asked on her first day at work, not to return. This apparently due to her wearing a headscarf, which she had not worn at interview. She described such poor hiring practices as ‘institutional racism’ and said it was a result of ‘not enough diversity in (executive) leadership positions’.

“Unemployment is high in Gippsland overall, not just young people or CALD communities.”

Participant, Morwell, 2014

The VMC was presented with evidence at Metro West, Mill Park, Sunshine, Dandenong and Morwell of hiring biases by employers, especially in regard to ethnic names on applications.¹¹³ Participants told the VMC that their job applications often did not progress because their ethnic names appeared ‘foreign’, making it hard to secure an interview. They felt the process was unfair, and that they were being denied an opportunity to speak for themselves and demonstrate their skills.

Incidences were related at all levels, with graduates citing similar experiences to school leavers. Participants at Mill Park advised that some young people changed their names as a result. Citing a friend named ‘Ali’, one participant, explained that after he changed his name to ‘Alex’ he suddenly got two interviews.

In Not Drowning, Waving (2009), a report for the West Australian government, similar issues were uncovered in consultations with young people from CALD backgrounds. These included, wearing headscarf, and speaking with a ‘foreign’ accent.

“70 shops have closed in Shepparton.”

Participant, Shepparton, 2015

Some VMC participants were quite resigned to the situation – ‘racism happens’ (young Muslim men at Broadmeadows); ‘racist employers are a minority, we just walk away, we know who they are’ (mixed groups at Shepparton).

Figure 6 - Extracted Muslims Australia, Australian Federation of Islamic Councils Inc, Issue 16; Jan 2015

In Victoria it is against the law to physically assault or threaten to assault someone. It is also against the law in Victoria to yell, scream or hurt someone because of the colour of their skin or their religion. For instance because a woman is wearing a hijab. Islamophobic assaults are racial vilification and are against the law.

You have a right to be safe whatever you wear!

If you experience an assault seek support as soon as possible from friends, shopkeepers, or anyone nearby. Collect any photos, names and contact numbers of witnesses or people who helped you. Write them in your phone.

What to do if you are abused due to your race or religion.

113 This issue was also previously raised at the VMC Regional Advisory Council meetings in 2014 and 2015.

At Dandenong and Sunshine young women explained that for them, it was sometimes tougher. They cited image and gender discrimination in the retail industry where many young women seek job opportunities. They related that some employers now request photos and even videos of applicants.

Young women at Dandenong advised that, under these conditions they would not submit an application, knowing that the photo, clearly showing ethnicity, would mean that their application was discounted. They told the VMC that it 'feels degrading for an image to meet a standard'. They also related incidences when particular ethnic boutiques hired only from within their own culture, in clear violation of equal opportunity legislation.

Transport Issues

Transport was also a major barrier to employment for young people in regional areas. At Morwell, Ballarat and Shepparton some young people were in situations where they were alone without family support and relied heavily on public transport, despite its restrictions.

Others were from large families, perhaps with only one family car and thus also reliant on public transport. In households with large numbers of children, younger siblings needed to take precedence for school runs and so on. One young man at Ballarat told the VMC that he walks to and from school 45 minutes each way. Initially this was because he did not know about the bus, but also due to the infrequent nature of the service.

Age Related Wage Structures

Participants also alerted the VMC to a gap that affects older teens when seeking part time employment. 17-18 year olds are often in an employment gap due to employers' preferences for younger teens owing to lower pay scales. One participant, a student at Shepparton explained that, once he attained 18 years, he was 'let go' from a local fast food chain, only to find later that he had been replaced by a younger person. Participants told the VMC that pay scales caused this problem because 'wages for 16 year olds are lower' and 'they pay juniors less, which makes us feel bad'.

Regional areas in particular are experiencing tough labour markets, where high unemployment and lack of opportunities affect whole communities.

These regional employment constraints often hit young people especially hard, occurring at a life-stage when access to employment could mean a measure of independence. For young people from CALD backgrounds the environment is tougher still. Participants at Morwell suggested that 'locals have advantages', citing an example where 'a friend's parents got him the job locally'. In limited labour markets the VMC was told that 'employers are more selective'.

“A mixing of cultural inspirations is a source of enrichment and an engine of creativity.”

Bauman, 2012

Networks

In discussions related to the need for contacts and making networks, participants observed that, in regional Victoria, networks are already smaller than in the metropolitan Melbourne region. Thus, even with assistance to initiate networks, the size of available networks posed constrained around being able to access employment in local labour markets. At Morwell the VMC was advised that the 'fly-in/fly-out (FIFO) workforce' was 'quite common in Gippsland'. However, young people from CALD backgrounds lacked access to even this job market due to youth and a lack of necessary skills.

English Language Competency

For some participants language was a barrier to gaining employment. English language skills and confidence in approaching employers were cited as challenges in accessing employment opportunities. At Ballarat and Morwell participants commented that their accents were perceived by prospective employers as being consistent with an estimation of poor English reading and writing ability.

There seemed to be an assumption that having a 'foreign' accent (other than from an English speaking country) meant a lack of English language skills, which was not always the case. In other cases English language competency was a real issue, illustrating a clear need for more intensive English language education in the early stages of settlement, and for some time on-going. For example, at Ballarat

participants cited English language skills as a potential barrier in performing at interview. At Dandenong some young women told the VMC that in their communities ‘women are not able to learn English without male permission.’

At Ballarat and Shepparton participants also cited employers’ lack of familiarity with the Australian visa system, especially in relation to work rights and the number of permissible hours of work. They said this barrier meant that their applications would be dismissed out of hand – put in the ‘too-hard’ basket’. Participants also explained that a lack of information for new arrivals about their work rights in Australia was also a barrier. For example, they may not know that they needed a tax file number (TFN), or how to obtain one from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO), or that there are age related limits to the number of hours that individuals are permitted to work.

Work Experience and Qualifications

A lack of prior work experience in Australia was another challenge. Participants at all VMC forums cited this as a barrier to gaining employment. At Morwell participants cited the need for both qualifications and work experience– ‘you need one or other to get an interview’.

The issue of gaining qualifications was cited as a challenge by many participants, in relation to high schools and universities and the suitability of qualifications for particular jobs, as well as the risk for some young people to disengage from education.

For example, young people from CALD backgrounds, and migrant and humanitarian refugee communities, can encounter significant difficulties in re-establishing educational pathways. Due to pre-settlement experiences they may have experienced not only disruptions to formal education, but a type of formal education that is very different to the Australian model.

As a result they may also encounter the formal stages of the Australian education system at different ages and levels of maturity from mainstream Australians.¹¹⁴

“They may never be able to compensate for their lack of educational background. The Australian school system is geared toward age groups, a two or three year gap is significant enough for kids not to be able to bridge it.”

Turnbull & Stokes, 2011

Participants at many VMC forum locations raised this issue. Their comments to the VMC highlighted their concerns at, what they felt was a distinct lack of understanding and acknowledgement of the impact of these early life experiences. They felt that educators and teachers did not acknowledge or understand the additional issues they face just to ‘get up to speed’ with their education within the Australian system, which they very much wanted to do. The need to provide extra supports for these students was previously raised, during a project in Melbourne’s western suburbs, that identified a key determinant of disengagement with education was frustration with the Australian education system.¹¹⁵ Related to this was the perceived focus on and primacy given to academic subjects and university entrance, in comparison to Vocational Education and Training (VET) related subjects.

Parental Engagement

This also raised a closely related and significant issue regarding parental expectations, knowledge of and engagement with the Australian education system. Participants at Metro West and Mill Park, raised the issues of unrealistic family expectations which put further pressure on young people already struggling to manage the school curriculum, and intergenerational conflicts emanating from navigating ‘living in two cultures, at home and at school’. The challenge was posed as a dilemma of ‘tensions with parental cultural backgrounds, not matching the young person’s desires’; ‘family expectations for young people’; and ‘lack of (parental) knowledge or understanding of the pathways’.

114 Turnbull & Stokes, 2011.

115 Ibid.

Young women at Dandenong raised the issue of encouraging parents to consider ‘encouraging females in non-traditional roles’. However, in discussing their aspirations for future careers their suggestions related to traditional female work roles, such as nurse, teacher (early childhood), and social worker. Nonetheless this may be a generation in transition as first or second generation migrants, who have aspirations not only for themselves but for their own daughters in due course.

Studies have shown that the active involvement of parents in their child’s education has a significant positive effect on students. Parental involvement in schooling can also bridge the gap in cultural values between home and school life that may occur in CALD families, ease intergenerational conflict, and improve the level of family connectedness.¹¹⁶ Although schools may desire to build good relations with CALD families, they often find it difficult to engage CALD parents.

One reason this can occur relates to a lack of positive engagement. For example, research demonstrates that parental contact with schools may be crisis-focused for students from CALD backgrounds, and related mostly to discipline issues. Thus families may associate contact with school with some sort of trouble.¹¹⁷ The ways that parents interact with schools may also reflect their own experiences of schooling overseas, such as a stricter separation between home and school life, where parents were not expected to be actively involved with the school, unless there was a problem.¹¹⁸

“The CMY ‘Journey to Work’ Program assists with establishing and building networks, and work experience.”

Participants, Morwell, 2014 and Ballarat 2015

Other issues affecting the family, such as lack of English language skills, financial pressures, family size (many young children), role change and power shifts (where young people have greater skills in English), and knowledge of the school system are all matters that can further contribute to a lack of engagement with the education system by parents from CALD backgrounds.¹¹⁹

116 O’Sullivan, 2006.

117 O’Sullivan, 2006.

118 Ibid.

119 Ibid.

120 Roberts, 2011.

The cost of schooling in Australia is another factor. The Victorian Auditor General’s Office (VAGO, 2015), found that parents were being charged for items and activities that should be free under legislation and policy. The VAGO Report, *Additional School Costs for Families*, found that the Department of Education and Training (DET) parent payment policy, templates and guidance, were not being followed by all schools.

“Invest in a Multicultural Youth Career Information Hub, a one-stop-shop where young people can find out about their work rights and responsibilities, and career options. Use it to connect employers with young people.”

Participants, Ballarat, 2015.

In effect the VAGO Report found that parents were not being given sufficient information, that they were also being denied sufficient time to pay, and not being provided with alternative options for payment (payment plans), or being given an opportunity to source cheaper alternative items themselves. The impact of this situation on CALD families can be disproportionate, especially in terms of understanding but also in assisting them to meet the school costs of their children and young people.

Investing in Young People

There is another group of young people, sometimes described as the ‘missing middle’, who are not in education, employment or training (NEETS), who are not ‘troubled’ or disengaged but who nevertheless are also exposed to precarious conditions.¹²⁰

In an interview with the Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL), Senator Ricky Moore explained that as an early school leaver, without work experience, qualifications or personal contacts, he found it very tough to find employment.¹²¹

Having left school at age 15 years, he also moved out of home and applied for ‘many, many entry-level jobs’.

At 17 years he ‘landed his first job’, but related that the experience of being a teenager and jobless was ‘very challenging’, affecting his morale. As a consequence, now aged in his 30s, Senator Muir says he ‘knows the challenges that young people in similar situations today face’. He recommends that ‘well-structured programs in the community that help jobless youth build transitional skills to get into the workforce, are very important for those not suited to higher study.’

Senator Muir’s experiences were reflected in the comments from young people who attended the VMC forums. Participants cited ‘work experience’ almost as a repetitive refrain at all forums. When it came to ‘ideas for a helpful program’ – the solutions focused phase of the employment discussions – participants almost universally requested ‘more work experience’, including as part of ‘a study course that has work experience’; and suggestions such as, ‘the ideal program includes ‘tastes’ of different workplaces’.

“Sometimes people are misunderstood because of their cultures. Help parents, inform them about career options – this helps young people.”

Participants, Broadmeadows, Carrum Downs, 2015

Participants saw benefits, not only for themselves, but also for employers in promoting greater diversity in the workforce. The ‘value add’ would be to enable employers to experience the benefits of a multicultural workforce. For example, young men at Morwell told the VMC that women (their mothers), ‘are the most hard working’ but that ‘employers do not know this because they do not understand the culture’.

However, concerns were also expressed by participants about the potential risks of exploitation through ‘free (work experience) placements’ and ‘employers exploiting the free labour’. Therefore, careful regulation with built in safeguards is necessary for any programs that promote and facilitate work experience placements.

5.4. Emerging Themes

A variety of themes arose from discussions on education, employment and career options for young people, and their ideas to achieve their aspirations. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2015) identified limited access to employment as one of the most important factors hindering the inclusion of young people in society.¹²² Although Australia escaped the worst effects of the GFC in 2008, its impact has been long-lasting and insidious, especially on the fringes of the labour force.

The BSL (2015) reported, “If you are 15 to 24 years and looking for work, your probability of finding a job has steadily declined since the GFC”. Providing young people with a better start in the labour market is vital for their well-being, as well as imperative for greater social cohesion. Creating any sort of labour market division, such as excluding certain groups due to misconceptions about ‘foreign’ accents or appearance, has the potential to affect individuals, CALD and mainstream communities in ways that are detrimental to social cohesion.

Much of the language around employment and education is about participation. Thus, for those who have limited capacity to participate, it can be particularly excluding and damaging.¹²³ The key themes that emerged from forum discussions regarding education and employment relate strongly to a participatory discourse of mutual obligation, rights and responsibilities.

Participants rated eight key themes that were both barriers and potential enablers to greater participation in education and labour markets. These were, Career Guidance, Limited Opportunities, Networks, Hiring Practices, Work Experience, Qualifications, Language Barriers and Transport.

121 Ricky Muir, Victorian Senator, representing the Australian Motoring Enthusiast Party. The interview was conducted as an aspect of the BSL Youth Employment Campaign, My Chance, Our Future, 2015. Available at: http://www.bsl.org.au/fileadmin/user_upload/files/campaign/Wise_words_MAR2015.pdf

122 OECD, Youth Inclusion, 2015. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dev/inclusivesocietiesanddevelopment/youth-inclusion.htm>

123 Edwards, 2008.

“We want to get good jobs, to earn well, enough to live comfortably with families.”

Participant, Carrum Downs, 2015.

Figure 7 – Employment – Key Themes

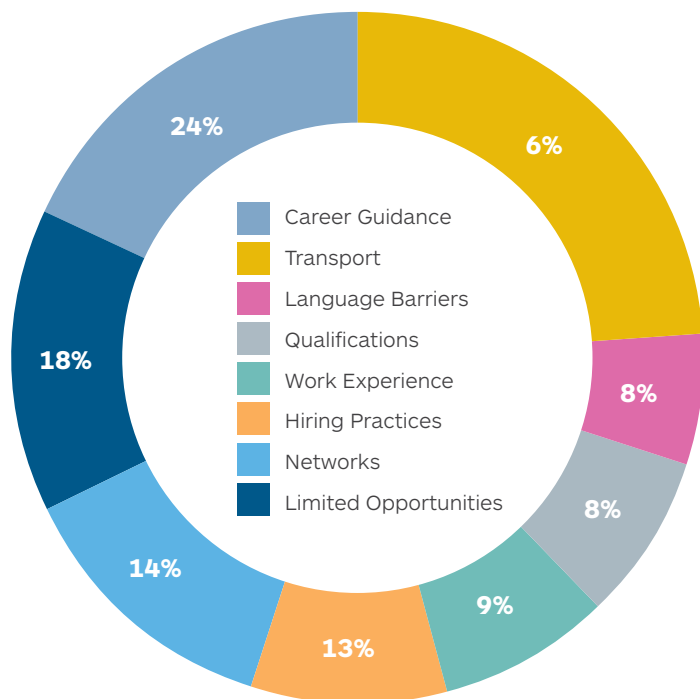


Figure 7 illustrates the emergence of key themes related to discussions on employment and education.

Key Themes:

- **Career Guidance** – in response to the solutions focused question – ‘what ideas for a helpful program do you have?’ – ideas about career guidance came out on top. This also included advice about programs that included employment pathways, as well as ‘different streams’. This meant career advice at different stages, such as at school in subject choice/career related, early school leavers (i.e. NEETS), and college and university graduates. Career guidance needs applied at all stages and participants highlighted the importance and benefits of including information for their parents.

- **Limited Opportunities** – this related, not only to depressed youth labour markets, but also to career constraints. For example, poor English language skills might mean that an individual had access to limited opportunities. It also related to limits posed by discriminatory hiring practices and the lack of entry-level jobs for young people.
- **Networks** – this theme arose due to understandings about ‘who could help you’ to find work? Rural communities at Morwell, Ballarat and Shepparton appreciated the value of networks, or at least raised the issue more frequently than participants in the metropolitan locations, where schools, coaching and mentoring were suggested. However, participants at Morwell and Ballarat were also participating in the CMY program ‘Journey to Work’, where they also learned about the importance of connections in seeking labour market opportunities.
- **Hiring Practices** – information on hiring practices arose when participants related experiences of discrimination in employment situations to the VMC. This included instances of younger teenagers being employed in preference to older teenagers due to lower rates of pay for young individuals, and instances of discriminatory hiring practices due to ethnic appearance or accent.
- **Work Experience** – this key theme arose due to overwhelming evidence of the value of prior Australian work experience in gaining interviews from prospective employers. It was also seen as a way to circumvent discriminatory hiring practices. For example, prior Australian work experience indicated to prospective employers that someone else had hired you, and demonstrated your skills and English language competence.
- **Qualifications** – interestingly this key theme rated at only 8%, meaning it was discussed in terms of challenges and opportunities, quite low. This may have been due to the fact that most participants were on the way to gaining a qualification; either still at school, or already at college or university working towards a qualification. Therefore, it should not be assumed that the low rating relates to the value of having a qualification.
- **Language Barriers** – English language skills also rated at 8% and quite low. However, the age cohort who attended the VMC Multicultural

Forums for Young People were from a broad mix of backgrounds, including second and third generation migrants, recent migrants, humanitarian refugees, asylum seekers and young people with refugee ancestry. Thus, while for some English language was a real and pertinent issue, others were born in Australia and fluent.

- **Transport** – this key theme had particular relevance for rural environments, and was raised at Morwell, Ballarat and Shepparton. However, it was also raised at Dandenong – ‘no car licence, no job’. For many young people from CALD backgrounds public transport was a key barrier or facilitator to accessing local labour markets. One participant at Morwell, described travelling two hours each way to Melbourne to attend work by car because the V-Line train timetable did not match his rostered hours.

5.5. Key Findings and Recommendations

The VMC facilitated discussions with perhaps some of Victoria’s most vulnerable job seekers – international students, asylum seekers and newly arrived young people, some in Australia alone and lacking close family guidance or support. Many of these young people will struggle to construct their ‘biography’ while struggling to support themselves and gain a foothold into mainstream culture through education and work. Some can be classed as being particularly ‘vulnerable’, a notion that is close to precarity.¹²⁴ Thus seeking to reduce young people’s structurally produced vulnerabilities to impoverishment, exclusion, deprivation and so on, also has the potential to safeguard individual futures and benefit whole communities.

In identifying key elements for successful strategies to activate inclusive labour markets, the OECD recommends the implementation of three key elements – motivation, employability and opportunities – to be managed by effective and efficient labour market institutions and policies, as the keystone of any successful activation strategy.¹²⁵

These three key elements of activation strategies closely interact with one another and can be mutually reinforcing. Thus the key elements also take account

of individual capabilities (motivation), qualifications and skills (employability) and structural elements (labour markets, institutions and policies), and the ways in which these elements interact to provide employers with staff as well as place individuals in gainful employment.

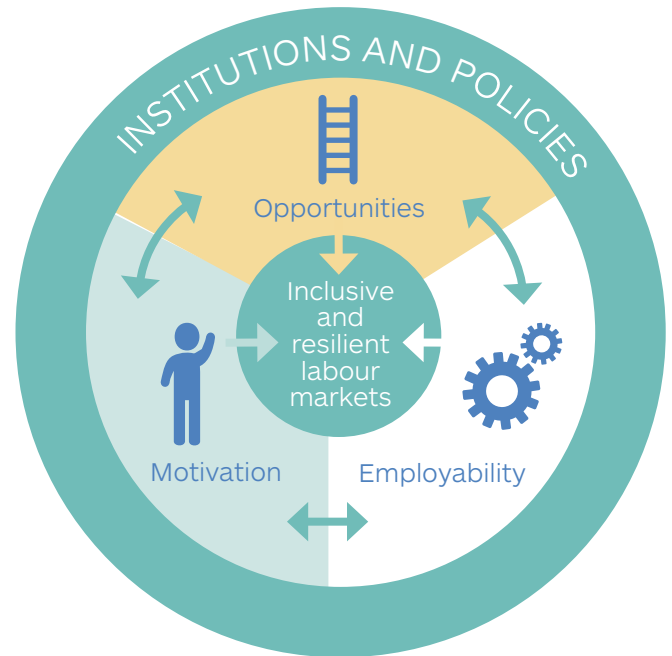


Figure 8 – OECD, Key Elements for Successful Strategies to activate Inclusive Labour Markets

“Giving young people the skills and tools to find a job is not only good for their own prospects and self-esteem, it is also good for economic growth, social cohesion and widespread well-being. That’s why investing in youth must be a policy priority the world over.”

OECD, Secretary-General, 2015

Similarly the key themes that arose from the VMC forums regarding employment - Career Guidance, Limited Opportunities, Networks, Hiring Practices, Work Experience, Qualifications, Language Barriers and Transport – also involve individual and structural elements that interact and reinforce one another.

124 Waite, 2009.

125 OECD, 2015.

During forum discussions on employment some young people from CALD backgrounds were already beginning to feel defeated. This was evident in perceptions such as ‘discrimination and bias is inbuilt, and part of the competitive processes’. A participant at Ballarat told the VMC he had been ‘looking for 3-4 years, but given up’, and because ‘some jobs are only available full-time and not flexible for study’. Therefore, it was also problematic in accommodating both work and study.

However, many were optimistic about their prospects. Years 11 and 12, and university students were very optimistic about their prospects. At Morwell and Dandenong, high school students told the VMC that schools helped them to develop a resume and facilitated work experience. These participants however, had little experience of actually applying for positions, or of being disappointed, thus were still highly motivated.

CAREER GUIDANCE

Forum participants were quite clear in their views that the career guidance that they received was tokenistic, and did not meet their needs. They identified the need for career guidance to be more integrated within the school system and more accessible at different stages. For example, some high school students, especially newly arrived young people, were struggling to become more familiar with the Australian education system where subject preferences could lock them into particular career paths too early. Once set in motion, they discovered, these pathways were difficult to alter.

The literature identifies the need for appropriate educational support for young people from NEC backgrounds as vital, noting that young new arrivals have often had vastly different pre-settlement schooling experiences and may therefore require extra assistance in adjusting to the Australian system.¹²⁶

There was also a need for information relating to alternative pathways to maintain motivation and hope. For example, information about accessing VET and Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)

courses. Young people and their parents need to know about all of the facilities and pathways that are open to them. Many participants at the VMC forums were not at all clear about alternative pathways, not only within the school system, but following completion of high school.

International students perhaps had a better understanding than EAL students. The VMC met EAL students at Ballarat and Shepparton who received additional supports in Year 11, but these ceased once they entered Year 12 and joined the mainstream student body. They wanted to achieve, but were realistic about the additional work necessary to be able to match their mainstream contemporaries. At Shepparton, these students advised that they needed a ‘homework club’ to help them because private tuition was too expensive to consider.

The strategic role of career guidance is even more important in fostering youth employability in current labour markets, especially when young people from CALD backgrounds are already vulnerable, competing in labour markets where they face barriers and discrimination. An additional complication may be that migrants often emanate from regions where the manufacturing base is still strong or from more agrarian economies. This can result in parents being ill equipped to assist their young people, either in education choices or career choices. For example, specialist employment services for refugees are limited, and this is seen as a barrier for refugee young people accessing appropriate and effective employment support.¹²⁷

The key themes of Career Guidance, Limited Opportunities, and Hiring Practices are inter-related and will be dealt with together. Limited opportunities is a structural labour market issue that young people have little control over. For example, ABS labour force data demonstrates that less than 15% of unemployed 15-19 year olds moved from unemployment into employment on a monthly basis in the early part of 2015.¹²⁸

In terms of general trends, analysis of the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey data also provided evidence that, while the proportion of unemployed Australians with less than

126 FECCA, 2015.

127 Mestan, 2008.

128 ABS, Labour force, Australia, January 2015, cat. no. 6202.0, trend data.

Year 12 had fallen since 2005, the proportion with some tertiary education has actually risen over the same period.¹²⁹

There was some support for these findings from participants who observed that 'its harder for older teenagers to find a job', and 'education is not resulting in employment'. At Broadmeadows, one participant related information about 'a friend who had to move to Darwin to take up a career opportunity' because he was not able to find a similar opportunity locally.

The literature also identified the need for additional supports to guide vulnerable young people from both established CALD and NEC communities. With supports in place, such as mentoring programs that support student engagement and increase students' study and career aspirations, young people can navigate the Australian school system successfully and transition to university, VET or employment.¹³⁰

“Tensions with parental cultural backgrounds, not matching desires of the young person, who is trying to forge an identity in the new culture Australia offers.”

Participant, Metro West, 2014

VMC forum participants' comments related to limited employment opportunities and hiring practices:

- not enough opportunities, not easy to find work, not a lot of jobs, businesses are not hiring (Shepparton); not many jobs (in Ballarat);
- programs are not necessarily providing the pathway to employment, jobs are not emanating at the end;
- lack of employment opportunities and constant rejections, its disheartening;¹³¹
- raise awareness in the private sector on the benefits of employing young people from diverse backgrounds, diversity helps; educate employers that a multicultural workforce is a benefit and not

a liability; it builds relationships, brings diverse clientele and a different perspective;

- employers expectations are too low, they are often surprised by the capabilities of a person from a CALD background; having multicultural workers develops interactions between diverse groups;
- multicultural employees bring a different perspective to the workplace, they can interact with people from overseas and provide cultural information that benefits relations with overseas customers;
- often women are the most hardworking and employers do not know this because they do not understand the culture (young African men at Morwell talking about their mothers);
- cultural appearance restricts confidence about applying for jobs – being asking about headscarf when applying for a job; some fast food outlets employ for a period and then, due to age, take on younger people due to cheaper pay scale; job adverts focus on 16 year olds, they pay juniors less, makes us feel bad;
- new arrivals lack information, even basics like the need to have a TFN from the ATO, and the number of hours you can work depending on age; and
- workplaces should be more open to flexible working arrangements.¹³²

Recommendation 9

That the VMC brings this information, provided by forum participants in relation to discrimination in hiring practices, to the attention of the Victorian Equal Opportunities and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC).

VMC forum participants' suggestions regarding the career guidance needs:-

Education system and career guidance:

- high schools in the northern metropolitan area have a limited curriculum, less choice of study streams which limits future career choices;¹³³
- no explanation to parents at school about students making preferences for subjects; informing and educating parents about the

129 Brotherhood of St Laurence, 2015 (b).

130 Victorian Council of Social Service, 2015.

131 Young Muslim man at Truganina, 2015.

132 Young women at Dandenong, 2015.

133 Participant at Broadmeadows, 2015.

diversity of career and work options for their children, and provide this information in translated materials; limits on courses means only so many places and besides, parents lack of understanding around prerequisites - help parents to guide children; help parents to encourage females in non-traditional roles;

- schools need to provide more career days; choice of subjects needs to be influenced by individuals employment objectives; closer employer and industry involvement; government could broker this role;
- career programs should have different ‘streams’, such as early school leavers, university graduates – because they have different needs and early school leavers may need more intensive case management; specialised services for job readiness for young people from diverse backgrounds;
- government should support young people into work by holding a “job expo” that connects employers with young people, in the way that universities do, otherwise we don’t know employers expectations; open a Multicultural Youth Career Information Centre, a one-stop-shop to help young people access jobs, get advice and learn about their work rights and responsibilities; create a travelling skills career fair/expo where students and parents can speak to qualified career advisers;¹³⁴
- lack of government support for entrepreneurial young people (who lack collateral to be able to borrow to start a business, for example); government should also support entrepreneurial skills of young people seeking work and help them to establish a new business; entrepreneurship - support to start a small business;
- need training in how to formulate a CV, address selection criteria and the requirements of the advertised position, or how to apply for work experience;
- CMY (Journey to Work Program) will call businesses and seek to match vacancies to the young person. They help with CV, prepare for jobs regarding the kind of qualification you need and opportunities for training by employers;
- provide suitably qualified careers advisers for secondary schools, teach them how to use resources to help young people from diverse backgrounds;¹³⁵

- career guidance at school isn’t enough, they don’t do anything and sometimes are not supportive, they want to do what they think is good for the students; schools help by providing mock job interviews in Dandenong and providing career sessions at the school;
- need to choose career well, misinformation through universities, information necessary to make an informed decision;
- interview practice, training and instruction, how to prepare a resume, practical skills, social and communication skills; and
- need careers advice – to help access to employment in an unfamiliar environment, and link to potential employers in the community.

Recommendation 10

That the Department of Education and Training consider early investment in the potential of young people from diverse backgrounds to enable them to participate fully and equitably with mainstream students who have been in the system for longer.

This means:

- establishing early intervention strategies to protect the school careers of young people from CALD and NEC communities;
- recognising that students from CALD and NEC backgrounds and their parents face initial and often ongoing difficulties in transitioning to the Australian school system due to pre-settlement experiences;
- providing parents with translated materials, and information sessions with interpreters, to provide them with accessible information about the school system and the realistic opportunities available to their children; and
- providing opportunities for the parents of students from CALD and NEC communities to engage with schools early and often to cement good relationships, and to provide avenues for ongoing further engagement to ensure that these students are not at risk of early disengagement from the system.

134 Participant at Broadmeadows advised that community schools lack guidelines and careers adviser are not suitably qualified

135 Comment from participant at Broadmeadows, 2015.

This could be achieved by:

- brokering and developing collaborations and/or partnerships with local government youth services, community based non-government organisations (NGOs such as CMY), community health services (who deliver primary refugee health care), and designated settlement services (such as AMES, Spectrum, etc), to engage families from CALD backgrounds;
- including collaborative partners in administrative school staff and planning meetings to ensure the needs of CALD and NEC students and their families are advocated for; and
- ensuring that these collaborative partner organisations and other community based locations (such as Council offices, libraries, recreation centres, maternal and child health centres) also have translated materials and storyboards on hand about the Australian school system.¹³⁶

Recommendation 11

Develop a Whole-of-Victorian Government approach to career guidance that seeks to encompass the many and varied careers and opportunities that can be pursued by young people from diverse backgrounds, and make this information widely available through translated materials, storyboards and on Government Department websites.

This could be accomplished in a number of ways, including by:

- the VMC developing and sharing profiles of young people from diverse backgrounds that include personal stories of their varied study and career pathways, to demonstrate the range of pathways possible in order to encourage and inform other young people, their siblings, families, mentors, guardians, teachers, community leaders, religious leaders, etc.;
- Victorian Government departments seeking input from their own staff (from CALD backgrounds), and from the VMC, to inform a suite of resources for schools, community events, career fairs and expo events (posters, online, video, etc.); and

- widely distributing all resources by utilising a number of community based avenues such as local government youth services, ethnic youth community organisations, ethnic and community media outlets, social media, and similar.

WORK EXPERIENCE

The key themes of Qualifications, Networks, and Work Experience are inter-related in terms of accessing potential employment opportunities, and will be dealt with together. The issue of qualifications is also closely related to career guidance and recommendations 10 and 11 would seek to address the few issues raised at the forums in this regard. Service providers who attended the forums raised the issue of qualifications more than young people, who in the main, were in high school or study and thus working towards a qualification. Young people's concerns related more to the need for work experience, and the importance of having connections and networks, to facilitate entry into labour markets.

VMC forum participants' comments regarding qualifications:-

- education, skills mismatch with what's available in the job market; university graduates, gap between graduation and first job;
- without a qualification, can end up in security services; and
- qualification and experience are barriers, need one or other to get an interview.

VMC forum participants' comments regarding networks:-

- knowing people helps you to get a job, need a network to get a job;
- mentor pairing, to share experiences and stories on how to get a job;
- connection, knowing someone in the field to help you - who you know, not what you do;
- structural disadvantage, lack of connections, lack of knowledge about labour market;
- its about having connections, not based on results, and its not easy to make these connections;¹³⁷ and

136 For information about CALD COM storyboards for people with limited English language skills. Each story is carefully crafted to convey messages that tell people about services, civic life and basically what life is like in Australia. <http://www.moreland.vic.gov.au/community-care/multicultural-services/cald-com-storyboards-and-videos/caldcom-story/>

137 Participant, Truganina, 2015.

- there are very few social or professional networks for community subsets, especially for Cook Islanders, Samoans and so on.¹³⁸

VMC forum participants' comments regarding work experience:-

- lack of Australian work experience is a challenge; pathways programs needed, from VCAL through school trade-base, and exposure to trade-skills; programs that include case support and brokering with employers;
- the ideal program (for young people from diverse backgrounds) includes transitions to work, such as practical elements or 'tastes' of different workplaces; access a course of study that includes/incorporates work experience;
- looking for apprenticeship; difficult to find apprenticeships (Morwell and Shepparton);
- develop partnerships with industry; CMY program helpful but need more work experience;
- youth employment focused initiatives with a mentoring and career pathway focus, including traineeships that lead into work; and
- short term mentoring and ongoing support in looking for work, e.g. having a buddy to help motivation.

Recommendation 12

Instruct young people on how to develop networks and facilitate their work experience, including through volunteering in the local community and internships.

This could be accomplished in a number of ways, including by:

- using careful screening processes to source mentors who can provide intensive and sustained coaching to help young people from diverse backgrounds to develop their interpersonal skills within the Australian context; and
- partnering with the local chamber of commerce or similar organisation to facilitate presentations and provide opportunities for young people to engage with local employers in conducive settings.

The Brotherhood of St Laurence*, *My Chance Our Future Campaign*, recommended a Youth Transitions Service to achieve linking young people to work experience, by noting that:

- access to real workplace experience is critical to building work readiness;
- young people need real-life opportunities to get a taste of varied workplace environments;
- this also helps them to build their personal networks and mentors;
- intensive and sustained coaching helps young people to identify their strengths; and
- parents need to be engaged to support their young person's transition to work.

*BSL (2015), *Australian Youth Unemployment Snapshot 2014: Snapshot*.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS

Poor English language skills were recognised as a barrier to accessing and participating in employment.

VMC forum participants' comments regarding English language skills:-

- concerned about my accent and perceptions of a potential employer who may assume my English skills are poor;
- language barrier, poor reading and writing skills; lack of proficiency in English can be a barrier at interview;
- language barriers in writing job applications, grammar for non-English speaking backgrounds is hard;
- more tutoring needed, support for languages; and
- difficulties with English language skills, people don't readily help.¹³⁹

Recommendation 13

Strengthen access to out of school learning for students from diverse backgrounds to improve English language skills.

Coordinate homework programs to ensure that all Victorian high schools have information about providers working in the local area.

138 Participants, Carrum Downs, 2015.

139 Participant, Truganina, 2015.

TRANSPORT

Transport issues were raised predominantly at regional forums in Morwell, Ballarat and Shepparton.

VMC forum participants' comments regarding transport:-

- transport is a problem in regional communities, especially for gaining access to work;
- getting to and from work, unfamiliar with public transport;
- parents need to drop off, or I have to walk to work – being part of a large family makes this hard;
- buses stop early and are infrequent on weekends;
- limited transport options means I am restricted to local jobs in the local area; and
- timing for buses is not frequent enough so I walk 45 minutes to school.

Recommendation 14

That the VMC brings this information, provided by forum participants in relation to public transport, to the attention of Public Transport Victoria and local bus services, and advocates for accessible information about services.

The VMC could also consider collaborating with public transport user groups for local services that meet the needs of CALD and NEC communities.

5.6. Supplementary Resources

This section provides some additional resources including models and examples of successful programs. Many were successful programs but not successful in attracting ongoing funding.

1. Handbrake Turn Sunshine – Concern Australia

Hand Brake Turn provides practical, hands-on training in a fully equipped mechanic and body repair workshop. The courses are ideal for learners who have (or have had) difficulty within the mainstream education system. All training includes some preparation for the workplace and/or further education. The course also engages learners in teamwork, social and life skills, activities and training.

Cert II in Automotive Body Repair Technology comprises 9 weeks full time training: 4 days at the training centre and the 5th day is offsite. The approach is flexible to course delivery structure to meet student needs. Training was delivered with Victorian and Commonwealth Government funding, however this has ceased and Hand Brake Turn is reliant on donations.

Three programs were supported at Geelong, Dandenong and Sunshine. Due to the loss of funding only one course is now available at Sunshine. The program has been positively evaluated by KPMG. Information at: <http://www.concernaustralia.org.au/handbraketurn/>

2. The Transition to Independence (TTI) Footscray Project - MVLLN

The Transition to Independence (TTI) Footscray Project, run by the Maribyrnong and Moonee Valley Local Learning and Employment Network (MVLLN) was developed following the closure of an area where a group of mostly disengaged young people congregated frequently.

The project sought to offset the negative impacts and provide young people with meaningful alternatives. Project objectives were twofold: to focus on a group of vulnerable young people, disengaged or at risk of disengagement from community, education

and training and, employment; and to focus on the engagement and capacity building of partners and stakeholders.

Participants were predominantly young men of South Sudanese background, aged 16-28 years, former humanitarian refugee arrivals. They were supported to re-engage with community, training and education or prepared for work placements and/or employment. The former Victorian Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) and the VMC provided additional funding.

3. Maribyrnong Jobs Project working with the Burmese community – MMVLLLEN

This project sought to provide employment outcomes for a community of newly arrived refugees from Burma (Myanmar) who spoke Haka Chin, in Braybrook. A combination of the agrarian economy of their home country and disruption due to conflict and long periods in transition as refugees meant formal education levels were relatively low.

The Maribyrnong and Moonee Valley Local Learning and Employment Network (MMVLLLEN) employed a Burmese Liaison Worker through the Maribyrnong Jobs project to support communication with the community: 22 community member completed training and 28 found employment in the areas of: Tiling, Painting, Meatworks, Mushroom Farming, Fast Food, Cleaning and Vegetable warehousing.

4. Family Inclusive Language and Literacy Support Program – MMVLLLEN

A community partnership that delivered a whole of family approach to English literacy, learning and engagement with the education system. Based on evidence that parent engagement with and support of education is the single most reliable and effective indicator of successful education outcomes, the program coordinated literacy and homework programs to enable whole family participation.

The program catered to the needs of localised populations of refugee and migrant families from NESB. Initiated by the MMVLLLEN, the program has been picked up by the Maribyrnong and Moonee Valley City Councils. Enrolments and participation

in the program has been highly successful, to date, with excellent anecdotal feedback from participants, families and schools.

5. HEPPP Enhancing Migrant Aspirations and Pathways Program – Swinburne University of Technology

The Commonwealth Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP), provides funding to universities to undertake activities and implement strategies that improve access to undergraduate courses for low socioeconomic groups. This project specifically focuses on low socioeconomic groups of migrant and refugee students at Swinburne University of Technology (SUT) from NESB residing in the outer-eastern suburbs of Melbourne.¹⁴⁰

As part of this project, migrant students are participating in focus group discussions and surveys to share their experiences, including individual and institutional barriers and challenges, as they transition through tertiary education. The research also seeks to identify the types of assistance and interventions most useful to the students and to provide recommendations for further support services.

A key objective is to raise aspirations within the targeted groups to undertake a higher degree qualification relevant to their employment requirements. The Pro-Vice Chancellor (Student Advancement), Prof Glen Bates, is undertaking a series of key activities during September-November 2015 to engage community leaders, migrant families and young people. Activities include a multi-cultural world kitchen event, community stakeholder roundtable discussion, a community led youth forum (Croydon campus) and an 'aspirations to higher education' event for migrant students and their families at the Hawthorn Campus.

140 See case study at <https://commons.swinburne.edu.au/items/4ab013a8-9e34-44dd-9595-0e29db38a8ac/1/>

6. The Yarra Youth Commitment - INLLEN

The Yarra Youth Commitment (YYC) is a strategic partnership of schools, education providers, government agencies, community organisations and industry who work together to design, deliver and align local approaches that improve outcomes for young people in the City of Yarra. The members of the YYC understand that complex issues, such as youth disengagement or unemployment, cannot be resolved through single agency programs.

The YYC works to improve outcomes for young people between 10-24 years of age, understanding that young people have diverse needs, including for those young people who are engaged in education, those who are at risk and those who are most vulnerable and disengaged. The YYC understands the pivotal role and influence of the family on young people's health, wellbeing and education outcomes. The scope therefore sees young people within the context of their family life. For further information see: <http://inllen.org.au/initiative/yarra-youth-commitment/>

7. Employment Pathways for Young Asylum Seekers - BSL

This program, run by the Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL), devised as a philanthropic pilot project, sought to cater for young people aged 18-30 years whose formal education had been interrupted. Beginning at Fitzroy the program successfully engaged local Councils partners at Darebin (Iranian, Afghani, Pakistani, Sri Lankan), Moreland (Somali), and Brimbank (Sudanese, Rwandan, Sri Lankan, Iraqi and Iranian).

The program focused on education, and seeking pathways through volunteering to engage young people, and consisted of six months continuous contact, guidance and support. The program has finished due to funding being discontinued but BSL are keen to resume. The project worker told the VMC that the program could easily be extended and replicated.

An evaluation of the project is currently underway, and BSL can be approached regarding internal reports.

The project worker advised that a major finding was that structured English language classes were an absolute necessity as part of the program.

8. Additional Resources:

- The EAL Handbook Advice to schools on programs for supporting students learning English as an Additional Language, Department of Education and Training. Online copy available at: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/teachingresources/diversity/eal/eslhandbook.pdf>
- Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) and Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YacVic), Building the Scaffolding, Strengthening Support for Young People in Victoria. Resource available at: <http://vcoss.org.au/documents/2013/04/Building-the-Scaffolding-VCOSS-YACVic.pdf>
- Community perspectives on social inequality, IPSOS, Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS), Reichstein Foundation and Australian Communities Foundation. Resource available at: <http://ipsos.com.au/community-perspectives-on-social-inequality-2005-2015/>
- Youth Central Resources – such as casual work, know your rights. Also jobs and careers, useful info and resources, including 'youth rights'. Available at: www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au
- Jobs for Youth Campaign 2015: Recent evidence indicates that there is a youth employment emergency in Melbourne's inner north. The Inner Northern Youth Employment Taskforce has been formed in response to this issue, gathering the data and developing a local Youth Employment Strategy. Inner Northern Local Learning & Employment Network (INLLEN) in conjunction with Youth Connections and the Darebin, Moreland and Yarra Youth Commitments. Campaign website at: <http://inllen.org.au/initiatives/jobs-for-youth-campaign/>
- CMY Homework clubs: Around 9,000 students from refugee backgrounds are enrolled in Victorian government schools – 5,100 primary and 3,800 secondary school students. In addition to providing support in mainstream schools and through the English as an Additional Language New Arrivals Program across language schools and centres, the Department of Education and Training provides targeted support for these students and their families through the Refugee Education Support Program (RESP) in partnership

with Foundation House and the CMY. Access the Homework Club Resource Kit at: <http://www.cmy.net.au/publications/homework-club-resource-kit-0>

- The Academic Performance of First Year Students at Victoria University by Entry Score and SES, 2009-2013, Victoria Institute. Research report examining the impact of tertiary entry scores, socio-economic status and other factors on first year performance of higher education students at Victoria University in Melbourne. Controlling for other explanatory variables, the research found that low SES students perform better than high SES students for a given ATAR score in their first year results. Access Report at:
 - <https://www.vu.edu.au/sites/default/files/cses/pdfs/the-academic-performance-of-first-year-students-at-VU-by-entry-score-and-SES-2009-2013.pdf>
- Australian Youth Affairs Council (AYAC) Submission in response to House Standing Committee on Regional Australia: Inquiry into the use of FIFO workforce practices in regional Australia, March 2012. See submission at:
 - <http://www.ayac.org.au/uploads/AYAC%20FIFO%20Youth%20Service%20Provision%20-%20Final.pdf>
- Adult Migrant English program (AMEP) Ready for Work: Short 5 week course that provides hands on experience of work in the 'wet' trades – plastering, tiling, painting and rendering. For further information go to: <https://www.ames.net.au/ames-course-detail/ready-for-work/97>
- Resources for Australian Apprenticeship Pathways. See: <http://www.aapathways.com.au/Home>
- Australian Government Learning Potential App: Advising your teen on post-school options. Information at: <http://www.learningpotential.gov.au/advising-your-teen-on-post-school-options-2>



6

DISCRIMINATION AND BIAS

A major principle of Australian multicultural policy is the maintenance of ethnic and/or cultural beliefs, customs and practices, in recognition that it is important for the well-being of migrant and ethnic minority groups, and necessary to support new and more ‘culturally distant’ groups who settle in Australia.¹⁴¹

6.1. Overview

Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu: a person is a person because of other people.

Zulu proverb.

The VMC topic of Discrimination and Bias was designed to explore experiences of discrimination related to ethnicity and culture. Experience of discrimination is a policy domain of social cohesion, relating to attitudes towards minorities and newcomers. It is measured by the Scanlon Foundation Survey social cohesion domain of ‘acceptance and rejection, and legitimacy’. Acceptance and rejection are also similar to notions of social inclusion/exclusion, and being deemed ‘acceptable’. The Scanlon Foundation ‘legitimacy’ domain, also relates to disagreement with government support to ethnic minorities for maintenance of customs and traditions.¹⁴²

In a policy context, social exclusion is most commonly used to describe a ‘state’ in which people or groups are assumed to be ‘excluded’ from social systems and relationships.¹⁴³ Social exclusion works against social cohesion, which is about fostering inclusiveness and promoting strategies for social inclusion that engender a collective sense of belonging to society.¹⁴⁴

Figure 9 – The SEKN Definition of Social Exclusion

Exclusion consists of dynamic, multi-dimensional processes driven by unequal power relationships. These operate at different levels including individuals, groups, households, and communities. Exclusionary processes contribute to health inequalities by creating a continuum of inclusion/exclusion. This continuum is characterised by an unjust distribution of resources and unequal capabilities and rights required to:

- Create the conditions necessary for entire populations to meet and exceed basic needs
 - Enable participatory and cohesive social systems
 - Value diversity
 - Guarantee peace and human rights
 - Sustain environmental systems
- Social Exclusion Knowledge Network (SEKN), WHO, 2008*

When people are discriminated against they feel a sense of injustice, disempowerment, and exclusion. For example, participants at Morwell told the VMC that incidences of discrimination ‘makes people feel judged and not for who they really are’. At Carrum Downs, participants said that it made them feel ‘helpless, insecure, unwelcome and unwanted’. At Morwell and Metro West participants equated experiences of discrimination to human rights abuse, stating that it made them feel ‘like you have no rights and are not accepted’.

141 Dandy & Pe-Pua, 2013.

142 Markus, 2014.

143 Popay, et al., 2008.

144 Ibid.

Education and awareness is the best way to deal with discrimination. If you teach people, they are more likely to change and open their minds.”

Participant, Morwell, 2014.

Social inclusion is also an important determinant of health, and in particular mental health and wellbeing. The World Health Organisation (WHO) reported on the growing body of research that reveals complex interactions between biology and society, and have powerful influences on health.¹⁴⁵ The social systems in which we live are also impacted by interactions that take place in different dimensions of power – social, political, economic and cultural. The interplay between these dimensions of power generates hierarchical systems of social stratification that divide individuals and groups, along lines of gender, ethnicity, class, ability and age.¹⁴⁶

It follows therefore that, understanding experiences of discrimination and bias is important, in order that support structures can be strengthened where necessary, to enhance the overall health and wellbeing of young people from diverse backgrounds. In relating the stories of young people from refugee backgrounds for example, Powell & Graham (2015), noted that they often had unique personal experiences, and that understanding these contributed to supporting them and their families.¹⁴⁷ Forum participants made similar observations, about the need to educate the mainstream culture about the cultural diversity in its midst.

6.2. Discussion

By placing discrimination and bias firmly on the agenda at the forums, the VMC was also giving young people from diverse backgrounds the opportunity to speak openly in a safe environment about their experiences. At Morwell, for example, young Sudanese women said that ‘talking about it, like today’ was good.

Young people from diverse backgrounds told the VMC that they face discrimination and bias regularly, in a variety of circumstances. One participant of Australian-Middle Eastern background, referred to the discrimination he faced in carrying out his work activities.

As a supervisor at the MCG he faced racial taunts and vilification when challenging people about their behaviour in order to keep them safe, especially from people affected by alcohol. He explained this as a perception of power imbalance; ‘who are you to tell me’. In these instances some MCG patrons seemed to have a problem with taking instruction from an employee from a CALD background.

“Each of us has a few stains of emigration on his or her family tree.”

*Jose Saramago.*¹⁴⁸

At Metro West (2014), participants talked about ‘racial profiling getting worse’ due to social media and anonymous posts on Facebook, Twitter and similar. It was noted however, that often people identified their victim incorrectly due to ignorance. For example, people from Chin and Karen background may not identify as Burmese, although they come from Burma or Myanmar. Many incidences were cited like this when it was clear that the abuser did not know the identity of the person they were seeking to vilify.

145 For further information please refer to the WHO webpage on the Social Determinants of Health at http://www.who.int/topics/social_determinants/en/

146 Popay, et al., 2008.

147 Powell & Graham, 2015.

148 Quoted in Bauman, 2012.

“The person who used to be exploited, and has forgotten it, will exploit other people; the person who used to be looked down on, and pretends to have forgotten it, will now do the same; and here they all are together.”

Riccardo Mazzeo, 2012.

At Dandenong, young female participants described authority figures (police, teachers) as those with a ‘higher power profile’. They told the VMC that these people consistently applied ‘stereotyping’ or ‘racial profiling’, to ‘judge young people based on skin colour, or other representations of culture and religion’.

The Scanlon Foundation survey (2014), also noted a high incidence of discrimination due to skin colour, and/or ethnic appearance or religion. The 2013 survey described a marked increase in the reported experience of discrimination, from 12% in 2012 to 19% in 2013. This level has remained high, and was recorded at 18% in the 2014 survey.¹⁴⁹

In 2014, forum participants from Muslim backgrounds told the VMC that the attitudes which prevailed in the aftermath of the World Trade Centre attacks (9/11) in New York seemed to have ‘become more entrenched’. The rise of the Islamic State (IS) in Iraq and Syria, together with persistent negative media coverage was raised as an impediment to forging more positive attitudes. Participants advised that such reporting was not helpful and worked against building tolerance and understanding.

For example, a participant at Morwell (2014) remarked that her mother had been accosted in the supermarket following the siege at the Lindt Café in Martin Place, Sydney, as having been perpetrated by ‘your type of people’. At Ballarat, participants noted that ‘Aussie people don’t make time to get to know you’. A young Afghani (Hazara) man at Shepparton stated that, ‘media shouldn’t mix up terrorism with

normal citizens’. He had been called ‘Taliban’ when in fact he fled Afghanistan for safety due to Taliban oppression.

Forum participants related many experiences of discrimination at schools and on public transport. At Shepparton participants observed that the school curriculum itself discriminated: ‘western curriculum is an issue’ because it favours western civilisations. They observed a lack of Eastern or other cultures being included, as well as a focus on ‘mainstream’ languages at the expense of lesser known languages. Their point was that a more diverse and inclusive curriculum would foster greater knowledge about other cultures, further the cause of multiculturalism, and reduce the type of discrimination they cited.

The Foundation for Young Australians (2009), made similar findings in their consultations with young people. In a survey of secondary students conducted across four states in Australia, “80% of students from non-Anglo backgrounds reported experiencing racial discrimination. Many students from migrant or refugee backgrounds, also reported that over two-thirds of racist incidents occurred at school”.¹⁵⁰

However, the VMC also met some very enterprising young people who were seeking to bridge the discrimination divide and facilitate opportunities for greater engagement between community subsets and mainstream groups. At Mill Park for example, the VMC met two resourceful young Iraqi men who formed an organisation they called A Beacon of Hope.¹⁵¹

“Young people reporting incidents need to feel supported, otherwise the young person is isolated.”

Participant, Metro West, 2014

149 Markus, 2014.

150 Mansouri, Jenkins, Morgan, & Taouk, 2009.

151 For further information about this non-government organisation please refer to A Beacon of Hope – The Next Generation Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/abeaconofhopeaustralia>

The co-founder explained how, as a young Iraqi immigrant, there had been no culturally appropriate programs for him growing up. The group facilitates activities for young people who live between two cultures, to build harmony and understanding between the generations; the culture at home and the broader Australian culture.

He explained that Iraq does not a multicultural society, although there are longstanding ethnic groups. Therefore Iraqi migrants may experience multiculturalism in Australia for the first time. Generally a segregated society, Iraqis in Melbourne maintain close relationships within their cultural subset. Iraqi social conventions, including cultural protocols around the ways men and women can interact, also makes socialising segregated. Generally speaking, he explained that Iraqi's are not accustomed to mixing in large social gatherings. This is something that A Beacon of Hope is working to address by organising large mixed community events where many cultures come together.

6.3. Experience and Circumstances of Discrimination

To generate discussions on Discrimination and Bias, participants were asked, about their 'experiences of discrimination', the circumstances of any incidents, and also about how it made them feel. Participants' responses fell within five broad categories: casual racism (38%), racial profiling (33%), negative media/ social media reporting (14%), bias (12%) and transport (3%).

Racist incidents have been shown to adversely affect people's physical and mental health.¹⁵² It can also exclude the target from wider society, sending a message that they are not welcome. It reinforces social barriers and attacks the dignity of the victim as an equal member of society, undermining civility and social cohesion.¹⁵³

The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC, 2014) advises that, like other forms of racism, casual racism can marginalise, denigrate or humiliate those who experience it, including harm, even if the incident is not motivated by malice.

Table 5 following page, groups participants' comments about discrimination within the five categories.

152 Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), 2014.

153 AHRC, 2014.

Table 5 – Experience and Circumstances of Discrimination and Bias

Discrimination Type	Discrimination Experience	Circumstances
Casual Racism	Workplace culture not being inclusive.	Western name v ethnic name (former more acceptable). Bias against names and identified by names.
	Sikh boy taunted and bullied at school. Racism impacts more when younger.	Asked family permission to remove his turban and cut his hair to 'fit in' and 'have friends'.
	Issues: ignorance, intolerance. Fear of people who are a bit different. Appearance in shops, people judging	Hard not to react, and in any event impacts upon mental wellbeing.
	Racism pretty low compared to other countries. People in Melbourne are more tolerant than rural communities.	Newer communities – pressure to act one way at home but differently in general community (two cultures). 2nd/3rd generation migrants expressing the view “too many migrants”. Suffered much more than this during pre-settlement journey.
	Muslim women are targeted because their difference is visible.	Girls more vulnerable to bias as they are more visible due to headscarf. Focus on the headscarf.
	After the Sydney siege (Martin Place) racism towards someone’s mum – “you’re type of people” did this.	#I’llridewithyou – good way to deal with discrimination on social media.
	Stereotyping ethnic groups/people of another culture, e.g. accused of eating cats and dogs.	Broad based discrimination, not on a personal level.
	“Go back where you came from”.	When in the park saying prayers.
	Aussie people don’t make time to get to know you. Friendships take a long time to develop.	It’s a minority of people in the community who are discriminating.
	Hard to communicate, get friendly with Aussie boys, easier with International students.	People should know about different people in their backyard.
	Stereotyping, people calling me ‘Taliban’.	This was at school and the Principal did not take action when reported.
	People say things when drunk or intoxicated that they might not say when sober. “We don’t want you here.”	Politicians should not shame and blame – consider the language used. Perspective that you are an outsider.
	“Do you have parts in the Koran which actually tell you to kill someone?”	Lack of knowledge about Islam.
	“Tone down your culture”.	Careers advisor at university. Student advised to remove certain details from resume to improve job prospects.

Discrimination Type	Discrimination Experience	Circumstances
Racial Profiling	Racial profiling is getting worse.	Abuse based on physical traits.
	People being identified as something they are not, such as African despite different nationalities (Sudanese, Somali, etc.).	Lack of awareness and knowledge of CALD communities, therefore negative stereotypes. May have wrong impression of us.
	Started with 9/11 (Twin Towers, New York) – blame Arabs. Still around, attitude prevails. Results in violence and abuse.	Incident at MCG, young Muslim man working as a supervisor. Faced racial taunts and comments from patrons in carrying out his duties.
	Islamophobia - bias, hate, like anti-Semitism, against people of a particular region.	
	If there is an accent involved it can cause more problems. Perception of a power imbalance – mainstream v minority, and ‘who are you to tell me’.	
	Sometimes ethnic divisions are also imported however.	
	African’s get more punishment. People think they are violent.	Listen to the concerns of the community, there is a loss of faith in the justice system.
Media/Social Media	Higher power profile – based on assumptions made by teachers, police around stereotypes.	Police not approaching appropriately. Arrogant, unprofessional manner. Unnecessarily provocative questions.
	Racist comments on Facebook, Twitter etc.	Negative media reporting – SE suburbs.
	Media focus – blame especially to certain people from certain regions.	Media influence, media training needed.
	Cyber bullying.	Social media posts, derogatory.
	Media – one sided. Reporting is biased and marginalises certain groups.	For example, following Indigenous ‘Apology’, their culture is still not acknowledged.
Mainstream culture representatives make comment on minority groups (interviews, etc.).	Why not source minority comment? Educate journalists to report.	
Bias	Structural discrimination: health services for example do not help CALD communities.	Excuses are that resources to translate materials are limited, not a priority.
	Need to reach out to CALD communities.	
	The school system is discriminatory, not the peers.	Teachers not supporting kids. Lack of academic fulfilment.
	Bias in education system.	Systemic bias needs to be addressed by educating teachers, police officers, etc.
	Discrimination against EAL students by mainstream school teachers – migrant students feel left out.	Teachers sometimes assume CALD students can’t make it to Year 12, tell them “just do VCAL”.

Discrimination Type	Discrimination Experience	Circumstances
Bias Cont'd	Teachers give more opportunity to mainstream students, maybe because we can't speak English as well as they can.	Focus on mainstream languages at expense of other less mainstream (ethnic) languages.
	Westernised curriculum is an issue.	But noted a recent increase in Eastern history, begun to include, sharing and interaction.
	Language is a barrier.	
Transport	Discrimination on public transport.	Bus driver refused entry to African boy and left him standing while went on to pick up mainstream students a short way along the road.
		Myki ticket inspectors target students from African backgrounds while favouring other racial groups.

Analysis of forum findings related to Discrimination and Bias are similar to those under Section 4, Marginalisation and Belonging. Young people from diverse backgrounds face discrimination due to their appearance and accent, in ways that cause them to feel denigrated and sometimes humiliated in public spaces. Participants explained to the VMC that the injustice of the unprovoked nature of the negative attention that they encounter was especially challenging for them.

Experience of discrimination and bias is directly relevant to the social inclusion dimension of 'recognition', which includes mutual respect and tolerance, and the extent to which community members feel accepted or rejected by others.¹⁵⁴ 'Recognition' is measured by indicators such as, self-reported experiences of discrimination and prejudice, intergroup attitudes (particularly discriminatory attitudes and prejudice), and more general perceptions of tolerance and mutual respect in the community.¹⁵⁵

Young people from diverse backgrounds, especially new arrivals and refugees, seek a measure of validation and support from the broader community. They may already feel isolated, due to dangerous pre-settlement experiences; the health impacts of their journeys and poor links to the broader community,

can result in compromised physical health and mental wellbeing. As many forum participants were in the school system, it was natural that they might feel that the schools could do more to assist and support, not only their school careers, but more broadly their integration within the general community. Schools generally have the capacity to be able to connect young people like these to support services through their administrative capacities.

“People respond to acts of kindness and are appreciative.”

Participant Mill Park, 2014

Forum participants talked about the impact of negative media portrayals upon them as individuals. There is also evidence in the literature that, broadly speaking, many in the general community obtain their information from the media. For example, the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture found that high levels of inaccurate information about unauthorised arrivals in the community correlated with negative attitudes towards asylum seekers and refugees. They also found that, for people who had personal contact with refugees, attitudes were more positive.¹⁵⁶

154 Dandy & Pe-Pua, 2013.

155 Markus, 2014.

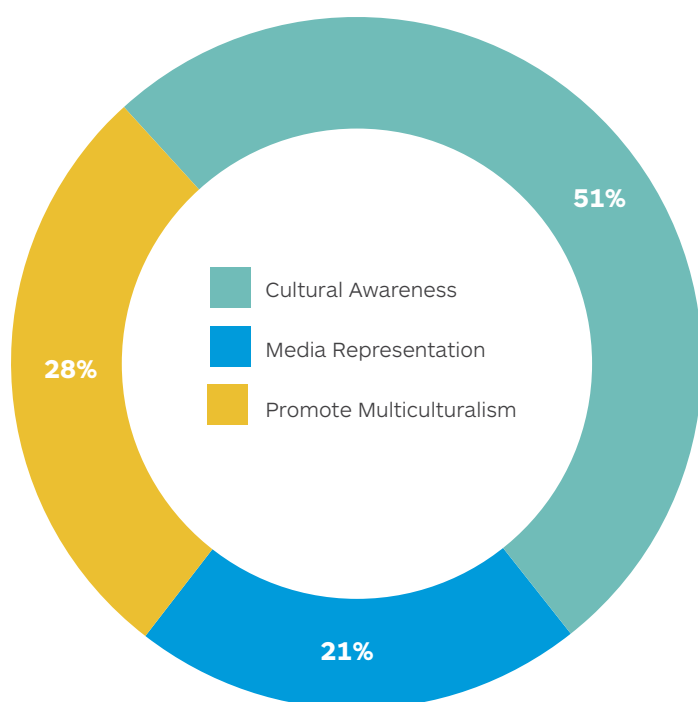
156 McHugh-Dillon, 2015.

6.4. Emerging Themes

Three key themes emerged strongly from the analysis of data related to Discrimination and Bias, demonstrating that, mainstream community understandings of multiculturalism are poor. Although experiences varied, there was strong evidence to suggest that young people from diverse backgrounds, especially those whose appearance caused them to stand out, were encountering negative attitudes towards them that were, not only damaging to their self-esteem but also created barriers to further engagement.

For example, young women from African backgrounds in Morwell reported undue surveillance when they were in public places, especially in retail stores. The literature supports this view, noting the pervasive and enduring impacts of racism and discrimination. Experiences of racism and/or discrimination denote a lack of recognition in the community and can disrupt belonging, inclusion and participation.¹⁵⁷

Figure 10 – Discrimination and Bias – Key Themes



Key Themes:

- **Cultural Awareness** – young people from diverse backgrounds overwhelmingly cited the need for cultural awareness, in all manner of settings; education environments, sporting activities, on public transport, in local communities, workplaces. This was also associated with levels of trust and related strongly to both media and the promotion of multiculturalism. Thus, these themes interrelate.
- **Media Representation** - young people told the VMC about the negative impacts upon them of negative media representations. They suggested that these representations add to ‘stereotyping’ or ‘racial profiling’ incidents which they encountered, and which in most instances they perceived as unprovoked and unwarranted.
- **Promote Multiculturalism** – participants appreciated the need to actively and consistently promote multiculturalism, noting that it would help all cultures, mainstream communities and community subsets, to feel included, more welcome and more accepted.

6.5. Key Themes and Recommendations

Although Cultural Awareness rated strongly, each key theme is interrelated, with crossovers between the three themes. For example, media can also be a powerful force for developing cultural awareness and education, while promoting multiculturalism engenders cultural awareness. Dandy & Pe-Pua (2013), found that local media was valuable because it challenged negative stereotypes, thus promoting diversity and multiculturalism in local communities.

Cultural awareness is about being sensitive to the similarities and differences that exist between different cultures. It is also about using sensitivity to effectively communicate with people from community subsets who are members of another cultural group.¹⁵⁸

Greater awareness and understanding of diversity and ‘difference’ in the Australian community has been identified as a driver for all social cohesion

157 Dandy & Pe-Pua, 2013.

158 Description of Cultural Awareness taken from the NSW Health Education and training Institute. Retrieved 11 September, 2015: <http://www.heti.nsw.gov.au/international-medical-graduate/cultural-awareness/>

dimensions.¹⁵⁹ Likewise, ignorance and stereotypes have been identified as contributing to cultural misunderstanding, discrimination and prejudice and generally disrupt social cohesion.

The VMC heard how important it was to young people from diverse backgrounds to be able to share information about their diverse cultures, but stereotyping and a general lack of cultural awareness could cause them to withdraw. They wanted to be able to create greater awareness in order to break down the stereotypes and foster greater intercultural understandings.

Factors that are also predictors of support for diversity, show that openness to intercultural contact, and the perception that different community subsets have harmonious relations in local communities, are very important.¹⁶⁰

Many of the suggestions made at the VMC forums related to bringing diverse groups together in harmonious environments in order to foster greater intercultural understanding.

Figure 11 – What is culture?

Culture is the integrated pattern of human behaviour that includes thoughts, communication, actions, customs, beliefs, values and institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious or social group. It reflects the norms and values of a given society and constitutes, to a large extent, the way in which individuals in that society view the world. Some of the elements of culture include:-

- language;
- dress and appearance;
- food and eating habits;
- music and dance;
- time and time-consciousness;
- interpersonal relationships; and,
- beliefs and attitudes.

University of Tasmania, June 2012

CULTURAL AWARENESS

Young people provided the VMC with their ideas about how to improve intercultural understanding. This included suggestions about cultural awareness training, creating opportunities for people to encounter different cultures and providing young people with opportunities to share their own stories with peers. The value of using awareness raising strategies was raised in relation to opportunities to engage and educate people about the cultural make-up of the Victorian and overall Australian populations, and further greater intercultural understanding.

“As long as you know who you are.”

Participant, Dandenong, 2015

The literature demonstrates that racism and discrimination disrupt all dimensions of social cohesion. The impacts of racism and discrimination are pervasive and enduring, and can disrupt experiences of belonging, inclusion and participation.¹⁶¹ Young people told the VMC of many instances where they were discriminated against in ways that demonstrated bias, and that they found unsettling.

In their research and examination of social cohesion, social division and conflict in multicultural Australia, Dandy and Pe-Pua (2013) found that discrimination was a factor in all dimensions of social cohesion and also related to other dimensions, such as cultural awareness, the role of the media, and positive intergroup contact.¹⁶² The evidence of the VMC forums support this finding. The VMC found that discrimination was a factor that related to the social cohesion dimensions of cultural awareness, the role of the media, and positive intergroup contact. The latter, in terms of the need to promote multiculturalism to foster positive intergroup contact.

159 Dandy & Pe-Pua, 2013.

160 Markus, 2014.

161 Dandy & Pe-Pua, 2013.

162 Ibid.

Following their research Dandy and Pe-Pua (2013), developed six key recommendations. These were to:

- 1) promote awareness, knowledge, recognition, and understanding of cultures, 'difference', and cultural diversity;
- 2) create opportunities for frequent, positive intercultural contact;
- 3) address racism and discrimination;
- 4) improve community capacity;
- 5) involve the media in enhancing social cohesion; and
- 6) conduct further research on mutual intercultural relations, and on social media and social cohesion.

The VMC key findings are grouped under the three themes which emerged – Cultural Awareness, Media Representation and Promote Multiculturalism - and the recommendations relating to these key themes follow accordingly.

As the VMC findings on the topic of Discrimination and Bias, are wholly in accord with those of Dandy and Pe-Pua (2013), the VMC recommendations seek to offer practical responses that are in accord with the broad based recommendations.

VMC forum participants' ideas on how to raise cultural awareness:-

- talking about it like today helps, people need to speak up; we need to change the negative impact of stereotypes that people have of different cultural backgrounds;
 - e.g. people don't understand the difference between Iraqi and Arab people, and terrorists;
- promote cultural awareness and understanding of cultural differences:
 - countering racism is a long term exercise over several generations effort, start to counter at local level, i.e. local government authority level;
 - demonstrate respect for different religions and cultural practices in public spaces; wider promotion of interfaith events;
 - more recognition of languages, languages being valued (other than English);
- education and awareness is the best way to deal with discrimination:
 - if you teach people they are more likely to change and open their minds; kids also want people to know about their culture, they are proud of their (ethnic) identity;

- educate teachers, police officers and others about 'difference' - school and workplace programs that raise cultural awareness help;
 - authorities judge young people based on skin colour and or other representations of culture or religion; ethnic people are identified (adversely) by name and there is bias against their names;
 - young people reporting incidents need to feel supported otherwise they are isolated; support teachers to support students - children and families are managing on their own;
- 'educate the educators'- educate teachers, police officers to be more culturally aware:
 - provide cultural awareness training for teachers; hold trained educators to account; make everyone go through a training program;
 - provide this training in-situ, by local government authority because areas vary in diversity and community subsets;
 - try a school exchange program (between Christian and Islamic schools, teacher and student exchange, peer-to-peer education, document and provide case studies); students and workers do not see themselves represented in staff and management;
 - need to commence diversity 'audits' in workplaces, schools, organisations;
- A Beacon of Hope, community youth organisation;
 - successful youth organisation initiated by two young Iraqi men in Melbourne's north; developed to counter lack of trust – this is predominantly a youth issue;
 - utilise recreational pursuits and build-in educational aspects; different communities and different age groups need different approaches to strengthen communities ties;
 - 12-17 year olds seek acceptance; and
 - 18-25 year olds are dealing with generational differences (with parents and community leaders).

Recommendation 15

Promote intercultural understanding by facilitating cross-cultural engagements that foster mutual understandings, develop knowledge of the cultural makeup of local communities, and demonstrate that difference is valued.

This could be achieved in a variety of ways, including:

- through organisational policies and practices that develop knowledge and understanding of cultural, linguistic and religious differences;
- use State Government and Local Government Community Grants to promote longer term sustainable intercultural engagement;
- promote the value of cultural awareness training and broader engagement with people of all backgrounds by creating opportunities for diverse groups to mix in social environments;
- encourage greater opportunities for people of all backgrounds to engage through the auspices of neighbourhood and community organisations, including sporting organisations; and
- build harmony through intercultural action:
 - seek local philanthropic support for national days by engaging local retailers and businesses;
 - engage local shopping strips, schools, libraries, etc., to display information about national days and help to create public intercultural conversations. For example:
 - 24 September - Eid al-Adha is a national day in countries such as Indonesia, Jordan, Malaysia, Turkey, Iraq and the United Arab Emirates; Muslims around the world observe this event, commemorating Abraham's willingness to follow God's command to sacrifice his son Ishmael;
 - 6-7 November - Diwali, Festival of Lights, celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs and Jains throughout the world, coincides with Hindu New Year and celebrates new beginnings and the triumph of good over evil and light over darkness; and
 - 27 June - Mixed Race Day, a Brazilian national day that honours all those who possess multi-ethnic origins.

MEDIA REPRESENTATION

VMC forum participants' ideas on how to inform media representations:-

- inform public discourse, through the media:
 - treatment by media generally makes community subsets reticent to speak up;
 - develop intercultural discussions;
 - get leaders of the community involved in the media; identify emerging cultural leaders;
 - start with community organisations, schools, community centres, churches etc.;
- training for the media – to be sensitive to local community subsets and culturally aware;
 - educate journalists to report, for example negative media representations of women with headscarfs;
 - media shouldn't mix up terrorism with normal citizens;
 - media can make people aware and show that not all people are the same;
 - targeted campaigns for particular groups, e.g. in different languages;
 - media campaign that raises the profile of and educates people about minorities, such as the 'Just Like You' campaign; and
 - educate people through media campaigns like the ones they have for drugs and drink driving.
- Social media:
 - create awareness, utilise social media/ Facebook to reach many, effectively, timely responses;
 - no consequences for 'keyboard warriors' on Facebook, poor regulation;
 - incorrect and discriminatory posts can draw untoward attention;
 - alert people with what's happening in the world, use Tumblr¹⁶³ and similar to show lots of different sides and opinions.
- public image and awareness - raise awareness of who to approach (community leaders, commentators), and who to go to for positive media stories, either face-to-face (meaningful connection), or social media (accessibility);

163 Tumblr is a microblogging platform and social networking website founded by David Karp and owned by Yahoo! Inc. The service allows users to post multimedia and other content to a short-form blog. Information at: <https://www.tumblr.com/>

- having people and representation from different NESB backgrounds; organise a celebration of every culture with stories online; and
- working with older generations and educating them.

Recommendation 16

The VMC to seek greater engagement in informing public discourse on multiculturalism by providing timely and informed comment on matters of social cohesion and cultural importance.

Including, but not restricted to:

- facilitating and supporting multicultural communities to have a voice in Victoria;
- promoting intercultural understanding by highlighting the benefits of cultural diversity;
- making informed comment on matters raised at Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) that affect local multicultural communities; and
- incorporating an interactive space for young people into the development of a new VMC website, to provide young people from diverse backgrounds with the opportunity to share ideas and personal stories, and engage in the broader public discourse on matters that affect and are of interest to young people.

VMC forum participants' ideas on how to promote multiculturalism:-

- more needs to be done about bringing people together, provide opportunities to meet people from other cultures;
 - Victoria is very good and much better than other states, but more work is needed in creating better understanding between cultures and about religion
 - need to do more work about raising awareness and understanding of

multiculturalism to make them realise the truth, help them to feel part of the mainstream community,

- provide positive role models telling their story, young educated professionals;
- interfaith programs are an effective way to learn about other cultures and build relationships, this is a good model;
- use expertise of teachers from language schools, such as Western English Language Schools (WELS);¹⁶⁴
- build on/duplicate successful programs such as Sisters and Brothers;¹⁶⁵
- collective community action – inform public discourse, use a VIP ‘drawcard’ – coordinated action is required;¹⁶⁶
- there is no blueprint on how to integrate cultures:
 - a main problem is (lack of) self-confidence;
 - young people stay in same cultural group;
 - creates lack of integration and education about the mainstream culture;
 - people are scared to go outside their own community and therefore not developing tie-in information/points of reference to mainstream culture;
 - potential solution – integrating all cultures in community events, activities, initiatives;
 - focus grants on encouraging greater cross cultural and mainstream community participation in events (not mono-cultural);
 - have a multicultural youth advisory group (MYAG); join a group where you can have a say;
 - broader cultural history in schools curriculum to reflect different cultures, e.g. teach Ottoman Empire, not only Greek and Egyptian civilisations;

164 Western English Language School (WELS), located in Melbourne, is a multi-campus Victorian government school providing high quality EAL programs for primary and secondary aged students at a number of sites in the South Western Region of Victoria. There is one additional English Language Centre in the South Western Region – Geelong English Language Centre. For further information see <http://www.esl-wels.vic.edu.au/>

165 The Sisters and Brothers project works with 8-12yr olds to build empathy towards those who experience discrimination; emphasise commonality and diversity; and promote dialogue around diversity, race-based discrimination and its harms, through an innovative music program. Sisters and Brothers project Stage 1 was funded by VicHealth and the R.E. Ross Trust. For further information see <http://sistersandbrothersproject.org/>

166 The VMC has plans to strengthen its public profile through stronger engagement with a range of stake-holders, including CALD and mainstream media. This will also include increased opportunities for participation in, and promotion of, public events, including new events, such as an Oration planned for November 2015 featuring Helen Kapolos in her first official speaking engagement as Chairperson.

- government should tell people what to do when discriminated against and where to go; and
- Victorian Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission (VHREOC) can do more workshops at schools.

Recommendation 17

“More needs to be done about bringing people together, and to provide opportunities to meet people from other cultures.”

This recommendation is about seeking to create ‘inclusive spaces’, such as through streetscapes that reflect the cultural makeup of the local community, where people from different cultural backgrounds can encounter one another, to further intercultural understandings, social inclusion and social cohesion.

This could be achieved through activities that:

- embrace the creative arts in public places, including the use of street sculpture that reflects local cultural histories, past and present;
- creative planning of ‘third spaces’, public spaces where people can come into daily informal contact in ways that promote sociability and trust; and
- include strategies to purposefully engage people from diverse backgrounds in consultations when planning open space. This might include:
 - engaging local interfaith groups, other multicultural bodies and places of worship;
 - including local primary and high schools to engage multicultural students and harness their creative ideas; and
 - engaging local government youth services when planning public open space.

6.6. Supplementary Resources

This section provides some additional resources including models and examples of successful programs. Many were successful programs but not successful in attracting ongoing funding.

1. B-Creative Street Art Program

Brimbank City Council Youth Services, B-Creative program, is a youth-led street art program. The program hired professional artists to mentor the program participants to create 6 street-art styled murals in sanctioned spaces across the local government authority’s region.

Over the course of the project the young people involved developed their aspirations, commitment to civic activities and connections to the community. The program received a 2014 Youth Affairs Council of Victoria Inc. award recognising the positive impact community arts projects can have on marginalised young people’s wellbeing and education. Award information at: <http://www.vu.edu.au/news-events/news/youth-service-award-for-street-art-program>

Victoria University (Victoria Institute), evaluated the program and explored participant’s experiences. The report is available at More Than Free Paint. Evaluation available at: <http://www.vu.edu.au/sites/default/files/research/docs/More%20than%20free%20paint%20%28screen%20reader%20V0%202%29.pdf>

2. A Beacon of Hope

The VMC met two young Iraqi men at Mill Park who had established a youth organisation - A Beacon of Hope - The Next Generation, an organisation “run by the youth, for the youth”. They organise recreational events for the youth such as camping, fishing, attending sporting events, etc. These young leaders have taken responsibility within their own community and seek to build bridges with mainstream groups. See organisation website at: <http://www.abeaconofhope.org.au/>

At Mill Park these young leaders explained that, growing up, they had not been able to attend many mainstream activities. Iraq is not a multicultural country and a culture unused to taking part in collective community events. They established the organisation with a view to linking different cultures and facilitating activities that create interactions with mainstream Australian activities. For example, they take groups of young people on camps and to attend AFL games and so on.

Based in Melbourne, these young leaders of the community organise regular events that will be for anyone who wants to get involved. See A Beacon of Hope Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/abeaconofhopeaustralia>

3. Opening the School Gate – CMY

A useful resource ‘tool kit’ that provides teachers and other school staff with a range of strategies to encourage parents and families from CALD backgrounds to fully participate in the educational experience of their children at school. Although

developed for educational settings, this resource includes a range of practical strategies that will assist in the process of engaging CALD families and creating environments that are inclusive of diversity. Toolkit available at: <http://cmy.net.au/sites/default/files/Opening%20the%20school%20gate.pdf>

4. Cultural Infusion – Building Cultural Harmony and Wellbeing

Cultural Infusion is an international organisation founded in Australia, dedicated to building harmony through intercultural action. The organisation works to promote equality, social justice and broader understanding of culture across the community. The Culture in Youth Program offers a variety of activities, workshops and events aimed at engaging young people aged 12-25 years from diverse backgrounds through the arts, encouraging their participation in community life and promoting healthy and active lifestyles.

The Discovering Diversity schools program reaches out to schools across the nation to educate, inform and entertain the diverse Australian youth about the importance of intercultural understanding in our communities. Intercultural understanding has been recognised as a general capability set out in the national standards of the ACARA Australian Curriculum. See The Discovering Diversity program at: <http://culturalinfusion.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/2015-Jan-brochure.pdf>

5. Additional Resources:

- Classroom Kaleidoscope – A program to facilitate connectedness and wellbeing in the culturally diverse classroom, Foundation House. Resource at: <http://www.foundationhouse.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/KlassroomKaleidoscope.pdf>
- The State of Greater Shepparton's Children Report, May 2014 – A joint endeavour of the City of Greater Shepparton Best Start Program and Communities for Children initiative, and the Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project. The project arose from a shared commitment to promoting better use of quality data and evidence for local community capacity building, service planning, and program evaluation. Resource at: <http://greatershepparton.com.au/children-report>

- Sisters and Brothers, VicHealth – The Cohealth Arts Generator are creating a new phase of the Sister and Brothers Project to be rolled out in a handful of high schools in the west. Over the last 3 years we have brought this hugely successful project to over 10 primary schools across the western suburbs. Further information available at: <http://sistersandbrothersproject.org/2015/06/22/sisters-and-brothers-taking-it-to-the-teens/>
- City Excursion – Immigration Museum Experience, Years 9-11, Self guided program plus optional intro. Prior consultation with museum educators and bookings staff is advised. Details at: <http://museumvictoria.com.au/immigrationmuseum/education/education-programs/city-excursion/>
- Creative public Space ideas:-
 - Pop-Up-Park: temporary park in Dandenong, opposite Dandenong Railway Station. Features a synthetic sports pitch, a BBQ area with picnic tables, and a community garden, the Pop-Up-Park is a unique place that everyone can enjoy. Details at: <http://www.popuppark.com.au/about-new/>
 - Dandenong Civic Square - the Civic Square is to provide for events, gatherings, diversity, art and culture, and hosts a 'Big Screen' an outdoor LED screen which is one of the highest quality screens of its size in the southern hemisphere. Further details at: <http://architectureau.com/articles/dandenong-civic-square/>
 - Wilson Avenue, Brunswick public space - In response to community feedback, this new public space has an urban bouldering wall as a feature. The wall is approximately 9 metres long and 3 metres high, and surrounded by softfall. The Wall was fabricated by Big Fish Pty in their workshop in Footscray. Details available at: <http://www.moreland.vic.gov.au/about-us/projects/shopping-area-and-streetscape-projects/wilson-avenue-brunswick-public-space/>

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APPENDIX 1

VMC Multicultural Youth Forums 2014-15

Core questions

Additional prompts to ask/explore

Employment

What challenges have you or others in your community had in trying to find work?

What aspirations do you have for work in the future, and what support do you need to help you get there?

- Any experiences of discrimination (pre or during employment)?
- Connections to social/professional networks
- Language & cultural barriers/understanding
- Where can/do you search for work? (online, friends, services)
- Who could help you? (individuals, networks, families, mentors)
- What ideas for a helpful program do you have?

Discrimination & Bias

What experiences of discrimination have you experienced or witnessed?

What do you think can be done to reduce acts of discrimination and bias?

- Circumstances such as online, by police, public spaces, school, etc.
- How did it make you feel?
- Can social media play a role in the solution? How?

Marginalisation & Belonging

What does an ideal community look like to you?

What would help create a better sense of belonging for young people who feel left out?

- E.g. friendly people, feeling safe, places to be together, understanding of different cultures, trust
- Why do some feel like they don't belong now (e.g. mental health, CALD background, etc.)
- What are the barriers and how can they be overcome?

Leadership & Advocacy

What does "leadership" look like or mean to you?

What can be done to ensure that young people are heard and their issues are understood?

- What are the qualities of a good leader, and can you think of examples?
- Do community leaders represent young people's opinions? If not, how can they?

APPENDIX 2

SEIFA Ratings for VMC Multicultural Forums for Young People locations.

SEIFA ¹⁶⁷			
Suburb	Index of Disadvantage	Ranking	Percent Ranking
Sunshine	908	94	7%
Sunshine North	852	37	3%
Sunshine West	871	49	4%
Mill Park	1020	719	48%
Morwell	846	32	3%
Ballarat Central	1003	555	37%
Ballarat East	938	163	11%
Ballarat North	996	496	33%
Shepparton	913	107	8%
Shepparton East	1006	581	39%
Shepparton North	1073	1299	14%
Dandenong	849	34	3%
Dandenong North	940	172	12%
Dandenong South	826	22	2%
Broadmeadows	772	7	1%
Truganina	1004	566	38%
Carrum Downs	986	425	29%

167 The Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. The indexes are based on information from the five-yearly Census. There are 1,516 areas ranked by the index within Victoria.



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