

Concerns and Solutions:

A Report on Issues Faced by Migrant and Refugee Young People in the Albury-Wodonga Region, and Youth-led Ideas to Address these Concerns.

November 2017

Introduction

The Albury-Wodonga Multicultural Youth Council (MYC) is a youth-led project of the Albury-Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council, Inc., and is a group of youth representatives from a diverse range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds between the ages of 16-25 years.

This report provides a summary of the outcomes of a consultation meeting of the MYC on the 23rd October 2017. In attendance were nine local young people from diverse backgrounds including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sri Lanka, and Bhutan.

Top four (4) areas of concern for multicultural youth

Unemployment

- Discrimination and racism experienced by multicultural youth in applying for jobs;
- A lack of work experience; and
- Language barriers.

Lack of social activities

- Many practical barriers (e.g. no access to transport, lack of public transport options);
- No regular meeting places for multicultural youth; and
- Communities very segregated (e.g. friends at school are often from the same cultural background).

School issues and academic challenges

- Difficulty with subjects (e.g. language barriers, or lack of prior educational experiences); and
- Bullying and isolation.

Racism

- Racism and racist attitudes permeate every aspect of life (employment, schools etc.)

Ideas and possible solutions to address these concerns

Unemployment

- ✓ Run workshops on career goals and pathways, ways to build industry experience, resume writing and interview preparation, etc.;
- ✓ Have access to services which help to enhance, and polish resumes; and
- ✓ Job agencies: need to have people/staff who actively advocate for the employment of multicultural young people - may need education about the kind of things young people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Backgrounds offer in terms of skills and talents.

Lack of social activities

- ✓ Ensure sport is accessible for everyone (e.g. female soccer team);
- ✓ Have programs to allow young people to try different things and discover talents (i.e. singing, dancing, arts);
- ✓ Organise bonding / team-building trips: e.g. camping; and
- ✓ Provide social activities that bring people together - young people from different multicultural backgrounds, as well as 'Anglo' young people;
 - Meetings 'just for fun', a regular meetup place every week - Could be a setting to run workshops as well as watch TV shows/movies etc.

School issues and academic challenges

- ✓ Homework clubs – need easier access to Lavington, Wodonga and Albury library homework help programs;
- ✓ Representatives from the Multicultural Youth Council at each of the schools – to provide support to newly arrived CALD young people (friendship, trust, language translation, school integration); and
- ✓ Have young people from our own backgrounds help with hard subjects (this may allow faster learning due to translations into a language they are more comfortable with).

Racism

- ✓ Raise awareness - e.g. going to schools and teaching students about other cultures (cultural exchange);
- ✓ Local media - radio programs, TV; and
- ✓ Have stalls / performances at events attended widely by the general (mainstream) community (e.g. Twilight Markets).