



Centre for Multicultural Youth

**Submission No. 44**

(Youth Violence)

A.O.C. Date: 4/11/2009

## Centre for Multicultural Youth Submission to the Inquiry into the Impact of Violence on Young Australians

October 2009

### INTRODUCTION

---

#### **The Centre for Multicultural Youth**

The Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) is a statewide community-based organisation in Victoria that advocates for the needs and rights of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. In supporting young people, CMY combines policy development and direct service delivery within a community development framework. This approach gives CMY strong connections with young people and their communities while enabling change on a local, state and national level.

#### **ABOUT THIS SUBMISSION**

---

CMY welcomes the opportunity to respond to the House Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth 'Inquiry into the impact of violence on young Australians'.

This submission provides background information on refugee and migrant young people in Australia and the refugee experience, then highlights some key issues and recommendations under the first, third and fifth of the Inquiry's terms of reference.

The submission draws on the organisation's 20 years of experience working with young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds, their communities and the youth and settlement sectors. It is further informed by consultations with CMY youth workers who work directly with refugee and migrant young people in metropolitan Melbourne and by a review of relevant literature in the subject area.

### BACKGROUND

---

#### **Refugee and Migrant Young People in Australia: Demographic Overview**

According to the 2006 Australian census, 2.7 million (14%) of Australia's total population of 19.9 million were aged between 15 and 24. Of these young people, 310,832 (12%) were born in a 'non-main English speaking country' (ABS classification) including 127,600 who arrived in Australia between 2002 and 2006. The number of resettled young refugees in Australia is also significant. In 2008/09, 66% of Australia's 12,930 Humanitarian arrivals were under the age of 30. Australia's young people speak over 200 different languages and 330,068 young people speak a language other than English at home.

## The Refugee Experience

Young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds demonstrate high levels of strength, resilience, resourcefulness and understanding.<sup>1</sup> However, this group also faces particular barriers to accessing services and opportunities, including language, culture, unfamiliarity with Australian systems and processes, racism and discrimination. These factors can place them at greater risk of social and economic disadvantage within Australian society, which in turn can lead to social isolation.<sup>2</sup>

The pre-arrival experience of young refugees further contributes to their risk of social isolation and social and economic disadvantage. While each individual refugee experience is different, refugees have, by definition, been forced to flee their country of origin because of a well-founded fear of persecution. The refugee experience is by its nature traumatic, and young people who are refugees are likely to have experienced all or some of the following:

- A dangerous escape from their country of origin, traveling long distances;
- Long periods of living in unsafe, insecure and threatening environments;
- Physical and emotional harm including trauma and torture;
- Separation from family or significant others, including the loss of loved ones; and
- Extended periods of time spent in transition countries or refugee camps, limiting their physical, educational and social development.<sup>3</sup>

For young people who are refugees in Australia, the developmental tasks of adolescence are compounded by the traumatic nature of the refugee experience, cultural dislocation, loss of established social networks and the practical demands of resettlement.<sup>4</sup>

---

## RESPONSE TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

### Perceptions of violence and community safety among young Australians

CMY believes that all young people should feel safe and secure in their communities. Unfortunately this is often not the case and there are a number of issues we believe should be addressed:

#### Community safety

In many parts of Melbourne, young Australians from refugee and migrant backgrounds express a great deal of concern regarding violence directed towards them. In working with these young people, CMY has found that violence is a major fear in their communities, particularly where it is a result of racism. Australian-Sudanese young people in particular have expressed fears that they may be attacked because of assumptions in some communities that these young people are dangerous or are in gangs.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Francis, S. and Cornfoot, S. (2007) *Working with Multicultural Youth: Programs, Strategies and Future Directions*, (Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues: Melbourne, for the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth).

<sup>2</sup> Coventry, L., Guerra, C., Mackenzie, D. and Pinkney, S. (2002) *Wealth of All Nations: Identification of strategies to assist refugee young people in transition to independence* (Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies: Tasmania)

<sup>3</sup> The average length of time spent in a refugee camp is 7 years and for some young people, this is the majority of their lives before arriving in Australia.

<sup>4</sup> Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council (2002) *Strategy for Refugee Young People* (Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs: Canberra).

<sup>5</sup> Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (2008) *Rights of Passage: The Experiences of Australian-Sudanese young people*, see:

<http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/publications/reports%20and%20discussion%20papers/> accessed 19/10/2009

The fear and insecurity felt by these young people was highlighted in a community meeting organised by the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) in August 2009. The meeting followed the raids and subsequent arrest of a group of Somali men accused of organising a terrorist plot. In the meeting it was heard that, in the period after the arrests, children were frightened to go into the schoolyard, abuse was shouted at people in the streets and shocking hate text messages and emails were sent to African-Australian members of the community.

### Public space and public transport

Young people have identified the use of public space as a key contributing factor to negative interactions with police and security personnel.<sup>6</sup> They relate this problem to high visibility, stereotypes and strained police relations.<sup>7</sup>

Young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds are particularly visible due to 'ethnic' markers such as physical appearance and language. Recently arrived refugee and migrant young people may also be more likely to congregate in public spaces due to a lack of space at home to socialise, family conflict, limited money for entertainment, and geographic isolation.

As a group hanging out in a public space, they become much more obvious and can be targets for racism, violence and over-policing. However, young people from refugee or migrant backgrounds have informed CMY workers that they often travel and hang out in large groups in public spaces for their own safety, particularly if they have been bullied or intimidated by others.

While young people are the highest users of public transport, they perceive that the system is not safe, particularly after hours and on weekends. Young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds from certain regions in Melbourne have informed CMY workers that they will not go to their local train stations at night, for fear of being attacked.

### Police

Young people from a refugee or migrant background are often fearful and mistrustful of police and authoritative figures due to their experiences in their country of origin.<sup>8</sup> Often authorities have persecuted and tortured them rather than provided protection.

Given their frequent and visible use of public space and public transport, young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds can be targets for over-policing. This is compounded by less than satisfactory relationships between refugee young people and police.

In CMY's experience, police are increasingly moving large groups of young people on from public spaces, including train stations. This is particularly challenging for young people from a refugee or migrant background, given their reliance on public transport. There is also a perception among young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds that Authorised Officers on the public transport system target them unfairly and can be intimidating when patrolling in groups.

The tension is fostered by a range of stereotypical images pertaining both to young people ('ethnic youth gangs') and to the police (repressive figures associated with authoritarian regimes). There is a lack of

---

<sup>6</sup> National Crime Prevention (1999) *Hanging out: Negotiating young people's use of public space* (Attorney-General's Department: Canberra).

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Coventry et al (2002)

adequate police training, especially cross-cultural training, in dealing with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, particularly refugees and recent migrants. Various studies have also shown that refugee and migrant young people are more likely than other groups of young people (with the exception of Indigenous young people) to be stopped by the police for questioning.<sup>9</sup>

A study of Vietnamese Australian youth and police relations in Melbourne identified a number of factors that influenced the relationship between the young people and authority figures.<sup>10</sup> These included:

- unwarranted targeting and harassment of young people in public spaces;
- high incidence of body search procedures used by police;
- denial of young people's legal rights;
- verbal, psychological, and physical mistreatment by police;
- non-reporting of police mistreatment through formal channels; and
- general lack of respect towards each other, demonstrated by subtle and overt means.

The above still generally holds true for certain groups of young people coming into contact with the police. The Western Young People's Independent Network (WYPIN) in Melbourne also reports that refugee and migrant young people often feel targeted and 'hassled' by police due to racial, religious, ethnic and cultural stereotypes.<sup>11</sup>

In one region in which CMY works, young people have experienced frequent police harassment by being regularly stopped and questioned. In one case, a young person reported that he had been hit in the face by a police officer and told, 'if you report it, it won't go anywhere'. Refugee and migrant young people are often unaware or unable to make use of their rights and find formal complaints procedures inaccessible or ineffective.

On the other hand, community policing has the potential to create a better understanding between young people and the police. It is an approach that CMY supports and has helped to lessen stereotypes on both sides and build connections with the communities generally. This issue is explored further in strategies to reduce violence and its impact among young Australians, under the heading 'Police/Youth Relations'.

### Representations in the media

The general perception of refugee and migrant young people is that the media plays a crucial role in how they are perceived by the community. This is particularly the case when there are media stories regarding terrorists (such as the arrest of Somali men as described above): racial vilification and physical assaults against culturally diverse communities increase in the wake of such media attention. Often it is women who are the main target of these attacks, particularly when they are wearing a hijab or burqa.

In some parts of Melbourne, local authorities have been proactive in working with the local media to encourage positive images and stories about the Australian-Sudanese community. However broader media representation is mostly limited to the controversial and constructs young people as problematic. Evidence of this is seen in statements made by former Immigration Minister Kevin Andrews in 2007 about the difficulties Sudanese refugees face in settling in Australia. By drawing on one incident – the tragic

<sup>9</sup> National Crime Prevention (1999) *Hanging out: Negotiating young people's use of public space* (Attorney-General's Department: Canberra).

<sup>10</sup> Lyons, E (1995:170) "New Clients, Old Problems: Vietnamese Young People's Experience with Police" in C. Guerra and R. White (Eds.) *Australian Youth Subcultures: On the Margins and in the Mainstream*.(Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies: Hobart).

<sup>11</sup> Francis, S. and Cornfoot, S. (2007) *Multicultural Youth in Australia: Settlement and Transition* (Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues: Melbourne for the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth).

murder of a young Sudanese refugee – the comments by the former Minister led to a public perception that all young people from the group were having difficulty settling in Australia.

A recent report by the Victorian Equal Opportunities and Human Rights Commission found that young Australian-Africans feel highly scrutinised and negatively portrayed by the media and the wider community.<sup>12</sup> There is a sense in the community that only ‘bad’ stories make the news and that this is out of proportion to reality. Participants interviewed in the study felt that they were being publicly punished and shamed by negative comments made by public figures. It also found that young people see a clear link between the way they are portrayed in the media and how they are perceived in the community. Reports tend to associate young people as the perpetrators of crime when, in fact, young men in particular are more likely to be the victims of crime.

Young people from refugee or migrant backgrounds are also affected by the prejudices and speculations reported in the media around ethnic ‘gang’ violence and drug related issues. The difference between ‘youth group formations’ and gangs is a sensitive one and it is important to avoid media stereotypes in this area. Where there is ethnic-based group criminal activity, media reporting needs to be sensitive to the potential impact on the public’s perception of groups of refugee and migrant youth.

Strategies to address the negative representation of refugee and migrant young people in the media are outlined below under the fifth term of reference.

#### Private violence

While instances of public or community violence are more visible, the impact of violence within the home or domestic relationships is equally profound. The impact of violence in the home is of particular concern for young women, who are more likely than young men to be physically or sexually assaulted by a male who is known to them.<sup>13</sup>

Young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds who are victims of domestic violence may be less likely than other young people to report the incident(s) due to more limited understanding of their rights to be free from violence within Australia and particular fears regarding seeking help from the police (see ‘Reporting violence’ directly below).

#### Reporting violence

There are a range of barriers that young victims of crime face when reporting a crime to police.<sup>14</sup> These are compounded for refugee and migrant young people who, as already highlighted, often have a level of mistrust or fear towards police due to their pre-arrival experiences. They may be fearful of the repercussions of reporting crime to the police, have a more limited understanding of their legal rights and the Australian legal system and feel that they are negatively stereotyped as a group. Some young people have been reluctant to report crimes against themselves to the police for fear of being sent back to their home countries.

---

<sup>12</sup> Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (2008), ‘Rights of Passage: The Experiences of Australian-Sudanese young people’, see

<http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/publications/reports%20and%20discussion%20papers/> accessed 19/10/2009

<sup>13</sup> White Ribbon Foundation of Australia ‘Factsheet: What is Violence Against Women?’ accessed 27/10/09 from [www.whiteribbonday.org.au/media/documents/Factsheet%20-%20What%20is%20violence%20against%20women.pdf](http://www.whiteribbonday.org.au/media/documents/Factsheet%20-%20What%20is%20violence%20against%20women.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> For example, see <http://www.youthlaw.asn.au/yoursay.php>, accessed 1/10/09

There is a lack of cultural appropriateness and flexibility within the police and justice system. Often there is a lack of translated material available to a victim, an inadequate use of interpreters and a lack of understanding of how the experience of being a refugee impacts on a young person's settlement in Australia.

### **The relationship between bullying and violence and the wellbeing of young Australians**

Despite overwhelming acceptance in the community of cultural and linguistic diversity, racism is an ever-present reality for refugee or migrant young people. They often relate to CMY their experiences of harassment, violence, teasing and the general feeling that they don't belong. Racial or cultural tension can exist between young people from refugee or migrant backgrounds and second generation plus Australians, as well as between young people from different newly arrived communities.

There is a causal link between bullying and retaliatory violence, which can quickly escalate out of control. Pervasive and overt racist bullying against young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds is widespread in certain areas of Melbourne, with young refugees subjected to verbal and/or physical attacks who then retaliate in a similar fashion. These experiences support the longitudinal research undertaken by the La Trobe Refugee Research Centre, which has found that racist bullying is a major cause of violence.<sup>15</sup> According to the research based on the experiences of 88 young people aged 12 to 20 years of age from refugee backgrounds:<sup>16</sup>

- 42% of young people reported experiencing racism because of their ethnicity, religion or colour, by their second year in Australia.
- 9% of young people experienced discrimination in their first year at school in Australia, which increased to 20% at school in the second year;
- 12% of youth experienced discrimination on the street or in public settings;
- 13% of young people experienced discrimination from police since arriving in Australia;
- 21% of young people experienced discrimination in public places since arriving in Australia, especially on trains and in shops.

One experience related to CMY by a young person illustrates these statistics: "We were walking in the street, me and my mate, coming from basketball, and the car stopped and they were calling us niggers."

It is also well documented that racism has serious health, social and economic consequences for affected individuals and their families.<sup>17</sup> Recent research by VicHealth on the health consequences of discrimination found that young people from refugee backgrounds who have experienced racism are significantly more likely to report poorer psychological and environmental wellbeing than those who have not experienced racism.<sup>18</sup> Racism also has strong detrimental effects on the life chances of these young people.

Some key findings from the VicHealth report include:

- nearly two in every five individuals from non-English speaking backgrounds reported being treated with disrespect or called names and insulted on the basis of their ethnicity at some time;

<sup>15</sup> Refugee Health Research Centre (2007), GOODSTARTS for Refugee Youth, Broadsheet #4, November.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid*

<sup>17</sup> VicHealth (2007), 'More than tolerance: embracing diversity for health', Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Melbourne

<sup>18</sup> Refugee Health Research Centre (2007), GOODSTARTS for Refugee Youth, Broadsheet #4, November.

- experiences of discrimination are common amongst refugee and migrant communities and that these have serious health, social and economic consequences for affected individuals and their families; and
- there is a strong relationship between discrimination and poor mental health, especially depression.

Retaliatory violence as a response to racist bullying can also have a serious impact on the wellbeing of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds, in terms of the consequences for them at school or within the juvenile or criminal justice systems. One CMY worker reported that a female student from a refugee background, who was engaging well with school, was expelled for retaliating on two occasions to racist attacks. The worker highlighted concerns that some schools are simply moving students on rather than dealing with the culture of racism and bullying within their schools.

### **Strategies to reduce violence and its impact among young Australians**

There are a range of strategies that can be adopted to reduce violence and its impact among young people from a refugee or migrant background. Following a discussion of these strategies, some specific recommendations are also outlined.

#### Police/youth relations

CMY's experience is that Victoria Police multicultural liaison officers (MLO) and youth resource officers (YRO) are generally effective in their engagement with, and support to, young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in their communities. For example, in an outer Melbourne region police officers are attached to local schools and are well placed to respond to instances of bullying or violence that have the potential to escalate otherwise. In the same region, the YROs, senior sergeants and the District Inspector invest a lot of time facilitating or attending various community events. This has been an effective way to forge positive relationships with young people and their families from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

However, as most MLOs and YROs work standard business hours, they are not the officers on duty who respond to crisis calls. In CMY's experience, many officers on duty are limited in their understanding of different cultures and in communication with young people from a refugee background. This impacts on their ability to interact well with young people from different cultural backgrounds and can result in situations easily escalating beyond what is necessary. It is vital that on-duty officers have an awareness of the refugee experience and the cultural needs of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. CMY has also heard concerns about regular turnover of MLOs in some areas, which has limited their ability to build relationships and forge strong linkages with the community.

The attitude of senior police officers towards young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds is a major contributing factor to the attitudes of other police officers in the station. It is therefore vital that a culturally aware community policing approach receives endorsement at the highest levels in each station. CMY has heard both inspiring and worrying accounts of the culture in various police stations in this regard. The Victorian Government's 'Police and Community Multicultural Advisory Committee', a joint committee between the Victoria Police and the Victorian Multicultural Commission established in 1985, is an excellent example of Police engaging in dialogue with communities to ensure a culturally appropriate response to offending issues. On the other hand, CMY has learned of stations with a culture in which duty officers display negative attitudes and behaviours towards MLOs and YROs, impacting on their ability to carry out their important work.

Training for all police in working with young people from diverse cultural backgrounds would go a long way to reducing the potential for conflict. Tension often arises as a result of simple misunderstandings and miscommunications relating to language, culture and body language.

An approach focused on building relationships and trust between police and young people is vital to address some of the tensions that exist. Francis and Cornfoot, for example, suggest the effectiveness of programs which increase dialogue between police, young people, multicultural communities and service providers to tackle difficult relationships and look at strategies for prevention and addressing anti-social behaviour.

#### Media and political representation of young people from refugee or migrant backgrounds

Media representation of refugee and migrant young people can contribute to a negative public perception of young people. This can have serious implications for the safety of young refugees or migrants. It can create a false stereotype about these young people, particularly where the coverage relates to 'ethnic gang' violence.

Strategies to address negative media representation should seek to reinforce positive messages about refugee young people. Some specific strategies include to:

- Encourage efforts to counter misleading media through letters to the editor, Mediawatch and other ways;
- Provide community-based organisations with media information and resources explaining how to make a complaint to media outlets, Australian Communication and Media Authority, and other media-monitoring mechanisms, as well as information about relevant legislation, such as the Racial Discrimination Act (2001);
- Distribute information on good media practice (e.g. the VEOHRC Media Guide) and to ensure that the media is aware of the Industry Code on the Portrayal of Cultural Diversity, which advises against using racial descriptors; and
- Develop a social-marketing campaign to address negative attitudes and behaviours towards culturally diverse young people, to educate and dispel stereotypes in order to overcome interpersonal discrimination that includes victim blaming and scapegoating.

#### Strategies to reduce offending by young people from refugee or migrant backgrounds

While perceptions may exist in the community about high levels of offending by newly arrived refugees or migrants in Australia, there is very little empirical information to highlight the extent of this problem. In respect of those young people who have offended, there are a number of strategies that can be adopted to reduce the occurrence and impact of the offending.

CMY has found that many refugee young people are not easily able to engage with 'mainstream' programs, thus compounding their disadvantage. This demonstrates the need for young people and communities to be involved in the planning and development of services. In line with this, we welcome the Victorian government's proposed Vulnerable Youth Framework, which recognises the need for engaging vulnerable groups in service planning.

Francis and Cornfoot, in their research on refugee and migrant young people, suggest that interventions should be targeted at multiple levels: individual level (e.g. through support and information), family and



community level (e.g. through community education) and in the broader context (e.g. through recreation programs and education and employment pathways).<sup>19</sup>

They also identify some key crime prevention responses for refugee and migrant youth:

- Improved police-youth relations (discussed above);
- Knowledge about laws - forums and resources which are culturally appropriate and in relevant languages assist in understanding of the law as well as rights and responsibilities;
- Youth friendly, public spaces - young people need safe spaces where they can just spend time with their peers without being labelled or stereotyped as 'gangs'; and
- Culturally appropriate responses to violent behaviour.

Other strategies to reduce offending by young refugee or migrant offenders can be found in the final report of the recent Victorian Government inquiry into Strategies to Prevent High Volume Offending and Recidivism by Young People.<sup>20</sup> Key strategies include:

- Quality education and a positive schooling experience – this is the key factor for successful interaction of young refugees and migrants, and also a protective factor mitigating against criminal and antisocial behaviour;
- Targeted and relevant alternative programs for those students who have been expelled or otherwise 'let go' from mainstream education;
- The use of peers in a mentoring system – helps to break down barriers between refugees/migrants and school teachers and police;
- Addressing a lack of communication and language skills;
- Flexibility and cultural appropriateness on the part of the police and youth justice system – programs don't necessarily have to be culturally specific but it is important to ensure cultural awareness and 'cultural competencies' for staff who work with refugee and migrant young people; and
- The Youth Referral and Independent Person Program (see below).

### *The Youth Referral and Independent Person Program*

The Victorian Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee endorsed the Youth Referral and Independent Person Program (YRIPP) as "an excellent example" of a strategy that tries to reduce offending and its effects by breaking down communication and language barriers and providing culturally diverse young people with access to a referral service that may be able to provide further and specialised assistance.<sup>21</sup>

Funded by the Victorian State Government and jointly managed by YACVic and CMY, YRIPP is delivered in partnership with community legal centres in metropolitan Melbourne and UnitingCare in rural areas of Victoria. Victoria Police is also a key partner in the program's implementation.

YRIPP brings together many of the elements of prevention described above. YRIPP provides volunteer Independent Persons (IPs) to support young people through police interviews where a parent or guardian is unavailable. The IPs are encouraged to develop an awareness of the experiences faced by a young person from a refugee background and how best to work with the young person. They assist in the interaction between police and the young person to ensure that the rights of the young person are upheld and that

<sup>19</sup> Francis, S. and Cornfoot, S. (2007) *Working with Multicultural Youth: Programs, Strategies and Future Directions*, (Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues: Melbourne, for the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth).

<sup>20</sup> Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee, Parliament of Victoria (2009) *Inquiry into Strategies to Prevent High Volume Offending and Recidivism by Young People, Final Report*.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* (2009: 261).

they are appropriately supported through the interview process. The program also refers young people to culturally appropriate health and welfare support services to reduce their chances of future offending.

YRIPP operates a 1300 telephone number that police can call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to obtain an Independent Person for interviews with young people under 18. The IPs are trained in relevant police and legal processes, as well as in working with Indigenous and refugee and migrant young people. YRIPP also provides information in 18 languages to parents about the law and the police interview process.

Some recent figures on YRIPP:

- Between 31 December 2008 and 30 June 2009, YRIPP responded to 974 callouts and of these, 98% resulted in interviews with young people;
- In 23% of interviews, YRIPP clients were directly referred to support services;
- An additional 18% of clients received information for later self-referral;
- 24% of all YRIPP clients who were born outside of Australia were directly referred;
- 44% of YRIPP clients had some level of previous involvement with DHS (45% of whom were involved with Child Protection and 40% with Youth Justice).
- Of all young people who weren't involved with DHS, 48% were either directly or indirectly referred to support services.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

---

### CMY recommends that:

#### Public space:

1. Young people are consulted and actively involved in the planning of public spaces, such as shopping centres, and that the creation of 'youth friendly' safe spaces be made a priority, particularly in growth corridors.

#### Community initiatives:

2. More programs are initiated that promote anti-racism, diversity and inter-faith dialogue in schools and local communities (including more intercultural recreational activities) and focus on developing skills to combat and overcome racism and bullying.
3. An initiative be developed that brings together media, young people, government and community to address the negative representations of refugee and newly arrived young people in the media.
4. Culturally sensitive programs be developed in a range of languages to educate young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds about domestic violence and their legal rights.
5. A targeted strategy be developed to educate refugee and newly arrived young people and their families about their legal rights and responsibilities in Australia. The education strategy should include information about how to seek redress through formal complaints procedures regarding maltreatment by members of the police force.

#### Relations with the Police:

6. Community forums and workshops are undertaken to improve relations between refugee and newly arrived young people, police, multicultural communities and service providers.
7. All police should receive training in working with young people from diverse cultural backgrounds, with a particular focus on understanding the issues faced by refugees.
8. Existing community policing approaches be audited for cultural sensitivity and good practice models be developed and shared across all community policing programs. Good practice community policing models should receive active and visible involvement and promotion by senior members of the police force.

#### Youth justice:

9. Young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds be involved in the planning and development of strategies to reduce youth offending.
10. Federal and state and territory governments develop a comprehensive refugee and migrant youth strategy that addresses the range of issues that affect this cohort of young people.

11. Young people are supported to engage with the rehabilitative functions of the youth justice system, so that they can address the issues which have led to offending.
12. The government recognise that the police interview is a key point of intervention and diversion for a young person and that the provision of a trained Independent Person capable of providing culturally appropriate referrals is an important factor in improving police/youth relations and legal outcomes and in reducing recidivism.
13. The federal government establish the YRIPP model of assistance for young people in police interviews in each state and territory (some state/territory legislation may require amendments to accommodate this).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

---

Coventry, Louise, Guerra, Carmel, Mackenzie, David and Pinkney, Sarah (2002) *Wealth of All Nations: Identification of strategies to assist refugee young people in transition to independence* (Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies: Tasmania)

Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee, Parliament of Victoria, *Inquiry into Strategies to Prevent High Volume Offending and Recidivism by Young People*, Final Report, July 2009.

Francis, Steve and Cornfoot, Sarah, (2007) *Working with Multicultural Youth: Programs, Strategies and Future Directions*, Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues, Melbourne, Australia for the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth.

Lyons, Eleanor (1995) "New Clients, Old Problems: Vietnamese Young People's Experience with Police" in Guerra, Carmel and White, Rob (Eds.) *Australian youth Subcultures: On the Margins and in the Mainstream*.(Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies: Hobart).

Refugee Health Research Centre (2007), *GOODSTARTS for Refugee Youth*, Broadsheet #4, November.

Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council (2002), *Strategy for Refugee Young People*. Canberra, Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs

VicHealth (2007), 'More than tolerance: embracing diversity for health', Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Melbourne

Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (2008), 'Rights of Passage: The Experiences of Australian-Sudanese young people', see:  
<http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/publications/reports%20and%20discussion%20papers/>  
 accessed 19/10/2009

White Ribbon Foundation of Australia 'Factsheet: What is Violence Against Women?', see  
[www.whiteribbonday.org.au/media/documents/Factsheet%205%20-%20What%20is%20violence%20against%20women.pdf](http://www.whiteribbonday.org.au/media/documents/Factsheet%205%20-%20What%20is%20violence%20against%20women.pdf), accessed 27/10/09.

<http://www.youthlaw.asn.au/yoursay.php>, accessed 19/10/09