

## Federal budget falls short in investing in Australia's young people

The Federal Budget 2017-2018 reflects a missed opportunity to invest in young people.

While there are some small investments in initiatives that include youth, MYAN is particularly disappointed that it does not build on last year's investment in youth employment initiatives in any meaningful way.

"At this time, with high youth unemployment and the expense of higher education, young Australians are in need of a helping hand, particularly those from refugee and migrant backgrounds who often face multiple disadvantage, and this budget does not reflect this," said MYAN National Coordinator Nadine Liddy.

However, MYAN appreciates the continued support for apprenticeship and traineeship programs within the \$1.5 billion Skilling Australians Fund. For some time MYAN has advocated for the importance of these programs in supporting young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds to access employment opportunities.

We are deeply concerned about the introduction of a new job seeker compliance framework which strengthens penalties for deliberate non-compliance. These punitive measures for unemployed young people who are already vulnerable are contrary to the support they need and likely to see their situation worsen.

MYAN is disappointed to see the reforms to the university sector – with fees to rise by 7.2% and the income threshold at which HELP fee repayments kick in dropping - and is worried about the impact this could have on those who are most vulnerable.

However, the small investment in youth homelessness is welcomed - a commitment to the National Affordable Housing Agreement, in particular Social Impact Investments, aimed at improving housing and welfare outcomes for young people at risk of homelessness.

We also welcome the additional \$55.7 million in funding for legal assistance services, \$15 million for research into mental health and \$40 million over four years to continue several longitudinal studies, including *Building a New Life in Australia*. This is an important study contributing to a much needed evidence-base on settlement outcomes for humanitarian entrants.

MYAN notes the \$21.2 million investment in managing asylum seekers in regional processing centres, and we are pleased to see that the closure of the Manus Island facility and regional processing activities in Nauru are explicitly included. However, we would like to see more detail about how the allocation will be spent, ensuring there is a focus on expediting resettlement.

We would also like to see more detail on the allocation of \$185.4 million over four years to reform Australia's visa processing arrangements, in particular how this might impact on young people.

We remain concerned about the proposed changes in citizenship requirements and will engage with the government's consultation process.

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