



## Humanitarian Youth Settlement in Western Australia

### 1.0 Introduction

The first of its kind in WA, this Information Sheet was developed by the Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network Western Australia (MYAN WA) to provide the youth and settlement sectors with a snap shot of data pertaining to humanitarian youth arrivals<sup>1</sup> in WA over the past five financial years.

The information presented is derived from statistics collated by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) based on the data records of people arriving in Australia under the Humanitarian Program as at 3 December 2013. DIBP's online Settlement Reporting Facility uses primary settlement data, supplemented by various sources including the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) and Medicare.

Please note that DIBP's online data is regularly updated and due to the high mobility of many young people, the information provided in this fact sheet is indicative only, as some figures may be inaccurate.

This information provides a general overview of the primary source countries and settlement trends for refugee young people currently residing in WA. DIBP's Settlement Reporting Facility can be accessed online at [www.immi.gov.au/settlement](http://www.immi.gov.au/settlement).

This information sheet also presents a brief discussion of some of the issues impacting on migrant and humanitarian youth in WA during the settlement process. These issues have been identified through MYAN WA's consultations with key stakeholders across the sector.

- All data presented in this information sheet is accurate as at 3 December 2013.
- For the purposes of this information sheet, the age range of youth presented in the data is 12 to 24 years of age.
- The statistics presented in this information sheet refer to the state of WA only, unless otherwise stated.
- For the purpose of the calculations in this information sheet, the visas referred to as the humanitarian stream comprise the subclasses: 200, 201, 202, 203, 204 and 866.
- The data presented refers to financial years and not calendar years.

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<sup>1</sup> i.e. those living in WA with a permanent visa, having arrived in Australia through either the offshore or onshore component of Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian program.

### 1.1 How many humanitarian young people have settled in WA over the past five years?

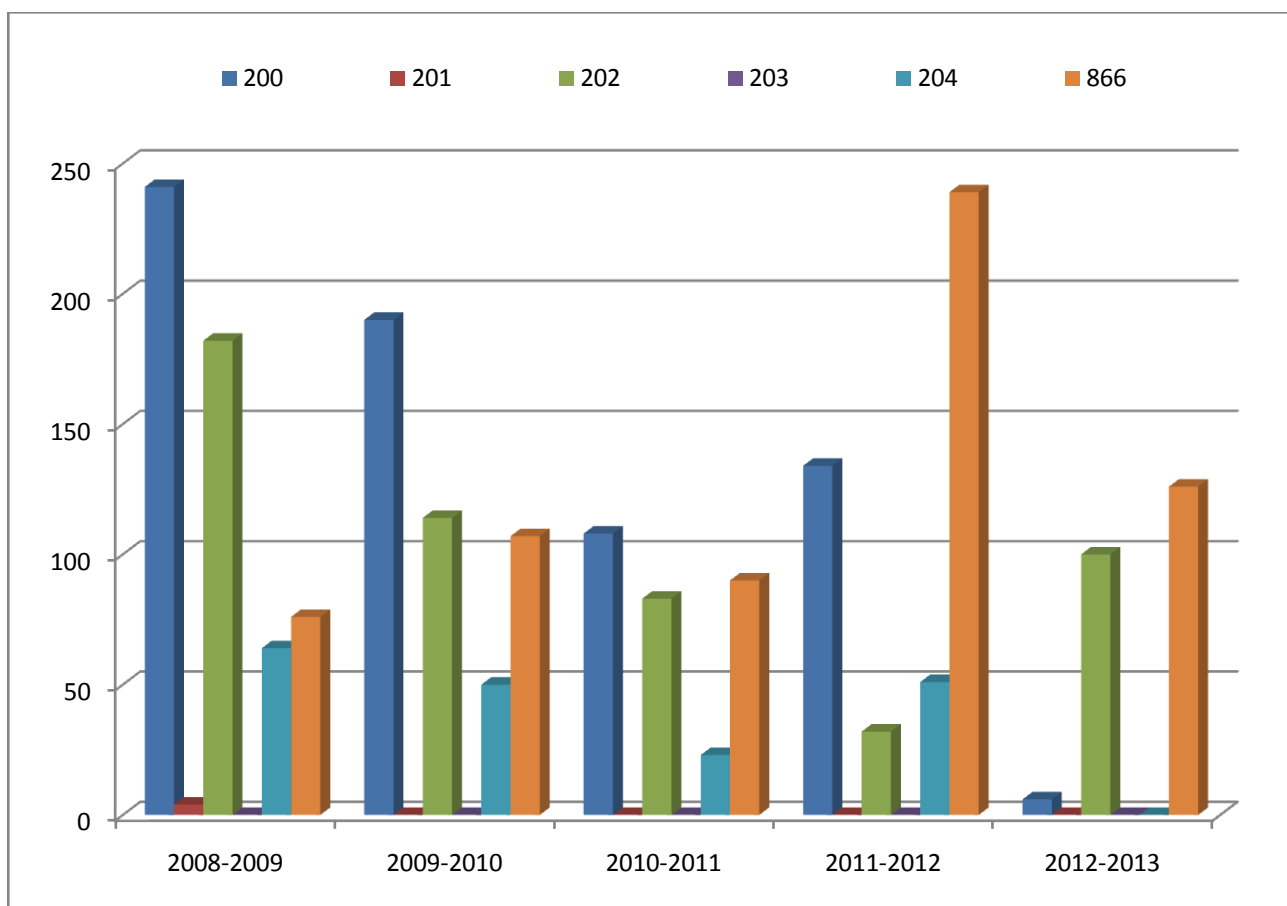
Prior to the 2012-2013 financial year, Australia resettled approximately 13,750 people annually under its Refugee and Humanitarian Program. This number increased to 20,000 in the last financial year, following the recommendations of the Expert Panel on Asylum Seekers (released on 13 August 2012).

As at 3 December 2013, there were 2,026 humanitarian youth arrivals living in WA who had arrived in Australia over the last five years (1 July 2008 – 30 June 2013). As there were 20,861 humanitarian youth arrivals to Australia over this period, WA’s arrivals account for 9.7% of the national figure.

In the last financial year (2012-2013), a total of 238 refugee young people were resettled in WA. This accounts for 7% of the Australian total for this period (n = 3,396).

Figure 1 provides a breakdown of WA’s humanitarian youth arrivals for the past five years by visa sub-class.

**Figure 1 - Humanitarian Youth Arrivals to WA by Visa Sub-Class (2008-2013)**



200 = Refugee      201 = In-Country Special Humanitarian      202 = Global Special Humanitarian  
 203 = Emergency Rescue      204 = Woman at Risk      866 = Protection

Figure 1 reflects changes in the refugee and humanitarian program in the last 5 years in relation to increased numbers of young people arriving in Australia through the on-shore program (i.e. being granted an 866 protection visa after seeking asylum in Australia). Over the last 3 years, there has been a clear increase in onshore arrivals, including those arriving in Australia as unaccompanied minors, and a related decrease in offshore visas granted (200 and 202). This reflects the national trend and has implications for service

providers as the settlement sector adjusts to the different needs of those arriving in Australia through the onshore program, including the needs of unaccompanied minors who are a particularly vulnerable group.

## 1.2 Where are WA's humanitarian youth coming from?

The top ten countries of birth for humanitarian youth who have settled in WA in the past five financial years are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1 – Top Ten Countries of Birth for Humanitarian Youth Arrivals to WA (2008-2013)**

World Region	Country	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Southern Asia	Afghanistan	81	91	81	106	113
South East Asia	Burma	139	99	43	71	59
The Middle East	Iraq	31	40	47	13	28
North Africa	Sudan	39	22	21	11	2
The Middle East	Iran	26	26	14	49	44
South East Asia	Thailand <sup>2</sup>	39	39	11	10	4
Southern Asia	Pakistan <sup>3</sup>	4	6	8	21	17
Central & West Africa	Congo	7	18	12	23	9
Southern Asia	Sri Lanka	6	19	14	9	4
Southern & East Africa	Ethiopia	27	14	9	15	1

As Table 1 illustrates, young people from Afghanistan, Burma, Iran and Iraq represent the largest components of the Humanitarian Program for youth arrivals for the last financial year. Over the past five years, Afghanistan has been consistent as the top country of birth - with the exception of the first two years documented in Table 1 (2008-2010) where Burma was the top source country for WA's humanitarian youth.

Currently, young people from Afghanistan make up a significant proportion of humanitarian youth in WA (23%) who have resided in Australia for five years or less. Of these young people, the majority (63%) have arrived in Australia in the last three years.

Young people from Burma make up the second largest component of humanitarian youth arrivals to WA, at 17% of the total. Whilst still providing the second highest average of youth humanitarian entrants to WA over this five-year period, Burma's numbers have decreased significantly since the 2008-2009 financial year.

The numbers from Iran have remained relatively stable over the past five years with the exception of the 2010-2011 period, where there was a significant drop in arrivals from the previous financial year. Iraq's numbers have also remained stable as Table 1 illustrates, with the exception of the 2011-2012 period, where numbers dropped to 16.

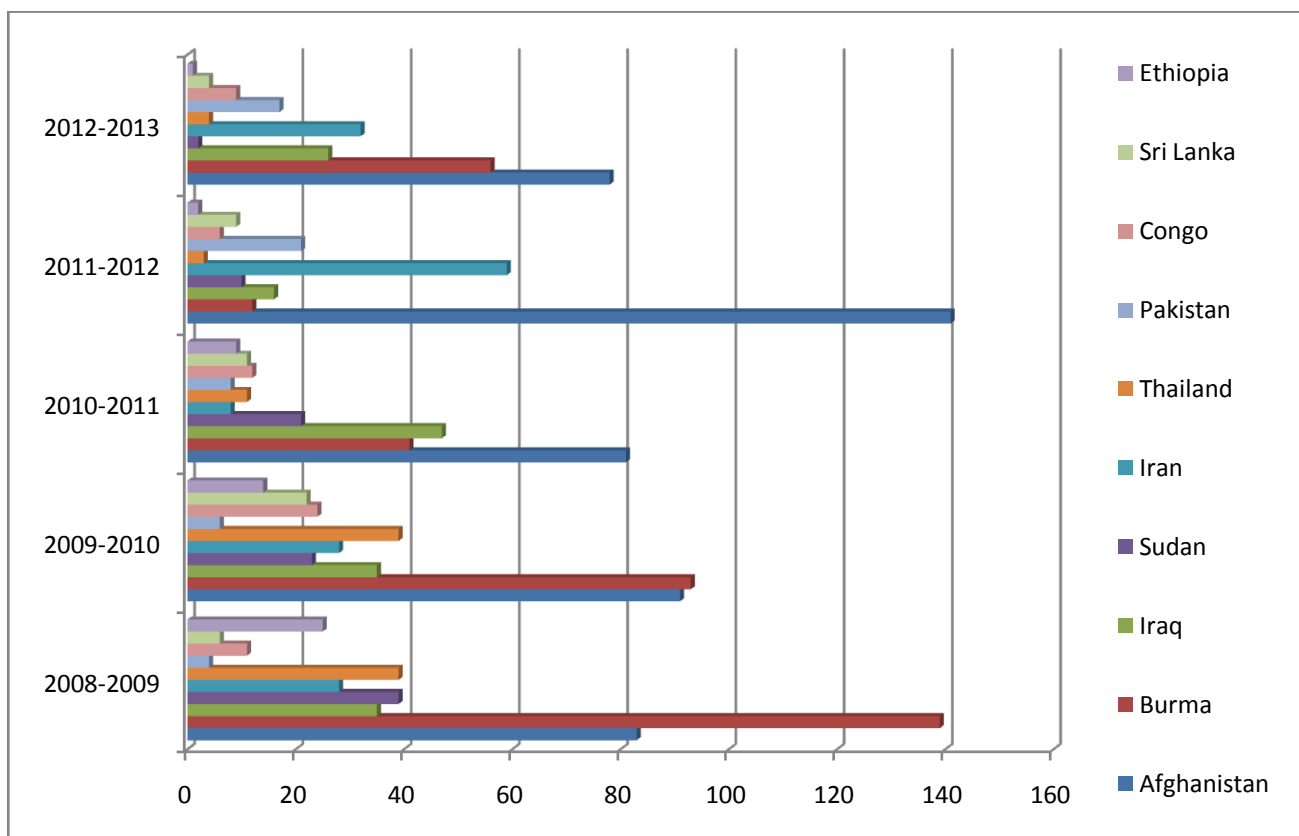
Humanitarian youth arrivals from Pakistan have been steadily increasing over the past five years, with numbers from Thailand, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Ethiopia and the Republic of Congo declining, particularly over the past two years. This suggests that young people residing in WA who were born in Thailand, Sri Lanka or Africa tend to have been in Australia for longer periods of time, arriving prior to the 2008-2009 financial year.

Figure 2 provides some further insight into these trends by showing how numbers of young people from these countries have spiked in some years and declined significantly in others.

<sup>2</sup> The majority of new arrivals who were born in Thailand are of Karen Burmese ethnicity, which should be taken into account when considering the numbers from Burma and Thailand (i.e. most of these young people are not of Thai descent).

<sup>3</sup> A large number of youth arrivals from Pakistan are in fact Afghan Hazaras. This is important to consider when interpreting these statistics.

**Figure 2 - Top Ten Countries of Birth for Humanitarian Youth Arrivals to WA (2008-2013)**



**1.3 Where are WA’s humanitarian youth settling?**

Table 2 shows the ten local government areas (LGAs) of metropolitan WA with the highest numbers of humanitarian youth arrivals in the past five financial years.

**Table 2 – Top Ten Metropolitan LGAs for Humanitarian Youth Arrivals to WA (2008-2013)**

LGA	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	Totals
Stirling (C)	130	117	88	96	81	512
Canning (C)	91	106	80	71	45	393
Wanneroo (C)	63	47	36	57	31	234
Gosnells (C)	69	57	25	19	36	206
Bayswater (C)	14	31	11	33	23	112
Swan (C)	46	21	20	22	9	118
Belmont (C)	14	16	18	17	13	78
Armadale (C)	31	19	13	3	7	73
Victoria Park (T)	12	20	9	10	16	67
Kwinana (T)	8	2	0	18	15	43

Over the past five years, the majority of humanitarian youth arrivals to WA (for whom the LGA has been recorded) have settled within the City of Stirling, located in the inner northern suburbs of metropolitan WA, approximately ten kilometres from the Perth central business district (CBD). The City of Stirling is the largest local government area by population in WA, with an estimated total population of more than 200,000 people.

Twenty-four percent of the total humanitarian youth who have settled in WA over the 2008-2013 period have settled in the City of Stirling. As documented in Table 2, numbers of youth settlers to the City of Stirling LGA have been consistently higher than those of other metropolitan LGAs over the past five financial years.

The City of Stirling is closely followed by the City of Canning with regard to numbers of humanitarian youth settlers, with a percentage of 19% of the total WA figure for the 2008-2013 period. The numbers of humanitarian youth arrivals to most of the ten LGAs presented in Table 2 have remained stable over time (with all LGAs experiencing a decline of numbers in the 2012-2013 financial year). However, Swan and Belmont have experienced a significant drop in arrivals between the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 periods. Conversely, Kwinana has seen an increase in numbers of humanitarian youth arrivals over the five-year period, particularly between 2011 and 2012.

**Table 3 – Top Five Regional LGAs for Humanitarian Youth Arrivals to WA (2008-2013)**

LGA	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	Totals
Katanning (S)	10	2	1	3	6	22
Plantagenet (S)	3	0	1	1	5	10
Busselton (S)	3	0	1	2	1	7
Mandurah (C)	4	1	0	0	1	6
Albany (C)	1	2	0	0	1	4

As Table 3 indicates, few humanitarian youth have settled in regional and rural WA over the past five years, and of those who have, the majority have settled in the Shire of Katanning, which is located 277 kilometres south-east of the Perth CBD. Humanitarian youth arrivals to Katanning account for 1% of the total number of humanitarian youth arrivals to WA between 2008 and 2013, closely followed by the Shire of Plantagenet, with 0.5% of the state-wide figure.

## **2.0 Demographics of Humanitarian Youth Arrivals in WA**

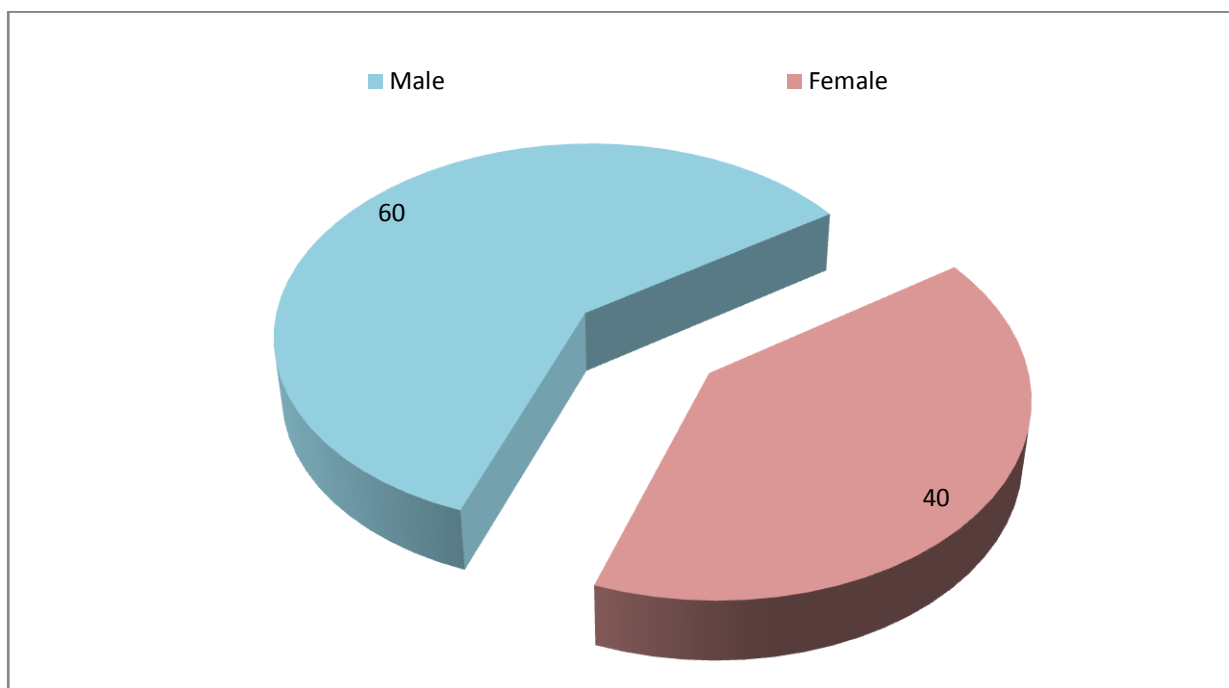
### **2.1 Gender**

The gender spread for humanitarian youth arrivals to WA over the past five financial years is illustrated in Table 4. Whilst numbers of male youth arrivals have been consistently higher than that of females over the 2008-2013 period, males and females were more evenly represented in the 2008-2009 period. As Table 4 illustrates, the male-female ratio has continuously shifted further in favour of male arrivals in the past five years.

**Table 4 - Humanitarian Youth Arrivals by Gender (2008-2013)**

Gender	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	Totals
<b>Male</b>	289	254	185	327	166	1221
<b>Female</b>	278	207	119	129	72	805
<b>Totals</b>	<b>567</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>2,026</b>

Figure 3 shows the average proportion of male to female humanitarian youth arrivals to WA over the past five financial years. As Figure 3 indicates, males account for 60% of the total youth arrivals with females comprising of 40% for the period of 2008-2013.

**Figure 3 - Humanitarian Youth Arrivals by Gender: Average Ratio (2008-2013)**

## 2.2 Main languages spoken

The top ten main languages spoken by young people from humanitarian backgrounds who have settled in WA over the past five financial years are presented in Table 5.

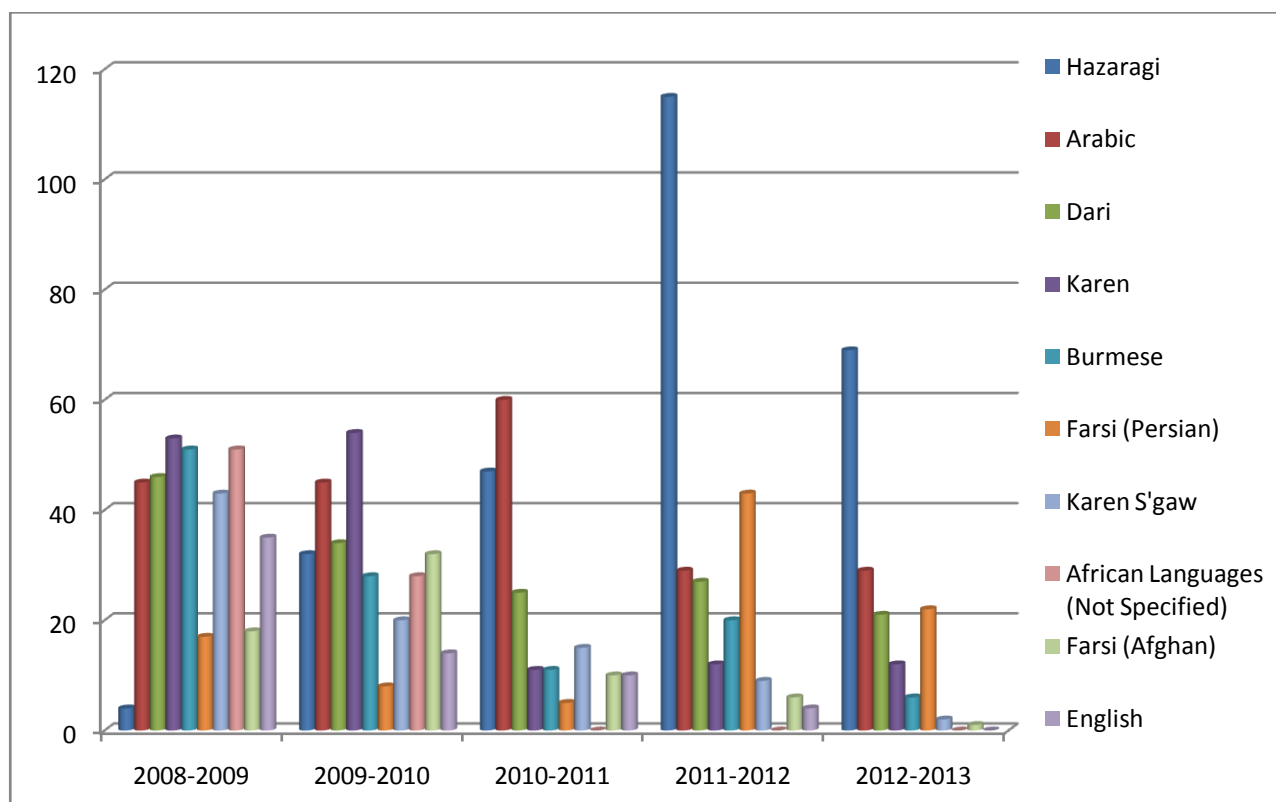
**Table 5 – Top Ten Languages Spoken by Humanitarian Youth Arrivals (2008-2013)**

Language	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	Totals
Hazaragi	4	32	47	115	69	267
Arabic	45	45	60	29	29	208
Dari	46	34	25	27	21	153
Karen	53	54	11	12	12	142
Burmese	51	28	11	20	6	116
Farsi (Persian)	17	8	5	43	22	95
Karen S'gaw	43	20	15	9	2	89
African Languages (Not Specified)	51	28	0	0	0	79
Farsi (Afghan)	18	32	10	6	1	67
English	35	14	10	4	0	63

The top language spoken by humanitarian youth entrants to WA over the past five years is Hazaragi, which was identified as the main language spoken by 13% of arrivals for the 2008-2013 period. This reflects the increase numbers of humanitarian arrivals from Afghan backgrounds. The figures for youth with Hazaragi as their main language have increased significantly since the 2008-2009 financial year, despite a drop between 2012 and 2013 from 115 to 69. Arabic and Dari represent the second and third most spoken main languages by humanitarian youth for the past five years, with 10% of total arrivals for this period primarily speaking Arabic and 7.5% speaking Dari. Hazaragi and Dari are spoken in Afghanistan, which is reflective of the high numbers of Afghan refugee youth who have settled in WA since 2008 (in comparison to other countries of origin - see page 3).

A significant decrease is evident over the last five financial years for youth arrivals with Karen, Burmese, Farsi (Afghan), and English as their main languages. Figure 6 further illustrates these trends.

**Figure 6 – Top Ten Languages Spoken by Humanitarian Youth Arrivals (2008-2013)**



### **3.0 Issues Impacting on the Settlement of Humanitarian Youth in WA**

Through regular consultations with the MYAN WA network of service providers who work with migrant and refugee youth in WA (coupled with data documented by the national MYAN Australia network), the key issues impacting on humanitarian youth in WA have been identified and are summarised below. These issues are concerned with education, employment, mental health, racism, and risk of homelessness.

#### **3.1 Education**

Access to, and engagement with, appropriate education is commonly noted as a significant issue affecting humanitarian youth during the settlement process (MYAN Australia, 2013). In WA, consultations with key agencies comprising the MYAN WA network have revealed that young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds are often disadvantaged with regard to learning English and their ability to participate in mainstream education at the level required for their age group. The factors identified via the MYAN WA network that impact on humanitarian youth engagement in education and training include:

- The difficulty of learning English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) in an unfamiliar learning environment;
- Limited resources available to support young people who are transitioning from Intensive Language Centres (IECs) to mainstream schools;
- Racism/ lack of cultural awareness within some educational institutions, causing migrant youth to feel unaccepted, which can result in their failure to attend classes; and

- Limited or interrupted schooling prior to their arrival in Australia, resulting in expected levels of education being disproportionate to their abilities.

The MYAN WA network has identified the need for:

- WA schools to be provided with targeted resources for EALD support;
- Increased cultural competency training and awareness-raising with both staff and students to provide a more accepting and encouraging environment for CaLD students; and
- Supports for newly arrived youth (both in and outside the classroom) to support EALD learning and sustained engagement in education and training pathways.

### **3.2 Employment & Training**

With regard to obtaining employment and/or participating in vocational training, young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds face additional disadvantage as a result of the following factors:

- Limited English proficiency;
- Unfamiliarity with Australian workplace culture and expectations, including knowledge of employment services and Australian systems;
- Family expectations around training and career options;
- Experiences of racism and discrimination whilst seeking employment;
- Limited exposure to viable career options, especially for those who have spent years living in refugee camps;
- Lack of recognition of existing qualifications (gained prior to relocating to Australia) when accessing employment opportunities; and
- Limited access to jobs with salaries that can support their needs – Many can only obtain unskilled or low-paid positions.

MYAN Australia (2013) recommended that young people from humanitarian backgrounds receive targeted support to overcome barriers to employment and training. This support needs to focus on enhancing their understanding of the workforce in Australia in order to build their confidence to make links with potential employers whilst gaining valuable job-searching skills.

### **3.3 Mental Health**

It is well documented that humanitarian youth face a number of mental health risk-factors as a result of: racism and discrimination; problems with belonging and identity in a cross-cultural context; and in some cases, experiences of trauma as a result of periods spent in immigration detention or refugee camps prior to settling in Australia (MYAN Australia, 2013).

MYAN WA has identified the following factors that further exacerbate the mental health issues faced by humanitarian youth during their settlement experience in WA:

- Limited cultural competency in mainstream health and mental health services, resulting in under-utilisation of these services for migrant youth; and
- Lack of coordination between mental health and other support services to facilitate effective referrals to professionals who can meet the needs of the young person concerned.

### **3.4 Racism**

For newly arrived youth in WA, especially those from refugee backgrounds, racism and discrimination is a frequently reported issue impacting on their well-being during the settlement process. According to MYAN Australia (2013), racism and discrimination:

- Threatens personal and cultural identity, impacting on mental health and a young person's capacity to negotiate the transition to adulthood; and



- Serves to diminish a young person's sense of connection and belonging to their community and broader society, which reinforces their experience of marginalisation, therefore inhibiting their engagement with peers, education, employment, and recreational activities.

Members of the MYAN WA network have emphasised the value of community and school-based programs that specifically address racism and discrimination. Youth-led models have been widely recommended to execute such programs and provide young people with effective mentors with whom they can relate to. MYAN WA is currently scoping a model for a youth consultation with this aim, which will be established in WA in 2014.

### **3.5 Housing & Homelessness**

MYAN WA has recognised and documented that humanitarian young people are particularly vulnerable to homelessness as many experience great difficulty obtaining appropriate housing. Some of the factors that increase the risk of homelessness for CaLD youth are:

- Separation from family members and other vital support networks;
- Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors (UHMs), who arrive in Australia with no adult relative (for more information about UHMs, see MYAN Australia's 2013 policy paper available at <http://www.myan.org.au/policy-work/121>;
- Cultural isolation/limited social engagement; and
- Overcrowded housing, as many CaLD young people in WA are reported to be residing in residences that are already overcrowded.

## **4.0 References**

Department of Immigration and Border Protection. (2013). *Settlement reporting: Providing statistical data on permanent arrivals to Australia*. Last accessed 3 December 2013, from: [www.immi.gov.au/settlement](http://www.immi.gov.au/settlement)

MYAN Australia. (2013). MYAN Australia federal election policy platform 2013. Last accessed 3 December 2013, from [www.myan.org.au](http://www.myan.org.au)

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\*This document is based on the report Humanitarian Youth Arrivals to Victoria by Centre for Multicultural Youth, available from: [www.cmy.net.au/ResourcesfortheSector#InfoSheets](http://www.cmy.net.au/ResourcesfortheSector#InfoSheets)

\*For more useful resources about humanitarian young people in Australia, visit <http://www.myan.org.au/policy-work/133>