



## Media release

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### **New report identifies trends impacting young refugees and migrants' wellbeing**

A new report issued today by VicHealth, CSIRO's Data61 and the Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN) has identified the key trends impacting the wellbeing of refugee and migrant young people.

The [\*Bright Futures: Spotlight on the wellbeing of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds\*](#) report looks at how emerging trends like an increasingly competitive job and education market, growth in digital technology, globalisation and an increasingly culturally diverse society impacts young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

The report found:

- Migrant and refugee students are less likely to find full-time employment after graduation (45%) compared with Australian-born students (69%) due to racial discrimination, lack of understanding of the local job market and overseas skills and qualifications not being recognised.
- Young migrants are much more likely to be employed in part-time than full-time work, compared with Australian-born young people. The '[gig economy](#)' can expose refugee and migrant young people to precarious work conditions and other risks.
- Young Australians are more accepting of multiculturalism than older age groups, but incidences of racism have increased steadily over the last ten years having a serious impact on young people's mental wellbeing.
- Cyber-racism is a key threat for refugee and migrant young people in Australia. Muslims, refugees and asylum seekers are the most common targets of harmful race-based online content.
- Despite increasing knowledge in mental illness prevention and treatment, young refugees and migrants are less likely to access treatment and support due to mental health services not addressing a diversity of needs, and cultural beliefs and stigmas around mental illness.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said the research highlighted the importance of building the resilience, mental wellbeing and social connection in young people from culturally diverse backgrounds".

"Improving the mental wellbeing of young people is the shared responsibility of all of us, regardless of where we come from or our cultural heritage," Ms Rechter said.

"We need to use this research to create more opportunities to boost young people's resilience and mental wellbeing and drive positive change for young migrants and refugees."



CSIRO's Data61 Research Scientist Dr Claire Naughtin said the research also highlighted the range of social, political and technological changes that impact the mental health and wellbeing of refugee and migrant young people – and the unique opportunities that these individuals offer.

“What we’re seeing in Australia as we enter Industry 4.0, is entire industries are becoming data-driven and this is impacting all aspects of Australia’s workforce today, creating new types of jobs and skill sets,” Dr Naughtin said.

“The research shows that refugee and young migrant communities also bring with them many unique qualities, such as global networks, new ideas and an entrepreneurial spirit, which can enrich the fabric of Australian society.”

“Young people’s greater acceptance of multiculturalism is not surprising, but a steady increase in racism warrants attention,” MYAN Chair Carmel Guerra said.

“While the adaptation to new economies and digital technology brings opportunities, and this group of young people often have broad global networks, racism can adversely affect many young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

“From our work, we know that all young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds want to be able to access the support and opportunities they need to be active participants in our society.”

“To make this a reality we need to ensure that important evidence like this report translates into more inclusive and targeted service delivery and policy at a local, state and national level.”

21 year old Mehak Sheik, MYAN Youth Leadership Officer said: “Refugees and migrants are a growing and integral part of the community. This report gives all of us the evidence-base to talk about issues that matter in our lives and find solutions.”

Ms Rechter said with the right support young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds thrive in Australia.

“Young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds have enormous skills and capabilities to enrich our society but this research clearly shows we need to do more to break down the barriers holding them back from fully participating in our community.”

To view the full VicHealth, Data61, CSIRO and MYAN Bright Futures report visit:

[www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/media-and-resources/publications/bright-futures-spotlight-refugee-migrant-youth](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/media-and-resources/publications/bright-futures-spotlight-refugee-migrant-youth)

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