

# News Release

**Report highlights what young people from a refugee or migrant background need to help them navigate a new way of living and to secure a sense of identity, belonging and connection.**

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Today, the NSW Advocate for Children and Young People, Ms Zoë Robinson, has released the report [\*"Everyone should be heard no matter your race, culture, religion...no matter what.": The experiences of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in NSW.\*](#)

Throughout 2024, ACYP conducted consultations with 276 young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds, who were aged 12-24 years and came from 29 countries, to better understand their experiences and insights about what could help them during their settlement journey.

"Report findings highlight that across all communities, young people's culture and religion underpin their values and beliefs, guides their interactions with others, and gives them a sense of belonging as they navigate their life as a young person from a refugee or migrant background in NSW," said Ms Robinson.

Overwhelmingly, the young people ACYP spoke with are extremely proud of their culture and identify their culture as being central to their identity.

However, young refugees and migrants can face barriers while they learn English, gain confidence in their language skills and navigate a new environment. A proportion also face additional barriers as a result of their visa type or settlement location.

Ms Robinson said, "These realities can limit their capacity to access resources and support, can hinder their ability to express their needs and concerns. It also has significant impacts on their settlement journey and can lead to social isolation and disconnection from the broader community.

"Despite this, throughout our broader consultations and polling over the last five years, children and young people from a refugee or migrant background have consistently been identified as a community who overcome barriers to thrive in NSW," she said.

Ms Robinson said, "Many of the young people we spoke to told us what would help them achieve their goals and support their sense of identity, belonging and connection throughout their settlement journey.

In particular young people called for improved accessibility of support services for refugee and migrant children and young people, more community led cultural education programs, and more free or low-cost spaces and activities for all young people to connect with each other.

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“Many policies, programs and services exist to support this community however, young people’s meaningful participation in the design, development and review of such policies could be strengthened and more could be done to promote this good work,” she said.

Report recommendations include:

- NSW Government and service providers that support children and young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds, develop a simple, accessible communication document and update the [NSW Government website](#) to reflect current available services and information that supports children and young people.
- Grant programs across government and communities should consider the specific needs of multicultural communities in terms of application forms and requirements.
- The NSW Government should prioritise greater investment in NSW Government led programs that aim to assist multicultural communities.
- Embed the voices of children and young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in decision making processes.

Ms Robinson added, “The report also highlights some of the good practice in NSW in the context of what young people asked for, and what more could be done to complement and leverage this work. We have an opportunity now to hear these young people and have included a worksheet so that agencies and organisations can reflect on their own work in this context”.

This work was undertaken as part of the focus on two commitments under ACYP’s [NSW Strategic Plan for Children and Young People NSW 2022-2024](#); Love, connection and safety and Hope for the future. Consultations focused on young people’s identity and connection to culture, sense of belonging and community, and their hopes for the future in terms of education and employment aspirations.

**ENDS**

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