



youth affairs network qld

MULTICULTURALISM IN QUEENSLAND'S YOUTH SECTOR – WHERE TO NEXT?

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS AND PROPOSED MODEL
TO RESPOND TO SECTOR NEEDS

BASED ON CONSULTATION WITH GOVERNMENT AND
NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS UNDERTAKEN IN 2012

YOUTH AFFAIRS NETWORK QLD (YANQ)

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www.yanq.org.au

**Multiculturalism in Queensland's Youth Sector - Where to Next?:
Preliminary Findings and Proposed Model to Respond to Sector Needs
May 2012**

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This consultation process is being undertaken and coordinated by Hamza Vayani in a consultancy role on behalf of YANQ. Contact admin@yanq.org.au for more details.

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Context

YANQ has been seeking the views of the Queensland youth sector, State Government Departments and national peak bodies in relation to updating and refreshing its approach to advocating advancement of multiculturalism. The consultation process has sought to capture and be informed by sector views, requirements for support and to develop an approach for coordinating advocacy with other key stakeholders at state and national levels.

Synopsis

A synopsis of responses to each of the questions asked in the consultation is as follows:

Is multiculturalism on the agenda in our organisations and what priority is it given? Should it be? And what do we mean by multiculturalism?

At the state level, all organisations including sector peaks, service delivery bodies and government stated that multiculturalism was a priority. Many organizations stated it was implicitly part of their work due to the diverse groups accessing their services. There was unanimous agreement that multiculturalism should be on the agenda. Service delivery organisations expressed that with limited resources and information overload they wanted to be kept informed of practical opportunities and/or toolkits that could help improve their understanding and organisational capability to appropriately meet the needs of diverse groups effectively. It was clear that there are opportunities to revisit what cross cultural youth work training exists and the form in which it is delivered i.e. online, face to face etc; especially for those services and staff located in rural and remote communities.

Action Item 1:

Consideration around the development of action orientated training supported with implementable accreditation standards with different levels that take into account organisational context/capacity could be developed to assist organisations in assessing, benchmarking and putting in place a culture of continuous improvement in ensuring multiculturalism and improving access in providing information, services or resources becomes embedded.

Definitions around multiculturalism varied. From a State Government perspective, it was noted that with the change in government, ascertaining the direction from new Ministers was a key priority. A whole of government approach and action plan noting different agency actions against multiculturalism has been developed. Multicultural Affairs Queensland advised a mechanism to discuss progress across government departments is in place and there are opportunities for targeted conversations/presentations that could assist government departments to progress their priority areas. Currently, there is no formal mechanism that is either ongoing or allows for input on specific agenda items that could contribute to progression or input from a community sector perspective at that strategic whole of government 'Interdepartmental Committee' level.

Action Item 2:

A mechanism to determine what is being achieved, where the gaps are and opportunities to share and build best practice in advancing multiculturalism in its broadest sense for both newly arrived and settled communities with community sector representation at 'whole of government meetings' considering multiculturalism issues could be an opportunity that could be explored and advocated for with YANQ working collaboratively with other state sector peaks engaged in the area of multiculturalism.

It was noted that multiculturalism and its remit really did depend on what services viewed their mandate was in terms of advocacy, service delivery or commissioning of funding.

Action Item 3:

Developing a shared definition of what multiculturalism means together with a framework that accommodates both settlement service foci and broader settlement of diverse communities is critical. Across the Queensland sector, a consistent theme was that agencies wanted clarity in navigating where to get specialist youth based, settlement or more generic advice and advocacy support around multiculturalism.

Are young people aware of the Queensland Anti Discrimination Act 1991 and the development of a new Multicultural Recognition Bill 2011 and Queensland Multicultural Policy; and how this will impact on them and the service providers that serve them? And what role and how should young people and the youth sector be supported to engage in this debate?

It was clear that generally there was a lack of awareness around the Queensland Anti Discrimination Act 1991 and even less awareness of the Multicultural Recognition Bill 2011; a bill which appears will not now progress due to the change in State Government.

Action Item 4:

An opportunity to develop an awareness campaign that frames the current Discrimination Act in the context of 'equality', 'human rights', and 'rights and responsibility'; and revisiting this with a new state government as well as the federal work of the Australian Human Rights Commission on developing a National Anti Racism Strategy are opportune for sector peaks.

A considered approach in ramping up and improving both sector awareness and advocating for strengthening provisions in addressing gaps to tackle discrimination, inequality and strengthen social justice was something that sector would welcome in terms of education. It would also create the space and role to argue and build the alliances to create a role for organisations and young people to be engaged in the debate in a very practical way. Currently based on consultation discussions this approach appears to be conspicuously absent.

What policies and processes do we have in place in promoting and progressing multiculturalism specifically from the perspective of young people and youth sector organisations?

What processes and systems have we developed to create a shared understanding and ownership of what multiculturalism means that is inclusive of all of the communities that we serve?

Many organisations were able to refer to general policies and procedures. However, there did not appear to be any type of tool or reference that expressly articulated commitment to multiculturalism. In some instances, there were principles in place around service standards and what clients could expect. There was, however, very little expressed around processes and systems. At minimum, some consideration is required about putting in place structural supports in a way that is incremental and takes into account organisational capacity, remit and context.

Based on consultation outcomes to date this practice seems to be patchy and could be addressed together with metrics indicating levels of success and progress achieved as part of Action Item 1. Arguably such an approach would be a practical and tangible mechanism to bring about the necessary awareness and incremental change to improve awareness, capacity and service outcomes for both newly arrived and settled multicultural communities.

What do we see as the challenges and opportunities for multiculturalism going forward? For example due to increased migration and population growth and diversity in regional communities outside of South East Queensland?

What practical action will we be taking to taking to address the challenges and opportunities that we articulate as a sector?

How can YANQ assist the Queensland Youth Sector in advocating what our position on multiculturalism should be noting the diversity of our geography and sector?

What can YANQ do to support organisations in practically developing a shared and sector owned vision about the practice, capacity, support and implementation of multiculturalism in relation to policy outcomes, sector capacity and equity of opportunity for Queensland young people to genuinely benefit from the notion of multiculturalism?

Organisations welcomed the increased diversity across the state, however concerns were consistently expressed in relation to the following challenges:

Funding: Capacity constraints to respond to and meet new demand on already stretched services.

Workforce: Skills, knowledge, access to training, time to attend and implement; attraction, retention and rates of attrition due to heavy workloads and inadequate resourcing to meet demand in an effective way.

At a State Government level, based on discussions with the Office for Youth, there was recognition more needed to be done in relation to sector support in terms of upskilling and retaining a high quality workforce.

Action Item 5:

There is an opportunity for YANQ to engage in representing sector training needs and ensuring they are reflected in the Youth Sector Development Plan; and developing, inputting and upgrading training for youth sector professional development with a specific input on rights, responsibility, equality, human rights and multiculturalism potentially as part of consortium responding to sector needs, developing content and rolling out delivery of training both face to face or online.

The other area that emerged from discussion was exchange of data. It was noted that in government funding, a large amount of statistical monitoring was undertaken and that there might exist opportunities to share aggregate data on the profile of service users; and the need also to capture outcomes achieved beyond just numbers of users.

Action Item 6:

YANQ could work on developing indicators that inform data collection and track impact on improving service outcomes for multicultural communities across the state thus maintaining accountability and having an evidence base that at minimum can quantify demand; and over a period of time view trends in improved outcomes and practice to service multicultural requirements in the youth sector.

Are young people and the youth sector adequately resourced to engage in this discussion? And what further sustainable resource and infrastructure should be in place to support this requirement if it is found to be necessary?

There was consensus that resources are tight and that there are examples of good practice. There was acknowledgment more should be done. Based on consultation input, the action items in this

paper are an attempt to provide a basis for planning YANQ's response. The action items are also designed to focus YANQ in securing the capacity needed to meet sector feedback on how multiculturalism can be progressed in the Queensland Youth Sector in collaboration with specialist peak bodies that have a multicultural and/or youth focus at state level or nationally.

Action Item 7:

An opportunity to showcase and share learning of such practice was something that the sector wanted YANQ to champion.

Key Themes – Sector Support Requirements

Action Item 1: Consideration around the development of action orientated training supported with implementable accreditation standards with different levels that take into account organisational context/capacity could be developed to assist organizations in assessing, benchmarking and putting in place a culture of continuous improvement in ensuring multiculturalism and improving access in providing information, services or resources becomes embedded.

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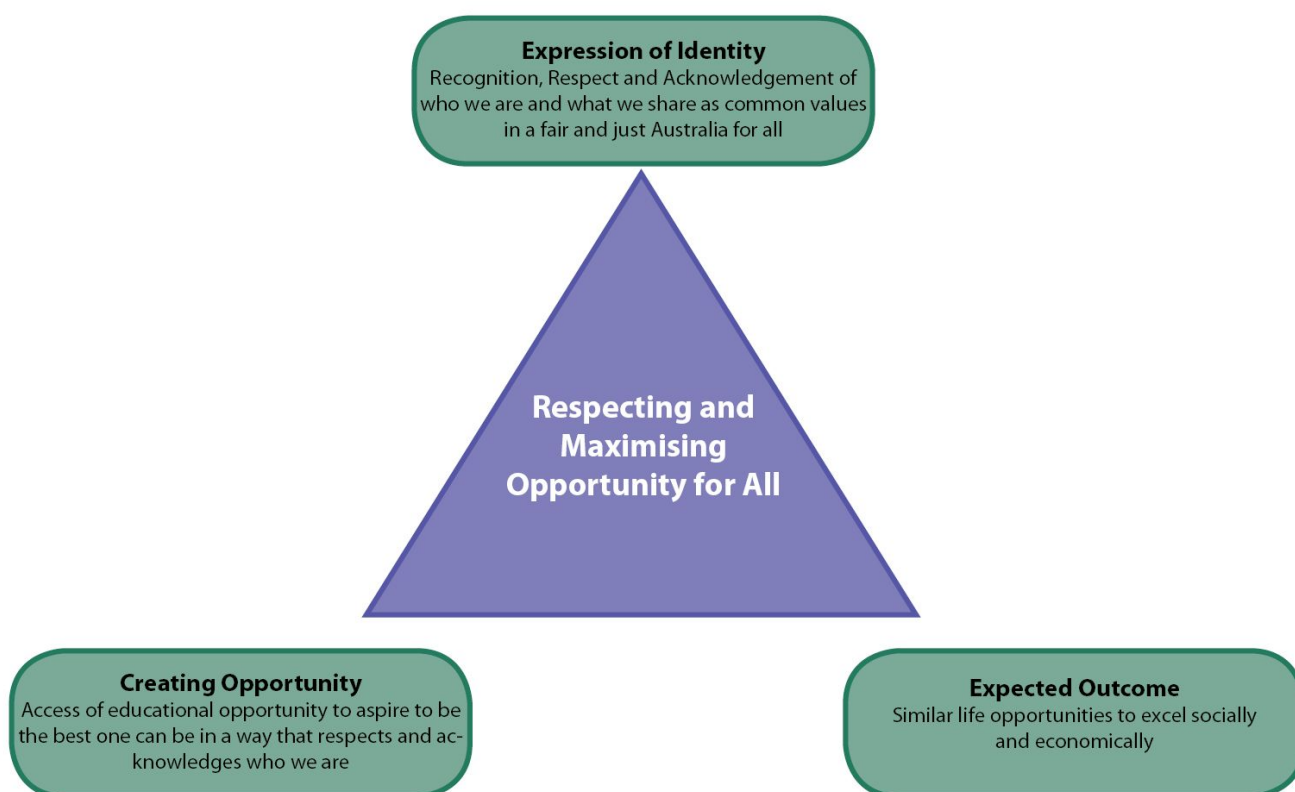
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Outcomes Framework for Addressing Multiculturalism Policy Development to Support Queensland Youth Sector

Outcome Activities	Partners	Type of Impact
<p><i>Action Orientated Training & Accreditation/Validation</i></p> <p>(Linked to Action Items 1, 5 & 6)</p>	<p>State/National Peaks Working in Multicultural/Youth Space</p>	<p>Systemic Structural Improvement & Developing Identity Discourse As Multiculturalism Includes First Australians & All Other Arrivals</p>
<p><i>Accountability & Showcasing Sector Practice to Influence Whole of Government & (Private Sector) Thinking</i></p> <p>Linked to Action Items (2 & 7)</p>	<p>State Peaks Working in Multicultural Space</p>	<p>Systemic Structural Improvement</p>
<p><i>Shared Definition on Multiculturalism & Clear Reference & Coordination re: Advocacy in terms of Peak Specialist Knowledge</i></p> <p>Linked to Action Item(3)</p>	<p>State Peaks Working in Multicultural Space</p>	<p>Systemic Structural Improvement & Developing Identity Discourse As Multiculturalism Includes First Australians & All Other Arrivals</p>
<p><i>Awareness Campaign on Tackling Discrimination & Promoting Multiculturalism</i></p> <p>Linked to Action Item(4)</p>	<p>State/National Peaks Working in Multicultural/Youth Space</p>	<p>Developing Identity Discourse As Multiculturalism Includes First Australians & All Other Arrivals</p>

Making Multiculturalism About Benefiting & Working for Everyone in Australia

The framework should be seeking to achieve outcomes both for newly arrived settlement service migrants and economic migrants; as well as those that have always lived in Australia and/or subsequently settled to make this land one that we all share in harmony and where opportunity is there for the taking of all who aspire for it. Below is a visual representation of how the outcomes framework seeks to contribute to that vision in view of the feedback received from this consultation process.



Defining the Philosophy Behind the Model to Trigger How We Maximize the Benefits that Multiculturalism can Afford Young People In Queensland

Expression of Identity

This is about creating the space for debate and discussion about diverse cultures and plurality in the context of living in a shared Australia for all young Queenslanders.

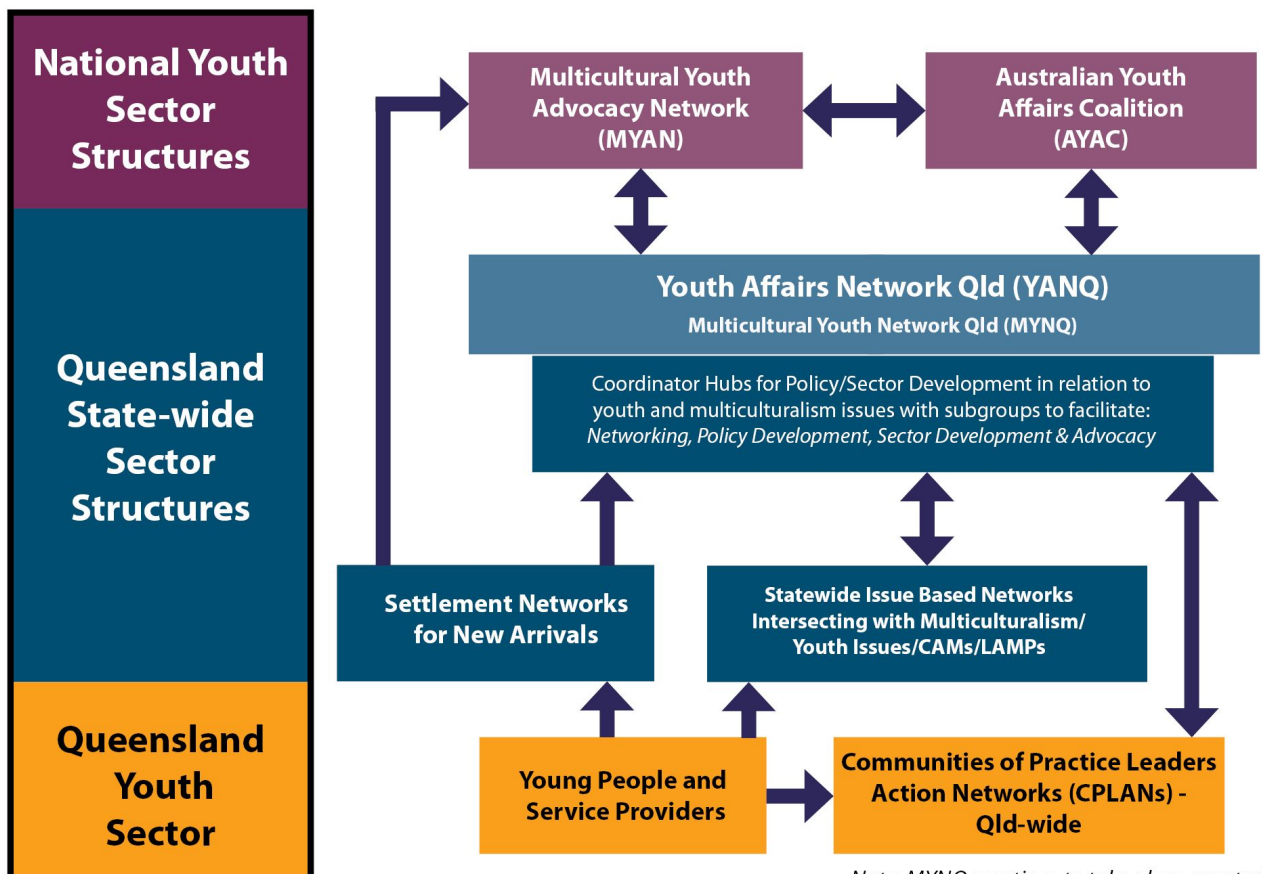
Creating Opportunity

This is about putting in place the structural provisions in place that support, enable and value young people to work hard, contribute and maximise their potential by removing barriers and inhibitors that enable this to happen. At the same time creating opportunity is about putting in place basic minimum supports for those that young people who are vulnerable and disadvantaged to have the means to help themselves. It is about enabling the power of self determination such that young people can support themselves and contribute towards society as a whole.

Expected Outcome

In creating the space to express identity and create opportunity, the expected outcome should be a place in which Queensland is the destination of choice for everybody including our young people to live, work and invest their future. This is because what we will have is a place where multiculturalism will be conduit that facilitates people to express and respect difference in a way that enables constructive working relationships, have aspiration and still share this state by benefiting from the dividends that diversity can bring through knowledge, trade, investment, enterprise and respecting one another.

Proposed Structures/Mechanisms for Progressing Action Items In This Paper



Note: MYNQ meetings to take place quarterly

Conclusion

YANQ welcomes the opportunity to build on the actions outlined in this paper based on its engagement and being informed by the Queensland youth sector because of our consultation activities relating to this paper. YANQ is committed to working together with the Queensland government, community sector and enterprise together with support from outside of Queensland where required in pursuing the actions that have come out of this paper. YANQ believes that we can achieve a vision in which there is a shared space for all citizens; including young people to explore and express plurality and diversity in a way that can be confidently valued and shared within the context of what it is to be Australian Queenslander.