

# A letter to newly arrived young people in Qld

## From YANQ Director Siyavash Doostkhah

In June 2012, I attended the Youth Employment Forum in Brisbane and spoke to the participants there about newly arrived young people to Queensland, and how difficult they had been finding it to get jobs.

I wanted to reassure them that this was not because of their own failings, but rather because of things going on across the state that are making it difficult for everyone to find work at the moment.

### **I'm a young person, I've just arrived in Queensland and I'm finding it really difficult to get a job. Why?**

The first thing you must remember is that Queensland currently has really high levels of unemployment amongst young people. The state average is around 12%, almost double what it was in 2007. In some regions alone, the youth unemployment rate is around 20%, meaning one in every five young people is out of work or study.

### **So is it my fault that I'm unemployed?**

You shouldn't feel that there is necessarily something wrong with you if you can't get a job. While training and qualifications for a role will get you so far, the current unemployment rate in the state is the highest it's been in a decade, meaning it's difficult for *any* young person to get a job at the moment.

You also have to remember that in mainstream Australia culture there are still quite high levels of racism, and when we're in hard economic times, the reality is that the more different you look, the more you will have to face up to discrimination in finding a job.

We've heard stories of young people from Sudan who whilst being just as qualified as those working the front counters in restaurants, were only allowed to work out the back washing up.

### **So what can I do?**

You should remember that despite facing hardship in the countries that we have come from, you should not think of Australia as a Utopia. Where-ever we are in the world, it is up to each and every one of us to play our part in building a better society.

When I was 18, I came as a refugee to Australia. One piece of advice I would give to newly arrived young people from my experience would be to make friends with Aussies. It's pretty simple, but this act will really help them to break down the fear issue they have with new arrivals. Most Australians are good people but are sometimes scared of difference. Once they get to know you and become familiar with you then they will most often be very willing to help you progress your life in Australia.



**Youth Affairs Network Qld**

The peak body for the community youth sector in Qld

[www.yanq.org.au](http://www.yanq.org.au)

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