Community
Conversations:
Talking about finding work in Australia

Young people and ***women*** from migrant and refugee backgrounds in Melbourne's west share their experience

Multicultural Centre for Women's Health

cmy Centre for Multicultural Youth

HealthWest Partnership

Acknowledgments

HealthWest Partnership acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands that we work on, the Wurundjeri, Boonwurrung, and Wathaurong peoples of the Kulin Nation, and pay our respects to their cultures, their elders past and present and to all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Community Conversations project is a partnership between HealthWest Partnership (lead organisation), the Centre for Multicultural Youth, and the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health.

We thank the twenty people who participated in this project for their time and insights.

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SECTION 1
Background

The Community Conversations project is a partnership between HealthWest Partnership (HW), the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) and the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health (MCWH). HealthWest is the lead organisation.

In May 2018, HealthWest Partnership sought to create system level change through the development of the Standards for Workforce Mutuality. The Standards provide guidance for organisations to address the diversity gap identified in the health and community services' workforce in Melbourne's west (Read & Planigale, 2019).

The Community Conversations project was then created to gather further information on the nature of economic exclusion among refugee and migrant communities in Melbourne's west, and to source community-informed ideas for reducing barriers to participation.

HealthWest outlined the initial project parameters:

Purpose

- Collect key messages from the community to inform regional planning to reduce the impact of race-based discrimination on economic inclusion in the west.

Objectives

- Identify accessible and appropriate language for use in strategic planning and future initiatives
- Understand felt need for economic inclusion, in the context of race-based discrimination
- Identify priority areas for action where possible.

Target audience

- Young people and women from culturally diverse backgrounds in Melbourne's west (including Maribyrnong, Brimbank, Melton, Wyndham and Hobsons Bay).

Whilst HealthWest Partnership is primarily interested in economic inclusion in the health and community sectors, this parameter is not applied to the Community Conversations project as it could limit participation and engagement.

CMY and MCWH's role as project partners was to collaborate on project design and undertake data collection with their respective target audience.

As a youth organisation committed to youth participation, CMY drew on the skills, knowledge and expertise of young people to co-implement the project. MCWH brought a strong intersectional feminist lens to the design and delivery of the project, focusing on the structural barriers central to migrant and refugee women's experience of work.

Methodology

Between March and July 2020, methodology and research questions were designed through a series of scoping workshops with partners. Individual phone interviews were conducted in August and September.

2.1 Project design

Based on the established goals and purpose of the project set by HW, the three project partners co-designed the project methodology and research questions through a series of scoping workshops held between March and July 2020.

The workshops defined the following project parameters:

- **Project scope:** What do we mean by 'economic inclusion'? Who are our target audiences and locations?
- **Project expectations:** What principles should underpin how the project is delivered? What outcomes will the project deliver for partner organisations? Community stakeholders? Policy makers and other partners?
- **Project focus:** What are the key topics we wish to investigate?
- **Project design:** How will we recruit and engage participants and frame our conversation with them?

Economic inclusion refers to equality of opportunity for all members of society to participate in the economic life of their country as employers, entrepreneurs, consumers, and citizens (Bettcher & Mihaylova, 2015, as cited in HealthWest Partnership, 2019).

The partnership group recognised the importance of placing economic inclusion in the context of the social and economic disadvantage often experienced by people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. By applying an intersectional lens, partners sought to explore relationships between economic inclusion / exclusion, individuals' participation in education and work, and their broader experiences tied to race, culture, gender, family, and access to other community resources.

For example, project partners were keen to explore experiences of education as a pathway to employment, transitions between the two, opportunities for individual skill development and recognition, access to broader social capital within communities, the role of families in modelling, enabling and supporting individuals' economic inclusion, and the role of dominant economic systems in shaping the minority experience of young people and women from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

Partners sought to frame the Community Conversations openly to allow project participants to scope and define economic inclusion in terms and language relevant to them, and to identify priorities of importance to them. The first draft of Community Conversations questions was developed and tested by CMY and MCWH. CMY tested the research tools with a Youth Researcher from the CMY Explore Team[1], while MCWH tested the tools with staff members in the Research, Advocacy and Policy Team.

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1. Explore is a team of youth researchers who have skills and experience undertaking research and consultation with young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. For more, see www.cmy.net.au/young-people-community/youth-opportunities/explore/

This input and feedback further informed the design and development of the research tool. The final interview guide included a brief project description, participant consent information, questions to gather de-identified demographic data, and a series of semi-structured interview questions designed to support a one-on-one conversation-style interview with participants. Additional prompt questions to support interviewers were also provided. The full interview guide is available at **Appendix 1**.

The themes covered in the interview included:

- The importance of work
- Participant experiences of finding work
- Participant perceptions of 'good work' and 'bad work'
- Experiences of discrimination or unfair treatment at work
- Participants' future vision in relation to life and work
- Perceptions of barriers, enablers and opportunities to obtaining employment
- Priorities and key messages for decision makers to assist in making it easier for employment.

2.2 Project delivery

Project partners primarily sought to engage women and young people with migrant and refugee backgrounds from the local government areas within the HW catchment in the western metropolitan region of Melbourne (Maribyrnong, Hobsons Bay, Brimbank, Melton and Wyndham).

A purposeful sampling approach was taken, where people were invited to participate based on the assumption that they could provide insights on the topic (Patton, 2015). They were sent plain language statements in English and provided access to interpreters where requested. Interview participants received a $80 gift voucher in recognition of their time.

CMY conducted ten phone interviews with young people. Participants were identified based on their age (16–25 years) and location (western suburbs of Melbourne), and were recruited through liaison with several youth services teams operating in the catchment area. Interviews were conducted by trained youth workers and youth researchers. Four participants accessed an accredited interpreter and undertook the interview in both English and their preferred language. Not all participating young people had direct experience with employment in Australia but were asked to share their observations more generally on economic inclusion.

MCWH conducted ten phone interviews. Participants ranged in age from 16 to 54 years and their place of residence was evenly split between Brimbank and Melton. Participants were recruited through a range of methods including via MCWH's Facebook pages and MCWH's team of health educators. All interviews were conducted by a project officer in English. No participants required the use of an interpreter. Phone interviews took between 45-60 minutes to complete for all CMY and MCWH participants. Participant demographics are outlined in section 3.

Following interviews, CMY and MCWH sought feedback by sharing transcripts with participants and providing the option to make corrections, give additional input or request redactions. No significant changes were made to participant responses.

Interview transcripts were then individually analysed by MCWH and CMY to identify key themes, which were shared with project partners for preparation of this report.

2.3 Project challenges and limitations

Initial project planning and scoping commenced in March 2020, immediately before the emergence of COVID-19. The resulting lockdown disproportionately impacted the Community Conversations target group. The catchment area experienced higher COVID-19 infection rates, hospitalisations and deaths; earlier and more severe lockdown measures; and significant economic disruption in the insecure, unstable and lower paid employment settings more commonly occupied by recent arrivals, young people and women. The pandemic required project partners to divert resources to pandemic management and response, and the project fell into a four-month hiatus, reconvening in July 2020. The partnership group agreed the impacts of the pandemic made the project as relevant and important as ever, although the project methodology needed to be significantly adapted to suit the COVID environment.

CMY initially proposed to hold three sets of consultations with groups of young people in three local government areas in Melbourne's west. Small group conversations are a simple and flexible method for supporting group dialogue, especially effective among young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds (Block et al., 2012).

MCWH originally proposed a single larger-format workshop to similarly support group dialogue, as well as reach a broader cross-section of its own community. After considering a range of options to hold group consultations via an online meeting platform, project partners agreed that privacy and accessibility issues made online options unviable. One-to-one phone interviews were adopted as the most suitable option under the circumstances.

All CMY interviews were conducted by phone. MCWH participants were offered individual interviews via online meeting platforms, but most also opted for phone interviews. The combination of content sensitivity and lack of face-to-face contact may have inhibited the opportunity for rapport between interviewers and interviewees. Many participants were interviewed in their own homes, which meant that for some, privacy was difficult to negotiate. For those interviews conducted via an interpreter, it is possible the process may have supported as well as inhibited accuracy and understanding between interviewers and participants.

The shift to one-on-one interviews also limited the number of people that could be effectively interviewed within available resources. Both CMY and MCWH interviewed a relatively small sample of 10 participants each. While the small sample and interview methodology allowed for more detailed conversation, it is difficult to analyse trends from such a small sample size and results should not be used to generalise for the broader population of young people and women from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

As indicated earlier, a number of the CMY participants (8) had not had work experience in Australia. While these participants were able to offer many insights into the challenges of looking for work, there were relatively fewer conversations with younger people about their experiences of work.

Notwithstanding these limitations, a series of common themes emerged from the interviews across both CMY and MCWH groups. These provide valuable insights for policy makers and service providers seeking to improve the social and economic prospects of young people and women from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

SECTION 3
Participant demographics

CMY and MCWH interviewed a total of ten participants each (a total of twenty interviews), ranging in age from 16 to 54 years. Participants came from a range of cultural backgrounds with diverse migrant and refugee experiences.

Time spent in Australia ranged from 1 year to 17 years, with one participant being born in Australia. Of the six MCWH participants employed at the time of the interview, four were employed in roles related to their qualification. Only two CMY participants were employed at the time of their interview. Neither they nor any CMY participant was or had ever been employed in a role related to their qualification.

The tables below provide a snapshot of CMY and MCWH participant demographic profiles. More detailed participant demographic information is available in **Appendix 2**.

Gender

	Female	Male
CMY	7	3
MCWH	9	1
TOTAL	16	4

Age group

	16-18 years	19-24 years	25-50 years	>50 years
CMY	5	5	-	-
MCWH	1	4	4	1
TOTAL	6	9	4	1

Relationship and parenting status

	Single	Married	With children
CMY	10	-	1
MCWH	7	3	4
TOTAL	17	3	5

LGA place of residence

	Brimbank	Hobsons Bay	Maribyrnong	Melton	Wyndham
CMY	4	-	1	1	4
MCWH	5	-	-	5	-
TOTAL	9	-	1	6	4

Country of birth

	Australia	Eritrea	Ethiopia	Iraq	Lebanon	New Zealand	Sudan	Thailand	Tibet	Vietnam
CMY	-	1	6	-	-	1	1	1	-	-
MCWH	1	-	-	3	1	-	-	-	1	4
TOTAL	1	1	6	3	1	1	1	1	1	4

Residency status

	Australian Citizen	Permanent Resident	Temporary Visa-holder
CMY	1	9	-
MCWH	5	3	2
TOTAL	6	12	2

Length of time in Australia

	<2 years	2-7 years	>7 years
CMY	1	8	1
MCWH	-	5	5 (incl. 1 person born in Aus)
TOTAL	1	13	6

Education

	Primary	Secondary	Vocational	Tertiary
CMY	6	4	-	-
MCWH	3	1	1	5
TOTAL	9	5	1	5

Employment status

	Casual	Part-time	Full-time	Unemployed	Not in workforce
CMY	2	-	-	8	-
MCWH	1	3	1	4	1 (parental leave)
TOTAL	3	3	1	12	1

SECTION 4
Key findings

This section outlines key themes and findings gathered from the Community Conversations interviews conducted by CMY and MCWH.

4.1 Introduction

Economic inclusion is a key driver to broader social inclusion, increased empowerment, and self-fulfillment in modern society. Unsurprisingly, the positive ideas and experiences that Community Conversations participants have of employment routinely flow back to a desire to achieve greater social inclusion, personal agency and sense of wellbeing, whether these are achieved through individual success, increased capacity to support the family unit, the ability to grow wider social networks, or to contribute meaningfully to the broader community.

However, participants also disclosed significant challenges and barriers to economic inclusion. Community Conversations participants highlighted challenges accessing supports to navigate the employment market, as well as challenges associated with an increasing reliance on online environments.

Many of the challenges and barriers identified by participants sit in the context of broader social and economic disadvantage and exclusion. They are often directly linked to participants' status as new migrant arrivals (with or without refugee experience) and are further compounded by intersectional disadvantage and oppression linked to age, gender, language, culture and race.

These findings are supported in the literature.

For example, a major 2017/18 multicultural youth status report (Wyn et al., 2018) found that almost half of multicultural young people had experienced some form of discrimination or unfair treatment in the preceding 12 months (48.7%) and an even higher proportion — almost two thirds — had witnessed someone else being unfairly treated or discriminated against (63.5%).

Two thirds of those who had experienced discrimination indicated that this was because of their race (65.7%), while one quarter was discriminated against because of religion (25.3%). The majority of those who had witnessed discrimination felt that it was on the basis of race (72%), while high numbers had also observed discrimination due to religion (46.3%), sexuality (42.9%) and gender (42.4%). Within the census sample, approximately 75% were born overseas and around half had arrived in Australia in the previous five years.

A 2020 CMY report notes, that in addition to experiences of discrimination, young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds face a range of other barriers to employment. These include: a lack of bridging social capital; unfamiliarity with employment options, pathways and the labour market in Australia; difficulties obtaining work experience; interrupted education; and English as an additional language (Beadle, 2014; CMY, June 2020). These barriers are reflected in the experiences described by CMY and MCWH participants in this report.

When participants were asked about their goals for work and life, common themes included wanting to help family, striving for independence and wanting to contribute to the community. For Community Conversations participants these were the common drivers for getting employment.

Emerging themes, regarding what participants thought decision makers needed to know, focused on strategies to make it easier for young people and women from migrant and refugee backgrounds to get and sustain employment. These included: making it easier to access support (particularly with online applications); more opportunities for newly arrived people in the job market; the need to tackle racism and discrimination in the recruitment process as well as in the workplace; and the need to understand how COVID-19 has compounded the challenges faced by those with migrant and refugee backgrounds.

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on employment for women, young people, casual and tenuous employees, and communities specifically in the west of Melbourne have also been well documented.

In August 2020 *The Age* (Schneider & Millar) reported that four of Melbourne's five most disadvantaged municipalities had the highest number of active COVID cases, with Brimbank having ten times the number of cases than more affluent suburbs. It also noted the higher rates of insecure work in these suburbs, often undertaken by minimum wage workers frequently from migrant communities.

The CMY *Locked Down, Locked Out* (June 2020) report cited above found that 38% of the young people interviewed had lost their job since the onset of the pandemic, 33% reported reduced hours, and 68% reported that their family had been negatively impacted.

For young people, the employment impacts have persisted throughout the pandemic to date. In December 2020, the Brotherhood of St. Laurence released a youth unemployment monitor showing that youth unemployment was higher than the post-GFC peak of 14% in 2014; part-time, casual and insecure jobs had grown; and youth underemployment which spiked in April 2020, remained high at nearly 18%. The report found one in three young people in the labour force were unable to find sufficient work. The long-term 'scarring effects' for young people of these employment shocks have been shown to persist for decades (Borland, 20 April 2020; Wright, 26 July 2020).

MCWH has also documented the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 on women from migrant and refugee backgrounds (31 July 2020). These include: higher levels of job loss due to precarious employment; higher representation in low-paid but essential industries; inability to access multilingual COVID information; and lower likelihood of being able to work from home, avoid public transport, socially distance at work or take time off when sick. Compounded by ineligibility for Federal government supports, many migrant and refugee women experienced increased financial difficulty and dependency, challenges accessing healthcare, greater isolation and vulnerability to family violence, increased caring responsibilities and higher likelihood of poor mental health.

The following sections present participant perspectives in key themes drawn from the interview guide (outlined in section 2.1): the importance of work, participant experiences of finding work, good and bad work, unfair treatment and discrimination at work, visions for the future, enablers and barriers, and priorities and key messages.

Recommendations flowing from the interview themes are presented in section 5.

4.2 Importance of work

Interviews commenced by inviting participants to reflect on the importance of work to them. Participants were asked what having a job meant to them, whether they thought it was important to have a job, and what they perceived as being some of the benefits or negatives about having a job.

Work and having a job were seen by participants as being important. Having a job was seen as instrumental in supporting family and themselves, alleviating financial strain, achieving independence, supporting the community, and building self-esteem.

4.2.1 Financial independence, stability and security

Most participants mentioned **financial independence, stability and security** as important reasons for having a job, and several spoke of the financial stress associated with being unemployed.

> *Having a job is very important. You can buy your own house, can do what you want. Centrelink is not enough to take care yourself.*
> Mina

> *If I don't have a job how can I get what I need?*
> Musa

Supporting themselves as well as alleviating their families' financial stress were cited as core motivations for several participants. Isaac for example described how he needed a job to help provide for his younger brother (8 years old) and his mother, who was currently unemployed and receiving Centrelink. Isaac described needing paid work to 'fix problems with finance' and to 'support myself and mum'.

4.2.2 Individual wellbeing

In addition to financial reasons, many participants cited the importance of work to gain skills and professional experience, especially in terms of increasing future employment prospects.

Meaningful participation in the workforce was also linked to the idea of work being important for non-financial reasons. A meaningful job was generally regarded as one that was beneficial to individual wellbeing and the broader community.

> *If you are doing a job that is meaningful or a job that is related to what you have studied or what you like then this can be more meaningful than the income that it generates.*
> Kate

Indeed, extensive research highlights the mental health benefits of employment (VicHealth & CSIRO, 2015; CMY, 2016).

For Ellen, a working parent of two young children, participating in meaningful employment was closely associated with **job status and self-esteem.** Ellen was having difficulty transitioning from hospitality/shift work to a stable job with more regular hours that would align with her parenting responsibilities.

These feelings were echoed in another participant's comments, Laura, a working parent of a teenager, who was employed in a part-time role that was related to her qualifications.

> *I feel like people look down on people who have migrated and who do physical jobs. Usually when you move into higher positions at work, those jobs require you to think and people respect people in those kind of jobs more. It's a self-esteem thing. I used to have other Asian people make assumptions about me and my job. They would automatically think that I worked in the nail industry or in the market earning $10 per hour. This makes me feel sad and I don't usually defend myself either.*
>
> Ellen

> *What I do is linked to my name, my self-esteem and my legacy. My job is something that I'm very proud of. I feel a sense of belonging at my work.*
>
> Laura

For many younger participants, relief from or prevention of financial stress was also closely associated with many non-financial benefits of work. These included broader forms of independence such as not having to rely on others, as well as the ability to build **social connections and skills**. These were regarded as important contributors to building young peoples' resilience, self-esteem, confidence and overall wellbeing.

Many younger participants said that work enabled them to meet new people and form friendships, socialise and maintain existing friendships, and forge positive relationships. In this regard, work was seen as a place to learn from colleagues and develop discipline and resilience.

> *As a young person, a job allows me to develop skills that will set me up for success later in life. I've been able to develop discipline and the ability to get along with people…It really makes me more resilient.*
>
> Ethan

> *Work means to be independent and not to ask for things from other people.*
>
> Sara

> *Work gives independence and freedom. Build confidence and happiness on yourself.*
>
> Elsa

> *You can help yourself be a better person. Might help with mental health and wellbeing. It puts you in a better place to do the things you want to do, and to help others do what they want to do.*
>
> Mary

> *The finances also give me the option to socialise.*
>
> Elisabeth

4.2.3 Supporting family and community

Being able to **support parents, family and the wider community** was also cited as important to many participants, particularly among the younger cohort.

Employment, as a means of supporting family, featured heavily in many participant responses. It was an integral part of why work was important to them and why planning for future employment pathways and career goals was crucial. Participants considered the importance of employment in terms of both supporting families with both immediate and future needs.

> *It means being able to afford material things. Basic needs of the house. Groceries. Things kids need for school. Having a job is important for me because it helps the family. I need to do my part and support the family to ease the burden and support the kids. My parents are experiencing financial hardship.*
> Elisabeth

> *To receive extra money so I can support family.*
> Julia

Two younger participants also spoke about employment as giving them the means to help family members overseas:

> *A job means personal income and the ability to help relatives back home.*
> Jasmin

> *I have family overseas and I would like to support family overseas as well.*
> Elsa

However, some participants also pointed out some of the challenges associated with work-life balance, particularly juggling family and carer responsibilities. For some participants, work that required long hours and long travel time meant less time for family. Women with children also described how prescribed working hours and demands of 'unskilled' work not only impact family and caring responsibilities but their future career prospects.

> *Having a job means that I don't have enough time for my family. Work can sometimes be stressful because there are deadlines to meet. I've worked in a factory before. They make you work faster than a machine so when get home, you have no energy to do anything.*
> Michelle

> *I have to sacrifice a lot of time to work. I currently work in hospitality and it's really hard for women with kids like me because it requires me to work night and weekend shifts. If I'm not able to work these hours, my employers may not mind but it's hard for me to move up the career ladder compared to other people.*
> Ellen

> *Don't know where the kids [are] and how they are, and I will worry about them.*
> Mina

Despite these identified drawbacks, no participants identified family responsibilities as an impediment or disincentive to work. On the contrary, the desire of both older and young participants to financially support family members were strong motivating factors to work. These motivating factors were not just restricted to family either. A number of the younger participants also identified support and contributions to the wider community as being important motivating factors to work.

> *To give it back to the community, the community in Australia.*
> Julia

> *...help new people around here [community].*
> Mina

4.3 Experiences finding work

In this second thematic area, participants were asked to share their experiences of finding work. They were invited to discuss their approach to finding work—where they had looked, who had supported them to find work—as well as the factors that made it easier or more difficult to find work, or that made job-seeking a more or less positive experience.

As noted in section 3, 80% of CMY participants were not currently employed, with eight of these having never been employed in Australia, while among the MCWH participants 40% were currently unemployed.

These figures broadly accord with population data that shows people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, younger people, and those residing in the west of Melbourne, experience higher rates of unemployment than the broader community. Rates of unemployment among migrant and refugee women and young people have been further exacerbated as a result of COVID-19 (see section 4.1).

Even prior to COVID-19, young people were much more likely to be employed casually – 86% of those in one CMY survey were casually employed (CMY, June 2020). Young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds have also cited a range of difficulties accessing employment. The Multicultural Youth Census for example found that over half of the sample said it was 'difficult' or 'very difficult' to find work (56%) and a further 17% had not looked for work (Wyn et al., 2018).

4.3.1 Language and communication barriers

English language proficiency plays a central role in determining the successful integration of migrants into Australian society and is a key factor associated with education and employment outcomes (Beadle, 2014).

English language proficiency was cited by almost all CMY and MCWH participants as the most critical factor in finding and maintaining work. Low English proficiency was identified as a significant barrier at every stage of the employment process from finding and responding to vacancies, to participating in interviews and maintaining employment.

Several participants commented on their experience of having secured an interview only to lose the employment opportunity to other candidates with stronger English language capabilities.

> *Not knowing the language makes it harder.*
> Musa

> *The shop managers really want someone who can speak English well. They can see that my English is not very good. Then they don't want to hire me. Language is the only thing that makes it hard for me to find work.*
> Mariam

> *My English language and communication skills make it harder for me to find work. Not making more friends, developing relationships or getting involved in the community has made it challenging for me to find work. Language is the most significant barrier.*
> Elaine

For people with migrant or refugee backgrounds, I think the thing that makes finding work the most difficult is our English language ability. In the past, when I went to job interviews, there were a lot of other candidates there and a lot of interview questions asked.

If I can't understand or speak English well then there's no chance that I will get the job. I have a Masters degree and the jobs that I apply to are relevant to my degree. I have the right experience and the right qualifications for the jobs I apply to, so I think the one thing that has definitely made finding a job most difficult is my abilities with English.
Amanda

Even when English proficiency was achieved, participants mentioned ongoing **communication skills** as presenting a challenge.

The ability to communicate cross-culturally—applying and adapting English language skills in the Australian workplace—was seen as important to gain employment and to progress in a desired field. (See also evidence of accent bias or discrimination described by Ethan on page 27, Section 4.5)

It is hard for me to find a job because although I can read, write and speak English, sometimes you have to formulate sentences like the locals do…I would love to be a childcare teacher. However, you can't just look after children. By the end of the day, you're required to write a report and I'm not good at writing.
Michelle

It's really important to have an understanding of Australian culture especially when dealing with Australian people. I have to understand how they communicate. [We] are usually really shy in my culture, that's a positive quality but here it's a negative quality. In Australia, because I'm shy people consider me to have poor communication skills and [have] low confidence. The concept of confidence is a very Western idea for me.
Tara

The importance of language-related skills to progress within Australian workplaces has been highlighted in the literature.

For example, a study of Chinese professional migrants in Australia found that while participants were confident in everyday conversation with colleagues and customers, they felt they lacked the "more professional and sophisticated communication and presentation skills" to advance to higher levels of management. They also reported struggling with conflicts between Australian and Chinese cultural norms (Cooke et al., 2013).

Another study of sixty Adult Migrant English Program participants by Major et al. (2014) examined the social inclusion or exclusion of migrants at work. This study found both self-imposed exclusion based on lack of confidence in English, as well as overt marginalisation by customers and colleagues. However, there were also positive stories where migrants felt a sense of inclusion because of colleagues who made effort to support their development of language skills, or who engaged in small talk with them.

One of the study's recommendations was to provide training for migrants to learn the language conventions of the workplace as well as interpersonal communication skills, such as how to engage with appropriate small talk with customers (Major et al., 2014).

Not surprisingly, Ethan, the only Australian-born participant, did not mention English language skills as a factor in finding work. He did, however, reflect on his time attending school in the eastern suburb of Kew after living and going to school in the western suburb of Sunshine. Ethan's comments about the 'East-side's strong study culture' highlight the importance of a well-resourced and inclusive education system, that provides opportunities for young people from all backgrounds and suburbs to pursue their chosen career path.

I really wish I didn't have to move to Kew. I felt that I didn't really fit in with the people there. There was a completely different culture. One thing that I am grateful for is that living there for a short while really set me up to be successful career-wise. Living in Sunshine made me happy in that the community there was very diverse. However, the schools there were really bad...at university, I don't really know many people who come from the west-side. Most people come from the east-side or from private schools.

Ethan

4.3.2 Complex systems and poor support

Many participants spoke of challenges navigating a **complex job-seeking system and poor supports** available to assist them to do so. This prevented many participants from making it to the job interview stage, and many of the younger participants thought new arrivals received insufficient support to access the jobs market early in their settlement.

Young participants in particular spoke about a lack of assistance to apply for work, especially in navigating an unfamiliar employment market and negotiating unfamiliar job search and education, training and accreditation systems. They spoke of the impacts of a lack of social capital and networks to facilitate economic participation. While many young people said they were keen to work and train, many lacked the informal networks or formal supports to help them.

When asked specifically what made it easier or harder to find a job, one participant described the need for formal, practical job search assistance.

If you are a newcomer and not knowing the language. How to improve when you don't know the language... Government could help the newcomers with finding jobs or supply interpreters or someone to provide some guidance. Didn't know how to do resume and cover letter. Had no one to support me. I couldn't help myself.

Mary

If I have someone to help me with my resume and cover letter. It is hard to do it by myself... [It would be easier with] someone who can help me to do multiple applications.

Mina

Many participants indicated that while they saw the job-seeking process as complicated, the right **job-seeking support** could make the process easier. Several of the younger participants indicated however that the support they had received to date was largely ineffectual in helping them gain employment. This included several of those who had received early introductory employment supports while still at school.

> *I have job experience from school that goes for 5 days but that didn't help much.*
>
> Elsa

Others described experiences of choosing to access job-seeking support from specialist migrant and refugee support services where they had preexisting relationships, rather than from employment services or job agencies. This support was often described as one-off and rarely in coordination with specific employment services. It was also often not necessarily a formal part of the agencies' role but was taken on by a specific worker to assist the young person.

> *One of my social workers from Foundation House helped me to apply but still didn't get the job. Wasn't sure why.*
>
> Mina

CMY's *Missing Link* report (2016) identified that the two most important resources young people sought to assist them to gain employment, were knowing people who can point them in the right direction and receiving help or advice from someone in a specific industry.

4.3.3 Online application and feedback processes

According to the *Multicultural Youth Census*, the most common way multicultural young people found their current main job was by searching online (28.2%). This was higher than the proportion who accessed employment through family networks (21%) or friends (16.4%) (Wyn et al., 2018).

While online sources were the most common means of finding work for young people with migrant and refugee experience, CMY and MCWH have highlighted digital barriers to education and employment, which have been exacerbated by the COVID environment.

For example, CMY found that, of the young people they surveyed engaged in online education in mid-2020, 46% faced difficulties accessing the internet and 30% faced difficulties accessing a device/computer (CMY, July 2020).

Linked to issues of both English proficiency and complex job-seeking systems, many of the CMY participants identified challenges associated with online application processes. They cited challenges accessing applications, uncertainty surrounding the application process itself and the questions asked.

> *I don't have much experience with online applications… It is easier to apply face to face because you can ask to repeat.*
>
> Jasmin

These difficulties are compounded because online processes often lack application support and assistance. Many CMY participants spoke of the need for more support to write resumes, knowing where to look for work online, and navigating online application processes.

...need help with computers and resume.
Mina

My application was unsuccessful because the resume was not upload. Find it difficult to upload my resume... Apply again this year. Same problem the resume didn't upload.
Mary

None of the participants indicated that online applications had assisted them positively to access the job market. Several participants felt that, unlike an in-person interview process, the inability to seek clarification and feedback and a lack of accessible support to navigate online applications hindered their prospects of gaining employment through online processes. They were often left unsure as to why their application had not been successful and how to proceed.

In fact, a number of CMY participants commented on a lack of feedback from would-be employers on the application process and the accompanying sense of frustration and disappointment.

When online, you don't get a response or a chance to ask for help/feedback.
Jasmin

I have look for work in year 10, 11, 12. Apply online. Didn't get it. Want to work in [name redacted] during study. No replies. No interviews.
Mina

First time I applied online by myself. I didn't get accepted. They didn't give me a response. I have never received a response. They refer me to another job application but they didn't respond.
Isaac

Despite these frustrations, one CMY participant described still applying online for work out of necessity and, like Mina, seeking support from other trusted sources.

It is hard... hard to apply. Hard if you don't have experience in particular field. Lots of applications ask for a lot of experience. I filled out the forms online. My friend helped with the forms. I get help when I don't understand the questions.
Jasmin

4.3.4 Gaining work experience

Some young participants described the feeling of being caught in a loop of not having enough experience to get a job, and not being able to get a job to gain experience to find the 'right' job.

This inability to 'get a foot in the door' was exacerbated by the challenges associated with complex systems, online applications and lack of feedback described in the previous sections. Some participants described this as being demotivating.

It becomes a vicious cycle of applying, having no experience, being unemployed and not getting experience.
Elsa

It's difficult not having the right qualifications or experience to look for work. The process of finding a job can be very demotivating.
Musa

Word of mouth and connections. Before COVID I was cleaning houses and I got more jobs from word of mouth. When COVID hit I lost work. The barriers in looking for work are experience. When I apply I don't have the right experience. It's like there's nowhere to start because these jobs want people who already know. I am confident in my character. Trying to build on myself is a positive experience. It's challenging when I lack the things people are looking for. Every time I look at the description it feels like an immediate no when they are after at least a years' experience in retail.

Elisabeth

Like Elisabeth above, others also highlighted the importance of personal networks and word of mouth for gaining work. Building on the need for specialist and trusted supports (section 4.3.2), Tara also identified that networking is the most important thing especially for people from refugee backgrounds, and she highlighted the benefits of programs that can provide specific support for new arrivals.

For refugees, it's very hard to network... because of the language barrier, it's very hard to build connections with people and very hard to get a job in Australia. To be able to access programs like Employment Readiness Program is incredibly valuable... I got my current job through AMES Footscray [where I did the program]... I [also] did a certificate III in Aged Care course. It's the easiest job for refugees to get.

Tara

Tara also described the need for getting experience working with Australian people:

Experience such a valuable asset to us. In Australia, it's very difficult for us to get an opportunity get gain real work experience. I'm interested in social work and I've had lots of experience with people in my own community and there's a lot of voluntary work that I can do. It's probably because I have a lot of knowledge and connections with my community. However, it's very hard to get experience working with Australian people. I really want experience working with Australian people to improve my language and my knowledge of Australian culture so that I can contribute. There's no opportunities for us.

Tara

The importance of social and professional networks for finding work experience has been documented in CMY research, while young people themselves have indicated that opportunities to gain work experience and paid internships are crucial to supporting their access to employment (CMY, 2016).

4.3.5 Australian qualifications

Several participants shared personal and anecdotal examples of having **Australian qualifications** but not being able to secure employment because of lack of Australian work experience. Even so, in addition to Australian work experience, having Australian qualifications may also play a significant role in finding work.

One participant, Tara, stated that newly arrived migrants who don't have Australian work experience but are 'educated and proficient in English' find it difficult to find a job because 'they have overseas qualifications and companies don't accept them'.

These experiences have been widely cited in other research. For example, one study of seven skilled migrants from the Middle East detailed their struggle to find equivalent employment despite having overseas qualifications (Bachelor and Masters level) and the appropriate English language skills to receive their visa (Rynderman & Flynn, 2016).

Many younger CMY participants thought studying and obtaining the right qualifications would help them get employment.

A course would help with finding work... It's difficult not having the right qualifications or experience to look for work. The process of finding a job can be very demotivating.

Musa

...[it is easier to get a job with the] right qualification for the job [and] that you like the work [and] know someone in the workplace.

Julia
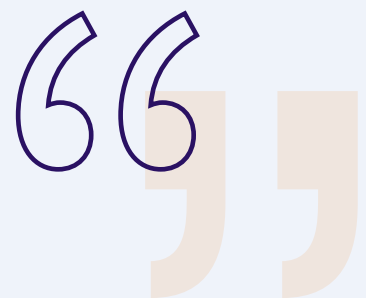
4.4 Good work / bad work

Participants were asked how they felt about different types of work and the features that helped define for them elements of 'good' and 'bad' work. Participants were asked to identify those things that might cause them to want or keep a job, or alternatively to avoid or leave a job. They were asked to talk about the best and worst jobs they have had.

4.4.1 Any job?

When the eight CMY participants who had never been employed were asked if it was ok to have any job, many of these participants indicated they would be happy with *any* job. Often this desire was related to need and circumstance.

> *Any job for me would be good.*
> Sara

> *Everything is a good job. I want to work, help people and be peaceful. Any job is okay because I have contact with people.*
> Isaac

> *It's okay to have any job in any field to get some experience. I would be happy with just any job. I would be happy with anything.*
> Musa

In one instance, even when the participant said they know that not all jobs are good, they indicated the benefits of having any job outweigh the negative impacts of having a bad job.

> *Any job is okay – If you have a job you have money and help friends and relatives. Not all jobs are good but I just want to work.*
> Jasmin

Even among these participants, the suggestion that they would be happy with any job still contained various qualifications, for example the availability or consistency of hours, or the right match to their skills and capabilities.

> *I don't mind what kind of job I get as long I get the hours.*
> Johnny

> *Any job within my power to do is ok. I would pretty much take any random job if I could do it…I don't really like cleaning but I still do it. I would not take a job I don't know how to do though.*
> Elisabeth

4.4.2 Jobs that help others

Several of the CMY participants appeared to equate 'good' jobs with those that provided some form of social benefit, and /or for which there was a degree of personal significance and fulfilment. A large portion of the participants linked their employment goals with a strong motivation to help others in the community, especially those newly arrived, and to contribute meaningfully to broader society. In the participants' responses this desire to help also led to professions such as nursing featuring highly in their future visions and opinions of what constituted fulfilling work.

> *Prefer a job that I am passionate about/ to work for. Passionate and interested, easier to work when I'm passionate about it/enjoy.*
>
> Julia

> *Longer term I would like to work in a nursing role.*
>
> Sara

> *Best job - Aged care.*
>
> Mina

Even for jobs outside the helping professions the opportunity to provide a positive experience to others was linked to perceptions of good and bad work, with one participant saying:

> *Best type of job – be at customer services, security guard. Helping others. Treating and serving people well makes the jobs great. Providing excellent service to other people... Bad job – refusing services to homeless people. Not treating everyone the same.*
>
> Isaac

Within this response it is not clear if Isaac is differentiating between jobs of *value*, or jobs *delivered well*. Clearly the broader responses in this section cannot be taken to mean that workers from migrant and refugee backgrounds are necessarily uniformly predisposed to helping roles. Indeed, they are often stereotyped as naturally 'good carers' when in fact these issues are structural—care/service work is often the easiest route for employment—but clearly these young people define 'good work' at least partly through the lens of personal value and fulfilment. Work must be meaningful.

4.4.3 Work environment and culture

A **good work environment and culture** were considered key characteristics of good experiences of work. These experiences were related to positive working relationships with colleagues and supportive managers who made them feel valued, trusted and respected.

In this regard, the examples of bad work mainly related to feeling undervalued and/ or being mistreated (see also section 4.5 Unfair Treatment and Discrimination at Work). Generally, most participants indicated that it is important to have a job that you want to do and that matches your values and qualifications. However, many were well aware of the need to adapt to changing circumstances.

> *You might need to do a certain job for visa purpose or for income to make ends meet. International students are allowed to work 40 hours per fortnight. When I was an undergraduate student, I worked all those hours in any job. Luckily, later in my degree I found a job as a tutor so things got better.*
>
> Kate

> *In the context of this COVID19 pandemic, any job that gives you income is better than no job at all. However, in normal situation, I'd prefer jobs that are relevant to my degree qualification.*
>
> Amanda

Even those who thought any job was acceptable framed their reasons in relation to their specific life circumstances. For example, Ellen, a parent to two young children, felt she 'didn't have much of a choice' and couldn't be 'picky' because of her perceived lack of experience and her age: 'I'm also 30 years old now, so I'm not young anymore.'

Laura, the oldest of the participants and an Australian citizen, put it another way:

> *A job is a good job. It's all about how you perceive it. When I came to Australia, I faced barriers finding a job and started my career in direct marketing…I worked in direct marketing for five years and gained work experience.*
>
> Laura

4.4.4 Safe work environment

A **safe work environment** was also mentioned by a number of the participants as important to a good workplace. For some, this was related to experiences of feeling unsafe at work.

> *At the worst job that I've ever had, it was a very bad environment. I was working in a small office in a warehouse. My colleagues were always smoking in the warehouse and swearing a lot when speaking to each other. They were often racist and disrespectful towards me. The other employees working there were born in Australia but they were of migrant background. They know that I'm a migrant and would often make fun of my accent. This made me feel really bad.*
>
> Amanda

> *… factory work – hard job. It can cause injuries like cuts. Factory work – not a lot of movement. Stand in the same spot for long time. Repetitive tasks. Unhealthy and dangerous.*
>
> Elsa

> *I think a lot of times in my job, people with better English skills or people of white appearance move up so much faster than people of Asian appearance. In the job that I'm working, I have had guests who have come in and have asked a white waitress, "How do you feel about working with all these Asian people?". For people of Asian background, they try to work hard but there's less opportunity for us to get promoted that quickly. We do get promoted eventually but it takes much longer – maybe one or two years longer compared to someone who is white.*
>
> Ellen

MCWH and CMY have both highlighted issues associated with safety at work, including experiences of discrimination (MCWH, 31 July 2020; CMY, 2020).

4.4.5 Fair pay

A number of Community Conversations participants also cited remuneration as an important element of good work. In some cases this meant a job which was well paid. In others the responses were more about fair and reasonable pay, as well as fair and legal conditions of employment. For example, when describing what they thought was bad work, one participant said:

> *Would like to get pay more. Not getting paid the right amount of money.*
>
> Julia

For another, the amount of pay was linked to getting the right amount of hours.

> *I don't mind what kind of job I get, as long I get the hours.*
>
> Johnny

4.5 Unfair treatment and discrimination at work

While racism and discrimination are reported in many parts of life, research and data from the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission routinely finds that workplaces are the most commonly reported setting. In a 2013 VEOHRC study, one in three survey respondents reported either witnessing or experiencing racism at work.

Workplace, institutional and systemic racism have been found to pose significant barriers to people from migrant and refugee backgrounds securing and maintaining meaningful work (CMY, 2014).

One 2012 study compared employer attitudes towards job applications for entry-level jobs with distinctively Anglo Saxon, Indigenous Australian, Italian, Chinese and Middle Eastern surnames. The study found that call-back rates were significantly different – 35% for applicants with Anglo Saxon surnames, Italian 32%, Indigenous Australian 26%, Middle Eastern 22% and Chinese 21% (Booth, Leigh & Varganova, 2012). Research such as this highlights the existence of both conscious and unconscious bias.

Experiences of racism and discrimination have been keenly felt during the COVID-19 crisis. CMY and ANU's joint *Hidden Cost* report (September 2020) found that most participants (89%) had at least one experience of vicarious racism since the COVID-19 crisis began, with 85% of participants from multicultural backgrounds reporting direct racism.

Almost all participants (93%) reported consciously adjusting their behaviour in public to reduce their exposure to racism and 87% reported being worried to return to their everyday lives and public spaces after lockdown, for fear of experiencing racial discrimination.

Only 6% of participants reported their experiences. When asked about their decision to report racism, just over a quarter (26%) stated they didn't feel confident that anything would be done or there was no point, and 19% stated they didn't know who to go to or how to report it.

The report found that high levels of racism and racial discrimination reported across direct and vicarious experiences, hypervigilance and worry about racism in public spaces, together with the low levels of reporting racism, are key issues to be addressed (CMY & ANU, September 2020).

All MCWH participants (except for Australian-born Ethan) shared a story, either about themselves, a friend or both, about being unfairly treated and discriminated against at work. Even CMY participants, most of whom had not yet been employed in an Australian workplace, could recall specific examples of workplace discrimination experienced by people known to them.

Given the backgrounds and employment histories of the CMY participants, their direct experiences of employment discrimination often related to the job searching process and a sense that there really were not opportunities available to newcomers from multicultural backgrounds. For many participants, getting assistance for job-seeking in school was the only time they received employment support. Speaking about the job-seeking support experience, one participant described their experience of discrimination in this context:

> *Applying to [Name redacted] – Applied with my classmate, got helped by the same person, one of them was white and she got the job but I didn't... [I was] angry, upset and I couldn't do anything. I also I have to study... I was crying. It was stressful.*
> Mina

Among the MCWH participants, Amanda who shared her own experiences of 'bad' work also said that she had 'seen overseas students who work really hard and work overnight shifts who are often underpaid, and they can be fired at any time'.

Although many participants mentioned racism and discrimination, none of the participants explicitly attributed their treatment to their gender or as a result of sexism. Instead, almost all the examples provided were attributed to the vulnerabilities of being a 'migrant' with poor English skills in a low status job.

For example, Ellen who wants to have a job that allows her to pick up and drop off the kids (because childcare is costly), spoke at length about the challenges of working hospitality hours 'now that I'm a mother' and the related difficulties of finding a job with flexible hours.

> *The worst job that I've ever had was when I was working as a waitress. The owner had me come in for a trial. I didn't enjoy the trial day and I called to let her know my reasons. Then she refused to pay me for the trial day. My English was really bad at the time so I couldn't argue with her and stayed silent. Then she just hung up on me. I didn't know that the law could protect me if she refused to pay me for my trial day. I didn't report this incident because I didn't know someone would listen to me. This happened two to three years after I arrived. I wasn't aware of Fair Work until five to six years later.*
>
> Ellen

Michelle's experience of being assigned tasks not given to other workers was a commonly cited example of workers with migrant and refugee experience being treated less favourably than other staff in a workplace.

> *When I first came to Australia, my English was only okay. My [employers] knew it was hard for me to find a job and that I needed the money... so they tried to rip me off and only paid me $6 per hour. They made me clean the whole shop and the toilets. None of the other workers had to do those tasks. They even used bad words towards me. If you heard it, I think you would cry straight away. Reflecting on it, it feels like a nightmare. When you first come from overseas that's what everyone experiences. Employers exploit you as much as they can for the first few months...I worked there for more than a year.*
>
> Michelle

Several of the CMY participants also recalled instances where people known to them had received similar treatment to Michelle's. Sometimes the allocation of more difficult or less desirable work took place alongside other forms of discrimination, while in other examples having English as a second language was specifically mentioned as contributing to discrimination.

> *One of my friends in aged care got treated differently. Have to do more jobs than other workers. She was treated like that because she was the only African there. Manager told her to do more work and yelled at her while the other workers are resting. Manager was nicer, [had] better rapport with other workers.*
>
> Mina

My friend in his job were given a hard job and he said he hated his job. His colleagues ignored him and [he] received more difficult jobs compared to his other colleagues. Had a fight/dispute and was kicked out. He reported to boss. He didn't trust his employer [who] ignored him at the end.
Johnny

People who work in factory – cannot speak the language at work, as a result they would have to do more work than English speaking peers/taken advantage by their English-speaking colleagues when their supervisor is not present.
Julia

What was common among all participants who experienced discrimination, and those who knew of people who had experienced discrimination, was that they took no action to address the situation.

One participant, Elisabeth, spoke of an experience of wage theft where she felt she had little choice but to preserve the employment relationship and endure the situation because she had limited networks and few other employment opportunities.

Multiple times at this one house I clean. It hurt me getting treated like that but no one wants to get treated that way. I guess you just have to shoulder it and keep going. Hopefully she pays me soon. That will help my family. That will help us pay bills like things like that. I didn't report because she's friends with my mum but I did tell my sister. If she's treating me bad, she's treating me bad. What can I do?
Elisabeth

Other participants who cited examples of workplace discrimination stated that they didn't know where to seek support and simply left the job. For example, CMY participant Isaac recalled an incident involving friends:

My two friends who worked in [name redacted]. Both Indians, only black people and were accused to steal money so they can kick them out of the job. They reported the boss and searched the cameras to prove they didn't steal and were offer their jobs but didn't return because how they were treated.
Isaac

The only participant who did not feel that they had been treated unfairly at work was 22-year-old Australian-born Ethan. He did, however, provide a compelling perspective in relation to the challenges of speaking English as a second language, as a second-generation migrant:

I don't feel like I've been treated unfairly at work before but I think that's because I change the way I speak at work. I'm not sure if they would treat me the same way if I talk the way I really want to talk. When I speak to people, I change my accent and the language I use to make them feel more comfortable. I usually do this when speaking to managers because I care about what they think of me. If I spoke in the way that I wanted to speak, then people would just pause and look at me. It doesn't really feel nice to try to speak more like them to get by. I feel like when you put on a fake professional workplace image that really closes the gap in terms of experiencing any kind of discrimination.
Ethan

Although it is beyond the scope of this project to analyse the specific employment experiences of second-generation migrants like Ethan, the uneasiness he conveys about 'trying to speak like them to get by' taps into the core of what all the participants have shared about the critical importance of proficiency in the English language and the challenges of using English in different contexts.

In many of the participants' accounts, efforts to learn, develop and practise their English language skills were seen as both the step ladder to job success and a shield against different forms of discrimination.

> *People experience workplace discrimination where communication skills are more important like in retail… We don't know how to stand up for ourselves and people take advantage of that and treat us unfairly. We need to be able to stand up for ourselves in a way that is still nice and respectful. We don't know how to do that so we just remain quiet.*
> Tara

In the experience of almost all Community Conversations participants, isolation and limited networks, low English proficiency, and/or low awareness of workplace rights and entitlements leave many people from migrant and refugee backgrounds vulnerable to unfair treatment, discrimination, workplace abuse and underpayment.

Many participants described their experiences of workplace discrimination left them feeling angry, upset and demoralised. For many the financial, emotional and psychological impacts of their experience were profound.

When asked about effects discrimination might have on people with migrant and refugee backgrounds, Isaac said:

> *The effects? Over time if it keeps happening people might feel emotionally attacked or they might feel they deserve what's going on.*
> Isaac

Mariam spoke about the time she tried to enquire about a job and the manager laughed at her language abilities. As Mariam put it:

> *It made me feel so bad. This really impacted me. Now I always feel shy when I talk to people because I'm afraid that they might make fun of my English like the manager did. I never reported this to anyone.*
> Mariam

For Kate, an international student on a temporary visa, her unfair treatment also impacted her mental health.

The worst job I have ever had was working as a waitress in a restaurant. The wage was below the minimum wage. They did not treat their employees well and were not very nice to their employees. If I did something wrong, then they would yell at me so I didn't feel valued when I was working there. I felt unfairly treated. How you are treated contributes to your overall experience. If I did something slowly then they would express their anger. I didn't feel that I needed to report it anyone, but it did make me feel bad for a few days.

I kept thinking 'am I that bad?'. I tend to internalise everything that happens around me. I thought 'it could be because of me', 'maybe I'm too terrible for any job - I'm too clumsy and I can't do anything well'. It really impacted my mental health. I spoke to my family and watched some videos of people who were experiencing similar things to myself and it did make me feel better. When being treated unfairly it can have a big impact on your mental health.

Kate

Despite participants disclosing direct experiences of discrimination, and many more disclosing the experiences of others known to them, none of the participants said it impacted on their motivation to continue or to seek work.

4.6 Vision for the future

Participants were asked about their goals in relation to work – what they would like to achieve in and through work, where they see themselves heading with work, and what success in work would look like for them. Participants' visions of the future were often articulated as a package of short, medium and long-term goals.

Short and medium-term goals often included finding a job that could accommodate parenting responsibilities, finishing current studies, obtaining a driver's license, or developing skills in a current job. Longer term goals included salary increases, saving up to **buy a house** and eventually **working in their field of choice** (accountancy, consultancy, nursing, hospitality, social work). One participant who was already working in a particular sector, simply said that they wanted a **'better job'**.

> *I want to apply for jobs and get jobs that are relevant to what I have studied. I want to focus on improving my English and education. These are all the goals that I have. It was really hard for me when I first came here and started a new chapter of life here. I want to show my family how far I can come in the next few years. I really want them to be proud of me. In the long-term, being successful would involve being a leader who teaches others.*
> Sandra

A common theme running through these short, medium, and longer-term goals was participants' aspirations to **realise their potential**. While economic stability featured prominently among the responses, many participants spoke of a deeper desire for personal, professional, and social fulfilment. For many, work was linked with the ability to grow networks and achieve greater social satisfaction, while for others employment was about opportunities for personal growth, improved sense of self-worth and wellbeing.

> *I want to be successful and be grateful in work. I would like to talk widely to people and be productive.*
> Isaac

> *I become busy and focus on having a good time.*
> Johnny

Few CMY participants identified a clear plan to progress their career goals and did not report discussing career pathways with any services. Many did however describe actions they thought would be helpful for their future employment (such as study) and expressed ambitions for their work (for example helping the community).

> *[I] would like to continue with my studies. I'm not too sure but I would like to take up a part-time position. I'm still not sure but I would like it to be involved with community. At the moment, I do not know what job, but I would still like to get part time work.*
> Julia

[In] two years I will [be] in year 12 and maybe taking a side job/part time job. I would like to get into electrical engineer – likes physics and maths. Cousin is a chemical engineer... Work hard and finish schooling. Work on myself and help my family.

Mary

...work towards being a plumber, then study to become an accountant.

Musa

As with section 4.2 where family features as a strong consideration in the importance of work, so too family features in many participants' future work aspirations.

For example, Kate and Mariam, two participants on temporary visas, spoke about **gaining permanent residency**, sponsoring their parents to migrate to Australia and helping the family financially. Sara, Mina and Mary also talked about wanting to be able to support members of their family in Australia, while Jasmin and Johnny talked about supporting family members overseas. Laura, the parent of a teenage daughter spoke of reducing her working hours so that she could spend more time with her family.

A number of CMY participants saw their short-term employment goals as a means towards achieving longer-term aims to develop their own business.

Almost all of the participants' future goals or ideas of success centered on **improving their English language and communication skills**, finding a job that was not reliant on having excellent English skills, or using their multilingual skills to the best advantage.

I want to be a nurse. I want to work in a hospital helping people. It's hard for refugees to learn a new language. I want to focus on improving my English language skills. I want to put a lot of effort into learning new words and practicing my English. These are my goals for now and I don't know if they will change.

Elaine

I'm trying to improve my communication skills by reading the newspaper everyday and taking free English classes for people from multicultural backgrounds. I don't think I'm getting job opportunities because of racism but rather, because my lack of English language communication skills.

Tara

I'm also interested in jobs that allow me to use my bilingual skills, I feel more comfortable working with people from migrant backgrounds because I feel more confident speaking English with people who have English as their second language too. This is opposed to stepping into a professional environment where everyone speaks English so well, it makes me feel like I don't belong there.

Ellen

4.7 Identified enablers and barriers

Building on the goals and aspirations identified by participants in the earlier section, the interviews explored the enablers and barriers that support or inhibit the achievement of those goals. The most commonly identified factors are outlined below.

Given the context in which the interviews took place, it was not surprising that many identified COVID-19 as having a significant current impact on their readiness for, access to, and maintenance of employment.

CMY participants in particular described how the COVID-19 lockdown made it more difficult to seek support and exacerbated the challenges they already faced prior to the pandemic.

COVID get in a way – it's a big challenge to find jobs. Hopefully after that I would get volunteer or part time work.

Elsa

If this is corona doesn't go away, I can't keep going with online learning. I don't like online learning. If I don't have anyone to help me, I won't be able to do anything to help myself.

Mina

30% of participants in CMY's 2020 *Locked Down Locked Out* survey said they had withdrawn from the labour market because of factors related to COVID-19.

Support services and programs specifically tailored to meet the needs of people from migrant backgrounds were seen by most as a crucial enabling support. As outlined in section 4.3.2, having employment supports available from trusted sources, including within specialist migrant and refugee support services, was seen as being beneficial to many participants. A few participants cited the benefits of having a mentor who shared similar cultural backgrounds (See also CMY, 2016).

I would love to see more programs targeted at people from migrant backgrounds including people who are international students. I would love to see more mentoring programs as well where the mentors are migrants themselves.

Kate

It would have been helpful for me to have someone similar to me to sit down and talk with me about my career. My brother has a mentor who is working in the field that he wants to work in the future. His mentor is also of [the same cultural] background, he grew up in the west side and had migrant parents. Something like that would be really helpful for me now because there's so much I don't know and so much insight I have to gain.

Ethan

Another participant suggested it would be helpful to have employment support tailored to the specific needs of migrant women, particularly those looking for bilingual job opportunities or those with primary caring responsibilities. For example, Mina, a young single mother, identified a need for childcare support to assist her to participate in study and job-seeking activities, while Ellen felt that gendered support specialising in **promoting bilingual skills** would make her feel more confident to apply:

> *I feel like if there was a specific organisation that targets their support towards women then it would be easier for me to express what would be suitable for me. I know there are jobs that are looking for someone with bilingual skills but there is no one platform which specifically advertises those opportunities for us to be able to find. Seek.com is really general. There's no similar job platform specifically for women of migrant backgrounds. If there was a job agent that contacts organisations needing bilingual employees and connects them with migrant or refugee women like me, that would be very helpful.*
>
> Ellen

There was also a sense that **English language classes need to be available for different levels**. As Tara puts it:

> *I think most of the funding goes to programs which are for complete beginners rather than programs for people like me. We still need to reinforce our English skills.*
>
> Tara

Michelle, a single parent with three children, also spoke about the need to improve her English to achieve her goal of being 'a leader in the workplace'. She found that there is a lack of English classes pitched to people like her 'who can speak some level of English already' and that more conversational-style classes should be available to make the classes more effective. Michelle is an Australian citizen, but she knows from her friends on temporary visas that low English language proficiency and temporary visa status can be mutually reinforcing barriers:

> *Permanent residents get 500+ hours of free English classes. When you apply for a job, they usually want you to have at least permanent residency status. For people without permanent residency status, it's hard for them to get a job because they are not proficient at English. At the same time, they can't pay for English classes without a job. For some of my friends, it has taken them five years to gain permanent residency status.*
>
> Michelle

These experiences are supported by a 2019 Shergold Review into integration, employment and settlement outcomes for refugees and humanitarian entrants in Australia, which found that strengths-based approaches that recognise bilingual skills and support English language skills will help to unlock the economic potential of more refugees, sooner (Shergold, Bensons & Piper, 2019).

Recent Federal Government announcements to remove the current 510-hour limit on free English tuition, extend eligibility from functional English to vocational English, and remove the time limits for enrolling, commencing and completing English tuition for eligible visa holders who were in Australia on or before 1 October 2020, may also go some way to addressing these issues (Department of Home Affairs, 2020).

The **sharing of knowledge**, whether acquired via the migration experience and/or further study was considered as an enabler. In various ways, participants spoke about aspiring to be a leader or achieving a qualification so that they can pass on and share knowledge with others in their community.

> *I run a lot of programs funded by community resources... I've experienced a lot of difficult experiences in my life but I've always tried to implement my spiritual values. This has helped me a lot so I've tried to share that with the young people in the community. I want to help young people in my community remain connected to their culture and to build their resilience.*
>
> Tara

A number of CMY participants regarded continuing education as vital to the achievement of work and economic goals. For example, both Sara and Mary commented that studying hard would get them where they wanted to be.

School career guidance that begins in the early school years, not just in the final years of high school, would allow young people time to know about all the different jobs available to them and to think about 'what impact they'd like to make in the world'.

A number of participants identified costs associated with study, training and job-seeking as presenting a financial barrier to their economic inclusion. **Subsidies and other forms of financial support** would help to offset the cost of courses and childcare while studying. One participant also expressed the hope that the first home-owners grant would be extended so that they had more time to save up for the minimum deposit.

A couple of participants also mentioned the crucial role **strong support networks** of friends and family can play in finding a job and enabling their career path. There was little to suggest that participants' networks had been useful in securing work. This was more a recognition that strong networks can play a facilitative part in the job search, or in assisting with the application process (as mentioned by Jasmin in section 4.3.3). When asked what would be most helpful to assist her to achieve her goals Mina said, 'my family first, my teachers second, my friends third'.

CMY's *Missing Link* report found many migrant and refugee young people don't know who can help or where to go to find assistance with employment. 15% of the survey respondents said they had not sought help with finding work because they: did not know who to ask (40%); didn't think anyone would help (20%); did not know anyone with the skills to help (20%); were not confident to ask for help (13%); or felt they didn't need help (7%) (CMY, 2016).

The same report identified the importance of *bonding networks* that provide basic support to 'get by' and *bridging networks* that help in 'getting ahead'. Bonding networks are seen as important for providing stability, belonging and confidence to support engagement with bridging networks (CMY, 2016).

4.8 Priorities, key messages and opportunities

The final section of Community Conversations interviews explored with participants their thoughts about future priorities and key messages for decision makers. Participants were asked what they thought decision makers needed to *know* about the experience of people from migrant backgrounds in relation to work and job opportunities, and what they thought decision makers needed to *do* to make sure people from migrant backgrounds have better job opportunities.

Picking up on key themes expressed earlier in this report, many participants identified a need for a range of **specialised study and employment supports** to assist people with migrant and refugee backgrounds into study and employment pathways.

Many participants said that support to find jobs was hard to find, and that the range of supports that were available were insufficient. In addition to improved support options, many expressly stated that schools, governments, businesses and prospective employers needed to understand the specific experiences, challenges and barriers experienced by women and young people with migrant and refugee backgrounds.

Identified opportunities to ensure specialised support included:

- Provide support services and information tailored to the needs of migrants and refugees in navigating employment and education pathways.
- Employ bilingual careers counsellors and vocational/pathways advisors.

Having careers counsellors and pathway advisors that share the same language or background as people accessing the services, will be more helpful than someone who is of a different background.
Laura

Young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds would benefit from guidance from someone who has been in a similar situation to them before. A lot of guidance counsellors… can't relate to the young people. It's important to them to have a mentor who can relate to them and inspire them.
Ethan

It would be helpful to have career advice from people who have previous experiences settling into Australia and who have had success getting a job. They can also help me with information about how the processes work.

Sandra

For many of the young people interviewed by CMY, **school settings** were identified as the first time participants were introduced to discussions and support to access the job market. One participant outlined their support needs as follows:

People who were born and grew up here it's easier for them and got more help. For newly arrivals it was not fair. – got less help … Help mainly people who born here but not refugees. [New arrivals] who don't know English need more support that is not just schools. Need more outside support. Need to know that they need help with computers and resume. Not to be racist and support everyone equally. [Schools] need to know they don't know much, compare to students who grew up here. They need to support students equally. They need help with resumes and cover letters and look for jobs. They need to know we came here to change our lives.

Mina

A key opportunity within school settings is to provide high school programs tailored to meet the needs of students living in the western regions of Melbourne, and that recognise the particular structural disadvantages they face.

Several participants perceived a lack of understanding of the difficulties faced by new arrivals trying to navigate settlement in a new context, particularly when language barriers were present, and felt that more needed to be done on the part of government to assist new arrivals. The majority of participants prioritised the need for additional **English language support** in the form of free or subsidised classes.

I would like them to know if a person come to Australia who are new and don't know English, the government needs to understand them and help them. [Support with language and support with jobs]

Mary

Newly arrivals – should get training when they first arrive here in Australia. – how to get a job, how things work.

Elsa

Many participants also felt there was a role for government to educate the general public on the migrant and refugee experience, and for employers to promote and provide more diverse workplaces.

It is well noted in the research that specific policies and programs to support employment outcomes for young people and women from migrant and refugee backgrounds will be most effective if embedded within a broader socially inclusive society. Facilitating social attitudes towards new arrivals that encourage a sense of belonging, and value positive messages of integration are important, including through widespread community education (Coventry et al., 2002, cited in Beadle, 2014).

Some participants stated there was too much emphasis placed on what migrants 'lack' and that there is a need to **recognise and value** the resilience and initiative of people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

> *It's really important for decision-makers to know that people from refugee backgrounds experience a lot of language barriers. They have to see the positive things that refugees bring too. For example, in my community, people are very compassionate and work very hard. Most people in my community working in aged care receive great feedback. Refugee people need more recognition for their strengths. People are not recognising others for their inner values...*
>
> Tara

> *People from migrant and refugee backgrounds who are highly educated, hold degrees and have a wealth of overseas experience. [Migrants] are rich in knowledge. Overseas degrees are not easy to get and these people work very hard. There are people who have suffered because of the economy or because of the war. There are people who have been traumatised by their experiences, but this doesn't mean that they are victims. They are victorious. They took initiative in coming to a new country. Don't underestimate the newly arrived.*
>
> Laura

This increased focus on migrant and refugee community strengths and resilience is further reinforced in the previously cited Shergold report that states "programs to assist refugees should be designed not just to help them overcome disadvantage, but also allow them to capitalise on the abilities that they possess" (Shergold, Bensons & Piper, 2019).

Participants identified the need to **address experiences of discrimination and racism** in the wider Victorian community. Many spoke about discrimination, the experience of being marginalised and excluded, and the need for decision makers to acknowledge, understand and address these experiences.

> *They should try to understand mispronunciations lead to discrimination*
>
> Jasmin

> *Any discrimination to people from migrant backgrounds or any other backgrounds should not be tolerable in any spaces and within any companies.*
>
> Elsa

> *Treat people fairly and equally. Give equal opportunities, regardless of religion and ethnicity.*
>
> Isaac

> *There is discrimination based on colour. There is a negative stigma around multicultural people. People assume you will rob them. So I would like them to know there is a discrimination. They need to change the way society views us.*
>
> Elisabeth

Beyond the need to address barriers to full and equal access to the jobs market, participants also spoke of needing specific or targeted employment opportunities for new arrivals that are designed to meet their language requirements, as well as providing opportunities to learn English.

These perspectives are also supported by the Shergold review which highlighted the need to invest in supporting economic participation of refugees:

> Opportunities should be taken to trial and demonstrate a range of specialised, place-based approaches to individualised labour market integration. Service delivery should be based on genuine partnership between governments and community providers... All levels of government, businesses and social enterprises should be encouraged to work together with refugees to provide them with employment preparation, mentoring, skills assessment, work experience, training and job opportunities (Shergold, Bensons & Piper, 2019).

Other opportunities to support people with migrant and refugee experience included:

- Posting jobs in the local area through local council websites
- Promoting community hubs and libraries for newly arrived migrants
- Providing opportunities and resources for networking and social engagement, with a focus on improving English language skills, creating cross-cultural understanding and building confidence.

I know a lot of Vietnamese women who are stay at home mothers. When they want to re-enter the workforce, they experience much difficulty. Their English comprehension and speaking abilities are not strong so they don't feel confident. If the government can organise English classes so that they can practice their conversational English and speak with native English speakers, rather than just teaching them grammar, that would really help to improve their confidence so that they can re-enter the workforce.
Amanda

These perspectives are supported by research into the experiences of Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) participants that found the majority of participants had very few opportunities to practice English language outside of class. Even those who did form English-language friendships often did so with other speakers from non-English speaking backgrounds (Yates, 2011).

The study found that even those participants with considerable cultural capital faced challenges forming connections outside of their first language network, indicating a need for awareness, practical supports and opportunities to form social connections between 'mainstream' Australian communities and newer arrivals.

SECTION 5
Recommendations for decision makers

Strategy & Policy Development

- Adopt a strengths-based approach when developing strategy and policy for people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.
- Develop strategy, policy and implementation measures that encourage and support workplaces to be equitable, diverse and inclusive.
- The Victorian Government's anti-racism plan needs to focus on a long term, whole of government anti-racism strategy to tackle racism and discrimination more broadly in society.

Program & Service Requirements

- Provide culturally meaningful support programs that are tailored to the needs of people from migrant backgrounds. This includes women's leadership programs and youth mentoring programs that are run by staff from migrant backgrounds.
- Provide tailored English language support programs, in addition to the 510 hours, that meets the needs of all migrants, including those on temporary visas and longer-term migrants, and parents returning to work after raising young children.
- Provide additional support for people in the early settlement period to access and navigate employment, including assistance to gain relevant work experience and skills in the Australian market.
- Improve digital inclusion (accessibility and affordability) in conjunction with employment support programs, settlement programs and schools.
- Additional targeted outreach support and mentoring is required in the COVID and post-COVID environment as the pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities and disadvantage.

Workplace settings

- Improve job-seeking processes so that people from all migrant backgrounds can confidently and equitably participate. This includes developing alternative hiring and selection practices that do not rely on standard interview questions and that are more closely aligned with on-the-job-skills, such as paid trials and task-based interviews.
- Develop an organisational strategic goal that promotes workplace diversity and inclusiveness; implement through policies, programs and services; and measure success.

Advocacy & Promotion

- Promote the value of a migrant workforce, including greater promotion of bilingual skills and different ways of thinking and leading. The bilingual workforce, as demonstrated during the COVID pandemic, needs to be recognised and acknowledged as an integral part of the workforce.
- Recognise and promote the benefits of a culturally diverse workforce to Victorian workplaces and provide support to develop diversity and inclusion policies and practices that demonstrate measurable outcomes.

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Appendix 1: Interview guide

Make sure you have with you:

- Key messages about the project
- Copies of the plain language consent statement
- Information about local services if needed

The process before beginning the interview should include:

- Introduce yourself
- Remind the participant about the purpose of the project and interview using the key messages provided.
- Read out the content of the plain language statement (which has been sent to the participant before the interview).
- Reinforce that participation is voluntary and confidential. Explain that we will not use the real names of people that we interview in any reports about the project or the real names of places that they describe, and that we will not include details of people's stories in such a way that they could be identified.
- Remind participants that we know that talking about the strains associated with work, or not having work can be difficult, and that they don't have to answer any questions they don't want to. If they decide that they would rather not talk any more then it is ok to stop the interview, for a pause, reschedule or to finish it all together, at any time.
- Ask the participant if there is anything happening for them right now that might make participation in the interview difficult.

    – Particular financial stresses.

    – A recent job loss.

    – Current difficulties in a workplace.

    – Any other crises or circumstances that may be aggravated by participating in the interview.

- If risk factors, crises or signs of emotional impact are detected before commencing the interview or arise during the interview, the researcher must prioritise the participant's safety and wellbeing. The interview could be paused for an adequate amount of time, postponed to a later date or concluded. The researcher should provide participants time to consider options, opportunities to discuss concerns with a trusted friend or support worker and information to contact support services. If any critical incidents arise, the interviewer must immediately advise their CMY / MCWH contact.
- Ask the participant if they consent to the interview being recorded to help with note taking and making sure than no important points are missed.
- Ask if they have any questions before starting.
- Remind participants they will receive a token of thanks for taking part (Coles-Myer voucher).

In this section we ask for information about your background – your family, your cultural background, when you arrived in Australia, and about your education and current work.

Your information will be kept strictly confidential. You can decide what you feel comfortable telling us. You do not have to answer all questions.

The questions aim to build a picture about you, your family and your background. We will use that information to explore how your background might impact experiences with work, finding a job and keeping a job. For example, we may link some of what you tell us about yourself to the interview questions that follow, to better understand your specific experience.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Questions about the Participant

Participant pseudonym:

Age (in years):	Country of birth:
Gender identity:	Preferred ethnic/cultural identity:
Language spoken at home:	Presence of disability or mental health diagnosis:
Length of time in Australia:	Religious preference:
Citizenship: ◯ Australian Citizen ◯ New Zealand Citizen	Residency status: ◯ Permanent resident ◯ Temporary resident / Visa holder ◯ Type of Visa: _____

Relationship status: ◯ Single ◯ Married ◯ De Facto cohabitation ◯ Widowed ◯ Separated ◯ Divorced	If the participant has children: How many children? _____ Ages of the children? _____	Does anyone else live in your household? (e.g. in-laws, cousins, siblings, etc.) Please list below: _____
Education level completed: ◯ None ◯ Primary ◯ Secondary ◯ Vocational (describe) ◯ University degree (describe) _____	Type of income: ◯ Full time employed ◯ Part time employed ◯ Casually employed ◯ Unemployed – no income ◯ Unemployed – Centrelink payments ◯ Other	If employed, occupation: _____ Have you found employment related to your qualification (if you have one)? ◯ Yes ◯ No

Theme	Prompts/example questions
Importance of work **In this section we will ask a few general questions to get our conversation started.** **We are interested to know your general thoughts about work and having a job – is it important and what difference does it make to your life...** *(Prompts if needed: having structure, being able to participate and contribute, feeling included, being independent, etc)*	What does having a job mean to you? Is having a job important to you? Why or why not? What are some of the benefits of having a job? What are some of the negatives about having a job?
Finding work **In this section we will explore different aspects of looking for work – for example the things that help you find work or make it harder to find work.** *(Prompts if needed: you might talk about support, pathways, contacts, mutual obligation, knowing where to go, jobs being available, having the right skills, language, applying for jobs, having other experience to draw on, needing to travel, etc)*	Tell me how you go about (or have gone about) finding work. *How / where* have you found jobs in the past? *Who* has helped you find jobs in the past? What things make it *easier* to find work? What things make it *harder* to find work? What things make looking for work a positive experience? What things make looking for work a *difficult or challenging* experience?
Good work / bad work **In this section we are interested to understand how you feel about different types of work – the sorts of things that are important to you in a job.** **For example, we are keen to know about what you think makes a job good or bad, the things that might cause you to want or keep a job, or avoid or leave a job.** *(Prompts if needed: for example, level of security, reasonable pay, meaningful work, decent conditions, using your skills and training, having status, being safe, having work-life balance)*	Is it okay to just have any job? Why or why not? Tell me about the *best* job you (or someone you know) has had. What were the things about that job that made it good? Tell me about the *worst* job you (or someone you know) has had. What were the things about that job that made it bad?

Theme	Prompts/example questions
Unfair treatment and discrimination at work **Sometimes people are treated unfairly at work. They may be treated unfairly because of some aspect of themselves – for example their cultural background, religious beliefs, gender or age.** **In this section we would like to talk about any unfair treatment you may have experienced or witnessed. You do not have to answer all questions, and please let us know if the questions make you feel uncomfortable or anxious.** *(Prompts if needed: discrimination, bullying and harassment, workplace rights, unfair dismissal, health and safety, unrecognised qualifications, unfair treatment by a boss or colleagues)*	Have you ever felt unfairly treated at work or while looking for work? What happened? What impact did that unfair treatment have on you? Did you report the unfair treatment to anyone? Why or why not? What happened? Are there other types of unfair treatment have you seen or heard about at work (even if you may not have directly experienced them yourself)? How do you know these things are unfair treatment? What effect do you think discrimination and unfair treatment at work has on your community?
Future vision **In this section we will look to the future – especially your goals in relation to work. We are interested to know what you would like to achieve with work, where you see yourself heading with work, and what success would look like for you in relation to work.**	Thinking about what you have told us about the good and bad things about work so far… What would you like to see yourself doing in two years' time? What goals do you have in relation to yourself, work and family?
Enablers, barriers and opportunities **In the last section you told us about your future vision and goals in relation to work. In this section we would like to explore the things you think will help you achieve your goals, and the things that might get in the way of achieving your goals.** **These may be things to support you personally, or broader changes in the world of work that would help improve your chances of achieving your goals.** *(Prompts if needed: support or assistance from your workplace, family or government/local council, info about expectations of types of workplaces, family dynamics, govt support, help finding work, etc)*	What things would help you achieve those goals? Which of those things is *most* important to you? (choose 1-3) Why? What things would most get in the way of you achieving your goals?

Theme	Prompts/example questions
Priorities and key messages **This is our last section, you're almost there!** **In the previous section you told us about the things that will help you achieve your goals in relation to work.** **This section is about creating change. We are interested in the things you think decision makers need to KNOW and DO about the experience of people from migrant backgrounds in relation to work.**	Thinking some more about the 1-3 most important things to help you achieve your goals… What do you think decision makers need to know *about* the experience of people from migrant backgrounds in relation to work and job opportunities? What do you think decision makers need to *do* to make sure people from migrant backgrounds have better job opportunities? Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

Concluding the interview:

- Thank them for sharing their experiences, and for their ideas for things that could be done – we will share these with services to try improve the situation for other women and young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.
- Ask if they would like a follow up phone call to see how they are after the interview – record on demographic form.
- Ask if they have any questions or other things that they would like to add or share.
- Let them know you will be in touch to check the information captured is accurate and captures everything they wish to tell us.
- Check if they would like to review the final report before it is finalized and record on consent form.
- Finalise details for the Coles-Myer voucher.

Appendix 2: Participant demographic information

Appendix 2.1: MCWH participant demographics

	Participant name (pseudonym)	Gender	Age	Residency status	Length of time in Australia (years)	Education level completed	Employment status	Family status	Cultural identity	LGA	Employment related to qualifications
1	AMANDA	F	32	Australian Citizen	8	Degree	Fulltime (mat leave)	Married, 2 children	Vietnamese	Brimbank	Y
2	ELAINE	F	19	Permanent Resident	4	Primary	Unemployed	Single	Iraqi	Melton	n/a
3	ELLEN	F	30	Australian Citizen	10	Degree	Part-time / unemployed	Married, 2 children	Vietnamese	Melton	Y
4	ETHAN	M	22	Australian Citizen	[Australian-born]	Secondary	Casual	Single	Vietnamese	Brimbank	N
5	KATE	F	24	Temporary (student)	6	Degree	Fulltime	Single	Vietnamese	Brimbank	Y
6	LAURA	F	54	Australian Citizen	17	Degree	Part-time	Married, 1 child	Lebanese-Assyrian	Brimbank	Y
7	MARIAM	F	19	Temporary	3	Primary	Unemployed	Single	Arabic	Melton	n/a
8	MICHELLE	F	33	Australian Citizen	16	Vocational	Unemployed	Single, 3 children	Vietnamese	Brimbank	n/a
9	SANDRA	F	16	Permanent resident	4	Primary	Unemployed	Single	Iraqi	Melton	n/a
10	TARA	F	33	Permanent resident	6	Degree	Part-time	Single	Tibetan	Melton	N

Appendix 2.2: CMY participant demographics

	Participant name (pseudonym)	Gender	Age	Residency status	Length of time in Australia (years)	Education level completed	Employment status	Family status	Cultural identity	LGA	Employment related to qualifications
1	JULIA	F	18	Permanent resident	2	Primary	Unemployed	Single	Karenni	Wyndham	n/a
2	SARA	F	19	Permanent resident	2	Primary	Unemployed	Single	Tigre	Maribyrnong	n/a
3	MINA	F	20	Permanent resident	5	Secondary	Unemployed	Single, 1 child	Oromo	Wyndham	n/a
4	MARY	F	16	Permanent resident	2	Primary	Unemployed	Single	Tigrayan	Brimbank	n/a
5	JASMIN	F	19	Permanent resident	3	Primary	Unemployed	Single	Oromo	Wyndham	n/a
6	ISAAC	M	18	Permanent resident	2	Primary	Unemployed	Single	Eritrean	Brimbank	n/a
7	ELSA	F	18	Permanent resident	2	Secondary	Unemployed	Single	Amhara	Brimbank	n/a
8	JOHNNY	M	21	Permanent resident	3	Primary	Casual	Single	Tigre	Brimbank	N
9	MUSA	M	17	Permanent resident	1	Secondary	Unemployed	Single	Oromo	Melton	n/a
10	ELISABETH	F	19	Permanent resident	11	Secondary	Casual	Single	Tongan	Wyndham	N