New Australians as Good Australians: Constructing the Young Middle Eastern Refugee as the Good Citizen

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of The Australian National University

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I certify that this thesis contains no material which has been previously submitted for the award of any other degree at any university, and that, to the best of my knowledge, this thesis contains no material previously written by any other person except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

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Abstract

This thesis investigates how young Middle Eastern refugees experience belonging in Australian society. It draws energy from a contemporary tension; on the one hand, political speech and immigration policies suggest that Middle Eastern refugees rank low among potential migrants on a ‘hierarchy of desirability’; on the other hand, if refugees from this region continue to arrive (via regular or irregular pathways), they should be integrated to share the core values, attitudes and beliefs of the idealised ‘community of value’ as Good Citizens.

The study’s theoretical significance resides in the expansion of Foucault’s notion of governmentality to explain how the state imagines, creates and shapes its population (and, in particular, how it shapes new arrivals as members of the population or ‘interpellated subjects’). Three concepts—myth-making, bordering practices and boundaring practices—are introduced as tools of governmentality. Myth-making evokes a collective imaginary through which the idealised Good Citizen is created and recreated. Bordering practices exert power to create a population, reflecting the Australian state’s desire to enforce its territorial borders externally through immigration law and policy to exclude those that it finds normatively undesirable. Complementing the established concept of bordering practices, ‘boundaring practices’ is introduced in this thesis to describe the action of the Australian state on those within its boundaries—utilising practices, procedures and institutions such as schools and settlement services, to create a community of ‘Good Australians’.

Following the development of this theoretical framework, the thesis presents and examines the actual experiences of young Middle Eastern refugees recorded through surveys and in-person interviews. This was complemented by interviews with service providers who work closely with refugee young people in the fields of education and settlement as well as refugee and migrant student data collected over a 5-year period. The data serves as the basis for addressing three primary research questions:

1. How does myth-making about the Other and the Good Citizen reflect and/or impact on the lived experiences of young Middle Eastern refugees?
2. In what ways do bordering practices (immigration and policy and law) influence refugee young people’s access to the state and belonging?

3. To what extent can boundaring practices (rooted in the desire to create and produce normative desirable members) facilitate belonging for the refugees in question?

In responding to these questions, the thesis presents three principal findings. First, Middle Eastern refugee participants placed significant value on pathways to citizenship. Attainment of citizenship was viewed by many as the ultimate indicator of belonging and as the antithesis of the refugee experience. This was contrasted against those participants who had experienced long periods of precarity (including experiences of detention), who found it more difficult to make long-term plans or build connections in Australia.

Secondly, participants emphasised the importance of English language learning and educational support for refugee young people. Those who experienced high levels of support from educators, community and peers reported high levels of connection to their society.

Finally, although multiculturalism has a complex political history in Australia, participants reported that this ideology empowered them to maintain dual identities and helped them to feel accepted in the community. They found that multiculturalism allowed them to maintain cultural links to their home country and culture while simultaneously building connections to Australia.

The study’s significance arises from its capacity to draw on the rich narratives of refugee young people and to demonstrate how their experiences speak to a potential future for Australia. The study speaks to the role of the state in fostering belonging and interpellation among new arrivals, including Middle Eastern refugees, thereby promoting a community of Good Australians.
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Chapter 1
Introduction to the study

This thesis explores the ways in which modern states seek to shape their populations to be communities of Good Citizens. It does so by using governmentality as a frame through which to discuss the way populations are imagined, created and shaped through a combination of myth-making, bordering practices and interventions within the community. Bordering practices—a term used in political science and migration studies to describe state action and exertion of power at the border—influence who can access the state and remain within its border. In this study, bordering practices are conceptualised as the exertion of power to create a population. In contrast, the term ‘boundaring practices’ is introduced in this thesis to describe the action of the state on those within its boundaries—the exertion of power to control a population—and takes the form of institutions such as school and settlement services. This thesis will argue that bordering and boundaring practices work in concert with myth-making to shape the behaviour of new arrivals to align with the values, beliefs and behaviours of the majority. It will explore the impact of these practices on young Middle Eastern refugees, on their belonging and on their journey toward becoming ‘Good Australians’.

The theoretical background for this thesis draws on a number of influential theories relating to the ways that states evoke myths and create borders and boundaries of inclusion and exclusion to control their populations and create a sense of identity. The study explores theories of othering

1 This thesis uses Foucault’s conceptualisation to define the state as a collection of governmental rationales and practices of knowledge production bound together and articulated from a combined perspective (Foucault, 2009, p. 118). Foucault suggests that the state is simply a ‘way of governing’, constructed and constituted by the governmental technologies and practices that refer to it. This thesis utilises this construct of the state as ‘an imaginary, fictive or discursive object that links the multiplicity of governmental practices together and makes them appear as a given entity’ (Jessen & von Eggers, 2020, p. 55).
and interpellation, and the ways in which these are employed by northern states\(^2\) to justify stringent border controls that monitor and limit who may enter and remain in their communities.

By controlling who can enter and remain in the state through bordering practices, the state can influence the composition of its population, distinguishing between citizens and Others. Over the past 20 years, states have increasingly sought to control who can enter through their borders; immigration was once hailed as a source of economic and social growth, but is now targeted as a cause of social unrest and fragmentation. Accordingly, states commonly invoke strategies to facilitate movement into the state of those thought to contribute to the state’s culture and economy, while limiting the movement of those deemed undesirable. Bordering policies to control and shape the population of the state can be viewed in terms of a legal relationship between the individual and the state; these practices affect the extent to which an individual can access full legal belonging, such as through the granting or withholding of visas and the availability of pathways to citizenship. Despite these efforts, bordering practices are relatively ineffective, and in Australia they can have consequences for the experiences of belonging for long-term residents of the state.

This thesis also looks at how the state controls its population within the border; it examines settlement and education as mechanisms through which the state seeks to create governable subjects. These are boundaring practices, the invisible tools of power that work to bound the actions of those within society, creating a cultural and social contract between the individual and the state, thereby creating self-governing ‘Good’ Citizens. While this study acknowledges the importance of being bounded and perceived as Good Citizens in order to experience belonging, it examines the extent to which these boundaring practices include and facilitate the belonging of young Middle Eastern refugees.

\(^2\) This thesis uses the terminology of ‘north’ and ‘south’ from migration studies and political science to differentiate between states at different stages of global development as well as states that are commonly migrant-receiving or migrant-sending countries. As such, Australia is considered a part of the global north. This terminology is used here in preference to more theoretically and historically loaded terms such as ‘west’ and ‘east’ or ‘first world’ and ‘third world’; as Connell (2007) argues, ‘[i]f we want a genuinely global analysis of globalization we must reconstruct sociological theory as a markedly more inclusive dialogue’.
This thesis has been written at a time when transnationalism, national identity and citizenship feature prominently in public debate, leading to a distrust and targeting of certain identities in political and public discourse and in policy making. As this thesis finds, refugees—particularly those from the Middle East—have been variously recast in Australian public discourse and political speech as the Muslim, the terrorist, the queue jumper, the illegal and the boat person. Here, ‘Middle Eastern’ refers to those arriving from the Greater Middle East, including Afghanistan, as this a common grouping or designation in Australian migration data. The identities of those from this diverse geographic area have been conflated in Australian myth-making, resulting in a questioning of refugee and Middle Eastern arrivals’ compatibility with the Australian community and its values. These developments justify the selection of Middle Eastern refugees as the focus for this study, and allow for complex measurements of how the interactions of the group’s members within the state and society shape their experiences of legal and cultural belonging, as influenced by state practice and policy delivery.

This enquiry was prompted by an acknowledgement and awareness that groups can be silenced by state action as well as by the desires of individual members to be accepted and to belong to the wider community. Accordingly, it provides young Middle Eastern refugees with opportunities to reflect on their individual migration and settlement journeys and to draw conclusions about the impacts that state policy and practices have had on their belonging in Australia. At the same time, this thesis utilises the perspectives of service providers (such as teachers and settlement officers) to complement and enrich (rather than speak for) the individual narratives of refugees. Service providers are instrumental in implementing boundaring practices, and their observations can reveal the limitations and implications of settlement policy at an institutional and systemic level. In combination, refugee and service provider interviews reveal the intentions and impacts of bordering and boundaring practices on refugee settlement, and also show consequences for interpersonal belonging and the systemic integration of new arrivals. In doing so, the study seeks to broaden research into, and further the analysis and understanding of, connections between policy, practice and belonging among Middle Eastern refugee youth.
1.1 Key themes

Belonging speaks to membership of a group, with lines drawn between those viewed as insiders, and those seen as the ‘stranger’ who do not belong (Yuval-Davis, 2011; Baak et al., 2019). Belonging is the experience of attachment, connection, membership, a sense of community (Habib and Ward, 2019, p. 1), and of home (Wernesjö, 2015). Belonging is a connection between people and their everyday, shared and collective experiences (Antonisich, 2010), occurring at the level of everyday lived experiences found in the ‘rituals of the neighbourhood’. This constitutes what Bridget Anderson (2013) terms the community of value, an idealised category of representation defined from within by Good Citizens who share core ideologies, values and attitudes and by ‘failed citizens’ who do not, and defined on the outside by the non-citizen or foreigner who is not recognised as sharing those values.

Good Citizens share the values and beliefs of the community, its myths or ideologies. Althusser (2004) describes this acceptance of ideas about how the world works and how one functions within it as interpellation. The interpellated subject recognises themselves and others as subjects and freely accepts this subjection, while those whom Althusser calls ‘bad subjects’ require the intervention of repressive state apparatus (such as the police, army or judicial system) (2004, p. 701). In this way, he provides a description of the Good Citizen as one who has accepted and internalised the ideology or myth of the state (or community of value) and acts accordingly.

The state seeks to facilitate entry to those compatible with the community of value; those migrants who are imagined to be compatible with the values and beliefs of the community—whom Tholen (2009) describes as ‘nears and dears’—rank high on what I term a hierarchy of desirability. The hierarchy of desirability speaks to the ranking of different migrants by the state, as well as to the extent to which this ranking impacts their ability to access and participate in the state and to access its society and culture. In contrast, those imagined to be incompatible with the community of value—to be lower on the hierarchy of desirability—are the ‘Other’, whom the state seeks to prevent entering via the border.

The Other represents individuals or groups identified and treated differently to (or excluded by) the dominant social group (Griffin, 2017). They contrast to the dominant racial, cultural, legal
and socio-political characteristics of an established community, and evoke fears of contamination, infection and bewitchment (Boehmer, 1995). To be othered is to have one’s differences highlighted, and is a process that reinforces social domination and subordination (Campbell, 1998; Said, 1995, p. 68). As will be explored, over the last 20 years, those of Middle Eastern backgrounds have been cast as undesirable—the potential terrorist or extremist—and incompatible with the values of the northern state. At the same time, this identity has been conflated with that of the refugee and asylum seeker, and has been constructed as the Other against whom the state exerts itself. Nevertheless, Middle Eastern refugees are present in northern states, but are not necessarily viewed as Good Citizens of the community with legal and cultural belonging.

*Legal belonging* means having access to legal and political rights and responsibilities, and is fundamentally tied to the institution of legal citizenship (Agamben, 1998). Through legal belonging, one has protections and rights such as the freedom to travel, protection from deportation, access to social security benefits and diplomatic support from the state. In contrast, those without political status are reduced to ‘bare life’.

*Cultural belonging* is the experience of attachment that occurs at the societal level within the everyday lived experiences of individuals; it constitutes, inter alia, obeying laws, participating in civil society, and adhering to cultural expectations and norms (Farquharson & Marjoribanks, 2003; Soutphommasane, 2012). In this thesis, cultural belonging is a complement to legal belonging, and those who have attained both in Australia are conceptualised here as the *Good Australian*.

### 1.2 Aims of thesis

This thesis explores how young Middle Eastern refugee arrivals experience belonging in Australia. It examines the ways in which this belonging is dependent upon how they are perceived by the population (as shaped by myth-making), the ability to access to the state (as shaped by bordering practices), and the building of cultural and social connections (as shaped by boundaring practices). That is, it explores the impact that state action has on individuals’ legal
and cultural belonging; the study questions the appropriateness and effectiveness of contemporary tools and measures of belonging and good citizenship in the Australian context.

This research contributes to theoretical debates about multiculturalism and citizenship, and seeks to give a voice to a traditionally othered group and to empower this group to reflect on the impacts that state practices have at the border and in the community on the individual’s sense of belonging. In contrast to Bridget Anderson’s top-down conceptualisation of the community of value, this thesis uses a ‘bottom-up’ approach, looking at the lived experiences of othered individuals in their interactions at the border and within the boundary of the state; in this way, it moves beyond a discussion of political discourse, and explores how these interactions shape people’s actions and views of the world. In doing so, it seeks to broaden research into the connections between policy, practice and understandings of belonging among Middle Eastern refugee youth.

The age group that forms the focus of this research is relatively under-researched in studies of refugee and asylum seeker populations in Australia. Extant studies on the impact of education and health on refugee settlement often focus on children (under the age of 18) or adults (usually categorised as ‘over 18’). This study exclusively interviewed refugee young people who were between the ages of 18 and 25 at time of interview and had arrived in Australia at or after the age of 15. There has been limited research into the settlement of this cohort despite the unique challenges faced by its members; they have long lives ahead of them in Australia, but may face the dual impediments of interrupted education in their home countries and being too old for remedial education in Australia. Young people who arrive in Australia toward the end of the age of compulsory schooling have a limited period within which to learn English language and develop the skills needed to succeed at school and in life. There is a gap in research for this age group, particularly in exploring the impact of settlement or schooling support on social belonging.

This study draws on the rich narratives of refugee young people and demonstrates how these experiences speak to a potential future for new Australians. The data used for this study is drawn from an online survey of 45 participants aged 18–25 years who arrived in Australia from the Middle East at or after the age of 15. Of those 45 individuals, 33 participated in in-depth, semi-
structured qualitative interviews that constitute the qualitative data of this study. This thesis provides space for the young participants to share their narratives—their retelling and reimagining of their migration journeys, their settlement in Australia and their interactions with the state and the public at the border and within Australia. The strength of a narrative approach is that it reveals the ‘stories that people tell themselves and others about who they are, and who they are not, as well as who and how they would like to/should be’ (Yuval-Davis, 2010, p. 266)—it allows for reflection on refugees’ identities and experiences.

These narratives are complemented by interviews with 16 service providers in the fields of education and settlement. The inclusion of interviews with service providers gives an additional perspective on refugee experiences in Australia and the influence of boundaring practices at settlement and schooling on belonging. The intention is for these interviews to complement and provide additional perspectives on—rather than detract from—the refugee narratives. Quantitative learning and language data from an Intensive English Centre over a 5-year period is included, demonstrating the unique educational and linguistic challenges faced by refugee young people compared with migrant arrivals of the same age.

This thesis organises and interrogates the rich data collected from refugee participants and service providers by exploring three questions. The first research question asks:

**How does myth-making about the Other and the Good Citizen reflect and/or impact on the lived experiences of young Middle Eastern refugees?**

This question explores young Middle Eastern refugees’ lived experiences, and contrasts these to the myth-making and othering that they see perpetuated in and by Australian society. It examines how participants use their narratives and their experiences to contribute to the imagining of Middle Eastern refugees in the community. The impacts and legacy of multiculturalism are also relevant here.

The second question asks:

**In what ways do bordering practices influence refugee young people’s access to the state and belonging?**
This question allows for the contrasting of participants’ different experiences of bordering practices and interactions with the state during their migration journey, and how these interactions at and with the border impact on belonging. This includes participants’ experiences of precarity or permanency and the influence of visa status on future planning and access to citizenship.

The third research question speaks to the ways in which Australia has consciously adopted and experimented with interventions within the community as a means to integrate and include new arrivals. It asks:

To what extent can boundaring practices facilitate belonging for young Middle Eastern refugees?

This question allows for a discussion of the extent to which boundaring practices such as settlement services, English language programs and the provision of resources in community languages succeed in helping participants to develop cultural belonging and by doing so create Good Citizens who share the values, beliefs and behaviours of the majority.

The combination of survey and rich interview data collected here informs the answers to these questions. The thesis documents refugees’ migration experiences and interactions with the state at the border and settlement in the community, allowing for reflections on how each impacts on their sense of belonging as new Australians.

1.3 Thesis outline

Chapter 2 provides the theoretical background to the notion of governmentality as a form of state control over a targeted population. The lens of governmentality is adopted to interrogate the ways in which states imagine, regulate and shape their populations through the use of myth-making, bordering practices and boundaring practices.

The chapter begins with an examination of the myth-making about the Good Citizen, and the influence these practices have on the population—how it perceives and monitors itself, and how it defines itself in contrast to the Other. Members of the population become interpellated subjects
by absorbing and accepting the ideologies of their state, and by shaping their actions and beliefs to align with those of the idealised Good Citizen and the community of value. The Other, the outsider who is incompatible with the community of value, is discussed as increasingly constructed in northern states as synonymous with Muslim and refugee identities.

Chapter 2 then discusses the monitoring and control of borders by modern northern states. It explores historical and theoretical perspectives on challenges to state sovereignty at the border due in part to the mass movement of people through regular and irregular channels. It traces the attempts of states to introduce increasingly stringent bordering practices—particularly against asylum seekers—to supposedly protect the community of value, and presents literature that shows how these practices can be relatively ineffective in stemming migrant flows. This section also discusses the impact of citizenship, or lack thereof, on experiences of belonging, and contrasts this to the precarity and ‘bare life’ (Agamben, 1998) experienced by those present in the state but living in ‘various degrees of non-citizenship’ (De Genova, 2015).

Finally, Chapter 2 explores attempts within the state to shape a population through those policies, practices and institutions to shape the behaviour of the population, termed in this thesis boundaring practices. The chapter explores tools used by the state to govern conduct (such as schools and settlement services) and ideologically-driven policies (such as multiculturalism and integration) to create a society of Good Citizens. Further, Hage’s concept of mis-interpellation is utilised to describe how outsiders living within the state’s borders can feel (and be) excluded from the community of value and from recognition as the Good Citizen.

Chapter 3 applies the concepts developed in Chapter 2 to an Australian context. Firstly, the imagining of the Good Australian is explored through an examination of Australia’s policies of and attitudes toward migration from colonisation until the present. This includes a meditation on the move from the White Australia policy toward a pluralist multicultural one, and nationalist challenges to this movement over the past two decades. Secondly, it explores the emergence of the Middle Eastern identity and the refugee as Other in Australian society, while further exploring the use of labelling in political speech and public discourse to exclude these othered identities from the Australian community of value.
The chapter then details figures and statistics relating to Middle Eastern- and refugee-background people living in contemporary Australia. It emphasises the high number of refugee and migrant arrivals to Australia from the Middle East in the last two decades, including those who have been held in Australian detention centres but later settled in Australia. This section serves to highlight the counter productivity of othering and excluding Middle Eastern identities from the community of value; they are present in society, and any exclusion or experience of precarity can only contribute to wider disunity and disharmony.

Finally, Chapter 3 explores the shaping of the Australian population by examining the policies of inclusion and education tailored to new arrivals in the community. It examines the differing services available to refugee arrivals according to their visa status, and draws conclusions from research as to the impacts these services have on the development of belonging and experiences of integration and inclusion.

Chapter 4 is the theoretical chapter that serves to introduce the research questions and provide the theoretical framework. The questions draw on theoretical material introduced in Chapters 2 and 3 to ask how young Middle Eastern refugee arrivals experience interactions with the state at the border and in the community, and how these interactions influence their sense of belonging in Australia. That is, do myth-making, bordering and boundaring practices contribute to the making of the Good Citizen? Chapter 4 also validates the use of qualitative methods to give voice to young Middle Eastern refugee arrivals as to their settlement experiences and their sense of belonging in Australia.

Chapter 5 explores the first research question by contrasting myths about refugee and Middle Eastern identities to the lived realities of refugee young people in Australia. It explores the impact of myth-making—and its consequences in the community in othering and labelling—on young refugees’ sense of wellbeing, as well as the consequences of multiculturalism on participants’ senses of place and belonging in Australia. Finally, the chapter looks at the ways in which refugee young people make connections to the community and build belonging through active participation and representation in public discourse.
Chapter 6 draws on participant data to answer the second research question on the ways that bordering practices influence refugee young people’s access to the state and their sense of belonging. Firstly, the chapter speaks to participants’ interactions with the border in accessing the state, comparing the experiences of those selected for settlement by the Australian government with those seeking asylum on-shore or via irregular channels. The chapter goes on to examine how visa categorisation—and attendant permanency or precarity—impacts on belonging and connection to that community of value. Finally, it explores the significance of citizenship to young Middle Eastern refugees living in Australia.

Chapter 7 answers the third research question on how boundaring practices facilitate access to the community of value for refugee Middle Eastern young people. It explores the different factors that impact on participants’ access to and engagement with settlement services. In doing so, it examines the consequences of visa status and associated rights, family networks and community support in the development of cultural belonging. The chapter speaks to the significance of English language and schooling in the development of belonging for Middle Eastern young people, and looks at the challenges faced when accessing these boundaring practices.

Finally, Chapter 8 provides an overview of the thesis, unpacking the context, theory and key findings from the study. It concludes by reflecting on the meaning, uses and consequences of belonging within the Australian state.
Chapter 2

Literature review: Making the Good Citizen in the modern state

Introduction

This chapter examines the literature addressing how states imagine, control and shape their populations. In this analysis, Foucault’s concept of governmentality is adopted as a lens through which to interpret state actions in determining population size and composition, and in shaping a community and its values.

In his 1977–1978 Lectures at the College de France titled Security, Territory, Population, Michel Foucault (2007) described governmentality as a form of state control targeted on the population rather than the individual. This marked a shift in prior characterisations of state control from sovereign power portrayed as ‘essentially a right of seizure: of things, time, bodies, and ultimately life itself’ (1990, p. 136), to ‘bio-power’ as the regulation and management of groups or ‘populations’ (rather than individuals) (2003, p. 246–247). Valverde explains this shift by reference to theft; sovereign criminal law punishes theft as an individual crime, while the logic of governmentality aggregated crimes of theft and projected their future impact ‘not [on] individuals, or the sovereign, but rather “the population”’ (2007, p. 172). With this shift in focus came the development of a suite of new knowledge relating to the population (such as statistics) and techniques for governmental intervention (such as crime prevention) in order ‘to govern the future, including all those risks and opportunities that could impact upon the state and its population’ (Hutchinson & O’Malley, 2018, p. 66; also Hutchinson, 2014).

This chapter firstly examines how the state defines and ‘imagines’ its population; it explores the myth-making practices that give rise to (and reinforce) the concept of the Good Citizen, and the influence these practices have on the population—how it perceives and monitors itself, and how it defines itself in contrast to the Other.

Secondly, this chapter examines how the state creates its population by facilitating (or restricting) the movement of people across borders and permitting (or restricting) their long-term residence and/or citizenship. It explores how the state facilitates the movement across borders of those perceived to be higher on a ‘hierarchy of desirability’, and how the state attempts to limit the entry of those viewed as less compatible with its values.
Thirdly, using Bridget Anderson’s concept of the community of value, the chapter explores how the state seeks to shape or mould its population to create a cohesive society. Further, multiculturalism, integration and Hage’s concept of ‘mis-interpellation’ are utilised to describe how those present within the state’s borders can experience inclusion or exclusion from the community of value.

2.1 Imagining the population: myths of the Good Citizen and the Other

There has been extensive research—particularly in citizenship studies—on how the state defines, imagines and controls its population. The field of citizenship studies has explored the framing of the ‘Good Citizen’ by state actors (Pykett, Saward & Schaefer, 2010) and how this framing serves as a governmental instrument through which to manage the population (Bhandar, 2010). Citizenship theorists often invoke Foucault’s notion of governmentality and the ‘conduct of conduct’ as the mechanism through which citizens are shaped to share behaviours, values and beliefs (Foucault, 1991; Rose, 2000) — ‘arranging things so that people, following only their own self-interest, will do as they ought’ (Scott, 1995, pp. 202–203, emphasis in original). The tools of governmentality are the ‘institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations and tactics’ (such as public opinion, the division of labour, the market and the judiciary) intended to control the behaviour and beliefs of the population (Foucault, 1970, p. 20; Goodwin, 1996, p. 65).

Foucault sees the governance of human behaviour as strengthening the state as well as strengthening society more broadly (1997, pp. 74–75). For Foucault, governance acts ‘to set up an economy at the level of the entire state, which means exercising towards its inhabitants, and the wealth and behavior of each and all, a form of surveillance and control as attentive as that of the head of a family over his household and goods’ (1991, p. 92). Governmentality sees the state construct systems to identify, order and ultimately control populations; these state systems include administration and management (such as processes, procedures and rules for completion of bureaucratic tasks) and classification (such as through income or profession). These systems are the ‘actual mechanisms through which authorities of various sorts have sought to shape, normalise and instrumentalise the conduct, thoughts, decisions and aspirations of others in order to achieve the objectives they consider desirable’ (P. Miller & Rose, 2008, p. 32) and, as such, make ‘governable subjects’.

The construct of the Good Citizen intersects with governmentality in the latter’s conception of state actors striving ‘to reach social and political ends by acting in a calculated manner upon the forces, activities and relations of the individuals that constitute a population’ (Rose, 1999, pp. 4–5)—that is, state actors striving to create a population of Good Citizens that can be controlled. The Good Citizen
is the narrative reference when shaping the population to conform to the ideals of the state and, in doing so, facilitate belonging—belonging created and perpetuated through national myth-making.

2.1.1 Myths, myth-making and interpellation of the Good Citizen

Myths provide a collective imaginary through which the idealised Good Citizen is created and recreated. Myths forge a connection between identity, collective imaginary and nationalism, and as such are a tool of governmentality used by the state and its governable subjects to shape and create the ideal of the Good Citizen.

Myths play an important role in identifying commonalities that bind strangers, and, in their creation and narration, contribute to the way the nation is imagined by its population. The recognition of commonalities amongst members of the population—often expressed as nationalism and/or a belief in state mythology—highlights the values and beliefs that unify insiders (Bannerji, 2000, pp. 87–123). In addition to constructing a collective imaginary of the Good Citizen, myth also provides a collective imaginary about how a society should function and be governed (Flood, 2001, p. 44; Grant, 2008), as ‘the frequent repetition of the same authoritative story can help to maintain society in its regular and accustomed forms’, and can simultaneously reshape it (Lincoln, 2014, p. 23).

Myths are built over time, are historically driven and contribute to a national identity (Barthes, 1973; see also S. Hall, 1997). Through the telling of myths as ‘important stories’ (Boer, 2009, p. 9), a collective memory is evoked, and bonds of community and unity are reinforced and perpetuated (della Sala, 2016); Anthony Smith (1999) similarly asserts that from ‘elements of myth, memory, symbol, and tradition … modern national identities are reconstituted in each generation, as the nation becomes more inclusive and as its members cope with new challenges’. The telling of myth is an act of public storytelling, a performative act that can include any cultural activity, and embodies ‘the complex system of images and beliefs, which a society constructs in order to sustain and authenticate its own sense of being, i.e. the very fabric of its system of meaning’ (Hawkes, 1988, p. 131). Bell argues that a nationalist myth should be understood

as a story that simplifies, dramatizes and selectively narrates the story of a nation’s past and its place in the world… Myths are constructed, they are shaped, whether by deliberate manipulation and intentional action, or perhaps through the particular resonance of works of literature and art. Myth serves to flatten the complexity, the nuance, the performative
contradictions of human history; it presents instead a simplistic and often uni-vocal story. (2003, p. 75)

The process through which myths are created, iterated on and shared is the act of myth-making. Through myth-making, the state can establish lines of inclusion and exclusion, with historical memory ‘a contingent product of social or political actions and … grounds or basis for further action’ (Misztal, 2003, p. 73; della Sala, 2016).

An individual’s response to (and relationship with) a national myth, and the state’s view of that individual’s place within the myth, can be interpreted via Louis Althusser’s concepts of ideology and interpellation; ideology is a set of ideas about how the world works and how we function within it, and interpellation is the imposition and acceptance of this ideology on a population. Althusser describes interpellation using the everyday example of the policeman hailing ‘Hey you!’ at an individual on the street, and the individual, by turning around, simultaneously recognising himself as the subject and becoming the subject (2004, pp. 699–700). That is, interpellated subjects absorb the core ideologies—the myths—of the state, which then shapes their actions and beliefs. For Althusser, the ‘majority of (good) subjects’ recognise themselves (and others) as subjects and freely accept this subjection, while those Althusser calls ‘bad subjects’ require the intervention of repressive state apparatus (such as the police, army or judicial system) (2004, p. 701). In this way, he provides a description of the Good Citizen as one who has accepted and internalised the ideology or myth of the state and acts accordingly.

In combination, myth-making and Althusser’s notion of interpellation can be used to explore structures of belonging within society. Belonging is the experience of attachment, connection, membership, a sense of community (Habib & Ward, 2019, p. 1), and of home (Wernesjö, 2015). Belonging has also been theorised as a connection between people and their everyday, shared and collective experiences (Antonisich, 2010), an expression of ‘everyday practices [that] layer onto each other to create performances of belonging that involve relationships with people and place’ (Cuervo & Wyn, 2017, p. 225). Belonging speaks to membership of a group, with lines of belonging drawn between those viewed as insiders, and the ‘stranger’ or those who do not belong (Yuval-Davis, 2011, ch. 1; Baak et al., 2019). Cultural connections—emotions, feelings, norms and traditions—have a significant role in defining the lines between insiders and outsiders. By identifying with the core myths, ideologies, values and attitudes of a group, and in turn being recognised by other members as subscribing to these tenets, members of the dominant group become interpellated subjects.
The sense of belonging to a society of interpellated subjects occurs at the level of everyday lived experiences found in the ‘rituals of the neighbourhood’, from working for the school fete to celebrating sporting victories. This, according to Bridget Anderson (2013, p. 3), is the ‘community of value’ built on common ideas and shared codes of behaviour. The shared values of ethnicity, religion, culture or language are in turn valued by members, who feel compelled to protect them from outsiders (Bridget Anderson, 2013, p. 3, 2016). The community of value is defined from within by individuals who embody the cultural, ideological and nationalistic ideals and codes of behaviour that are accepted within a society (Stanley, 2008), and on the outside by those who are not recognised as sharing those values, such as the ‘failed citizen’ (the dole bludger, the criminal) or the foreigner. Members self-ascribe to the behaviours, myths and cultural attributes of the community of value from dress to language and customs. They make up the community of value as ‘law-abiding and hard-working members of stable and respectable families’ (Bridget Anderson, 2013, p. 3) and have legal rights to be present and to participate in the society.

At the same time, the boundary of the community is defined by those who are excluded—those outside by the non-citizen or the Other (whom Anderson terms the foreigner), and those within by the ‘failed citizen’ such as the dole-bludger, the criminal, the rioter or the single mother. The constant advertisement of what it means to ‘truly’ belong to the state sees new arrivals attempt to prove that they both value and are valuable to the new society. Anderson claims that new arrivals prove their value by demonstrating their potential to contribute; ‘eager to show that they are the Good Citizen … the naturalised migrant has to prove that they are not undocumented … [T]he person who is undocumented is showing how hard they’re working’ (Bridget Anderson, 2016). In this way, belonging is viewed as driven by race, class and gender (Habib & Ward, 2019, p. 2) and is ‘continuously being modified and contested, with growing ethnic, cultural and religious tensions within as well as between societies and states’ (Yuval-Davis, 2011, p. 2). There is intense state pressure on perceived outsiders to ‘demonstrate’ their willingness and ability to fit into the community of value and its myths, and so ‘earn’ belonging. Without this form of membership and acceptance, it can be difficult for individuals to function in and access resources within society, and thereby experience belonging. Tonkens and Duyvendak (2016, p. 4) speak about the difficulty of finding and keeping a job, for example, without knowing cultural norms such as when to shake hands or make eye contact, or when to be discreet or outspoken in the workplace.

Ideology and myth allow individuals to form connections to and a sense of belonging within their community, to construct a sense of cultural identity, and to feel justified in the recognition of those
like themselves and in the exclusion of outsiders. The inclusion or exclusion of individuals according to how the individual interacts and adopts the core values, beliefs and attitudes of society reflects how culture can represent ‘the essential tool for making other’ (Abu Lughod, 1991, p. 143), and ‘a way of continuing rather than repudiating racial thought’ (Michaelis, 1992, p. 684) through othering. That is, national myths and the associated ideal of the Good Citizen allow the Other to be held up as a foil, a threat to the mythology and integrity of the nation.

2.1.2 The Other and mis-interpellation

The concept of the Other was first utilised by Hegel as a complement or ‘mirror’ to the ‘self’ (Doy, 2006, pp. 59–60). In the field of migration studies, the Other is equally useful as a foil to the dominant racial, cultural, legal and socio-political characteristics of an established community (Capetillo-Ponce, 2003, p. 122). To be othered is to have one’s differences highlighted and represented as inferior or radically alien; this can result in isolation and exclusion from the dominant (social) group (Brons, 2014). Via myths and myth-making, the state and its governable subjects idealise the Good Citizen—the interpellated subject with full legal and cultural belonging—and compares him/her to the Other; the Other does not fulfil the expectations or criteria for full membership and thus falls into various categories of ‘non-citizenship’ (De Genova, 2015, p. 192).

Othering is the process whereby individuals or groups are identified and treated as different (and less worthy) than the dominant social group (Griffin, 2017). It is ‘a process that identifies those that are thought to be different from oneself or the mainstream, and it can reinforce and reproduce positions of domination and subordination’ (Johnson, Bottorff, Browne, Frewal, Hilton & Clarke, 2004, p. 253). Othering allows for the creation of two categories of individuals, us and them, with the latter a cohesive group only in its contrast to the dominant group. The dominant group ‘is in a position to impose the value of its particularity (its identity) and to devalue the particularity of others (their otherness) while imposing corresponding discriminatory measures’ (Staszak, 2008, p. 3). Thus, othering fulfils a myth-making purpose and ‘serves to mark and name those thought to be different from oneself’ (Weis, 1995, p. 17), reinforcing and reproducing positions of dominance and subordination, with Others placed at the margins of society.

Ghassan Hage draws on interpellation to describe three different forms of racialisation or othering that emerge as a result of not being recognised or ‘hailed’ as the interpellated subject or Good Citizen.
1. Non-interpellation—the individual is present in the society but experiences invisibility and irrelevance; ‘While they physically exist within the social realm, they are not recognized to exist within the symbolic order.’ (Hage, 2008, p. 122)

Non-interpellation speaks to the ways othering and myth-making work to reinforce a unified ideology and identity, despite the reality that the population of any state is rarely homogeneous. Knippenberg (2002, p. 192) describes this contradiction:

Modern states, i.e. states based on the ideologies of popular sovereignty and nationalism, almost always have a plurality problem. State territories hardly ever cover homogeneous populations… Still, for ideological and political reasons a minimum of cultural homogeneity is desirable, if not necessary. Therefore, the formulation of these states has always been accompanied by a policy of nation building, i.e. the construction of the imagined community of the nation (Benedict Anderson, 1991) that legitimates the power and authority of the State (elite) within the territory of the State.

In such a population, those with differences are ignored or used as Others that reinforce the similarities of the majority.

2. Negative interpellation—the individual is ‘noticed and made visible’ in society, which designates them with negative characteristics; ‘Rather than having to fight for visibility, the racialized subject has to fight for valorization.’ (Hage, 2008, p. 122)

An example of negative interpellation is the act of labelling, whereby Others are recognised, identified and excluded; Bridget Anderson (2013, p. 4) emphasises that the labelling of certain groups—such as ‘the migrant’, ‘the refugee’, ‘the illegal’—designates them as Other, and as apart from the shared values and beliefs of the majority. Labels are ‘not simply descriptive of legal status, that is, formal membership, but they are value laden and negative’ and act as indicators of ‘status’ in a society. Labelling the Other creates ‘boundaries through which they distinguish between people like themselves with whom they identify and Others’, creating both visible and invisible boundaries of inclusion and exclusion (Lamont, 2000, p. 25). In literature, the migrant or refugee is often labelled as the outsider, the stranger, the Other, and as a foil through which we define belonging (De Genova & Peutz, 2010; Honig, 2003).

3. Mis-interpellation—the individual is at times included and at other times excluded. Hage elaborates:
it is a drama in two acts: in the first instance the racialized person is interpellated as belonging to a collectivity ‘like everybody else’. S/he is hailed by the cultural group or the nation, or even by modernity which claims to be addressing ‘everyone’. And the yet-to-be-racialized person believes that the hailing is for ‘everyone’ and answers the call thinking that there is a place for him or her awaiting to be occupied. Yet, no sooner do they answer the call and claim their spot than the symbolic order brutally reminds them that they are not part of everyone: ‘No, I wasn’t talking to you. Piss off. You are not part of us.’

Mis-interpellation is particularly relevant in describing recent arrivals who seek to absorb the ideology and behaviours of interpellated subjects in order to belong, but who may not be accepted by the dominant group as compatible with the myth of the Good Citizen.

The reality is that some arrivals are not interpellated into the community; some resist, while some are unable to be accepted and are perceived as the Other. Hage, writing about national identity and multiculturalism in Australia, speaks to the potential for national identity to be used as the basis for discrimination, exclusion and rejection, such as through mis-interpellation. Hage also draws on Bourdieu’s idea of cultural capital to claim that different groups are perceived to be (and made to feel) ‘more or less national than others’ within the state in relation to ‘sanctified and valued social and physical cultural styles and dispositions’ (2000, pp. 52–53). For Hage, physical attributes and English language competence can contribute to ‘a form of national “cultural capital”’ (2000, p. 53). Hage uses ‘whiteness’ as a form of symbolic cultural capital to be aspired to through modes of conduct and ways of being:

White has become the ideal of being the bearer of ‘Western’ civilisation. As such, no one can be fully White, but people yearn to be so. It is in this sense that Whiteness is itself a fantasy position and a field of accumulating Whiteness. It is by feeling qualified to yearn for such a position that people can become identified as White.’ (2000, p. 58)

Hage voices a distinction between the notion of passive belonging, which can be achieved by migrants fairly easily (such as through sporting prowess), and governmental belonging as a capacity or feeling that one can speak for the nation, which is more difficult for non-white migrants to acquire. In short, the accumulation of whiteness is linked to claiming a sense of national belonging, which in turn requires practices of exclusion and inclusion to maintain the bounds between those who more fully belong and those who do not.
Others such as asylum seekers, refugees, and irregular immigrants may find it difficult to attain cultural capital or the perception of ‘whiteness’ described by Hage. Their mis-interpellation can be further compounded within the state by limited access to social services, an inability to speak for themselves in public and political discourse (Bleich, Bloemraad, & de Graauw, 2015), and their holding of precarious residence and social status (Gibney, 2009). As such, refugees and asylum seekers present in the community often rely on others to speak on their behalf, as they can be rendered ‘voiceless’ by their political situations (Ruedin, 2017), limited cultural capital and/or the perception that they have no claim on the community of value.

2.1.3 The myth of difference and hierarchy of desirability

Particularly vulnerable to mis-interpellation are refugees and asylum seekers from the global south; a ‘myth of difference’ describes the imagined gap between those refugees escaping Europe after the World Wars—for whom international refugee law and the policies of the UNHCR were shaped and envisioned—and those arrivals arriving today from the global south (Chimni, 1998; see also Uptin, Wright & Harwood, 2014, pp. 4–5). Drawn up during the Cold War, the 1951 Geneva Convention framed the refugee as the liberal fleeing (Communist) oppression, escaping persecution and demanding human rights (Bridget Anderson, 2013, p. 55; Gibney & Hansen, 2005); prior to the 1980s, ‘[w]hen the public thought about refugees, to the extent it thought about them at all, it associated them with Hungarian freedom fighters or Soviet ballet dancers, both of whom were popular figures’ (Gibney & Hansen, 2005, p. 70). However, the unprecedented and increasing numbers of refugees from the global south seeking safety in the north has led to a reimagining of who is understood to be a refugee (Chimni, 1998, p. 351)—the myth of difference sees refugees from the global south and particularly, I argue, those from the Middle East viewed as holding values and identities incompatible with communities of northern states. This has consequences for how states respond to refugee arrivals at and within their borders.

Obligations to refugees have been reassessed in light of international terrorism incidents (Collyer, 2005, p. 279; Faist, 2002), with the fear of fundamentalism fuelling a perception that Islam is

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3 Global south is a term used by the World Bank and is frequently used in studies of international migration to describe migrant distributing regions such as Africa and the Middle East. Global south and global north are used here in preference to the loaded terms, ‘third world’ and ‘first world’.

4 On 11 September 2001 there was a series of four coordinated attacks against the United States perpetrated by 19 members of the anti-Western, Islamic extremist group al-Qaeda. Since that time, there have been highly publicised and scrutinised international terrorist attacks including, but not limited to, Bali (2002, 202 killed), Madrid (2004, 193 killed), London
 incompatible with the national myths and values of northern states (Joppke, 2004; Kofman, 2005). In the last two decades, a rising number of refugees have arrived in the global north from Muslim-majority countries, particularly the Middle East; millions of people in Iraq and Syria have been forced to flee their countries since the outbreak of conflicts in 2011 (UNHCR, 2020, p. 8). This change in demographic patterns has led to considerable attention on, and public discourse about, their integration into the social and economic fabric of northern host communities (Mahoney & Siyambalapitiya, 2017; Postelnicescu, 2016). Fekete describes the position of Muslims in Europe following September 11:

Since Islam now represents ‘threat’ to Europe, its Muslim residents, even though they are citizens, even though they may be European born, are caught up in the ever-expanding loop of xeno-racism. They do not merely threaten Europe as the ‘enemy within’ in the war on terror, their adherence to Islamic norms and values threatens the notion of Europeanness itself. Under the guise of patriotism, a wholesale anti-Islamic racism has been unleashed which itself threatens to destroy the fabric of the multicultural society. (2004, p. 4)

Scholars have identified a politicising of Islam in the global north (Berkhout & Ruedin, 2017; Brubaker, 2013), along with the association of terrorist attacks with ethnicity and religion. There has been a shift in emphasis from ‘refugee-ness’ and the categorization of ‘bogus’ or ‘genuine’ asylum-seekers to a primal concern with their Muslim identity, which is viewed as threatening (Fiddian-Qasmiyah & Qasmiyeh, 2010). Inflammatory and emotive political speech and media speculation about Muslim arrivals has led to ‘increased suspicion of the “Arab Other” and reduced acceptance, tolerance, and cohesion within neighbourhoods in many Western nations’ (Benier, 2016, p. 81). This has contributed to a myth of difference around Middle Eastern refugees imagined as (fundamentalist) Muslim and incapable of integrating and participating in large numbers in northern states.

Refugee arrivals from the global south have undergone a shift in their portrayal in the public imaginary, conceptualised in ‘discourse [that] is preoccupied by notions of identity and belonging embedded in debates about citizenship and the “other” in an era of global migration’ (Zetter, 2007, 2005, 52 killed), Paris (2015, 137 killed), Boston (2015, 3 killed), Brussels (2016, 32 killed), Orlando (2016, 49 killed), Manchester (2017, 22 killed), London (2017, 48 killed) and Barcelona (2017, 16 killed), each with responsibility claimed by an Islamic extremist group or as an act of jihad.
Bauman claims that refugees have been increasingly positioned as the lowest ‘commodity’ in the consumer world:

…the stripped of every single element of their identity except one: that of statelessness, placelessness, functionless refugees. Inside the fences of the camp, they are pulped into a faceless mass, having been denied access to the elementary amenities from which identities are drawn. (2004, p. 76)

Cultures of racism have often involved the scaling or ranking of humans according to difference, conferring the status of ‘contingent insiders’ on some migrants while unloading hate and derision on other groups (Back & Sinha, 2012). Accordingly, there can be oblique references within immigration policy-making to the perceived incompatibility of some according to race and/or religion. Strang and Ager (2010, p. 593) discuss this shift in perception in the United Kingdom, where a narrative of ‘social cohesion’ has been adopted in which ‘the rights of a refugee to asylum [are] subsumed in a drive to select as citizens only those suitable to be part of the ideal “British” society’. This is described by Back and others as the differential treatment of minority communities according to where they fall on a ‘hierarchy of belonging’ (Hall & Back, 2009, p. 680; Back & Sinha, 2012; Hage, 2000, 2003), expanded in this thesis as the hierarchy of desirability.

This thesis draws on Back’s notion of a hierarchy of belonging to conceptualise the ways in which states attempt to facilitate entry by only those migrants viewed as valuable. Here, a hierarchy of desirability is introduced to describe states’ justification for facilitating the movement of certain migrants above others. The hierarchy of desirability reflects the notion of a collective imaginary, informed by national myth and ideals of the Good Citizen, about who might make a valuable contribution to the state—who might become the Good Citizen—thereby influencing who should be given access across the border. The highest on the hierarchy of desirability are those perceived to have shared cultural and historical attributes to the state’s population, who should integrate easily.

Tholen (2009) refers to those of similar cultural backgrounds as ‘nears and dears’, and claims that members of this group are privileged in migration policy because they are seen to have ‘special ties’ and to represent less of a cultural, economic or political threat to the majority. Those higher up the hierarchy may possess, for example:

- special cultural and historical ties,
- commonalities in religion and ethnicity or race,
• shared legal and political systems, and
• shared language (see, for example, van der Brug, D’Amato, Ruedin, & Berkhout, 2015).

The preference in migration policy to prioritise nears and dears is reflected in the use of quotas to limit arrivals from some countries and privilege those from others. This can be seen, for example, in the Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement, which allows citizens of Australia and New Zealand to live and work in either country indefinitely. The provision of special visas for Australians and New Zealanders respectively reflects close historical, linguistic, economic and military connections between the two nations. This form of privileging is inherently discriminatory, and yet has historically been practised as an expression of nation building, national development and shared myth-making (such as, in this case, the ANZAC legend).

The exclusion of those perceived to be low on the hierarchy of desirability has been increasingly justified by the state as being about management of migrant numbers and diversity, as well as to benefit the state (Owen, 2020). Other factors contribute to the construction of ‘desirability’, such as wealth and education, most vividly exemplified by the ‘point system’ to apply for visas and long-term residency (Koslowski, 2014). However, a hierarchy of desirability conceptualises the privileging of certain groups in migration policies; in particular, a hierarchy of desirability can be seen in the policy-making and discourse around refugee arrivals from the global south.

2.2 Creating the population: access and acceptance

The state seeks to create its population through the exercise of policy at the border; this is the exercise of bordering practices over who can traverse the border to enter the state, who can be granted long-term residency to remain, and, ultimately, who can access citizenship of the state and its associated rights. Borders are visible markers where ‘the main distinction is made between citizens and foreigners, between insiders and outsiders, or between those to whom entry is allowed and those to whom it is not’ (Garcés-Mascareñas, 2015, p. 128). The very visibility of borders is paramount, as it overtly signals to citizen and non-citizen alike the power and authority of the state. States attempt to exert sovereignty over members and non-members alike through tactics of control at the borders (P. Miller & Rose, 1990), including the regulation of entry and exit (Hindess, 2000, p. 1495).

However, the border is more than a line indicating the outer limit of sovereignty, more than ‘a political claim—to exclusive control of a definite territory’ (Hirst & Thompson, 1999, p. 256), and is
instead a place of power and performance. The border is a site where governmentality is performed as states attempt to control and police who can come into their domain (Bosworth, 2011, p. 592). At the border, the population is constituted and controlled through bordering practices, and it is where the quantities and qualities of the population are manipulated through visa categorisation, citizenship granting and the assessment of refugee claims (Salter, 2008, p. 366). The consequences of bordering practices see some people—particularly those perceived to be higher on the hierarchy of desirability—access legal belonging, while others might experience precarity due to their inability to successfully navigate the border.

Bordering practices are visual tools of border control intended to shape and normalise the behaviours and aspirations of non-citizens and citizens alike. State actors (such as border officials) enact sovereignty by ‘performing’ policies on the person crossing the border—both citizen and migrant—such as through security checks and the scanning of person and property, and highlighting territorial sovereignty through the use ‘of highly visible symbols such as pillars, flags, fences, and signboards’ (van Schendel, 2005, pp. 40–41). According to van Houtum & van Naerssen (2002, p. 126), ‘Bordering processes do not begin or stop at demarcation lines in space. Borders do not represent a fixed point in space or time, rather they symbolise a social practice of spatial differentiation’. The performance of control and authority ‘creates the subject and the sovereign through the submission of the traveler and the recognition of the sovereign’ (Salter, 2008, pp. 373–374); it is the site where the citizen, the foreigner and the refugee recognise the power of the state to define their status.

This performance of bordering practices reflects policy-making that aligns with what Hollifield (2004) terms the ‘liberal paradox’ of the globalised world—open markets and closed political communities; neoliberal societies open their economies to trade and investment in order to establish or maintain competitive advantage, while simultaneously closing or restricting the movement of people due to security concerns and political pressure (Bauman, 1998; Hollifield, 1992, pp. 4–5; Hollifield et al., 2008, p. 68). Sassen (1996, p. 59) describes a ‘growing consensus in the community of states to lift border controls for the flow of capital, information and services … But when it comes to immigrants and refugees … the national state claims all its old splendour in asserting its sovereign right to control its borders.’ However, transnational actors push against the existence of border controls and attendant bordering practices, challenging the sovereignty and authority of states over their population and borders (Sassen, 1996).
2.2.1 Access, desirability and super-diversity

In the past 20 years, according to theorists such as Dauvergne (2004), and Vogel, Triandafyllidou and Düvell (2011), states have increasingly sought to control who can enter their borders; immigration was once hailed as a source of economic and social growth but is now targeted as a cause of social unrest and fragmentation. States—and their successive governments—seek to mediate and manage who crosses their borders by categorising and restricting access to immigration channels (Bauman, 1998; Castles, 2010). They invoke strategies to facilitate the movement of migrants perceived high on the hierarchy of desirability into the state, while simultaneously seeking to exclude migrants perceived not to contribute to the state’s culture and economy.

Thus, ‘in the transnational economy, spaces of circulation and mobility rights are structured by aspects of age, race, gender and class’ (Tesfahuney, 1998, p. 501). This sees states preferring those migrants perceived to be desirable or useful, with others ‘resented, marginalised or excluded’ (Griffiths, 2015, p. 72). Some potential migrants at the border are perceived—and portrayed—to be more valuable (and thereby more welcome) than others. According to Ruedin (2017, p. 8), ‘the application of racial categories is almost exclusive to Anglo-Saxon countries, while moral categorization and the politicization of Muslims have increased across most Western countries in recent years’ (see also Berkhout & Ruedin, 2017; Brubaker, 2013). In this context, migrants who are perceived to be culturally similar are often imagined to be more desirable than those from diverse backgrounds.

At the same time, the direction and diversity of migration flows have changed, with Steven Vertovec (2007) coining the term ‘super-diversity’ to describe the multidimensional shifts in migration patterns and increases in immigrant diversity in receiving societies. As a consequence, states must now contend with rising numbers of arrivals from increasingly diverse global regions and migrants with a broader range of legal statuses, genders and ages, as well as variations in national, ethnic, linguistic and religious backgrounds (Meissner & Vertovec, 2014).

Economic challenges and inequalities have combined with demographic pressures and environmental crises to generate ethnic conflicts and extremist action (Richmond, 2002; Robinson, 2014). Following decolonisation, there has been a rapid increase in south-to-north migration—a dynamic predicted more than a century ago by Ravenstein (1885). Conflicts in the 1980s saw large-scale displacement and migrations from the global south (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Tan, 2017, p. 30) and this trend has continued; between 2015 and 2020, a net number of 14 million people moved out
of the global south to the global north (UNDESA, 2019, p. 22). United Nations (UN) data estimates 272 million migrants in the world at the end of 2019, representing 3.5% of the global population (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2019, pp. 3–4).

Moreover, the number of refugees and displaced peoples has greatly increased in the last two decades, with 65.6 million people newly displaced in 2017 alone—a new annual record. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that at the end of 2019, 79.5 million individuals were forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, or human rights violations. Of these, an estimated 30 to 34 million were children below the age of 18. The UNHCR classified 26 million people as refugees at the end of 2019, as well as 4.2 million asylum-seekers (UNHCR, 2020). Ongoing conflicts in the Middle East suggest that elevated numbers will continue for the foreseeable future.

These dynamics have increased the visibility of migrants and refugees in industrialised countries and contributed to the popular perception of an unprecedented level of contemporary migration (de Haas, 2005), as well as applying pressure on policy makers to manage migration flows. Mass media and political commentators have emphasised this perceived growth in migration, as well as the potential for new arrivals to drive (negative) social, economic and cultural change (Ruedin, 2017, p. 9). The resurgence of nationalism and patriotism in multicultural liberal democratic states reflects this global turmoil, and there has been an accompanying rise in public and intellectual debates on the nature of migration (de Wilde, 2007).

2.2.2 The non-entrée regime

Despite the establishment of restrictive border measures, attempts by states to stop or limit ‘unwanted’ migration often fall short of set policy goals (Bhagwati, 2003; Czaika & de Haas, 2013; Düvell, 2005). Accordingly, policy makers have constructed migration as a problem to be managed, often without considering the drivers of migration. Hein de Haas claims that:

[I]t is an illusion to believe that we can put a stop to large-scale South-North migration as long as supply and demand last and global inequalities persist. Therefore, the assumption that migration can be ‘managed’ or curbed to a great extent seems unrealistic. (2005, p. 1280)

Increasingly restrictive migration policies and practices introduced by states in response to the irregular migrant flows continue to be surpassed by migration flows (Eule, Loher & Wyss, 2018).
That is, the insistence by states on monitoring and militarising their borders as a form of
governmentality belies the reality that movement into the state occurs in defiance of bordering
restrictions.

National and transnational policy development intended to address mass movement of people has
often been reactive and relatively ineffective both in preventing and managing the movement of
people (Czaika & de Haas, 2013). There are three limitations to border management that demonstrate
the failure of the current paradigm to address the challenges brought by the globalised world:

- the increase in numbers of people moving across borders;
- the change in migration flows and its impact on migrant diversity; and
- the continued use of irregular channels by migrants.

In response to these challenges, states continue to strengthen their bordering practices to manage and
arbitrate the movement of people across borders. The state exercises sovereignty through bordering
practices in order to limit the entry of certain people into their territory; as Ty (2019, p. 871) argues,
the ‘question of whether to accept migrants and on what terms has become increasingly charged as
the privileged site of critical attention and political intervention’. Some arrivals to the border are
more acceptable to the state than others. States have justified this continued approach to bordering by
drawing a connection between stringent border controls and the need for national security in a time
of terrorism.

In the post September 11 world, the perceived vulnerability of the state to international terrorist
action has seen migration constructed as a threat and the right to cross borders a security issue
(Guild, 2003). State-based policy settings linked to anti-terrorism have been shaped, sharpened and
used as a justification for exclusion through, *inter alia*, stricter border controls and enhanced visa
requirements (Chebel d’Appollonia & Reich, 2008; Leonard, 2010). Faist (2002, pp. 7–8) interprets
this as a political technique intended to ‘dramatiz[e] a publicly convenient link between international
migration and security’.

For refugee arrivals in particular, this has in part ‘translated into a series of restrictive measures
which … constitute today what has been called the non-entrée regime’ (Chimni, 1998, p. 351);
refugee law was constructed on the basis of non-refoulement (that refugees not be turned away),
while non-entrée is imagined as not allowing refugees to arrive in the first place (Hathaway, 1992).
Thus, the non-entrée regime is comprised of ‘efforts by powerful states to prevent refugees from ever
reaching their jurisdiction at which point they become entitled to the benefit of the duty of non-refoulement and other rights set by the Refugee Convention’ (Hathaway & Gammeltoft-Hansen, 2015, p. 244). States can, for example, refuse asylum to those who could have claimed ‘effective protection in a safe third country’ (see Legomsky, 2003; Neumayer, 2004), even if this third country does not provide high levels of protection and/or support to refugees and asylum seekers (see Gammeltoft-Hansen, 2011).

The non-entrée regime has emerged in response to rising numbers of refugee claimants in developed regions, given that ‘not only were refugees fleeing in greater numbers, but the number of claimants reaching the developed world was also rising’ (Orchard, 2014, p. 203). Moreover, there is a perception in northern states that refugees engage in ‘forum shopping’, and are attracted to those states with generous levels of protection—in reality, the selection of destination states is more complicated, and includes the motivations of family and community connections, geography and national language (Barbou des Places, 2002, p. 8). In this context, states seek to balance immigration priorities with obligations under international law when resettling legitimate refugee claimants, placing a greater emphasis in literature and practice on the securitisation of migration (Bigo, 2002; Bigo & Tsoukala, 2008; Lazaridis & Wadia, 2015). Northern state policy making has become reactive—introducing increasingly sophisticated bordering practices to restrict the entry of refugees—rather than instituting systematic reforms to handle the movement of people (Giannacopoulos, Marmo, & de Lint, 2013, p. 560).

At the same time, northern states move to reframe the refugee and so justify their exclusionary policies. Across the developed world, fewer people are afforded full refugee status, and are instead (re)labelled with a status that affords fewer rights, such as ‘asylum seeker’ (Zetter, 2007, p. 181). This reframing allows for the withdrawal or reduction of established rights and protections owed to the refugee; for A. Hall (2010, p. 882), ‘the person without the protection of a state (the asylum-seeker) and those with no legal immigration status (“illegal immigrants”) emerge as limit concepts; the “others” against whom the sovereign state reasserts itself’. Relabelling evokes the myths of otherness, and so justifies restrictive policy making; Collyer (2005, p. 283) explains that, ‘while “refugee” remains a morally unassailable category, “terrorist” immediately shifts the balance and necessitates the introduction of a battery of repressive measures’. Politicians and the public in northern states use ‘immigration’ and ‘asylum seeking’ interchangeably, and both evoke deep political division and controversy (Gibney & Hansen, 2005, pp. 70–71).
Refugees and asylum seekers are increasingly constrained by states seeking to prevent their access to the state and attendant rights; as a consequence of state action, many live for long periods in transit or as outsiders in third countries (Hamood, 2006; Schapendonk, 2012), hold semi-legal status (Kubal, 2013) while awaiting asylum applications, endure precarious living and working conditions (Bloch & McKay, 2016; Griffiths, 2014; Sager, 2015) and experience detention by the state (Griffiths, 2013; Turnbull, 2016). Particularly vulnerable are refugees and asylum seekers from the global south; they often do not have legitimate pathways into the state and accordingly look for irregular pathways.

The mitigation of irregular migration—the latter seen as a subversion of sovereign authority—has become a key area of policy development in many northern states, giving rise to new forms of legal governance that function to increase state powers (Pécoud & de Guchteneire, 2006). States have employed increasingly strict measures in their attempts to control irregular arrivals, with ‘regulatory power deployed … not only to prevent black and brown bodies from being recognized as legitimate subjects of the state but also to keep them on the outer limits of the “population”’ (Ty, 2019, p. 871). As such, northern states have introduced increasingly sophisticated domestic deterrence measures, including what political theorist Giorgio Agamben (2005) terms a ‘state of exception’. A state of exception describes the ways in which governments suspend legal processes in periods of emergency, crisis and disaster. As well as suspending domestic and/or constitutional obligations, a state of exception can also abrogate conventions and expectations under international law. The use of states of exception often comes at great political cost, such as international censure and accusations that the state is abrogating responsibilities under international law. For Agamben, the state of exception is exemplified by the detention centre (such as Guantanamo Bay), wherein detainees are placed outside the law, ‘stripped of all political status and wholly reduced to bare life’. As Billings details:

Contemporary configurations of the state of exception are, notably, ‘offshore excised places’ for asylum seekers … [They are] zones where regular law has been suspended

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5 This includes enlisting the support of transnational companies and other governments, both in source countries and internationally. An example of the use of transnational companies to support national deterrence measures can be seen in the case of Australia, where transnational security companies are employed by the Australian government to run and manage the off-shore detention centres on Nauru and Manus Island. The participation of non-government entities represents one means by which the Australian government abrogates responsibility for the detention of asylum seekers in the Pacific (McPhail, Nyamori & Savitri Taylor, 2016).
(or withdrawn) and the rule of law (equality before the law and access to justice) eroded, and their features include a concentration of executive powers and heightened surveillance over particular subjects. (2011, p. 272)

One such example of a prolonged state of exception is in Australia’s detention and off-shore processing policies (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Tan, 2017). Termed ‘Operation Sovereign Borders’, the policy prevents arrivals to Australia by boat from claiming asylum and involves the indefinite detention of those arrivals found to be genuine refugees. Australia has adopted a policy of ‘excision’, as part of immigration reforms following the September 11 attacks in the United States, whereby those who reaches offshore islands by sea are classified as ‘unauthorised maritime arrivals’ and prevented from claiming asylum. In 2013, this excision was extended to include the entire Australian mainland. Thus, boat arrivals are not subject to domestic or international law, and are simultaneously under the control of the state but excluded from its legal processes and protections (Vogl, 2015, p. 145). The Refugee Convention states that seeking asylum without a visa or travel documents is not a crime under international law, and as a signatory Australia has an obligation to treat arrivals as refugees prior to processing (McAdam, 2013, p. 438). However, the processing of asylum claims outside Australian territory has circumvented this obligation.

This is an example of the state abrogating some of its sovereignty for the purposes of migration, in order to avoid complying with international law; ‘Australia, in its quest for orderly migration … makes the claim of absolute sovereignty over its borders through its mandatory detention policies and the location of detention centres in remote and hostile sites’ (Briskman & Mason, 2015, p. 138). As Matthew Gibney (2004, p. 194) argues, ‘if the case of Australia is representative, immigration countries may see themselves as justified in implementing even harsher deterrent and preventative policies’. States have responded to irregular and/or increased migration by amending their bordering practices and by recasting who has a claim to seek entry to the state.

Only a limited number of potential migrants are stopped by immigration controls, with the majority continuing to enter states despite the barriers, often sliding into irregularity to do so (Andreas & Snyder, 2000; Düvell, 2011; Lewis, Dwyer, Hodkinson & Waite, 2014). The resulting increase in
irregular migration can lead to the exposure of migrants to exploitation and vulnerability at the borders and in the labour market (Bridget Anderson, 2010; Marfleet & Blustein, 2011).

Some irregular arrivals are asylum seekers whose precarity—experience of precariousness and insecurity—in the state can lead to exploitation inside and outside of the labour force. They can be members of what Guy Standing (2015, p. 6) terms ‘the precariat’: those with limited rights within the state who experience ‘casualization, informalisation, agency labour, part-time labour, phoney self-employment and the new mass phenomenon of crowd-labour’ (Also Standing, 2011; Standing, 2014a). Members of the precariat can have a higher level of education than is expected of the labour they perform (Standing, 2014b, p. 10)—à la the familiar story of the refugee Uber or taxi driver with a medical or engineering degree. To be part of the precariat is to experience uncertainty and instability (Waite, 2009), and to experience precarity is to live without access to long-term residency and legal belonging.

2.2.3 Citizenship, precarity and bare life

Legal belonging means having access to legal and political rights and responsibilities—in other words, holding citizenship. Legal belonging is used to control the individual, the household, society and the state (Foucault, 1997, p. 82) as well as to define and identify non-members. This dictates who is welcome in a state, and the associated rights and responsibilities that dictate the behaviour of members. Those who are able to access the state and transition to citizen receive benefits and protections from the state and in return have obligations to their community through, inter alia, taxation and military service (Stanley, 2008, p. 57).

Citizenship, as distinct from permanent residency, provides migrants with a greater level of security and rights. Citizens hold documents that certify their membership and have the opportunity to impact upon state policy and law making. Full legal belonging means having, for example, voting rights, the freedom to travel, protection from deportation, access to social security benefits and diplomatic support from the state. These rights are particularly important for refugee arrivals seeking naturalisation, as their status means they have been unable to access those rights and protections traditionally provided by their home country (Nunn, McMichael, Gifford & Correa-Velez, 2016).

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6 For a discussion of the unintended consequences of bordering practices, see Castles, de Haas, and M. J. Miller (2014, pp. 20–27).
Citizenship allows for the creation of ‘in groups’ and ‘out groups’, of us and them, those who belong and those who are excluded or othered; it ‘marks a distinction between members and outsiders based on their different relations to particular states’ (Bauböck, 2006, p. 15) and in particular to the legal boundaries of the society. It is used as a tool of governmentality—that is, as a way to inculcate responsible and virtuous behaviour in some and arbitrate the behaviour of others via the threat of exclusion and non-belonging. As de Koning, Jaffe and Koster explain:

Having become a buzzword in popular, political, and policy-making circles, the term ‘citizenship’ itself is central to techniques of governmentality used far beyond state programs to describe and proscribe desirable behavior. Often, these agendas do not necessarily target the entire national population or territory, rather they are directed at specific subpopulations or subnational territories. (2015, p. 122)

De Genova (2015, p. 192) claims that citizenship is always inherently exclusionary and divisive, and the Other is produced in ‘various degrees of non-citizenship’.

Thus, those who do not have legal rights to remain can experience precarity, exclusion and a lack of belonging; scholars have pointed to Foucault’s biopolitics as a means of explaining how those without pathways toward legal belonging can experience ‘abject’ or ‘bare’ life—an existence devoid of rights, and excluded from the political community (see Agamben, 1998; Foucault, 2003).

Agamben argues that the power of sovereignty is that of inclusion and exclusion, determining who is to be assimilated and who is to be expelled from the body politic (1998, p. 9). Drawing on Hannah Arendt’s concept of the refugee’s ‘naked life’ (Arendt, 1973), Agamben describes individual rights as fundamentally tied to the institution of legal citizenship, rejecting the notion that human rights can exist or be upheld outside of membership of a nation state. Rather, ‘the so-called sacred and inalienable human rights are revealed to be without any protection precisely when it is no longer possible to conceive of them as rights of the citizens of a state’ (1998, p. 126). Those without political rights of citizenship who are reduced to bare life—particularly the refugee and/or the ‘illegal’ migrant—become politically and socially insignificant, existing outside the social contract, without access to its attendant obligations and rights.

Historically, the key set of practices utilised by the state to incorporate the Other into the community has been naturalisation—the state-defined process through which non-citizens progress toward legal belonging. Naturalisation is a ‘key site in the construction of the citizen and gives insights into those qualities that a state values in its members’ (Bridget Anderson, Gibney & Paoletti, 2011, p. 554).
demonstrating how the Good Citizen is imagined: ‘What states require of naturalising citizens (such as lack of a criminal record, knowledge of the state’s history, commitment to certain values, use of the language and ethnicity) offers a vision of “good” citizenship’ (Anderson et al., 2011, p. 554). The power of citizenship to ‘invest’ the individual in the state reflects the idea of citizenship as a technology of state power through which the state rationalises, implements and systemises the governing of people’s conduct. However, northern states have progressively made it more difficult for non-citizens to gain access to citizenship and its permanent and irrevocable access to the community.

Clear and defined pathways to citizenship (even when they involve lengthy processes) have been found to be highly effective in creating integrated legal and cultural citizens, as well as central to refugee integration (Bloch, 2000; Stewart & Mulvey, 2014; Strang & Ager, 2010). Carens (2002) and Hampshire (2011) propose the moral argument that the state should grant citizenship to long-term residents. Hampshire justifies this in that ‘living in a society over time invariably establishes a person as a full member of that society’—and a part of the community (Hampshire, 2011, p. 958). That is, long-term residents develop an affinity to place within the space of the nation. Place can be considered a social space derived from political and structural processes of society (Lefebvre, 1991). Social relationships and connections are inextricably connected to place (Massey, 1998), and although groups may hold differing values, beliefs and experiences, their sharing of a space brings them into contact, connection, and, potentially, conflict (Cuervo & Wyn, 2017). Despite the centrality of place as the site of these interactions, it is rarely factored into policy making around resettlement and integration (Chen & Schweitzer, 2019; Curry, Smedley & Lenette, 2018).

O’Keeffe and Nipperess (2021), in discussing the resettlement of young refugees in Australia, argue that there is an interconnectedness between space, place, belonging and identity. For young people, identity development and social relations are inextricably located within and formed by place (O’Keeffe & Nipperess, 2021; Cuervo & Wyn, 2017). However, access to citizenship and the right to remain in the state on a permanent basis has an impact on the development of cultural connections to society (Aptekar, 2015, pp. 78–82). Similarly, extended periods on temporary visas—particularly without clear pathways to citizenship or permanent residency—have been found to undermine people’s connection to the community (see McMillan, 2017) and leads to ‘the social condition of being neither fully excluded nor fully recognized’ (Walters, 2008, p. 185). Long-term residents who do not have access to citizenship live precarious lives on the border of the community. They cannot be considered full legal members of the community.
2.3 Shaping the population: belonging and community

The Foucauldian view of the state sees governmentality as the rationalisation and systemisation of the way political sovereignty is exercised in governing people’s conduct so as ‘to secure and improve the circumstances of the population being governed’ (E. F. Cohen, 2014, p. 1050). This is achieved through the creation of a shared imagining of the Good Citizen, the community and its values, which are then perpetuated, promoted and protected by the policies and practices of the state on those within its borders. The state can shape or mould its population to create a cohesive society through what this thesis terms ‘boundaring practices’ that foster a cultural and social contract between the state and the individuals of its population. Boundaring practices include institutions and practices that influence the cohesion, cooperation and tolerance of all those within the state, including new arrivals (Guo-Brennan & Guo-Brennan, 2019; Schinkel & Van Houdt, 2010). They shape an individual’s connection to social systems, to other residents, and to the nation, and can take the form of social and cultural institutions such as schools and settlement services (Ouellette & Hay, 2008, p. 473). Boundaring practices are mechanisms of governmentality seeking to gain the ideological compliance of the population through the evocation of conscience and cultural expectations. They promote the construct of the Good Citizen and encourage the interpellation of the population to comply with that ideal.

The individual— Influenced and shaped by collective institutions and procedures within the state— forms a sense of belonging to this community through political and economic processes as well as cultural contexts (Farquharson & Marjoribanks, 2003, p. 45). Full membership of the state, I argue, requires cultural belonging—the identification with cultural, linguistic and ideological aspects of a society—as well as and distinct from legal status, as ‘modern states portray themselves not as arbitrary collections of people hung together by a common legal status but as communities of value, comprised of people who share common ideals and (exemplary) patterns of behaviour’ (Bridget Anderson & Hughes, 2015, p. 2; see also Cassity & Gow, 2005, p. 52). Cultural belonging is the experience of attachment that occurs at the societal level within the everyday lived experiences of individuals, and is an essential complement to citizenship and legal rights.

2.3.1 Multiculturalism, integration and the management of difference

States with diverse populations and the presence of the Other have debated how to foster attachment and belonging to the state for all members. Multicultural and integration policies and outlooks have been adopted to address the plurality of identities in diverse communities. Countries such as
Australia and Canada have used multiculturalism—as policy and as myth—to address the tension of arrivals from a myriad of cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds living together in large cities.

In the wake of post-World War II migration, multiculturalism as a public philosophy emerged in Canada in 1971 and later in Australia to address societies made up of people living together in major cities but having different origins, religions, languages and distinct cultures (Jupp & Clyne, 2011, xiii). Multiculturalism is the ‘management of difference’ (Mackey, 2002, p. 64), and generally refers to ‘the strategies and policies adopted to govern or manage the problems of diversity and multiplicity which multi-cultural societies throw up’ (S. Hall, 2000, p. 209). Moreover, it is a mode of governmentality intended to regulate and reconcile those tensions and conflicts derived from the existence of racial, ethnic and cultural differences among the population of a territory (Ang, 2010, p. 3). Indeed, exposure to racial diversity is an important mechanism for reducing intergroup antagonisms and promoting a cosmopolitan sense of belonging (Wu, Hou & Schimmele, 2011). As a political theory and a public policy, multiculturalism ‘aims to foster integration of cultural minorities in the wider society by facilitating their participation in common life, by recognizing their cultural origins and differences, and by compensating their historical disadvantages’ (J. Gale & Staerklé, 2019, p. 1; see also Kymlicka, 1995, 2001).

However, the social imaginary of multiculturalism is often based on the notion of culture as difference, and the assumption that distinct ethnic communities need to be enfolded within a larger cohesive community (Noble, 2009). This form of multiculturalism is based on ‘a moral discourse of tolerance and respect which, while sounding progressive, fosters an unreflexive civility that reproduces a politics of identity but detracts from a critical interrogation of the constitutive nature of cultural practices’ (Watkins & Noble, 2016, p. 42). From that, there is a need to move beyond the moral imperative of recognising and respecting different cultural groups (Kymlicka, 1995, 2001; C. Taylor, 1994), and toward the ability for citizens to reflect on, analyse and participate in a culturally complex world, shaped by forces such as migration, transnationalism, intermarriage, generational change, and cultural hybridisation (Watkins & Noble, 2013, 2016).

Refugee resettlement has been the subject of scholarly attention in recent years, with researchers seeking to identify key factors contributing to the integration of new arrivals (Berry, 1997; Castles, Korac, Vasta & Vertovec, 2002; Strang & Ager, 2010). Koirala (2016, pp. 120–121, drawing on Berry, 2011) explains integration as the ‘preferred option for refugee adaptation in a multicultural society’, as ‘[refugees] retain some aspects of their cultural identity while at the same time they participate in the shared activities of the host society.’ Integration of refugees is conceptualised as a
two-way process, ‘requiring from refugees a preparedness to adapt to the lifestyle of the host society without having to lose one’s cultural identity; and from the host society a willingness to be welcoming and responsive to refugees and for public institutions to meet the needs of a diverse population’ (Fozdar & Hartley, 2012, p. 10; also see Threadgold & Court, 2005, pp. 16–17).

Integration research is a complex and evolving field; Dhanji (2009, p. 155) points to three interconnected variables that influence and contribute to the complexity of refugee integration: the policies of and services provided by the host government, the perception and reception of refugees by the host community, and the willingness and ability for refugees to adapt to their new environment. Reflecting this complexity, there are competing approaches in the academic literature to investigating the integration of refugee arrivals.

One approach to integration research assesses local factors that may contribute to (or hinder) refugee integration (Platts-Fowler & Robinson, 2015; Johnston, Vasey, & Markovic, 2009; Mulvey, 2010). This assessment may include prevailing notions of nationhood and citizenship—the myths of the state—and how they influence the legal frameworks, institutions and service provision within a receiving state (da Lomba, 2010; Ager and Strang, 2008). Further, the demographic characteristics, values and capabilities of refugee arrivals—including their relative desirability within a receiving state—have been identified in research as important determinants of successful integration (Castles et al., 2002; Strang and Ager, 2010; Threadgold and Court, 2005; Phillimore, 2011).

Another approach in integration research speaks to metric benchmarks, and how these can be used to measure the ‘success’ or otherwise of new arrivals’ integration (Korac, 2003; Phillimore, 2012). Researchers—such as Collins (2013) and Wilkinson (2013)—‘define integration as an identifiable output that can be objectively measured within a framework of predefined indicators’ (Koirala, 2016, p. 120); Dhanji (2009), for example, selects ‘proficiency in the English language, access to suitable accommodation, the right to employment, health and welfare and participation in community affairs’ as the benchmarks indicating successful integration. One challenge with this approach is the absence of large scale quantitative data with which to measure the success of settlement (see Squires, 2020, pp. 102–3).

Finally, an extensive body of integration literature focuses on refugees’ reported perceptions (gathered through qualitative methods) of successful integration and beliefs about their own belonging. Researchers conceptualise integration by focusing on the experiences and challenges faced by refugee arrivals (see Berry, 1997; 2011). This includes exploration of the impact of
structural inequalities and procedural barriers to refugee belonging (Grzymala-Kazlowska & Phillimore, 2017) and the impact of media and public perceptions on refugees’ connection to community (Khan, 2014). This research looks at the extent to which refugees feel able to socially, economically and politically participate in their new society (Nagel & Staeheli, 2008; Cheong, Edwards, Goulbourne & Solomos, 2007), but faces challenges linked to generalisability of qualitative data.

This thesis applies each of these approaches to integration research. First, it considers local factors, including the influence of myth-making about citizenship, the Good Citizen and the refugee on integration policy. Additionally, it explores the impact of certain benchmarks of integration—particularly English language—on perceptions about and experiences of refugee belonging. Finally, it contributes to the existing literature by focusing on the experiences of young Middle Eastern refugees, an age group often either overlooked or conflated with ‘adults’ (18-plus) or ‘youth’ (under-25). However, this group have unique experiences, particularly in relation to integration challenges faced and support options available; these young people additionally have often experienced disrupted childhoods and educations and yet arrive in Australia in or near adulthood.

2.3.2 Education as a process of integration

The processes of integration—supported by institutions of the state—are thought to contribute to belonging and identification with the imagined values, beliefs and identities of the community (D. Phillips & Berman, 2003, p. 347; Ager & Strang, 2004; 2008). Education is one such process; it is a tool of social reproduction through which the values and myths of society are expressed, contested and transformed in order to shape the population. Schools are central to this process, as they ‘are one of the few institutions that can be found in almost every urban and suburban neighbourhood, and with which almost every individual has meaningful, sustained contact at one or more points in their lives’ (Collins & Coleman, 2008, p. 281).

State (or, in Australia, ‘public’) schools are diverse places, catering for young people of different ages and abilities, as well as for the different socio-economic, linguistic, religious and ethnic backgrounds of the young people living in the community. As a melting pot of diversity, one function of the public school system is to instil common values and beliefs in its students; Collins and Coleman (2008) argue that schools have a role in transferring not only academic and technical skills but also socially appropriate knowledge and values. They claim that the school is a nation-building institution, with the potential to shape students’ knowledge and understandings as well as
their behaviours, beliefs and identities. Collins and Coleman go on to say that schools ‘have common roles to play in the organization of social life, and the shaping of social identities’ and ‘are institutional spaces where … forms of conduct are generally first acquired’ (2008, pp. 282–283). That is, the school is a quintessential institution of governmentality, arbitrating the conduct of conduct and shaping the behaviours, values and beliefs of young people within the population (see Robbins & Kovalchuk, 2012).

As schools function in part to reproduce social norms, they can also work to conflate the identities of the diverse student body within them. Schools have the potential to reproduce and privilege identities and attributes associated with the Good Citizen at the expense of those who might be viewed as the Other. Even those school settings that have adopted multicultural approaches and ‘draw on diverse rationales—notions of social justice, cultural maintenance, community harmony, cultural awareness’ can exhibit competing rationales via programmes that compete for resources and time allocation (Noble & Watkins, 2014, p. 163) The school as an institution of governmentality seeks to identify and categorise groups, and in doing so can conflate student identities with assumptions about culture and background; for example, schools can sort students according to ‘ethnicised’ categories and require them to ‘perform’ their identities in a show of acceptance (such as at multicultural days) (Watkins & Noble, 2021, p. 51). In this way, student identity can be ‘schooled’ and (re)produced through pre-determined assumptions (Noble & Watkins, 2014). Such attempts at inclusion can have implications for ethnic groups in multicultural communities, including those perceived as the Other.

Drawing on this theoretical literature, there is extensive applied research on the role of schools in integrating refugees. This body of literature—explored further in 3.4.2—speaks to the importance of the school in fostering the inclusion and belonging of refugee young people, with reference to, inter alia;

- Language learning (Phillimore 2011; Uptin, Wright & Harwood, 2013; Blake, Bennetts Kneebone & McLeod, 2017);
- Recognition of refugees’ prior learning (Uptin, Wright & Harwood, 2016);
- Teachers, as arbiters of academic and social knowledge, and a sense of safety (Oikonomidoy, 2010);
- The building of family-school connections and channels of communication (Hamilton & Moore, 2004; Hek, 2005; Block, Cross, Riggs & Gibbs, 2014; McBrien, 2011); and
- Support with administrative, legal and bureaucratic responsibilities (Taylor & Sidhu, 2012).
This literature speaks to the role of schools in shaping and influencing the settlement, integration and belonging of refugee young people.

Conclusion

This chapter used governmentality as a tool to explore the way modern states imagine, create and shape populations. Firstly, it looked at the imagining of the population through the creation of national myths. It argued that myth-making is used as a means of fostering national identity and forming boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. National myth-making idealises the attributes and qualities of the Good Citizen, building a collective imaginary about who and what constitutes the national identity and ideology. These myths then shape the actions and beliefs of the population, who are interpellated and shaped to resemble Good Citizens. This chapter examined how the Other is constructed as the opposite of the Good Citizen, the mirror or foil to the dominant racial, cultural, legal and socio-political characteristics of the community. Those Others who wish to belong but are viewed as not aligning with the myths of the Good Citizen can be ‘mis-interpellated' or actively rejected from belonging.

Secondly, this chapter explored the creation of the population through facilitating access and authorising permanency and/or citizenship for new arrivals. This section examined theories of border control and bordering as the ways in which states seek to control who can enter and remain within the community. Importantly, this chapter looked at the non-entrée regime in the global north as states seek to stop or limit ‘unwanted’ migration, turning away from refugee resettlement obligations. It also examined the limited effectiveness of border control and the associated consequences of bare life for those living in the community without access to full legal rights or pathways to permanency.

Thirdly, this chapter examined the shaping of populations within the state through the governing of conduct. The shared imagining of Good Citizen, the community and its values are perpetuated, promoted and protected by the policies and practices of the state and through its institutions, such as the school. This section also gave an overview of how some states navigate the ‘management of difference’ in increasingly pluralist societies, through the introduction of multicultural and integration policies.
In the following chapter, this application of governmentality will be applied to the Australian context to explore the way the Australian state imagines, creates and shapes its population, with particular reference to Middle Eastern refugee arrivals. It reflects on the history of migration in Australia and the legacy that so-called ‘White Australia’7 and multiculturalism have left on the myths of the nation. It compares these to myths of the Other and explores how these have developed over the last 20 years in relation to those from Middle Eastern and refugee backgrounds. This chapter focuses on how entry to the state by refugee arrivals is facilitated or restricted, and the consequences of permanence or precarity on refugees’ development of belonging. Finally, the chapter gives an overview of how the Australian state facilitates belonging for refugee arrivals through settlement services and the school, and introduces literature that speaks to how refugee young people experience belonging in Australian society. In short, this chapter explores national myths, their reflections in public and political discourse and impact on policy making, and consequences for the Middle Eastern refugee arrival.

7 White Australia refers to the period of non-European exclusion from Australia which, in various forms, shaped federal immigration policy from Federation in 1901 through to the multicultural policies of the 1970s. The Immigration Restriction Act 1901 was the first formal federal legislative tool to exclude non-White arrivals and was colloquially referred to as the White Australia Policy (Kamp, 2010, p. 411).
Chapter 3

Literature review: Making the Good Australian

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of Australian state and citizen making; migration has never functioned as a marginal feature of Australian society but rather has been central to the development of the national identity and the conception of the community of value. Benedict Anderson (1991, pp. 22–36) in *Imagined Communities* argues that the ‘nation’ and its identity are considered historical constructions; as such, this chapter examines the historical means of facilitating and restricting migration to Australia and the legacy that this history has for the modern state. Moreover, this chapter builds on the concepts introduced in the previous chapter and applies these to the Australian context in order to establish how the Middle Eastern refugee, in particular, is positioned in relation to the myth of the Good Australian and the Australian community of value.

In the last 20 years, the Middle Eastern refugee has emerged as the new Other—an amalgam of identities, borne of the perceived threat of transnationalism to bordering practices and the hierarchy of desirability—as global instances of Islamic terrorism allowed an Australia-wide questioning of integration, multiculturalism and the ability of some migrant groups to participate constructively in the community of value. Middle Eastern identities have increasingly been conflated in political speech, labelled as the Muslim and/or the bogus refugee-cum-boat-person; people from the Middle East have been positioned as the antithesis to the Good Australian and othered in political discourse and policy making. These political voices have found space, too, in mainstream parties, and have had a substantial impact on multicultural policy in action. There is a privileging of nears and dears in political speech, which has flow-on effects on policy-making and public perceptions. These perceptions are created through political speech, policy-making and media representation, which flow through to the attitudes of everyday Australians.

In focusing on the Australian state and the control of its population, a note must be made about the nation’s federalised system of government. Australia’s three tiers of government operate and control different areas of authority. Border integrity, security and immigration policy, for example, are under the auspices of the federal government, and a governmentality lens sees the federal government...
controlling the border and thereby defining the population by facilitating or restricting entry, residence and citizenship. The six state governments—of which New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria are the most populous—control the shaping of population by formulating and implementing policy relating to schools, education and local policing; in many cases, funding for these services is allocated to the states by the federal government. By necessity, this thesis moves between these different tiers of government, addressing jurisdictional discrepancies by considering the implications of federal policy on refugees settled within New South Wales. It must, however, be acknowledged that the complexities of a federal system mean that the different tiers of government are often in conflict with each other. For example, the de-emphasis on multiculturalism at the federal level in Australia is paralleled by the take-up at state and local levels of many multicultural programs.

3.1 Imagining the Good Australian

In Australia, there is a well-established relationship between history, nationalism and exclusionary policy-making and Australia’s link to Britain (Tavan, 2005, p. 136), with myths used to justify the inclusion or exclusion of certain groups. The transportation of British subjects to New South Wales from 1788 marked the foundation of a new European-styled society that already had strong societal markers of inclusion and exclusion—namely, freedom or servitude. Core British class constructs, patterns of power, and conceptions of the Other were imported to the new society, with social, legal and ethical lines drawn between soldiers, entrepreneurial settlers, emancipated convicts, the interned and the indigenous population. The colonies were intended to mirror the home country in tradition, government and culture, and as the population of free settlers increased, so too did the desire to import people from Britain to solidify a dominant white culture.

More open immigration policies were in place from the late 1960s, and multiculturalism became an important basis for policy and identity from that time until the late 1990s. Multicultural policies produced a diverse population, making Australia today one of the countries with the highest proportion of overseas-born in its population. Nevertheless, the country remains relatively Eurocentric in outlook and identity (Hage, 2000) and this has consequences for who is included and excluded.

3.1.1 Myth of white Australia

Australia is a settler society that views its history and mythology through a Eurocentric and post-colonial lens (Tranter & Donoghue, 2007). As a state formed through British colonial conquest and
violence, particularly against the indigenous population, Australia’s national identity is marked by ‘an anxiously buried awareness’ of guilt and xenophobia (K. Anderson & A. Taylor, 2005, p. 462; Dixson, 1999, pp. 1–4). Ideas of the struggle of the settler-pioneer against hostile landscape and hostile native became central to colonial myth-making and distanced the settler from the indigenous peoples; ‘The otherness of the landscape [was perceived as] closely bound up with the otherness of the consciousness of its primordial inhabitants’ (Lattas, 1997, p. 229). Such discourse formed part of a broader pattern of the cultural and racial othering that Britain exported throughout its Empire.9

The myth of Australia as a British nation was reflected in the country’s early attitudes and policy measures relating to immigration (Kamp, 2010, p. 412). In the period leading up to Federation, the disparate colonies sought unity on the back of shared racial and cultural characteristics as increased diversity among migrant arrivals in the 1800s led to concern for the colonies’ identity as part of the British Empire. Prior to 1850, there were limited bordering practices in place to control arrivals to the colonies, and some of the first economic migrants came from China, India and Afghanistan (Elder, 2005). Increasingly stringent restrictions were placed on non-White migrants towards the end of the nineteenth century (C. Price, 1974). In 1896, for example, anti-Chinese laws already extant in the five eastern colonies were expanded to block the arrival of all ‘coloured’ races (Yarwood, 1964, p. 5). Anti-immigration arguments grew out of fears that Australia was becoming less British (and

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8 This othering took on an official capacity when James Cook’s reports back to Britain claimed that the country was sparsely populated by those nomadic people living in a ‘state of nature’, without European understandings of private property (Banner, 2005). The claim of terra nullius—unowned land—justified the claiming of Australia for the British crown, effectively beginning the systematic exclusion and persecution of the First Australians in policy-making and practice. Historically, Indigenous culture, identity and physicality were demeaned and othered in favour of supposedly superior European values and ideology; Indigenous Australians followed political, legal and economic structures that were alien to the British Empire, and absorption into the monolith of the Empire or eradication were viewed as the only options. In practice, cultural and physical violence were used as complements to the colonial discourse of the ‘supreme’ white man (Reece, 1974; Sharp, 2008, p. 111). Established communities and kinship groups of the Aboriginal peoples were marginalised and actively destroyed, as were their diverse languages and cultures (van Krieken, 2004).

9 Although secondary to the overall argument, it is important to recognise that layers of othering and exclusion have been a constant, pervasive and wide-spread occurrence throughout Australia’s history. Indigenous Australians, who had inhabited the country for 60,000 years before the arrival of the British in the eighteenth century, were viewed as inferior by the British colonists. In addition to the injustices inflicted on the indigenous population, for example, there were additional layers of othering at work within the ranks of Anglo-Celtic convicts and free settlers. A high percentage of early convict and free settler arrivals to Australia came from Ireland, seeking to escape the poverty and colonial oppression of their home country. The colonial conquest of Ireland and the British control of Australia meant that these Irish arrivals were perceived as an underclass and othered as the British sought to replicate their colonial power structures in Australia (Castles, Cope, Kalantzis & Morrissey, 1988, p. 19). Thorpe and Evans (1999, p. 327) argue that the British occupation of Ireland was reimagined in parts of Australia through ‘often brutal and degrading relations between the military and [Irish] convicts’. Irish arrivals were viewed as more criminal and less desirable as workers and, later, migrants. Irish migrants—particularly those from working class (usually Catholic) backgrounds—found social acceptance difficult; the othering of this group continued through the nineteenth and into the twentieth century (Jupp, 2001, p. 452).
less white) following a rise during the mid- to late-nineteenth century of largely low-wage economic immigration from the Asia Pacific (Jupp, 1995, pp. 207–209); labour unions protested the low-wage importation of indentured Melanesian and Pacific Island workers to work Queensland’s hot and labour-intensive sugar plantations (Saunders, 2013). In 1890, the importation of so-called kanaka labour was banned, and by 1904, those labelled as Kanaks were declared illegal and were to be repatriated (M. Gray & Agllias, 2010, p. 155). Accordingly, there was an introduction of exclusionary immigration policies drawn along racial lines, firstly in the colonies, then, following Federation, through coordinated state bordering practices.

The ability to control borders and monitor who was admitted became a key argument in favour of uniting the colonies; a federated state would be better able to restrict entry, particularly from those coming from Asia (see Markus, 1988). Cultural homogeneity was viewed as essential to the continuation and success of a new state, and it became the basis of Australian nationalist ideology (Tavan, 2013, p. 40; Vasta, 2005). That is, racial uniformity—whiteness—was perceived as central to national unity, and this unity would be undermined if large numbers of non-Europeans were allowed to cross the border (Curthoys, 2003). Restrictive bordering practices that promoted cultural homogeneity would, it was believed, create a society that was egalitarian, harmonious and fair (Healy, 2016).

The formulation of the independent Australian state was centred on the white identity of its people. Australia’s first Prime Minister, Edmund Barton, described non-whites to be ‘in comparison with white races—I think no-one wants convincing of this fact—unequal and inferior’ (Barton, 1901, p. 5233). The nation was envisioned as a place populated by people of British heritage, and from pre-Federation until World War II, immigration policy sought to exclude the ‘coloured races’ from neighbouring regions (Langfield, 1999). The first significant piece of legislation passed by the newly formed Commonwealth parliament was the Immigration Restriction Act, and, within it, the White Australia policy, a Eurocentric and exclusionary immigration policy (Castles, 1995, p. 303; Jupp, 2007, pp. 5–20). The White Australia policy provided the opportunity to ensure that only those of white European heritage—considered to be higher on the hierarchy of desirability—would be given easy access to Australia. The policy included a dictation test, and applicants were required to write a passage of 50 words dictated to them in a European language of the assessor’s choice (Kemp, 2011, p. 37). The test gave the policy the veneer of impartiality, while providing a migration pathway for desirable non-English speaking Europeans and excluding non-white English-speakers who could not, for example, speak French. Thus, the White Australia policy used ‘the discourse of race … to mark
the limits of the Australian imagined community, not distinctions within it’, presenting the Australian community of value as inherently and intrinsically tied to white European culture, with ‘the perceived importance of “racial purity” as the symbolic cement for the imagined community of the fledgling nation’ (Stratton & Ang, 1994, p. 141, original emphasis).

World War I provided the first opportunity for Australia to present itself on the world stage as a unique nation with a unique identity. From this war, the mythology of the Anzac soldiers emerged as a metaphor for the nation—young, brave, irreverent to the so-called mother country but ultimately white and allied to Britain (Cochrane, 2018). The reality of war also highlighted for Australia the peace and prosperity the white majority enjoyed, and linked this to cultural homogeneity; Prime Minister Stanley Bruce declared during a 1925 re-election speech, ‘We intend to keep this country white and not allow its peoples to be faced with the problems that at present are practically insoluble in many parts of the world’ (in Chiro, 2016, p. 20). Thus, the imaginary of White Australia persisted, as did ‘the widely-held perceptions of the “ideal” and the “alien” in immigration policy, the racial hierarchy of preferred immigrants with the British [being] the most favoured’ (Langfield, 1999, p. 55).

However, this preference for British migrants and reliance on British allegiance were challenged in the following decades when economic turmoil and Britain’s increased internalism and post-colonial attitudes spelled the need for Australia to forge new relationships and allegiances and to look elsewhere for migrants. With the Great Depression of the 1930s and Australia’s participation in World War II, Australia’s connection to the motherland lessened. Australia’s geographical position in Asia—on the other side of the world from Britain—was reinforced by the War in the Pacific; the Japanese attacks on Darwin and the limited support Britain provided for those fighting in the Pacific reiterated the need for Australia to reconsider its outlook and allegiances (Kivisto & Faist, 2010, p. 77). As Suzanne Rutland (2003) writes:

The Pacific War radically changed accepted attitudes within Australia. Many policy makers became aware of Australia’s need to increase her population for reasons of defence and economic development. For the first time in Australian history, non-British immigrants came to be regarded as a viable migrant source.

In response to the nation’s vulnerability and isolation during the war, the hierarchy of desirability was reassessed in terms of defence, economic development and nation-building. Concerns were
raised about the economic and strategic suitability and efficacy of an exclusionary policy in the face of a potentially expansionist Asia and a post-imperial Britain.

There was widespread public anxiety after World War II about the (dwindling) number of British migrants needed to maintain a White Australia (Hassam, 2007). Without sufficient numbers of desirable migrants, it was argued that Australian culture, identity and sovereignty would be under threat; famously, the first Minister for Immigration, Arthur Calwell (1945–1947) reasoned, ‘We have 25 years at most to populate this country before the yellow races are down upon us’ (in Pilger, 1992, p. 87) and expressed the hope ‘that for every foreign [European] migrant there will be ten from the United Kingdom’ (in Hassam, 2007). This translated into immigration policy as free passage to Australia for British ex-service personnel and their families, as well as assisted passage schemes for other Britons (Jupp, 2004, pp. 133–139). Assisted migration through these schemes, known colloquially as Ten Pound Pom and Bring out a Briton, continued in different forms until 1982.

Simultaneously, Europeans moved up the hierarchy of desirability, as immigration from Britain alone was seen as insufficient to achieve economic growth (Vasta, 2005). From 1947, Australia introduced assisted European migration programs seeking ‘suitable non-British settlers [who] were young, educated and healthy, and ideally … possessed certain racial features’ (Neumann, 2003, p. 4), and between 1947 and 1952, 170,000 displaced persons arrived. According to Jacobowitz (2016), ‘desirable nationalities apart from the British were, in order of preference: Americans, Scandinavians (Norwegians, Swedes and Danes), the Dutch, Belgians, Yugoslavs, Greeks and Albanians’ (p. 78). Those lower on the hierarchy were feared to be too culturally dissimilar to Australians and politically influenced by the communist values of their home countries (Vasta, 2005). Later, migrants also came from Spain, Turkey and the former Yugoslavia (Jupp & Freeman, 1992), with Southern European migrants outnumbering those from Britain between 1953 and 1956 until the government introduced another ‘Bring out a Briton’ immigration assistance program (C. A. Price, 1998). The General Assisted Passage Scheme of 1954 provided incentives to bring in desirable migrants from white source nations, specifically Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland as well as the USA (Klapdor, Coombs & Bohm, 2009, p. 7). There were increasingly large numbers of migrants from different countries with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and this diversity was accelerated by the removal of the dictation test in 1958 (Jordens, 1997).

The ideology behind the opening of borders to European migrants was that they would readily naturalise and assimilate into the Australian community of value (Jakubowicz, 1989; Jordens, 1997). The acceptance of Europeans—often as refugees—from war-torn Europe also gratified Australia’s
sense of themselves as egalitarian and benevolent to those in need (Gordon, 1994, p. 223). The intended goal of assimilation policies was ‘complete absorption into the dominant culture’, with the more open bordering practices adjusting but not altering the status quo (Castles, 1995, p. 298). Such policies were intended to remove the cultural distinctiveness of immigrant communities and to instead promote the absorption of individuals into the Australian community (J. Martin, 1978, p. 207). Assimilation was intended to ensure that migrant groups did not change the cultural identity of the Australian nation; rather, individuals would adopt the values of their new country.

Despite the gradual opening up of migration channels, non-British migrants continued to face bordering challenges (Carmi & Kneebone, 2010). When Australian (as distinct from British) citizenship was established under the Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948 (NCA), those from Britain could become citizens after 1 year in Australia, while other Europeans needed to wait for 5 years to become Australian (Zappala & Castles, 2000). Asian migrants were required to reside in Australia for 15 years before they were eligible for naturalisation (Brawley, 1995), and although Indigenous Australians became citizens under the NCA, they were not counted in the census until after the 1967 referendum.

The increased levels of migration to Australia from non-English speaking countries required governments to address issues of social cohesion and national unity more directly (Jayasuriya, 2004). Government inquiries and academic research from the mid-1960s revealed high levels of inequality and disadvantage among minority groups (see Jupp, 1966; J. Martin, 1978; C. A. Price, 1966, 1971; Zubrzycki, 1968). Moreover, as a result of the changes to the Australian demography, successive governments from the end of the 1960s sought to recast the Australian community of value—and the policies that shaped it—as ‘a (multi-)cultural, (multi-)ethnic and economic community’ (Plage, Willing, Skrbiš & Woodward, 2017, p. 320).

Australia—like Canada and Britain—began to adopt inclusive migration policies from the 1960s as integrationist social policies replaced assimilationist ones (Tavan, 2013, p. 40). The Commonwealth Migration Act 1966 increased access to non-European migrants but still based selection on the perceived suitability and willingness of migrants to integrate into the Australian community of value (Tavan, 2013, p. 46). Although these migrants were still expected to identify with and conform to a homogenous Australian identity, ethnic differences and practices became more acceptable. Equally, Australia became a signatory to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which marked an official commitment to creating a more inclusive community, both nationally and internationally. Multiculturalism was to become the great new myth...
of the Australian nation, an ‘attempt to fashion a national identity and sense of community’ (Carmi & Kneebone, 2010, p. 47).

3.1.2 Myth of multicultural Australia

Multiculturalism as an ideology placed greater value on the identities of migrants as individuals, looking to their unique skills, interests and traditions as assets for the nation. From 1973 to 1996, successive bipartisan governments championed multiculturalism as the solution to the paradox of living together differently and equitably (Fleras, 2009). There was an acknowledgement, too, that government intervention would be central to the inclusion of a wider range of Australians in the community of value as well as a reassessment and growth of a new Australian myth. As Jupp elaborated:

Multiculturalism ended the belief that all other cultures were inferior to and incompatible with the ‘mainstream’ culture of White British Australia. It accepted that immigrants would continue to speak their own languages and would try to pass on to their children a sense of pride in their origins. Those who had come as refugees would still follow closely the politics of their homelands, even while being anxious to become Australian citizens. Finally, with the official ending and denunciation of the White Australia by the Whitlam government in 1973, it was accepted that physical appearance or non-European origin [was] not a suitable basis on which to exclude people from the Australian community. (Jupp, 1996, p. 6)

With the removal of the final vestiges of preferential treatment given to white migrants, non-discriminatory procedures for the selection of migrants were introduced instead.

The shift in political discourse and introduction of anti-discrimination and inclusionary social policies demonstrated a shift from ‘an exclusionary, homogenizing, even racist past, in favour of an inclusionary, pluralist and equitable recognition of the diverse groups living within the boundaries of the nation’ (Ang & Stratton, 2001, p. 95). The Australian Citizenship Bill introduced in 1973, for example, sought to embody a new national identity that was less about a (British-dominant) cultural heritage and instead about residence in the Australian state (Davidson, 1997; Zappala & Castles, 2000, p. 40). Then Immigration Minister, Al Grassby (1973), described multiculturalism as a process that allowed for the creation of a ‘family of the nation’ wherein different ethnic groups could ‘create their own commercial life and preserve their cultural heritage indefinitely while taking part in the general life of the nation.’ During his Prime Ministership, Malcolm Fraser (1978) acknowledged that
‘Australia is at a critical stage in developing a cohesive, united, multicultural nation’, and proceeded to support the ideology—and the reshaping of the community of value—through the introduction of multicultural policies and programmes during his prime ministership.

This enthusiasm for multiculturalism in policy-making between 1975 and 1990 was reflected in the plethora of government enquiries and reports into the effectiveness of multicultural programs and services (Jupp, 2007, p. 69). These reports influenced the ideological shape and approach of multicultural policy settings for the next two decades, and marked the real beginning of targeted migrant education in Australia. In 1978, the Review of Post-Arrival Programs and Services to Migrants (known as the Galbally Report) argued that cultural pluralism could be harnessed as a source of strength and national pride, and found that, if ethnic identities were successfully ‘interwoven into the fabric of our nationhood by the process of multicultural interaction, then the community as a whole will benefit substantially and its democratic nature will be reinforced’ (Galbally, 1978, pp. 104105). Moreover, in his inaugural address to the Institute of Multicultural Affairs, Fraser (1981) declared:

The [Galbally] report identified multiculturalism as a key concept in formulating government policies and recognised that Australia was at a critical stage in its development as a multicultural nation. It re-examined existing assumptions and methods, and urged the need for policies and programs to take new directions.

This development of a multicultural ideology was foundational in shaping social policy that would incorporate the ‘common good’ and common Australian values into official policy (Keddie, 2014, p. 411). Some consequences included the expansion of services provided to minority groups during the 1970s and 1980s (Castles et al., 1988), including the establishment of Migrant Resource Centres, the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) and the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs. These supports included services intended to assist in the settlement and integration of migrants, such as the establishment of the Settlement Services Branch of the Department of Immigration, and the Telephone Interpreter Service (TIS) (Klapdor et al., 2009, p. 10). These services recognised the importance of accommodating community languages (Goot, 1988, p. 8) and providing distinct and ‘ethnic specific’ support (Kalantzis, 2000, p. 104).

Policy developments and political action in the 1970s and 1980s attempted to recast the values and mythology of the Australian nation from one that valued white Australia and a western heritage to one that reflected the wide range of ethnicities present in Australian society. Multiculturalism was,
for a time, hailed as a successful shift in identity from that of the racist past to one of tolerance; under multiculturalism, ‘[m]igrants and their cultural heritage are welcomed and accepted and their economic and civic contributions are cherished. Australia’s ‘fair go’ culture is the backbone of such an ideal’ (Ozdowski, 2016, p. 3). As migrant communities made contributions to Australia’s economic and social wellbeing (Hugo, 2011), multicultural Australia became the new myth of the nation; a ‘new Australian’ could become the Good Australian.

Multiculturalism as a policy was never adopted in legislation at the national level—as it was in Canada, for example—leaving multicultural policies vulnerable to shifting opinion (Jupp, 2007). As such, by the end of the 1980s, the pragmatic policy-making that championed multiculturalism was in decline. As Australia’s population grew increasingly multicultural in the 1990s, there developed a tension between the desire to recognise and respect cultural difference and simultaneously enhance national unity. Hage (2000, p. 87) argues that multiculturalism was ‘a strategy aimed at reproducing and disguising relationships of power in society’. Multiculturalism as an ideology was increasingly criticised as placing the individual above the welfare and cohesion of the nation.

As early as 1989, (then) future Prime Minister John Howard voiced his objection to multiculturalism as a threat to Australian values in an interview, stating, ‘multiculturalism is in effect saying that it is impossible to have an Australian ethos, that it is impossible to have a common Australian culture so we have to pretend that we are a federation of cultures and that we’ve got a bit from every part of the world’ (quoted in Brett, 2005). His 1996 election campaign was directed toward those in the electorate who rejected a perceived pandering to special-interest groups such as Indigenous Australians and migrant groups. His brand of performative popular politics played a key role in the emergence of a new social and political discourse surrounding race and the conception of the Australian nation; John Howard targeted disenfranchised white working classes by constructing the mythology of ‘Howard’s Battlers’ (G. Gray & Winter, 1997, p. 4) as an underclass that had been underserved and overlooked in favour of promoting minorities and the ideal of multiculturalism. As Gray and Winter observe:

> The Liberal Party’s election slogan—‘for all of us’—was in its formulation directed towards exclusion… The slogan, stated John Howard, brought together ‘in a very effective fashion the mood and resentments of the Australian people’. (1997, p. 4)

Howard’s platform was that multiculturalism was discriminatory and exclusionary—that white Australia had been othered. Winning the 1996 election and forming government until 2007, to some
extent his victories reflected public disquiet about multiculturalism as the Australian myth (Tate, 2009).

This was accompanied by a growing perception that multicultural policy had moved beyond what the ‘market’ of public opinion could bear; there was, for example, a backlash against rhetoric that placed Australia as part of Asia, as this was seen to minimise the nation’s British-European history and mythology (Mcallister & Ravenhill, 1998). Clyne and Jupp (2011, pp. xvi–xvii) have linked the backlash against multiculturalism with, *inter alia*:

- increased movements from the global south, including from war-torn regions, and the perception that these migrants are ‘undesirable’ economically and socially;
- the perceived cultural incompatibility of Islamic and liberal nations, tied to the rise in transnational Islamist terrorism;
- economic and social problems tied to globalisation and job diversity; and
- ‘[a] perception that the distinct civilisations and cultures built on a European basis are losing their pre-eminence’.

By 2001, Howard called for the complete abandonment of ‘multiculturalism’, to be replaced with ‘One Australia’, where ‘loyalty to Australia, her institutions, values and traditions transcends loyalty to any other set of values anywhere in the world’ (Koleth, 2010). Under his government, funding cuts were made to migrant and minority organisations, while institutions such as the Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research and the Office of Multicultural Affairs were closed (Pietsch, 2018). Juliet Pietsch (2018, p. 68) argues that by 2001, ‘both Labor and Liberal governments scarcely used the word “multiculturalism”, which has since gradually faded from public discourse’; nearly all federal multicultural institutions have been abolished, and policies and programs have been defunded or devolved to state governments (Jupp & Pietsch, 2018). The actions of politicians and public discourses have the potential to ‘[limit] the possibilities for imagining a truly multicultural political landscape’, ‘reinforc[ing] a monocultural version of Australian identity’ (Fozdar, 2011, p. 621) and outlining who is and is not acceptable as members of the community of value. Across northern states, ‘there [is] now in this post-9/11 era a more visceral and populist attack on multiculturalism, often associated with the imputed dangers of segregation’ (Vertovec & Wessendorf, 2010, p. 26). This trend can impact how arrivals view themselves in relation to the wider society and can also influence the behaviour of citizens toward the new arrival, including inciting ‘moral panic’ (Al-Natour & Morgan, 2016; Noble, 2016), a desire for arrivals who embrace
‘Christian’ values (Fozdar, 2011), and a retreat from multiculturalism (Poynting & Mason, 2008). Clyne and Jupp (2011) argue that the post-multicultural period has seen a returned focus to integration. Indeed, according to Ghassan Hage (2002, pp. 434–435), ‘Australia’s debates about multiculturalism … have always centred around the construction of an “unintegrated other” and the subsequent debating of the necessity, possibility and desirability of his or her integration.’

The construction of this Other in the Australian public imaginary has shifted—and expanded—over time. During the 1990s, debates about multiculturalism focused on the place of the Asian migrant in Australian society and the contrast with a ‘traditional’ Australian way of life. In the last 20 years, however, a new Other has emerged—an amalgam of identities, borne of the perceived threat of the unrestrained movement of people to sovereignty and the hierarchy of desirability; according to James (2014, p. 336), ‘the simultaneous association between Islam and “unAustralian” criminality’ has meant ‘Australia has experienced a combustible environment in which the robustness of the country’s multicultural credentials has been put sorely to the test’. That is, global instances of Islamic terrorism have allowed an Australia-wide questioning of multiculturalism and hindered the ability of some groups to truly access and comply with the community of value.

3.1.3 Myths of ‘good’ citizenship

In the Australian context, debates around citizenship and naturalisation exemplify this desire for states to maintain a uniform community of value. A 2006 discussion paper, ‘Australian Citizenship: Much More than Just a Ceremony’, argued that Australian citizenship is the single most unifying force in Australian national identity and that a citizenship test would assist with social cohesion and the successful integration of migrants in the community (Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, 2006). In 2007, a new Australian citizenship bill was passed by parliament, amending the 1948 bill; it extended the period of residence before a migrant could apply for citizenship from 2 to 4 years. A separate amendment replaced the informal interview with a formal test, marking the first time since the abolition of the White Australia policy10 that a citizenship test was introduced to assess applicants’ knowledge of Australian civic values, and the required English language proficiency level was also raised (Haggis & Schech, 2010). Then Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Kevin Andrews (2007), introduced the bill into parliament, with the

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10 The Immigration Restriction Act 1901 was the first formal federal legislative tool to exclude non-White arrivals and was colloquially referred to as the White Australia Policy (Kamp, 2010, p. 411). White Australia refers to the period of non-European exclusion from Australia which, in various forms, shaped federal immigration policy from Federation in 1901 through to the multicultural policies of the 1970s.
claim that it would ‘encourage prospective citizens to obtain the knowledge they need to support successful integration into Australian society’ and send ‘a clear signal to the broader community that new citizens know enough about our way of life and commit to it’. This bill received criticism for its exclusionary potential, its mirroring of the White Australia policy and its narrow focus; the values test was criticised for the ‘undifferentiated view of the national community it presented, privileging white, male, “British-Australian” institutions, values and endeavours through a focus on issues such as convict settlers, “a harsh country”, diggers and the Anzac legend, the economy and politics, sport and the nation’ (Tavan, 2009, p. 131). That is, it was criticised for its glorification of a myth of White Australia.

Since 2007, legislative changes to the acquisition of Australian citizenship have been proposed, seeking to place shared ‘Australian values’—including higher English language requirements—at the core of the naturalisation and citizenship process. Again in 2017, the Australian Citizenship Legislation Amendment Bill sought to ‘strengthen the integrity’ of Australian citizenship by increasing residence requirements, by language testing, and by placing greater emphasis on an assessment of ‘Australian values’, including a pledge expressing a commitment to accepted values (Petrie & Sherrell, 2017). In April 2017, when asked on public television to identify problems with the existing process, then Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull stated that some values—‘freedom, equality of men and women, mutual respect, the rule of law, democracy, a fair go’—were ‘uniquely Australian’ and should be ‘at the core of becoming an Australian citizen’ (Turnbull, 2017). Although ultimately rejected in the Senate—Australia’s Upper House—the proposed changes suggest an attitude to new arrivals in Australia that rewards conformity, compliance and, ultimately, the invisibility of the migrant.

Ongoing debates around Australian values as benchmarks for citizenship reflect what Tonkens, Duyvendak, and Hurenkamp (2010) term the ‘culturalization of citizenship’. ‘Good citizenship’ becomes defined not by a focus ‘on working, on paying taxes, or on voting, but on criteria such as religious and cultural practices, women’s clothing, feelings of belonging and loyalty, experiencing the correct emotions at the appropriate moments’ (Hurenkamp, Tonkens & Duyvendak, 2012, p. 11). The state becomes an arbiter of the values and practices of potential members, attempting to ‘strengthen the shared identity of both natives and immigrants through national citizenship’ (Hurenkamp et al., 2012, p. 12). Hurenkamp et al. pose the question: ‘When decent people employ a “norms and values” offensive against those they disapprove of, or when they require foreigners to
adapt to a culture that nobody can quite define, can they reasonably expect social cohesion?’ (2012, p. 4).

This question reflects the reality that, while migrants and refugees from diverse backgrounds continue to arrive in Australia, overarching cohesion is potentially undermined by a fixation on outdated, ill-defined and/or exclusionary values. While these values seek to define the Good Australian as an ideal, they simultaneously construct the imaginary Other as a threat—the fixation on myths of the nation allows the Australian national identity to be stagnant and in need of protection, while communities existing within the state can be misinterpellated, distrusted and excluded.

3.2 Imagining the Other: myth, political speech and public perception

The myth-making of the Other in the Australian imaginary has seen complex issues and diverse identities—such as boat arrivals, refugees, religion, and terrorism—conflated in political discourse and constructed as threats to the Australian community of value. This conflation of markers of identity and legal status reflects what I term a *stretching of identity* and is experienced by (among others) refugees arriving from the Middle East who are imagined and labelled as the Other. A myth of difference sees members of this group mis-identified in political and public discourse as, inter alia, the terrorist and/or the illegal or bogus refugee, amplifying their otherness. The following section will explore the use of these labels as tools of othering and exclusion, with a focus on political speech and how politicians operationalise othering as tool to control access to the community of value.

In recent years, Australia has experienced a resurgence of political voices seeking to restrict immigration; there has been ‘a recurring theme in media and policy discourse that the body of the nation is “under siege” from escalating flows of immigrants [needing to] become “integrated” into the space of the nation in the interests of “social cohesion”’ (K. Anderson & A. Taylor, 2005, p. 464). In response, there is great political cachet in presenting oneself as defending the community of value through the construction and rejection of the Other—as terrorist and bogus refugee.

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11 The concept of ‘stretching of identity’ emerged from Kubal’s idea of the ‘stretching of the “illegal” label’ (2013, p. 556) to conceptualise, label and imagine as ‘illegal’ those who are not covered by an established legal framework (e.g. those with rejected asylum claims awaiting appeal, see Dauvergne, 2008). Here, stretching of identity speaks to the application of composite identities to the refugee in order to Other them.
3.2.1 Myth of the Middle Eastern terrorist

The imagining of Middle Eastern identities in Australia has been tied over the last two decades to the fear of Islamic terrorism and its construction as incompatible with the Judeo-Christian heritage of (White) Australia. Greg Noble (2008) explores the construction of the ‘Arab Other’ in Australia, and the accompanying rise in public and political discourse of ‘highly moralised, and moralistic, language of good and evil… [the] hardening of boundaries between good and bad, between law-abiding citizens and wrongdoers’ (p. 14). This reflects what Lattas (1997, p. 320) described as the ‘[f]ear of the stranger at home, particularly the Islamic stranger’.

In the post-2001 period, politicians and political parties have periodically used their platforms to exclude Muslims from the construct of the Good Australian. Some elected representatives have focused on Islam and Muslim identities as the Other threatening Australian values. This has included political stunts and public speeches intended to draw attention to the ‘threat’ to the Australian community posed by immigration and Islam in particular. The most prominent and electorally successful populist party in recent years is Pauline Hanson’s One Nation Party, which has found support on the back of discourse that is overtly anti-Islam, anti-immigrant and pro-Australian values. One Nation’s political platforms have focused on perceived threats to the Australian community of value and to a traditional imaginary of Australians as white and of Anglo-Irish heritage. While these are not the only voices, far-right anti-immigrant discourse has had far-reaching consequences for immigration and integration policy, as well as public perception (see Squires, 2020, p. 91).

On 17 August 2017, Senator Hanson entered the Senate Chamber wearing an Islamic burqa or full-face covering. She then called for a plebiscite on the wearing of religious garb in public places; Attorney-General at the time, George Brandis, emphatically stated that national security depended upon the promotion of national belonging and working ‘cooperatively with the Muslim community’ and clarified that ‘to ridicule that community, to drive it into a corner, to mock its religious garments is an appalling thing to do’ (2017).

On October 15, 2018, Pauline Hanson called on the Senate to acknowledge that ‘it’s OK to be White’, given what she saw as a ‘deplorable rise of anti-white racism and attacks on Western civilisation’ in Australia (2018). The motion was narrowly defeated by 28 senators to 31, with 23 members of the ruling Coalition Party supporting the motion. The government’s position caused controversy due to the links (particularly in the US) between the expression ‘it’s OK to be White’ and white extremism. Attorney-General Christian Porter, whose office had directed Coalition
senators to vote in favour of the motion, used Twitter to defend the vote as a stand against racism (see Appendix 3). He later released a statement claiming that his office had erroneously supported the senate vote and that he had not seen the wording of the motion himself. Senator Mathias Cormann (Leader of the Government in the Senate) took responsibility for the ‘process failure’ and asked the Senate again to raise the motion again, ‘so that the final vote recorded by the Senate truly reflects the views of government senators in relation to these matters’ (2018). The second vote saw it defeated unanimously.

Although Senate motions are not legally binding and are primarily used to make political statements, the motion reiterated a vision that the community of value was under threat and that white Australians were being othered. The ‘OK to be White’ motion demonstrates the ways in which populism, xenophobia and othering have been given a voice and a platform in Australian political speech. Power dynamics in Australian political speech, and the ability of some voices to be heard over others (Hage, 1998, pp. 117-140), means that platforms such as anti-immigration and white cultural identity have been elevated in the Australian Parliament. As Labor Senator Malarndirri McCarthy stated after the initial vote that ‘Everything that we say in this Senate chamber and …in the House of Representatives actually does matter. …the Australian people actually listen to what we say’ (2018). She continued by emphasising, ‘We must unite against those things that divide us based on our race and against those things that divide us on our disadvantage and differences in this country.’ The vote shows that othering, racial profiling, railing against political correctness and hailing back to a mythical past are increasingly utilised in mainstream politics; the consequence of this is that the community of value is increasingly inaccessible to some.

Like Pauline Hanson before him, Senator Fraser Anning used the Australian Senate as a platform from which to target Muslim immigrants. Anning was elevated to the Senate as a member of One Nation (with a total of 19 first-preference votes) following the disqualification of Senator Malcolm Roberts. Within weeks of his promotion, Anning defected from One Nation to Katter’s Australia Party, and on August 13, 2018, he delivered his maiden speech to the Australian Senate. In his speech, Anning celebrated the arrival of the British to Australia in 1770, ‘a race [which] for the purposes of settling new colonies … never had its equal on the face of the earth’, and bemoaned the (purported) loss of an Australia which ‘fifty years ago … was a cohesive, predominantly Anglo-Celtic nation’ (2018). He claimed that ‘ethnic and religious minorities, radical feminists, sexual deviants, Third World immigrants and antisocial criminals’ pose a threat to ‘traditional values and the white family’ and stated that, ‘[w]hile all Muslims are not terrorists, certainly all terrorists these
days are Muslims’. He made unsubstantiated claims that Muslims ‘here and in other Western nations … [are] the least able to assimilate and integrate’. Moreover, Anning implied that his position was a majority one, calling for:

a plebiscite to allow the Australian people to decide whether they want wholesale non-English speaking immigrants from the third world, and in particular whether they want any Muslims. Or whether they want to return to the predominately European immigration policy of the pre-Whitlam consensus… [with] bipartisan support from both Liberal and Labor [parties] for a European based immigration program. (Anning, 2018)

Anning echoed the sentiments enshrined in the White Australia policy (what he terms the ‘pre-Whitlam consensus’): ‘We as a nation are entitled to insist that those who are allowed to come here predominantly reflect the historic, European Christian composition of Australian society and embrace our language, culture and values as a people’ (Anning, 2018).

Senator Anning’s speech was widely condemned by both Houses of Parliament and other politicians (including Pauline Hanson) as being racist, inflammatory and factually inaccurate. The Senate passed a motion that reaffirmed ‘the dismantling of the White Australia Policy’ and acknowledged the bipartisan pursuit since 1973 of ‘a racially non-discriminatory immigration policy’ (Shorten, 2018). Despite being an extremist voice, Anning’s views gave a voice and platform in the Australian Parliament for concerns about immigration and the presence of Muslim migrants in society, and he connected these to an undermining of the community of value. Anning’s position on immigration and the importance of Australia’s white heritage demonstrates the longevity and pervasiveness of this aspect of the Australian myth.

Following the killing of 49 Muslim worshippers in Christchurch in March 2019, Senator Anning tweeted: ‘Does anyone still dispute the link between Muslim immigration and violence?’ (Bourke, 2019). He later released a statement saying, ‘The real cause of bloodshed on New Zealand streets today is the immigration program which allowed Muslim fanatics to migrate to New Zealand in the first place.’ Following these comments, Anning appeared at a right-wing press conference, where he was ‘egged’ by a 17-year-old protestor, an event that garnered international attention but also served to re-air Anning’s views (ABC News, 2019).

Xenophobia and a fear of the Middle Eastern Other has emerged in the discourse of members of the major parties, including government ministers. For example, Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton—
whose portfolio oversees border protection, immigration and citizenship—called on the one hand for the prioritisation of white South African farmers in refugee resettlement, saying:

‘We have a huge South African expat community within Australia. They work hard, they integrate well into Australian society, they contribute and make us a better country and they’re the sorts of migrants that we want to bring into our country.’ (reported by SBS News, 2018)

The Minister stated, ‘[T]hese people deserve special attention and we are certainly applying that special attention now.’ In short, political speech that accompanies policy settings reinforces the historical perception that some (white) migrants and refugees are more desirable, deserving and contributing members of Australian society than others. On the other hand, Minister Dutton sparked controversy by claiming that former Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser, had made a ‘mistake’ in facilitating the arrival of Lebanese refugees in the wake of the Lebanese Civil War in 1976–1977. He argued: ‘[O]ut of the last 33 people who have been charged with terrorist related offences in this country, 22 are from second- and third-generation Lebanese Muslim backgrounds’ (2016). An examination of the typology of Islamic extremists did find that nearly half of Australia’s 105 Islamic State fighters were born in or had a parent from Lebanon (Shanahan, 2020). However, the geographic proximity of Lebanon to Syria and the large proportion of siblings (19 sets) who became jihadis may account for this. Additionally, Shanahan found only 6% of Australian jihadis were refugees or the children of refugees. Nevertheless, his statements suggests that the deserving are not from Muslim, Middle Eastern backgrounds.

The linking of Middle Eastern and Muslim identities with Islamist terrorism and criminality has negative consequences for the community. In this context, Muslims are ‘differentiated as threats to “social cohesion” and “national unity”, that is, to the cultural values and integrity of the dominant (Anglo-Celtic) host society’ (Dunn, Forrest, Burnley & McDonald, 2004, pp. 410–411), reflected in an increased acceptability of negative attitudes toward Islam and Middle Eastern identities more broadly (Akbarzadeh, 2016, p. 327; Bloul, 2008; Borrell, 2015). In the wake of September 11, the Australian Arabic Council reported a 20-fold increase in acts of vilification toward their community (Poynting, 2002; see also Poynting & Noble, 2004; Kabir, 2007). Studies have documented that negative depictions of Australian Muslims in political speech and media have an alienating effect on individuals, and have flow-on negative impacts on Middle Eastern communities and Australian society more widely (Kabir, 2008).
Increased acts of violence towards those of Middle Eastern appearance—imagined as the Other—are exemplified by the Cronulla Riots of December 2005. The riots were sparked in part by escalating racial incidents in the days prior, including the assault of two surf lifesavers by a group of men of Middle Eastern appearance (NSW Police, 2006, p. 11). An attack on lifeguards was viewed as the literal attack on an icon of Australian myth; thousands of predominantly white Australians gathered at Cronulla Beach in south Sydney, and over 270,000 text messages were transmitted inciting racially motivated conflict at North Cronulla Beach (Valverde, 2009, p. 12). These messages were a call to arms, asking Australians to ‘Bring your mates down and let’s show them that this is our beach and their (sic) never welcome back’ (N. Wilson, 2005). Over a December weekend, the protest descended into a riot and an attack on Middle Eastern-appearing bystanders and police alike. The organisers validated and justified their actions as necessary to defend Australian culture, which by implication excluded peoples of Middle Eastern appearance regardless of their nationality, as reflected in chants and slogans such as, ‘We grew here. You flew here.’ The riots reflected a panic about a loss of culture and constituted a defensive backlash in the name of the myth of the Good (white) Australian.

Despite attempts to construct and conflate Middle Eastern individuals as Other, members of these groups are settled in and are part of Australian society. There have been more than 100 years of migration from the Middle East to Australia (Batrouney, 2006). According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2017) more than a quarter of Australia's population (26% or 6,163,667 people) were born overseas, and of those, 303,089 people, or 4.9% of the overseas-born population, were born in the Middle East.

In the last 20 years, regional wars have contributed to an increase in the number of refugee arrivals from the greater Middle East (including Afghanistan) (Department of Home Affairs, 2019b, p. 4). Over 55% of arrivals under the offshore Humanitarian Program between 2017 and 2018, for example, were born in the Middle East (Department of Home Affairs, 2018b, p. 1) As reported by the DIBP:

Significant numbers of people… continue to be in need of resettlement due to ongoing conflicts, primarily in Afghanistan and Iraq, and more recently in Syria. Resettlement from this region has increased from an average of around a third of the Programme from 1998 to 2009 to over half of the Programme since 2012–13. (Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2017 p. 15)
Despite the increase in arrivals from this region, Middle Eastern refugees do not reflect a single religion, culture and/or ethnicity. Between July 2015 and February 2019, for example, 2,738 Yazidi-background arrivals had been settled in Australia (Department of Home Affairs, 2019d). Yazidis are members of a monotheistic and endogamous ethnic community, with ancestral homes in northern Iraq, Syria and the south-east of Turkey. This Kurmanji-speaking minority group has faced religious persecution since the 15th century and was more recently targeted by ISIS. The recent intake of Yazidi refugees further belies the conflation of Middle Eastern identities as Muslim, extremist and terrorist.

3.2.2 Myth of the ‘bogus’ refugee

There is a common perception that asylum seekers are mainly economic migrants and therefore ‘bogus’ rather than ‘genuine’ refugees; Neumayer (2005) argues that political upheaval, human rights abuses and threats to personal safety linked to warfare, state failure and dissidence are more significant factors than economics in the calculations of those seeking asylum.

Under international law, people can seek asylum without holding appropriate travel documents or visas, and a state’s obligation to assist them is not dependent upon the prior recognition of refugee status (McAdam & Chong, 2014, p. 438). However, in Australia, the use and understanding of the term ‘illegal’ to describe asylum seekers arriving by boat is increasingly accepted in mainstream discourse (Rowe & O’Brien, 2014, p. 175). The designation of some asylum seekers as ‘irregular’ or unworthy does not reflect the lived experience of people fleeing persecution and the reality and complexity of refugee journeys. It also does not consider differences in access to time, wealth and connections when fleeing the home country (Schon, 2019; Refugee Council of Australia, 2014).

The language used to describe asylum seekers in political speech in Australia has set the tone for attitudes toward refugee arrivals more generally. Depersonalised language allows for a separation in the public imaginary between ‘us’ and ‘them’, with slogans such as ‘turn back the boats’ and ‘stop the boats’ putting the focus on the mode of arrival rather than on the asylum seekers themselves.

The construction of boat people as bogus, queue jumping and entering through illegal channels places them at the bottom of the hierarchy of desirability and also impacts on all categories of

12 Soldiers of ISIS committed acts of genocide (as recognised by the UN) against Yazidis living in Syria and Iraq—one study estimates that 2.5% of the Yazidi population was killed or kidnapped over the course of just a few days in August 2014 (Cetorelli, Sasson, Shabila & Burnham, 2017).
refugees and asylum seekers, becoming a catch-all categorisation in political discourse (Kubal, 2013). This labelling is a tool of othering used to justify the exclusion of certain groups from being granted asylum—and long-term status—in Australia. In political speech, asylum seekers arriving by boat, or ‘boat people’, have served as a lightning rod for broader issues around a clash of cultures and values, and the pervasive discourse has impacted on the perception of refugees more widely and on their compatibility within the Australian community.

A watershed moment in the othering of asylum seekers—and by proxy, the refugee—was October 2001, when then Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock alerted the media to reports of asylum seeker children being ‘thrown’ out of boats and into the sea by their parents; Prime Minister Howard reiterated, ‘I don’t want people like that in Australia. Genuine refugees don’t do that…they hang onto their children…I don’t want in this country people who are prepared, if reports are true, to throw their own children overboard’ (Marr & Wilkinson, 2004, p. 251, my emphasis). Ultimately, the reports and the accompanying images were found to have been misrepresented by the government and media; a Senate Inquiry ruled that untruths and miscommunications had been relayed to the Australian public (Macken-Horarik, 2003, p. 299), but not before the incident became a source of national outrage (P. Gale, 2004, p. 322). The myth of the unworthy boat arrival solidified as “[t]he government seized on the “children overboard” story and kept it going long after they knew it was untrue—because it appeared to confirm the view that these people were unworthy of our compassion’ (Lawrence, 2006, p. 45). Boat arrivals were imagined as the undesirable Other.

In the successive 20 years, claims that boat people engage in ‘queue-jumping’, ‘smuggling’ and entering Australia through ‘the back door’ have been used to exclude, other and persecute asylum seekers (C. A. Martin, 2020; O’Doherty & Lecouteur, 2007; Peterie, 2017). Prime Minister Julia Gillard, for example, raised a moral argument for the exclusion of those seeking asylum by boat—that they were disadvantaging those who had been waiting ‘for many years to get a chance at a new life and a new start in a country like Australia’ (Gillard & Bowen, 2011), an assertion that is ‘misleading as, in reality, there is no such orderly process; all asylum seekers, regardless of their mode of arrival, ultimately end up in similar processing situations’ (Rowe & O’Brien, 2014, p. 174). Moreover, without access to an appropriate visa to apply for asylum in-country, the only legal route to claiming asylum in Australia is through the limited places offered through the offshore humanitarian resettlement program. The notion of a queue created the mythology of the boat person as a cheater, and rationalised Gillard’s declaration that, ‘if you arrive in Australian waters … you
will go to the back of the queue’ (Gillard, 2011a). The idea of queue-jumping also evokes the notion of the hierarchy of desirability, with boat people taking the place of those who are ‘more deserving’.

Terrorism has also been used as a key justification for the othering of asylum seekers; ‘[O]ne major discourse that was produced by governmental leaders in the mediascape was the framing of asylum seekers as potential terrorists’ (Osuri & Banerjee, 2005, p. 231). In 2001, for example, then Prime Minister John Howard emphasised security concerns relating to the arrival of asylum seekers by boat, saying, ‘You don't know who's coming in [on boats] and you don't know whether they do have terrorist links or not’ (in Mares, 2002, p. 134). This view was reiterated by then Minister for Defence, Peter Reith, who emphasised that ‘you’ve got to be able to manage people coming into your country’, and that, in failing to do so, borders may become ‘a pipeline for terrorists to come in and use your country as a staging post for terrorist activities’ (in Pickering, 2004, p. 223). The threat posed by boat people as potential terrorists has legitimated the need for a strong government capable of stopping irregular arrivals. Stringent policies aimed at excluding boat people are validated by constructing this group alternatively as invaders, criminals/actors, wealthy queue jumpers and potential terrorists (Rashid, 2007, p. 14). Boat people—and links drawn in discourse to illegality, immorality and terrorism—have served to justify exclusion and othering.

The focus on boat people as bogus refugees and potential terrorists who threaten the integrity of the community of value belies the reality that boat arrivals constitute a small percentage of asylum claims in Australia and that those claims are overwhelmingly found to be genuine. According to Crock, Saul and Dastayari (2006, p. 28), this emphasis on numbers is a performative tool, stimulating public concern about ‘the potential for larger scale incursions by unchecked invaders, or because of some deeper cultural fear’; numbers of irregular arrivals by plane and by boat are roughly equitable, but “boat people” have generated most concern’. Boat people represent less than 0.01% of all migrants to Australia (G. Martin, 2015, p. 309), and their refugee and asylum claims are usually in the minority—in 2009, for example, the 2,849 boat people who entered Australian waters and applied for asylum comprised only a third of asylum applications overall (6,170) (Koser, 2010, p. 5). At the height of the boat-arrival crisis (as it was then portrayed) in 2012-2013, 18,365 boat people entered Australian waters and applied for asylum, representing 68.4% of the 26,845 onshore applications (J. Phillips, 2015, p. 7). However, the vast majority of ‘irregular maritime arrivals’ (IMA) (particularly from the greater Middle East, shaded in grey) who had their refugee claims assessed were deemed to have genuine claims to protection as refugees (see Table 1). In comparison, the grant rate for onshore plane arrivals (non-IMAs) seeking protection—primarily from non-Middle
Eastern nations—was much lower (Table 2), suggesting the applicants had insufficient grounds for claiming refugee status. Nevertheless, plane arrivals from the Middle East (again shaded in grey, Table 2) had a higher acceptance rate on average than those from other regions. In short, the high acceptance rate of Middle Eastern asylum seekers arriving by air and as IMAs contradicts the imagining of these arrivals as bogus refugees.

Table 1: Final protection visa grants and refusals by Top 5 countries of citizenship—irregular maritime arrivals (IMA)

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<td>Grants (n)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1440</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1336</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>333</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>99.3</td>
<td>255</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>93.2</td>
<td>241</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stateless</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>482</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>…</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>209</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>2152</strong></td>
<td><strong>98.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>2721</strong></td>
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Source: Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2013, p. 30.
Table 2: Final grants and refusals by top 20 countries of citizenship (non-IMA)

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<td>Grants (n)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Afghistan</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>94.1</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>94.9</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>78.4</td>
<td>48</td>
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<td>90.8</td>
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<td>Iran</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>88.8</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>97.7</td>
<td>368</td>
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<td>351</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>91.0</td>
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<td>Iraq</td>
<td>157</td>
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<td>183</td>
<td>95.8</td>
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<td>94.2</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>96.1</td>
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<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>41.7</td>
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<td>45.1</td>
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<td>19.9</td>
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<td>Palestinian Authority</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>94.1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>90.0</td>
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<td>85.7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>58.8</td>
<td>&lt;5</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>92.0</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>97.4</td>
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<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>43.5</td>
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<td>48.4</td>
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<td>China</td>
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<td>31.6</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>215</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>78.6</td>
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<td>80.4</td>
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<td>189</td>
<td>76.5</td>
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<td>72.1</td>
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<td>62</td>
<td>63.9</td>
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<tr>
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<td>16</td>
<td>94.1</td>
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<td>75.0</td>
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<td>90.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2013, p. 20.

The criminality narrative surrounding boat people and asylum seekers—many of whom are Middle Eastern and/or Muslim—impacts on the perception of multiple and intersectional communities living in Australia. This can be seen in Greens Senator Jordon Steele-John’s reflection on the power of exclusionary political discourse to undermine Australia’s multicultural cohesion in the wake of the Christchurch attacks in March 2019:

If you spend two decades telling people that Muslim refugees are a threat to this country, if you spend two decades crafting a false bipartisan narrative which suggests the only way to treat asylum seekers, the most desperate people in the world, is to lock them up … then you are part of this dehumanisation. You are part of how we got here. And you cannot be part of the solution. (In Clift, 2019.)
Moreover, this negative labelling and stretching of identity to form the Other has flow-on consequences for all refugee and/or Middle Eastern arrivals and their ability to access belonging.

3.3 Creating access for the Middle Eastern refugee

Ongoing emphasis on border control and national security evokes Australia’s migrant history and appeals to entrenched national imaginaries linked to the immigrant threat to culture (P. Gale, 2005, p. 6). Exclusionary policies and an increasingly militaristic approach to border control have often been framed in terms of complying with the will of the Australian populace and protecting the community of value from threats, such as from terrorists and bogus refugees.

The implementation of border protection policies and the language of exclusion in migration discourse over the last two decades suggests a disproportionate focus on asylum seekers as targets of deterrence, deportation and detention. As such, deterrence and exclusionary measures that have been employed include: limiting the ability of asylum seekers to reach the Australian mainland to claim asylum; holding them for long periods in detention, usually on off-shore islands; and limiting the opportunity for those within the community to access long-term residency and ultimately citizenship, instead of which they experience precarity. The rise in numbers of boat arrivals, the threat of terrorism to security and sovereignty, and the historical desire to protect the Australian community of value have each contributed to shifts in discourse and policy making that are increasingly performative and exclusionary in their representation of boat people—many of whom arrive from the Middle East—as Other.

3.3.1 Asylum, boats and the border

Deterrence measures have sought to limit access to the border by potential asylum seekers. These have involved increased and improved ‘risk management’ techniques when processing visa applications to limit tourist or working visas granted to those who might subsequently claim asylum onshore (D. Wilson & Weber, 2008). A small proportion of Australia’s humanitarian visas are granted to onshore applicants; in 2018–2019, only 1,425 of the 16,250 humanitarian visas were granted to onshore applicants (Table 3, in grey). Since 2013, all of the applicants who arrived in Australia by plane and claimed asylum at the airport or after admission into the country have been placed on temporary visas (J. Phillips, 2015).
Table 3: Humanitarian Program outcomes by component 2013–2014 to 2017–2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refugee</td>
<td>6,501</td>
<td>6,002</td>
<td>8,284</td>
<td>9,653</td>
<td>7,909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHP*</td>
<td>4,515</td>
<td>5,007</td>
<td>7,268</td>
<td>10,604</td>
<td>6,916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onshore</td>
<td>2,752</td>
<td>2,747</td>
<td>2,003</td>
<td>1,711</td>
<td>1,425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>13,768</strong></td>
<td><strong>13,756</strong></td>
<td><strong>17,555</strong></td>
<td><strong>21,968</strong></td>
<td><strong>16,250</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Home Affairs, 2019b, p. 7

The majority of visa places are reserved for offshore applicants who are either vetted and referred by the UNHCR (the ‘Refugee category’) or selected by the Australian government (the ‘Special Humanitarian Program’, or SHP). The SHP assists those who may not be UNHCR-designated refugees but are subject in their country of origin to discrimination that violates their human rights, as well as having ‘substantial links’ to the Australian community, often in the form of a community sponsor. From 2018–2019, a percentage of available offshore visas were allocated to those accepted as part of a ‘Community Support Program’ (CSP), which ‘enables communities and businesses, as well as families and individuals, to propose humanitarian visa applicants with employment prospects and support new humanitarian arrivals’, particularly targeting those aged between 18 and 50 who are willing to settle in regional areas (Department of Home Affairs, 2019b, p. 5). The Refugee Council of Australia (2020) claims: ‘This increasing trend towards selecting refugees based on community links in Australia undermines the principle that Australia should be taking the most vulnerable refugees.’

Since 2001, successive policies have restricted the ability of asylum seekers to reach Australia by boat; for example, the three laws that comprised ‘The Pacific Solution’ marked a significant shift toward deterrence measures that have been expanded upon by subsequent governments (such as Operation Sovereign Borders). The first law involved the excision of offshore islands including Christmas Island and Ashmore Reef from Australia’s ‘migration zone’. This meant that boat people seeking to establish asylum claims in Australia could only do so if they reached the mainland (Hatton, 2011, p. 78). The second law authorised the interception and towing of boats into international waters by the Australian Defence Force, and returning boat people to Indonesia or to Pacific Islands for processing, amounting to a ‘military operation designed to repel asylum seekers and demonstrate the government’s “toughness” on border protection’ (Williams, 2008, p. 200). The

* Special Humanitarian Program
third law saw Nauru and Papua New Guinea (PNG) given large amounts of money in exchange for becoming screening sites for those boat people towed out of Australian waters. In addition to these three changes, the definition of ‘refugee’ in status determination was narrowed, with applicants who had spent more than 7 days in a ‘safe’ country prior to arrival in Australia deemed ineligible for a permanent protection visa (Hatton, 2011, p. 78–79).

Over time, those boat arrivals who did reach the Australian mainland have had their ability to find long-term protection curtailed alongside the perception that they have not arrived ‘legally’. This relates to a perceived bordering crisis over issues of sovereignty, the right of the state to protect its borders, and the worthiness of those seeking to jump the immigration queue. Since September 2013, ‘the onshore component of the Humanitarian Program has been reserved for people who arrive lawfully’, and permanent protection visas have not been granted to those who arrive to Australia by boat regardless of their claim to protection (Department of Home Affairs, 2019b).

Asylum seekers are also more commonly detained than other categories of ‘illegal’ arrival. The Commonwealth Migration Act 1958 stipulates that any non-citizen in Australia without a valid visa can be detained until they are either granted a visa or removed from the country. In 2014, the Department of Immigration and Border Protection estimated that there were 62,100 unlawful non-citizens living in Australia. The majority of these unlawful non-citizens were students and tourists who had overstayed visas, a category of ‘illegal’ migrant that is rarely the target of policy review, political speech or active identification and deportation (Crock & Saul, 2002, p. 23; McDougall & Fletcher, 2002, p. 33). Meanwhile, ‘failed refugees’—those whose onshore humanitarian applications for asylum have been rejected—are more commonly subject to detention and ultimately forced to return their country of origin than other categories of irregular migrants.

Since 1992, those who enter Australian territory without a visa—invariably by boat—have been mandatorily detained, often in remote locations (Markus & Arunachalam, 2018). From 2001 until 2008, and from the end of 2012, boat arrivals have been transferred to offshore detention centres on Pacific islands: from the time of offshore processing restarting in August 2012 until April 2019, 4,177 people have been transferred to Nauru and PNG (Refugee Council of Australia, 2020, p. 2). Of the 4,177 people transferred to Nauru and PNG, 2,063 were in Australia as of 1 March 2020, with 1,220 categorised as ‘transitory’—that is, in Australia (without a valid visa) for medical or other reasons but able to be returned to Nauru or PNG at any time (Refugee Council of Australia, 2020, p. 5). As of 20 March, 2020, there were 209 asylum seekers left on Nauru and 227 in PNG. Detention—and long-term or indefinite detention in particular—has been found to have negative
consequences for detainees’ wellbeing and mental health (Coffey, Kaplan, Sampson & Tucci, 2010; Green & Eagar, 2010). The impacts of detention on children have also been widely investigated (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2014).

3.3.2 Permanence and precarity

Despite the restrictions on permanent settlement for boat arrivals, many have been living in Australia for long periods on temporary visas and without recourse to permanency. Indefinite detention outside the community of the state is not a long-term means of exclusion, with many boat arrivals ultimately being settled in the Australian community either on temporary visas or bridging visas; in 2019, 716 people were living in community detention, of whom 287 were children. A further 2,453 children were in the community on Bridging Visa E. This visa requires renewal by the holder every 5 years; holders are also unable to leave Australia without ministerial permission and must live in a place designated by the state. Thus, the ability for holders to participate in society is constrained—they can be physically present in the community, but cannot fully be part of it due to restrictions on participation, residence and movement. Appendix 4 provides an overview of the different humanitarian visas issued by Australia, while Appendix 5 details the social resources that those on different visas can access. Additionally, limitations on settlement services, social services, employment and education support for temporary visa holders have consequences for the community in which they settle; under the federal system, ‘the role of supporting these people…falls to the particular Australian state or territory’ (Pugh, Every & Hattam, 2012).

The revision of the Migration and Maritime Powers Legislation Amendment (Resolving the Asylum Legacy Caseload) Act 2014 (Cth) (‘the Act’) saw substantial changes to the visa regime applying to asylum seekers (Crock & Bones, 2015); the revisions included extended processing times for existing asylum claims, defunding of legal support for onshore applicants making asylum claims, and a ‘code of behaviour’—monitored by the immigration department—from which even minor breaches could lead to detention and deportation (van Kooy & Bowman, 2019, p. 694). One of the more significant changes introduced under the Act was the reintroduction of temporary protection visas rather than permanent pathways to citizenship; onshore visas were no longer granted to those crossing Australia’s borders as so-called illegal maritime arrivals (for a full list of humanitarian visa categories, see Appendix 4). If claimants are deemed eligible for protection in Australia—that is, if they are in need of protection—they are issued with one of two temporary visas that are renewable but do not readily or naturally transition toward permanent residence. These are:
• the Temporary Protection Visa (TPV): a 3-year visa that can be renewed and does not have a permanent pathway; and
• Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV): a 5-year renewable visa that allows for Medicare and the right to work. At the end of 5 years on this visa, the person can apply for a permanent migration visa if they meet the stringent requirements of that category of permanent visa.\textsuperscript{13}

Successive policy amendments have made visa review and appeal processes more difficult to pursue, have abolished family reunion and permanent visa pathways, and have placed greater restrictions (including restricting access to work, social security and health) on former detainees settled in the community (Fozdar & Banki, 2017)—for a full list of differing rights, see Appendix 5. These policy changes are exclusionary and contribute to the creation of the Other. Despite the small number of maritime arrivals compared to other migrants, this group has served as a useful foil through which to promote nationalistic policies in the name of protecting the community of value;\textsuperscript{14} the targeting of boat arrivals in political speech is an example of ‘[the] national order of things’, ‘the “others” against whom the sovereign state reasserts itself’ (A. Hall, 2010, p. 882).

The increase in policy-driven barriers to permanency has resulted in a large number of temporary residents living in Australia in a state of precarity. ‘Precarity’ refers to those whose lives are marked by uncertainty and instability (Lewis et al., 2014; Waite, 2009). Brubaker reflects that long-term residency in a country should lead to belonging in the community; ‘[t]he longer the period of settlement without citizenship, and the more integrated such resident non-members are in the economic, social, and cultural life of the country of settlement, the more anomalous is their status, and the stronger is their case for full membership.’ (Brubaker, 2010, p. 72) Many temporary arrivals remain in Australia for extended periods and transition between different visa classes over time, often seeking permanent residency (PR) through what Mares (2018) and Wright, Clibborn, Piper and Cini (2016) call ‘multi-stage migration’. This refers to individuals’ movements between different visa categories in order to extend residency, and has been linked to ‘long-term temporariness’

\textsuperscript{13} To progress to permanency, holders must work or study in a regional area for at least 42 months. This period need not be continuous and can be completed over multiple SHEVs. However, to satisfy permanency transition requirements, an arrival must work either full- or part-time, and cannot undertake formal study.

\textsuperscript{14} The disproportionate representation of the number of refugee arrivals, including those arriving by boat, can be seen during the 2013 federal election campaign; Liberal candidate Fiona Scott, for example, blamed asylum seeker numbers for the pressure on Western Sydney’s roads and hospitals; ‘[Refugee arrivals is] a hot topic here … because our traffic is overcrowded…go and sit in the emergency department of Nepean Hospital or go and sit on the M4 [highway] and people see 50,000 people come in by boat’. Her comments were subsequently defended by Tony Abbott and Scott Morrison (Martinez i Coma & R. Smith, 2018, p. 277).
(Mares, 2016) as well as to uncertainty about the future. These ‘internal navigations between visa categories in a singular destination country … disrupt linear settler-citizen pathways’ (Roberts, 2019, p. 3) and may undermine an arrival’s connection to the community of value. This has flow-on effects for the community, as an increase in numbers of temporary residents results in unsettled populations, with a large and increasing population of non-citizens who may have limited moral, economic and social investment in Australian society.

3.4 Shaping population through settlement services and schooling

Belonging can be found in access to the community of value through the rituals of the neighbourhood. As explored above, the boundary of the community of value is defined in contrast to the Other and the failed citizen. However, it is the role of the state—and in the interest of the community—to utilise policy and practice to achieve cohesion and unity among the population present in that state. Just as the state implements re-integration practices for offenders (the failed citizen), it is responsible for helping the Other (as refugee, in this thesis) to access, form connections with and integrate into the community of value. In this way it seeks to shape the population as the Good Citizen.

This thesis focuses on young refugees (aged 18–25), their experiences of settlement and belonging, and how the state can influence the success of this, given that:

Young people from refugee backgrounds face enormous challenges in the settlement process within Australia. They must locate themselves within a new social, cultural, geographic and adult space, yet also try to find security within the spaces of their own families and ethnic communities. Traumas of the past can mix with painful experiences of the present. (Brough, Gorman, Ramirez & Westoby, 2003, p. 193)

The refugee experience can be one of displacement and the loss of connection to place (Robertson, Gifford, McMichael and Correa-Velez, 2016; Kaiser, 2008), accompanied by attendant experiences of broken social and family connections, and lost socio-cultural understandings. Refugee arrivals face unique and complex challenges on their migration journeys, forced to leave home—and the meanings attached to this place—to find safety in strange, foreign and unknown places (Correa- Velez, Gifford and Barnett, 2010; O’Keefe and Nipperess, 2021). This journey is often characterised by experiences of exclusion, uncertainty, exile and insecurity, experiences that are then exacerbated for those who experience detention as part of their journey (Austin, Silove and Steel, 2007).
Resettlement is a continuation of the refugee journey. However, the ability of refugee arrivals to connect with Australian society is impacted by structural, societal and political processes linked to the construction of insiders and outsiders within the community and ‘reflect[ing] a narrow concept of Australian-ness as white, masculine, Christian and English-language speaking’ (O’Keefe and Nipperess, 2021, pp. 100–101; and as discussed in 3.1). This imagining of the Good Australian is exclusionary and alienating for refugee arrivals and can have consequences for those refugee young people seeking to find belonging and a sense of home in a new place. Although there is no homogenous refugee experience (Matthews, 2008), young refugee arrivals are often imagined in deficit terms with emphasis placed on experiences of trauma, difficulty and associated complexity (Keddie, 2012b).

Nevertheless, literature on young people and belonging highlights their desire to experience belonging in spite of marginalisation and othering. Belonging in a modern context is conceptualised as malleable, with Marcu emphasising that ‘the world is constantly changing, and thus our sense of home and belonging is constantly readapting and readjusting to the new realities’ (2014, p. 327). Butler and Muir (2017, p. 320), too, emphasise the potential for young people ‘to remain connected to people, places and issues that matter to them as they carve out a place in which they belong in the modern economy’. Many with refugee backgrounds living in the community are able to adapt to a new setting and unfamiliar cultural frame, and bring with them diverse skills—including the ability to communicate in multiple languages. Moreover, young people with refugee backgrounds commonly demonstrate independence, resilience and maturity, and shoulder expectations and concerns of family, beyond those expected of or demonstrated by their peers (E. Miller, Ziaian & Esterman, 2018; Matthews, 2008).

This thesis views settlement services and schools as boundaring practices that facilitate belonging during refugees’ periods of adjustment following arrival and going forward until they feel adjusted and established in Australia. In order to develop belonging, state action in facilitating successful settlement and schooling is central, as the latter ‘are two sites from which to understand the multifarious practices through which refugees are inculcated into citizenship’ (Sidhu & Taylor, 2009, p. 656), and so become the Good Australian.

3.4.1 Services for settlement and belonging

The federal government defines settlement as ‘the period of adjustment that occurs following a migrant or refugee’s arrival in a new country, as they become established as independent in their new
society’ (DIAC, 2008). As such, settlement is comprised of ‘somewhere to live, money to live on, information and orientation on services including schools, transport and health services … access to employment and education, the development or enhancement of English language skills, [and] the formation of individual and family social networks’ (DIAC, 2008). All refugees and humanitarian entrants are considered by the system to be ‘settled’ once they are independent of Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP), regardless of whether they are emotionally or socially adjusted and established in their new society (Wilmsen, 2013, p. 246). The HSP provides settlement support to newly arrived refugee and humanitarian entrants to become ‘self-reliant and active members of the Australian community’ (Refugee Council of Australia, 2019a).

Refugees and humanitarian entrants have access to settlement support over a six- to 18-month period through the HSP, with access to services differentiated according to the refugee’s time since arrival, visa status and perceived need. Those on permanent visas have access to employment assistance, English language tuition, family reunion, travel rights, social security, health care, accommodation and settlement assistance, as well as schooling for children. Arrivals with complex settlement needs can also receive additional support under the HSP’s Specialised and Intensive Services if they are unable to independently engage with services (Department of Home Affairs, 2021).

Refugees and humanitarian entrants holding temporary protection visas usually receive more limited support from the federal government (see Appendix 5). There are substantial barriers placed on their movement, as well as on their ability to prepare for and access the workforce. Those in community detention, for example, must live in government-allocated locations. Savitri Taylor (2018) provides an in-depth discussion of the support provided to these visa holders, the limitations placed upon them and potential consequences. In short, TPV and SHEV holders typically:

- Cannot travel overseas (and return) without Ministerial approval;
- Must live in government-allocated locations;
- Cannot receive financial support if they have sent money overseas;
- Can receive financial support when unemployed (89% of the NewStart Allowance). This support is conditional on actively seeking employment and proving financial hardship. On this allowance, they can complete study if it forms part of their ‘employment plan’ and is no longer than 12 months (limiting the kinds of job-readiness courses accessible);
- Can receive financial support while completing longer courses on a part-time basis, but the study will not count toward the 42-month residency requirement of the SHEV visa;
- May be eligible for supplementary payments, including rent assistance, child care benefit and parental leave;
- Must regularly renew their visas, which can jeopardise their employment status and impact ongoing employment; and
- Are not entitled to family re-unification.

The difference in support provided to permanent and long-term temporary refugees—although both are present in the community—can have implications for settlement and success in Australia.

Refugees in Australia can have their successful resettlement and integration impacted by, inter alia, trauma, displacement, limited family support and less developed social networks, English language difficulties, racism and discrimination, as well as culturally inappropriate mainstream services and/or programs (Sampson & Gifford, 2010; Baak et al., 2019; Hugo, 2011; Taylor & Sidhu, 2012).

Lacking is an overarching, clear policy framework for addressing the needs of those with refugee backgrounds, with access to services being dependent on visa allocations (Woods, 2009) and with policies and funding differing in each state (Matthews, 2008, p. 32). Young refugees in particular form a vulnerable group that requires support in settlement, and Fozdar and Hartley (2013, p. 32) argue that there is a need for a ‘holistic approach’ to promoting public awareness of settlement issues for these arrivals, ‘starting at the top of the political system and integrated into the education system generally’, in order to combat the ‘general negativity of media and political discourse’. That is, there is a need to facilitate belonging for young refugees through tailored and targeted service provision, such as through education (Christie & Sidhu, 2002).

In Australia, multicultural programmes tailored to young people include, inter alia, English as a Second Language (ESL), community languages, multicultural perspectives across the curriculum, anti-racism programs, intercultural understanding and community liaison (Noble & Watkins, 2014, p. 163). In recent years, support for refugee students in Australia has shifted focus from social justice, multiculturalism and English language toward a more holistic approach (Arnot & Pinson, 2005; Block et al., 2014) centred on the ‘principle of social inclusion through the recognition of difference’ (Pinson & Arnot, 2010, p.255).

3.4.2 Schooling as settlement

All young people living in Australia between the ages of 5 and 18 can attend free public schooling funded by a combination of the federal and state governments, although those on Bridging Visas or in community detention require special ministerial permission to do so. Prior to 1971, there had been
no tailored government response to the needs of school-aged arrivals from a non-English speaking background, with young people treated ‘in exactly the same way, as if they were all little Anglo-Saxons’ (Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs, 1980, p. 21). With the increase in non-European migration and a recognition of the needs of this population, the *Immigration (Education) Act 1971* (Cth) was introduced, taking responsibility for supporting the language and educational needs of new arrivals (Lo Bianco, 1997).

From 1978 onward, Commonwealth funding and catered teaching programs supported English as a Second Language (ESL) for young people in state and territory schools (Oliver, Rochecouste & Nguyen, 2017, pp. 12–13). Students can access learning support—including intensive English language and literacy assistance in specialist schools or programs with a modified curriculum—although this support is often limited for those living outside of metropolitan areas (Sidhu, Taylor & Christie, 2011). Young refugees receive this language and learning support for up to one-and-a-half years, depending on their age and readiness, before transitioning to a mainstream setting with more limited assistance (E. Miller et al., 2018, p. 340). Of relevance to this thesis, in NSW the first Intensive English Centre (IEC) was opened 1977, catering to high-school-aged new arrivals, followed by three more in 1978. There are now 14 IECs and one Intensive English High School in NSW, all catering for secondary students. These centres were established in response to the increase in immigration from non-English-speaking countries and the commencement of the Commonwealth Indo-Chinese Refugee program. IECs provide intensive language learning for students prior to their entry to mainstream high schools and also assist arrivals to develop social and cultural understandings and provide opportunities for participation and inclusion in the community.

Nevertheless, resettlement in new, unfamiliar places can be challenging and isolating, and the effects of forced migration see many young refugee arrivals requiring additional support in schooling to address their unique needs (Taylor & Sidhu, 2012). In particular, refugee young people often:

- have a history of disrupted education;\(^{15}\)
- present with low literacy;\(^{16}\)

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\(^{15}\) See, for example, Brown, J. Miller and Mitchell (2006); Correa-Velez et al. (2010); Correa-Velez, Gifford, McMichael and Sampson (2016); Francis and Cornfoot (2007); Keddie (2012); J. Miller, Mitchell and Brown (2005); and Naidoo (2015b).

\(^{16}\) See, for example, Gifford (2007); Naidoo (2015a); and Oliver, Haig and Grote (2009).
• take longer than others studying English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD) to build English language (Woods, 2009);
• have difficulty adapting to educational settings;\(^\text{17}\) and
• arrive with experiences of stress, trauma, violence or disengagement.

Young refugee arrivals face additional challenges to belonging, including a lack of support at school and at home and limited specialist refugee youth services for high and/or complex needs (Olliff and Couch, 2005). These challenges can make integration more difficult than for other young migrant arrivals, and can put them at risk of poor educational and employment outcomes (Cassity, 2007; Colic-Peisker, 2009; Pittaway, Muli, & Shteir, 2009; Fozdar & Banki, 2017).

Research shows that young refugee arrivals often arrive in their host countries and enter educational settings with high expectations and ambitions for success (Sidhu & Taylor, 2009). However, students placed in classes with an ill-matched level of academic challenge may feel that there is no way forward (Hattie & Yates, 2013), while experiences of interrupted education and the limitations in language and learning support often result in a disconnection between ambitions and realistic achievement (Watkins, Razee & Richters, 2012; J. Hammond & Miller, 2015); as Cassity and Gow (2005, p. 53) state, ‘The ambitiousness of refugees’ dreams may be indicative of their traumatic pasts and their perceptions of new opportunities in Australia. Unfortunately their dreams coexisted alongside a limited awareness of the difficulties involved in climbing the socio-economic ladder in Australia.’ Equally, comparing their progress and achievement with that of other students (Cassity & Gow, 2006), and experiencing problems ‘fitting in’ and building relationships, can give refugee young people ‘a sense of self as failure’ (Cassity, 2012, p. 63; Watkins, Noble & Wong, 2019, p. 18), which can have long-lasting impacts on wellbeing and success.

Additional challenges to educational success for some young refugee arrivals include the gap in educational provision for those who arrive in Australia after the age of 18, that being the upper age limit of state-funded education. These young people have had limited or no time in school and may find it difficult to fund tertiary education or training. Once young refugees age out of the school system, they are subject to full-fee-paying TAFE or university education, and/or rely on the differential support and scholarships provided by each state or territory to access subsidised education and training (TAFE, 2021). Older refugees are able to study under the Adult English Migrant Program (AMEP) for 510 hours of English tuition for free—although TPV- and SHEV-

\(^{17}\) See, for example, Alford (2014); Brown et al. (2006b); and Cassity and Gow (2005).
holders access the AMEP through a 2019 legislative instrument (Federal Register of Legislation, 2019) and have no additional entitlement to Commonwealth funded subsidies for study. These challenges to educational access can be compounded by refugee experiences of limited or disrupted education in their home or third countries.

Schools can represent key sites of transition and belonging, where young people living in Australia gain cultural knowledge. Through the explicit teaching of values and the promotion of a culture of inclusion, respect and reciprocity (Woods 2009; Block et al., 2014), schools can support and empower refugee students to accumulate cultural and social capital (Major, Wilkinson, Langat & Santoro, 2013). Schools and education systems throughout Australia can facilitate integration and participation (King & Owens, 2015), with the experience of schooling ‘a stabilising feature in the unsettled lives of refugee students’ (Matthews, 2008, p. 31). Matthews continues:

Education in general facilitates intellectual and personal development; correlates with income, occupation and community integration; and inducts young people from ethnic minority backgrounds into majority language, history and culture. Importantly, schools are responsible for developing literacy, a pre-requisite for educational success, social participation and settlement. (2008, p. 32)

Cassity and Gow claim that:

For recently arrived refugees, who seldom venture far outside their local area, their primary experiences of belonging in Australian society occur at their schools.’ Accordingly, ‘schools are endowed with the task of transforming these young people into national citizens and coordinating their cultural identities. Formal “nationalised” citizenship is promoted through activities, such as school assembly, as an identity that unites students across their differences. (2005, p. 52)

However, there is also the potential for schools to acts as sites that (re)produce ethnic difference and inequality. Refugee student experiences are shaped by the distribution of power within schools’ social, cultural and institutional structures (E. Miller et al., 2018). Recognition of power imbalances within the school (Due & Riggs, 2009), combined with the explicit teaching and prioritising of inclusivity among staff and students, can contribute to a welcoming atmosphere at school and contribute to the development of a sense of belonging among young people with a refugee background (Keddie, 2012a; Olagookun & White, 2017).
Conclusion

The remainder of this thesis explores the impacts that state action to imagine, create and shape the Good Citizen have on the lived experiences of young Middle Eastern refugees. It will do this through the examination of the bordering practices at work to facilitate or limit long-term entry to and residence in the state, the institutions and practices that shape new arrivals within the community (termed here ‘boundaring practices’), and the prevalence of myth-making.

Australia’s bordering practices have been progressively reshaped over the last 20 years to facilitate the entry of those perceived to be socially and economically advantageous to the nation. The hierarchy of desirability has been shaped by Australia’s historical connection to Britain and valuing of European culture and heritage. More recently, connections to and within the Asia Pacific have influenced a more multicultural approach to immigration. However, ‘the Australian nation is constituted through strategies of Othering, of sustaining an antagonistic binary between the national “us” and the foreign “them”’ (Hattam & Every, 2010, p. 413), and in the last two decades the refugee and the Muslim—particularly from the Middle East—have been constructed as outside of and in conflict with the community of value.

Simultaneously, policy-making and political speech have sought to keep those low on the hierarchy of desirability—the Other—from entering, remaining in and participating in the state. This has been achieved in part through policy-making that focuses on temporary rather than permanent migration quotas, assessment of the skills and values of arrivals, and restricting the movement or prospects of certain groups (such as arrivals by boat).

Despite this increasingly restrictive approach to migration, those perceived to be lowest on the hierarchy of desirability—Middle Eastern refugees—continue to make Australia their home. As such, their experiences of belonging are a valuable resource; the following chapters examines their interactions with the state and examine how the impact of myth-making shapes their sense of belonging in Australia.
Chapter 4
Theoretical framework, methodology and research design

Introduction

This chapter outlines the empirical approach in the exploration of attitudes of Middle Eastern refugee young people to the Australian state, and how interactions with the state—at the border, during settlement and in society—impact on their sense of belonging and becoming Australian. Moreover, it explores how the position of Middle Eastern arrivals on the hierarchy of desirability, and their individual interactions with the community of value, impact on their perceptions of themselves in relation to the Good Australian.

This chapter begins by introducing the theoretical framework that shapes this study, building on the literature introduced in previous chapters. The framework introduces bordering and boundaring practices as tools of governmentality that are used to shape the behaviour and actions of populations. After introducing the research questions, the chapter justifies the selection of refugee young people (aged 18 to 25) from the Middle East as the focus population in this investigation, and outlines the ethical considerations of such a study. The data collection process is then discussed, including the conducting of qualitative semi-structured and in-depth interviews, the analysis of questionnaire data, and the collection and evaluation of school-based data. A mixed-methods approach provides insights into how Middle Eastern refugee young people experience belonging in Australia.

This investigation acknowledges that, if institutions, policy makers and politicians seek to integrate new communities into the Australian social fabric, they need to understand and connect with the distinct challenges, ambitions and intentions of new groups. This can only be done by listening to and engaging with those peoples’ stories. Thus, the research gives voice to the experiences of Middle Eastern refugees living in Australia and undergoing the process of becoming Australian. Engagement with and critical reflection on the narratives, interpretations and experiences of othered groups is a key means of bridging the cultural divides that are
fracturing Australian society. It is vitally important that marginalised groups are given a voice in public discourse and debate, as well as in political spheres. This is particularly important for those whose voices have been progressively quietened by government policy-making and political speech. This silencing is fed into public perceptions of these groups and can have an impact on their treatment and inclusion in broader society.

The focus of refugee settlement in Australia and attendant research has traditionally been based in larger metropolitan locations (L. Smith et al, 2020). These spaces too are conceptualised and imagined in public discourses as more ethnically diverse, socially progressive and accepting of new arrivals when compared to rural and regional settings. However, as federal policy increasingly promotes the settlement of refugees in rural and regional areas, this thesis examines both metropolitan and regional contexts in order to assess the reality of belonging experienced by refugee young people in these different settings.

4.1 Theoretical framework

The theoretical model below describes and explains key factors influencing young Middle Eastern refugees’ experiences of belonging in Australia. It builds on the literature of the modern state and the methods the modern state uses to imagine, create and shape populations (vis-à-vis governmentality), and how this has historically applied in an Australian context. The model speaks to the ways in which state action—defined and divided into the mechanisms of bordering and boundaring—impacts on the lived experiences of young Middle Eastern refugees living in the state. This framework will guide the empirical investigation of the latter half of the thesis, investigating how the interactions Middle Eastern refugees have with these practices influence their sense of belonging in the state.

Governmentality is used as a frame within this thesis to explain the way the state imagines, creates and shapes a population of governable subjects to ‘do as they ought’—as Good Citizens. The reality of this state action on the lived experiences of young Middle Eastern refugees in Australia is explored going forward, through the examination of:

- myth-making, and the construction of the imagined Good Citizen and the Other;
bordering practices that facilitate or limit long-term entry to and residence in the state; and

- boundaring practices, a complementary term introduced in this thesis to describe the institutions and practices at work within the state to shape the behaviour and values of those in the community.

*Myth-making* refers to the construction of the Good Australian and the Other in the public imaginary, as perpetuated through political and public speech; the state shapes attitudes and directs the behaviours of its population through the creation and endurance of national myths and the sentiments that these evoke. The idea of the Good Australian makes a statement about who is included or excluded in society, and impacts on one’s sense and experience of belonging, while the construction and imagining of the Other can negatively impact on the sense of identity and belonging of some in Australia.

*Bordering practices* are used in political science and migration studies (and latterly, ‘border studies’) to describe a state’s action and exercise of power at its periphery (Diener & Hagen, 2012; Hafeda, 2016; Meier, 2013; Parker & Vaughan-Williams, 2009; Reeves, 2014). In short, the term describes the means by which states control the movement of people across borders (Vaughan-Williams, 2009, pp. 14–37). Scholars look beyond borders as ‘the physical and highly visible lines of separation between political, social and economic spaces’ (Newman, 2006, p. 144) to see ‘borders and bordering as processes, rather than things …[—]as much a verb as a noun.’ (Diener & Hagen, 2012, p. 59). Borders—and bordering practices—are now understood as formal and informal institutions of spatial and social practice, as well as physical and symbolic markers of difference’ (Diener & Hagen, 2009, p. 1198). For van Houtum and van Naerssen (2002, p. 126), bordering is ‘an ongoing strategic effort to make a difference in space among the movements of people, money or products’ whereby ‘territorial borders continuously fixate and regulate mobility of flows and thereby construct or reproduce places in space’.

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18 For a review of the evolution of border studies, including the variety of meanings applied to the notion of ‘border’, see Kolossov (2005).
Fassin (2011, p. 214), drawing on Weber and Durkheim, claims that ‘borders as external territorial frontiers and boundaries as internal social categorizations are tightly related in a process in which immigrants are racialized and ethnic minorities are reminded of their foreign origin’. Thus, borders are those limits that delineate legal subjects (such as citizens) and political entities, while boundaries demarcate symbolic differences such as those between class, gender or race, as well as producing identities, be they national, ethnic or cultural (Fassin, 2011). In this thesis, bordering practices and their impacts are examined in terms of the legal relationship between the individual and the state—that is, the extent to which one can have access to the state (the granting or withholding of a visa) and can access full participation (the availability of pathways to citizenship).

Bordering practices describe the impact of state action at the border on the ‘conduct, thoughts, decisions and aspirations’ (P. Miller & Rose, 2008, p. 32) of the individual. This mechanism focuses particularly on the allocation of visa categories to refugees and the consequences this action has for the speed, ease and extent to which the arrival can access and participate in society. Middle Eastern refugees’ ability to progress to long-term and permanent residency is also explored for its impact on the state’s control of access to, and refugee participation in, the state.

*Boundaring practices* are introduced in this theoretical framework as a complement to the established concept of bordering. They describe the action of the state on subjects within its borders, with a focus on the use of institutions and policies intended to shape the population as governable subjects or Good Citizens. For new arrivals, boundaring practices can include support upon settlement (such as in health and housing); access to language learning (through provision of education); and social connections (including pathways for participation and representation within society).

While bordering practices are predicated on the legal relationship between the individual and the state, boundaring practices seek to foster a cultural and social contract between the state and the individual (Fassin, 2011, p. 214). These practices are the invisible tools of governmentality: the institutions, tactics, policies and practices working together within the state, the ‘social and cultural intermediaries[,] and the institutions (schools, social work, the medical establishment)
that authorize their expertise’ to shape or *bound* the actions of those within society (Ouellette & Hay, 2008, p. 473). Boundaring, in this sense, has a core set of attributes that help define identity and belonging but can also create boundaries of inclusion and exclusion.

Boundaring practices include institutions that act as enculturating and socialising forces to shape an individual’s connection to social systems, to other residents, and to the nation; they influence the cohesion, cooperation and tolerance of all those within the state, including the acculturation of new arrivals (Guo-Brennan & Guo-Brennan, 2019; Schinkel & Van Houdt, 2010). Boundaring practices are in part mechanisms of power intended to gain ideological compliance of an audience through appeals to conscience and cultural expectations. That is, they seek to promote and espouse the notion of the Good Citizen and so craft citizens ‘who do not need to be governed by others, but will govern themselves, master themselves, care for themselves’ (Rose, 1996, p. 45) in order to belong. To do this they utilise policies such as integration, assimilation, multiculturalism and segregation to propagate an individual’s connection to social systems (such as sports teams, religious communities, peer groups) and, more relevantly, to the nation. They can function to deal with differences between mainstream identities and Others.

As demonstrated in Figure 1, the new arrival is yet to attain legal or cultural connection to the state and is thus categorised as having both categories of non-belonging. Ideally, all new arrivals who remain long term in the state progress to high legal and cultural belonging, becoming the idealised Good Citizen. However, if this is not achieved, these individuals are present in the state with limited connection to its legal or cultural dimensions.
Guided by state policies and practices within the border that are intended to ‘cultivate civic virtue among its citizens’, cultural belonging can be conceptualised as obeying laws, participating in civil society, and adhering to cultural expectations and norms (Farquharson & Marjoribanks, 2003, p. 45; Soutphommasane, 2012, p. 165). Individuals who have established cultural links to a society but who lack all the legal rights of citizenship are not able to function and participate completely in society. They are not able to participate politically—either through voting or employment—but are expected nevertheless to abide by the laws of the government. Thus, those with cultural but without legal belonging must behave as citizens but do not hold all citizenship’s rights and privileges; the individual is formally ‘othered’ in a context where s/he might otherwise be indistinguishable from a legal citizen.

Similarly, individuals who hold legal citizenship rights, for example, can still be excluded from full legal and cultural belonging if they feel socially and culturally marginalised. That is, an
absence of cultural belonging ‘weakens the social bond and questions the strength of citizenship as an integrating force in contemporary society’ (Castles & Davidson, 2000, p. 127). At the same time, those who have attained a level of legal and cultural belonging can be said to be progressing toward becoming the Good Australian.

The mechanisms of bordering and boundaring are used to explore how young refugee background arrivals experience belonging. This is done through the collection of quantitative survey data with refugee participants as well as in-depth interviews with young people and service providers, including educators and settlement service officers. This mixed-methods approach is informed and shaped by three research questions derived from the theoretical framework. These questions are exploratory in nature, seeking to gain insights into how the actions of the state—through bordering and boundaring—facilitate or hinder belonging.

### 4.1.1 Research questions

Drawing on the conceptual framework, the following research questions are the focus of the empirical investigation:

1. How does myth-making about the Other and the Good Citizen reflect and/or impact on the lived experiences of young Middle Eastern refugees?

2. In what ways do bordering practices influence refugee young people’s access to the state and belonging?

3. To what extent can boundaring practices facilitate belonging for young Middle Eastern refugees?

The first question seeks to understand the impact that myths and myth-making about the Good Citizen and the Other have on the refugee young person in the community. It will contrast the imagining of the refugee and the Middle Eastern arrival in political speech and public discourse with the lived experiences of participants, drawing conclusions about the compatibility of refugee young people with the Australian community of value.
The second question asks what impact bordering practices—with a focus on the allocation of visas and citizenship—have on the speed, ease and extent to which young Middle Eastern refugees can access the state. It will explore the impact that the granting of permanent visas and, ultimately, citizenship has on participants’ legal as well as cultural belonging.

The third question focuses on boundaring practices as the institutions, tactics, policies and practices that work to form a cultural connection between the state and the individual; they are intended to bind governable subjects to the community of value. It asks the extent to which the policies and practices of settlement services and schools bind the behaviour of participants to the community of the nation and contribute to their belonging. It interrogates the impact of legal belonging and community connections (such as family links) on participants’ access to these institutions, and on the effectiveness of boundaring practices in addressing the needs of refugee young people.

The remainder of this thesis examines how young Middle Eastern refugees experience the factors of myth-making, bordering practices and boundaring practices and how these impact on their legal and cultural belonging. It gives voice to these young people’s narratives—their retelling and reimagining of their migration journeys, settlement in Australia and interactions with the state and the public at the border and within Australia. The strength of a narrative approach is that it reveals the ‘stories that people tell themselves and others about who they are, and who they are not, as well as who and how they would like to/should be’ (Yuval-Davis, 2010, p. 266)—it allows for reflection on refugees’ identities and experiences.

4.2 Context of study

4.2.1 Justification of population

As discussed in Section 3.2, there is a long history of migration from the Middle East, but in the last 20 years the number of refugees from the region being settled in Australia has increased; in 2018–2019 and 2017–2018 respectively, 54.6% and 55.9% of offshore grants were granted to refugees from the Middle Eastern region (Department of Home Affairs, 2018a; 2019a). At the same time, there has been a conflation of the identities and—more relevantly—imaginaries of this group and a questioning of their compatibility with the community of value. Middle Eastern
arrivals have variously been recast in public discourse and political speech as the terrorist, the queue jumper, the illegal and the boat person; this group has been othered in Australian myth-making as culturally incompatible with Australia’s Judeo-Christian heritage and as a potential source of terrorism and social unrest.

This empirical study seeks to give voice to these othered groups who are present in the community but continually contrasted to the ideal of the Good Australian. It presents their reflections on interactions with and in the state, and explores how these impact on settlement and belonging. The study surveys structural aspects of belonging—the actions of state and its institutions at and within the border—and the influence on individual refugees’ senses of legal and cultural belonging within society. While earlier research has sought to identify the connections between belonging and structural integration outcomes, or ‘success factors’, such as labour market participation, income, qualifications and health outcomes (McMillan, 2017, pp. 106–110), this thesis asks the refugee to designate their own success factors, reflecting on their experiences and describing how successfully they have become a part of the Australian community of value. The in-depth interview data collected for the thesis seeks to give room for the ‘subaltern’ to speak (Spivak 2003); that is, it provides young Middle Eastern refugees with the opportunity to reflect on their individual migration and settlement journeys and draw conclusions about the impact of state policy and practices, and public imaginaries, on their experiences of belonging.

This investigation focuses on young people who were aged between 18 and 25 at the time of interview and who had settled in Australia at or after the age of 15. This age group will have a long future living in and contributing to their new society, but faces the dual challenge of having potentially had interrupted education in their home countries while having limited access to free public education, due to their age, in the new country.19 Young people who arrive in Australia toward the end of the age of compulsory schooling only have a limited period within which to learn English language and develop the skills needed to succeed at school. This cohort often has limited access to free public education due to their age, yet many still express the desire to access

19 Australian public schools generally cater to students between the ages of 6 and 18. Those students over 18 will generally be directed to TAFE (or in some instances a senior college), and this may attract a fee.
further education. The focus on refugee-background young people is derived from evidence that this group of arrivals to Australia have unique learning and socio-emotional needs that, if not addressed, may hinder participation and belonging in society. To demonstrate this need, the researcher collected 5 years’ worth of student data from one Intensive English Centre (IEC). This quantitative data was analysed to demonstrate the challenges faced by young refugee arrivals and to complement the qualitative data collected from participants.

Research shows that, the ‘older the young person [was] on arrival in Australia, the less likely they were to complete secondary school’ (Correa-Velez et al., 2016, p. 15). There is a gap in research for this age group, with many studies focusing on refugee children (particularly those who are primary-school-aged) and ‘adults’ (see Mahoney & Siyambalapitiya, 2017), without recognising the unique needs and voices of those in the transition from childhood to adulthood.

Moreover, until recently, much of the scholarship on the resettlement and integration of refugees in Australia had been focused on migrants of African (particularly Sub-Saharan) origin. Since 2005, urban-based African populations have been the focus of studies examining refugee settlement, alienation and education (Brown, J. Miller & Mitchell, 2006; Cassity, 2007; Cassity & Gow, 2005; Cranitch, 2010; J. Miller, Mitchell & Brown, 2005; Naidoo, 2012). These studies emerged within the context of a perception of large numbers of humanitarian entrants from the African continent, and public disquiet about social cohesion and integration (Spinks, 2009). As the demography of refugee arrivals shifts, so, too, must research emphasis. Moreover, research reports describing community-based interventions for refugees and asylum seekers (boundaring practices) in Australia have similarly targeted primarily African cohorts (see, for example, Hallahan & Irizarry, 2008; N. Harris, Rowe-Minniss & Somerset, 2014; V. Harris & Marlowe, 2011; Killedar & Harris, 2017; Naidoo, 2013).

As a note on terminology, the general term ‘refugee participants’ is used in the following chapters to discuss all young participants, regardless of their visa category. The terminology ‘refugee’ is widely accepted to apply to ‘any person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his/her nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself/herself of the protection of that country’ (UNHCR,
1951/1967), while an asylum seeker is ‘a person who has sought protection as a refugee, but whose claim for refugee status has not yet been assessed’ (Refugee Council of Australia, 2019b, p. 2). Thus, ‘refugee participant’ is used as a collective term for those seeking and those who have been granted protection; this is justified because: firstly, the investigation gives voice to those who identify themselves as having refugee experiences and who have sought protection from the Australian state on this basis; secondly, the experiences of asylum seekers cannot always be separated from those of resettled refugees (Neumann, Gifford, Lems & Scherr, 2014, p. 13), and this is acknowledged by the Australian state in the granting of Safe Haven Enterprise Visas (SHEV) to maritime arrivals; and, thirdly, this investigation looks at how perception and labelling impacts on belonging and how the actions of the state impact on individuals. Although the blanket label of refugee is used in this thesis, it also treats each participant as an individual, contextualised by critical factors such as nationality of origin, age and visa status. Each participant is given a unique pseudonym, with their nationality, age, gender and visa status specified in Appendix 1.

4.2.2 Location of the researcher

This enquiry was prompted by an acknowledgement and awareness that groups can be silenced by both state action and their own desires to be accepted and to belong. This understanding emerged over the course of my teaching career, working with newly arrived high-school-aged migrants and refugees. Primarily, I worked with these young people during their first years of settlement, in the early stages of their English language acquisition. This was in the context of an IEC where students were prepared socially, linguistically and emotionally to enter mainstream high school.

In this context, I gained a unique insight into how new arrivals to Australia can develop an understanding of their place in their new society. For many, the development of English language skills comes hand-in-hand with a growing awareness of their otherness, and this results in confusion and uncertainty about their ability to belong and succeed in their new countries over the long term. Many turn to their classroom teachers to clarify social discourse and its applicability to themselves. Teachers in NSW IECs are commonly the first sustained interaction and personal relationships that young migrants and refugees have within the Australian
community upon arrival. As a result, the school communities are very close-knit, and strong bonds and support networks exist between students, alumni, staff and former staff.

Over a short space of time, many students develop and demonstrate an awareness of social mores and accepted behaviours of Good Australians. These include ways of dressing and speaking, significant sports and teams to be interested in, accepted social activities, as well as ways of conceptualising their own belonging in relation to the wider community. That is, young people show a deep awareness of how their personal identities correlate or conflict with societal messages about belonging. As a teacher in 2013, for example, I discussed the migration journeys of two 14-year-old refugee students from Iran while on a school excursion. The casual conversation focused my interest on the challenges faced by the Middle Eastern arrivals and the repercussions of myth-making about refugees and asylum seekers, or the Other, on refugee belonging. The substance of this conversation is recalled here, as it motivated this inquiry into refugee young people’s experience of belonging.

Teacher: How did you come to Australia?
Student 1: I came by boat, Miss. A boat from Indonesia to Christmas Island.
Teacher: What was that like?
Student 1: So many people, Miss. And there are big waves, it was really scary…
Student 2: (interrupting) Don’t tell her that, man! Don’t say you come in a boat.
Teacher: Why not? Why can’t he say that?
Student 2: We shouldn’t tell people. People don’t like us when we come in a boat.

This recollected conversation speaks to many of the issues central to this thesis: the position of refugees and asylum seekers in the public imaginary; challenges of being misinterpellated or rejected in Australia; the existence of (negative) myths about those arriving through irregular channels; and the legal challenges and precarity faced by those without permanent visas.

This investigation was designed to build on my observations as a classroom teacher, seeking to (re)connect with refugee young people some years after arrival, to learn how their perceptions of belonging and otherness had shifted or developed after extended interactions with the state through school and settlement.
4.3 Ethics

Before commencing fieldwork in 2018, I sought and was granted Ethics approval by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the Australian National University. An important ethical consideration beyond the procedures for collecting data was acknowledging that the cohort under study is highly vulnerable and marginalised, and many have experienced significant distressing events as they have made their way to Australia. In addressing the concerns of the Ethics Committee, I sought to manage the risks to participants and to ensure appropriate protections in terms of counselling support, confidentiality, data storage and language divide.

Firstly, as the interviews were conducted in NSW, I provided participants with information about the services provided by the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS). Participants were provided with the contact details for this specialist non-profit organisation, which provides free, confidential and culturally appropriate psychological treatment to refugees, asylum seekers and those with refugee-like backgrounds in NSW.

Secondly, I sought to ensure that individual participants would not be identifiable in the final thesis or later publications. All information provided by individual participants is confidential, and no information will be disclosed that reveals participants’ identities. All participants are de-identified; all names have been coded, with respondents given pseudonyms to highlight individual narratives without compromising anonymity. Identifying information such as schools attended has also been de-identified. I emphasised to participants at the time of interview that they may withdraw from interview proceedings and participation at any time and that their consent was paramount.

Thirdly, the data collected in pre-interview questionnaires and in interviews as recordings and transcripts are stored on a secure server under password protection. After a period of 5 years from the time of all publications arising from the research, the data will be archived in a de-identified format on the Australian Data Archive and will be accessible only to the researcher.

Finally, I considered and sought to address issues around language barriers. Consent documentation was provided in Arabic and English and was verbally discussed in English to
ensure understanding and to emphasise the importance of participant consent. The pre-interview questionnaire included explanations of questions in simplified English to account for low English literacy. The pre-interview questionnaire also provided the opportunity for participants to request a translator for the interviews. No participants required translation services; this was partly due to a bias in sampling, as the majority were contacted via their connections to IECs and TAFE English programs. At the time of interview, many participants had completed intensive English courses during settlement, and in most cases had continued to learn and use English in educational institutions or the workplace.

In August 2019, additional approval was granted to interview service providers. This change was made because service providers speak from a different context about circumstances and challenges that refugee young people face in settlement. Moreover, this group also have in-depth knowledge of the challenges faced by asylum- and temporary visa holders in settlement; given the low number of participants from this cohort, these insights could be informative. Different ethical issues were considered when interviewing providers. In order to allow providers to speak candidly about their experiences, all were de-identified and given gender-ambiguous pseudonyms to conceal their identities; gender-ambiguous names were used in acknowledgement of gender imbalances in some service roles that could make some providers more identifiable than others. Services were also de-identified and given pseudonyms.

### 4.4 Data collection

This thesis utilises a mixed-methods approach to explore the subjective experiences of migrants. It uses existing theories as the background context through which to compare and contrast the experiences of Middle Eastern migrants with studies elsewhere to derive and explore theory. The factors influencing belonging (as discussed in Section 4.1) were derived from the theoretical literature discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. Abductive methods were then applied—with qualitative methods used as evidence—to build on the current literature. According to cultural sociologists, qualitative interviews and textual analysis provide the best methods to investigate human action and lived experience (Alexander & P. Smith, 1993), as survey research alone does not reflect the context and complexity of social life.
4.4.1 Targeted population

The focus of this study is young Middle Eastern refugees based in NSW, Australia. Participants in this study included:

1. refugees living in metropolitan NSW; and
2. refugees living in regional NSW.

Potential metropolitan participants were living in Sydney; potential regional participants were living in the Riverina area centred on Wagga Wagga. The selection of both a metropolitan and a regional centre, both in NSW, allowed for comparative study whilst minimising state-based policy differences (given the differences in policy settings and services offered to refugee populations in different Australian states).

Across Australia, refugee settlement has historically centred on metropolitan areas, such as South Western and Western Sydney. There are well-established settlement and educational services available in these areas. Refugee participants and service providers from these areas were interviewed to provide some insight into the success of boundaring practices on refugee belonging.

To complement metropolitan settlement, in recent years the federal government has sought to settle refugees regionally in small and medium-sized towns (Scheck, 2014, p. 602). The Australian government focus on regional settlement is justified by research that points to:

- faster integration of arrivals due to settlement in culturally diverse and less-populated areas;
- economic, social and cultural contributions of refugees and humanitarian migrants (Refugee Council of Australia, 2010); and

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20 As a note of clarification, in Australia regional areas are outside major cities (cities with populations over 100,000), but are distinct from ‘rural’ areas (which have a connection to and/or dependence on agriculture).
• revitalising towns and regions suffering from population decline and labour shortages, including in unskilled and semi-skilled roles in rural industries (Broadbent, Cacciattolo & Carpenter, 2007; Stilwell, 2003; Birrell & Rapson, 2002).

Wagga Wagga (or ‘Wagga’) is an important agricultural, military and transport hub, and the largest inland city in NSW. Wagga has seen a significant increase in new refugee arrivals in recent years—particularly those of school age (Watkins, Noble & Wong, 2019, pp. 14–18). This increase results from federal government policies prioritising rural and regional settlement, including visa conditions that require new arrivals to live rurally as part of CSP and SHEV; in such cases, ‘the destination is chosen by a government agency (usually by the Department of Social Services) after analysis of the capacity of the location to meet entrants’ needs, and usually after consultation with the three levels of government’ (Piper, 2017, p. 5).

Understanding refugee experiences of belonging in regional areas is important, given the recent focus in policy-making on regional resettlement. A comparative study of the settlement, educational resources and services available to refugee young people in regional areas with those in the more established metropolitan settings is also an important justification for this study.

The study aimed at collecting refugee participant data that varied across religion, ethnicity and age. To be eligible for participation in Groups 1 or 2, individuals needed to have left a Middle Eastern country as a refugee or asylum seeker, be aged between 18 and 25 years at the time of interview, and have settled in Australia at or after the age of 15.21

In addition to the refugee participants, this study also included:

3. interviews with service providers working in metropolitan or regional NSW who work closely with refugee young people; and

4. five years of demographic and educational data from an IEC.

21 One participant lived in Australian detention centres for 18 months from the age of 13 but was not settled in community detention until the age of 15.
Group 3 was comprised of those who work closely with refugee young people in the fields of education and settlement. The views of service providers are of relevance to this thesis due to the different understandings, interpretations and enactments of policy that occur in practice in the process of settlement and in schools, and an appreciation of the impacts that such differences have on refugee young people (E. Miller et al., 2018, p. 341).

The experience of participants is also complemented by a comparison of refugee and migrant student data from an IEC over a 5-year period (Group 4). The 5 years of data from ‘Inglewood’ IEC speaks to the unique educational and linguistic challenges faced by refugee students compared to migrant arrivals of the same age.

4.4.2 Sampling procedures

Convenience and snowball sampling were used in this study.

Group 1

Participants in metropolitan Sydney were recruited through the researcher’s professional connection to IECs; in NSW, all recently arrived migrants and refugees of high school age (excepting those few with strong English language skills) are first enrolled in IECs. Intensive English Centre cohorts represent a controlled yet diversified population with a strong alumni community. Intensive English Centre Facebook pages provided a means of contacting individuals, many of whom maintain connections to their IEC community. This means of recruiting participants explains the significantly lower mean age of participants in Group 1 (19.2 years old) compared to Group 2 (22.4 years old), as those contacted through alumni groups were usually recent graduates or in their final years of high school at time of interview.

Group 2

Participants in Wagga were accessed in the community via well-located contacts working in organisations that provide parallel services to refugees. These organisations include TAFE and Adult Multicultural Education Services, Multicultural Offices and Migrant Resource Centres. An information flyer was displayed and distributed to potential participants. Individuals who were
interested in participating contacted the researcher directly. Snowball sampling also assisted in the recruitment of refugee young people in Wagga.

**Group 3**

The participants were recruited through a combination of professional connections and cold emails. The professionals who work closely with young people from refugee backgrounds worked in the fields of education and settlement. The contributions of these experts provided an additional layer of interpretation and discussion of refugee interactions with the state.

**Group 4**

Five years of de-identified enrolment and educational data was collected from Inglewood IEC with permission from the executive staff. The researcher collated the English level upon arrival and upon departure of the 76 refugee students and 978 migrant students who attended the IEC between 2015 and 2019. The mean differences in English ability and improvement between migrant and refugee students (as measured against the ESL Scales\(^\text{22}\)), as well as length of stay in the IEC gave insights into the educational barriers faced by school-aged refugees.

### 4.4.3 Demographic characteristics

In total, 33 in-depth interviews were conducted with recent arrivals; 19 with refugee young people in metropolitan Sydney, and 14 with young people in the Riverina region. An additional 12 participants completed the online survey component only (as such, some data for these participants is missing). A total sample of 45 was collected, with participants from four countries representing five self-defined ethnicities and three first-language backgrounds. The total number is appropriate given that: ‘[I]n interpretive studies the sample size is small and it is the information richness of the cases that is important’ (Marlow & Boone, 2005, p. 150). Tables 4 through 14 provide descriptive statistics for reported citizenship(s), racial/ethnic identity, gender identity, age, faith belief, length of stay, and mode of arrival to Australia.

---

\(^{22}\) ESL Scales (2006) is an assessment tool used by teachers to assess the English language development of EAL/D learners in the skills of oral interaction, reading, and responding and writing. It is a tool of assessment, planning, programming and reporting.
Table 4: Age at interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age at interview</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>12</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>57.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>45</td>
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</table>

Table 6: Home country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home Country</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>48.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7: Self-described identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-described identity</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ahwazi</td>
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<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazara</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraqi</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syrian</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yazidi</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>39.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: First language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First language</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazara</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kermangi</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>39.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: Religious faith

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious faith</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>57.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yazidi</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>39.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10: Third country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Third country</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detention</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Missing       | 12        |

Table 11: Years in third country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years in third country</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3–4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5–6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7–8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9+</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Missing       | 12        |
Table 12: Years since arrival in Australia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years since arrival in Australia</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13: Mode of arrival

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of arrival</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boat</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plane</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>93.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14: Australian visa category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Australian visa category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citizen</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Resident</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>87.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHEV</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridging</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, participants in Groups 1 and 2 are listed by pseudonym in Appendix 1, detailing their pseudonym, age, gender, visa status and self-identified nationality, as an aid to understanding responses.
Group 3 consisted of 16 participants; 12 worked closely with refugees in schools or other education contexts, and four assisted refugee young people and their families with settlement. These participants are listed in Appendix 1, detailing their gender-neutral pseudonym, employer pseudonym and role. The locations of these participants were indicated through their employer pseudonyms; those schools and centres ending in ‘wood’ (e.g. Birchwood High) represent metropolitan sites, while those ending in ‘field’ (such as Brookfield TAFE) represent regional sites. Of the 16 participants in Group 3, 11 participants are based in metropolitan Sydney and the remaining five are based in the Riverina region. Each participant completed one semi-structured interview ranging from 1 to 2 hours in duration. Group 3 participants were vital to this study, as they provided a range of institutional, professional and practical perspectives on the challenges faced by young refugee arrivals to Australia. Their inclusion in the study was intended to enrich and support the refugee participants’ narratives, rather than speak for them.

Group 4 presented those enrolled in an IEC over a 5-year period. Between 2015 and 2019, 6.9% of the high-school-aged population of Inglewood IEC\(^23\) were from a refugee background, and had arrived from five countries, including 60 students from Syria and six from Iraq. An additional 6% of the population were from refugee-like backgrounds—although they had arrived on non-refugee visas, these young people may have had traumatic experiences and disruptions to their lives, both in their home countries and on their journeys to Australia.

4.4.4 Instruments

The questionnaire

This researcher collected empirical data initially through an online questionnaire completed by participants. In addition to the 33 participants, an additional 12 Middle Eastern young people completed the online form but did not ultimately participate in interviews. The questionnaire was distributed electronically and was in English, with simple explanations of questions and/or definitions of key terms provided. The questionnaire was comprised of five modules and

\(^{23}\) All IEC and schools in this thesis are de-identified and given pseudonyms, with the fictitious names indicating if they are metropolitan (ending in ‘wood’) or regional (ending in ‘field’) sites.
The first four sections involved classification questions; according to Hague (1993), it is important to collect responses to these questions so to classify the information gathered, validate the sample and make comparisons between and within the population. The two sections asked questions related to participants’ country of birth, nationality, gender and date of birth. The second section sought information about participants’ educational history, first language (L1) literacy and fluency, and skills in additional languages (other than English). English language learning prior to arrival was measured, as was competency in English (L2) at two points in participants’ migration history—upon arrival and at the time of the questionnaire. In this case, a 7-point Likert scale allowed participants to self-assess their language abilities, allowing for greater diversity in response. This scale was subsequently reduced to a 5-point scale in analysis to allow for cross-comparisons. The third section examined the scope and scale of participants’ migration journeys as a function of time, place and personnel. The fourth section looked at refugee settlement factors such as family, location and language usage. It asked about social activities in the context of community involvement given that positive integration of refugees requires social and community inclusion interventions and support networks of family and friends.

This section was made up of 27 descriptive statements, and invited participants to agree or disagree with each statement according to a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The Likert scale was used to uncover respondents’ attitudes, beliefs and thoughts on particular issues linked to their migration journeys and to their experiences in Australia (Cooper & Schindler, 2006; Zikmund, 2003). In developing the descriptive statements for the questionnaire, a deductive approach was used; this approach assumes that the background theoretical literature provides sufficient information to form the basis for the questions. Questionnaire items were based primarily on the literature review, which allowed for the identification of the main factors that were likely to influence access to, participation in and belonging to the state. It was not expected that these domains would necessarily emerge as distinct factors in the data analysis. In order to assure content validity, items were then refined according to the researchers’ domain knowledge gained from extensive experience of the sector.
This section was intended to give context as to how refugee arrivals experience acts of the state and interactions with the community. The questions were about Australian society and sought to reveal participants’ attitudes to Australia in six focus areas—community, belonging, language, media, school and culture. Questions were framed in both positive and negative terms so as to account for bias or suggestion; for example, participants would be asked to respond to the statement, ‘Most of the time, I feel part of Australian society’, as well as the statement, ‘Most of the time, I feel excluded because of my cultural background’ (the meaning of excluded would be defined to minimise misunderstandings). The order of questions in Section 5 was randomized in order to address bias, and a summary of substantive questions including the Likert item questions can be seen in Appendix 2.

The pre-interview questionnaire provided participants with the opportunity to reflect on their migration, education and integration experience prior to interview, and allowed the researcher to prepare appropriate interview questions. Participants’ responses were used as the basis for discussion, elaboration and justification in the semi-structured interviews of 60- to 90-minute duration.

*Interviews*

Data gathering in Sydney occurred over 18 months between April 2018 and September 2019 (Group 1), while data collection in Wagga occurred between May and July 2019 (Group 2) (see Appendix 1). Interviews with Group 1 and 2 were conducted in locations convenient to participants, including local IECs, multicultural centres, libraries and coffee shops. Participants were given a $30 department store card as thanks for their participation. Each interview took between 1 and 2 hours.

Procedures for each interview were given in writing and clearly explained to participants prior to the interview. Participants were asked for permission to make audio-recordings of interviews, which were kept confidential. Interviews were conducted in person and transcribed by the researcher. The two-stage process (survey and interview) provided the researcher with the opportunity to monitor participants’ willingness to participate, and gave participants the opportunity to voice any concerns they had about the process, the focus or the direction of research.
The shape and direction of interviews was informed by the data collected in the pre-interview questionnaire. As a general guide, the interview asked participants to do the following:

- narrate their migration journeys;
- reflect on their interactions with the state at and within the border;
- respond to significant instances of othering by political actors; and
- relate their sense of belonging or inclusion within the Australian state.

Although focused, the interviews were open-ended and exploratory in nature. It was important to give value and structure to the interviews without undermining or devaluing participant experiences through a heavy reliance on theoretical frames or structured interviewing approaches. In the interviews, direct questions about the participants’ family backgrounds and their forced migration experiences in their home country were avoided in order to minimise the risk of evoking traumatic experiences (Pittaway, Bartolomei & Hugman, 2010). Instead, participants were empowered to shape the direction and specificity of their migration narrative.

At the conclusion of the interviews, participants were asked to respond to prompts referring to political speech acts relating to identity, Islam and/or Middle Eastern refugees. The prompts (Appendix 3 and discussed in 3.2) included composite images of Pauline Hanson removing a burqa on the floor of Senate in 2017, Fraser Anning being egged following his comments on the Christchurch attacks in 2019, and screenshots of politicians’ tweets defending their initial support of Hanson’s ‘It’s OK to be White’ motion in 2018. The prompts sought to gain an understanding of the extent to which political speech impacts on, and such impacts are felt by, Middle Eastern refugees.

As English was not the first language of the participants, the interviewer verbally summarised and reframed participants’ responses during the interview to confirm and clarify meaning and understanding. As there was only one researcher as interviewer, consistency in nature of questions asked and areas addressed was maintained. All the interviews were transcribed by the researcher, with names, employment, educational and location details de-identified. All names used in the results are pseudonyms.
4.5 **Analytic strategy and data analysis**

Data analysis began early in data collection of the qualitative interviews, with preliminary analysis of Group 1 guiding the later interviews. This two-stage interview process allowed the interviewer to revisit each step as the data collection and analytic process progressed. In the interview process, participants reflected on experiences in their own words. Then, analytic processes of transcription and coding allowed the researcher to detect the main narrative themes within these accounts in order to make sense of and understand their experiences.

The data were then analysed using an abductive approach (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014; Timmermans & Tavory, 2012), which combines elements of inductive and deductive strategies. The researcher begins by building a strong theoretical basis drawn from the literature. Then, a close analysis is conducted using grounded, interpretive methods (Tuckett & D. Stewart, 2004). This method was adopted to address a key challenge of qualitative research—imparting critical and theoretically rigorous analyses on the individual data, while still giving voice to the peculiarities of social life; ‘The risk is forcing the logic, the order and the plausibility that constitutes theory making on the uneven, sometimes random, nature of social life. Yet without theory we can be left with banal, unilluminating description…’ (Miles & Huberman, 1994, pp. 14–15). The abductive approach acknowledges the importance of grounded theory as well as giving voice to how people construct their subjective meanings (Charmaz, 2006). This approach has the dual benefit of situating the empirical data within contemporary theoretical assumptions while simultaneously facilitating meaning-making drawn from participants’ individual—yet shared—experiences of, and interactions with, the Australian state and its community of value.

The intention behind the abductive approach is to explore the extent to which stories people tell provide insights into their lived experiences and match up with policy assumptions about integration and belonging. It seeks to make meaning from unstructured and subjective experiences, and to situate these within ongoing intellectual discussions. The findings demonstrate how participants’ recollections of experiences reveal the ways each experience is shaped, transformed and understood.
4.6 Limitations of research

A considerable limitation in the recruitment of participants was the identity of the researcher. As a non-Islamic, non-Middle-Eastern woman, there was some difficulty in contacting and communicating with the community. These access challenges were in some ways mediated by my professional reputation as a teacher within IEC, as well as through professional connections with those working in settlement services and TAFE. Former students assisted in snowball sampling, bridging the gap between the researcher and other refugees. Once trust was established with a small number of participants, my identity as an outsider reinforced the relevance of the research in giving their narratives a voice outside their own communities.

An additional limitation was in the self-selection of participants (Jacobsen & Landau, 2003). This method may mean that participant results are not representative of the overall population of Middle Eastern refugees. Those who nominated themselves to participate had accessed education in English and had access to state services, through which they came into contact with the researcher. Those who may have been excluded from the sample include those who had limited access to state services (including asylum seekers and those on temporary visas), those who did not feel their language skills were sufficient to participate (despite the offer of translation services) and those who felt participation might jeopardise their migration status in Australia. As asylum seekers and refugees are acknowledged as a ‘hard to reach’ group (MacFarlane et al., 2009), the insights gained from interviews with young people about their experiences of belonging and their lived experiences in interacting with the state are invaluable.

The vulnerability and insecurity experienced by participants on temporary visas were important considerations during data collection and analysis. Fear of compromising their visa status meant that many young people living in Australia on temporary visas were less willing than permanent visa holders to be interviewed. Fear of being identified and discriminated against for participating in this study significantly influenced participant recruitment; of the 33 refugee-background interviewees, only two had spent time in detention and remained on temporary visas. A third had applied for protection onshore and at the time of interview was awaiting the decision on a temporary visa. In part due to the low numbers of participants on temporary visas, their
experiences have been complemented in this thesis by the experiences and observations of those service providers who work extensively with temporary visa holders and asylum seekers.

My position as an educator required me to reflect on how participants might view me and respond accordingly. Interviews with participants in Group 1 were often conducted at local IECs, as these sites were deemed to be familiar to the participants (as former students) and to the researcher. However, critical reflection revealed that this choice of site may have influenced the interactions between the researcher and participants, placing the former in a position of power by evoking my role as a teacher and authority figure. This in turn may have impacted on participants’ narratives. Accordingly, after the initial five interviews in Group 1, interviews were conducted in more neutral spaces such as coffee shops and local libraries.

Given the identity of the target group, participants had only been in Australia for a short period of time, and accordingly many had some English language limitations. Although participants self-selected as English speakers and were able to express themselves in English, the researcher acknowledges that some nuance in meaning and expression may have been lost. All participants were offered a translator service but declined, many expressing the wish to tell their experiences and narratives directly and in English. This did pose a challenge for the researcher in terms of clarifying the meaning of participant responses; accordingly, participants’ responses were often summarised and restated by the interviewer to confirm intention.

As grounded theory insists that preconceptions should not have a bearing on the data and that the researcher be aware of their personal constructed meanings, interpretations and potential bias (Charmaz, 2006), this research required me to reflect on my identity and understandings as a fourth generation Australian of Anglo-Irish heritage. My position as a member of the dominant Australian culture demanded that I take a reflexive and critical stance when conducting this research.

The researcher acknowledges the limited number of Middle Eastern countries represented: Iran; Iraq; Syria; and Afghanistan (as part of the Greater Middle East). The high proportion of Syrian (42%) and Yazidi (39%) participants in the data set reflects refugee flows since 2011. Additionally, the researcher acknowledges that the small sample size of 45 participants means
that findings are not generalisable. However, the in-depth and exploratory nature of the 33 qualitative interviews means that they provide a picture of Middle Eastern refugees’ experiences and give shape and voice to their narratives, while the quantitative findings give shape to the overall narrative. These are valuable contributions to current debates.

**Conclusion**

This chapter introduced and justified the theoretical framework of the thesis; the framework utilises Foucault’s concept of governmentality to explore the way the state imagines, creates and shapes its population through myth-making, bordering practices and boundaring practices. Using this framework, the thesis investigates young Middle Eastern refugees’ experience of belonging in Australia, drawing on their experiences through semi-structured interview and survey and supported by interviews with service providers.

After establishing the research questions, the chapter provided context for the study and justified the selection of young Middle Eastern refugees as the focus of study. Participants, aged between 18 and 25 and who arrived in Australia at or after 15 years of age, have a long future in Australia—by virtue of their age—but are often overlooked or conflated with other age groups in research. However, this group faces unique challenges such as experiencing interrupted education but being aged out of the state-provided education system, and balancing adult responsibilities from a young age.

After locating the researcher and providing an overview of ethical considerations, this chapter detailed the rationale for, and means and method of data collection. This included justifying the selection of a metropolitan and a regional site as comparative fields of study, given the shift towards the regional resettlement of refugees in federal politics and policy making. Participant selection using convenience and snowball sampling was justified, and demographic characteristics of the 45 participants (such as age and ethnicity) were provided. The choice of instruments of collection—questionnaire and semi-structured interviews—was also justified in this chapter.
The chapter explained the use of an abductive approach as the analytic strategy adopted in this thesis—the approach allows participant narratives to be front and centre of the thesis, but to simultaneously draw meaning from the connection between this empirical data and the theory. It is an appropriate approach to answer the research questions, empowering young refugees to reflect on their identities and experiences, whilst situating their narratives within wider theoretical discourse. This approach allows meaning to be made from unstructured and subjective experiences, making their important and powerful narratives even more impactful.

Finally, this chapter acknowledged the limitations of the research, including the consequences of self-selection and snowball sampling on who’s voices are elevated (for example, those with higher language skills or who feel part of a community). The small sample size—including of participants on temporary visas—and the limited number of Middle Eastern countries represented were acknowledged as significant limitations and mean that the findings, while important, are not generalisable.

The next chapter addresses the first research question as to the ways bordering practices and the hierarchy of desirability influence refugee young people’s access to the state and their sense of belonging. It gives context to participants’ journeys and their supposed place on the hierarchy of desirability by exploring the challenges they faced en route and their motivations for leaving their home countries. It explores the ways in which these journeys shaped attitudes toward Australia and its community. Finally, the chapter examines the consequences of visa allocation and permanency on participant belonging. This section highlights the differential impact that permanency and precarity have on connection to the state and to the community of value.

The following chapter contrasts the myth-making around the Good Australian and the Middle Eastern Other with participants’ narratives and professed values and beliefs. It asks participants to reflect on their migration journeys, on their identity and self-perception, and on their hopes for the future, and compares these with the myths and imaginaries explored in Chapter 3. Firstly, the chapter introduces participants’ lived experiences in their home countries and in transit, and contrasts these lived realities to myth-making around the Middle Eastern terrorist and/or bogus refugee. Secondly, participants reflect on how they believe refugees and Middle Eastern arrivals are viewed in Australian society and on the consequences of this for their sense of belonging.
Thirdly, the chapter looks at how participation in society, including engaging in public speech to share experiences and to combat prejudice and othering, influences connections with the community of value.
Chapter 5
Dispelling the myths: refugee lived realities

Introduction

This chapter explores the reality of Middle Eastern refugee identities and values by presenting participants’ lived experiences; it examines how refugee journeys align with the myths of Good Australian and the Other. By exploring participants’ migration journeys, lives in third countries and aspirations for life in Australia, this chapter seeks to challenge the othering of Middle Eastern refugees in Australia. In doing so, this chapter addresses the first research question:

How does myth-making about the Other and the Good Citizen reflect and/or impact on the lived experiences of young Middle Eastern refugees?

The chapter firstly explores the circumstances in which participants fled their home countries. Participant narratives highlight the trauma and danger experienced in home countries and during migration journeys, contradicting myths of the bogus refugee. The chapter also speaks to the difficulties participants face in third countries, with their lived experiences of discrimination, precarity and an absence of rights challenging myths of effective protection and forum shopping promulgated under the non-entrée regime (see 2.2.2).

Secondly, this chapter allows participants to speak to their identities as Middle Eastern refugees, demonstrating the diversity that exists within this categorisation. This section challenges the conflation of Middle Eastern identities as Other in political discourse, and demonstrates the desire of many participants to develop a composite Middle Eastern-Australian identity and to be part of the Australian community. This includes participants’ reflections on the legacy of multiculturalism in facilitating their inclusion and belonging in Australia.

Thirdly, the chapter examines the desire of participants to comply with the community of value and the idea of the Good Australian. It presents participants’ desires to contribute to their host societies and contradicts the ‘myth of difference’ that refugees from the global south hold values
and identities incompatible with the societies of northern states. On the contrary, participant narratives speak to refugee young people wishing to be exemplary interpellated subjects.

5.1 Refugee journeys: refuting the ‘bogus’ myth

As was explored in the literature chapters, over the last 20 years, Middle Eastern identities have been constructed as the new Other, the foil to the idealised Good Citizen and the Australian community of value. These identities have been conflated in political speech as the Islamist terrorist and/or the bogus refugee, and have served to justify and legitimise stringent bordering practices. However, as explored below, the Middle Eastern refugees interviewed for this thesis shared the difficult—and genuine—circumstances that required them to flee their homes, as well as the challenges and hardships they faced in third countries. Their narratives point to the well-founded fears and motivations many refugees have when leaving their home countries and seeking protection elsewhere; their lived realities belie the myths of the ‘bogus’ refugee perpetuated in the public imaginary.

5.1.1 Surviving conflict with courage

Of the 76 refugee arrivals at Inglewood IEC between 2015 and 2019, 75 were diagnosed by the school counsellor on arrival as having witnessed or experienced something traumatic in their pasts. Participant narratives, too, revealed the difficulties faced by young people in their home countries that had precipitated their refugee journeys. Motivations for migration were assessed in interviews and via survey questions, with conflict a central factor in families leaving their home countries. Participant narratives recount the journeys of genuine refugees escaping political upheaval and warfare and highlight the strength and bravery needed to respond to difficult circumstances. Participant migration journeys were not made as calculated strategies or attempts to circumvent bordering practices—as myth-making of the refugee as Other might suggest—but rather as painful necessities; their lived experiences can be held in sharp contrast to the ‘bogus’ refugee myths explored in 3.2.2.

For some participants, leaving their country was precipitated by long-term exclusion, violence and discrimination that they and their families had experienced, often as ethnic or religious minorities. Mehmoud (19, Ahwazi) identifies as an Arab minority from the region of Ahwaz in
Iran. He spoke extensively about the troubles and violence his family had endured in his home country due to their identity:

In 1925, the Iranian people they overtake my country and then they don’t want any Arab in the country and they used to kill Arab people… We had a problem with the government because we are Arab and how they overtake our country so they are like racist to our people.

He describes experiencing discrimination as a child, when he was banned from speaking in his first language and bullied and punished in school. Mehmoud’s innate sense of injustice saw him reject Iranian education—he refused to apply himself in class, resulting in illiteracy in both Arabic and Farsi.

[The government] didn’t let us study in Arabic and like, for example, if we learn Arabic and they catch us they put us in jail. So there is no Arabic. And I was forced to learn Persian because all the school was Iranian and they then treat us bad, so they always used to hate us and so that’s why I didn’t like to learn and so I didn’t study. I just learnt how to speak [Farsi].

More than this, he describes the physical violence and intimidation he witnessed as a child, including the killing of family members and the arbitrary imprisonment of his father: ‘[T]hey killed my two cousins and they took my dad for 52 days in jail and after that, when he come back finally, that’s why we left the country.’

Similarly, sectarian violence, discrimination and war drove Elya (25, Hazara) and her family to move from place to place within Afghanistan before seeking asylum in Iran. Elya and her family are members of the Hazara minority of Afghanistan, a group that has experienced discrimination in their home country impacting on their access to education, economic opportunities and services. This was particularly the case in the areas controlled by the Taliban, where Elya was living:

My family, we move [in 2001] ’cause it was really bad. It was war at that time and nearly the whole country was controlled by Taliban—maybe some few little towns
maybe not Taliban but the most country was controlled by Taliban. It was really
dangerous time, it was really hard for us to live even though we moved from one city
to another city. We’re not sure we going to make a home or a life because there’s lots
of bombs around the streets…

Additionally, Elya and her family were targeted by Afghani officials because of their religion
and language as Shia Muslims and Dari speakers:

Also every police stop and check up, to ask you [questions]. Especially for Hazara
people, for Shia people, it was dangerous… They asking you, ‘Are you Hazara?’
You say ‘Yes.’
‘You speak Pashto?’
‘No.’
And they kill you because you are Hazara and because you cannot speak Pashto and
especially if you are Shia. They say, ‘We love to kill you for you are Shia.’

Elya has no wish to return to Afghanistan and has spent long periods of her childhood in Iran,
where she also received limited support or rights as a Hazara refugee.

Yazidi participants reflected on their experiences of long-term persecution in Syria and Iraq,
which intensified with the empowerment of ISIS in the region. Multiple participants articulated
the fear and growing danger that necessitated the movement out of their home regions: ‘My
country not good. It had too many ISIS there, every day is killed people. That’s why we had to
leave’ (Fadi, 20, Yazidi).

Aischa (24, Yazidi) fled Iraq in the two weeks before ISIS destroyed her village and captured or
killed its inhabitants:

[When ISIS come in 2014, me and my family escaped to Turkey and we stayed there
two or three years. We came to Turkey by bus, a little bus, for our family because
when we heard ISIS was coming, my father was scared because he heard they taking
girls. It was about 6pm and he said ‘We should leave’ and we just escaped to another
part of Iraq which is Kurdistan. We stayed there about two or three days until we get our things together and then we escaped to Turkey. We stayed in Turkey about ten days [when] they said ISIS striked and surround our village and it’s gone. Two weeks and it was gone.

Her school friend, Nadia Murad, was captured and subjected to physical and sexual violence by the Islamic State fighters.

When ISIS come, they were catching her with many many thousand of girls and women. When she had a chance she just escaped from them… She received Nobel Prize. She was my classmate and she has a book about the whole story what ISIS did to her and our village.

Nadia was subsequently awarded the 2018 Nobel Peace (conjointly with Denis Mukwege) for her efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon in war and armed conflict. This achievement speaks to the significant power that refugee stories— and giving a voice and a platform to refugee’s experience— can have in creating change.

Yazidi participants described extended periods of displacement during their childhood as minorities in northern Iraq and Syria, with many moving between regions and countries so to avoid persecution. Kamal (19, Yazidi), for example, moved to multiple cities during the periods before and during the Syrian Civil War:

First in 2006 I was 5 years old, we left [city name] and went to another city [in Iraq] that was two or three hundred kilometres from Mosul. We went there and then some of my father’s cousins, the terrorist killed them so we went back to [the first city] for 6 months and in 2009, I left my country of Iraq and I went to Syria for 3 years. Then the war started there. We went to Turkey for 5 years and then now I am here for one and a half years.

Nisreen (25, Yazidi) has no desire to return to her home country as she did not feel accepted or welcomed there:
I don’t miss my country because we saw a very hard life at that time… ISIS come to attack us. We left everything, all our furniture, all our goods. We go to our car and we go through the mountains and we go to the north of Iraq at that time. … The first time we went to cross the border, the policemen was there and they say, ‘Nobody can go. We locked the border.’ And we stay on the street for 3 days—all the Yazidi people was there in the street. They sleep and stay on the street and we say ‘We want to leave the country.’ Nobody help us, nobody doing something for us—they say, ‘Because ISIS is very strong, we can’t help you.’

After 3 days … they open the border and at that time we went to the Turkey because I think they changed their mind.

In the telling of her narrative, Nisreen emphasised the fear she and her family experienced trying to escape the ISIS attacks in northern Iraq, and the difficulties they faced when trapped at the border with Turkey. These recollections of an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty demonstrate the traumas that refugees can face in their home countries.

Participants who identified as ethnic and/or religious minorities in their country of origin typically expressed no desire to return there. Twelve respondents (29%) strongly disagreed that they would return permanently to their country of origin given the chance (Figure 3) and of these a high proportion were from ethnic minority groups in their home countries. Some of these participants spoke at length about the discrimination and sectarian violence they experienced in their home countries. Moreover, these narratives demonstrate that, prior to commencing their migration journey, many participants had already experienced discrimination, compounded traumas and extended periods of dislocation.

On the other hand, other participant narratives spoke of the decision to leave their home countries as a difficult one that they and their families had resisted for as long as possible. These participants shared treasured memories of their home countries and emphasised that their departure was not a planned choice, but a consequence of prolonged conflict and danger that had impacted on their ability to live a productive life. Despite the dangers that participants faced in their home countries, participants described their attempts to remain. Saif (19, Syrian), for example, spoke at length about the 2 years he spent living in his home city of Homs as Syria
descended into war. He described moving from his childhood home to different suburbs of the city in order to avoid zones of conflict between militants and the government. He, his parents and his two sisters moved firstly to his grandmother’s house and then to a more distant relative’s home in order to escape the areas where there was most upheaval:

[W]e moved to another suburb that’s not that far, like from here to [a suburb 3 km away]. We moved there so hopefully it’s gonna be alright. The house that we lived in, it was my uncle’s wife’s mum’s house. We were all together, we were 30 people—my uncles, my grandfather, my mum, my sisters, the whole family. We lived there for about a month but the most worst thing[,] … we are actually very lucky because we moved from our suburb, that day when we moved, at the same day the Syrian army came to our suburb and killed about two hundred people from our suburb. The same night, I can’t believe it. We were watching the news and we saw that and we got really upset because we grow up with these people.

Ultimately, this house was also caught up in gunfire:

[Combatants] start shooting from the building opposite our house and we got like really scared. I was only maybe 11 years old and my sisters they were all smaller. We got through so many things in this house. We tried to get food, to get something to eat, we couldn’t but fortunately we’ve got olive—my mum used to [preserve them] and we had two boxes of olives. We are 30 people and we used to eat from them for two weeks—only olives and bread—old bread but we used to fix it and eat it. After that, the army started shooting with the tank to another people. Imagine all of this in front of your house and the noise when the tank shoot. I started crying because it was really scary. It was 8 at night and from then until the next day it didn’t stop and both [sides of the conflict] were shooting at each other.

Saif’s narrative recalled how, when the fighting in Homs intensified, he and 30 members of his extended family crowded into the back of two flat-bed cars and headed to Damascus:

We moved from one suburb to another and then from that suburb to outside of the city. … A group of 30 people, we moved outside to Damascus, the [capital] city of
Syria… [W]e are 30 people, children, old people, younger my age when we decided to move from one city to another we moved in two [utes]…

On the way, one of the cars apparently broke down and had to be towed by the other:

My dad’s car, I don’t know what happened to it because it’s very old and it’s not ready to move that far… [T]hey tied the cars together and they pulled it by the other car… We were really scared because at any time the army might see us and figure out that we escaped from them or something… By normal car it take two hours [to reach Damascus], but it took the whole day and we too scared that something going to happen to [the second car].

In Damascus, they had no connections or family members to turn to for assistance. Saif describes being helped and housed by two strangers who noticed their arrival from Homs:

[T]wo guys and they were on motor bikes and then they came up and they asked us ‘Do you need help?’ because we were looking really tired and the cars were really bad. And we said ‘Yeah, if you can’. So they took us to a house because we got really kind people [in Syria] before but not anymore now. They were really helpful people, kind to each other—because they know about Homs and what’s going on there and we told them we escaped from that situation to here to get a better life, to feel safe. And then they took us to a house … and they gave us food and this house they paid the rent and everything … for a month maybe. Those people … support the weak people who need help.

After a month of receiving support from these strangers, Saif—then 13—and his uncles found work in order to afford rent in their own house. Ultimately, however, the fighting also intensified in Damascus and they had to relocate once more, this time crossing into Jordan. His narrative highlights how families move within their countries and regions in search of safety and normality; his family’s long-term internal displacement demonstrated their desire to remain in their home country if possible.
Saif’s narrative speaks to the genuine motivation for many refugees’ migration journeys. Rather than fleeing their homes readily and easily, participants’ narratives revealed the unwillingness that many families felt toward leaving their homelands in the first place and the extreme events that finally motivated their departures. Saif, like other participants interviewed, experienced extraordinary danger and hardship in his home country, but resisted migration until this danger was too great. These narratives are centred on everyday experiences and trials and a desire for normality and safety—they do not reflect the myth of bogus refugees moving for economic motives.

Despite their youth, many participants demonstrated a deep understanding and critical awareness of the socio-political landscape in their home countries prior to migration. Throughout their narratives, young people condemned the atrocities of war and focused on instances of shared humanity that they had experienced during their journeys—the values they espoused while narrating did not reflect the myth that Middle Eastern refugees arrive bringing terrorist or extremist viewpoints that are fundamentally incompatible with Australian society. Ahmed (19, Syrian), described the geo-political upheaval and criminality that had motivated his family’s migration:

I was living in Syria, in a small village with my family and people start ask the government for freedom, and the government start to stop the people and the government couldn’t stop the people talking or by speaking. Then the government start to use weapon to kill people, to scare people.

The Syrian conflict emerged from the violent suppression of protests linked to the regional Arab Spring (2011), with escalation to warfare between a suite of actors including the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) (Zuber & Moussa, 2018). Young participants made substantive links between the upheaval in their home country and the personal impact on their families that ultimately drove their migration.

Those who lived in major cities at the start of the conflict described public protests calling for the removal of the President, Bashir al-Assad; these were met by violent suppression by government forces. Ammar (18, Syrian) detailed the escalating situation in the country and the violence he
witnessed as a child in Hama. This included incidents of violence perpetrated against citizens, including young people:

What happened is, some kids wrote on the wall of their school ‘We want freedom’ and then the police came and take their [finger]nails off and then their families went and asked for them so the police said ‘We don’t have anyone in here’ … [The people] knew they are there so they went and got angry … [T]hey found their kids without any nails … and the people started to get angry. Then they started to [hold] demonstrations; they were on the roads calling for freedom and then the police started to shoot them by guns and stuff. The people started to get angry, angry—more and more and more—and it started to get bigger.

Ammar also described the escalation of fighting and the spreading of conflict to larger parts of Syria:

Then the government started [using] weapons to bombings, with tanks, by air and stuff and then came to my city [Hama]. There were half a million people in the middle of the city, calling for freedom… There was a person who was singing and stuff for the freedom and then they came and [cut his throat]. They came and killed him and said, ‘This is an example of someone who says he wants freedom.’ My city’s symbol is a river… So they throw him [in the Orontes River] to make the blood go there and give an example to the people. And then it started to get dangerous.

Ammar demonstrated an awareness of the unique and troubling socio-political circumstances occurring in his homeland and of the great injustices perpetrated against families and fellow countrymen. Such awareness of political circumstances and experiences of civic turmoil speaks to the desire of many participants to be informed and educated about the world around them, despite the circumstances in which they find themselves.

For many participants, their journeys out of war zones were complicated, traumatic and risky, often involving irregular border crossings. In interviews, participants described the intense dangers involved in crossing land borders to escape conflict zones. Participants’ narratives also reveal the mental, physical and financial costs of leaving their home countries—the challenging
reality of their journeys—that belies the imaginary of the asylum seeker as Other or bogus (Chimni, 1998).

Moreover, participant narratives demonstrate the bravery, ingenuity and personal strength exhibited by refugees and their families during their migration journeys. Far from being valued as the lowest commodity of the consumer world—stateless, placeless and functionless (Bauman, 2004)—the grit, resilience and willingness to make sacrifices to survive demonstrated by refugees should recommend them as valuable additions and contributors to northern states.

Participants spoke of the sacrifices made and risks taken by family groups to ensure escape. This included paying high costs for unreliable transport and, in some cases, taking chances with smugglers. Rabi (19, Syrian) and his family paid smugglers to help them to move from Damascus to Jordan:

[T]he worst thing is the move to Jordan because we paid guys that was going to take us to the border. We got to pay money because we don’t know the direction how to go. We paid them, it was about $100 for one person maybe and then they took us. … They put us in trucks and they took us to the start of the border of Syria and Jordan.

The smugglers took them to within several kilometres of the border, where they were to cross an open plain at night and unescorted. He described the threat of this large group of travellers being heard and killed by Syrian forces, and related his fear about crossing the desert in silence:

During that time, I can’t explain my feelings because it was really terrible. It was maybe 12 o’clock at night and maybe anything is going to happen to you. We had to walk like three or four hours and we had to walk all this way without any noise or anything.

Elya (25, Hazara) spoke of having to travel from Afghanistan to Pakistan in order to get a visa to travel into Iran. According to Elya, she and her family were smuggled across the border in a crowded rubbish truck:

All of us came together: my parents and my sisters, we moved together. My uncle, my aunt and the whole family we moved in one day. We moved in a big truck, in a
dump truck. Many people sitting there in the dump truck. I don’t know how many
days we drive.

The journey involved travelling for long periods of time through mountainous and difficult
terrain.

It’s really long way to move by a small car—there were many people squeezed in
[next to] each other. For around 12 hours that the driver was driving the whole time
he was driving on the mountain the whole way.

The journey, which she undertook at around 8 years old, is still traumatic to recall, for several
reasons:

I’m thinking about this how was dangerous—there was a very high mountain. In the
middle of the mountain because it’s really slippery scary and most of the men and
young girls and boys who can walk they get out of the truck to [make the truck] light
to not going to fall [off the side of] the mountain. … [I]t’s many years ago but I’m
still scared and still in my heart it was like it’s happen yesterday. It’s really hard, it’s
terrible.

In addition to the danger of the roads, travelling in a crowded, hot truck was also dangerous, and
some passengers became delirious and dehydrated. In particular, Elya recounted how her baby
brother fell into a stupor on the journey, to the distress of his family members:

All of the water you drink you bring it in when it’s finished there is no water on the
way. My youngest brother he was only one year old he was nearly dead because it
was really hot. Even you open the window, you think it’s fire outside it was so hot
and the [air conditioning] wasn’t work.

The baby was very thirsty and was very hot and he turned to white—his skin and his
eyes and my mum can just not talk anything [because of shock and fear]. She was
just cry and she thought that the baby is dead already because he was really hardly
breathe.
Finally we reach [some] water—on the mountain there was two or three small tap. They put it on the mountain for the people crossing. So there was [a little bit of] water coming out, it take a few minutes to get a cup of water… My dad just take my brother and straight away put him under this water. After 5 or 10 minutes he started breathing again and my mum was really scared and she is in shock for two or three hours. She not talk to anybody and it’s really hard for me. As a little 8-year-old child it’s really hard to experience those things.

These narratives demonstrate risks that participants and their families undertook in their efforts to reach a safe place. More than this, the narratives highlight the qualities of bravery, determination and resilience that are intrinsic to many refugee journeys; journeys that refugees must make to reach safety are rarely straightforward. These recollections emphasised the reality that migration was not a calculated strategy or an attempt to circumvent bordering practices—as the myths discussed in 3.2.2 would suggest—but rather was a painful necessity.

Jamal (18, Syrian) and his family crossed the border between Syria and Jordan with the assistance of smugglers. During their night-time crossing, his baby sister began to cry and threatened to reveal their presence to Syrian fighters:

My little sister … started crying and we were really scared when she started because we don’t want the Syrian army to hear us because if they do, they going to shoot everyone. We tried to just make her quiet but she didn’t. She just kept screaming and crying because it was really scary and it was at night.

According to Jamal, his mother tearfully called on strangers to kill her crying baby before the noise resulted in the rest of the family and three hundred fellow travellers being caught and killed.

After that, my mum said ‘OK, if she don’t want to be quiet, just kill her.’ It was awful for her. She said, ‘I can’t kill her,’ but she gave her to the other people and said, ‘Kill her—or three hundred people will die.’
Fortunately we had luck. A lady with us had a drug, when you have an operation or something and you have it to sleep. She said, ‘I have this drug, but if you want to give it to her, give her a little bit because this is very strong, like for older people.’

Jamal emphasised the stress that his mother felt during the crossing, willing the baby to stop crying: ‘My mum was really scared and she gave her the whole bottle [with milk] and after 10 minutes, [his sister] slept… It’s a very strong drug and she gave her the whole bottle.’

When Jamal and his family reached Jordan, they were transferred to a refugee camp by the Jordanian army.

It took us two days to get to this camp and during this time there was no food, no water and it was an awful time because my little sister—imagine a small baby… [S]he didn’t eat for two days and we don’t know if she’s alive but we can hear her heart working but we don’t know if something happen to her. We told the Jordanian army but they said, ‘We can’t do anything about it until we get to the camp, they’re going to help you.’

Jamal’s little sister now attends primary school in Sydney. This vivid description of sacrifice and fear elucidates the life-or-death situations faced by refugees when seeking safety. This story has parallels to the ‘Children Overboard’ myth discussed in 3.2.2, and John Howard’s comments that ‘Genuine refugees don’t [put their children at risk]…they hang onto their children’. However, this was a lived experience where Jamal’s mother was faced with a choice of risking the lives of 300 people or one of her own children. Contrasting Howard’s comments and Jamal’s narrative highlights the disconnect between assumptions about refugees and refugees’ lived traumas. It emphasises the necessity that people in northern states listen (with an open-mind and -heart) to refugee experiences rather than making assumptions from a place of safety and ignorance about what ‘genuine’ refugees would and should do.

5.1.2 Living in limbo

Policies of non-entrée adopted by northern states include the rejection of refugee claims by those who may have claimed ‘effective protection’ (Legomsky, 2003) in a third country. To qualify as providing this protection, third countries do not need to give adequate support to the refugees
living within their borders or to grant refugees rights and/or high levels of protection (Legomsky, 2003). Participant narratives demonstrate the difficult and unsafe circumstances many refugees experience in third countries, particularly in those countries bordering warzones who host large numbers of refugees. These young people often did not have access to schooling, experienced discrimination and racism, and worked under unsafe and poorly compensated employment conditions. These narratives refute the myth of effective protection as sufficient, and demonstrate the perseverance and endurance of many refugee young people.

Many participants recalled their experiences, having left their homes as refugees, of exclusion and rejection in third countries prior to arriving in Australia. As demonstrated in Table 11, 28 participants (85%) spent time living in a third country prior to being settled in Australia (excluding those two respondents who lived in Australia in non-community detention). Participants related their histories of social interaction and schooling during their migration journeys and noted that discrimination and threats of violence often occurred in third countries. This period of instability between leaving the home country and being resettled can have a detrimental impact on the educational, social and emotional development of young people.

Participants’ narratives revealed lives in third countries that continued to be disrupted and marred by discrimination and exclusion. Despite the efforts of families to leave the danger and disadvantages of their home country, many participants described experiences of exploitation, particularly in the workforce, exclusion from basic services and education as well as racism in third countries, particularly in those countries that border conflict zones. These experiences aligned with the literature that finds refugees awaiting resettlement in third countries often live for long periods as outsiders (Hamood, 2006; Schapendonk, 2012) or with semi-legal status (Kubal, 2013), and experience precarious living and working conditions (Bloch & McKay, 2016; Griffiths, 2014; Sager, 2015).

Many of the participants describe discrimination in third countries, particularly when these countries border war zones and host a large number of displaced people. A common experience was disillusionment upon arriving in a supposedly safe third country, having expected safety, security and a new life. Saif (19, Syrian), who lived in Syria during some of the conflict, spoke
of the differences between the life of safety and security he imagined upon reaching Jordan, and the reality:

    In Jordan, we were there for 6 years. After all of this dangerous things [in Syria], we are safe there… I was planning to a new life, a beautiful and peaceful life… [I]f you want to work, you can work, if you want to study you can study. It was actually the opposite; yeah, it was safe but it wasn’t like I thought…

Many who spent time as refugees in border countries detailed negative interactions with the local population. Lebanon, for example, hosts the largest number of (majority Syrian) refugees relative to its population, with one in six people a refugee in 2018 (UNHCR, 2019, p. 3)—participants described experiences of prejudice and exclusion. Omar (18, Syrian) spoke of the isolation he felt living there when much of the local population believed that refugees were looking for handouts or were taking Lebanese jobs:

    In Lebanon, they always say ‘You are a refugee.’ I know that I’m a refugee but I’m maybe not seeking your help. I came because I want to have a safe life for me but they [talk about refugees] different than [in Australia]: ‘You are a refugee, this is not your home, you should go back, you’re taking our places from work, you’re taking our food.’ That’s what they say. But actually we paid for our most of the things. You don’t help us… Yes, I am in your country, I am taking some houses to sleep or to stay but I am paying for that.

He compared his experience living in Lebanon with the mostly positive feedback and welcome he received in Australia, where, in his words, ‘It’s been amazing.’

Ammar (18, Syrian), the son of a Lebanese national, spoke extensively of the discrimination he and other Syrians experienced once they crossed the border into Lebanon. He travelled to Lebanon through border checkpoints, ‘because my mum is Lebanese and her family is there so we refugees to Lebanon but unfortunately in Lebanon, the people they treated us really badly.’ Some of his experiences of discrimination ranged from everyday exclusion and racism to threats of violence. Ammar also described the widespread mistreatment and dislike of Syrian refugees in Lebanese society, and gave examples of disagreements with bus drivers and shop owners:
The bus drivers … were gonna take us to school, they didn’t stop for us. They just go and let us walk to them and then when we [reach the bus], if it’s cold and raining, they turn the aircon on cold and when it’s hot they turn it on hot so we get like really bad [sickness]. One time, I still remember it—me and my friends were sitting in the bus and the bus driver was angry with something and he came and he … hit all of us and we told our families and they came and he was like ‘Yeah I just hit them.’

… Every time you go to the shops … I said I want something, it was in the fridge, and [the shopkeeper] was like, ‘I don’t have it.’

I was like, ‘You have it, look, it’s in front of you.’

And they was like, ‘I have it but you are Syrian, I’m not going to sell it to you.’

[B]ecause of my accent—cause our accent to their accent is different, so he hear the different accent and then he was like, ‘Oh OK, because you are Syrian I am not going to sell it to you. Get out of my shop.’

It was really hard for us to live there.

This racism was also witnessed on the street, with Ammar describing threats he experienced on the street in Lebanon:

I was wearing the ‘Free Syria’ flag and someone had a knife, and was gonna kill me behind my back. But my brother was walking on that street and he saw [the person with a knife] and they had a fight ’cause we were in danger, me and my friends.

Ammar described the sense of being unwanted and resented in a school context. Syrian students were schooled separately to Lebanese students, a separation that allowed resentment and suspicion to develop:

They made us a Syrian school. We go from 4pm until 8pm but all the bus drivers were Lebanese and all the head teachers were Lebanese, operated by Syrian teachers. … The students there in Lebanon, every time we go to school at night, they write on the desks, ‘Syrian go back to your country, we don’t want you in here.’
Participants also spoke of difficulties accessing education in third countries where they were often living in refugee camps or transient situations. This made access to education over the long term difficult. Participants commonly spoke of the discrimination toward refugees in the school system and in employment in ‘border’ countries. Ali (18, Syrian) described:

[In Jordan] they were really racist to us, they don’t like Syrian people. Even the most annoying thing for me was they don’t call you by your name, they say, ‘Hey you Syrian! Come here.’ And the government as well, they wasn’t that good to us but we have no choice, we have nothing else, so we can’t do anything.

This experience highlights the refugee experience of bare life (Foucault, 2003), a life lived devoid of rights and excluded from the political and cultural community.

Discrimination in and exclusion from education during their migration journeys in the school system was a common recollection of young participants; Jamal (18, Syrian) recalled living in Jordanian society but being excluded from studying alongside Jordanian young people:

I tried to go to school … but we have to go after the Jordanian kids finish. We started at 5pm and we finish at maybe 8 or 9, four hours. It leave us feeling maybe unfair, that you started after the Jordanian kids… And the teachers, they’re not really nice to us because we’re refugee.

Many Yazidi participants claimed that there was limited (if any) education available to them in their third country. Turan (18, Yazidi), who now is in high school in Wagga Wagga, spoke of the piecemeal education he received after leaving Iraq:

In Turkey I did 3 years [of school] but not all the time. I was working. They let us to go to school but there [everyone] was Muslim and we were different religion so they do not want us to stay there. They always was fighting with us. We didn’t feel like we belonged there.

Aischa (24, Yazidi) recalled relinquishing her aspirations for further education when she moved to Turkey; there, she and her siblings worked long hours and many jobs to contribute to the family’s survival:
I had been to school 11 years in my country but in Turkey I was just working and [so were] my sisters and brother—it was so hard experience for me and my family. We just doing whatever work we could do to keep going, day by day. I prepared food at the restaurant and I was packing vegetables, and I was serving food. … [I did] many type of work and moving from this [job] to this one, to do as much as I could. I left Iraq in 2014 to [go to] Turkey and came to Australia in 2017.

Omar (18, Syrian) described living for 4 years in Lebanon, where he experienced problems such as difficulties finding and maintaining a job and accessing adequate education.

Unemployment. I can’t find a job, my dad can’t find a job and the education was very bad. Also, because we used to live in a small house, we used to be five people in a small house. It was too much bad.

Many of those young people who could access employment in a third country experienced substantial discrimination in the workplace, including long hours, arbitrary firing and poor pay. The range of exploitation impacting on refugees can be seen in the employment narrative of one participant who lived and worked in Jordan between the ages of 13 and 17. His narrative describes the struggles many refugee young people experience while working in third countries, including enduring dangerous employment conditions, failure to pay for work done and on-site discrimination and dehumanisation. As this participant provided an image to demonstrate these working conditions, he is unnamed to further protect his identity:

My dad, he have [illness] so he can’t work and my mum either—she has blood pressure and diabetes as well, so I’m the man of the house so I have to work, I have to make money. So I found work at a supermarket for cleaning equipment. I worked there for two years at this place. There is a lot of racism there because we’re Syrian, we’re refugee and they make us feel like we’re not human…

And work was so hard, you can’t imagine how hard. Every day I have to get the goods outside and get them inside by myself. And they’re like being kind of rude to me—[the shop owner’s] whole family live next to the shop … and every time I have to serve his house, his wife, get her stuff and buy her stuff and his wife is like kind
of rude to me... I said, ‘Alright, I have to be patient for my family, to help them,’ you know? At this time I was 15 years old maybe.

After that, I had a fight with the manager because I was working 16 hours a day and I got no day off. One day I came late, and he just fired me because I came late. Even if I work more hours, more than 16 hours a day, he don’t pay me and he paid me less than other kids, less than Jordanian people.

[Next] I found a job [in construction]. When you will see the photo [Figure 2] it will show you how tough that time was. It was really terrible. Like they have no mercy for us... I was, as you see here, my face, my hands and all of this dirt goes into my mouth...

I was doing my work in that room and the dirt from the concrete it was coming into my face and my mouth, I took some time for fresh air outside. And the manager, he suddenly came to me and when he saw me, he said, ‘What are you doing? You’re supposed to be inside.’

I told him that it’s too hard for me to breathe inside, ‘I just wanna get some fresh air,’ and then he said, ‘You’re fired.’

I went home. I was earning money and giving it to my family. I used to give it to my mum and she used to pay the bills for the house.

Life was alright for them, but not for me ... because I’ve got no future in this country. ...

And I got really frustrated, I don’t want to work after I got fired from that job and I was at home doing nothing. But Eid was coming and I looked at my sisters—they need clothes to wear to go out with friends. In the Middle East all people used to wear new clothes to get ready for Eid and you have to work to get those clothes.

My mum told me, ‘Go and find something because Eid is coming and we need some money.’ I started looking for job until I found [another] supermarket and [the manager] told me if I work from that day until Eid—if I work for a month—he’s
going to give me the money before Eid … to buy whatever. He said, ‘I will save the money for you.’ And I agreed because all the point is for Eid, the working for Eid.

And I started working for the whole month and he said, ‘Don’t worry, because you’re Syrian, you’re refugee, I’ve got you.’

And he got me actually.

At the end of the whole month and when I came up to him and said, ‘Alright, that month is finished,’ and he just gave me maybe $40 for the whole month.

And I said, ‘What is that?’ and he said, ‘That’s your money for the job.’

And I just can’t say anything, no words, I don’t know what to say. Imagine you working the whole month to get clothes for your sisters and then that guy he just gave you like $40. That wouldn’t get you anything and he just said, ‘That’s all I’ve got.’

Well, I couldn’t do anything. I wanted to do something but if I did, I get in trouble not him. I just start crying and then I went home.

Actually, I was thinking I want to kill myself, I don’t want to be alive anymore. Because I was thinking, why are we alive if this is it? Why are those people doing this stuff to us? All of this because we are refugee, because we are Syrian? I actually was really frustrated… I don’t know why they treat us like this. We’ve done nothing to them. …

And then I just got home and my mum she said, ‘That’s OK, don’t cry. Don’t worry, I will act [like] that was money from you and I will buy clothes for your sisters and I will say that it’s their brother’s money. I will tell them.’ She’s really kind.
As demonstrated above, having escaped the dangers of their home countries, refugee young people commonly experience exclusion and isolation in third countries. The poor treatment that many participants described highlights the importance of settlement support in Australia to facilitate a sense of belonging and overcome trauma. Moreover, these narratives belie the myth that refugees should remain in countries of first asylum where they may have access to effective protection; often those bordering nations that are easily accessible by refugees fleeing their homes are overwhelmed by the number of arrivals and ill-prepared to provide the support necessary to facilitate access to the community and, ultimately, to belonging. Participant narratives speak to the situations in third countries such as Lebanon that have disproportionate shares of the world’s refugees and are unable to provide services to all those living within the state; the absence of state-endorsed boundaring practices to include and empower refugee populations in these societies may contribute to the social unrest and resentment described in participants’ narratives.
5.2 Refugee identities: challenging the Other

The participants interviewed for this thesis come from diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds within the Middle East—there is no one Middle Eastern identity. Participants’ unique refugee journeys and interactions with their home countries have shaped their attitudes to home and how they view their nationality, ethnicity and religion. These young people overwhelmingly expressed a desire to accommodate and reconcile their Middle Eastern identities with their lives in Australia by adopting and embracing a composite of values and identity. Participants repeatedly spoke to the importance of Australian multiculturalism in empowering them to undertake a ‘blending’ of identity—to value their backgrounds while simultaneously feeling part of the Australian community. This blending of Arab-Australian identity speaks to Australian multiculturalism in practice.

At the same time, perceptions held about refugees and Middle Eastern people in Australian society had an impact on young people’s experiences and conceptions of belonging. There has been an othering of certain identities, particularly in political speech, such as the imaginary of the Middle Eastern refugee as the stereotypical ‘Arab Other’ (Benier, 2016) or ‘Islamic stranger’ (Lattas, 1997) who brings intransigent and incompatible (Muslim) values to northern states (Fiddian-Qasmiyah & Qasmiyeh, 2010). Moreover, there has been a conflation of these identities in political speech—a stretching of identity—with refugees, Muslims and/or Arabs often interchangeable as the unintegrated Other (Hage, 2002; Noble, 2008) or stranger at home (Lattas, 1997). The othering of Middle Eastern young people, particularly in the media and political speech, had consequences for how participants were viewed in the Australian community.

5.2.1 Blended identities

In interview, many participants described an ongoing sense of loyalty to their home country and a sadness about conflict and social upheaval occurring there. The loyalty and fondness that many participants felt for their home country was reflected in the memories they shared in interviews and in their expressed wish to one day return. Twenty-two survey respondents (49%) agreed or strongly agreed that they would return to their home country if given the choice (Figure 3), but in interview many of these participants clarified that this wish reflected their hope that their home
country would once again become a place of peace and prosperity rather than reflecting a definitive plan to return.

![Figure 3: Attitude to home country](image.png)

Like many others displaced by the Syrian crisis, Moustafa (19, Syrian) spoke of his love for his home country and the hope that he might reconnect with a life there in the future:

> Of course I have to go and visit [Syria] when it becomes safe to go because I still love my country. It was where I was born and I have some memories to go and find, and remember it, and see my old friends. Maybe I would build up a business there and come back to Australia, I think.

This hope for reconnection does not undermine his new life in Australia, and Moustafa expressed a desire to maintain a dual identity and loyalty to both countries. The connection to the home country expressed by many refugee participants represents an enduring sense of loyalty to place and people, despite the challenges and traumas experienced there. Maryam (18, Syrian), for example, values her Syrian citizenship although she may never return to her home country:
You can’t dispose your citizenship because it’s your honour, it’s your proudness. If you do that, in a cultural way they say you are not a good person, that you are disposing of your homeland to do another thing. I think in my opinion it’s not a good thing because you just throwing [away] your honour. You’re just disposing of something that grown you up and made you, shaped your personality. You can’t just dispose it easily.

For Omar (18, Syrian), love and loyalty toward his home country was not shaken by the destruction he witnessed there:

[Syria] It’s everything, it’s my country, it’s where I was born—my memories, my childhood, my everything. My school, I still remember my school but my school got bombed, got destroyed but I still remember it. It means a lot for me, you know? It’s like my mother, my second mother, say.

He describes himself as ‘a patriotic person’, who sees Syria as inextricably tied to his identity:

It’s my first country, I feel like I more belong there because it’s my first country; where I was born and all my family, my relatives, they all lived in Syria. So that’s why I want to go back one day. It’s kind of like—patriotic?

Many young refugees living in Australia retain a strong link to their past lives, despite the war and violence that forced them to leave. At the same time, their narratives suggest that this loyalty to and memory of homeland does not contravene the development of a sense of belonging to Australia. Rather, it speaks to Butler and Muir’s (2017) conception of the work undertaken by young people to negotiate the different obligations, contestations and connections of their lives in order to remain connected to the things they value.

Jamal described his life prior to the outbreak of the Syrian civil war in idyllic terms: ‘[I]t was a basic, simple life. We used to live, me and my dad, four sisters and mum … in my grandfather’s house in the country. Life was so cool. It was beautiful and happy.’ He spoke of his wish to go back to his home country today, if only he could return to his life before the war:
I don’t love Syria because it’s the most beautiful country in the world, I love it because it’s my country and that’s why... [I]f you hadn’t lived there you wouldn’t understand it. Everything is different from here. And I would go back. If it were my normal life before the war came, I would go.

However, Jamal’s loyalty to the country of his birth was tempered by realism and an acknowledgement that the way of life he remembered from his childhood was gone forever. His narrative demonstrates the competing loyalties experienced and expressed by many participants, and their desire to balance a connection to one’s home country, an acknowledgement of ongoing civic and political unrest there, and a growing connection to Australia. He spoke of the emotional connection he feels to both his old and new countries. He emphasised:

[T]he thing that makes me love this country is it’s all equal for everyone. There are rich people, but it’s all equal. You can’t see that [some] are poor or rich or something. If you want to get a car, everyone can get a car. Everyone can wear expensive clothes. That makes me feel that I belong to this country.

Jamal believed in the potential for everyone to succeed and find belonging in Australia, regardless of their background. This was a common theme in participant narratives, with many believing that Australia offered the chance to start a new life without forfeiting or hiding their home country or refugee experiences.

There was a demonstrable desire and willingness among participants to embrace both Middle Eastern and New Australian identities. Many participants spoke of a strong attachment to their new country but acknowledged the importance of their nationality and ethnicity had to their identity and sense of self. Although participants recognised that their former lives were very different to those they were living in Australia, they wished to reconcile and combine both identities. These narratives challenge the stretching of identity as an othering descriptor (discussed in 3.2), with young people viewing themselves as a combination of nationalities, loyalties and values that are not incompatible with the community of value.

Others—particularly those from minorities (as discussed in 5.1.1—drew a link between their experience of (non-)belonging in their home country and their desire to and experience of
belonging in Australia. Aischa (24, Yazidi), for example, described a growing attachment to Australia and associated it with the sense of safety and security she feels in Australia in contrast to the fear and danger she experienced in her home country:

When we first came it wasn’t easy [to settle in Australia]—for me I was thinking I should go back to my country. I was feeling uncomfortable, about one or two months then I learn and now I want to be in Australia forever, be Australian. I can see it is the best place for us, safe and we don’t feel we are refugee, we are like Australian people. We received a warm welcome from Australia.

There was a recognition amongst many participants that multiculturalism allowed new arrivals to maintain cultural identities and language and foster blended identities. Aminah (18, Syrian), for example, spoke of her culture and heritage as being intrinsic to her identity and sense of self:

[Syria] is where I lived in and I knew some cultural stuff about my country, so it’s important for me to know it and to not forget it because that’s where the past things happened in Syria, which is important for Syrian cultures to hold on to it. Maybe it has something to offer Australia—Australia is built on multiculturalism, which is good.

Fatima (19, Syrian) also emphasised:

I think it’s very important to keep our language, the first language, because it builds the belonging and for me, I feel like it’s the thing that makes Australia unique, that everyone has his own language. It’s very important part of being multicultural society in Australia. Because without belonging to our first language and to our country, we won’t have that multiculturalism in Australia.

So I feel like it’s really important to practise and speak in the first language and read in the first language and even speak with each other and read about it.

It’s really important to keep going, especially maybe for us because we came in an age that we won’t be forgetting our language, we’re gonna be good in it, but it’s for
the coming generations, especially the young ones. Maybe like our children in the future. It is important to keep practising the language, it’s not to be lost.

Indeed, 43 respondents (95.5%) emphasised, ‘My cultural heritage is important to who I am.’

![Bar chart showing responses to "My cultural heritage is important to who I am" with the majority strongly agreeing.]

**Figure 4: My cultural heritage is important to who I am**

More than this, there was a recognition among many participants that cultural heritage could make an important contribution to the enrichment of Australian society. Moustafa (19, Syrian) emphasised that multiculturalism allows individuals to maintain and show respect for their cultural backgrounds, and that this ultimately builds a more diverse and accepting society:

> So it starts with the individuals and it grows to be like around the country if we as individuals respect our culture and we keep in touch with our culture… But imagine if everyone forgets their origins and their culture, we’re gonna end up with a society where they’re all the same and they treat people … like they are outsider to them because they are different to them.

Omar (18, Syrian), on the other hand, emphasised the need for new arrivals to strike a balance between their own cultural heritage and understandings, and those of the new country. He
emphasised that this would lead to stronger participation and belonging in society as well as the enrichment of society:

Learn English and don’t forget your culture. Let’s make it balanced between getting back to your culture and merging into your new society. It’s very important to balance between both of them, so don’t go over to your culture cause you’re gonna be away from the new society… [F]or a lot of people, some of them don’t speak English, they are very separated from the society. They are so isolated because they don’t get in touch with the community when they came here.

He raised the problems of forgetting one’s past, and the danger that doing so might pose to one’s identity and sense of worth:

I know a lot of people that … went over the other side; so they forgot their past, their culture and they became part of the Australian community. But when I say part of the Australian community, even the Australian community they feel like they have origin; everyone feels like they belong to somewhere else in the world but for a lot of people, especially the young ones, they feel like if they want to be successful in this life, they have to forget their past. But that’s wrong because when you have your past in front of you and you work on your future, that way you’re gonna be successful.

As such, maintaining cultural links to one’s home country and building links to one’s new country were identified as important factors in participants’ belonging. Participants recognised that successful belonging was tied to an understanding of Australian values and way of life and a balancing of one’s old and new culture. Moustafa (19, Syrian) emphasised that ‘learn[ing] about Australian stuff and culture’ helped him to make connections to the community, and in doing so ‘…the people they make you feel like it’s your new home’. Omar (18, Syrian) believes that it is also the responsibility of refugee arrivals to learn about the culture of their new home:

Education has helped me to learn about the laws, learn about the history of Australia. … I learnt a lot about the laws of Australia and the history of Australia—like the Aboriginal people—I had no idea about that and so it really helped me.
Soon I will be Australian and so I have to know these things and so if I go overseas and they ask me what I know about Australia, I have to know about the Aboriginal people, the flag, the laws. It’s so embarrassing when they ask you, ‘Oh what do you know about Australia?’ and I say, ‘Sorry, I don’t know anything. Kangaroos?’

Moreover, the ideal of Australian multiculturalism is a recurrent theme in participant narratives. It is evoked by participants to describe their place within and connection to Australian society. Although multiculturalism as a policy and social reality is often unrealised in practice (see section 3.1), many participants in this study view multiculturalism as a symbolic anchor for their sense of identity. For Omar, the multiculturalism of Sydney allowed him to develop a strong sense of belonging to Australia:

I always feel like I’m belong here [in Australia]. In Australia there’s people from different cultures, it’s a multicultural country so I don’t feel like I not belong because there’s many people and they speak many languages. They come from many backgrounds so there’s no one [to] own this land—everyone came from other places and they met each other here.

The myth of multiculturalism allows participants to hold and value two identities simultaneously, to express and embrace dual belongings.

Omar (18, Syrian) explained the importance of multiculturalism to feeling a sense of acceptance as a new arrival:

In Australia there’s people from different cultures, it’s a multicultural country so I don’t feel like I not belong because there’s many people they speak many languages, they come from many backgrounds so there’s no one own this land—everyone came from other places and they met each others here.

Maryam (18, Syrian), for example, compared the openness of the Australian community to the rejection and exclusion he experienced as a refugee in Lebanon:
That’s what I loved about Australia—everyone see you like you belong to them. They doesn’t say, for example, what I’m used to in Lebanon, ‘You are Syrian, get out of here.’ They doesn’t. They doesn’t judge you on your race.

Rabi (19, Syrian) also explained the unique contribution and importance of multiculturalism to social thinking and acceptance:

When I compare like to Jordan, Jordan is a very closed community. They don’t have multiculturalism, they don’t have this diverse society in there and so someone’s come to them, even if Syrian and Jordan are very close to each other, even with the traditions, even with the religion, with everything, they treat you like you are different. …

[People in [Australia] respect each other and respect your opinions, your religions, respect your race… [Mainly what I’ve seen is that people here are very respectful for other communities.

Jamal (18, Syrian) attributed multiculturalism with fostering diversity of opinion in Australia and empowering people of different cultures and backgrounds to thrive and live cooperatively:

I feel like Australian society are really open minded because of, the first thing is the multiculturalism, it’s very essential in here. This leads to a really open-minded community and society, so they are open to many different issues and matters. Even if they don’t agree with it, they will listen to the other side so I feel like yes there is a lot of people who show interest in many different aspects.

A meditation on the importance of multiculturalism as fostering belonging was a strong and recurrent theme in participants’ responses. Although multiculturalism has a chequered social and policy history in Australia, participants in this study valued (the myth of) multiculturalism as central to developing their sense of place in Australia. For these participants, multiculturalism is an ideology through which they can find acceptance and belonging as recent arrivals—through building cross-cultural connections—and hold dual identities, allowing them to at once become Australian and maintain their cultural ties. Participants emphasised that the idea of
multiculturalism and a multicultural outlook helped them feel greater belonging in and connection to their new society. Ammar (18, Syrian) emphasised that the multicultural community of Australia helped him to learn more about himself, about the world and about being a global citizen:

[W]e’re not used to being like in the multiculturalism community which is pretty nice and like engaging with other people and knowing about their culture—it will impact on yourself to look after the world.

Participants consistently pointed to the idea of multiculturalism as facilitating belonging for new arrivals to Australia and allowing and validating the maintenance of dual identities. Indeed, 31 respondents (68.8%) strongly agreed with the statement: ‘Mostly, people from different backgrounds are happy to live together in Australia’ (Figure 5), and 13 (28.9%) agreed. Only Mehmoud—who has experienced long periods of exclusion linked to his detention and precarious visa status (discussed below)—disagreed with the statement.

Figure 5: Mostly, people from different backgrounds are happy to live together in Australia

Cross-cultural awareness was identified as important to the development of participants’ sense of belonging. Participants spoke of the presence and valuing of different cultures in Australia as a
reason for their sense of belonging. On an individual level, many participants drew a sense of belonging from the presence of different cultures making up and contributing to Australian society. That is, despite the history of White Australia and its legacy in myth-making, the lived experience of new arrivals spoke of acceptance of different cultures and a valuing of multiculturalism.

5.2.2 Perceived identities

The perception of refugees by the wider community has a significant impact on their sense of belonging and acceptance. Participant narratives suggest that media and political speech had some impact on the way Middle Eastern refugees were seen and treated within the community, although positive interactions were more common than negative ones. However, participants were torn about the way refugee identities were imagined in the community—although they felt the community was generally welcoming, they recognised that individuals often held some negative preconceptions about refugee and Middle Eastern arrivals, which reflected the othering of these identities in the public imaginary.

The presence of cultural and ethnic diversity within individual neighbourhoods made a significant impact on participants’ experiences of belonging and on how they felt they were viewed by members of the community. When reflecting on one-on-one interactions with strangers, those young people living in metropolitan Sydney reported less frequent instances of othering compared to those living in the smaller regional town of Wagga Wagga. The perception of their Middle Eastern identities as ‘Other’ was less marked in multicultural Sydney. At the same time, participants living in regional NSW emphasised the value of community spirit on their sense of belonging, with community-led initiatives intended to include refugees having a big impact on their sense of acceptance and welcome to the country and to their local neighbourhood. In short, those living in metropolitan areas with diverse populations were less likely to be recognised as Other and treated differently in casual exchanges than those in Wagga; at the same time, they also reported fewer instances of personalised community support, input and care compared to those living in the regional area.
The majority of respondents described Australia as a welcoming place for refugees and, to a lesser extent, Muslims. As Ali explained:

No it’s not [a racist country]. There is some [racism], actually, but they’re a very small part of the country. This is normal, this is the humanity things.

This is reflected by the 42 (93.3%) respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement ‘Australia is welcoming to refugees’.

![Figure 6: Australia is welcoming to refugees](image)

Only two (4.4%) of respondents did not agree. Mehmoud (19, Ahwazi), who spent long periods of time in Australian-run detention centres, felt alienated from society and attributed this feeling to his identity as a refugee. He emphasised the impact that the labels such as ‘refugee’ and ‘import’ had on his own wellbeing and sense of belonging:

…I don’t feel like I’m part of society, I don’t think so. I feel like they don’t include me—I feel like they hate me and I don’t know why. Is it because I’m a refugee? Maybe. Or because of my culture or my religion.
In contrast to those on permanent visas, Mehmoud described Australian policy toward refugees as very negative. His long-term detention and separation from family members, as well as his ongoing temporariness (explored in 6.1.3), has contributed to his alienation from Australian society:

I think they don’t like refugees people. The government. Like I don’t know why—if they really want refugees to come to Australia, why did they keep them in the detention centre and some of them sent to Nauru and Papua New Guinea. If they really want them, just let them come to Australia—why keep them in detention to spend so much money on food and everything?

Although most participants felt that Australia overall was welcoming, many also had anecdotes of experiencing racially-based exclusion or othering. Multiple participants spoke about misconceptions that the public had about refugees and described experiences where they felt labelled or stereotyped. These experiences were reflected in the survey responses, wherein 17 (37.7%) respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, ‘Most people in Australia talk about refugees in a positive (good) way’ (and two responded negatively).

![Figure 7: Most people in Australia talk about refugees in a positive (good) way](image-url)
Participants pointed to how owning a mobile phones as a refugee, for example, was a cause of conflict or confusion among Australians. These participants expressed disbelief that phones—an important tool of translation between languages, communication with family members and a source of news—was a trigger for anger or confusion among Australians. Ammar recalled: ‘At school, some students wanted to know why I have a mobile phone if we are refugees and we asking for help.’

Similarly, Hassan described a confrontation he had with a stranger:

    I remember when I first came to here there’s a guy who saw that I have an iPhone and he was like, ‘Oh, you’re a refugee, do you know actually to use it?’ and this made me shocked and I was like, ‘What did you say?’ and he was like, ‘Do you know actually how to use the phone that you have?’ and I was like, ‘OK, I’m a refugee. I didn’t come for money or food, I came for peace and that’s it. I know how to use this phone because I had it in my homeland. But don’t judge every refugee, you’re supposed to be nice to them; you’re not supposed to be that rude.’

Participants also spoke about the kinds of othering discourses present in Australian society and how some media and politicians were reinforcing exclusionary language and actions. The labelling, misrepresentation and stretching of their identities—as Middle Eastern, refugees and/or Muslims—impacted on participants’ interactions with fellow Australians. Mais (19, Syrian) spoke about attitudes toward arrivals from the Middle East and the connection some Australians drew to terrorism. She explained:

    Like there are some people—I came from Syria—they think that all the terrorism, all these problems is because of us. We were like a part of things that lead to this terrorism—like, we lead to terrorism. But like I say that no we don’t relate to these people.

    And even if I am Muslim and they are Muslim, but they are not Muslim because if you really read the Koran it doesn’t say about this thing terrorism and this.
But when you say to someone you came from Syria, they straight away think, ‘Oh terrorism’ and ‘Bombs’ and this kind of stuff. I start explaining to people it’s not how you see in the media because the media now is horrible. They turn the truth upside down… [T]hey’re teaching people, they’re telling people not really [true] stories, it’s all fake. They made the stories just to get people engaged in their programmes and this stuff.

As a result of this kind of misinformation, Omar (18, Syrian) explained the importance of communicating with Australian friends and clarifying misinformation they might receive in public discourse. However, he emphasised that his individual impact had a more limited reach than that of the media:

It does affect me because they’re saying things that not true and they’re teaching people things that’s not real. When my friends look that way, I think it’s all because of the media and so I feel bad. Sometimes I had discussions with my friends—we are friends, we respect each other but sometimes we had discussions—and the way how they think is the same as how the media think.

Personally, I can affect one person, but the media can affect many people so it’s very hard.

For all participants, the ways in which they were viewed by the wider community in Australia had a major impact on how connected they felt. Being—at least initially—discriminated against and excluded because of culture or religion was an experience shared by many participants and is reflected in the survey response to: ‘Most of the time, I feel I am treated differently to others because of my cultural background’ (Figure 8). Ten participants (22.2%) agreed to some extent that they were treated differently, and 10 (26.6%) were neutral.
Those participants living in metropolitan Sydney reported experiencing fewer instances of discrimination or racism in their day-to-day interactions than those living in the regional town of Wagga. Moustafa (19, Syrian) recalled experiences of being heckled on the street in Sydney: ‘Someone on the street he said “import—you’re an import”, and I … just keep going. It didn’t affect me because it’s just one person. Not many. He’s not going to affect my life with that word.’ He emphasised that a few individuals would not influence his sense of belonging and connection to Australia. Moustafa was thankful for the freedom that Australia afforded him to live and worship as he wished to:

Where I go everywhere, I can go and pray in my mosque. Everywhere I can see a mosque where I’m going, and find address [for it] … Everywhere I can go to the mosque and pray so that helps me living in Australia as well.

His experience aligned with a broader trend among participants living in the metropolitan city, who claimed that instances of discrimination were infrequent in public spaces, and contrasted to the experiences of those in regional areas. Nada (18, Iraqi) felt that her identity as a Muslim refugee living in Sydney had a limited impact on her sense of belonging:
For those participants living in Wagga, a regional town, a sense of being outsiders—labelled and made visible as Other (De Genova & Peutz, 2010; Honig, 2003; Johnston, Vasey, & Markovic, 2009)—more often occurred in public spaces. Unlike Sydney and other metropolitan cities, regional areas have populations that are less multicultural; accordingly, some refugees are more recognisably different to the majority population, and do not hold Hage’s cultural capital of whiteness and language competence (2000). Elya (25, Hazara), for example, described her experiences living in Wagga as a Muslim woman who wore a head covering. Arriving from Iran, she initially wore the traditional ‘chador’, a loose outer covering of the body that left only the face uncovered.

I am wearing my own simple hijab now. I had different hijab when I arrived here. I put a long black [chador] that Arabian people wearing—most Iranian people—your face you can see but the whole [body] is covered. We wearing all the time, it was very hard to put it away. Without that [chador], going outside I feel like I have no clothes on.

However, when she resettled in Wagga she found that her clothing choice alienated her from the community and made other community members fearful.

For two weeks I had my own [chador] because it’s too big [that is, visible]—it’s different from here people. People I found in the street—when I walking around looking for chemist or something—I found gentleman look like really strange and worried to me and like scar[ed]. You can [see it] in people face; to others they smiling, say[ing] ‘Hello’ and I feeling like they scared of me and it was really strange… I go far away and look at my back [they] still looking at me… and because I can’t speak English I can’t ask him what’s happened.
Later, after I think one month I found that the [chador] is really a bit scary [and reminds people of] ISIS group…

In order to feel more accepted—and because her traditional Afghani culture did not call for the chador—Elya began to wear only a headscarf in public.

Because [in Wagga Wagga] no more people wear that [chador], I think if I put it on I am the only one different, and everyone else is the same, or a mix. Everyone is close to each other but I am alone. So I decided to leave this [chador] away and I’m wearing a small hijab, a small scarf.

Experiences of discrimination or distrust in public places were commonly recalled by those living in Wagga, often linked to appearance or language ability and in spaces where they were easily identified as different to the dominant social group (Griffin, 2017). This othering was more common in public spaces for those living in Wagga, which has a less multicultural population than metropolitan Sydney. These experiences highlight that multiculturalism is not a value intrinsic to the Australian community of value; rather, it is an attribute of metropolitan centres where diverse communities are obliged to co-exist.

However, while public spaces were common sites of discrimination for young people in Wagga, their narratives also praised settlement services and community-led programs and initiatives to help integrate, include and support refugees into the regional community (discussed in Chapter 7), as well as to involve and educate the Australian population about refugee issues. Participants living in Sydney and in Wagga emphasised that frequent interactions between participants and non-refugee Australians were the most effective ways of challenging perceived identities, stereotypes and instances of othering directed toward them. These interactions allowed them to demonstrate that their blended identities are compatible with the Australian community of value.
5.3 New Australians: fulfilling the myth of the Good Australian

The framing of the ‘Good Citizen’ by state actors serves as a governmental instrument through which to manage the population (Pykett, Saward & Schaefer, 2010; Bhandar, 2010). The imaginary of the Good Citizen is perpetuated and recreated through national myths, which also speak to how a society should function and be governed (Flood, 2001, p. 44; Grant, 2008). In Australia, myths of the Good Citizen—the Good Australian—draw on the heritage of British colonialism, tempered by the turn toward multiculturalism from the 1960s. However, as discussed in 3.1.3, debates around good citizenship are contested and continue to undergo what Tonkens, Duyvendak and Hurenkamp (2010) term a ‘culturalization’—a broadening of expectations on the naturalising citizen beyond fulfilling civic duty (such as working and paying taxes) to demonstrating shared actions, values, beliefs and emotions. This expectation on the Good (New) Australian conflicts with the imagining of the Other and suggests that the othered identity cannot become the Good Australian.

The myth of difference perpetuated in northern states imagines refugees from the global south as holding values and identities that are incompatible with the host societies they seek to join. However, participant narratives refute this imagining of a myth of difference, with refugee young people seeking to contribute to and be included in Australian society. Many participants have high ambitions for employment and are motivated by a desire to support their family and/or enrich the community. Others seek to utilise a wide range of skills gained during their migration journeys, but may find these skills undervalued in their new society, as they are ill-aligned with the skills and cultural capital valued in ‘Western’ civilisation (Hage, 2000).

This section also demonstrates the desire of some young participants to contribute to the public discourse—the myth-making—about refugees and those from the Middle East. These young people share their experiences and refugee narratives in order to bridge the divide between the construction of the Middle Eastern refugee as the Other in the public imaginary, and their own lived experiences and desires to become Good Australians.
5.3.2 Contributing to society

The high ambitions of refugee young people have been the focus of some research, as has the need for high levels of support to help them to overcome the challenges of their refugee journeys (Cassity & Gow, 2005). Participants’ reflections on their narrative journeys often demonstrated their desire to be contributing members of their new society. Motivations behind their long-term goals were many and varied, but included making families proud, supporting their home countries after war, contributing to their host community, helping the needy and demonstrating thanks. However, no participants looked to the future to better themselves alone. Every participant aspired to support and assist, inter alia, their family, direct community, society more widely and/or strangers.

Participants’ refugee journeys and experiences during their migration journeys often motivated and inspired them when planning for their futures. Some sought to repay the sacrifices made by family members by becoming successful and contributing members of their new society. The narratives revealed the beliefs that excelling in and belonging to their new communities would make the hardships worthwhile. Saif (19, Syrian), for example, stated:

I want to be something good. Do [emphasis in original] something. I want to help people. What I mean is… I want to make my parents proud of me and I want to be maybe a nurse, a personal trainer, a dietitian, helping all of the people who can’t move. Maybe [physio] if you injured yourself, stuff like this about health because I love biology, I love stuff like this.

Many drew on the suffering and hardships they had witnessed as a direct or indirect consequence of war to inform their job aspirations. Many participants interviewed for this thesis expressed the desire to contribute to society, particularly in traditionally caring professions. Turan (18, Yazidi), in year 11 at the time of interview, hoped to become a nurse and later a surgeon in Australia:

I want to be a nurse. Because I wanna save people. After nurse I want to be a surgeon—save peoples life. I wanted to be a surgeon because there wasn’t too much surgeon in Iraq. I thought the surgeon it takes a long to be a surgeon—is it twelve years? So first I want to be a nurse.
Wishing to help others and make a positive contribution were common motivators in participants’ narratives. The frequency of such responses suggests that the refugee experience made many young people reflect on the importance of a collaborative and functional society, and on the role of the individual within it. In none of the interviews, when asked to reflect on their future goals, did participants share aspirations of personal wealth or individual betterment alone; helping others and giving back to the community were usually the motivating factors of education and employment goals. Sara (21, Iraqi), in university and studying psychology at the time of interview, shared:

[T]o benefit myself and benefit others, … that’s one of the reasons I chose psychology. I wanted to do something in the health field because I always feel like I need to communicate with people, help them. If there is something that I can help with then yes, I’m happy to help. And especially here because honestly I’ve been helped so much by education and even by the health system because I had to get surgery here.

Participant narratives challenge the myth of the refugee or migrant arrival as being a burden on the state. Rather, the high levels of motivation to succeed and to make a valuable contribution to their direct communities and to society more widely speak to the value of these young people in the community and their ability and willingness to become Good Australians. Their refugee journeys have made participants reflect on what they believe matters to their personal relationships and in their relationship to the state—commonly they reported that working hard and making a positive contribution would benefit all in the long-term.

Despite the challenges of transience, discrimination and instability of work, many participants demonstrated an ability to persevere, adapt and succeed. Many participants have lived in third countries or in precarious situations where they were obliged to adapt and learn quickly to survive. Their narratives reveal that they often have a diverse range of skills and abilities beyond those traditionally expected in young people or measured by conventional education and training benchmarks. While some participants may appear to be lacking the skills or education valued by Australian society, closer examination of their experiences reveals a depth of knowledge, skill and ability beyond that of many Australian young people the same age. Participants, for
example, speak multiple languages, have participated in the workforce from an early age, and have worked in a variety of industries.

Nadir (21, Yazidi), for example, moved from Iraq to Syria and then Turkey and as a result is illiterate in his first language (Kurmanji), but can speak Turkish, some English and some Arabic. Despite transience, limited fluency and no literacy, Nadir took jobs from a young age, first as a builder, then as a baker, and finally in a restaurant. After these years of experience in the workforce, Nadir has a range of skills that he can bring to a workplace in Australia. Nadir has already sought employment, though his ability to enter the workforce has been limited by (perceived) poor language ability—he has a working knowledge of three languages—and a (perceived) lack of skills:

I worked for Hungry Jacks for 4 weeks [as a trial] part-time but at that time my English was not very good so they didn’t employ me. I [want to] work for a baker—I worked as a baker in Turkey for 3 years. When I finish Certificate III [at TAFE], I want to.

His experience exemplifies how the work ethic and work experience evident in the narratives of many participants can be overlooked due to a lack of English ability or institutionalised or formal training.

Participants’ narratives highlight the desire of many young refugee participants to actively contribute to their new societies. Refugee young people are often highly motivated, seeking pathways through which to contribute to their community. At the same time, many bring a range of skills that may not be acknowledged or valued by institutions—formal education and training and ability to speak English are often prized above years of on-site work experience or the ability to communicate in multiple languages. These forms of bias speak to Hage’s (2000) reflections on cultural capital as signifiers of belonging—instead of being accepted and appreciated for the skills they do have, refugees are othered for the markers of identity they do not demonstrate, such as whiteness and (English) language competence.
5.3.3 Contributing to discourse

This section also demonstrates the desire of some young participants to contribute to the public discourse about refugees and those from the Middle East. For many, the opportunities to share their experiences and to be involved in discussions about the place of Middle Eastern refugees in Australian society were important.

The voices of refugees and asylum seekers are not often heard in political speech or in the media (Ruedin, 2017; Bleich, Bloemraad & de Graauw, 2015), and this invisibility in public discourse can have consequences for representation and/or othering. A number of participants recognised the absence of refugee voices in the Australian community and sought to share their own experiences. In doing so, some were motivated by a desire to support and be role models to other refugees in the community; others sought to educate and build awareness through discourse; while still others sought to rebut the negative depictions of Middle Eastern refugees.

Actively participating and engaging in public discourse was a theme that emerged in some participants’ narratives. Prompts about individual politicians and their political views drew mixed responses, and suggested that recently arrived refugee young people did not closely follow political speech relating to refugees and Middle Eastern identities. Seventeen (37.7%) participants could neither agree nor disagree with the statement, ‘Most politicians care about refugees’ (Figure 9), while five (11.1%) disagreed or strongly disagreed. This large number of neutral responses suggests that participants were unsure about how to answer, or had no strong opinion.
In interviews, some participants were unsure as to how politicians viewed people of their minority identity. The fact that these respondents were unaware of key political figures and/or their views about refugees and Middle Eastern arrivals may reflect a broader trend of youth disengagement with politics, including among those who are recently arrived. This disengagement extends to issues that impact young people, including, in the case of these participants, politicians’ attitudes toward refugees.

Other participants raised concerns that a few loud voices in politics who were critical of Middle Eastern identities overshadowed otherwise positive leadership. As discussed in section 3.2, misinformation spread through political speech and myth-making can contribute to the labelling, exclusion and othering of minority and Middle Eastern identities in society. Saif (19, Syrian), for example, reflected on the comments made by Fraser Anning in the wake of the Christchurch shootings:

This is the guy—he’s from the government, a senator. I read what he wrote and he said that the guy who kills [people] at the mosque [at Christchurch], that it was only a game effective[ly] and stuff like this. And it wasn’t his fault, it was the Muslim’s fault… Actually, he deserved the egg[ing].
When asked to reflect on how such attitudes from politicians made him feel, Saif continued:

It freaks me out, but the good thing is there is always good people who stopped these things cause if they didn’t do this, the people gonna go out and makes some troubles because of this smaller things, maybe it’s going to make revolutions, you don’t know.

Saif’s comments reiterate the impact that politicians can have on the behaviour and beliefs of the wider population and on the sense of belonging experienced by members of minority groups. Media and politicians’ representation of minorities can have an impact on their perception by the wider community, and this can have consequences for their development of belonging.

Opportunities to share refugee narratives raise awareness of the reality of refugee experiences and combat negative myths, and also validate the experiences, challenges and strengths of the young person sharing their story. In presenting at a large Refugee Week event, Aischa (24, Yazidi) was given a platform from which she could highlight the challenges of her migration journey and the experiences of the Yazidi community in Australia:

I had a speech with many people because it was the first time for me to be in that special place and with many people, it was great for me. I present my story to Peter Dutton. I have been in Canberra three times with different teams—and [talk about] how the Yazidi story is going on.

Ammar (18, Syrian), spoke of being selected by his school to be their representative in NSW Parliament; there, he presented a speech on the requirement under Section 44 that parliamentarians hold no other citizenship than Australian citizenship. Ammar emphasised how dual citizenships were important to his sense of identity and self. This speech gave Ammar a platform to highlight the importance of dual nationalities—and dual cultures—to members of the multicultural Australian community. He said:

For someone who was born overseas, this current rules means I have to dispose of any of my citizenships of my homeland of Syria [to enter parliament] but if I had children born in Australia they would also need to renounce their Syrian citizenship even though they are Australian and born here. …
I think this Constitution should be updated because if you are a true multiculturalism nation, anyone who is an Australian citizen should be eligible to sit in the federal Parliament.

Importantly, this was an opportunity for Ammar to represent his school, the Syrian community and refugees more broadly. These young people, by speaking to their lived experiences in a public forum, are able to present a counterpoint to disembodied othering and myth-making that can occur in political speech and can infiltrate the public imaginary (as discussed in 3.2). Central to this is providing space for othered groups to be visible and heard to promote belonging among young people from refugee backgrounds.

Other participants sought to inform their peers about the experiences of refugees in order to build empathy and promote acceptance of refugee young people. Maryam (18, Syrian) spoke of the importance of presenting at Refugee Week at her school in terms of promoting understanding of refugee experiences. The opportunity allowed her peers to develop a greater understanding of her migration journey and her reasons for coming to Australia:

I feel very belong to the school. The school has helped me a lot especially by giving me a chance on Refugee Week to go and stand on the stage and talk about my experience which made the students feel they want to know me more and then the students started to talk to me and ask me about my experience and they supported me.

Maryam’s presentation served to raise awareness of refugee issues within the school community and also contributed to her belonging; when her peers had a greater understanding of Maryam’s experiences and challenges, they demonstrated greater empathy, interest and kindness towards her. This ultimately contributed to Maryam’s sense of acceptance and belonging within the school and wider community.

The presence of refugee voices in public discourse, and their participation in advocacy and support groups, assists fellow refugees to experience belonging and is particularly important for those refugees experiencing precarity. Hamzah (21, Syrian) spoke to the importance of refugee young people participating in awareness-raising about the difficult situations faced by some
refugees while living in the Australian community. Hamzah empathised with refugees in difficult situations and felt it was important for him to remain committed to and supportive of those in weaker positions than himself:

I’ve been in this situation, to be a refugee, to be in a hard situation and even to come here with no help so when I saw people helping me when I came here, I saw how great it is for me, so I’m trying to give back to people who are in need.

He was thankful for the support he received from Australian community activists to get active in community and advocacy events, particularly for new arrivals and refugees:

We do a lot of social activities, especially for redirecting new arrivals especially for working and employment because a lot of them struggle in getting employment …they have not that good English so we redirect them to certain course they can do [for free]. … I do some of the advocacy for refugee issues and political issues—maybe for the refugee rights. We went to a lot of protests in this city for the refugees in Manus and Christmas Island.

By being active in advocacy and support groups, Hamzah is able to build awareness and involvement among those outside of refugee communities, thereby building a support base for the most vulnerable in the community. He described inviting and engaging friends from different (non-refugee) backgrounds in events:

[My] other mix of friends … are different from my country that I met in school and uni … [and] I’m trying to make a relationship between both of [groups] because a lot of my friends, the Australian ones, they are interested in the refugee crisis and this stuff. So I’ve invited a lot of my uni friends to participate in the protests … [and] I am trying to make a balance and a mix between.

Initiatives and platforms that provide refugee young people with the space to be visible and have their voices heard are essential to build tolerance and belonging, and to (re)shape myths of the refugee, the Other and the Good Citizen. By contributing to public discourse about refugee
issues, these young people facilitate tolerance, empathy and understanding and foster cross-cultural awareness between different groups living in the Australian community.

**Discussion**

This chapter responded to the first research question, examining the ways that myth-making about Middle Eastern refugees impacted on the belonging of participants. It explored how the lived experiences of refugee young people contrasted to the myths about Middle Eastern refugees perpetuated by and in Australian society. It also examined how participants use their narratives and their experiences to contribute to and deepen the imagining of Middle Eastern refugees in the community.

This chapter began by contrasting the challenges and dangers faced by participants during migration with the myth of the bogus refugee. In Australia, bogus refugees have been imagined primarily as arrivals by boat, with negative consequences for the perception of all refugee arrivals due to the ‘stretching of identity’. Political speech and public discourse have viewed these arrivals as illegally circumventing Australian sovereignty, ‘jumping the queue’ and taking the place of more ‘worthy’ refugees waiting to be resettled in Australia. This construction belies the reality that many refugees utilise irregular channels during their journeys even if they are then resettled in Australia through ‘regular’ channels; participants described hiring smugglers and/or illegally traversing borders during their journeys out of their home countries. They also recounted the dangers and deprivations these journeys inflicted on their family members, including young children. The lived realities of refugees fleeing war and having to make life-and-death decisions is very different to myth-making by politicians such as those who drew conclusions about what ‘real’ refugees would and should do during the Children Overboard scandal. In short, participant narratives revealed the legal, ethical and psychological complexity associated with refugee journeys that defy generalisation in myth-making and politicised speech.

The chapter revealed participants’ experiences in third countries and showed how these challenged the myth of effective protection and the non-entrée regime. The non-entrée regime sees northern states seeking to prevent refugees from reaching their jurisdiction by, inter alia, refusing asylum to those who could arguably claim effective protection in a safe third country.
Participants described limited access to schooling, poor working conditions and discrimination and racism in those third countries. Their narratives showed how young people in those third countries can experience bare life, excluded from the political and cultural community and with limited rights, thereby refuting the notion of effective protection.

Participants’ perception of themselves as New Australians was also explored, as was the legacy of multiculturalism on their sense of belonging. Participant narratives demonstrated the ways in which many young people are able to reconcile dual cultural identities to form a blended Arab-Australian identity. This navigation and melding of two cultural worlds reflects Butler’s and Muir’s (2017) claim that young people are able to negotiate the different obligations, contestations and connections of their lives in order to remain connected to the things they value. Moreover, participants often credited multiculturalism with their ability to hold dual identities. Although multiculturalism has had a chequered history in federal policy and has been criticised and condemned in public debates for attributing to a declining sense of loyalty to Australia (Section 3.1.4), respondents expressed the belief that multiculturalism empowered them to become Good Australians while simultaneously maintaining and promoting their cultural identities (Ozdowski, 2016). This chapter revealed that the majority of participants saw multiculturalism as an empowering and inclusionary force in Australia, allowing new arrivals to belong while simultaneously maintaining their cultural backgrounds; all but one respondent, for example, believed that Australians were happy to live with people from different cultures. Participants compared this acceptance of different cultures to their experiences in third countries, where their cultural identities were often actively rejected or used as triggers for discrimination.

Participants’ beliefs about how they were perceived by Australians were examined, with reference to othering and the construction of the Middle Eastern Other. Participants recounted their experiences of exclusion and othering, with those living in metropolitan areas with diverse populations less likely to be labelled Other, and treated differently in casual exchanges, than those in Wagga. Experiences of discrimination or distrust in public places were often linked to appearance or language ability and in spaces where they were easily identified as different to the dominant social group (Griffin, 2017). This lived experience of exclusion and othering in public discourse reflects a history of myth-making derived from Australia’s immigrant past (Barthes, 1973; see also S. Hall, 1997). The othering of immigrant groups serves to sustain and
authenticate the dominant culture’s system of meaning and devalue the differences of others (Hawkes, 1988, p. 131; Staszak, 2008).

Many participants could share anecdotes of negative stereotyping or labelling perpetrated by members of the public, from asking why refugees have mobile phones to calling participants ‘imports’. Participants recounted being called ‘imports’ and being targeted for their cultural and language backgrounds. The evocation of labels such as ‘import’ or ‘refugee’ designates participants as the Other, incompatible with the shared values and beliefs of the community of value (Bridget Anderson, 2013; De Genova & Peutz, 2010; Honig, 2003; Lamont, 2000). Misconceptions about refugee and Middle Eastern identities reflect the politicising of ethnicity and religion in the global north (Benier, 2016; Berkhout & Ruedin, 2017; Brubaker, 2013). Participants recognised that the prejudice experienced in their day-to-day interactions that was borne of misconceptions held by members of the public and exacerbated by some media and political actors.

Chapter 5 explored the ways in which participants seek to contribute to Australian society, embodying the Good Australian and challenging the myth of difference. The myth of difference views refugees from the global south and the Middle East as holding incompatible values and identities to the communities of northern states. Participant narratives, by contrast, demonstrate how participants have high ambitions for employment and are motivated by a desire to support their families and the communities in which they live. This section spoke of the wide range of skills that refugee young people gained during their migration journeys, although these may not be recognised (or certified) in Australia. Additionally, these young people commonly support their families and demonstrate independence, resilience and maturity in their new lives in Australia (E. Miller et al., 2018; Matthews, 2008).

Finally, this chapter explored how refugee participants sought to contribute to the myth-making about Middle Eastern refugees. It demonstrated how these participants seek to bridge the divide between the construction of the Middle Eastern refugee as Other in the public imaginary, and their own lived experiences and desires to become Good Australians. Participants emphasised the value of being able to communicate with their peers and to build cross-cultural connections. Participants spoke of the importance of finding the space and time to engage in open and honest
conversations that allowed them to bridge cultural misunderstandings or prejudices. These opportunities allowed young refugees to explain their own experiences and values and to separate these from stereotypes. Many participants placed an emphasis on the significance of public opportunities to address the community and to share their stories, experiences and worldviews, such as at school assemblies or as school representatives. After sharing their refugee experiences and their cultural understandings, young people reported feeling a greater sense of connection to and acceptance by their peers and to members of the community. This was viewed as an important way of combating ignorance and cultural discrimination, and provided the young person with a voice to participate in and contribute to the community of value.

Participants’ narratives in this chapter demonstrated the value and richness that can be added to a society when different cultures are embraced rather than othered—and when migrant communities are empowered to contribute in discourse, as well as economically and socially (Hugo, 2011). This chapter spoke to the importance of openness and communication across cultures and among individuals in Australia: by listening to and accepting others, the dangers of othering, discrimination, stereotyping and exclusion can be mitigated. In this way, all those living in Australia can move closer toward being an inclusive and open society: a community that values the sum of its parts, rather than enforcing imagined values on the whole.

The following chapter speaks to accessing the state and becoming part of the population. It asks participants to reflect on the value of citizenship as legal belonging, and of the rights and privileges afforded to citizens. It includes a discussion of individual’s interactions with bordering practices—particularly the allocation of visas— and how they influence their experiences of permanency or precarity. The chapter also explores the consequences of detention on refugees’ belonging in and to the community.
Chapter 6

Bordering: accessing the population as New Australians

Introduction

Northern states attempt to control the compositions of their populations through the exertion of bordering practices on citizens and non-citizens alike (P. Miller & Rose, 1990, as discussed in section 2.2). Increasingly, bordering practices of northern states are shaped by political discourse that constructs migration as a threat and the right to cross borders a security issue (Guild, 2003). Stronger restrictions on entry to the state and regulation of how long arrivals can reside in it have been justified as security measures (Chebel d’Appollonia & Reich, 2008; Leonard, 2010). This has in part translated into the ‘non-entrée regime’ (Hathaway, 1992; Chimni, 1998), which prevents the entry of refugees into northern states before they can evoke rights and protections under the Refugee Convention (Hathaway & Gammeltoft-Hansen, 2015).

Bordering policies that control and shape the behaviour of populations can be defined in terms of a legal relationship between the individual and the state. These practices effect the extent to which an individual can access full legal belonging, such as through the granting or withholding of visas and the availability of pathways to citizenship. As explored in section 2.2.3, a young refugee’s legal designation according to the state has a direct impact on their ability to participate meaningfully in civil society; this can have flow-on effects for their cultural belonging, even when living long-term in the state.

This chapter explores the interactions of Middle Eastern refugees with state bordering practices and the impacts these have on the experience of belonging. In doing so, it responds to the second research question:

In what ways do bordering practices influence refugee young people’s access to the state and belonging?

The chapter firstly investigates participants’ interactions with the border when seeking access to the state. It looks at the migration journeys of those settled as part of the Humanitarian Program),
as well as the experiences of those seeking to reunite with family members in Australia. It also explores one participant’s experiences of detention, and how this suspension of legal rights and status impacted on their wellbeing, perception of Australia and its institutions and their sense of belonging. Secondly, the chapter explores the different visa categories held by participants and the impact that permanency or precarity has on their sense of belonging. Thirdly, the chapter documents how participants view the rights and privileges associated with citizenship and how they conceptualise citizenship as a means to transcend each refugee’s bare life.

6.1 Accessing the state

All participants interviewed for this study live in Australia—and have therefore accessed the state—although their responses revealed markedly inconsistent experiences with the bordering practices faced, including applying for visas, the journey to Australia, and resettling family members in Australia.

6.1.1 Successful interactions with bordering practices

Those participants who were settled through the Humanitarian Program often reported that, although they sometimes experienced practical difficulties and associated anxiety applying for asylum, their journey to Australian soil was for the most part straightforward. Some who were settled through the Humanitarian Program reflected on the difficulties they faced applying for and receiving visas. Saif (19, Syrian), for example, spoke about the emotional turmoil his family faced in applying for a visa. He recalled that his family was offered asylum in Australia but this was revoked due to his father’s illness:

The Australian embassy they call my dad and they ask him if he interested in coming to Australia... they gave us hope for a new life. We thought it wouldn’t be too long when they would call us and we would come to Australia. But it took us two years to come to here.

Before this time, the consulate called us and said “No. You can’t come anymore because you sick”, for my dad because he had the liver cancer. …After they told us
that we can’t come anymore, the whole family started crying because it was [thwarted] hope. …

After two more years living in Jordan, Saif’s family were again contacted by the Embassy:

They said they would give us a Gold Opportunity – that’s what they called it because it not often happen and then they said ‘We will get you to Australia’ …Then we moved here… It took us a day to get to Australia but it was really nice in the plane…Then [in Australia] we slept the best night in my life.

In contrast to the difficulty of being identified and granted asylum, participants reflected on the ease of the journey to Australia and the benefits of having people to meet them upon arrival. Layla (24, Yazidi) described how, upon being granted a visa, her journey to Australia was ‘easy’; ‘They gave us a visa at Istanbul in airport and Immi-card so when we came to Australia everything was settled.’ That is, participants’ arrival in Australia was often the easiest part of their journey out of their home countries.

The allocation of sponsored refugee visas under the Humanitarian Program means that those with support from family or friends in Australia are prioritised for resettlement in Australia. Many participants who arrived in Australia on permanent humanitarian visas received assistance from family members in-country. Moustafa (19, Syrian) said about his application to live in Australia:

It was always the plan because my uncle is from here [Australia], and he came to Australia about 30 years ago, so he made us the paperwork and all this stuff to come to Australia. That took us about two years when we were in Egypt.

Omar (18, Syrian) also claimed that family connections were central to their decision to apply to Australia:

We were in Lebanon [when] we decided [to apply to Australia]. Our cousin’s here [in Australia]. They called us and they say ‘Australia’s accepting the migrants, like the Syrian refugees. Do you want us to apply for you?’ and we said ‘Yeah,’ obviously.
Under current policy, those who have a permanent humanitarian visa can propose immediate family members for entry through the offshore Humanitarian Program. However, this process has become increasingly difficult, as there are greater requirements for refugees themselves to fund and support newly arrived family members (Department of Home Affairs, 2019c).

6.1.2 Rejected visas

Interview data emphasised that the inability to bring family members into Australia can have a negative impact on young people’s day-to-day happiness and sense of belonging. Some discussed the difficulties they faced in reuniting with family members while living in Australia on a permanent visa. Ammar (18, Syrian), for example, explained his attempts to reunite with extended family:

For me, we made an application to bring our family members, and we got refused like 12 times. I know a lot of people have the same situation so this is the only thing that I have concern about. It would be much much better if they would accept more people to come in here.

He linked this difficulty in reuniting families to changing government policy and said that these increased restrictions impacted on his perception of refugee belonging in Australia. When asked to describe how welcoming Australia is to refugees, he explained:

[I]t is the best [country at] welcoming everyone when it comes to being here. But in the late few months, even few years, the policy of accepting refugees is getting really reduced by the government. …Within Australia, it’s a great place to live in and Australia is welcoming refugees within Australia [but] I feel like they have to accept more people in Australia.

Although participants are now living in Australia, many continue to think of family members who have been killed, are still in danger, or are separated from them indefinitely. For Emine (22, Yazidi), separation from family members is difficult and impacts on her happiness in living in Australia:
One of my sisters, she’s still in Iraq, she’s stuck there. We applied for her [to come to Australia] about two years [ago] and they refused her. We are so worried to see her because we know how bad it is. She’s about 30—she’s married, she has a family. But it’s still so hard because we know how hard situation they are in in Iraq now, in the camp. It’s terrible, so sometimes we are so sad… But Australia we still call our home because it saved [us], it’s the best place for us.

Those living on temporary visas have no rights to family reunification, with former boat arrivals prevented from ever bringing their family members to Australia. Temporary visa holders are also unable to travel overseas to see their family members. This separation can have a direct impact on individuals’ ability to forward plan and to work toward their future. Morgan (Refugee Liaison Officer) discussed how restrictions on family reunification impacts on those wishing to see their family members in person:

[The Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV)] denies them any kind of family reunion if the men have come first hoping to one day bring their families with them, and so the separation of families is intrinsically built into this visa system. It means even if they save the money, they can’t go to a neutral country and meet their families closer because they don’t have the permission to travel—so there’s so much disadvantage.

Nat, a settlement officer, identified family separation as the main concern voiced by those accessing services:

The key concern that we always hear is the lack of access to family reunion. Often people will have family members in situations of danger and one of the absurdities is they’ve been found to be a refugee but their wife or son or daughter or parent, often in very similar circumstances, remains in situations of either direct or indirect danger. … Often they’re just grappling to find a way to see their families—to get permission to go back or to go to a third country to see them temporarily.

Morgan gave anecdotes of the impact that visa-related family separation could have on young people’s daily lives:
I know of one case in this school of a year 12 student whose family came by boat before the rule changed in July 2013, so they were on Christmas Island, then Darwin, then Sydney. They were on a bridging visa for years and they got the SHEV a bit over a year ago. The father was also in Indonesia but got a boat and landed after that date and spent 5 years on Manus Island.

So for this student’s life, first at the IEC and then in high school from [Years] 7 to 11, the only way to talk to the father was through social media when the reception on Manus Island was good enough. He’s now been brought to Australia—partly for health reasons—at the start of [2019]. He was in Villawood for 3 months but now he’s finally living with them.

This kind of family separation and worry can only be detrimental to young people already grappling with everyday challenges of settlement, compounded by the traumas of refugee experiences and separation from loved ones.

6.1.3 Detention

As discussed in 3.3.1, under the Australian Migration Act, all people who enter Australian territory without a visa are required to be detained, with those arriving by boat often held in remote locations (Markus & Arunachalam, 2018). Australia’s off-shore detention policies embody Agamben’s notion of the state of exception, wherein detainees are ‘stripped of all political status and wholly reduced to bare life’ (2005). Those held in detention are under the control of the state but excluded from its legal processes and protections (Vogl, 2015). These policies are the ultimate representation of exercising control over who can enter the population, claiming absolute sovereignty over borders and detaining those lowest on the hierarchy of desirability in ‘detention centres in remote and hostile sites’ (Briskman & Mason, 2015, p. 138).

Long-term detention has detrimental consequences for detainees’ wellbeing and mental health (Coffey, Kaplan, Sampson & Tucci, 2010; Green & Eagar, 2010), while isolation from mainstream society can undermine confidence and the ability to function positively in society upon release (Griffiths, 2013; Turnbull, 2016). Moreover, detention can reinforce a lack of trust in authority figures and can create individuals who feel excluded from or actively discriminated
against within society. As many of those held in detention ultimately live long term in Australian society, the experiences of exclusion and of mistrust of state actors can have negative consequences for shaping, normalising and instrumentalising the behaviour of these refugees as (un)governable subjects.

In this study, two participants (6.1%) spent time in Australian detention centres—Hassan (23, Iraqi) and Mehmoud (19, Ahwazi). This section will closely examine Mehmoud’s interaction with the bordering practices of the Australian state and how detention has impacted on his sense of belonging in Australia.

Mehmoud fled Ahwaz, a contested area of Iran, and with his two brothers and parents travelled through Shiraz, Dubai and Jakarta before taking a boat to Christmas Island. There, at the age of 13, Mehmoud began a 27-month stay in three different Australian detention centres before entering community detention in Sydney.

I was in Christmas Island for 6 months. In Darwin I stayed there for almost 6 months as well and then I went to Adelaide and stayed there for almost 6 months and then I came back to Darwin for a year and a half.

The length of time in detention may impact on young people’s perceptions of belonging to Australian society. In Mehmoud’s narrative, detention and precarity have had long-term consequences for his familial relationships and for family members’ mental and physical health. He emphasised:

[My dad is] really sick—he take a lot of medicines [for] his teeth. I think his teeth they took out of in the detention centre, [the teeth] didn’t have condition so they took his teeth. And he’s like mental and stressed… [H]e’s really sick because of how the Iranian government put pressure on him and when he came here, there was a lot of pressure in the detention centre and so he got really really sick. He doesn’t get support, he doesn’t even go out, he only stays in his room.

Differences in visa categories and conditions can impact on people’s ability to live normal lives and to maintain reasonable family relationships. Mehmoud and his father spent some months in
detention separated from his mother and brothers. As Mehmoud’s younger brother was only a 5-year-old when the family group was detained, he was transferred to community detention after 18 months; Mehmoud’s mother was settled in the community at that time also, along with his elder brother, who was over 18 and settled as the male guardian of the child. Mehmoud and his father remained in detention:

When we were [in a detention centre] in Adelaide with all my family and then when we came back to Darwin, my mum and my two brothers came out of the detention centre and my dad and I, we stayed there.

When he was relocated to Darwin, Mehmoud was deeply affected by the separation from his mother. She and his brothers were resettled in Sydney, over 3,000 kilometres away:

I talked to mum on the phone—we used to use internet, like on computer. We used to, like, Skype and message each other. … I don’t know what [the government] were doing exactly. We came in the same boat and we came in the centres at the same time… [W]hy did they separate us? It was really crazy, I was confused.

He spoke about the negative impact that being separated from his mother had on his mental health and behaviour during this time. While in detention, Mehmoud and his father were also often in conflict.

Mehmoud’s temporary status had consequences for his family unit once he was settled in the community as well. Upon settlement in community detention in Sydney, Mehmoud was still not allowed to live with his mother. Under the conditions of their respective visas, they were settled some distance apart; Mehmoud or his mother travelled for 40 minutes on public transport to visit each other, before returning to their respective homes. Staying over at each other’s house could have constituted a breach of Mehmoud’s visa, ‘…because we have a different visa, we didn’t have the same visa as they had. They said, “You guys have to be separated.” [At the time] [t]hey didn’t tell us why or anything. Just because of the visa.’
At the conclusion of the interview, Mehmoud reflected on what he viewed as important to live and succeed—to develop belonging—in Australia after a long period of detention and disruption. He claimed:

What else is important—to study and focus on family, and to be with your family. Because if you’re not with your family, you’re separated, you won’t feel happy and you keep always thinking about your family… If you’re with your family, you’re happy and you can focus on things, you know?

Mehmoud’s experience of family separation impacted on his ability to learn in the detention centre, to plan for his future and to prepare for his life in Australian society, where he lives to this today.

Mehmoud linked his rising levels of disaffection and the hopelessness during his detention to an uncertainty about his future and the feeling that he might never be free:

I used to think that the detention centre—how I spent half my time there and I used to say to myself I’m going to do this and this and that when I get out of detention centre but when you ask anyone there who works there when I’m going to get out, they will say something to you so you can give up. ‘You will never get out of this place.’ So I gave up on everything.

You know what I mean [when I say] ‘I gave up on everything’? I only had one thing—to be a soccer player, that’s all—and when I was still in my country and my dad said we’re going to go to Australia I was thinking, ‘I’m going to make my dream come [true] really quick in this country, I can play soccer and be really success.’ When I came, and I saw all of this situation in the detention centre, I said, ‘OK, that’s it. No more, don’t think about anything.’ It was really bad.

Detention centres have been found to have negative consequences for the behaviour and development of children and young people (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 2004, pp. 429–432), and this is supported by Mehmoud’s experience. He spoke of his own
combative and destructive behaviour during his detention and linked this to the mental stress that long-term detention put in him under.

In Christmas Island they used to send other boys and girls [to school] but they didn’t let me to go to the school ’cause I used to fight a lot and I used to get angry because of the situation and how they used to treat me.

Detention centres also have inadequate access to educational facilities and recreational opportunities (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 2004, pp. 636–638; 686–689). Mehmoud’s resistance saw him excluded from mandated schooling, suggesting that the educational facilities were ill-equipped to moderate and address combative behaviour:

I used to make a lot of troubles in the detention centre and I didn’t go to school because I didn’t like the school at the first time because they used to separated us from the Australian people. So when the Australian people finish the school, we would go after them—when the school is empty, it was only us—what is that? So I didn’t like it and I didn’t go and the police came after me and they say, ‘If you don’t go to school I will do this and this and that to you. I’ll put you in jail, I’ll “take you out”.’

Mehmoud’s literacy and education, already low due to discrimination and disengagement in his home country, suffered further during his time in detention. This has implications for his ability to participate in society now that he is living in Australia. Although he speaks three languages well, Mehmoud has limited literacy in any language. He also has limited numeracy skills. His narrative illustrates the negative impact that indefinite detention has on the individual welfare of young people, as well as the consequences for Australian society in the long term. Now 20 years old and having lived in the Australia for over 5 years, Mehmoud has a long future ahead, but his refugee journey and his interactions with the Australian state at the border have undermined his settlement and have had consequences for settlement services (see 7.4.3).

The impact of bordering policies on the individual—such as arbitrary and indefinite detention—places otherwise unremarkable individuals in conflict with institutional or state actors. Negative interactions with state actors can undermine trust in authority figures and an
individual’s belief that he or she is being treated fairly. This can have consequences for governing the conduct of conduct and for the making of governable subjects who will do as they ought. Mehmoud’s interactions with contracted detention officers demonstrates this potential conflict at the border:

I wasn’t that good at English and then when I used to get angry at the detention centre, the people who worked there (we used to call them ‘officer’ or ‘CIRCO’), they used to just swear at me and push me or put me on the ground and hit me. That’s why I get like crazy.

Like they used to be racist to us—some of the officers were good and some of them really bad. They just hate us, you know? ‘You are a refugee and you are like—’ saying bad words. It affected me—I was really angry and really upset.

These interactions reflect Bridget Anderson’s emphasis on the use of labelling to designate the Other; the label of refugee is used by officers in Mehmoud’s narrative as an insult and indicator of Mehmoud’s ‘status’. This othering also reflects Hage’s (2008) notion of negative interpellation, where the individual is made visible and imbued with negative characteristics and so is in contrast to the Good Citizen.

Again, detention may have consequences for detainees’ trust in authority figures and belief in the validity of state action, and this in turn can impact on the making of Good Citizens. Mehmoud reflected on his interactions with police as a child, and how their treatment compounded his negative behaviour:

It has affected me because once police came to the detention centre and they treated me really bad—they were talking to me and like I feel like they want to hurt me, like punch me and this and that. The way they spoke to me, it was really bad.

Many detained asylum seekers—including Mehmoud—ultimately end up living in Australian society; accordingly, their learned distrust of actors of Australian institutions can be damaging to wider society, as well as to their individual sense of belonging. Mehmoud summarised the
barriers to belonging presented by detention centres, and the limitations that long-term detention and precarity place on the individual’s ability to participate and succeed in society:

That’s the thing—what’s the point of keeping people in the detention centre, like I said before. Get out of the detention centre really quick and get education and not waste all their age.

Imagine: I came to Australia [at] 13 years old. I spent three birthdays in the detention. Like if I came out really quick of that place, for example now I would finish year 12 and TAFE and I might be working and make some money. I’m in year 11 now. I swear it is, it’s really bad. I spent three? Four? Terms—a year and a half I spent in the IEC as well. Twenty-seven months in the detention centre and in the IEC a year and a half—4 years and a half! I don’t know what to say about that—I can’t complain, I guess.

The consequence of social, legal and educational exclusion of asylum seekers—particularly young people—through detention is the creation of a disenfranchised, traumatised and undereducated subgroup who may be unable to attain legal and cultural belonging. However, many of these individuals ultimately live in the community, but may not be governable subjects.

Mehmoud is now a temporary visa holder who, despite his ongoing legal precarity and self-described exclusion from Australian society, sees no option of returning to his home country: ‘I can’t—they’d kill me.’ That is, Mehmoud lives in Australia in a state of long-term temporariness without building strong connections to the community. His narrative highlights the problem of temporary visas (compounded by mandatory detention) in creating long-term residents in the community without fostering belonging; long-term temporariness is in direct conflict with research that supports clear pathways to citizenship as supporting successful refugee integration (Strang & Ager, 2010) and moral arguments to include long-term residents as citizens of the state (Hampshire, 2011).
6.2 Visas: permanency or precarity

Long-term residents in a state develop economic, social and cultural connections to the community in which they live (Brubaker, 2010), and some theorists argue that these connections justify their legal and cultural membership in the society (Hampshire, 2011; Carens, 2002, see 3.3.2). At the same time, access to citizenship and having the right to remain in a place on a permanent basis can have a positive impact on the development of individuals’ cultural connections (Aptekar, 2015).

On the other hand, living in a long-term state of temporariness can have negative consequences for the formation of cultural connections to the state (McMillan, 2017). Those temporary residents can experience precarity—being neither fully excluded nor fully recognised (Walters, 2008), living with uncertainty and instability (Lewis et al., 2014; Waite, 2009).

As explored in 2.2.2, refugees and asylum seekers are increasingly constrained by states seeking to prevent their access to the state and attendant rights. Australia has adopted sophisticated deterrence measures to restrict refugee claims outside the off-shore resettlement program, at times adopting policies akin to a ‘state of exception’ (Agamben, 2005); as a consequence, some refugee arrivals to Australia experience long-term temporariness (Mares, 2016), transitioning between different visa classes in their search for permanency and stability (Mares, 2018; Wright, Clibborn, Piper and Cini, 2016). This long-term temporariness can leave them on the outer limits of the population (Ty, 2019) and uncertain about their futures; this can have consequences for refugees’ connection to and participation within the community.

6.2.1 The importance of permanent visas

Permanency allows refugee arrivals to rebuild their lives and look to the future. Young refugees have their whole lives ahead of them and would benefit from the security of permanent situations (Nunn et al., 2016). Permanency enables them to plan for the long term such as engaging in education, charting out a career and planning for a family life. It is the antidote to the precariousness and insecurity of refugee journeys that often involve long periods of transitory living in third countries (Hamood, 2006; Schapendonk, 2012) under precarious living and working conditions (Bloch & McKay, 2016; Griffiths, 2014; Sager, 2015).
Participants emphasised the importance of permanent visas to enable them to begin new lives. Ammar (18, Syrian) compared his permanent settlement in Australia to the short-term solution of living in Lebanon during the Syrian crisis:

It made the difference because now you can look for the future, but when you have temporary [residency], like when we were in Lebanon, we don’t know—we might leave now, we might stay, we didn’t know anything so we were concerned. If you had a temporary visa you would always [be] concerned if you going to leave now. The [government] might say, ‘Your visa has expired, you have to leave now.’

But when you have permanent visa you can always settle down, you can look to the future and what you going to do, you can make plans. That’s going to make the difference.

Those participants who were settled quickly in Australia through the Humanitarian Program spoke of the major role that permanent residency played in their sense of belonging in Australia: it provided them with stability and helped rebuild their identity outside of their refugee status.

Moustafa (19, Syrian) spoke about his thankfulness for Australia’s accepting his family on a permanent visa:

Australia is welcoming to refugees—that’s why I’m here. Many countries accepted refugees but not as permanent visa—just a temporary visa … where they live until their home or their countries is safe to get back to. But Australia gave refugees a permanent visa which they live for their whole life.

He continued, saying that the benefit of permanency was the ability to rebuild a life in a new country after losing everything in the home country:

Maybe some people, they say, ‘I don’t have any home anymore, no job [in their home country].’ I think that’s why permanent visa is important. Because when you live in a country, any country, you start a life, learn the language of the country, you work, you get some money and stuff and you rent a house and you build your future here.
It’s kind of hard leaving where you started [building a life]. We started from Syria, yes, we build our future there and everything, but we had to leave. So now we’re building new future in the next country. You can’t worry—you’re not going back to your country because you already built [something new] in Australia.

This permanency allowed Moustafa to look to and plan for the future, rather than fixating on the past: ‘[B]ecause you have Syria, it’s war and stuff, so you kind of have to keep going with the life and you have to think about making your future in Australia.’

Participants also recognised that permanency allows the development of a tangible connection to the host country that might not occur if their residency is only temporary. An important feature of permanent visas for young refugees is that it gives them the opportunity to develop a new hybrid identity. Participants spoke of an emerging cultural connection with Australia that complemented and enriched their Middle Eastern identities. For Ahmed (19, Syrian), who arrived at 16, Australia gave him the opportunity to embrace two identities. ‘I feel [like] an Arab person. But I belong maybe in between [Syria and Australia] because I nearly grewed up here. Here I start work, here I have a life.’ Hamzah (21, Syrian) also spoke of the importance of building a cultural connection to the place that you live in. He emphasised that time spent in a new country on a permanent basis allowed the development of this identity:

It’s not about only the place of origin, it’s about the place that you’re raise[d] in and you live in and when I look at Australia and compare it to different countries and all the chances that are offered in here and the lifestyle, like regarding human rights, to respect in the community, to anti-racism—all these kinds of stuff—I feel like I’m lucky to be here and I feel like I’m proud to say that Australia is part of me and I’m part of Australia because it is a lovely country.

I’ve been here for 3 years and I feel like I’m really lucky. A lot of people they dream to be in here and I have this chance to be in here. So I feel like I started to be part of this country and this country started to be part of me. Even though I’ve only been here for 3 years, but I feel like this [connection] is going to be growing in the future.
That is, the granting of permanent visas contributed to the development of cultural belonging, with refugee young people feeling grounded and connected to their new country. As they have a long future in Australia, these participants made a concerted effort to learn about and connect to the shared codes of behaviour and beliefs of the Australian community of value. This reflects da Lomba’s (2010) argument that legal status is a necessary condition for positive integration.

Participants also emphasised the connection between their permanent status in Australia and building a connection with the Australian populace. Aminah (18, Syrian) claimed that positive interactions with and acceptance by Australians contributed to her sense of belonging:

> It’s my second home. Australia’s my second home: where I felt belong, where … you feel like you are actually in your homeland ‘cause everyone is kind, everyone is respectful. You see some bad people but they’re not that [many]. The majority are kind people, which makes you feel, ‘Okay, I’m in this country but no one is actually bothering me. Everyone is being nice so why not to settle in here?’ That’s what I think.

Participants stressed that the ability to make a long-term commitment to Australia due to their permanency was central to their experience of belonging and acceptance in the Australian community.

A positive relationship with the state—and its government representatives—was also a consequence of permanent settlement. Young peoples’ narratives praised bordering practices in facilitating and promoting their access to the state. Those participants who experienced positive bordering policies readily recognised and praised the government as being supporting and welcoming to refugees. Rabi (19, Syrian) acknowledged: ‘I think the government is helping a good support for the programs for the settlement and for merging people in their new community. So I feel like yeah, they are supporting, they’re giving good support.’

The recognition and acknowledgement of the support that humanitarian visa holders receive from the state was a common theme in participant responses. Ammar (18, Syrian) emphasised the positive impact that the government had via organisations intended to support refugee arrivals:
I’ve been in a lot of organisations and they’re all supported by the government. So the government they give a lot of opportunities for people—they give money, they give places, they give whatever the organisation asks, just to get the outcomes that people are being active members in the society.

While participants with permanent visas recognised their own good fortune, at the same time, many acknowledged the potential for political favour to wax and wane. Some reflected that settlement for those in-country such as themselves was done well, but viewed the tightening of the border against arrivals seeking asylum as a negative. Moustafa (19, Syrian), for one, was very grateful for the opportunities and state support he was receiving in Australia but wished that it was accessible to a greater number of refugees:

The only thing we disagree with the government is the policy towards the new arrivals, like for bring new people. So outside of Australia I feel they need to be more open but inside Australia they’re doing very well in supporting the new arrivals.

He argued that bordering policies were too restrictive, but that once refugees were in-country they received high quality and high levels of support. Others pointed to a perceived cooling in attitude towards refugees in government policy-making. Sara (21, Iraqi) emphasised the positive experience she received when she arrived in 2013, but considered attitudes and policies to be increasingly restrictive:

That question [about government welcome] was a bit tricky because if I look back to the time when I came, my experience, it was way better than now. If you ask someone who just came to Australia they would have a totally different opinion and that’s because of different policies that have been applied. … The regulations and stuff were very welcoming in my time but sometimes you actually meet some people who, when you see their values, you think, ‘I wish that I could go back to my country so I don’t have to deal with these kinds of people.’

The belief that restrictions on refugee arrivals are increasing—whether or not borne out in policy making—speaks to the public perception of refugees and how this impacts on young people’s perception of their belonging. Moreover, it emphasises the importance that participants placed on
permanency and positive bordering practices, and suggests that these should be perpetuated and upheld in government policies.

In emphasising the importance of permanency to their own migration experiences, some participants compared their experiences to those of refugees living in Australia on temporary visas. Fatima (20, Syrian) spoke of the importance of permanency to her life, the stability that it affords her, and in particular the way her experience compares to that of a temporary visa holder:

I have the permanent residency which is really not much difference from the citizenship—but some people are having visa bridging, they don’t have as much rights… Having the citizenship or permanency would help you to succeed because you’ll be able to continue your further education or even if you want to work, some work [employers] might be like, ‘Oh no, if you’re on a bridging visa’—you might not have much chances to get a good job.

She elaborated on the ways in which her experience and opportunities as a permanent resident differed from those of her friends living in Australia on temporary visas. In particular, she emphasised her ability to access services as a permanent visa holder that may not have been accessible to her if she were on a temporary visa:

I can use the HECS [Higher Education Contribution Scheme]. Whereas I know some people now, they have a bridging visa and when they finished high school they have to go to TAFE. They can’t go to university because they can’t really do HECS. So I would say without having the permanency I would not be able to continue my education, further education. …

For sure, having the citizenship would change someone’s perspective about how they feel about Australia, like if I was 8 years here and I don’t have the [citizenship] I might not be like ‘Australia’s the best’ because of what I’ve experienced.

These experiences demonstrate how permanency impacts on young people’s ability to participate, settle and succeed in Australian society. Moreover, these impacts of bordering
policies can be compared to with the experiences of young people living in Australian on temporary visas.

By making these comparisons, participants reflected on their own experiences and the impacts that permanence and security had on their lives. Moustafa (19, Syrian) criticised temporary visas as limiting the ability of arrivals to build a meaningful life in their new country. He emphasised that, without a permanent visa, refugee arrivals would always be worried that they would have to pack up and move again, particularly once their home countries became safe. This would cause ongoing instability and limit the ability—particularly for young people—to develop and grow in education and employment. He emphasised:

\[O\]n temporary visa, you’re gonna build [a new life] but you’re gonna lose it … when your country becomes safe [and you therefore must return]. It [will be] really good when Syria is a safe place to go to—but also what you started you’re gonna have to finish by selling everything and going back to your home [country]. Then you’ve got to start again.

Unlike those who arrive on permanent visas and are able to begin to rebuild their lives in Australia, refugees on bridging and temporary visas experience long-term uncertainty or precarity, and face challenges in building connections to their host communities.

6.2.2 The impact of precarity

Those who do not have clear pathways to long-term residency and/or citizenship can experience precariousness and insecurity (Waite, 2009)—precarity—and associated exploitation. In Australia, asylum seekers waiting for their refugee claims to be processed and refugee boat arrivals on long-term temporary visas hold limited rights (Hartley, Fleay, Baker, Burke & Field, 2018) and can experience the challenges of ‘the precariat’ such as casualisation, informalisation and part-time labour (Standing, 2015). More than this, young people experiencing precarity are excluded from the certainty of settlement and its supports. Temporariness equates to an absence of predictable settlement steps, and reflects what Roberts (2019, p. 3) describes as disrupted ‘linear settler-citizen pathways’. The consequences of precarity are an absence of safety and security, the inability to access certain support services, and the inability to set and achieve long-
term goals. Ultimately, temporariness can prevent the development of significant bonds or connections to society.

The sense of stability in refugees’ lives provided by permanent visas allows young people and their families to feel safe and secure, protects them from exploitation and empowers them to seek better situations. In contrast, those on temporary visas have no certainty about their futures or security about remaining in the state long-term. The consequences of precarity are in part reflected by the small sample size of temporary visa holders in this study. The researcher found it difficult to locate temporary visa holders willing to speak about their experiences due to uncertainty and fear about their precarious residence in Australia. For example, Fatima (19, Syrian) who has the right to remain permanently in Australia, was unable to convince two of her friends on temporary visas to participate in the study; following her interview, she texted this researcher: ‘I spoke to two of my friends and unfortunately they weren’t brave enough to say yes [to being interviewed] 😞’. The threat of deportation or visa cancellation experienced by the precariat demonstrates how bordering practices can impact on refugees’ experience of legal—and by extension, cultural—belonging.

Nat, a settlement officer working ‘almost exclusively with people seeking asylum, including TPVs [Temporary Protection Visas] and SHEVs’, pointed to precarity as having a negative impact on refugees’ ability to effectively plan for the future:

(Temporariness) has a range of different impacts ranging from the inability to feel like they can put roots down here—people will say to us, for example, ‘I’ve got a 3-year visa, or a 5-year SHEV visa but I don’t feel like I can call Australia home, I don’t feel like I can invest my time and resources here.’

The lack of a permanent visa can impact on young people’s abilities to plan for or work toward a productive future. Morgan, a refugee support officer, described how precarity can impact on a sense of worth and undermine future planning:

They think, ‘How can we move on and create a life in Australia if we’re so uncertain about our status here?’ And for many [refugees on temporary visas] that’s been not
just 2 or 3 years, it’s been 5, 6, 7 years that they’ve been in this situation now, with that degree of uncertainty. …

The requirement that temporary residents reapply for visas periodically means that young refugees must continually relive and retell their past to be granted visas, rather than plan for their futures. Morgan described the stress that long-term precarity can put on young people and their families, with the stress of visa applications compounded by the fear of deportation from Australia:

There is the stress of deportation… [There are] those that have refugee status who came by boat after the 2012 to July 2013 window who are living in the community and who’ve got refugee status, but they’re on the temporary visa. Some of those on the 3-year temporary visa are now having to reapply to prove again that they still face persecution, so that unearths a lot of the stuff again and adds to their trauma.

Hassan (23, Iraqi) has no defined pathway to permanent residency after arriving in Australia by boat. Since 2013, he has lived in different detention centres and then in the community on temporary visas. At the time of interview, he had transferred onto a 5-year (SHEV) visa. In the interview, he was not able to articulate what implications SHEV may have on his long-term planning. Instead, he prioritised being able to live out of a detention centre and having some security for the next 5 years: ‘I need a visa to stay in Australia… This visa I can stay for 5 years. It’s OK—I didn’t really care about the visa, I just wanted to come out of that place [the detention centre].’ Hassan’s eagerness to be granted SHEV despite its limitations reinforces the experience of some temporary visa holders in Australia seeking (even short-term) certainty and security by engaging in multi-stage migration (Mares, 2018; Wright et al., 2016).

Like Hassan, some temporary visa holders look to different visa pathways such as SHEV to attain stability and to combat a sense of limbo and helplessness. However, Morgan explained how SHEV can appear to be a viable pathway for temporary visa holders looking for longer term stability, but that it is not suitable for every applicant:

The SHEV visa is a horrible thing—it creates so much confusion. It’s 5 years, so many people went for that without realising the sting in the tail for that visa. Yeah,
you can just stay in Sydney and reapply after the 5 years for another one of those or for the 3-year TPV but the government tried to present this as a pathway to the skilled migration program—but in order to do so, [applicants must] spend 3 and a half years of the 5 in a rural to regional centre without any welfare payments.

So they’ve got the challenge of again trying to find the job when you’re in a rural area, on a temporary visa, or else being able to afford to study full-time which is the other way you can meet the skilled [criteria]. And then you’re competing against all these other professionals from overseas who are applying for those skilled visas. So in many cases they’re just not going to make it even though they’ve had this carrot dangled.

The promise of some stability can lead some temporary arrivals to apply for SHEV when it is not appropriate for them or will not ultimately lead to permanency. To progress to permanency, SHEV holders must work or study in a regional area for at least 42 months. This period need not be continuous and can be completed over multiple SHEVs. However, to satisfy permanency transition requirements, an arrival must work either full- or part-time, and cannot undertake formal study. The condition of SHEV—that at least one member of a family must work or study in a regional area and not apply for Centrelink payments—conflates distinct policy motivations of regional settlement and community enrichment, and the deterrence of boat arrivals. Nat elaborated:

There’s a focus on regional settlement at the moment so we’re making arguments and representation to the federal and state governments that if you would like to see sustainable, effective migration to regional areas, the SHEV visa is not the way to do it. It conflates your deterrence [of boat arrivals] approach with that other goal [of community settlement] and they’re not compatible. There’s more than 15,000 people on SHEVs at the moment so it’s not an insignificant population.

For many refugee arrivals, including young people, SHEV is not a realistic pathway toward permanency, as the benchmarks are unrealistic for many refugees with limited financial, social and educational capital to support them. Morgan spoke to this challenge; ‘We know people [on SHEVs] who are working but unable to [simultaneously] educate themselves to meet their goals,
but also to meet the requirements that will enable them to apply for the skilled pathways’. Morgan reinforced that these unrealistic goals and the insecurity of SHEVs ‘just creates this ongoing sense of limbo and uncertainty that is not that dissimilar from the time that they were on their bridging visa’.

For those living in the community on temporary visas, their ability to work and contribute to society can be compromised by their visa status. Standing (2015; 2011) speaks to the insecurity and exploitation experienced by the precariat in work contexts due to their legal status. In the Australian context, the need for temporary visa holders to reapply for visas every 3 to 5 years can have consequences for employment; employers can be hesitant to employ those on short-term visas and employees can lose work in the process of reapplying for a new visa. Morgan explained:

There’s not even the recognition [by the state] that if you’re on a temporary visa, employers will look at that and say, ‘I want someone who is more permanent,’ and they can suffer indirect discrimination on that basis in terms of their job searching.

Additionally, those on temporary visas are ineligible for a range of services and entitlements that are available to permanent protection visa holders. As detailed in Appendixes 4 and 5, those resettled through the offshore humanitarian programs receive support that is additional to provisions available to Australian citizens in the areas of housing, health, social security and welfare, education and family reunification. In contrast, holders of temporary protection visas have the same rights as permanent residents in housing, health and employment but have no rights to family reunion. Young people under the age of 18 on bridging visas or in community detention can apply for special ministerial permission to attend free public schooling. However, once they age out of the school system they are subject to full-fee paying TAFE or university education. Raafi (18, Afghani), who is in his final year of high school, has applied for an on-shore humanitarian visa. He spoke about the uncertainty of the application process and the long period of waiting for permanency:

We have applied for protection visa and until they give response, until that we can stay. We just have to wait, and if their reply is negative then we could go to higher court. I don’t know how long it’s going to take.
However, this has a direct impact on his ability to plan for the future, and Raafi understands the importance of permanency to his future planning:

I want permanent residency a hundred percent because after finishing my school year 12 and completing HSC I want to go to university and do a policing course; and to do that course you have to have permanent residency. Because I want to stay in Australia, I don’t want to go back to my country, I want protection. That’s another reason. I have two reasons [for wanting permanency].

Raafi’s views reflect the importance of stability for young people living in Australia and demonstrate how precarity impacts on communities, families and young people. This example highlights, too, the impact that Australia’s bordering practices have on families and on young people in particular. The differing access to support and assistance—compounded by the difficulty in attaining a guarantee of long-term residency—impacts on the belonging and participation of temporary visa holders living in the community.

6.3 Citizenship and belonging

Citizenship is inherently exclusionary, defining those who belong and those who are excluded (Bauböck, 2006, p. 15). Although only one of the participants had become an Australian citizen at time of interview, many others spoke about their plans to work toward and attain citizenship in Australia. Participants recognised the opportunities and rights that were given to Australian citizens, and viewed citizenship as a means to transcend their refugee identity and build connections to their new country.

Citizenship invests citizens with the benefits and protections of the state in the form of political rights, and contributes to legal belonging. Citizens in turn owe responsibilities to the community (Stanley, 2008). Sara (21, Iraqi), who became a citizen in the year before the interview, saw her citizenship as a tool of empowerment, as it meant that she had greater protections and freedoms as an Australian:

…when you travel, if you don’t have a citizenship you can get a travel document but it will say the nationality that you are, it won’t say Australian. There is a difference
when you get the citizenship and there’s a lot of laws that you can access if you’re a citizen. And voting as well—I voted this year, it was my first year.

Sara emphasised the opportunities and security she had as a citizen, and explained how these enhanced her sense of belonging to her new country. In interview, and after completing the online pre-interview questionnaire, she reflected:

… I did the survey and straight after I saw one of my friends—she’s Arab but she was born here. I was saying about the questions and she said, ‘What did you say about the one “How much do you feel Australian?”’ I was like, ‘I feel Australian, I really do.’ I’m happy and I’m proud to say that but I don’t know how to explain it.

But I would say it’s because Australia’s given me chances that I know if I was in Iraq I would never get. Australia respected me as a person and … here I feel like I have more freedom and I feel like I can speak up. That’s what makes it special for me.

Sara sees her citizenship as essential to her sense of belonging and participation in Australian society; her permanency and dual nationality gives her the safety and security to belong in Australian society. ‘I already have my citizenship, and so I think, “What makes you Australian and doesn’t make me Australian?” Apart from cultural background, we do have equal rights.’ That is, she sees and experiences citizenship as affording her legal belonging in Australian.

Legal belonging involves the granting of rights such as the freedom to travel, protection from deportation, access to social security benefits and voting rights as well as diplomatic support. These are rights that are particularly important for refugees and asylum seekers who, in fleeing their home countries, are no longer protected by those citizen rights (Nunn, McMichael, Gifford & Correa-Velez, 2016). Participants reflected that Australian citizens were afforded rights and privileges that are in some ways denied to refugees as exiles from their own countries and region. Participants spoke of permanency—and ultimately Australian citizenship—as a means of transcending the statelessness and powerlessness of their refugee status. They described Australian citizenship as the opportunity to recast their identities in safety and freedom. In particular, those from minority groups in their home countries valued Australian citizenship—and the multicultural society—as a unique chance to be themselves. Some of these participants
didn’t feel as though they belonged in their home country due to extended periods of discrimination and exclusion, and looked to Australian citizenship as a new source of identity and pride. Safi (25, Yazidi) spoke in anticipation of becoming an Australian citizen, and adopting a nationality that would give her the freedom to travel and to have her own beliefs:

I have been in Australia only 2 years and 6 month and I have to stay I think 4 years and I will apply for [citizenship]. I will cancel my Iraqi citizenship, I don’t want it because my country very danger, especially for us because there they are not like Australian, they are not friendly. They are aggressive and they want all the people to be a Muslim and if we say no they have to kill us.

And we can’t go to anywhere—like now I can go to Sydney, to Canberra. If I live in my country I have to stay only in my village. If I move to another town, like Canberra, maybe somebody kill me. And nobody [would] ask him, ‘Why you kill her?’

Layla (24, Yazidi), too, spoke of the importance of citizenship and her desire to stay in Australia because it was where she felt safe:

[I want to stay permanently] because it’s very safe. I want citizenship because I want to be a part of the Australian people. I think it’s important for everyone. … I feel I am in my house when I talk to [Australian people]. I don’t feel like I’m refugee when I’m in this country.

Restoration of the freedom of travel was a key factor that many refugee young people on permanent humanitarian visas associated with having an Australian passport; they placed greater weight on this freedom of movement as they felt that this was something they had lost—or had restricted—as refugees. Hassan (19, Syrian), for example, described Australian citizenship as an ‘honour’ and as empowering the holder:

It’s an honour to have an Australian citizenship and it will make the difference a lot, especially as a refugee. Now I’m Syrian, even though I’m Arab, I can’t go to Emirates, I can’t go to many countries because my country is in a war zone and not many countries welcome us but when you have the Australian citizen, you will be
protected by the Australian government wherever you go and this will make you feel confident and excited to go somewhere else. Whereas I have now my Syrian passport I can’t go anywhere and I’m not protected by anyone.

These participants recognised that citizenship was an important step in rebuilding identity, allowing them to transcend the dislocation and powerlessness of the refugee experience. For some, their sense of self had been eroded or lost when they were forced to leave their country of origin. Hassan, who planned to apply for his citizenship a few months after the interview, saw Australian citizenship as restoring his freedom and pride as an individual after his refugee experience:

It will make the difference, it will make much much difference especially if I go back to Lebanon they will actually respect me like not when I left. When I left, they were like, ‘Ha ha! Get out get out.’ But when I come now as an Australian citizen, they will be much different with me. They will respect me as another person, even though you’re still the same person, they will respect you in another way. It will be much different.

Access to citizenship and the right to remain in the state on a permanent basis has an impact on the development of cultural connections to society (Aptekar, 2015, pp. 78–82). Participants described citizenship as a means of building stronger and long-lasting ties to their new society and was, for many, more than a mere legal status, but the possibility of a new identity that was at once empowered and accepted by society. Sara, for example, believes that her citizenship has contributed to her sense of Australianness and belonging: ‘[N]ow I would be able to say I’m Aussie. I would say emotionally I feel better [with citizenship] because I feel like I’m part of what you [as an Australian] have, we’re both on the same level.’ This reflects the claims by theorists that clear and defined pathways to citizenship are central to refugee integration and are effective in creating integrated legal and cultural citizens (Bloch, 2000; E. Stewart & Mulvey, 2014; Strang & Ager, 2010).

Participants reflected that citizenship would serve to broadcast their belonging to the wider community. When conversing together, Turan (18, Yazidi) and Pamir (18, Yazidi) discussed the importance of getting an Australian passport in the future, linking this step to finding greater
acceptance at school and in society. They anticipated that citizenship would change the attitudes of those people who saw them as outsiders. Turan clarified:

We not having the Australian passport. We going to get [it] in two years more—of course we want it. We want to be Australian. There are some of them that bully us, but we don’t want them to bully us—I think if we [are] Australian they won’t.

Turan felt that a feeling of belonging would be solidified by citizenship. This belief in the transformative power of citizenship to foster belonging aligns with the literature that sees citizenship as marking the distinction between members and outsiders based on relationship to the state (Bauböck, 2006). Turan and Pamir agreed that other people’s perceptions and treatment of them directly impacted on their sense of belonging. Turan elaborated on how this treatment influenced how Australian he felt:

I do [feel Australian] because if [other students] think the refugee people are just a people and the same as them, then I feel Australian. But if they say ‘I don’t want you,’ then I don’t want to feel Australian.

The importance of acceptance by the community to Turan’s experience of belonging demonstrates that, while citizenship may assist in fostering legal belonging, it does not constitute full belonging for refugee arrivals. As will be discussed in Chapter 7, full belonging can be hindered by cultural exclusion and othering, which is the absence of cultural belonging.

In Australia, recent political debates have focused on a ‘culturalization of citizenship’ (Tonkens, Duyvendak & Hurenkamp, 2010; 2012); as well as being a tool of inclusion, social cohesion and integration of new arrivals, citizenship has increasingly been imagined as a means of placing a greater emphasis on Australian values (Petrie & Sherrell, 2017), perpetuating an imagined ideal of the Good Australian. The power of citizenship (and naturalisation) to ‘invest’ the individual in the state reflects the idea of citizenship as a technology of state power through which the state governs people’s conduct. In conversation together, Amal (24, Yazidi) and Hadil (22, Yazidi) discussed their permanency and why they wanted to be citizens:

A: We both permanent.
H: And want citizenship. [Why?]
A: We want to be like them—
H: Like Australian [people].

This discussion demonstrates how closely some refugee young people link legal belonging, citizenship and becoming a part of the Australian community. The aspiration of Amal and Hadil to become ‘like Australian[s]’ reflects citizenship as a tool of governmentality, encouraging citizens to do ‘as they ought’ (Scott, 1995) and to share behaviours, values and beliefs (Bhandar, 2010).

**Discussion**

This chapter responded to the second research question, exploring the ways in which bordering practices influence refugee young people’s access to the state and also impact on their development of a sense of belonging in Australia.

It found that ease of access to the state, visa allocation and access to citizenship had substantial impacts on the development of the refugee young person’s senses of legal and cultural belonging; those who could see pathways toward legal citizenship reported high levels of belonging and connection to the society. In contrast, those with no claim to long-term residence or legal belonging demonstrated little motivation to plan for the future or develop their skills. This is particularly the case for refugees who have experienced detention and/or long periods of precarity.

The chapter began by examining the different journeys of young people when accessing the Australian state. It explored the experiences of young people settled under the Humanitarian Program, comparing the stresses that could accompany asylum applications and granting of visas with the ease of arrival. Also explored were the difficulties some participants faced when negotiating bordering practices to bring family members to Australia, and the negative impact that family separation could have on belonging.
Additionally, the well-acknowledged impacts of detention—the indefinite nature of detention as well as inadequate access to educational and recreational opportunities (Coffey et al., 2010; Green & Eagar, 2010)—were borne out by the detailed examination of one participant’s experiences. For Mehmoud, the suspension of legal rights and status impacted on his wellbeing, perception of Australia and its institutions, and his sense of belonging once settled in the community. The impact of bordering policies on this individual—such as arbitrary and indefinite detainment—placed him in conflict with institutional and state actors.

Moreover, Mahmoud’s narrative highlighted how, despite repeated attempts to prevent detainees from accessing and participating in Australian society, many ultimately live in the Australian community on temporary visas. Moreover, problems exacerbated by those bordering practices of detention and temporary visas (such mental health issues, interrupted educational access and a distrust of institutional authority figures) must be ultimately managed by the boundaring practices of schools and settlement services. Temporary visas for refugees and those who have been in detention result in a sub-class of resident in Australia—a vulnerable, marginalised and traumatised group of individuals unable (or less able) to establish any consistency or long-term goal-setting in their new country. Mehmoud lives in Australia in a state of long-term temporariness without building strong connections to the community.

This chapter continued by exploring the consequences that visa categories and associated permanency or precarity had on refugee young people’s long-term access to the state and to their experience of belonging. It discussed how permanent visas contribute to a tangible connection to Australian society, giving young people the freedom to plan for their futures and unlocking their access to a range of settlement services and supports. Participants reported feeling greater levels of security and safety as a result of their permanency, with many looking toward citizenship as the step to feeling more Australian.

Reflections of participants and service providers on long-term temporariness highlighted the negative impact that short-term visas can have on belonging and wellbeing; temporary visas limit the ability of refugee young people to make long term plans or build a meaningful life in their new countries. They refuse refugee arrivals the stability and assurance that they can stay in Australia and make a new life here, with the fear of deportation impacting on refugees’ planning
and behaviour, including the willingness to participate in this research. Few participants on temporary visas were willing to risk their residence by sharing their views with the researcher; the three participants living in Australia on non-permanent visas spoke of experiencing difficulties in forming connections to the Australian community and were unable to express a long-term plan for education or employment. Their narratives suggest that participants experience a ‘social condition of being neither fully excluded nor fully recognized’ (Walters, 2008, p. 185) despite being present in the society, with long-term temporariness undermining their development of cultural belonging (McMillan, 2017).

Finally, the chapter explored the significance of citizenship for refugee young people; it found that participants’ narratives supported research findings that clear and defined pathways to citizenship were effective in fostering legal and cultural belonging. In terms of legal belonging, participants aspired to citizenship because of the rights and protections it would afford them. They compared the security of citizenship to the powerlessness and statelessness of the refugee experience, and saw citizenship as a means of rebuilding their identity and sense of worth. The attainment of citizenship was conceptualised by participants as, in many ways, the antidote to their refugee experiences; by aspiring to become Australian citizens, some participants saw the potential to regain their identity and sense of self, access those rights and protections traditionally provided by their home country (Nunn et al., 2016), or to regain a sense of home. Participants saw citizenship as a tonic to the social and economic exclusion and bare life that they experienced as outsiders in third countries.

At the same time, participants shared their beliefs that citizenship would help them to gain greater cultural belonging in Australia; many argued that by attaining citizenship they would gain acceptance and respect in their new country, as they would hold a legitimate and permanent place in the community. This aligns with research which suggests that citizenship and the naturalisation process contribute to the creation of legally and culturally invested residents (Aptekar, 2015).

The power of citizenship to invest the individual in the state reflects the idea of citizenship as a technology of state power through which the state rationalises, implements and systemises the governing of people’s conduct. However, the recent and proposed amendments to citizenship
laws discussed in Chapter 3—a form of reimagining of ‘good’ citizenship (Bridget Anderson et al., 2011, p. 554)—have focused on extending the time and criteria required between arrival, granting of permanency and eligibility to apply for citizenship for all new arrivals, including refugees. Making the criteria for citizenship more stringent means that the most vulnerable in society find it more difficult to attain legal belonging.

The following chapter explores how institutions and policies intended to shape the population within the state impact on refugee young people and their connection to the community of value. It examines the role of boundaring practices—particularly those involved in settlement and schooling—in creating new citizens who are Good Citizens. The chapter asks how refugee settlement services promote participation and belonging in the community, and how different visa categories can have consequences for access to these services and therefore to belonging. The ramifications for family and community support in accessing settlement services are also of concern here.

Chapter 7 also looks at the role of schools as institutions fostering connection to community through the promotion of language learning and cultural knowledge. It then discusses the place of boundaring practices in addressing refugee needs, with problems of interrupted education, aging out of the school system and entering the community after living in detention. Key issues in the provision of support to refugees, such as funding, geographic location and the availability of services, are also explored.
Chapter 7
Boundaring: shaping the population of Good Australians

Introduction

Through the lens of governmentality, the population can be described as governed by the institutions and procedures of the state, with the conduct of individuals shaped by the behaviours, values and beliefs of the majority. Individuals recognise themselves (and others) as interpellated subjects (Althusser, 2004), and have their actions and beliefs shaped by the ideologies or myths of the state. This conduct of conduct is such that, by following their own interests, individuals will simultaneously ‘do as they ought’ (Scott, 1995). Moreover, the population is not merely a collection of people with shared legal status; they also have shared beliefs and behaviours. By experiencing an attachment to the everyday lived experiences, ideals and behaviours of the community of value (Bridget Anderson & Hughes, 2015), the individual can be thought to have cultural belonging.

Multiculturalism is a mode of governmentality intended to regulate and reconcile differences drawn from racial cultural and ethnic differences (Ang, 2010), and this ‘management of difference’ (Mackey, 2002) informs settlement services and education provision in NSW. Settlement services and schools are the boundaring practices intended to support refugee arrivals to access and participate in the community, and facilitate an introduction to and adoption of accepted and expected social practices.

Drawing on research, and using interviews and survey responses from participants, this chapter looks to answer the third research question:

To what extent can boundaring practices facilitate belonging for young Middle Eastern refugees?
These boundaring practices focus on settlement services and schooling, but also include English language programs (Lo Bianco, 2008; Piller & Takahashi, 2011), and the provision of resources in community languages (Aspinall, 2007).

This chapter firstly examines different factors that impact on participants’ access to and engagement with settlement services. This includes examining the consequences of legal belonging, visa status and associated rights, the presence of family networks, and community support and involvement on the development of cultural belonging.

Secondly, the chapter speaks to the place of schools in fostering belonging. It explores the significance of English language to the development of cultural connections as well as the role of multicultural education and cross-cultural interactions in developing understandings about and connections to the Australian community of value.

Thirdly, the chapter interrogates the challenges faced by refugees in accessing schools as sites of belonging. It explores the challenges of interrupted education and age on participation in the school system, as well as the legacy of detention on school attendance. It also speaks to the different services available in NSW and the consequences of age, location and funding on accessing these services.

### 7.1 Settlement services, access and belonging

Australia utilises policies informed by theories of integration and multiculturalism in the settlement of new arrivals. These policies draw on the notion of culture as difference and the assumption that different ethnic communities need to be enfolded within the wider community (Noble, 2009). As discussed in 2.3.1, multiculturalism can be used as a mode of governmentality so as to regulate and reconcile differences drawn from racial, cultural and ethnic differences (Ang, 2010), a ‘management of difference’ (Mackey, 2002) that informs settlement services.

Settlement services provide additional support to refugee arrivals to ensure that they can access and participate in the community, and to facilitate an introduction to and adoption of accepted and expected social practices. Blair, Regional Settlement Coordinator of a multicultural
settlement provider based in Wagga Wagga, summarised the role of settlement services in assisting all new arrivals:

In a nutshell, [settlement services aim] to enable new settlers, be they from refugee backgrounds or migrants, to be able to transition into the Australian culture as smoothly as possible but also to retain their cultural identity and to bring that in so that it actually showcases the benefits of diversity and harmony.

The above settlement process does this by supporting participation in ‘common life’ through the provision of services in health, housing, education and community (J. Gale & Staerklé, 2019; Kymlicka, 1995; Kymlicka, 2001). However, as discussed above, some refugee arrivals are living indefinitely in the community on temporary visas, with differential access to settlement services. This can have consequences for their development of belonging.

7.1.1 Access to settlement services

Depending on the visa category allocated to the migrant, varying levels of support are available or provided on arrival that can foster integration and, ultimately, belonging. This difference in settlement reflects Ager and Strang’s (2008) model of integration, which sees the foundation of integration as access to rights (and citizenship); here, participants’ access to settlement support was impacted by their visa status and associated rights.

Refugees settled in Sydney under the Humanitarian Program—thereby holding permanent visas—shared positive experiences of being supported by state-based settlement services. Participants’ responses emphasised that the services provided to humanitarian arrivals allowed them to feel part of the Australian community and added to their sense of being a valued and valuable member of society. Participants settled with permanent status emphasised the importance and value of settlement services and housing assistance in making them feel part of the community. Tosine (23, Yazidi) equated her receipt of government support as a tacit acknowledgement of her accepted place in the community: ‘We received a warm welcome from [the Australian government]. We have Centrelink and they are looking after us like they do the Australian people. I couldn’t see the difference between me and Australian people.’
For Ahmed (19, Syrian), the assistance he received to come to and settle in Australia made him believe that Australia was a welcoming place for refugees: ‘They saved us from the war in Syria—they gave us a house, and they helped us a lot, they helps my brothers to go to school, helps my father to get a job. They helps a lot.’ When asked what kind of welcome Ammar (18, Syrian) received upon arriving to Australia, he said:

What should I say? Fantastic! I cannot imagine something better than this because when I came here I felt the welcoming, I felt people caring about you, caring about what you do especially when you come from a war situation, it’s really very big to be in [this country] where you see the people taking care of you.

Hamzah (21, Syrian) and his family were given extensive support to build connections with and to settle in their new communities:

[T]he government were also helping us. They were sending us people and they offered us a house for one month for free, they will pay for it until we settle in here and they were giving us Centrelink payment so we can pay for ourselves.

Hamzah continued that this support included English language lessons for older members of his family, as well as legal assistance in order to speed up their progress toward full legal belonging:

And they offered my family—my mum, my dad—800 hours of English in Navitas [an English language training provider] and then they gave us a lawyer that he will look after us every single 6 month, 3 month. We are applying for the citizen in 3 month so he will be taking over the process when we do.

In contrast, those on temporary visas have fewer state-based support structures to assist them with their settlement. In many cases, they must find and look to non-government organisations for support. At the time of interview, Raafi (18, Afghani) was on a bridging visa and spoke at length about the difficulties he and his family have faced due to the restrictions on government funding and support for temporary visa holders. His family rely heavily on non-government and religious organisations:
Centrelink helped my mum a bit but they have different rules and restrictions but only if you are in that, they are helping you… Non-government organisations don’t have so many restrictions [on who and how they can assist] but they are helping as well. …My mum went to so many organisations, but most of them are NGOs [Non-Government Organisations], not government… [N]ot many could help us at all because we weren’t citizen. Asylum Seekers [Resource Centre]—they helped us, Anglicare gave us places to live and food and school clothes, all that stuff. We were relying on those NGOs.

While his application for permanency is under consideration, charitable organisations are covering the cost of his education: ‘So my first school—IEC—the Asylum seekers helped me with that and they pay everything. They’re still paying for all of that and now I’m at TAFE.’ Raafi recognises the grass-roots community support and assistance that exists for those on a temporary visa:

The [local] church—they’re Australian as well and they’ve helped us. They are very friendly. The way they treat us is not different, it’s the same as they treat Australian peoples with the same background and religion they have. They don’t treat us differently [as Muslims and asylum seekers]. So that’s why I feel like belonging sometimes because they are very friendly and they don’t make us feel like we are from different culture.

Nevertheless, Raafi’s need to seek support from local charities to afford education and supplies highlights the problematic nature of unequal provision of settlement services in Australia. Similarly, Hassan (23, Iraqi) acknowledges and is thankful for the support, assistance and welcome he received from different community and religious groups:

There are so many organisations in Australia who are specially standing for refugees and they’re helping for refugees. Rich people they don’t need to get help from organisations so sometimes they are looking to help other peoples. The organisations are [existing specifically] because refugees are peoples who are having troubles…
As well as providing some ongoing support to temporary visa holders, Australian Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) are also active in advocating for policy changes to more effectively promote the belonging and integration of a substantial number of temporary visa holders present in society over the long term. Nat (Settlement, Sydney) recognises the limited support that can be provided to temporary visa holders without longer-term solutions:

In terms of day-to-day support, there’s a limited amount we can do, so our services [for asylum seekers] remain open to people on TPVs and SHEVs as well—and that’s food bank, that’s access to social connections through community gardens, men’s shed[s], all that kind of thing. It’s specialist referrals to, for example, STARTTS, it’s all that kind of thing…

There is a significant difference in support provided to those refugees with permanent visas, and those on temporary visas who must often seek out and apply to non-government organisations for support. These NGOs rely on public funding or successful government grants that may earmark funds for prescribed criteria. Temporary visa holders without the knowledge, means, connections or categorisation to access funding and support may receive inadequate assistance to access and participate in the community, even when they become long-term residents. As settlement services—including education provision—have implications for settlement success and the development of belonging, this inequality is problematic, and undermines the aims of multiculturalism and integration.

7.1.2 Community settlement initiatives

Refugee families often do not have the resources, language skills or established networks to be able to support young people’s extensive participation in the community. As a result, greater community involvement and support can help facilitate young refugees’ participation and develop their sense of belonging. A key factor in the development of belonging identified by participants was the welcome and support they received from their new community. This aligns with the notion of building a connection to the community of value through an introduction or conduit to the common rituals and codes of behaviour of the neighbourhood (Bridget Anderson, 2013, p. 3).
Those participants settled in Wagga through the Humanitarian Program emphasised the importance of organised volunteers helping to orient them to their new homes and to the regional community. Participants stressed that this first connection to Australian society helped them navigate the community and feel at ease. Many participants spoke about being welcomed to the country at Wagga Wagga Airport and being assisted in settlement. Nadir (21, Yazidi) stressed the importance of settlement services in supporting his family, as few members spoke any English:

People from Australia meet us at the airport. We had two volunteers, three volunteers and they help us [very] much. When we come we was know no English. My cousins help us and also the Australians also help us [very] much. They was emailing me and they say, ‘If you need any shopping or anything, just send a shopping message.’ I didn’t know too much English.

…They was coming in weekends and was take us to shopping… They was very helpful and very nice. I still speak to them and sometimes I give them my mum cooking. Special cook[ing] or bread we cook at home, sometimes we give [this to] them.

Turan (18, Yazidi) spoke of the difference between his welcome in Australia and his experiences living as a refugee in Turkey:

[Volunteers] met us at the airport—the house was ready for us and we just go in. We feel pretty good, there is safety and the people are gentle to us, they love us, they don’t ask us about religions. The Australian peoples think just we are people same as them but in Turkey they say, ‘Your religion is different and we don’t want you.’

Some spoke, too, of the emergence of friendships with their Australian neighbours. Several participants emphasised that volunteers had transitioned from helpers to friends—they remained in close contact past the initial few months of settlement and regularly attended community events. Emine (22, Yazidi) spoke about how volunteers helped her to navigate everyday life and had now become a permanent part of her life and family:
[Australian people are very friendly to refugees. They all help us—first when we come there are two families from Australia, I think they working like volunteer, they come to us, talking to us, take me and my brother to the shopping. Before they were volunteer but now we are friends…We have a connection.

Similarly, Fadi (20, Yazidi) is enjoying building a new life and new friendships in Australia, including with his neighbours:

Actually I teach the Australian guys with my language—the Australian guys tell me ‘Please teach me.’ My friend next to my house very good in Kurmanji [because Fadi has taught him some of the language]. And the good people help, all the time, my family.

In Wagga, participants spoke of the sense of belonging they felt in the community, which several participants attributed to community involvement and assistance. Nadir (21, Yazidi), for example, spoke about how many Australian residents of Wagga attend cultural events and celebrations of the different refugee and migrant communities. He also spoke of how the different groups of new arrivals went to events together, crossing cultural divides:

We have refugee day [and other cultural days], we go together—all the refugee go together. Everyone’s happy. Australians come too—my volunteers, I tell them and if they are free they come too sometime. The community is very positive—they are happy.

In his experience, refugee arrivals received encouragement as well as financial support to help them feel included in local organisations. For example, the local soccer club waived some fees to help refugees in the early stages of settlement to participate:

We were play soccer and they help us. First year we didn’t pay any money to be in the competition because they say ‘You are refugee, first year.’ We didn’t pay and the next year we pay half because [it’s our second] year and now we pay normal because we working sometimes.
The prompt, ‘People in my local area are willing to help their neighbours’ (Figure 10), found that 38 participants (84%) agreed or strongly agreed that people in their local communities are willing to help their neighbours. At the same time, 30 participants (66.6%) reported positively that: ‘Most of the time, I feel strangers would help me if I have a problem’ (Figure 11). Participants’ narratives revealed that, overwhelmingly, those settled in Wagga had the most positive experiences in interacting with their community. In contrast, many participants living in Sydney reported not knowing their neighbours and built most of their initial community connections through the school rather than settlement services.

Note that it has been policy for nearly 20 years to promote the resettlement of an increased proportion of refugee arrivals in regional and rural areas. There are mixed views as to its success (McDonald-Wilmsen, Gifford, Webster, Wiseman & Casey, 2009).
Figure 11: Most of the time, I feel strangers would help me if I have a problem

Service providers reported that, in Wagga, community members acting as volunteers have a vital role in establishing connections between new arrivals and the wider community. Blair (Regional Settlement Coordinator, Wagga Wagga) discussed the process of liaising with refugee arrivals about how best to build connections with community:

[I]t was quite an interesting thing, because about 70 percent of them actually said that they would like an Australian-born person [rather than a refugee-background mentor]. Because their [English] language was quite new and emerging, they wanted someone who could help them with language, help them with the systems and the culture of Australia, rather than having someone from their own background sharing their journey because people from their own background hadn’t been settled long enough here to actually have a good understanding of how to settle there. So we’ve flipped our program so we have people from refugee backgrounds acting as mentors and we also have Australian-born mentors or people who have been in Australia for many many years. That seems to be working quite well, those matches.

Eli, Head Teacher (Brookfield TAFE), and Danny, Regional Coordinator (TAFE Riverina), discussed the importance of volunteer networks in assisting with the regional resettlement of
refugees. Danny stated: ‘We have the volunteer tutors … and you’d have people of all sorts coming—retirees and all sorts coming in.’ Eli responded:

I think [volunteers] are still very interested and usually the families will have one. There’s a bit less now that [a different settlement organisation] has taken over—but we usually have volunteers attached to the family, very proactive volunteers. And we have the Language Cafe at the library downtown … [with] heaps of volunteers so the community do want to get involved.

This discussion also highlighted a core systemic challenge of settlement: because policy-making and tender contracts are administrated at the governmental level, established networks and collaborations at the service level can be disrupted by changes in government and policy. Equally, changing funding models from the federal government mean that service providers can change at short notice.

Settlement areas for young refugee arrivals can impact on the support received and can impact on equity in settlement experiences. A greater absence of community connection and volunteer support in the metropolitan context was reflected in participants’ responses and to some extent in the small proportion of respondents who reported negatively to Figures 10 and 11. Mehmoud (19, Ahwazi), for example, spoke of limitations in support from the community: ‘It depends where you live. Some of the neighbours they’re good, and some of them they’re not.’ Jo (Principal, Wakefield IEC and High School) pointed to existing government policies and support as insufficient to promote refugee young people’s full participation inside and outside of school:

What I’d like to see more of is support outside of school on the weekends and stuff like that—to engage in football teams and soccer teams [for example] is incredibly expensive … These families don’t have the capacity to support the kids … And that’s a real shame—to fully participate you want to be a part of the new society that’s taken you in and you’re calling it home but you can only participate so far because you don’t have the means or you don’t know the people who could give you a lift.

Although most metropolitan participants did not report receiving formalised support such as volunteer assistance, many instead pointed to schools as a key site of assistance in early stages of
arrival. Connections between schools, parents, and communities play an important role in refugee people’s success in school, although for families and young people from refugee backgrounds these connections can face substantial barriers (McBrien, 2011).

7.2 **Networks, knowledge and settlement services**

Young people’s access to settlement services and can be impacted by their family networks and knowledge of the services available. Refugee applicants with family members in-country may benefit from the support of established family and community networks. Those refugees without existing family networks in Australia can face more difficulties in identifying and accessing settlement services, and this can have consequences for the development of belonging.

Family connections assist young people to access services and to develop an understanding of and connection to their new society. Omar emphasised the importance of having family members in Australia to assist him and his family to settle in and to navigate society quickly:

> Family made a big difference, absolutely. 'Cause when I first came here I came with none English before and then my family really helped me to find the school…they helped me to register in the schools and Centrelink and everything and to find a home.

Other participants emphasised the importance of family reunion in paving the way for their arrival in Australia and assisting in their settlement. At the same time, Maryam (18, Syrian) summarised the importance of family members and people from one’s own culture to help new arrivals feel a sense of belonging:

> So when I came here, you need people from your culture because they speak the same language as you and you need them to help you, to support you because they came the same as you but ages ago maybe and so they now they know how the rules is going and how to belong to this country and to participate and so they help me.

Interviews revealed that the presence of and connection to family members already in society made it easier for new arrivals to develop a sense of belonging to the broader community; family members served as a conduit between the refugee and his or her new community.
In contrast to Middle Eastern settlements in Sydney, the Yazidi community in Wagga is a relatively new community. At the time of interview, Yazidi refugees had only been resettled in Australia for a short period of time (less than 10 years), and accordingly there were limited family and cultural networks established that could provide support, advice and guidance to new Yazidi arrivals. This smaller network means that refugee arrivals rely more heavily on settlement services upon arrival in Australia. Safi (25, Yazidi) had no community connections when she arrived in Australia. She spoke about her family’s fears about coming to Australia without existing support systems: ‘[When applying come to Australia] we didn’t know any Australian people and we don’t have any relative here or friends and we ask ourselves how we can live there when we don’t know anybody.’

Extended family members provide a support network to new arrivals and assist settlement services in beginning the process of enfolding refugees into the broader community. This suggests that increased barriers to family reunion (3.3.2)—including increased costs for sponsored arrivals—are counterproductive to fostering community belonging.

Family connection and reunification play an important role in assisting young people to build connections to and develop a sense of belonging in their new society. Family networks assist new arrivals to navigate and access services in the community as well as to begin the process of belonging. The act of separating or segregating refugees from family members is an act of social exclusion and marginalisation.

7.3 Schools as sites of belonging

Education is widely acknowledged as a key site of belonging and integration, facilitating psycho-social development, community integration and linguistic skills (Matthews, 2008). Schools can be viewed as a tool of governmentality, arbitrating the conduct of conduct, and of social reproduction through which the values and myths of society are transmitted to, at different times, almost every member of the community (Collins & Coleman, 2008). At the same time, the promotion of the values of inclusion and respect can serve to support and promote the belonging and participation of refugee students (Woods 2009; Block et al., 2014; King & Owens, 2015), acting as a stable feature in ‘unsettled lives’ (Matthews, 2008, p. 31).
The school setting provides opportunities for academic learning as well as development of social connections and understandings. The following section explores impact of schooling in facilitating belonging, promoting language learning and forging cross-cultural understandings.

### 7.3.1 Schools, language learning and belonging

Fundamentally, schools are responsible for English language learning and for literacy, which Matthews (2008) claims is a pre-requisite for educational success, social participation and settlement. In interview, participants frequently linked their level of English language ability to their sense of belonging and happiness in Australia. Over 88% of survey respondents reported that their education had a positive impact on their belonging (Figure 12).

![Figure 12: My education in Australia has helped me to feel part of the Australian community](image)

Participants commonly emphasised that English language was a defining feature in the ability of students to make close connections to other students, and that the ability to communicate and interact with Australians was important to their belonging. Responses to the prompt ‘Speaking good English is an important part of living in Australia’ (Figure 13) supports participants’ emphasis on English as a key component of belonging.
Participants consistently referenced English language as the biggest challenge and most important skill to acquire when settling in Australia.

Participants’ narratives demonstrated the importance of English acquisition through schooling and communication with other young people as central to helping them engage with and participate in their new society. Ahmed (19, Syrian) described English as ‘[v]ery important, because you need English to communicate to the people, to find a job, to study. English is the most important’.

The commitment to learning English is reflected in participants’ self-identification of their own English ability; participants self-identified their language levels upon arrival in Australia and also at the time of interview. Tables 15, 16 and 17 demonstrate their levels on arrival, those at time of interview (or survey completion), and the scale of improvement between the two. There was a statistically significant improvement in understanding, speaking, reading and writing (p<.01). Respondents self-reported an average improvement of 2.7 (understanding), 2.8 (speaking), 2.6 (reading) and 2.6 (writing). Although participants had been in Australia for differing periods of time and engaged with language education to different extents, this data is indicative of the importance of learning English language to young refugee arrivals.
### Table 15: Self-reported English level upon arrival

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Understanding</th>
<th>Speaking</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>48.9</td>
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<td>28.9</td>
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<td>Basic</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4.4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
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<td>2.2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Table 16: Self-reported English level at interview

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<th>Understanding</th>
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<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some simple words or sentences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>40.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluent</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td>100.0</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Table 17: Scale improvement in self-reported English level between arrival and interview

<table>
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<th></th>
<th>Understanding</th>
<th>Speaking</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
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<td>2.2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nada (18, Syrian) stated:

[T]he thing that stop you from feeling you belong to this country or community or environment is English actually. Before when you just start [learning English] you will feel like you not belonging but after this you start speaking and belonging that’s gonna make you feel you belong too. At the beginning it’s normal to feel a bit like you’re not belonging but after that everyone I think has been through the same thing. At the beginning you will feel like you not belong to this country… It’s all about time.

Turan (18, Yazidi) spoke emphatically of the disempowerment and isolation that comes with not being able to speak the language of your new country:

I think if you don’t speak the English language you not talking. You can’t do anything without the language—not shop, not anything. Without the language it is like you are [mute] and you can’t talk.

This aligns with the findings of Blake, Bennetts Kneebone and McLeod (2017), who argue that oral English proficiency has a significant impact on refugees’ ability to access services that help them to settle as well as participate in activities that aid in social integration—such as making friends and talking to Australian neighbours.

Participants reported that poor language ability could have an impact on social interactions; this was reflected in the mixed participant responses to the prompt: ‘Most of the time, I am treated differently because of my English level or accent’ (Figure 14).
One explanation for this difference is that, while participants were convinced of the importance of English, many did not feel that their level of English was good enough to build strong connections with community, thus hampering their sense of belonging. It also reflected the experiences of some participants who felt excluded because of their low language skills. English language ability impacted on an individual’s sense of worth and ability to make social connections. Sara (21, Iraqi) recalled of her time in high school that:

I couldn’t make friends because I always feel like, ‘Oh my gosh, they’re going to hear me, they’re not going to understand what I say.’ So I would say the language barrier impacted my ability to perform well and my ability to communicate well with other cultures, with Australians.

Nadir (21, Yazidi) explained how his life in Australia improved as his language skills developed.

First we wasn’t know any English we was unhappy because we don’t know where to go and what’s everything. But after we learn English, we know how to go to Sydney and anywhere we want, talk to people and ask questions. Make you more confident and more strong.
His sense of belonging and his happiness with his new life improved when a greater command of English enabled him to function and participate in society. It allowed him to travel and improved his self-confidence after years of displacement and exclusion.

### 7.3.2 Schools, cultural connections and belonging

Schools can function as places of safety and security and can be the primary sites where recently arrived refugees experience belonging and develop cross-cultural understanding in Australian society (Cassity & Gow, 2005). However, Uptin, Wright and Harwood (2013) claim that some schools do not see or are unconcerned by discriminatory and racist behaviours towards refugee young people—and the exclusion and discrimination experienced by some participants support this claim.

Some young people described feeling initially excluded and ostracised by their peers at school due to their language ability and identity as new arrivals. Saif recounts:

> When I just came to this school they started calling me ‘import’ and this makes me feel really like I not belonging and it makes me feel a bit angry or something. Some kids called me that and then I spoke to them I told them that ‘I don’t like this word, don’t call me this.’ Some of them listened to me and they stopped but some not… Now no one calls me that.

> Actually, when I [first] came my English wasn’t that good maybe, that’s why I couldn’t defend myself. I couldn’t say ‘Stop! You can’t call me this, this is racist.’ Maybe I couldn’t or I wasn’t confident enough to say that. But now I’m pretty confident to say it to anyone.

For Nada (18, Iraqi): ‘That all goes back to my experience at high school … [W]hen I first went I was so not welcomed by the students. No one liked “imports” … [and] it was hard for them to accept someone that isn’t from here.’ This speaks to Riggs and Due’s (2010) claim that a negative perception of refugees in Australia results in a disinclination among Australian-born students to include refugee students in their friendship groups. For Nada, her interactions with non-refugees became more positive as they knew her better—that is, once she was no longer seen only as a ‘refugee’:
[The students] started to understand that someone who’s not born here but you know still is a person. They start to get to know you more and that’s when I started to feel part of the society. They started to include me in the things; they wanted to be my friend, to share things with me, talk to me in class. I used to have none of that before but after that they started to include me in that stuff.

After building personal relationships with students at his school, Omar (18, Syrian) stresses that his one-on-one relationships are very positive and help him feel part of Australian society: ‘My friends really respect [my culture and religion]. I have a lot of friends that don’t have religion but they respect my religion, my traditions and everything.’ For participants like Omar, schools are sites of inter-cultural connection that provide opportunities to build connections to others and a sense of belonging. It is at school that students from all backgrounds have the opportunity to bridge cultural and ethnic differences, expose themselves to a range of backgrounds and languages and build friendships. Schools can facilitate cross-cultural connections and friendships between recent arrivals and others living in Australia and contribute to the transferral of cultural knowledge to refugees (Collins & Coleman, 2008).

Participants identified schools as sites where they first come into contact with the ideas of multiculturalism, as well as with different cultures. Developing an understanding of the different cultures that make up Australia and Australians was also recognised as important. Ali (18, Syrian) explained:

Honestly I didn’t know about other cultures cause in Syria there are only Syrians. There are only Palestinians—we used to know them and we used to live with each other but they have similar values, similar culture but when I come to here [the IEC] I made many many friends from different countries—like I made from Greece, Japan, China which made me really happy and I still talk to them. I think it’s been really good to make me think bigger to the world.

He was thankful for the opportunities that the school gave him to make connections with people from other cultures. Moreover, Hamzah (21, Syrian) stressed the importance of allowing cross-cultural connections to form first at the school and then to carry on into relationships outside of school:
It's not only meeting people in school—because I know a lot of my friends, they don’t meet with people from other societies and like from other cultures out of school, it’s only in school classes. So they feel like, ‘Oh, we have to meet these people in school,’ and they go home and it’s ended. So I feel like an important factor is to get in touch with people out of school, like to make it personal relationships, friendships and this stuff.

At the same time, schools have the capacity to provide the social and institutional support to help young people build social capital (Naidoo, 2009) and to break down barriers to successful integration (Stanton-Salazar, 2011). Schools are spaces where young people can access community and make connections to Australian society; this is particularly the case for refugee students as well as other disadvantaged groups. Jo (Principal, Hazelwood High School) spoke about the importance of schools as safe spaces for young people—particularly new arrivals—to build and connect with their peers:

When I leave at around 5pm, the playground is still full of kids playing basketball or volleyball because they have nowhere to go. So I think that the community as well as schools being part of the community has a role to play in providing the space—whether it’s a building, facilities, or even just the basketball courts—for those kids to engage with others because they live in flats. The density of housing and the lack of space means it’s no surprise that kids are here after school and early in the morning.

That also feeds into that thing of schools as safe spaces—they know that someone’s around and they’ve got access to their friends—whether they’re 12-year-olds or 16-to 18-year-olds, the friendship groups are paramount.

These schools can also be sites of social reproduction, and have the task of transforming young people into national citizens with shared cultural identities (Cassity & Gow, 2005).

Schools play a fundamental role in bridging the gap between refugee students and families, and the wider community (Reynolds & Bacon, 2018). As Jo describes it, ‘The school is sort of that conduit [for refugees] to the rest of the services and the community.’ Teachers and other school
staff play a role in advocating for and supporting refugee students, which can include assisting refugee students and their families to navigate legal and bureaucratic processes as well as combating negative political discourse (Taylor & Sidhu, 2012).

Teachers and schools assist refugee integration by providing a sense of safety, security and support as well as being sources of academic and social knowledge (Oikonomidoy, 2010). Noor, the Community Liaison Officer at Hazelwood High School, speaks to the important roles schools play in supporting refugee young people—particularly those shouldering significant responsibility at home:

> We’ve got a lot of kids that go with their families to translate to the doctor. … But they feel helpless, and that’s when we call home and we say wherever you go, whether it’s a hospital or a doctor, or … school … you are entitled to require an interpreter in your own language and make sure you ask. …sometimes we get one phone call and it’s very hard to get in contact with mum again. And we want to grab the opportunity [so] that if she needs us, we’re there for her.

These young people can become cultural and linguistic brokers for their families (McBrien, 2005). As they are the ones learning the language, young refugees often become responsible for providing translation and interpretation for their parents and families (Uptin, Wright, & Harwood, 2013). Mel (Head of Inglewood IEC) highlights this:

> [I]t’s not uncommon for the kid who comes here who maybe would be seen as struggling academically, to be really the big hope for the family because the kid will be picking up a lot of the [Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills] relatively quickly here and learning some reading and writing. And that kid may be the one in the family whose got that key to working out what’s going on here. So that kid might be the one that the family takes to Centrelink appointments, or deals with paperwork and letters that come in, as best they can.

The support of refugee students in schools is achieved through the provision of tailored programs, specialist staff and the flexible initiatives of teaching and executive staff. However,
service providers reveal that there is little consistency in support and resource provision across schools. Equally, there is a piecemeal approach to programming and policy-making on a governmental level. Greater cohesiveness and coherency need to occur if schools are to be successful in empowering refugees and building their sense of belonging.

7.4 Challenges to schooling

The effects of forced migration see many young refugee arrivals requiring additional support in schooling to address their unique needs (Taylor & Sidhu, 2012). These arrivals often have interrupted education, which can have consequences for their aspirations, their settlement in age-appropriate classrooms and, for those approaching 18 years old, their ability to access state-funded education.

At the same time, schools and their staff must accommodate the complex educational and emotional needs of refugee arrivals and the additional needs of those who have experienced long-periods of dislocation, trauma and detention. Accommodations differ according to the services and funding available; the most recently arrived refugees settled in Sydney can access intensive language learning and the support of specially-trained staff in IECs, while those in regional areas may not have access to tailored programs and support. Regional areas face difficulties funding and staffing specialist school services tailored to new arrivals and refugees, while mainstream schools in metropolitan and regional areas can face difficulties in training staff and funding sufficient support for refugee students.

7.4.1 Interrupted education and schooling support

Those who arrive in Australia as refugees between the ages of 15 and 22 have often not completed schooling in their home country. This may be due to internal displacement or long periods living in third countries (as explored in 5.1.2). Thirty-two participants (71.1%) in this study arrived in Australia with a history of interrupted education. Additionally, 22 survey respondents (48.9%) self-reported having arrived in Australia with no understanding of English language (see Table 15), while a further 13 (28.9%) understood some simple words or sentences of English.
At Inglewood IEC between 2015 and 2019, 20 (or 26%) of the 76 refugee students had disrupted previous education, including those with minimal literacy even in their first language. Refugee students typically require longer periods of intensive English study to be able to access mainstream high school content. At IEC, a regular enrolment period is 30 weeks, with those students with a special-needs entitlement (categorised as disrupted education, physical disability, learning difficulty and/or psychological trauma) having their enrolments extended to 40 weeks. An extension request is required for those who remain in IEC for over 45 weeks. Of the refugee students enrolled in the school between 2015 and 2019, all 76 had special needs, and 22 (29%) were categorised with two or more special needs broken down as follows:

- 20 had experienced disrupted education;
- 72 had psychological trauma as assessed by the school counsellor upon arrival; and
- 2 had an assessed learning difficulty.

In contrast, only 31% (303 out of 978) non-refugee students were recorded as arriving with special needs. Refugee students were significantly more likely to arrive with special needs compared to non-refugee students (p < .001; Fisher’s Exact Test).

At Inglewood IEC, 39 (51%) of the refugee students between the period of 2015 and 2019 had their enrolments extended to over 45 weeks, each requiring a special extension request. Refugee students spent an average 44.1 weeks at the centre, approximately 9.9 weeks longer than students from non-refugee backgrounds (with an average stay of 34.2 weeks). That is, there was a statistically significant longer length of stay (in weeks) for refugee students (M = 44.1, SD = 10.9) compared with non-refugee students (M = 34.2, SD = 10.4; t[82] = 7.51, p < .001). This result is robustly tied to the possibility that the increased length of stay is driven by the special needs status of all refugees in the sample, as opposed to their refugee status: that is, we can infer that the refugee status and subsequent special needs are connected. There was a statistically significant longer length of stay (in weeks) for refugee students (M = 44.1, SD = 10.9) compared to non-refugee students who were listed as special needs (M = 41.3, SD = 11.1; t[111] = 2.00, p = 0.048). The data reveals that students’ refugee status impacts on their speed of English acquisition and their readiness for high school as compared to other English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD) students.
Moreover, despite typically spending extra time in IEC, this population demonstrated that young refugees often enter high school with lower levels of literacy in English compared to that of other EALD students. Although the difference between the skills of both groups in oral English was not significant, refugees entered high school with reading and writing skills that were significantly poorer than non-refugees exiting IEC. Data based on teacher-recorded achievement measures from the ESL Scales were collected to inform an analysis of the differences in English language levels among refugee and non-refugee (EALD) students on high school entry (upon exit from IEC).

Table 18: English level on ESL Scales upon high school entry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Refugee</th>
<th>Non-refugee</th>
<th>Diff. of means</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Median</td>
<td>Std. Dev.</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Median</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N-Obs</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>448</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***p < 0.01, **p < 0.02, *p < 0.1

This data suggests that refugee students have lower literacy skills (Reading and Writing) than non-refugee students, while at the same time learning and expressing themselves in spoken English (Oral) at a similar rate to other EALD students. These spoken language skills can mask literacy needs and the importance of additional support.

Thus, upon transition to high school, typically:

- all EALD students have poorer writing skills than their mainstream (non-EALD) peers;
- refugee students have significantly lower writing skills than their EALD and their mainstream peers; and
- refugee students have similar spoken language skills to their EALD peers. This similarity can mask a language acquisition lag in reading and writing and contribute to classroom invisibility.
These factors influence considerations as to whether young people with interrupted education and low-level English should be placed according to their age or to their schooling level. Many refugee students experience a gap between their educational experience and knowledge on the one hand, and their cohort level, according to age, on the other. This can involve balancing the importance of new arrivals receiving the time and differentiated support to succeed in schooling, and the importance of being with and able to make friends among their peer group.

On the one hand, students who are put in age-appropriate cohorts face a steep learning curve. Sara (21, Iraqi) describes the difficulty she experienced entering the correct cohort for her age despite having missed several years of education:

> I felt kind of like behind because a lot of the concepts that they were talking about and they were like, ‘You should have learnt that earlier, in year 7 or year 8’, and I’d just look at them and I’d be like, ‘But I didn’t go to year 7 or year 9.’ Because straight they put me in with my age. So I came here when I was 15 years old and they were like, ‘OK, Year 10 is the most suitable year for your age.’

She continued:

> A lot of things I actually missed—it was really a struggle because even if I learnt it [at IEC]—because you know I went to the IEC for 3 terms, they teach you the basic stuff—but when you actually go to the school it’s really different.

On the other hand, social considerations are important to ensuring that young people connect to and feel part of the school and society. It is at school that young people build friendships and connections that contribute to their sense of belonging and well-being. The importance of age-appropriate placement is highlighted by 18-year-old (Syrian) Jamal’s comments about being temporarily placed with junior students when he arrived at the IEC:

> [W]hen I just started at the IEC I wasn’t with the adults, I was with the young guys and that makes me feel so bad. That’s why I hate it because I was doing sport with them and stuff and that makes me feel terrible because I don’t like it—imagine you’re 17 and you’re studying and working with children who 10 years old and 12. That was
until I improved my English a bit because with the adults guys there wasn’t space for English at my level. Because when I came I start from zero [English].

As Morgan elaborated:

It’s a tricky one because refugee kids often have disrupted learning and even in first language are behind people of a similar age… However the social considerations are incredibly important… I don’t think a kid should be more than 2 years older than their classmates, even if they have disrupted learning. They should go in at an age-appropriate age—1, maximum 2 years older than their cohort—and then get the extra support necessary to help them cope with the content and subject matter that’s required.

Charlie (Teacher, Inglewood IEC) described the importance of balancing educational needs with age and social considerations when transitioning IEC students to high school:

[For some students, it’s] about looking at their age and their age-appropriate year and then comparing that to their language level and their educational background as well as factors like maturity and even [physical] size. Can we get away with giving them an extra year [of schooling]? And the high schools have to agree too. It’s a balancing act, and sometimes not an easy one—you don’t want students to stand out, not for their background, for their age or their ability.

Jo (Principal, Hazelwood High School) spoke about the potential consequences of putting students in year groups that are inappropriate for their age-groups, particularly for older young people:

The one thing you don’t want to do with those kids who are already pretty fragile, is to put them in an environment where they’re going [stand out]—we’re setting them up to lose—I’d be loath to do that. So, if there are those alternative settings like senior campuses or senior college even that the kids can access, I would say to them and I would counsel them that that for them will be a much better outcome.
Experiencing problems building relationships with their peers can impact on refugee young people’s sense of well-being and belonging (Cassity, 2012; Watkins, Noble & Wong, 2019) and can have a long-lasting impact on wellbeing and success.

7.4.2 Age upon arrival and schooling support

Many of the young participants in this study faced significant challenges to their education due to their age. These refugee arrivals are often caught in limbo between different age-tailored services. Older arrivals may have finished their education in their home countries and arrive in Australia with transferrable skills, and children who arrive in Australia before the age of 15 are able to access free education within the Australian school system for an extended period of time; this gives them the opportunity to gain skills, learn the language and accumulate cultural and social capital (Major et al., 2013). Moreover, aging out of the school system is a concern, given the importance of education to facilitate intellectual and personal development, its correlation with income and community integration, and its role in inducting new arrivals into the majority language, history and culture (Matthews, 2008).

One of the unique metropolitan options for older students is that of senior high school campuses (with a focus on years 10, 11 and 12 only), as well as one Senior College and IEC—‘Silverwood’ here—for adult learners aged 17 and over (Silverwood IEC is exclusively for older EALD students). Ashley (Teacher, Silverwood IEC) spoke of the importance of the Silverwood model for older arrivals:

I just think because of the age group, it would be far more difficult because they’ve been out of school for such a long time, the responsibilities that they carry are very different from a high-school-aged student recent arrival. I think that comes with a lot of other expectation and demands.

I think [Silverwood] is critical…It’s a little bit like TAFE but it has the structure of a high school with a lot of support. Because where students are doing business … there are high intellectual demands but they need a lot of support for EALD students and particularly refugee students.
Silverwood Senior College is connected to the IEC and was originally established as a re-entry school for post-compulsory school aged Australians (over 18). It is now predominantly made up of students from refugee backgrounds. Sam (EALD teacher, Silverwood Senior College) explained this history:

The college was born as a school for adult re-entry students. It was for students that left school early and realised that was the wrong decision and they come back. Through the years we have more and more refugees, to the point now [that] 86% of the school is refugee background.

Sam emphasised the significance of the site as providing high levels of support to refugee students but simultaneously giving the flexibility, freedom and respect appropriate for adults:

That’s the gap between students that find that going to TAFE is too hard for them and they need the structure of a high school and they need that support but … the relationship is not like, you’re the teacher, you’re the student because sometimes some of the [students] are actually older than the teacher themselves.

The Senior College is an important alternative for those young people who are nearing the end of compulsory school age (usually at 18). Ahmed (19, Syrian), for example, arrived in Australia at the age of 16, having missed 2 years of schooling. Ahmed described his experience first at the IEC and then at Silverwood: ‘After the IEC I went to the senior college for one year and there’s a lot of support there.’

After receiving this baseline of education, Ahmed now plans to transition to TAFE where he can further develop his skills and contribute to society: ‘I start work with my dad—we’re thinking to grow a business with him. Maybe I’m going to go to TAFE to do apprenticeship and study three years at TAFE and then get my licence.’

Jo (Principal, Hazelwood) also spoke of the importance of Silverwood in filling the gap for young adult refugee arrivals:

At [Silverwood] they access all of the services that they need outside of school. The transition to work programs are really strong, whereas putting them in a high school
they’re not going to necessarily get access to anything like that. It’s geared for a HSC and that’s the pathway we’re going down. … The focus is narrowed, you’re not having to deal with the issues of the transition from year 6 to year 7, you’re not having to deal with year 9, there’s a maturity about the way people carry themselves.

Ashley pointed to the important role played by Silverwood IEC in catering to older students and their unique situations:

[Silverwood and its teachers] help them out with life skills such as job skills, CV writing, those sorts of things. Learn about self-care because often they are carers— for their parents as well as others in their families. We identify their needs. Because of their age, it’s assumed that they know how to take care of themselves but for various reasons they don’t necessarily or they don’t prioritise themselves because of the roles that they now play in their families that aren’t traditional for the age and stage that they’re at.

Sam, too, described the importance of flexibility and support provided at Silverwood Senior College for those with familial responsibilities:

We find ourselves to do more support like find a job, a lot of courses, because our students are older and they have family responsibilities, responsibilities to send money back to their country, and some of them want to stop studying because they want to go to work and we try to say, ‘You can do both of them at the same time.’ We offer them the opportunity to be trained—we have hospitality courses outside the school on a Friday, we have support by [an] Aquatic Centre[;] … we have students trained to be swim instructors, pool lifeguards. … [I]t’s not only support academically, because the teachers have those skills, but also be able to support them, find out what other things they can do for themselves.

Morgan (Refugee Support Officer) emphasised the uniqueness of the College and the potential for expansion of the model:
Obviously the [Silverwood] Senior College is one of a kind but it plays an incredibly important role—there are kids who are in their twenties there whose parents are studying the [Adult Migrant English Program] at TAFE—they don’t want to be in the same class as their parents. They want to have a little bit of independence and form their own identity. …

[T]here should be some discussion about whether this model could be replicated to another site because … it’s quite a successful arrangement that there’s demand for clearly. There could be scope for another campus somewhere else for people to come to.

However, the geographical position of Silverwood—in Western Sydney and at a distance from easy public transport options such as a train station—means that the number of people who can attend it are limited. Ashley (Teacher, Silverwood IEC) elaborates on the difficulty associated with its location:

The distance is a big one again… We can’t actually be a hub for them, where they can drop in, where they can stay back after school. So even if we’ve got scholarship applications [to complete], maybe we’re struggling to keep them back here because it’s getting dark and it’s raining and they’ve got to get two buses, or a bus and a train.

So I think the distance is an issue. The fact [is] … there’s only one [senior IEC] of us in the whole of NSW, which is mindboggling almost. Could they go to TAFE? Probably not. Navitas [an education provider]? Probably, but again those institutions don’t offer what we offer here. So I think the distance is definitely a problem and students will start to talk about exiting early … because it’s just too far and the commute is just too much for them. Particularly because most of them don’t drive when they start here.

For those unable to access the Senior College and IEC, there are limited options. Few are able to access mainstream schooling—and those that do can experience problems fitting in given the disconnect between their English and/or learning level and their age (Cassity, 2012, p. 63; Watkins, Noble & Wong, 2019, p. 18)—and without the support of schools can have trouble
accessing employment and navigating bureaucracy. Jo (Principal, Hazelwood) explained the difficulty of assisting older students who are too old to enter mainstream schooling but who are located too far from Silverwood Senior College to continue their education there:

Those older kids … it wasn’t suitable for them to be in a classroom [after] their IEC experience. The Senior College was too far for them [to travel] … so the service just wasn’t there.

So the message for those kids was ‘Yes, you have limited English. That is all you’re going to get in a formal setting, go and get a job.’

And a lot of them didn’t have the skills, they weren’t work ready, they didn’t have the necessary skills to apply for a job, to get an interview, and the support services available to them were really, really limited.

We would often have those boys coming back to school saying, ‘I found this job ad, can you help me apply for it?’ So we would assist them in an informal sense because there was no one else doing that.

The lack of services existing for those aging out of the school system suggests a reliance on employment as the solution to integrating these arrivals. Whilst employment is often considered the primary indicator of self-sufficiency and refugee integration, it can be a short-term solution for those with limited education and literacy, given ‘low level employment in the short-term works against refugees developing the language proficiency that would improve their long-term outcomes’ (Morrice et al., 2021). As well as pointing to the need for support for older refugee youths, this also demonstrates the important role that schools play in supporting and contributing to the wellbeing and inclusion of recent arrivals (Olagookun & White, 2017).

In regional areas, too, there are limited educational options and programs for those young refugees aging out of the school system. Morgan highlighted the issue for older young refugees in regional areas:

[W]hat do you do with those kids who are within that 18-year-old bracket where there isn’t that ‘economies of scale’ … to have something like the senior college? Maybe
there’s a class within the high school, maybe there’s a class within the IEC to incorporate those young adults rather than necessarily going to TAFE? And if they go to TAFE they may not pick up all sorts of cultural things, and mixing—it’s very beneficial to have that.

Eli (Head Teacher, Brookfield TAFE) echoed some of the issues faced by students who may be too old for the school system. Eli spoke about the social and extracurricular limitations placed on young people excluded from the high school setting:

[Students aged] 17 and under, the high schools are obliged to take. I think one of the schools take 18-year-olds and the other two don’t so they come here [to TAFE]—that’s not the most ideal because they don’t have access to sport, drama [and] all that and not the same peers and age group but that’s all we can do here in Wagga [Wagga] with [the services available].

The experience of Nadir (21, Yazidi), who is too old to attend schooling but has attended TAFE in between working jobs, demonstrates how this gap in service provision can affect belonging. He described feeling alienated in Australia due to his limited English language, a lack of social connection at TAFE and not having the opportunity to build a network of friends:

[I don’t feel I belong] because I don’t have many friends. My English is not good. Sometimes I feel like if I talk or when I talking I have mistakes in English … And Australian people talk very quickly and sometimes I don’t understand anything… I don’t start a conversation, I wait till them to start. That why maybe I still don’t have friends, maybe that why. Need to be confident and talk.

Without attending school and having the opportunity to interact with and learn from new people, Nadir reported feeling isolated, and this has a direct impact on his sense of belonging. He is thankful that TAFE provides the opportunity to mix with others learning English, even though they are from a range of ages, backgrounds and educational experiences.

I talk to many people from different countries—like Burmese, Africa, Chinese, Philippines and our class is everyone—mixed. Indian. It makes me feel very happy
because they talking like us, they make some mistakes and that’s good for us because we make mistakes too. I feel OK because they talking like us.

He compares his experience there with that of his cousin, who has made many friends in Wakefield High School: ‘I have another Yazidi friend, my cousin—he is going to high school and he has many Australian friends because he with them all the time.’

Schooling provides an essential service in facilitating interaction between new arrivals and communities. If the settlement of refugee arrivals in regional areas is to succeed, it needs to be accompanied by the systematic re-examination of services available, particularly in education (Johnston et al, 2009; Olliff and Couch, 2005).

Having a history of interrupted education and having limited education in Australia can prevent some refugee arrivals from aspiring to higher educational and employment goals. Some participants voiced aspirations to enter university but often did not have solid plans or knowledge about how to achieve long-term education and employment goals. Aischa (24, Yazidi), for example, spoke about the limitations that disrupted education placed on her long-term goals:

[W]hen I was in my country I wanted to be, for example, a doctor or a lawyer. I was so excited about study. But when I didn’t complete my study, then I went to Turkey, I didn’t imagine I would come to Australia. …

I come to Australia, it’s a new life, start at the beginning. So I still confused. I’m excited about my future but I don’t know what exactly to do. I want to like, maybe, make a course for a short time but I want to still be an employee. …

I think [becoming a] teacher is hard for me because I come here in middle age [at 22 years old] so I don’t know what the rule and system in Australia. They’re confusing, I don’t know what to do in future so for now it’s OK for me to be teacher’s aide.

Nisreen (22, Yazidi), who had no education during the 5 years she spent living in Turkey, is now learning English under the Adult English Migrant Program. Beyond this, she aspires to train as a nurse: ‘I want to study more, like if I was able to go to university and be a nurse maybe.’ That is, Nisreen aspirations to complete higher education is complicated by a history of interrupted
learning, limited literacy and fluency in English and—as she is too old to attend school—access to only 510 hours of English language learning under the AMEP. She, like other young people with limited or no time in Australian schools, and may find it difficult to qualify for, access and fund tertiary education or training.

Morgan (Refugee Support Officer) explains that one of the roles of schools and education services is to support refugee students struggling to achieve their dreams: ‘It’s about letting them know, “You’re doing remarkably well”—just try and be encouraging and not trashing their dreams but also trying to channel them into a direction where they’re not set up for failure and they can achieve.’ As Morgan explains, sometimes this is a difficult readjustment, and it often falls to school staff to manage and support refugee students seeking to build their futures in Australia. Morgan described working with a senior level class of refugee students with limited English:

[W]onderful kids but very little English and already 16, 17 years old but sometimes with perhaps unrealistic ambitions at least in the short term of getting into university and getting into a course with a very high ATAR when they’re already at that age. …I know that quite a few of them have gone to TAFE and are doing OK and have adjusted to that, and I always stress with them that if you do really well [at that], there is always the opportunity to go back to uni as a mature age student.

Young refugee arrivals can enter educational settings in host countries with high expectations and ambitions for success (Sidhu & Taylor, 2009), but low language ability and experiences of interrupted education—as well as limits to school-based support—can result in a disconnect between ambition and realistic achievement (Watkins, Razee & Richters, 2012; J. Hammond & Miller, 2015).

7.4.3 Experiences of detention, and re-integration

When young detainees ultimately enter the wider community on temporary visas, they interact with boundarizing practices such as schools and settlement services. At that point, it is the role of service providers such as teachers to help them to settle and connect to society, in spite of their
legal precarity. For example, after 3 years in detention, Mehmoud entered the mainstream school system—firstly at an IEC and later to a high school:

When I came to the IEC, it was very good. Teachers were support me and it was really good. At the IEC there wasn’t any bad things there—it was really good like how I improved a little bit of my English, a little bit of my reading and writing so it was really good.

He linked the trouble he faced in settling directly to his experiences in detention, but emphasised that eventually he was thankful for the learning he received as part of the Australian community:

[High school] is alright—it’s a good school. A lot of different cultures and I’m learning new things. I get studying support. And the students, you can communicate with them and you can be friends really easy.

Mehmoud continued that the schooling he received upon being settled on a temporary visa in the community has helped him to communicate with Australians and feel to some extent part of the community.

Mel (Head of Inglewood IEC) emphasised that one of the most important roles IECs—and the school system generally—play in supporting young refugees is in fostering the development of school behaviours and trust: ‘It’s about trust, I suppose. It’s about rebuilding trust for people who’ve been in detention background which is horrible, horrible—to have that as your first experience of coming to live in Australia. I can’t fathom it really.’

Mel emphasised that those who had spent time in detention before entering school were particularly vulnerable to mental health issues:

For students who’ve been in detention … in my experience, they’ve obviously been pre-traumatised by their time in detention. That threat of not knowing if you’re going to be sent back, and the things that they’ve seen in detention are a source of major mental health issues.
As young people spend many hours of the week in school settings, schools can be important sites from which to identify and provide refugee young people with mental health support (Reynolds & Bacon, 2018, p. 753). Mel continued,

Those kids really need a lot of support which we can work with through our counsellor. Sometimes the problems are so deep-set and difficult to deal with that there’s no quick fix with it.

I think the only thing [that helps] is consistency of approach over a long period of time … For a student who’s come from a situation like that, we need to show that we’re always acting in [his or her] … best interest and that there are people [at school] that [he or she] … can talk to and we’ll help…

Charlie (IEC teacher, Inglewood IEC) spoke about the difficulties involved in re-engaging young people who have been in detention for long periods of time. For instance, Charlie described the following situation at the IEC with one former detainee:

I had a student in my class who was in community detention after spending a long period of time in different detention centres… [H]e was very disengaged and showing signs of trauma. He was very combative when he arrived at the school and … he got into a bit of trouble but over a period of 12 months he made big improvements… [H]e was able to develop his literacy in his first language and his second and also he was able to develop and control the problems that he had with anger management that mostly sprang from his dissatisfaction with his life and his long periods of time in detention.

Charlie spoke about the strategies that the school put in place to ensure that the student was able to function and participate in the school community:

I had to have a plan in place where he could leave the classroom if he got too angry or agitated. Sometimes I’d call [the Head of IEC] in and they’d go for a walk around the playground and just chat about things until he was ready to come back inside and give [school work] another go. Usually the anger was linked to not understanding or
struggling with the work. But he could lash out and be quite confrontational … [so] straight up discipline would never work—it was more important to try and get the trust back, to let him know that we actually [cared about him]. That was something he’d lost in the [border protection] system.

The exclusionary nature of bordering practices—such as through the creation of precarity and the detention of some individuals—can create moral dilemmas for service providers, whose roles are often meant to facilitate belonging. Charlie describes discussions and debates that occurred between key classroom and administrative staff members in the event that border officials or police came to remove temporary visa holders. Charlie elaborated particularly on one case:

There was a period of time where we were concerned that [one refugee] would be [moved] back into detention and I know that [another staff member] and I discussed strategies of what we would do if Border Force officials arrived at the school and attempted to remove him… I don’t know if I should say this, but we had [planned] strategies of essentially hiding him and protecting him, at least in the short term, from removal from the school.

This instance reveals how bordering policies may present teachers with ethical and moral dilemmas as state actors and as the guardians of their students. Teachers’ obligation to follow state-issued policies may, in some contexts, be in conflict with student welfare and may go counter to teachers’ instincts, which, Charlie explained, ‘[I]s an overwhelmingly good thing. We want teachers in our society to be sympathetic, to be nurturing, to care about all their students.’ Charlie continued:

These are things of personal conscience really. Sometimes you need to think about what you’d do personally when you’re faced with really rank injustice… You’ve got to do what you think’s right to live with yourself, in a way… [T]hese are judgements that you make personally. There’s no way that the Department of Education would sanction us [protecting temporary visa holders], or that the police would.

Morgan emphasised the impact that the welfare of temporary visa holders can have on school staff:
[It] takes an enormous toll and you can’t really make these stories public to the whole school due to privacy—even though you think the school should know. Obviously the ESL teachers, the year advisors, they know the story. … It’s just upsetting to know what [young refugees] have been through but you also see the smile on the face when they see you, and the resilience. I guess that’s what helps you drive on with the job to try and do your best—that’s an experience a lot of IEC and ESL teachers have, meeting these inspiring kids and that’s what motivates you to do the work that you do.

Bordering policies can have an impact on frontline service providers and may undermine the school as the site of safety and trust for all students, particularly vulnerable ones.

These comparisons demonstrate that, on the one hand, those refugees who are settled quickly and permanently in Australia are able to rebuild their lives and plan for the future while simultaneously building a social connection to the state and its representatives. On the other hand, those experiencing long-term precarity and/or detention are unable to make long-term plans, may experience uncertainty and fear about their security in society, and may find it difficult to develop connections to the community of value or trust in state representatives. Nevertheless, both groups are present in the Australian community.

### 7.4.4 Differential services

As well as the challenge of catering to those who experience interrupted education and aging out of the school system, the NSW education system also faces issues linked to differential services. Metropolitan centres have access to IECs and specialist staff, while regional areas face difficulties funding and staffing specialist school services.
7.4.4.1 Specialist (IEC) settings

The metropolitan area of Sydney has 14 of the 15 NSW IECs\(^25\) that collectively provide an introduction to English language and Australian society for recently arrived high-school-aged migrants and refugees (NSW Department of Education, 2020). These centres provide new arrivals with high levels of support, derived from a funding model that allows for small class sizes and staff who are EALD trained. Mel, Head of Inglewood IEC, describes the primary role of the IEC in settling new arrivals as being to help them improve their English language in order to be able to function in high school and broader society:

> We’re an Intensive English Centre so our main role is to teach English and equip students for the type of learning situations that they’ll be in in high school. So this includes giving them an understanding of the types of English demands that they will meet in each of the curriculum areas when they go to high school.

Intensive English Centres function as a conduit between new arrivals and the wider Australian society. Participants who attended IECs emphasised the importance of these sites in their settlement and their acquisition of English. Aminah (18, Syrian) reflected on the supports that refugee arrivals receive upon arriving in Australia and pointed to IECs as a key site of support and assistance in helping her settlement:

> If I look back to my experience, I would say that the support that I have when I came and when I went to the IEC, it help you to learn English and to improve my English and stuff.

Intensive English Centres play an important role in connecting new arrivals to their new community. For Hamzah (21, Syrian):

\(^{25}\) This includes one Intensive English High School. In addition to these Centres, a new IEC was established in Armidale in 2020, where 585 Yazidi refugee families are settled (as of January 2020). However, this centre has yet to receive a charter and is therefore not a permanent IEC.
I think the Intensive English Centre is very essential for new arrivals because it’s not only about language it’s about redirecting people for the new community they’re gonna live in.

Jamal (18, Syrian), too, emphasised the importance of community connections through IEC:

What makes it different kind of school is the different cultures. It’s cool when you find when you’re new to this country and you find different religions and different people and them’s English is the same as you. That makes you feel like you’re alright, you’re not behind or something.

Newly arrived families face challenges to their settlement, particularly after the initial (supported) period of settlement; IECs and their teachers, already known and trusted entities, often fill the service gap. As Jo (Principal, Hazelwood) explained:

[T]hat’s the beauty of IECs because the kids develop a relationship, it’s their first education provider, the empathy that is there, the understanding that is there is really important because the kids do connect back when they need assistance. And so do their parents oftentimes as well … [such as] the situation where the parents come in with letters from the Australian Taxation Office and they’ve said, ‘What do I have to do with this?’

That says to me that even though we have multicultural support services down the road, parents aren’t accessing those services whether they don’t know of them or whether they don’t feel welcome, they don’t feel confident, their fallback is the IEC.

For vulnerable arrivals, IECs also function as sites of security and consistency after long periods of dislocation and uncertainty. Mel (Head of Inglewood IEC) describes the role of IECs in providing a safe and predictable environment for high school aged new arrivals: ‘It comes to safety and predictability in this environment here. As a system, as a school we can provide a learning system where they can make progress in their English language skills and their academic skills.’
Mel continues that this position of relative safety and predictability provides a stepping stone from which young refugees can then be introduced to the wider community:

[IECs are] where they can learn more about their community through excursions and things like that and feeling safe in doing that, and feel safe in going out and engaging in new situations and with students from other countries and so on—in a constructive way and feeling success and enjoyment from participating in that.

Intensive English Centres are also unique, as they are staffed by trained EALD teachers and language-background Student Learning Support Officers (SLSOs). The presence of specialised staff such as SLSOs trained in community languages is an important factor in ensuring students can effectively communicate in school environments. Thus IECs, and the EALD support they provide, play a crucial role in capacity-building and assisting new arrivals to feel part of their new society. For Ashley (Teacher, Silverwood IEC): ‘I think [integration] is made easy for [students]. I’d say there’s a lot of awareness amongst staff, a lot of building capacity of staff, certainty a lot of empathy … a lot of trainings, professional development.’ Empathy and awareness are supplemented by advice from trained staff, and access to language support and professional development opportunities.

A significant factor in the success of refugee students is an understanding of the additional needs these students may require, particularly those with interrupted education. As Mel (Head, Inglewood IEC) elaborated, for some refugee students:

… it’s really about learning about how to be in a classroom, how to sit in a classroom for seventy or eighty minutes, how to learn and be organised to learn in a classroom and to learn the sorts of behaviours that they’ll need to learn both in the classroom and outside the classroom to ensure success for them later on.

For many kids it’s hard to do that—some who’ve only had one or two years of school and who are not literate in their first language. They need a whole lot of focus on ‘learning to learn’ kind of things. That requires a lot of patience and detail, close-up work, and explanation about what’s going on through an interpreter so that they can
get some orientation to the situation that they’re now in, the expectation and what they’ve got to learn...

Mel summarised some of the challenges connected to working with refugee students with, often, limited language expertise:

It genuinely is a case-by-case basis and learning along the way about what works best with particular kids, what sort of approaches are needed and so on. Some of the kids who come with no learning in their first language don’t get the notion of text and the way that text works in relation to sounds… [and] don’t get that connection between texts and words and sounds and meaning.

This speaks to the innovation, expertise and time investment required to prepare students with a diverse range of skills for high school.

Some refugees face challenges to learning associated with their refugee journeys or due to health issues being undiagnosed or untreated during their migration journeys. As well as supporting new arrivals with English language acquisition, IECs have processes and actively coordinate services to promote and ensure the physical and mental wellbeing of students. Sara (21, Iraqi) acknowledged the additional barriers that health issues can play in accessing learning. She elaborated on her personal experiences of having hearing issues, which were subsequently identified and resolved during her time at the IEC:

Some people might come and have other issues, like health issues, that prevent them from actually communicate well. …I think the IEC in my time … was very very helpful. Very. Even you know with my health issue, it was my ear, and literally sometimes I couldn’t come to school because I had an infection in my ear. And that was for a long time, even when I was in Iraq, and [the IEC] actually helped me to fix it. They tried to tell me what to do, they were like you have to go to the hospital, put your name down, you know. … [T]hey kept making sure that I was on the right track. … When they fixed my ear, it made a big difference.
Mel (Head of Inglewood IEC) explained how health and wellbeing issues that might be missed in a mainstream context could be identified and addressed in the small and supportive context of IECs:

There are sometimes difficulties for the refugee students, particularly, on the road [to high school] … It’s not uncommon for them to have some kind of health issues but we’re very fortunate to have a school-based nurse here who screens all of them for vision, hearing and BMI. For particular high risk groups we organise blood tests for them as well.

We find a very high proportion of the refugee students have treatable medical conditions. It can be physical things like lack of glasses, poor hearing, which can be sometimes treated and we organise that to happen so that we detect from pretty early on about the physical barriers that they might have to learning and get them fixed up through the good network that we have with the local area health district that can help us to speed things along.

Refugee arrivals can have prior experiences of torture and trauma that bring ongoing consequences for their wellbeing and learning. Intensive English Centres have counsellors on site and work closely with the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS), as well as other settlement organisations, to support refugees to feel safe and secure in their new environments. Intensive English Centres provide support for young people who have experienced complex trauma by assisting them to find a place of safety and security, and with their transitions to mainstream high school. Ashley (Teacher, Silverwood IEC) elaborated:

[There is] the importance of making sure that their wellbeing is supported…so that they’re not falling between the cracks. Helping them to transition into and out of [IEC]… Transition anywhere is difficult so then you layer that with trauma—ongoing trauma—it doesn’t end of course. [Wellbeing] is critical. It really is something we value here, and it’s a priority.
Demonstrably, IECs play a valuable role in supporting refugee young people in the early stages of their settlement. As well as providing language learning support, IECs provide support for families, and provide a safe place from which refugees can learn about, explore and make connections to the wider Australian community. They also play a role in screening for and supporting the treatment of underlying physical and mental health issues. These services, available primarily to refugees settled in metropolitan areas, support young people prior to their transition to mainstream schools.

7.4.4.2 Mainstream settings

The additional and sometimes complex needs of refugee young people require the provision of sustained and high levels of support in mainstream school contexts. The resources and staffing invested in EALD and refugee support in high school are major factors in the success of young people in schools, in their ability to overcome challenges, and in the development of their sense of belonging. However, policy factors and funding can influence the provision of sufficient levels of support, as can awareness of refugee needs (which can be linked to the numbers of refugees in a school and their visibility) in mainstream school contexts.

There can be a significant difference in support provided to refugee students in an IEC context, compared to mainstream schools, in both regional and metropolitan settings. Fatima (19, Syrian), who had a history of interrupted schooling, spoke about the support she received in different schooling settings: ‘I felt like I had much support in the IEC and then when I moved to the high school I felt like there was a big difference … [R]efugees need extra help because of their background.’ Some participants described feeling lost and invisible in the mainstream school community after transitioning from IEC. Moustafa (19, Syrian) for example, compared the different levels of support and opportunities that he received in mainstream high school to his IEC experience:

I thought the IEC is like every other school in Australia but what I find is when I went to [high school], completely different. It’s a bigger school and also the English, they speak really really fast so that was a bit hard and challenging. It took me about one year to get understanding about how the school works and stuff.
Omar (18, Syrian), too, spoke about a lack of support and/or special consideration for refugee students, particularly in later years of high school. As such, he claimed that the school system does ‘not really’ help everyone equally:

Modern History [for example,] it’s very hard for me. The language is very hard and require academic English. Well I can’t do that. There’s some people, they’re getting high marks—I’m getting bad marks and that’s not fair. …

I can’t [succeed compared to] people who was born here, it’s very hard to me. And they speak very fast, the teacher explain very fast, and that’s one of the major problems that I’m facing. Most of my support comes from my friends. They are mostly helping me.

Responses on a Likert scale to the prompt, ‘The Australian school system supports all students equally’, (Figure 15) reflect that, overwhelmingly, participants feel the school provides them with opportunities to succeed equal to those given to other attendees (86.7% positive to 6.7% negative). However, there was a reported difference in support between those schools that were experienced in the settlement of refugees and those that had fewer refugee arrivals or were newer sites of settlement.
Figure 15: The Australian school system supports all students equally

Those participants who attended schools with high numbers of refugee and EALD students reported high levels of support, positivity and assistance for refugee-background students. Staff awareness and education about appropriate support for refugee students, as well as explicit teaching and prioritising of inclusivity among staff and students, is central to fostering refugee belonging (Keddie, 2012b; Olagookun & White, 2017). Participants reflected on well-staffed and visible EALD faculties that were available to support students. Aminah (18, Syrian) spoke of the support she received at high school:

Since we came to the school the ESL teachers always give us support. Whenever we have assignments, we go to them we ask for help. They help us to get through it, they make us understand what we have to do and explain it to us and in this way we know what we doing and we do our assessments and yeah they provide us with so much support, so much. Like financial support, educational support, everything.

Nada (18, Syrian) stated that:

On the breaks every time there’s a teacher in the library who’s always there to support the ESL students and there’s a program only for the ESL students that you can get support in any subject.
On the other hand, those participants who attended schools without many refugee students reported lower levels of support and accommodation for their high needs. Hamzah (21, Syrian), for example, emphasised that he did not find the support that he felt he needed in mainstream high school. He went to a school with a low number of refugee students, and stated that:

There was no guidance there, especially the school that I went to, they didn’t have that much of refugees’ background or new arrivals’ background so they didn’t provide any support. It’s just because of this school it’s not normal to receive refugees for them. Normally they’re more like the people from Australia; because I know a lot of schools my friends went to the situation was much better than the one in my school.

I was in an ESL class—that was the only thing [there] was for the second language speakers, but for other supports, I didn’t receive anything actually. We had the school counsellor, she tried to help us but it wasn’t that much [compared to the support] I heard from my friends in other schools.

Omar (18, Syrian) emphasised that the support provided differs from school to school:

The only thing [is] … it depends on the school itself, not a system to be followed in all schools. It different from schools that receive a lot of refugees to schools that they don’t receive refugees. For the schools that they normally receive refugees, they give more support for them. For the schools that they don’t receive refugees it is normal to not give a lot of concern for refugees because they don’t receive them but I feel like it would be much greater if they would make it equally in all schools to care about non-speaking English people.

Thus, a high level of awareness of refugee students among staff, and a willingness to support them, are central to better outcomes for students. Jo emphasised that:

For us, our role really is about continuing the supports that have been put in place in the IEC to make sure that that student transitions well into the larger environment… My role is to educate [staff] and to make sure they know that this kid has come from
background ‘X’, may have disrupted learning, make sure they access the homework support centre… [I]t’s really about continuing the support and making sure the kid doesn’t fall through the gaps.

High levels of ongoing support for refugee students are central to the successful integration and participation of refugee young people in mainstream schooling. Jo (Principal, Hazelwood) stated that:

[I]f the support is there and [refugee] kids are encouraged to take those risks with their learning and they’re well supported then they’re no different to any of the other kids… [I]t comes down to support on arrival, and then it isn’t withdrawn when they transition from an IEC to a high school. A lot of time we see that the support may not be completely withdrawn but it’s wound back.

Nada emphasised that her early experiences at school would have been improved by individual teachers and staff members more overtly educating students about refugee issues and about new arrivals:

Maybe raise awareness about refugees and stuff; as in, let the teachers talk more about the students that aren’t from here and where they’ve come from. Actually introduce them to the whole class—‘This is a new student. They’re not from here, they’ve had some trouble. Be friendly with them. If they need help, help them…’ I didn’t get any of that. [I was just] dropped in basically.

This difference between schools is reflected, too, in the service provider’s responses, which reported differences in the experiences and preparedness of schools to support refugee students. Morgan (Refugee Support Officer) argued that the school’s experience and that of its executive—and the resources and staffing invested in EALD and refugee support—are major factors in the success of young people in schools:

There’s a real variety [of schools] even in this geographical area—there are some schools that really really already know what they’re doing and they have teams set up and [the Refugee Support Officer] is icing on the cake in terms of extra support
and extra advice. And there are others where … [for example] the EALD team didn’t even know who their refugee students were until I first visited, now they know and they’ve set up a little support group and we’ve done [professional development sessions for teachers] and they want [the professional development session] ‘Teaching Students from a Refugee Background’ next term so that’s also really encouraging.

When there is an awareness of refugee populations in school communities, schools can provide systemic and structured support to refugee families, who may not know how to access certain services. They can unofficially function to support young people and their families to navigate Australian service providers and to access essential services. Jo spoke at length about the cultural and systemic challenges facing refugee arrivals, which often fall to the school to address:

Some of that basic [setting-up]—how do I get a Medicare card—it’s very unwelcoming. If you’re not white and English speaking, it is incredibly unwelcoming. And if you’re not moving into an already established community of your country folk who have walked down that path and who can give you the benefit of their experience, you’re screwed. You only need to sit at the asylum seeker centre in Newtown and the people who are desperate for assistance who end up going in there for all sorts of things. Whether it’s to help fill out a form, or whether there’s paperwork that they don’t know what it is.

The literacy requirements of operating in our society are huge. If you’re not keyed in, you’re left behind. It’s very sad actually. The fact that if you need to get in contact with Centrelink for example—you can’t speak to a person. You have to go through a series of telephone menus and then you might get a call back. Or if you want to do something with Medicare, you have to go onto the site, so they’re assuming not only a level of English language literacy but they’re assuming a level of computer literacy as well. And the sites are really difficult to navigate. So what is that message that our government is sending to new arrivals—we’ve got all of these hurdles in place, and were going to make it as hard for you as we possibly can, and then if you get over those hurdles, then we just might give you some assistance.
Noor (Community Liaison Officer, Hazelwood High) speaks about the importance of connecting with the parents and families in order to help refugee families access these services:

In regard to support, we support the student by getting to know the parent, what the parents need. Getting agencies to support the parents in whatever they need, financially, housing with the counsellor, link them to adversity resources. … Every school is different. When I used to work at [a school] we had a huge community from [one background], and we had to get someone to communicate their language, because interpreters are great—to speak another language with that person, that connection is the strongest. … When we get in contact with the family [in their language], we actually learn more of what the services we need to provide for them … from counselling, to housing, to support for the kids, to language, the courses they need to do.

This highlights the important roles that Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) and support staff (such as SLSOs) play in informing and empowering those parents with limited knowledge of Australian culture as well as limited English. Jo clarifies the role of the CLO as a staff member who:

doesn’t work in the classroom… [The CLO] is a bridge between the school, the home and the community. But that role … [is] clearly defined as a non-classroom based role, … the role being that bridge between the school, home and the broader community… That’s very important. Because the trust and the relationship that the CLO is able to build, helps us enormously when we are dealing with difficult kids… Because it needs to come from a cultural perspective … someone who ‘understands my story, understands my narrative. [The CLOs] know where I’ve come from.’

Additional support roles, such as CLO, are often driven by a philosophy of community inclusion, and are important to the empowerment of refugee students. It is the responsibility of the school principal to recognise the need for such roles and to establish and fund them. However, their value is not universally recognised within schools. Noor describes, for example:
It’s about staffing, it’s about language, cultural understanding, but it has to come from the top. If the principal doesn’t want it—I know at some stage I had to resign from a school … because [the new principal] didn’t see the value of me [and] started stopping all the services that I was providing, all the programs that I had put in place over years…

Support for refugee students is often driven by school staff rather than from consistent and systemic benchmarks; Jo (Principal, Hazelwood) spoke of the importance of principal education to ensure that executive staff were aware of roles and funding available to support refugee students within schools:

Principal education is where it has to start, so when principals go through their induction program, they need to have a multicultural section. [There are] young, new principals who want to be seen to be doing a good job [but] who don’t know that there are these support services [for refugees] that they can key into … That’s the problem because it is not system wide so it’s the luck of the draw for those kids where they end up… whether they get the support or whether they don’t get the support. And therein is the problem.

Additionally, staff education to ensure that refugees are supported and understood in schools is important to make sure refugees can make connections to their broader society. Jo spoke of the need for ongoing professional development in schools driven by centralised and department-endorsed roles such as Refugee Support Officer. This professional development will ensure mainstream high school staff members are aware of and responsive to refugee students in the school:

The work that the [Refugee Support Leader] has been doing is really important to make sure that schools are educated on the fact that you do have X refugees in the school, that they need varying degrees of support, and to find out who they are. … You’ve got to know these kids. You really need to build the relationship with those kids so that they’re comfortable and confident in asking for assistance.
The ending of the Support Officer roles at the beginning of 2020 may bring a gap in support if teachers and schools are unable to provide or unaware of refugee student needs.26

There is a limit to systemic-level support for schools with refugee students, and much of the responsibility for supporting refugee students and their families ultimately falls to the school and its staff, while Morgan also acknowledges that:

The system has some things in place—but it really does depend on the culture of the school and whether there are individuals be it at executive level or at the teacher level who are prepared to really implement and put these sorts of systems into practice and go beyond what’s there. If people can find it, the multicultural education section on the department has a whole lot of information—but it’s just a whole lot of information. Going from getting that information to using it and implementing it is another thing. I don’t know, one of the high schools I have, in addition to their careers advisor, they have a [teacher] who is [a two-day loading] just for year 12 transition. That’s not just for refugees but it just means that she can spend a bit of one-on-one time with each of the kids, including the refugee kids, and she has sometimes communicated with me about their situation.

I think a lot of it is teacher driven. Even though the multicultural education section of the department is one of the better sections and they certainly do what they can to support schools and teachers, but there’s limited resources, and reaching all the teachers that [the section] needs to is not always a smooth, easy process.

The NSW public school system is one of the largest of its kind in the world, and prioritising and funding teachers and resources to invest in refugee education is a significant challenge. This is

26 Funding for Refugee Support Officer roles came to an end in December 2019. Morgan discussed the impact of this change: ‘There’s a lot of people that express shock when we tell them … The Refugee Leadership Strategy created our positions in 2017. We were told that it was only going to go for 1 year, it was extended … because of the feedback from teachers, Principals, from Directors and right up to Executive Director. It was proposed to keep it until this year. The same sort of feedback on the ground is happening [about it ending in 2019] but I think the decision made at the higher levels is going to be harder to budge. So a lot of people are like, “I can’t believe this is going, the number of refugees is increasing if anything, the need is still there,” so I think [the removal of the roles] will have an impact.’
particular the case in regional and rural areas, where economies of scale complicate the provision of specialist services and support.

Over the past 20 years, an increasing number of Australia’s humanitarian migrants have been settled in regional areas. However, these areas often do not have funding for specialised services such as trained EALD teachers and specialist language schools such as IECs. Morgan, as a Refugee Liaison Officer in Sydney, summarises the regional situation:

[N]ow there’s a surge, and this dovetails with the federal government’s policy of more regional settlement. Coffs Harbour, Armidale, Albury, Wagga [Wagga], Wollongong and Newcastle have all seen a large increase in the number of refugee background kids and obviously there isn’t something like a Senior College in all of those places, there isn’t even any IECs except for Wollongong. I think there needs to be discussions … even though the IECs are seen by the Department as a more expensive model because of the class size limits, the staffing ratio compared to mainstream, I do believe that that should be considered if [there is] this [ongoing] push for regional resettlement.

As most regional centres do not have established IECs, young refugee arrivals are placed into high school or TAFE upon arrival, depending on their age. Taylor (Deputy Principal, Wakefield High) and Jordan (Head of EALD, Wakefield High) in Wagga discussed the challenges associated with providing support to new arrivals in this model.

Jordan said:

We’d love to have an IEC. We have IEC classes … rather than a Centre. We have two classes at the moment with our intake … [F]or the number of students that we have on ‘Maintaining EALD’ [a classification of support], we would probably have a greater proportion of refugees than many of the schools, even in Western Sydney. In Sydney, you’re getting a base number [of arrivals] coming through all the time but we never know until two weeks before the kids come to Wagga [Wagga].

Taylor added:
And the [settlement services] who settle them don’t know either. We just get an email saying ‘We have these people coming’—and sometimes it’s not right—sometimes the genders are wrong, the age is wrong, so we just never quite know. … [W]e can know they’re coming to Wagga [Wagga] but until [the settlement services] settle them in their housing, we don’t know which high school they’re going to. So we have to be very flexible…

Jordan continued that the fluctuating numbers meant that IEC-like classes were very mixed in ability, and often students could only be supported in the classes for a limited amount of time before moving into the mainstream:

We have two IEC classes but then we just enrolled 13 students—absolute new arrivals, refugee background—so then we very quickly had to move some in the ‘better’ class out and into more mainstream classes. … What it means is, we can do a great program and we’re halfway through it, and now we have five new [students] who don’t speak a word of English; so now we have to adjust this or these kids from this class are going there, so we don’t get to finish [a learning progression]. We have to be flexible to meet those needs. …

And our classes, although there’s sort of an A and B group, with A slightly better, it’s not actually clear that their English is actually better. There’s a whole load of factors in that about siblings, and older kids with younger ones, and then we have a couple of kids that have got severe physical disabilities and we’re needing to find one room to use all the time.

Once refugee students transition to mainstream classes, it can be difficult to provide ongoing support to all student who require it:

When we can, we put them in classes so that any support—whether that’s EALD teacher or one of our SLSOs—is more effective and gets to more students. It’s not always possible because [the refugee intake has] grown to this number and [in the past] it’s been much smaller.
Taylor and Jordan emphasised that they would like an IEC established in their region, but they recognise the limitations of funding and staffing in regional areas, exacerbated by irregular settlement patterns:

Taylor said:

We’ve definitely talked to our directors about having some sort of IEC and then moving the kids out [into high school], and in theory they support you but in practice it doesn't happen.

Jordan responded:

We’ve never had the sustained numbers—we had 18 months with no new arrivals and then we have this sort of thing, where we get a lot. Last term we enrolled very few until the end of term when we enrolled thirteen in the last week of school and the first week of this term. They were absolute beginners again, so that’s a lot of pressure.

Principal challenges for supporting refugee young people in regional areas are staffing and funding. Despite the focus on regional settlement for refugee (and migrant) arrivals, there are limited numbers of permanent EALD teaching and staffing positions. Taylor (Deputy Principal, Wakefield High) claimed, ‘We have one permanent EALD teacher in the Riverina region.’ Instead, positions are typically temporary and funded according to EALD student enrolments. These staffing arrangements can make it difficult to fill positions with EALD-trained staff from within the region, while out-of-area teachers are often unwilling to relocate due to the insecurity of temporary positions. Jordan elaborated:

Finding EALD teachers is a problem in every school in Wagga [Wagga] and it’s not just the high schools, it’s the primary schools. Down here it’s much less possible and that’s partly because there hasn’t been the need but now you get people saying ‘I could do that training’ but there’s no permanent jobs in it so you’re not going to get permanent work.
There’s also not work full-time. Sometimes we get 0.4 [of a full time (1.0) load] and we need someone for 2 days, and you get the funding for a semester. That’s not our decision, that’s what we get given from Sydney to manage. Last year we had 11 teachers, nearly eight positions. We’ve got six and a half full-time positions at the moment.

This makes employing quality, long-term and specialty-trained teachers for refugee students difficult.

The prevalence of positions that are funding- and enrolment-dependent has flow-on impacts for consistency of instruction and ability to fill positions. Jordan (Head of EALD, Wakefield High) spoke, too, about a low-socio-economic primary school in Wagga that has had difficulty sourcing an EALD teacher for a recent intake of Yazidi students:

They’ve had funding but not been able to get a teacher, let alone someone trained. I think someone’s moving from Sydney to an [Assistant Principal] position who will teach a couple of days and do the EALD a couple of days … but [the school has] had that funding for nearly a term without it being used. They’re not being slack with it, they’re just not able to get the staff.

As an alternative to trained EALD teachers, Jordan pointed to the importance of motivated, empathetic teachers to fill the gap:

There are very few people trained [in EALD]. So if we can[, we] find people who are good teachers, who have some empathy and are willing to give it a go—’cause [the refugees in Wagga] are fantastic kids to work with and it’s very satisfying work.

However, as these teachers are undertaking work for which they are not trained, this can have an impact on teacher wellbeing as well as on the quality of education and instruction for new arrivals.

Moreover, the absence of pathways to permanent positions in regional areas also means that those who gain in-classroom experience of EALD teaching may not remain in those positions long-term. Jordan gave the example of one teacher at Wakefield High:
We have a young teacher who worked with us [in EALD] for a number of years … [H]e loved it, he was terrific, but we kept saying to him, ‘If you get the opportunity to work in your specialist [subject], you need to take it because you’ve got a long career ahead and you’re not going to get permanency in EALD.’ Teaching EALD gave him a good experience and good background that he can take into mainstream, but there’s no permanency.

The lack of permanency results in a lack of long-term continuity of care and depth of experience; those teachers who develop skills and practical experience teaching EALD do not have pathways to long-term security in that subject area. A high turnover of staff is detrimental to those students needing support.

Difficulty finding and funding trained EALD teachers in the regional vocational sector is also an issue. Eli (Head Teacher, Brookfield TAFE) stated:

[W]e are just finding [that they get funding for] a temporary position that is a contracted position for a year or 6 months. Nobody moves to Wagga [Wagga] for a casual position. So we’re not getting the qualified staff that we need. In Sydney you’ve got a huge area where you can draw staff from, but we don’t.

Danny (Regional Coordinator, TAFE) continued:

I think that a big issue as far as regional settlement is concerned is a shortage of qualified staff. It is huge. Last week there were five teachers off sick and two admin staff, so we had to combine or cancel classes. But … there are very strict rules about how many students you can have in a class … and therefore you can’t just combine willy-nilly. And then there’s the childcare requirements, we can’t cancel for [those students with children in childcare] because it costs, and all that kind of thing. So it’s a real dilemma, trying to find staff.

And in fact, when we finally get approval for a temporary position as opposed to a casual, all the casual teachers here apply for it of course because they all want some permanency. But then it takes from the same pool—if one of them get it, we don’t
even gain one hour of extra [teaching] because they already do the teaching! It’s very difficult.

In addition, regional areas have difficulty accessing community- and learning-support officers, who perform important community connection roles in metropolitan schools. In Wagga, where the Yazidi community is relatively new, schools face difficulties accessing trained SLSOs and/or Kermangi speakers to assist in translating and communicating with students. This means that schools often draw on Kermangi speakers from the community, who may have limited English themselves. One participant, Nisreen (25, Yazidi), spoke of working in schools as a translator despite having no formal training or strong language skills. Nevertheless, she was able to assist young people who had very limited language and therefore had difficulty accessing school lessons:

I want to work as interpreter for Yazidi people—when I was working in high school I help many children to learn more about English language because in my country they wasn’t study—they don’t have any idea about English language. I explain for them in my language, in Kermanji, they understand more. I want to help many children and people to learn English, I like that.

Pamir (18, Yazidi), a student at Wakefield High School, spoke about the difficulty his school has in having ready access to a Kermangi translator:

We have some teachers they help us for the assignments and other things. In class we still have teachers they help us … We have a translator—not all the time just for special times for example when we getting the reports.

His cousin, who has a very low English language skill level, relies instead on his classmates and fellow Kermangi students for translation and assistance: ‘[T]here is student in his class that speak English and they sometimes translating for him—make it easier for him.’

These examples demonstrate the unique challenges faced by refugee arrivals settled in regional areas given the limited funding, support and trained staff to provide support. This is in contrast
with the established support services for refugee populations available to metropolitan IECs and high schools and their staff.

In addition to the above experiences, refugee participants and service providers reported significant differences between the provision of support in IECs versus mainstream schools, and between regional and metropolitan school contexts.

**Discussion**

This chapter responded to the final research question, examining how boundaring practices facilitate belonging for young Middle Eastern refugees. By exploring the provision of settlement services and schooling to young refugees in Australia, it sought to understand the ‘multifarious practices through which refugees are inculcated into citizenship’ (Sidhu & Taylor, 2009, p. 656). This chapter recognised that: refugees in Australia can have their successful settlement impacted by their access to support, family networks and community support; schools can serve as sites of language learning and cross-cultural exchange and development; and the complexity of refugee needs and equitable service provision can have consequences for their development of belonging.

This chapter began by exploring participants’ access to and engagement with settlement services. In Australia, settlement is comprised of ‘somewhere to live, money to live on, information and orientation on services including schools, transport and health services[,] … access to employment and education, the development or enhancement of English language skills, [and] the formation of individual and family social networks’ (DIAC, 2008). However, access to and extent of support are dependent upon one’s visa category—thus, one’s legal belonging has a direct impact on the ability to develop cultural belonging. Those young people on permanent visas spoke of the importance of settlement support in helping them to navigate their new society. Some emphasised the support they received from government services to enrol in school services and operate in their new community. In contrast, participants living in Australia on temporary visas spoke of the difficulties in accessing and finding sources of support, often looking to NGOs and volunteer networks for assistance.
The impacts of access to family networks on settlement and the development of belonging were also explored in this chapter. Those young people with family networks and supports in Australia reported benefits to their sense of belonging; some were able to access the state quickly and easily, as they were prioritised for permanent visas. Others spoke of family members acting as a conduit between themselves and the services and/or cultural expectations of Australian society. In contrast, those without family members or extensive networks in Australia did not benefit from prior experience of services or social expectations. They reported relying more heavily on settlement services, community initiatives or members to help them access and participate in the community and thereby develop a sense of cultural belonging. For these young people, mentorship and volunteering emerged as significant contributors to their development and understanding of cultural norms and expectations (Tonkens & Duyvendak, 2016). At the same time, participants spoke of separation from family as a barrier to fully feeling at home in Australia, and reported confusion as to why some family members were accepted to Australia as refugees while others were not.

This chapter explored how effectively schools act as boundaring factors, connecting and facilitating participation of refugee students in the community. The development of English language was recognised by participants as a key tool in accessing and participating in the community. Intensive English Centres, high schools and TAFE were identified as important sites of language learning, cultural interaction and understanding—safe spaces where young people from different backgrounds can learn from each other and transcend othering stereotypes of public and political speech. Settings such as schools and TAFE classes provided young people with the opportunities to connect with and learn from non-refugee background Australians.

This chapter also explored challenges faced by refugees and schools to the promotion of belonging. These challenges include interrupted education, aging out of the school system, experiences of detention, and differential services. Refugee young people often arrive in host countries with learning challenges including histories of disrupted education and/or trauma, and they can show slower English literacy development compared to other EALD students. Quantitative data from Inglewood IEC aligned with research that shows that refugee arrivals typically learn English reading and writing at a slower rate than other EALD students, and this gap needs to be recognised and accommodated for across the school system in NSW. As it is,
refugee needs can be rendered invisible in the classroom, masked by the disproportionately high levels of spoken English often demonstrated by young refugees.

Those refugees who arrive in Australia at an age when state education is coming to an end, and who are thus aging out of the school system, can find it difficult to access language learning. Young people who arrive between the ages of 17 and 25 may have disrupted schooling and significant familial obligations, and often have limited opportunities to further their education. This chapter explored the support available to these young people; Silverwood Senior College and IEC caters to students requiring intensive language and literacy support who are too old for the mainstream school system. Unfortunately, there is only one Senior College in the whole of NSW, in a southwestern suburb of Sydney. Its location limits access to those from different areas of metropolitan Sydney and from regional areas. These young people rely on the less-specialised support found in TAFE.

Service providers such as teachers face significant challenges in supporting those young people who have spent time in detention; the most fundamental challenge is in rebuilding their trust in authority figures and state actors, such as teachers. Schools are an important site for the organisation of social life and the shaping of social identities (Collins & Coleman, 2008), and thus teachers are well placed to assist these young people to (re)learn school and social behaviours that will help them participate in the classroom and wider society. However, teachers are simultaneously faced with challenges derived from the bordering practices of the state, which complicates their role as state actors.

Accordingly, this chapter discussed the differential support available for refugees according to their settlement area and the staffing, funding and services available. It examined the consequences different levels of support had for settlement, the development of cultural belonging and networks, and language acquisition. Those participants settled in Sydney spoke of the importance of IECs in providing cultural and linguistic support to young people. These specialist schools have small class sizes, EALD trained staff and staff trained in community language. Regional schools have lesser funding, support and staff training than metropolitan schools, and this has consequences for their capacities to support refugee young people. This chapter explored the limitations on regional high schools and TAFEs in regard to funding
trained, long-term and permanent EALD staff, with these limitations impacting on the quality of education delivery. The provision of intensive language learning (including the establishment of IECs) and trained permanent EALD staff in regional settlement areas would go some way toward addressing the gaps in support. Studies into refugee settlement in regional Australian towns have found that refugees and local people hold positive perceptions of refugee resettlement (McDonald, Gifford, Webster, Wiseman and Casey, 2008; Shepley, 2008). Regional settlement is found to contribute to functioning, multicultural communities. By addressing some of these limitations in settlement services and education, NSW could facilitate greater access to the community of value for refugee young people in these areas. In doing so, this group would develop greater cultural belonging and, this thesis argues, make better progress towards becoming the Good Australian.
Chapter 8
Conclusion: New Australians as Good Australians?

Introduction

This thesis commenced with an introduction to the ways in which states seek to shape their populations to be communities of Good Citizens, using governmentality as a frame through which to discuss the ways populations are imagined, created and shaped through the tools of myth-making, bordering practices and boundaring practices. By assessing the literature of myths and myth-making around the Good Citizen, and how the state ‘imagines’ its population, the thesis explained the process by which national myth-making influences how the population of the state perceives and monitors itself—and defines itself in contrast to the Other. Next, the thesis described how modern states attempt to create and control their populations at the border, utilising bordering practices to prioritise the movement of some migrants and restrict the movement of other (as with the non-entrée regime). By controlling who can enter and remain in the state, bordering practices influence the composition of the population. Concluding the theoretical section, the thesis investigated how the population present within the state is shaped by policies, practices and institutions to comply with the expectations of the Good Citizen. In particular, key boundaring practices—settlement services and schools—were the focus of an examination of how a population can be moulded to comply with and share the values and beliefs of the community.

The thesis then undertook an empirical study of young Middle Eastern refugees, who, it was argued, are often conceptualised in Australian myth-making as the Other. A particular focus of this study was an analysis of the methods employed by the state to facilitate or hinder the passage of these people through the border, and how the state facilitates integration in the community. The empirical research was undertaken by seeking participants’ reflections on their interactions with the state at the border and within the Australian community. This thesis delved into the realities of lived experiences, asking young Middle Eastern refugees to reflect on their interactions with the state and their sense of belonging in Australia. Young arrivals aged between
18 and 25 participated in semi-structured interviews, reflecting on their journeys from their home countries, their experiences at the border, and their settlement and interaction with community (and its myths) upon arrival. This examination was motivated by a belief that inclusion, participation and flourishing of othered identities in the community are central to long-term social cohesion, collaboration and wellbeing.

This study was conducted at a time when the values of multiculturalism—as a unifying and empowering national discourse—have increasingly been undermined in public discourse and removed from policy-making. Instead, the last 20 years have increasingly been shaped by the threat of transnationalism, the rise in nationalist discourses, and a fixation on citizenship and its acquisition. In response to external and internal threats of terrorism, political unrest and the perceived disloyalty of those with transnational connections, Middle Eastern and refugee identities have been conflated and othered in public discourse and imagined as culturally incompatible with the Australian community of value. In the global north, Middle Eastern and refugee identities are present in society but are neither fully accepted nor viewed as Good Citizens. This thesis explored the extent to which the lived experiences of young Middle Eastern refugees challenged or aligned with that myth-making.

8.1 Discussion of findings

8.1.1 Myth-making: imagining the Good Australian

This thesis explored myth-making as a tool of governmentality and the means by which the Good Citizen is imagined and aspired to by the population. Myth-making involves the construction of collective memory—built over time and historically driven—contributing to a national identity through which bonds of community can be reinforced and perpetuated (Barthes, 1973; della Sala, 2016). Myth-making constructs an idealised community of value composed of Good Citizens, ‘law-abiding and hard-working members of stable and respectable families’ (Bridget Anderson, 2013, p. 3). Those who perceive themselves and are perceived by others to be members of this community can be considered interpellated subjects who, in following their own interests, will ‘do as they ought’.
By identifying with the core myths, ideologies, values and attitudes of dominant group, interpellated subjects may be said to belong to the community of value. Lines of belonging can be drawn between those with membership of the dominant group, and the ‘stranger’ or Other who does not belong (Yuval-Davis, 2011). The Other is the foil that highlights dominant racial, cultural, legal and socio-political characteristics of an established community (Capetillo-Ponce, 2003, p. 122), reproducing positions of domination and subordination (Johnson et al., 2004).

In Australia, the imaginary of the Good Citizen (or Good Australian) has been derived from the intersection of history, nationalism and exclusionary policy-making (Tavan, 2005), centring on immigration and Australia’s connection to Britain. The ability to control borders and monitor entry to the state was a key motivator of Federation, and influenced the immigration policy of the early state (Kamp, 2010; Markus, 1988). Immigration policy reflected a hierarchy of desirability, giving preferential access to the state according to, in this instance, racial characteristics, and informed by national myths and ideals of the Good Citizen. The ability to restrict entry to those deemed most desirable—first British migrants and later Europeans more generally—went hand-in-hand with the construction of certain potential migrants as undesirable or Other. From the 1960s, the maintenance of White Australia became untenable, and myth-making about the hierarchy of desirability shifted toward multiculturalism. Under multiculturalism, migrant arrivals could be welcomed into the social and commercial life of the nation, while maintaining and contributing their own cultural heritage to the community. Nevertheless, Hage (2000) argues that ‘whiteness’ continues to be used as a form of symbolic cultural capital in Australia, held in contrast to the Other.

Othering sees individuals or groups identified and treated as different from (and less worthy that) the dominant social group (Griffin, 2017). In recent years, the Other in Australian discourse has taken the form of the refugee and/or the Middle Eastern arrival. This othering often occurs through a ‘stretching of identity’—the conflation of refugee and Middle Eastern identities—and aligning them with myths of bogus refugee and Islamic terrorism.

The othering and exclusion of refugees can in part be explained by the imagined gap, or ‘myth of difference’ (Chimni, 1998), between the construction of refugees during the period when international refugee law and UNHCR were established (refugees being those fleeing war-torn
Europe) and those seeking asylum in northern states today (primarily from the global south). As such, northern states such as Australia have sought to limit the arrival of these refugees, adopting a non-entrée regime. The non-entrée regime speaks to the efforts of northern states to prevent refugees from reaching their jurisdictions and hence become entitled to rights of asylum set out under the Refugee Convention (Hathaway & Gammeltoft-Hansen, 2015). One justification for deterrent measures is the myth that refugees engage in ‘forum shopping’ (Barbou des Places, 2002), seeking asylum in those states with generous levels of protection rather than remaining in the first country to provide them with ‘effective protection’ (Legomsky, 2003). The non-entrée regime claims effective protection exists even if the third country does not provide high levels of protection and/or support (Gammeltoft-Hansen, 2011).

However, as demonstrated by participant narratives, many third countries (particularly those bordering war zones with high numbers of refugees crossing their borders) provide limited basic protections and rights to refugees. Participant narratives spoke to the difficulties young people faced accessing schooling and support, overcoming challenges of discrimination and racism in the society, and enduring precarious, unsafe and exploitative working conditions. Their narratives spoke to young refugees’ experiences of ‘bare life’ (Agamben, 1998)—precarious existences in third countries where they were devoid of rights or assistance, and were excluded from political and cultural community. These narratives refute the myth of ‘effective protection’ as a justification for excluding or limiting refugee intakes, and speak to the perseverance and endurance of the refugee young people interviewed for this thesis.

At the same time, boat arrivals to Australia have also been represented to the public as ‘bogus refugees’. Political speech and public discourse in Australia have constructed boat arrivals as illegally circumventing Australian sovereignty, ‘jumping the queue’ and taking the place of more ‘worthy’ refugees waiting to be resettled in Australia. However, participant narratives speak to the reality that many refugees slide into irregularity at different stages of their migration journeys. Young people who were later settled permanently in Australia recalled using smugglers and circumventing state bordering practices as part of their migration journeys. Thus, the imagining of some seeking asylum as more worthy (or more ‘legal’) than others oversimplifies and diminishes the reality of lived refugee experiences.
In the years since September 11, the construction of Middle Eastern arrivals as the ‘Arab Other’ (Noble, 2008) has seen increased negative attitudes toward Islam and Middle Eastern identities in the Australian community (Akbarzadeh, 2016; Bloul, 2008; Borrell, 2015; Poynting & Noble, 2004; Kabir, 2007). Through value-laden and negative labelling—often reflecting the myth-making in the community—Middle Eastern and refugee identities are designated as Other (Bridget Anderson, 2013); myth-making incorporating negative depictions of Australian Muslims has a negative impact on Middle Eastern community members’ experiences of belonging in Australia (Kabir, 2008). Young participants recounted their experiences of being othered in the community, labelled ‘imports’ and treated differently due to their dress, appearance or language ability. This labelling commonly occurred in contexts where participants were unknown and easily identified as different to the dominant social group (Griffin, 2017).

Participant narratives challenged the conception of Muslim and Middle Eastern arrivals as ‘threats to “social cohesion” and “national unity”, that is, to the cultural values and integrity of the dominant (Anglo-Celtic) host society’ (Dunn, Forrest, Burnley & McDonald, 2004, pp. 410–411); rather, participants embraced the opportunities provided by multicultural ideals to reconcile the values of their homeland with those of the Australian community of value—they described multiculturalism as an inclusionary and empowering force, allowing them to maintain their cultural identities while becoming part of the wider Australian community. Participant narratives also pointed to the power and potential of providing young Middle Eastern refugees with a platform to share their migration journeys, their worldviews and their values—they demonstrated an understanding and critical awareness of the socio-political landscape of their home countries, yet often meditated on instances of shared humanity.

8.1.2 Bordering practices: accessing the Australian population

Bordering practices, an established concept in political science and migration studies (Diener & Hagen, 2012; Hafeda, 2016), were introduced in this thesis to describe states’ exercises of governmentality to control the movement of people across borders (Vaughan-Williams, 2009). Bordering practices do not stop at the border and are not fixed in space or time, but ‘symbolise a social practice of spatial differentiation’ (van Houtum & van Naerssen, 2002, p. 126); by controlling who can enter and remain in the state, the state can influence the composition of its
population, distinguishing between citizens and foreigners, insiders and outsiders, those permitted entry and those to be kept out (Garcés-Mascaréñas, 2015).

The performance of bordering practices aligns with the notion of the liberal paradox (Hollifield, 2004), whereby states seek to facilitate entry across borders of goods and capital, but limit the entry of immigrants and refugees through the exercise of sovereignty (Sassen, 1996). Those arrivals who are given mobility rights to enter the state are often perceived to be desirable, useful, or ‘nears and dears’ (Tholen, 2009) who share similar cultural background to the population. These arrivals are higher on the hierarchy of desirability. Others are marginalised or excluded from the state, with the application of racial categories still inherent in the way migrants are imagined (Ruedin, 2017).

The increased visibility in northern states of migrants and refugee arrivals from the global south—the ‘super-diversity’ of migrant flows (Vertovec, 2007)—is contributing to perceptions of unprecedented levels of migration (de Haas, 2005) and their potential to bring negative social, economic and cultural change (Ruedin, 2017) or threaten the state (Guild, 2003). Fears of international terrorist action have been used to justify the securitisation of migration through, inter alia, stricter border controls and enhanced visa requirements (Chebel d’Appollonia & Reich, 2008; Leonard, 2010). Despite attempts by states to stop or limit ‘undesirable’ arrivals from entering their borders, restrictive migration policies often fall short of their goals (Bhagwati, 2003; Czaika & de Haas, 2013; Düvell, 2005).

Participants in this thesis all have accessed the Australian state, although their journeys and abilities to remain long-term differ. Those participants with the right to remain were selected for permanent visas through UNHCR vetting or because of sponsorship or family support from within Australia. Thus, bordering practices deemed these refugees ‘more desirable’ and/or able to demonstrate an existing connection to the Australian community. By contrast, those participants living in Australia on temporary visas arrived ‘irregularly’ (without a visa and by boat) or were seeking asylum on-shore (after arriving on a non-refugee visa). At the time of interviews they had no certainty about their position in the community or future planning, and had no legal belonging; they were members of the precariat (Standing, 2015), experiencing uncertainty, instability and limited rights (Waite, 2009). Temporary visas for refugees and
asylum seekers result in a subclass of resident in Australia—a vulnerable, marginalised and traumatised group of individuals unable (or less able) to establish any consistency or long-term goal-setting in their new country.

The reframing of asylum by political actors justifies the granting of fewer protections or rights to those deemed ‘asylum seekers’ or irregular arrivals rather than ‘refugees’ (Zetter, 2007). This (re)labelling has been used to evoke myths of otherness, and to justify restrictive policy making; the interchangeable use of ‘immigration’ and ‘asylum seeking’ induces political division and controversy (Gibney & Hansen, 2005; A. Hall, 2010), and the evocation of ‘terrorism’ necessitates the introduction of repressive bordering practices (Collyer, 2005, p. 283). In Australia, migration discourse over the past two decades has focused on the ‘threat’ of boat arrivals, placing a focus on asylum seekers as targets of deterrence, deportation and detention (van Kooy & Bowman, 2019; Crock & Bones, 2015). Moreover, this political speech and public discourse justifies and legitimates restrictive bordering policies. However, despite the labelling and exclusion of the ‘boat arrivals’ interviewed for this thesis, the circumstances of warfare and discrimination that motivated their migration journeys clearly demonstrated their genuine need to seek protection and the legitimacy of their claims for refugee status.

Australian bordering practices prevent asylum seekers from reaching the Australian mainland, and/or hold them for long periods in detention, usually on off-shore islands. The detention of boat people constitutes Agamben’s (2005) ‘state of exception’, with the Australian state abrogating conventions and expectations on the treatment of asylum seekers under international law. Yet, as demonstrated by participants in this thesis, indefinite detention is not a long-term means of excluding boat arrivals, with many ultimately settling in the Australian community on temporary or bridging visas. Moreover, as detention compounds the traumas of the refugee journey for young people (Austin, Silove & Steel, 2007), poor mental health, interrupted education and disconnection from the community of value must ultimately be addressed by settlement services and schools.

Those without legal rights to remain in the state or without pathways to legal belonging can experience precarity (Lewis et al., 2014; Waite, 2009), bare life, and exclusion from the political community. Participants in this thesis spoke of the importance of permanency in developing a
sense of belonging and safety and building their connections to the state; permanency gave them access to services to assist in their settlement, and empowered them to plan and work toward future goals (such as engaging in employment-specific training). On the other hand, those on temporary visas found future planning difficult and had difficulty accessing and sustaining long-term education and work, which in turn led to increased reliance on non-government organisations (NGOs) for support. These young people live in limbo, neither excluded from nor fully included in society (Walters, 2008).

For Brubaker (2010), those living long-term in the state should be entitled to full membership of that state (citizenship) due to the inevitable development of economic, social, and cultural belonging and participation in the state. Citizenship is inherently exclusionary (De Genova, 2015), distinguishing between insiders and outsiders according to their (legal) relationship to the state (Bauböck, 2006, p. 15); it can also be a tool of governmentality by prescribing desirable behaviour (Koning et al., 2015). Recent political debates in Australia focus on placing greater emphasis on values when conveying citizenship (Petrie & Sherrell, 2017), reflecting a ‘culturalization of citizenship’ (Tonkens, Duyvendak & Hurenkamp, 2010, 2012).

Agamben (1998) rejects the notion that human rights can exist outside of membership of the state, and suggests that those without permanency (and legal citizenship) are unprotected. Accordingly, participants in this thesis aspired to citizenship as a tonic for the refugee experience, providing rights and protections they had lost. They contrasted the security of citizenship to the powerlessness and statelessness of the refugee experience, and saw citizenship as a means of accessing those rights and protections traditionally provided by their home country (Nunn et al., 2016). Simultaneously, participants viewed legal belonging as a means of solidifying cultural belonging—through citizenship, participants felt they would be viewed, treated and valued as New Australians.

8.1.3 Boundaring practices: shaping the population

Boundaring practices were introduced in this thesis as a complement to the established concept of bordering practices. This approach draws on the work of Fassin (2011), who defines borders as the territorial limits to define states and their citizens, and boundaries as the social constructs that demonstrate differences (such as in class or gender) and produce identity. That is,
boundaring practices encapsulate the action of the state on subjects within its borders through the use of institutions and policies to shape the population as governable subjects or Good Citizens. Full membership of the state—or full belonging—involves the development of cultural belonging as well as legal belonging, and the former is often fostered through boundaring practices such as settlement services and schools. Fozdar and Hartley (2012) speak of the integration of refugees into the community as a two-way process, requiring on the one hand that refugees adapt to the lifestyle of the host society while maintaining their cultural identity, and, on the other hand, that the host society be welcoming and have institutions that are responsive and accommodating to the diverse needs of refugees. This second aspect, the accommodation of needs, is addressed in Australia through boundaring practices.

In multicultural states such as Australia, the development of cultural belonging has been made more complex by the adoption of multicultural and integration policies. Multiculturalism is the management of difference (Mackey, 2002), or the desire to encapsulate distinct ethnic identities into a larger cohesive community (Noble, 2009). Multiculturalism allows arrivals to maintain their own ethnic identities while also being willing and empowered to become part of the host society (Fleras, 2009). However, in recent years, multiculturalism has faced backlash in Australia (Poynting & Mason, 2008), with some voices pushing for recent arrivals to embrace (or demonstrate) ‘Christian’ values (Fozdar, 2011). Clyne and Jupp (2011) linked the backlash to, inter alia, increased migration and refugee arrivals from the global south, the incompatibility of Islamic values with Australian ones, and a concern about the maintenance of European cultures.

Despite this backlash, participant narratives speak to the continued importance of multicultural ideals and outlook in Australian society. Young Middle Eastern refugees credited multiculturalism with their ability to feel included in society and to be proud of their heritage, while developing dual identities as Arab-Australians. They spoke of the importance of gaining an understanding and appreciation of different cultures and of a multicultural outlook in encouraging tolerance and acceptance. When reflecting on the importance of multiculturalism, participants compared their experiences in Australia with those in what they described as their mono-cultural homes, or third countries. In mono-cultural societies, difference was distrusted and was a cause for exclusion, even between different Arab communities. In Australia, participants pointed to multicultural activities and community events as occasions where they felt
accepted and as opportunities for building cross-cultural understanding. Their experiences speak to cultural belonging in Australia being tied to multicultural communities and interconnected identities.

Refugees and humanitarian entrants receive support in settlement over a 6- to 18-month period after arrival, with access to and extent of the support dependent of the refugee’s visa category. Those refugees settled under the Humanitarian Program have assistance with, inter alia, employment, family reunion, social services, health and accommodation. Participants on permanent visas reflected on the importance that settlement services played in developing belonging, from meeting and greeting refugee families at the airport and taking them to their new homes to helping them with shopping in the early stages of settlement. Those on temporary protection visas receive more limited government support (Savitri Taylor, 2018), and in some cases, temporary visa holders are dependent on NGOs to assist with and fund their engagement with services, including schools. In addition to having less support and assistance, temporary visa holders must also navigate stressors including the threat of deportation and disruptions associated with visa renewals.

Temporary visa holders also do not have access to family reunion, and some permanent visa holders fail to secure refugee status for their family members. Participants separated from family spoke of this as a barrier to fully feeling at home in Australia. Those with family members in Australia emphasised the value of having access to community networks and family members with cultural knowledge to assist them to understand and navigate services and the new community. Given the pressure placed on ‘outsiders’ to demonstrate their willingness and ability to fit in (Bridget Anderson, 2016), as well as their understanding of cultural norms and expectations (Tonkens & Duyvendak, 2016), family networks and cultural insights play an important role in fostering cultural belonging.

For refugee young people, schools can serve as the primary sites of belonging, transforming them into national citizens and coordinating their cultural identities (Taylor & Sidhu, 2012). Schools are sites of social reproduction, with a role in transferring the values and myths of society (Collins & Coleman, 2008) and encouraging refugee students to accumulate cultural and social capital in their new communities (Major, Wilkinson, Langat & Santoro, 2013).
participants, schools played an important role in supporting language learning and providing a platform from which to interact with Australians from different cultural backgrounds. It was through school that participants reported being able to make social connections outside their own communities, with one-to-one cross-cultural interaction, understanding and friendship allowing them to challenge assumptions and identity myths about Middle Eastern refugees perpetuated in political speech.

School also serve a role in addressing the unique and complex needs that refugee young people bring to their new countries. In addition to experiences of trauma, refugee young people often present at Australian schools with a history of disrupted education (Naidoo, 2015b), low literacy (Naidoo, 2015a; Oliver, Haig & Grote, 2009) and difficulty adapting to educational settings (Alford, 2014). They can also take longer than other EALD students to build English language skills (Woods, 2009). The majority of participants arrived in Australia having experienced interrupted education during their migration journeys, while a still greater proportion arrived with limited or no English language skills. They identified schools as places where they could develop language skills and address the gaps in their learning. Young refugee arrivals often enter school contexts with high expectations and ambitions (Sidhu & Taylor, 2009), but experiences of interrupted education and the limitations in language and learning support often result in a disconnection between ambitions and realistic achievement (Watkins, Razee & Richters, 2012; J. Hammond & Miller, 2015).

There was recognition among participants and service providers of the challenges in accommodating students with interrupted education, such as providing additional support to catch up on learning or placing students amid younger cohorts. There was also recognition that the necessary support was not always available, particularly in large or regional school contexts. The difficulties of differential service provision—the funding, staffing and serving of support to address refugee needs—is an intransigent one. Some school settings are more aware and/or equipped through staffing and EALD training to address the needs of refugee arrivals. Those participants who arrived in Australia after or toward the age when compulsory education ends (18 years) found it more difficult to access schooling and to address their gaps in language and learning. While there are services within the NSW education system tailored to these language and learning needs—IECs, Senior Colleges and specialist EALD teachers, for example—young
refugee arrivals are not always able to access these services. Given the important role English language learning and education plays in the integration of new arrivals (King & Owens, 2015; Matthews, 2008), acknowledging gaps in education service provision and addressing funding, staffing and knowledge shortages is essential to facilitating the belonging of New Australians as Good Australians.

8.2 Summary of findings

In this thesis, three research questions were developed and explored, examining the ways in which Middle Eastern refugees imagined, accessed and participated within the Australian population.

The first research question posed by this thesis was:

How does myth-making about the Other and the Good Citizen reflect and/or impact on the lived experiences of young Middle Eastern refugees?

This question challenged myth-making about young Middle Eastern refugees by giving voice to their migration journeys, their lives in third countries, and their aspirations for and contributions to life in Australia. It allowed participants to speak to their realities, and to compare these to the expectations and assumptions of myth-making and political speech.

By sharing migration narratives and connecting with communities, participants were able to combat the myth of the Middle Eastern refugee and build their identities as Good Australians. By sharing their migration journeys and cultural knowledge, young people reported feeling more connected to their audiences, be they school peer-groups or the wider community. Participants emphasised the significance of addressing the wider community, and of sharing their stories, experiences and worldviews, in building cross-cultural connections and expanding the community of value to include themselves. Also significant was the opportunity for these young people to act as representatives, including as refugees, as Middle Eastern minority members, and as future young Australians. By being empowered to engage in collaborative conversations, these young people felt that they had a voice and were a valued and accepted part of the community and as Good Australians.
In exploring young people’s perceptions of values of the Australian community, the most important factor contributing to refugees’ sense of belonging proved to be multiculturalism. Early in the thesis, I showed that multiculturalism has often been criticised in public debates as contributing to a declining sense of loyalty to Australian identity among recent arrivals. The majority of participants believed that multiculturalism was an empowering and inclusive force that enabled them to express dual identities. Participants’ cultural backgrounds were legitimised by the inclusivity of multiculturalism, which simultaneously allowed them to belong and contribute to Australia. Participants’ responses reiterated the importance of multiculturalism to Australian society and to the ability of the state to embrace new arrivals from varied backgrounds. This aligns with findings in the literature that exposure to racial diversity is an important mechanism for reducing intergroup antagonisms and promoting a cosmopolitan sense of belonging (Wu, Hou & Schimmele, 2011).

In contrast to the factors that contributed to connection with community and their affiliation as Good Australians, prejudice in day-to-day interactions emerged as a contributor to exclusion and alienation—reflective of othering. Misconceptions about refugee and Middle Eastern identities held by members of the public, and exacerbated in political speech, undermined young people’s senses of belonging and connection to Australian society. Participants recalled being targeted in the street and in the schoolyard because of their cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and that labelling left them feeling excluded and vulnerable. However, most participants recognised that these voices formed the minority, and many reinforced the notion that communication, opportunities for minority representation and the continued promotion of multicultural values in Australian society could limit acts of othering and exclusion.

The second question asked:

In what ways do bordering practices influence refugee young people’s access to the state and belonging?

Participant narratives demonstrated that precarity and permanency were significant influences on experiences of belonging. Those refugee young people arriving in Australia from the Middle East through the Humanitarian Settlement Program receive extensive support and assistance upon arrival, aiding their settlement; more importantly, they receive permanent visas, allowing
them to remain in Australia, with pathways to citizenship. Permanency to remain in-country allows individuals to plan and prepare for productive futures, and such permanency is imperative for young people, as it gives them the freedom and security to strategically plan for their careers and lives. Participants reported that permanency contributed substantially to their connection to—and feelings of belonging in—Australia and to their sense that Australia was now their home.

Further, access to and (re)unification with family members was a recurring factor that contributed to participants’ belonging. Those with family members in Australia emphasised the importance of these members to their sense of belonging and settlement in Australia and their role in assisting new arrivals to integrate and participate in society. Family connections within the society facilitate and aid the development of cultural connection to the community of value.

The attainment of citizenship—or realistic pathways towards this goal—emerged as a key factor in the development of belonging among participants. Those who could chart realistic pathways toward attaining citizenship emphasised its importance to their sense of belonging in Australia. Citizenship was conceptualised by many participants as a tool to overcome many of the core challenges of the refugee experience; Australian citizenship was viewed as a means to restore the identity, protection, freedom of movement and sense of pride that many felt had been undermined during their exile from their home countries. Moreover, participants described citizenship as a mark of full membership of the community—that is, of complete acceptance and belonging in Australia.

In contrast, precarity was reported as a factor that substantially prevented the development of belonging for refugees in Australia. Only three young people living in Australia on non-permanent visas were willing to be interviewed; these young people spoke about their uncertainty about the future, their inability to plan, and a level of dislocation and exclusion from the wider community. Precarity places young people’s lives on hold as they wait for a visa, for support and/or for the security to engage in longer-term projects, including training and education. Precarity has negative consequences for settlement, employment and, ultimately, belonging. Those on non-permanent visas can also be limited in their abilities to travel, which can see them separated from family members for prolonged or indefinite amounts of time.
Unsurprisingly, experiences of detention—including for extended periods of time—emerged as a significant factor that hinders belonging. The two participants with experiences of detention reported disconnection from the Australian community and difficulty building trust. Experiences of long-term detention had detrimental consequences for participants’ wellbeing, literacy and ambition. Moreover, these participants now live in the Australia in a state of precarity, excluded from the citizenry and from full belonging, but present and attempting to plan for the future. With no claim to long-term residence or legal belonging, these participants have little motivation to develop their skills; their attempts to move out of stagnation include applying for temporary visas that may merely prolong temporariness.

The third research question was:

To what extent can bounding practices facilitate belonging for young Middle Eastern refugees?

This thesis focused on settlement services and schooling as the key bounding practices used by the state to foster cultural belonging among new arrivals. These two factors were explored with participants to understand the extent to which they facilitated access to and participation within the community.

Settlement support emerged as an important factor in facilitating the settlement of those refugees on permanent visas and contributing to their sense of belonging. Participants reported being met at the airport and shown to their new home, and some emphasised that this support felt like a tacit acknowledgement of their welcome and inclusion in Australian society. In contrast, those living in Australia on temporary visas have fewer state-based support structures to assist them with their settlement, which often forces them to look to NGOs for support. These participants reported being thankful to religious groups and NGOs for their support, but they did not report feeling included in the wider Australian society.

Community welcome—facilitated by settlement assistance services—was also identified as important to building connections in the community. Refugee participants based in regional centres emphasised the importance of having mentors who were already settled in the community, including those from Australian backgrounds. Support from a community volunteer
created a connection between the refugee arrival and his or her new society, and provided the arrival with a friend to help navigate the new society.

Support in schooling was reported by participants as a significant boundaring factor in promoting belonging, as it allowed young people to develop their English language skills and to make connections socially. Settings such as schools and TAFE provided young people with the opportunities to connect with and learn from non-refugee-background Australians. In particular, the provision of early, intensive and extensive English language support was central in assisting refugee young people, regardless of age and prior education, to make connections to community.

Participants emphasised the importance of having the space and opportunity within schools for open and honest conversations across cultural divides. Young participants spoke of the importance of combating stereotypes and misconceptions through communication and cross-cultural exchanges with school peers. Participants also spoke of the importance of being able to reach out to their Australian friends and to exchange values and beliefs as a way of moving forward together. Participants frequently confirmed the school as a critical site of community connection.

This research found that differences in support provision were significant to participants’ experiences of belonging and development of community connection. Intensive English Centres—providing young migrant and refugee arrivals with an introduction to language and culture in Australia—are an important model in developing English language, encouraging cross-cultural understandings and building connections with community. Intensive English Centres’ funding provides for small class sizes, EALD trained staff and Student Learning Support Officers (SLSO) who are trained in community languages. However, these centres are only permanently established in metropolitan Sydney and Wollongong. Silverwood Senior College and IEC caters to older students with disrupted education; this school setting provides social and educational support to refugee arrivals and facilitates learning for those who arrive in Australia after compulsory school age. It runs community connection programs and links students with occupational training and industry pathways. However, this is the only centre of its kind in metropolitan Sydney, and there is no equivalent support in regional areas; instead, young people are encouraged to attend TAFE to gain English before entering the workforce. As interrupted
education is a common refugee experience, and many arrivals experience a disjunction between their age-appropriate year group and their learning level, there is a major gap in the provision of educational support for arrivals in Australia who are toward the end of school age.

The lack of funding, support and staff training provided to regional schools impacts on their ability to provide high levels of support to refugee young people. This study found that regional high schools were unable to fund permanent EALD-trained staff, and that high turnover of experienced staff (due to the temporary nature of roles) impacted on the quality of education delivery. TAFE providers also reported issues with staffing linked to high numbers of temporary—rather than permanent—roles for EALD teachers and difficulties in attracting trained teachers to relocate to regional centres. A contributing factor to this funding dilemma is fluctuating numbers of new arrivals requiring EALD support. Additionally, the inability of education or settlement services to predict numbers or times of rural refugee settlement makes it difficult to plan appropriate programs and maintain consistency in learning. This has a substantial impact on the ability of educational centres to provide high quality and highly supported learning to refugee arrivals.

This thesis highlights a conflict between the control of the population via acts of governmentality (myth-making, and bordering and boundaring practices) and promotion of belonging for those present in the community. The findings outlined above point to tactics, policies, procedures and institutions of governmentality that, rather than facilitating connection to society, promote exclusion. Four examples of governmentality practices harming the development of belonging among refugees are discussed below.

First, temporary visas—such as Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs) and Safe Haven Enterprise Visas (SHEVs)—promote long-term precarity among the most vulnerable communities, when contrasted with permanent alternatives. Established research shows that extended periods of temporariness without clear pathways to longer-term solutions undermine people’s connection to the community. Participants’ reflections emphasised that, without feasible pathways to legal belonging, it was difficult for them to plan for the future or invest in long-term goals. This study also found that precarity, compounded by experiences of detention, led to disconnection from the community of value and an inability to feel included. Walters (2008, p. 185) describes this as
‘the social condition of being neither fully excluded nor fully recognized’, and in this thesis it is conceptualised as being a legal and cultural outsider, the ultimate Other (Figure 1).

Secondly, recent and proposed amendments to citizenship laws have been focused on extending the time and criteria required of migrants between their arrival, granting of permanency and their eligibility to apply for citizenship. Additionally, there has been an emphasis placed on introducing an Australian values test, as well as making English language requirements more stringent. In contrast, as participants’ responses demonstrated, attainment of citizenship is viewed by many as the ultimate indicator of belonging; for refugee young people, citizenship represents a liberation of sorts from the refugee experience. The migration narratives of these young people demonstrate that they are able and willing to make a valuable and considered contribution to Australian society. However, many of these participants—who are eager to attain citizenship and commit to Australia—have interrupted educational backgrounds and limited literacy in their first language and/or in English. Adding a values assessment, raising the English language requirement and extending the wait time until an arrival can apply for citizenship make it harder for the most vulnerable in society to attain that goal. At the same time, if they were unable to pass a citizenship test, these young people would not be excluded or ejected from Australian society—they would only be prevented from becoming full legal members of it. By making the pathway to citizenship more difficult, the state creates a category of outsiders who feel increasingly part of the community of value but cannot be considered or included as full members. These are the legally othered. If it is the state’s goal to create a society of Good Citizens, making citizenship exclusionary is counterproductive.

Thirdly, while there are many excellent programs in play across NSW to support refugee young people, the available support is not uniform or equitable. There remain significant gaps in funding, quality and access to education provision. Those young people who experienced high levels of support from educators, community and peers reported high levels of connection to their society. Many participants valued English language acquisition above all else, as it empowered them to connect with and participate in the community. In contrast, those who did not report high levels of educational support often reported dissatisfaction with their language ability and/or alienation from or loneliness in the community. This isolation could lead to cultural exclusion or isolation among permanent residents, making them the culturally othered.
Finally, the fading of multiculturalism in policy-making does not reflect the value ascribed to it by refugee arrivals. Participants in this study emphasised that their connection to the culture of their home country and their emerging Australian identity were legitimised by the learnings and values of multiculturalism. More than this, they emphasised that multiculturalism promoted the building of cross-cultural awareness and understandings, and encouraged people to contribute their cultural knowledge and values to enrich the community of value as a whole. Participants emphasised the importance of multiculturalism in making them feel accepted, active and participative in the community while simultaneously maintaining their cultural links. By reigniting a focus on multiculturalism through policy-making and impassioned political speech, the Australian community of value can continue to expand and ensure that all arrivals who wish to commit to a life in Australia can find a place and make a contribution as the Good Australian.

8.3 Significance of research

The significance of this research is, firstly, in its introduction of a new paradigm of boundaring practices to complement that of bordering. The concept of bordering practices is not new, as it is used in the literature of migration and border studies to describe the acts of policing and enforcing the border. This thesis utilises these established concepts to introduce the complementary construct of boundaring practices to describe the ways in which the state shapes behaviour and values of the population within its border. This research identifies settlement services and schools as key boundaring practices intended to shape and control the population, and shows how these practices work in combination with bordering practices to determine who can fully access the state. This thesis argues that, combined, bordering and boundaring practices provide a valuable way to conceptualise and explain the development of legal and cultural belonging.

Secondly, this thesis introduces the concept of the hierarchy of desirability to explain the underlying (and often unspoken) bias that continues to permeate migration and refugee policy in northern states. In Australia, the existence of a hierarchy has a long history, derived from those policies of exclusion and selective migration embedded in the White Australia policy; although this policy was fully rescinded in 1973 with an ethos of multiculturalism embraced in its stead, the deference toward white Anglo-Celtic history and the ‘pre-Whitlam consensus’ (Anning,
2018) still have echoes in public and political speech and the community of value today. The concept of a hierarchy of desirability is a useful tool through which to highlight the practice of othering played out in migration policy.

Thirdly, this study places a focus on the insights and experiences of a relatively under-researched group—recently arrived Middle Eastern refugees between the ages of 18 and 25. This group is either overlooked or conflated in refugee research with older (‘adults’ as 18-plus) or younger (‘youth’ as under-25) age groups. However, this group have unique experiences and reflections on society. Moreover, they form a significant population, as refugee young people have often experienced disrupted childhoods and education and yet arrive in Australia in or near adulthood. This cohort has a long future in Australia, and the individuals’ perspectives in dealing with the challenges of early adulthood are important additions to current research.

Fourthly, this study contributes in-depth qualitative and discourse-oriented perspectives to pre-existing research into refugee settlement. Although there is a substantial body of research on the interactions of refugee arrivals with state services in Australia, that research has commonly drawn on quantitative measures of success and participation in fields of education, health and employment. This research draws on qualitative analysis of participant reflections on interactions with the state policies, practices and institutions, those being the tools of governmentality.

Additionally, this research is significant because it contributes to theoretical debates about multiculturalism and citizenship that are infrequently grounded in empirical observation. The study aligns with a range of contemporary political, social and media debates on the nation state, citizenship, belonging, migration, terrorism and multiculturalism. It adds the perspective of those who are most othered in society, and allows for an assessment of the accuracy of assumptions about belonging and the Good Citizen.

Australia will continue to receive refugees, and the successful integration of these new arrivals into the community is essential for social cohesion—as well as to allow the best opportunity for these arrivals to live full lives. Providing refugee arrivals with access to legal and cultural belonging will improve the participation, welfare and belonging of these New Australians. The ideal—from a governmental, policy-making perspective—should be for long-term residents to
gain the legal right to remain and participate in the society *and* to be culturally invested in the community of value. Successful resettlement sees refugees experience belonging and interpellation—being viewed, accepted and self-perceived as Australian.
## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Participant index

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## Appendix 2: Online survey questions and Likert items

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<tr>
<td>What is your place of birth (city, country)?</td>
<td>Free text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your home country?</td>
<td>Free text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What citizenship(s) do you hold?</td>
<td>Options</td>
<td>Australian, Afghani, Iranian, Iraqi, Jordanian, Saudi Arabian, Syrian, Other (Specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you identify closely with a religion?</td>
<td>Options</td>
<td>No, Yes (Specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When did you leave your home country?</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who did you leave your home country with?</td>
<td>Options</td>
<td>Alone, With family members, With friends, Other (specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your (approximate) date of arrival in Australia?</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever lived in a refugee camp?</td>
<td>Options</td>
<td>No, Yes (Specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you live in a third country before arriving in Australia?</td>
<td>Options</td>
<td>No, Yes (Specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did you arrive to Australia?</td>
<td>Options</td>
<td>Boat, Plane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever spent time in an Australian (or Australian-run) detention centre?</td>
<td>Options</td>
<td>Yes, No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever lived in community detention in Australia?</td>
<td>Options</td>
<td>Yes, No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you now have the right to remain permanently in Australia?</td>
<td>Options</td>
<td>Yes, No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you have family living in Australia before you arrived?</td>
<td>Free text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What suburb do you live in?</td>
<td>Free text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside of work or education, list three social activities you participate in.</td>
<td>Free text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many years did you attend school in your home country?</td>
<td>Options</td>
<td>0–10+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many languages do you speak?</td>
<td>Options</td>
<td>1–4+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your first language?</td>
<td>Free text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In your first language, how would you describe your verbal understanding level?</td>
<td>Likert type</td>
<td>None, Some simple words or sentences, Basic, Good, Strong, Fluent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In your first language, how would you describe your speaking level?</td>
<td>Likert type</td>
<td>None, Some simple words or sentences, Basic, Good, Strong, Fluent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In your first language, how would you describe your reading level?</td>
<td>Likert type</td>
<td>None, Some simple words or sentences, Basic, Good, Strong, Fluent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In your first language, how would you describe your writing level?</td>
<td>Likert type</td>
<td>None, Some simple words or sentences, Basic, Good, Strong, Fluent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For how many years did you learn English in your home country?</td>
<td>Options</td>
<td>0-5+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you describe your English verbal understanding level when you arrived in Australia?</td>
<td>Likert type</td>
<td>None, Some simple words or sentences, Basic, Good, Strong, Fluent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you describe your English speaking level when you arrived in Australia?</td>
<td>Likert type</td>
<td>None, Some simple words or sentences, Basic, Good, Strong, Fluent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you describe your English reading level when you arrived in Australia?</td>
<td>Likert type</td>
<td>None, Some simple words or sentences, Basic, Good, Strong, Fluent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you describe your English writing level when you arrived in Australia?</td>
<td>Likert type</td>
<td>None, Some simple words or sentences, Basic, Good, Strong, Fluent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you describe your English verbal understanding level now?</td>
<td>Likert type</td>
<td>None, Some simple words or sentences, Basic, Good, Strong, Fluent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you describe your English speaking level now?</td>
<td>Likert type</td>
<td>None, Some simple words or sentences, Basic, Good, Strong, Fluent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you describe your English reading level now?</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>None, Some simple words or sentences, Basic, Good, Strong, Fluent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you describe your English writing level now?</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>None, Some simple words or sentences, Basic, Good, Strong, Fluent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Australia, where did you first get English help?</td>
<td>Options</td>
<td>Intensive English Centre (IEC), Senior college, TAFE, High school, Other (Specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside the home, how often do you speak in your first language?</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do you speak in English?</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many of your friends in Australia have the same or similar ethnic background to you?</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent do you feel that Australia is now your home?</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do you feel like an 'outsider' in Australia?</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do you feel 'Australian'?</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia is a great place to live.</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia is welcoming to refugees.</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in my local area are willing to help their neighbours.</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People living in Australia should value Australian laws above cultural traditions.</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly, people from different backgrounds are happy to live together in Australia.</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking good English is an important part of living in Australia.</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Likert type</td>
<td>Options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Australia, everyone can succeed if they work hard enough.</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Australian school system supports all students equally.</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time, Australians help people with bad English.</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My cultural heritage is important to who I am.</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most people in Australia talk about refugees in a positive (good) way.</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time, I feel part of Australian society.</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time, I feel strangers would help me if I have a problem.</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My education in Australia has helped me to feel part of the Australian community.</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time, other Australians respect my religion and cultural heritage.</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time, I am treated differently because of my English level or accent.</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time, I feel like I am treated differently to others because of my cultural background.</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time, I make friends with people of the same cultural background to me.</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think most Australian politicians care about refugees.</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time, I agree with Australian values and attitudes.</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If given the choice, I would return permanently to my country of origin.</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3: Interview prompts

Figure 16: Pauline Hanson wears a burqa into the Senate, 17 August 2017

Figure 17: Attorney-General Christian Porter and Senator Mathias Cormann post on Twitter, October 15 2018
Figure 18: Senator Fraser Anning ‘egged’ during a press conference, March 16 2019
## Appendix 4: Overview of Australia’s humanitarian program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visa subclass #</th>
<th>Visa name</th>
<th>People to whom it is granted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>Refugee</td>
<td>Most have been identified by UNHCR and referred to Australia for resettlement. Must be a refugee and have a protection need that can only be met through resettlement. Some are self-identified or have been referred to Australia through another channel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201</td>
<td>In country special humanitarian</td>
<td>Granted to people still in their home country (i.e., not refugees but subject to persecution).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>202</td>
<td>Special humanitarian program</td>
<td>Holders must be outside their home country and face substantial discrimination amounting to gross violation of their human rights in their home country. They are not required to be refugees but in many cases are. There must also be a link to Australia in the form of a proposer (an individual or organisation) who will be the holder’s main supporter after arrival.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>203</td>
<td>Emergency rescue</td>
<td>Cases identified by the UNHCR and moved because the person is in imminent danger. High levels of recent trauma; will not have had time to prepare for relocation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>204</td>
<td>Woman at Risk</td>
<td>Cases identified by the UNHCR and typically either single women or female-headed households and their dependants. Selected because of their vulnerability; may have experienced significant torture/trauma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>866</td>
<td>Permanent protection (onshore)</td>
<td>Visa granted to those recognised as refugees or found to be persons in respect of whom Australia has complementary protection obligations after they applied for protection visa in Australia. Some have been in detention; others are in the community during the determination process. No longer available to those who arrive in Australia without a valid visa (usually by sea).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>785</td>
<td>Temporary protection (onshore)</td>
<td>Visa granted for 3 years to those recognised as refugees or found to be persons in respect of whom Australia has complementary protection obligations after they applied for protection visa in Australia. Some have been in detention; others are in the community during the determination process. No longer available to those who arrive in Australia without a valid visa (usually by sea).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>790</td>
<td>Safe haven enterprise</td>
<td>Visa granted for up to 5 years to those recognised as refugees or found to be persons in respect of whom Australia has complementary protection obligations after they applied for protection visa in Australia. Some have been in detention; others are in the community during the determination process. At least one member of the family must intend to work or study in a regional area and not apply for Centrelink payments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 5: Rights of refugees and humanitarian entrants in Australia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rights</th>
<th>Resettled refugees (visa subclasses 200, 201, 202, 203, 204)¹</th>
<th>Permanent protection visa holders (visa subclass 866)²</th>
<th>13/8/12 to 19/7/13 arrivals: temporary protection visa holders, safe haven enterprise (visa subclass 785, 790)³</th>
<th>Post 19/7/13 arrivals⁴</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>As per Australian permanent residents PLUS bond assistance, support finding accommodation and household formation package (furniture, white goods, etc.)</td>
<td>As per Australian permanent residents PLUS bond assistance</td>
<td>As per Australian permanent residents</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>As per Australian permanent residents PLUS specialist physical, mental and dental health care and counselling support</td>
<td>As per Australian permanent residents PLUS specialist physical, mental and dental health care and counselling support</td>
<td>As per Australian permanent residents</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work and employment</td>
<td>As per Australian permanent residents</td>
<td>As per Australian permanent residents</td>
<td>As per Australian permanent residents</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social security and welfare</td>
<td>As per Australian permanent residents PLUS exemption from 2-year waiting period imposed on migrants</td>
<td>As per Australian permanent residents PLUS exemption from 2-year waiting period imposed on migrants</td>
<td>Mutual obligation (‘work for the dole’). Possible residency requirements</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>As per Australian permanent residents PLUS access to language programs (children, youth and adults)</td>
<td>As per Australian permanent residents PLUS access to language programs (children, youth and adults)</td>
<td>Access to schools, Tertiary education at foreign student rate. No free language tuition for adults³</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family reunification</td>
<td>As per Australian permanent residents PLUS priority in cases of immediate family PLUS access to special humanitarian visa option</td>
<td>As per Australian permanent residents PLUS priority in cases of immediate family PLUS access to special humanitarian visa option</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality and documentation</td>
<td>As per Australian permanent residents</td>
<td>As per Australian permanent residents</td>
<td>Only eligible for another TPV or SHEV</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom from discrimination</td>
<td>As per Australian permanent residents</td>
<td>As per Australian permanent residents</td>
<td>Unclear at this time</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Resettled refugees are those who are granted a permanent visa outside Australia, either as part of the formal UNHCR resettlement program (visa subclass 200, 201, 202, 203 and 204 holders) or have a link to and are proposed by an Australian permanent resident or citizen under the special humanitarian program (visa subclass 202).

²Those holding a permanent protection visa include: those who arrived with valid entry documents and subsequently sought and obtained protection (through determination of refugee status or eligibility for complementary protection); and those who arrived without valid documents (mainly by boat but also by air) and were granted protection prior to 13/8/12.

³The Abbott Government introduced temporary protection visas after its election in 2013, but these were disallowed by parliament in December 2013. They were finally passed in December 2014.

⁴Boat arrivals after 19/7/13 are taken to offshore processing centres and will never be resettled in Australia.

Source: Fozdar and Banki, (2017), p. 64.
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### Acronyms and context-specific terminology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full form name</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centrelink</td>
<td>Centrelink</td>
<td>Australian Government service, providing support to Australians who face financial hardship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIAC</td>
<td>Department of Immigration and Citizenship</td>
<td>Government department (2007–2013), now part of Department of Home Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EALD</td>
<td>English as an Additional Language or Dialect</td>
<td>Acronym commonly used to describe students whose first language is a language or dialect other than English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
<td>Acronym commonly used to describe programs that assist students who are not native English speakers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL Scales</td>
<td>English as a Second Language Scales</td>
<td>NSW resource used by teachers as an assessment tool to describe the English language development of EALD learners in oral interaction, reading and responding and writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HECS-HELP</td>
<td>Higher Education Contribution Scheme—Higher Education Loan Program</td>
<td>Australian Government loan assistance for eligible students to cover education fees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSC</td>
<td>Higher School Certificate</td>
<td>NSW award for secondary school students who successfully complete senior high school studies (usually Years 11 and 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSP</td>
<td>Humanitarian Settlement Program</td>
<td>Providing initial settlement support to families and individuals granted a permanent visa under Australia's humanitarian program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEC</td>
<td>Intensive English Centre</td>
<td>Schools for new arrivals from 12 years of age, prior to entering high school, providing English language tuition, welfare support and introduction to Australian culture and school system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISIS</td>
<td>Islamic State of Iraq and Syria</td>
<td>Sunni jihadist group based in Iraq and Syria which claims religious authority over all Muslims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MYAN</td>
<td>Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network Australia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDIS</td>
<td>National Disability Insurance Scheme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-Government Organisations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHEV</td>
<td>Safe Haven Enterprise Visa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLSOs</td>
<td>Student Learning Support Officers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STARTTS</td>
<td>NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE</td>
<td>Technical and Further Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPV</td>
<td>Temporary Protection Visa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MYAN**
National peak body representing rights and interests of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds

**NDIS**
Australian Government welfare support scheme funding costs associated with disability

**NGOs**
Non-profit organisations that operate independently of government

**SHEV**
5-year temporary protection visas for boat arrivals claiming asylum with a rural settlement focus and reflecting Australian policy that boat arrivals should not receive permanent protection

**SLSOs**
Classroom support staff who assist teachers and students in classroom activities, school routines, and the care and management of students with special needs

**STARTTS**
Specialist, non-profit organisation providing culturally relevant psychological treatment and support to victims of torture and refugee trauma.

**TAFE**
TAFE NSW is a government-owned, operated and accredited vocational education and training provider.

**TPV**
3-year temporary protection visas for boat arrivals claiming asylum, reflecting Australian policy that boat arrivals should not receive permanent protection