

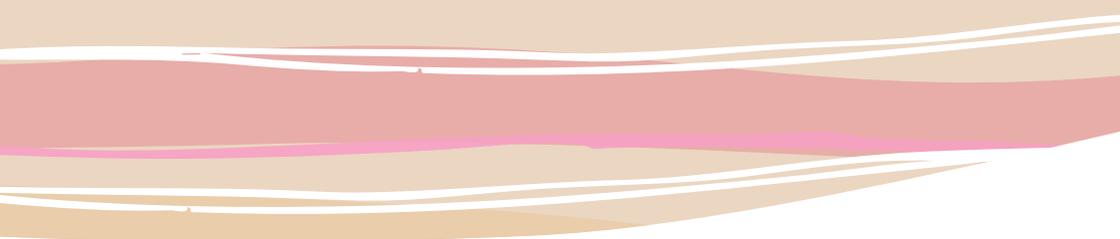


# This Is Me

Stories from culturally and linguistically diverse children and young people



Commissioner for Children and Young People  
Western Australia



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## From the Commissioner

In 2015, my office asked almost 300 young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, such as refugees or recent migrants, about the positive things in their lives, the challenges they face and the services they find helpful.



Their views and comments are provided in the report *Children and Young People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds Speak Out*.

This consultation also showcased how children and young people from different cultural backgrounds bring rich experiences and ideas to our community – diversity is truly one of Western Australia’s greatest strengths.

With 2011 data showing that almost one in five under 18s in WA were born overseas, it is important we recognise and celebrate the range of stories behind the lives of children and young people living in WA.

This publication shows just a small handful of these stories, and is an eye-opening reminder of the challenges some children and young people face, their resilience and their belief in a bright future. It is truly inspiring to see how these children and young people are building healthy and happy lives.

Thank you to all 15 children and young people featured in this publication who allowed us to share their stories so far.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colin Pettit'. The signature is stylized and fluid.

**Colin Pettit**

Commissioner for Children and Young People WA

# Working hard to get better

Asad, 17

When my family came to Australia it was the biggest culture shock. I always laugh about this – back in Iran everyone has their heads covered, so at the airport I saw someone without a hijab, and I actually closed my eyes and looked away, I didn't know what to do!

Leaving Iran was with mixed emotions. Leaving family; coming to a better place. We left my grandparents and relatives to start a better life. That was about eight years ago now.

When we arrived, an Iranian couple helped us get on our feet. They spoke the same language and helped us with shopping and enrolled me and my brothers in school. I used to say I was sick all the time just so I didn't have to go. I didn't know the language and that got on my nerves. I don't think we would have settled as well as we did without them.

I live with my mum and dad, and have three older brothers and one older sister. I look up to all my siblings; they all have their own little spot in my heart.



I know school is good for you, but it has been hard. Where I go, there are many kids from wealthy backgrounds, which is the opposite of mine. At the start, I had trouble fitting in. It's better now.

I got a sports scholarship to go to high school. I see it as a chance to change my life. I do athletics and rugby. I started athletics four years ago when my teacher saw me run. After that, I got a coach and I trained hard for two months before going to the WA All-School competition. I won the long jump and 200 metre race, and came second in the 100 metres by a fraction of a second. I was so impressed with my progress after just two months of training!

The year after I became State champion and I got sponsored to compete in Brisbane at the Australian All-Schools comp. I got to the finals, and although I didn't do that well, it was all about the experience, it opened my eyes.

Competing in the Olympics and Commonwealth Games is my ambition. I know I have to work hard to reach my goals.

I don't think I would have gotten to where I am today without sport. I used to mix with the wrong crowd and got into a lot of trouble. Athletics keeps me busy and has changed my focus points. It's my future.

I still have mates who do drugs and get into trouble and I still see them 'cause they're really nice people. When we hang out and if they do stuff I don't want to do, I say so. I've learnt to choose the good.

In the end, all I really want to do is to make my mum proud. She went through hell and back for us kids and I want to pay her back somehow. I feel like I have a role in making her happy; I want to make her believe coming here was all worth it.

**“ I know I have to work hard to reach my goals.”**

# Be positive, have courage

Poster, 17

I was born at the border between Thailand and Burma under a tree in the jungle. Before coming to Australia I lived in a Thai refugee camp called Budaya.

I have lived in Australia for nine years now. When I first arrived it was really strange; the weather and landscape were so different to what I was used to. Where I'm from had lots of trees and rivers and was very green, and when I came here I was so disappointed, but other than that I really like Australia.

You get to see so many different cultures and people here. In the refugee camp I only saw Asian people, but now I get to see all colours. I'm so grateful to have come. I thank the Australian government every day for bringing my family here.

I live with my mum, dad and two brothers. The move has been harder for my parents because they didn't speak a lot of English – we still sometimes speak Karen at home.

My brothers and I used to watch TV and eat and do stuff together but now that we're all a bit older we all sort of go our own ways.



I really like school, I learn quite a lot. Sometimes I find the work they give us hard but I still think it's a good opportunity. My favourite subject is woodwork and home economics because I like making stuff with my hands.

Education is very important. If you're knowledgeable you can have any job you like. Getting a job is important because you need to put food on the table; jobs give you money and money can help with food.

**“ I really like Australia; you get to see so many different cultures and people here. ”**

I think teachers and the government need to listen to us and make it easier for us to meet people. Schools should have a 'get to know each other day' where you can meet other people and learn about different cultures, not just your own culture. Then we can all get along and understand more about our differences.

I'm into music. I love to play the piano, even though I'm not that good at it.

I think sport and hobbies help you feel like you belong to something.

Sometimes I look at how far I've come. I have overcome a language barrier and feel much braver now than when I first came to Australia. I used to be very shy because my English was bad, and when I had a group activity at school I'd get so nervous. Now I can stand up and speak my own thoughts. I'm so proud of that.

Sometimes I worry that I won't get my future dream job because my

English is limited; I want to be a midwife. I'm working hard though. I think I will get there if I'm positive and have courage.

My advice to other kids is to keep challenging yourself. Don't doubt yourself too much – everyone has to go through tough times to get where they need to. I think the most important thing is to love your God first. He has helped me be me. He gave me the strength I needed every day.

# Setting goals

Abi, 11

The most important thing to me is firstly to have money to survive; you have to take care of yourself before you can take care of others. And then my family and friends.

I live in Ballajura with my mum, dad and young brother, it's good here. We came from Sri Lanka about two years ago.

I was so scared because I didn't know much English. I had learnt some at school in Sri Lanka, but didn't know enough. After about a month in Australia I enrolled in school and wasn't so scared after that.

When you first start you have to go to an Intensive English Centre class for a year and a half, but I moved to primary school after just one year.



I will go to high school next year. I'm excited and nervous at the same time. I don't really know what to expect. I hear you have to have a really heavy bag, and the studying is harder. I'm worried if I don't get good grades I'll go to a lower class and mum and dad want me to get into the high class. It all depends on how well I do this year. I have to work on my English. Sometimes I still have problems understanding things.

I like school because I get to see my friends. I like maths because I'm good at it, art because it's fun – I like to paint and draw, and science because when I grow up I want to be a scientist and make potions and stuff. Or do things with electricity like an engineer.

I think it's important to have goals. If you don't have any then you'll just stay in the same place in life. With goals you can move forward all the time, not backwards.

School is good; it lets you get a job so you can get money to buy food and survive. It will help you to have a future.

I play badminton with my brother and dad. I'm kind of good but I had to stop because I lost my racquet. It helps me keep fit and helps my mind so I can focus on my studies.

I like Australia. It's quite different to live here. People are nicer here I think but not as many people know their neighbours like we did in Sri Lanka. I also like how many parks are here. We just didn't have that sort of thing back home.

**“ School will help you to have a future.”**

# Making friends

Jamshad, 16

I am a Hazara boy, born in Afghanistan. I am the smallest in my family, which is really cool. I have three brothers who are all older than me. I love everyone in my family.

I have been living in Australia for four and half years. I am happy here because I think Afghanistan is not a safe country to live.

My eldest brother first came to Australia and then he actually sponsored me along with my other siblings to come here. I remember when I arrived for the first time; I was very happy and amazed.

My first three months of settlement was an amazing experience; seeing people from different countries, cultures, religions and backgrounds was awesome and something that I had never seen before. Living in a very diverse and multicultural society is awesome! I have made a lot of friends from all over the world and I have been learning a lot of good stuff from them. My teachers have been helpful too. They all respect me and the background I have.

But as we all know life doesn't always go the way we expect it to. Things happen along the way. After three months of being here,



things twisted in my life in a way that made me start worrying. I remember worrying about my relatives and missing my childhood friends back home. Among all other problems, not being able to speak English was the hardest thing for me, something I will never forget to this day.

The biggest worry I have sometimes is for my people back in my country. I think that they are really poor and do not have enough to eat. I am still really worried about my country's future.

important to have a good job in the future. I am bit confused about my future. I still haven't decided about what to become.

I love waking up in the morning and going to school though. I think that school is the best place to get knowledge and learn about the real world. By learning science you can learn about the human body and its structure, and learning math has always been fun for me, I enjoy figuring out things and playing around with it.

**“ I think that no one should be ashamed of asking for help.”**

I recommend to other kids to talk to their family or teachers when things get hard. I always like to have a chat with my family. I usually talk about my future and what should I do to improve and have a better life. I think that no one should be ashamed of asking for help.

My first priority in my life is to do well in my study at school. I think that doing well at school is very

My favourite hobby is drawing and sketching. I enjoy it. I also like playing table tennis. I think by playing table tennis I feel more healthy and active.

My advice to other young kids who come to Australia is to try and make friends so you don't feel lonely. You have to respect other people's culture, beliefs, religion too and, most importantly, who they are.

# Everyone is unique

Sara, 11

I have lived in Australia my whole life. My parents are from Sudan and moved here more than a decade ago. They told me they came here for a better life, to live somewhere cleaner and safer.

I have only been to Sudan once. They have a different lifestyle there and it's a bit difficult I think. Sometimes it's hard that I don't get to see my family, like my friends get to go to their aunties and uncles and stuff but all my relatives live in Sudan and Dubai.

I live at home with my mum, dad, my grandmother and my brother, he's only one year older than me.

My dad works as a taxi driver and speaks English really well. My mum works at the markets, I think she'll make that her permanent job now. Her English goes back and forth. She used to go to TAFE to learn, which really helped her. We speak both English and Arabic at home.

I definitely want to go to university when I'm older. It's good to be prepared in life, if you're prepared then you will have less worry I think. You can have a good future and a better life.



My parents would love me to be a doctor. I mean it would be nice to help people every day of your life but I'm not really sure about it. I like the sound of being a lawyer. It would be a good job because I will have done something with my life and because you can help people who are innocent and if they're in a bad situation you can help them.

Overall no one is bad in the world, generally there is a problem or someone is doing something to them or threatening them. They're just trying to protect themselves, and all they really need is help. Doing law would mean I get to do lots of different things.

I like arts and crafts. I don't know why but I like to get something you are about to throw away and turn it into a masterpiece. I just made this little popsicle box for Father's Day at school that you can open and close. I dyed all the popsicles, it was fun.

I also love swimming, I like being at one with the water and with nature. I've just gone to Level 4, which I am so proud of. I swim very often, its good in Perth because it's nice and warm.

Everyone is unique here in Australia. They're not afraid to do what they do best. It's multicultural. I think that's part of the Australian way of life, to accept people. I like that.

**“ I think that's part of the Australian way of life, to accept people.”**

# Dream big

Sujjad, 15

I was born in Pakistan, my family is from Afghanistan, I speak Hazargi and English, and now I live in Katanning in WA. I've been here for two years and live with my family. There's my mum, my dad and my two brothers.

We chose to live in Australia because in Pakistan, although it's good to study, there is too much fighting. I feel like I have lots more freedom in Australia. The best thing about living here is that I'm safe.

My dad came over for business as a migrant one whole year before we

did. We missed him when he was gone. He's almost been here long enough to apply for citizenship.

When I first came to Katanning all I knew was how to say hello. It took me about three months to learn English. Even though I was 13, I spent my first two weeks at the primary school so I could be taught English. I went to the high school after that where I made some friends with other people who could speak my language, including my cousin, they really helped me to learn.

My mum and dad can't speak English very well. My dad goes to



TAFE every Friday now though. He can say a lot but not properly.

I like Katanning. It's a small place. It's nice and safe and there's not too much trouble. I also really like the new bus stop! I don't like the shops though, like there should be different kinds, like a Kmart.

We don't really visit Perth that much. Others do on the weekends and stuff but I work at a fast food restaurant. I've worked there for about six months – sometimes I work up to 20 hours a week. The money I earn goes to my dad to help the family. I don't get too tired and it doesn't make it hard to do my homework or anything.

I go to homework class each day after school which helps. There are teachers there who help me get my English grammar and spelling right. I'm in Year 9 and my favourite subject is sport. Outside of school I love to play soccer.

I really wish there was a soccer club based in Katanning where we could have competitions and play against each other. Sometimes we get to play in Country Week competitions but they only take the good players.

When I finish school I think I'll travel to Pakistan for a while and then come back to Perth to continue my studies. My parents want me to be a plumber, but I have different thoughts. I want to be lots of things.

First I think I want to be a policeman. I want to learn how to get fit, like stronger and faster than I am now. Being part of the dog squad would also be the best. I like animals but they're too expensive to keep.

If I can't be a policeman, I want to be a pilot or a doctor. I just want to help people.

**“ The best thing about living here is that I'm safe. ”**

# Staying safe

Bipai, 8

I'm not really sure how long I've lived in Australia. All I remember is coming here by plane and I was probably two years old or something. We came here from Uganda. It was okay when I arrived but boring because I didn't know anyone.

I have two brothers, one older than me and the other one is 10 months old. We live with my mum and dad. I get along with them; we have fun together, play together and do lots of things. My family is important to me.

I go to school, I'm in Year 2 now. It's fun! It's better than being at home where it's boring and there's nothing to do. I like maths the most, like if someone asks me a question I can just answer it quickly. I also like writing because I like writing fast.

School is good because it helps you learn and you can help your kids with their homework when you grow up. It's important because people who can't go to school don't know as much. School helps your brain to get bigger and if



you keep learning you can be the smartest person in the world.

I think schools do lots to help kids. I think if they keep on time for recess and lunch it would be good because then we don't lose out on learning time. I like how they keep us safe; clean water is important.

I love to play sport, especially footy and soccer. Playing sport lets you do interschool competitions instead of being stuck at school and sad.

If people are going through a rough time, I would tell them to ask nice people for help but you've got to be careful of stranger danger.

If they're suffering, I would give them a blanket or a meal because that's being helpful. I would tell them to stay safe and not let anyone hurt them, and if they can't be safe, then they can come and live with me.

**“ My family is important to me.”**

# Embracing differences

Immaculate, 12

Tanzania, that's where I was born. I came to Australia in 2006, which is about nine years ago now.

My family love me and help me and support me. I have two sisters and two brothers. I'm the youngest. With my middle sister we sing karaoke and play in the park. I like cooking with my older sister, and with my brothers we go places together.

I know how to play a couple of instruments. I've played the recorder for five years, and also play the ukulele, piano and guitar.

I'm actually pretty good at the guitar. You can get really sore fingers learning though because of the strings.

I'm in Year 7. My teacher told me we'd get heaps more homework at high school, but I'm still waiting for that to happen. In high school they divide you by how smart you are. I think the higher class you are the harder the tests are. I'm somewhere in the middle. I like that system though because it means we can be in smaller classes and you get to know one another and one teacher all year, that is better.



You have to have an education because in this country if you don't have money you don't have anything. There are places you can go that can support you, yes, but the best thing to do is to get an education so you don't need as much help. Education helps you reach your goals so you can have a good future. We are very lucky to live here.

that kind of thing though. No one is normal, did you know that? Everyone is weird or awkward in some way. When people are weird they're funny and more interesting.

I don't really like the saying 'sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me'. It's not true. Words – you kind of keep them in your head, some people

**“I love who I have grown up to be so far; that's my biggest personal achievement.”**

If you don't like the school environment then you're not going to learn. There has to be good, friendly teachers and people around you who want to help you, that's the type of thing that leads you on a good path and gets you to enjoy school.

I used to get teased for saying words wrong. I remember I couldn't say 'excuse me'. But now I've grown up and learnt English properly and just find it funny how I used to pronounce things. I actually laugh about it now. I like

get very upset by them. Unless you're like me, I don't really care what people think.

I don't worry about much. I like how it is, I like everything. I'm very happy in my life. Like, what is there to worry about at just 12 years-old? I'm sure most of the difficult stuff is yet to happen.

My life is one of the most important things to me. I love who I have grown up to be so far; that's my biggest personal achievement. I know some other people haven't gotten this far.

# Helping others

Ibrahim, 17

I'm living with my family. There are four of us. We are originally from Syria but came to Australia from Turkey. We spent many years in Turkey before we got to come. I don't really remember how long the plane journey took, only that my aunt invited us.

We've been in Australia for almost a year now. It was exciting at first. It was nice.

The biggest difference is the language. And also, I guess the people are so different too.

Australia has many helpful people, they are very friendly. I like both places, they are both my countries now.

The most important thing to me is my family. Then my life and my study.

I like school. I think it's important for every person. It teaches me many things for my life, like how to be respectful. I like my teachers, they always make us students happy.

My favourite subject is maths. I like it. English and science too.



They're the best for me because I want to be a businessman. You know, every person has a dream to be something. So do I. If I work on myself I know I can do it.

I have a job now. I think some people choose to have a job because it makes them feel confident in themselves. When I didn't have a job, I couldn't do financials and didn't have money for myself to spend. So when I found my job, I learnt many things, and now I can be a man.

Sometimes I worry about my future. I'm always thinking about what I'm going to be doing, what are things going to be like, what money will I make. I know I still have time to decide what I want to do, but I still want to plan so that I make the right decisions along the way.

I think sometimes you just have to trust in yourself. You can make yourself happy, you just need to feel confident and believe. There's nothing hard in this life. If you work hard, you will win in the end.

## “ School teaches me things for my life.”

I like swimming when it's summer time and going to the gym. I don't really have time for sport, just study and work. I know sport is important though for your health and body, and to be strong.

My biggest achievement would be to help people. I got a lot of help when I came to Australia, now I will help people too.

# Value your opportunities

Dickson, 16

I come from a rural site in West Kenya near the Rift Valley. We used to live on a farm. We even grew maize there.

In December 2010 we applied for visas, and then had to wait for two years. I remember mum and dad picked me up from school, I went to boarding school then, and they took us to Nairobi where we did a whole bunch of medical tests at the Australian Embassy. It was quite emotional waiting for the results because we really wanted to continue our journey to Australia.

Then one day my mum and dad came and told us we were moving. It was our Christmas present! We were so excited.

When we first came, we moved into a house in the northern suburbs of Perth. Everything was so new and looked so good. There were even parks with playgrounds — coming from a rural background I had never seen anything like it. It gave me a sense that children were valued here. In Kenya you're only valued if you're educated.

I've been in Australia for almost four years. I now live with two family friends and my two sisters. I also have two step brothers. We



all stick together and make time for one another.

Acting is life. I love it so much. I did my first performance three months ago where people actually paid to see me. I was proud of myself. The opportunities here are amazing; in Africa they have nothing like an arts school.

I enjoy everything to do with politics. If you look at my phone, you'll see I have more news apps than games. Maybe that's worrying!

I come from a very educated family, my mum is studying a PhD in psychology and special education and dad, well he just loves maths. My mum is always like, 'Dickson, study hard and don't miss anything.' Knowledge is power. Knowing how bad home is, I know have to make the most of things here in Australia while I can.

Having a job has also given me independence. I like to be able to chip in here and there. It was hard to work back in Kenya. The earliest

someone back home can get a job was in their 20s, so for a 16 year-old, who is able to earn the same as a 22 year-old, well that's pretty big. You have to find a balance between work and study though, you can't let the money go to your head.

When I first went to school it was a little awkward. The schools just deal with kids who behave badly in a different way to how they'd be handled in Africa.

Did you know, in my current school, out of more than 1,600 kids, there are only two Africans in the whole school? I have experienced many things; I'd say the positives outweigh the negatives.

Australia is a great country. I look forward to a day when everyone believes in equality and we have a truly accepting society. You have to treat someone the way you expect to be treated. I hope growing up I get to experience the Australian spirit of a 'fair go'.

**“ Knowledge is power. ”**

# Look on the bright side of life

Lovely, 12

I think we should all look on the bright side of life. There are so many other people who are suffering more than you. It's important to stay happy.

I have a lot to be happy about. I was born in Thailand and moved to Australia when I was eight, so four years ago now. I was only small so I don't really remember the trip that much. I slept most of the way!

I am really happy that I've settled in Australia; in my last country we always had to run away from

people and find new houses and stuff, but now we don't have to face that anymore.

I have also learnt to overcome bullying and hard times, and sometimes I still worry about what people think of me. But then I think of how grateful I am to have God, my family and culture in my life. They are all so important to me; they're always there for me when I need them.

If you need help, you should talk with someone who you trust and are comfortable with so that you're honest and let the whole



truth out, someone like your parents or teachers or a chaplain.

I live with quite a few people – my mum and dad, my little brother and sister, my grandparents and my great grandmother. My brother and sister are quite a lot younger than me. When I was nine, I asked my parents if I could have more siblings because I felt like I was bored and had no friends. Luckily my wish came true! Sometimes I get to look after them when my parents are away.

School is a daily thing for me, I like going every day. The education in Australia is very good. There used to be no stationery or even supplies where I used to live but here we get a lot more. I like English the most because it's my second language and I get to learn more of it. I also like hanging out with all my friends.

It would be good if there was an English as a Second Language class at school. That would really help me to be even better and become the doctor I want to be when I'm older.

**“ If you need help, you should talk with someone who you trust and are comfortable with. ”**

# Letting others help

Arsema, 15

My family is loving and caring and the most beautiful thing that I have in my life. There's my mum, dad, two sisters and two brothers. We are all very close but I get along with my sisters and my mum the most. We spend time together like swimming and shopping and stuff. Girl's time.

I was born in Eritrea; that's in Africa. When we left we first went to Sudan, where we lived for a few years – I even went to school there. Then we applied to come to Australia, which took about a year to process.

It was sad and exciting to leave. It was amazing that I could experience living in a new country but leaving all my friends and some of our relatives was hard. None of them live in Eritrea anymore apart from my grandma and grandpa. Our family has moved all over the world to live in Canada and Sweden and stuff.

Australia is a safe country; it's better than the place I used to live in. The people are nice and caring. I feel comfortable and like I belong to the community. I feel like I'm an Australian!



Fitting in at first was difficult 'cause I have my own culture. We didn't really know anyone and didn't speak English very well so we felt a bit isolated. Our cultures are so different to one another. It's hard sometimes because my mum still thinks and teaches us about Eritrean culture and then my school is teaching me about Australian culture.

or want to learn more, you can go and the teachers will help you.

I've had a lot of help from teachers. In my first year of school I had some kids who were bullying me. A teacher let me talk to her and express my feelings and helped to stop it. Everything is better now. There are some stereotypes at school still though; I get the idea that sometimes kids think that

**“ I feel comfortable and like I belong to the community. I feel like I'm an Australian! ”**

School is good in Australia; everything about it. Like even the rules and how the school works and the education itself. Teachers care and help me to understand things and they listen.

I learnt a bit of English in Sudan but it's not as important there because they have Arabic. English was so hard to learn. My school has a homework club though so say if you have questions about English

all black people are the same. I've never experienced racism or discrimination myself though.

In my life, I know I will get a good education and go to uni and get a job I want. I used to know exactly what I wanted to be but all my sisters stole my ideas! Plus now I want to do something bigger and better than them anyway. The best thing is I know I have a positive future here in Australia.

# Family is the best

Jessica, 8

I'm eight! I was born in Perth and have lived here the whole time. My parents are from Burundi. I think they came here in 2005.

I think it's been a little easier for me compared to some other kids because I was born in Australia. It would be hard to learn English. I also speak Kirundi at home sometimes.

Family is the best. They're the ones who are there for you. I have a big brother who plays soccer and another brother who plays football and basketball.

Then my sister and I play football. I like sport a lot. I also play netball and basketball but I like footy the most. We've won a few games but we didn't make it to the grand final this year. It's good to do more than one sport because you won't get better at the others or fitter if you just do one.



I like school because I always get to play with my friends. I'm in Year 3. I learn a lot there. I like writing the most. You get to write a lot of different kinds of stories. I do like art a little bit too because you get to see a lot of art and learn about art stuff. I'm not that good at drawing I just like it.

I like school because you learn, and if you don't learn you won't really know stuff. Like at the shops when you're older and you want to buy something, you have to know how much it costs and how much it will be altogether, you know.

I don't really worry about anything. If you are worried about something though you should go to an adult like your mum, or a teacher if you're at school. Maybe I can make you feel better too by asking you to come play with me. I would also ask if you are okay.

**“ If you are worried about something though you should go to an adult or a teacher. ”**

# Staying positive

Fawzia, 15

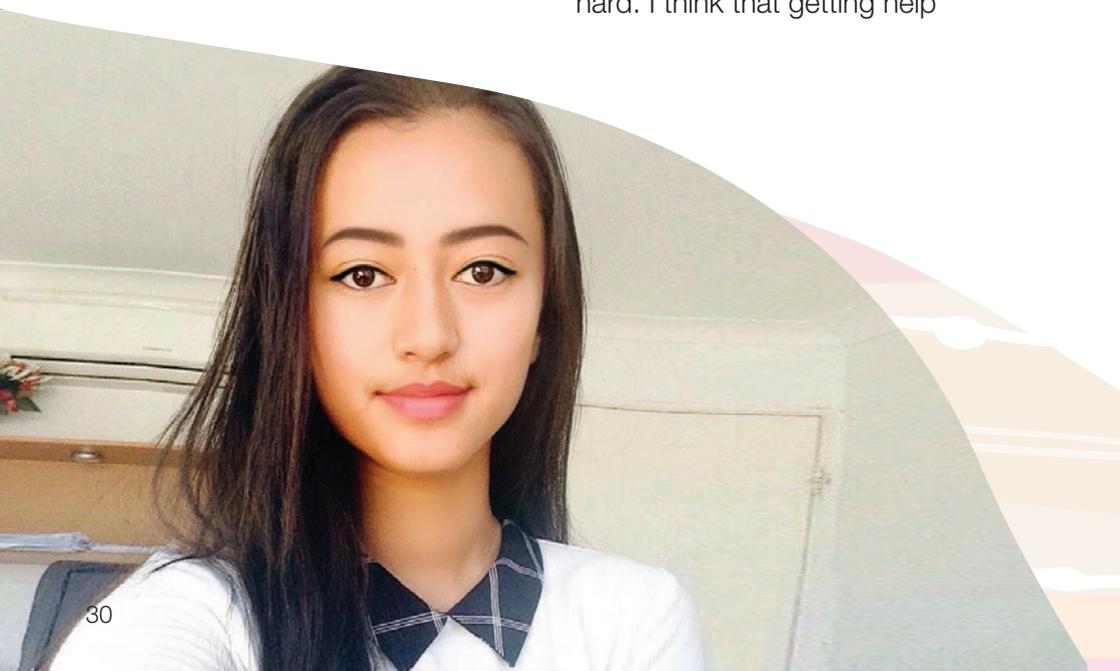
My name is Fawzia and I was born in Afghanistan. I'm 15 years-old. I live with my mum and dad and my six siblings; I have four brothers and two sisters. I get along with my family very well and enjoy going to different places from time to time. I love spending time with them and having barbecues in the park.

I have been living in Australia for about 10 years. Actually, I do not remember a lot about coming to Australia because at the time I was just a little kid. I do remember that I was very excited.

I remember waiting for a very long time and then finally when we arrived and I was very happy.

I love playing soccer! I have been playing as a goalkeeper lately, which I really like. I also play netball and enjoy playing it with my friends. I like to play soccer or netball when I am bored and I think that it's a good way of overcoming laziness. More importantly, it's a good way to stay fit and healthy.

I personally believe that in order to get a job you must be educated. Therefore, you have to study very hard. I think that getting help



from my family and school can play a very important role in my education and in my future job.

I have been doing very well in English, which is exciting for me. I have a lot of personal achievements and one of my best achievements is learning English. I came here not being able to speak one word and now I am one of the top students in English at my school. I love writing essays and biographies but I would like to get more support from my teachers in subjects that I am struggling a bit with and not doing very well in.

I get worried about Year 12 sometimes. I am not sure whether I can go to university straight from school. The reason is that I don't want to have to go to TAFE in order to be able to get to university. I am still not really sure about what to study either, but I kind of like the idea of nursing. I think that I still have time to decide about my future.

It's important for people to try and stay positive and not think about the negatives though, even when we worry. I think that the first place to get help is your family and your teachers.

**“ My family and school can play a very important role in my education and in my future job. ”**

# A sense of belonging

Nardos, 17

In Australia there is a lot of freedom and a lot more chances for education and work. That's the main thing I've noticed since moving here from Eritrea.

I moved to Australia three years ago with my two sisters, two brothers and my mum. It took a really long time to get here. We first had to live in Sudan in Khartoum.

At the start, I wasn't that happy to be here. It was scary; there wasn't anyone from our country here who spoke the same language or had the same culture as us. But now

it's fine, we just needed some time to get used to it. Most people have been very welcoming and now I feel safe.

I'm really happy to live with my family. We are very close. Like all siblings we have our arguments but it always ends in laughing and talking again. I'm the third oldest; the middle child.

In Eritrea I went to school up until Year 4. I had learnt some English before but it was quite different because it was taught the American way. So when I came here it was quite challenging getting used to the different pronunciations. I found writing the hardest part.



It was fun going to English school. I got to learn about Aboriginal people and how the Europeans came and settled. I met so many different people from all over the world. We were all in it together; we were all starting from the same point so we all felt comfortable.

I didn't used to be interested in education but now I see the importance of it. I'm interested in learning more and doing my best. Here we can choose subjects we like. I have a drama show coming up where I'll be performing two roles in Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. I am Friar Laurence and also the chemist, it's exciting!

education and getting a job. I want to settle down and have a family.

I used to have some trouble with other kids in my schools. I think it was racial because I don't look the same as some of the other kids. Some people bully others just because of their race or religion, which isn't fair. All the bullying has stopped though. I know those kids are just going through their own issues.

I think maybe schools could do more by teaching primary school students that being from another country can be challenging in terms of adjusting and the language

## “ You have to see the good in everyone.”

I feel very positive about my future. Whatever you want to do, you can just go and do it, as long as you work hard of course. Australia is good like that. I see myself as a psychologist because I love helping people with mental illness. I'm looking forward to finishing my

barrier so they understand what we might be going through.

Not everyone is mean though. I have nice neighbours and great friends from different cultures. I like it because they teach me how to cook their family recipes and teach me different words in different languages. You have to see the good in everyone.



## Thank you...

A group of 12 young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, aged 18 to 25 years, helped to gather the inspiring stories in this project.

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