



Refugee Council of Australia

BULLETIN FOR MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS

16 November 2011

Welcome to the latest bulletin from the Refugee Council of Australia. We welcome feedback, ideas or information worth sharing. Please contact us at info@refugeecouncil.org.au.

Paul Power, CEO, Refugee Council of Australia

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NEWS FROM THE REFUGEE COUNCIL

Australian communities have their say on Refugee and Humanitarian Program

RCOA is now concluding its six-week national consultation process for its annual submission to the Australian Government on the Refugee and Humanitarian Program. More than 40 face-to-face and teleconference consultations have been held with RCOA members, supporters and former refugees in eight states and territories, in metropolitan and regional locations. We have been seeking views on international refugee needs, regional cooperation in Asia-Pacific, the composition of Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Program and factors in post-arrival settlement. The submission is due to be completed next month, for the Government to consider its budget planning cycle for the 2012-13 financial year. For details on the consultation process, including a discussion paper and consultation questions, see <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/resources/intakesub.php>

Government shifts towards community processing of asylum applications

The Government's Bill to circumvent the High Court decision on the Malaysia refugee swap deal was withdrawn after it failed to secure support on the floor of Parliament. Following the collapse of Parliamentary support for the Government's offshore processing model, the Prime Minister and Immigration Minister announced on October 13 that they would maintain onshore processing of asylum claims and shift more asylum seekers from detention into community arrangements. RCOA welcomed this announcement: http://refugeecouncil.org.au/news/releases/111014_onshore_processing.pdf

In the weeks since then, RCOA has been seeking further information from the Government about how this approach will be applied in practice, also putting forward suggestions about how the Government can conduct appropriate identity, health and security checks while managing its duty of care to people seeking asylum.

RCOA members, religious groups and unions back community processing

During October, RCOA worked with the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) to develop a delegation of NGOs, religious organisations and union-affiliated bodies to visit Canberra to lobby Government MPs and Senators on the implications of the Government's decision to focus on onshore processing and community release of asylum seekers. The delegation was supported by 17 organisations, including representatives of RCOA and its member organisations, Christian, Islamic and Jewish leaders and the Australian Council of Social Service. The message was a clear and positive one – that many Australians support the shift to onshore processing and community release and our networks will do everything we can to support the shift of asylum seekers from immigration detention. The Qantas dispute intervened and on the day the delegation took place – October 31 – only nine of the original 17 delegation members could get to Canberra. However, the meetings went ahead and, during the course of the day, delegates had individual or group meetings with more than 30 Government MPs and Senators. To see the briefing paper distributed to Parliamentarians, visit http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/resources/statements/111031_Community_delegation.pdf

RCOA celebrates 30 years – by looking back and looking forward

RCOA will celebrate its 30th anniversary on Wednesday, 23 November with two public forums to be held at Friends House at Surry Hills, Sydney. One forum will compare current refugee policy with policy in 1981 from the perspective of then Immigration Minister Ian Macphee, Secretary of the Department of Immigration John Menadue and Dr Tien Nguyen, former President of the Vietnamese Community Association who arrived in Australia from a refugee camp in South East Asia during 1980-81. In the second forum, Dr Wendy Southern, Deputy Secretary, Department of Immigration and Citizenship, will address a public forum on *Onshore Processing – The Way Forward*, providing RCOA members and supporters with the opportunity to seek further information about the Government's new plans to expand onshore processing and the use of Bridging Visas for asylum seekers arriving by boat. Further details are available at <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/about/agm.php>

Intake freeze causes dismay

RCOA expressed dismay at the Australian Government's decision to overturn a planned increase of 1000 resettlement places under the Refugee Program. At a time when global resettlement places are in decline world-wide, keeping the program at 6000 places was the wrong decision. Last year, global resettlement places decreased by 12 per cent to just 98,761 and are expected to decline further in 2011. In 2012, it is expected that only 10 per cent of the 780,000 refugees identified by the UNHCR as being in priority need of resettlement will have the opportunity to resettle. In the 2011-12 Federal Budget, the Australian Government announced plans, associated with the arrangement with Malaysia, to increase the Refugee Program by 1000 places to 7000 places, increasing the overall Refugee and Humanitarian Program to 14,750. The Government promised to increase refugee resettlement by 4000 places over four years regardless of the numbers of asylum seekers transferred to Malaysia. To see RCOA's release visit

http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/news/releases/111017_humanitarian_intake.pdf

Annual UNHCR gathering grapples with global refugee challenges

In October, RCOA president John Gibson, Board member Dr Melika Sheikh-Eldin and CEO Paul Power were part of a group of five Australian NGO representatives and three Australian Government officials to participate in the annual Executive Committee (ExCom) meeting of UNHCR. Melika and Paul, along with James Thomson from the National Council of Churches, were non-government delegates on the Australian Government delegation. Dr Linda Bartolomei, Deputy Director of the University of NSW's Centre for Refugee Research, presented, on behalf of the world's NGOs, the report of UNHCR's annual consultations with NGOs (which took place in June). The Australian Government delegation was led by Dr Wendy Southern, Deputy Secretary of DIAC. Key topics of discussion included: responses to major international emergencies, including those in Côte d'Ivoire, Libya and Somalia; resolving protracted refugee situations and enhancing durable solutions to refugees; the need to improve cooperation and sharing of responsibility for refugee protection; the need for more constructive approaches to asylum seeker management including avoiding practices which cause harm; and the protection needs of refugee women and girls. RCOA has produced a document which draws together some of the most interesting insights from the ExCom debates on issues which are relevant to the refugee policy debate in Australia. This document can be viewed at

http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/global/unhcr/2011_ExCom.pdf

COMING EVENTS

X for Unknown: SIEV X Memorial designs

Wednesday 21 September to Sunday 20 November, Darling Harbour NSW

In October 2001, Suspected Illegal Entry Vessel (SIEV) X sank en route to Christmas Island, drowning 353 people. Nineteen powerful designs by students for the National SIEV X Memorial mark the 10th anniversary of this tragedy.

Details: free entry; open daily 9:30am-5:00pm; Australian National Maritime Museum, 2 Murray Street, Darling Harbour NSW; for further details visit www.anmm.gov.au.

'What's the law? Australian law for new arrivals': Education kit and train the trainer workshops

Tuesday 10 October to Thursday 15 December, NSW

'What's the law?' is a new education kit for adult ESL learners that has been developed by Legal Aid. It seeks to improve students' understanding of the Australian legal system and some common legal

issues, while developing English language skills. Legal Aid NSW is providing free workshops designed to provide teachers, tutors and community workers with the knowledge and confidence to use the kit. The workshops cover key legal concepts, how to deal with legal questions, making legal referrals and where to find more information. Ten workshops are scheduled in Sydney, Parramatta, Chatswood, Hurstville, Bankstown, Wollongong, Newcastle, Gosford and Coffs Harbour between October and December 2011.

Details: for further information contact the Coordinator, Community Legal Education, on (02) 9219 5921 or cle@legalaid.nsw.gov.au, or visit www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/15950385689218_5.html#content-start.

ART YO' for Young People: Creative expression for emotional wellbeing

Wednesday 26 October to Wednesday 14 December, Osborne Park WA

A Perth North Metro Medicare Local Program for young people experiencing emotional issues or stress which is compromising their sense of well-being. This 8-week program will provide opportunities for young people aged 13 to 17 years to identify and express feelings, encourage positive coping strategies, increase self-confidence in managing relationships and will provide support for young people at critical times in their lives. To take part in the program, contact your local GP, psychologist (school or private), or social worker for referral.

Details: 4:30 - 6:30pm; Perth North Metro Medicare Local, Suite 2/145 Main Street, Osborne Park; for further information call Christina Self on (08) 9208 9501 or e-mail christinas@pnml.com.au.

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia Biennial Conference

Thursday 17 to Friday 18 November, Adelaide SA

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) Biennial Conference is Australia's pre-eminent multicultural conference. Every two years, the issues that relate to Australia's cultural and linguistic diversity are explored through a series of plenary addresses, panel discussions and presentations. This year, the Conference will explore the theme of 'Advancing Multiculturalism'.

Details: Adelaide Convention Centre; for further details and to register, visit www.fecca.org.au

Lecture by Prof Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons

Thursday 17 November, Sydney NSW

Anti-Slavery Australia and the Australian Human Rights Commission invite you to a lecture by Professor Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, on the topic "A human rights approach to trafficking in persons". Refreshments will be provided.

Details: 3:45pm for a 4:00pm start to 5:00pm; Moot Court; RSVP (essential) to antislavery@uts.edu.au.

Kabul Kids: A collection of photographs from Afghanistan's youth

Friday 18 November to Sunday 20 November, Surry Hills NSW

Kabul Kids is the result of a photography project that was undertaken in 2009 by Sydney-based freelance photographer Palwasha Yusaf, aiming to shed light on the perspectives of children in conflict situations while providing a creative outlet to the children of war-ravaged Afghanistan. A group of children aged between nine and 18 years from Hope House, a Kabul orphanage run by Australian aid organisation Mahboba's Promise, took part in several photography workshops before being handed a camera with which to document their life and explore their creativity both within and outside of the orphanage enclave.

Details: opening night (Friday 18 November) 6:00pm-9:00pm, China Heights Gallery, 3/16-28 Foster Street, Surry Hills; for further details e-mail shutterseed@gmail.com or visit www.artwhatson.com.au/kabulkids.

International Social Service (ISS) National Office Open Day

Friday 18 November, Melbourne VIC

ISS Australia's National Office in Melbourne will be holding an Open Day to celebrate Universal Children's Day, which falls on 20 November each year. The event will feature: a keynote presentation by ISS Patron, the Honourable Alastair Nicholson AO RFD QC (1:30pm); presentations by staff on ISS' history and areas of service delivery; information packs to take away; the opportunity to learn more about ISS Australia's inter-country social work services; and the chance to win door prizes. A light lunch (12:30pm-1:15pm) will be provided and refreshments will be available all day.

Details: visit any time between 10:30am-3:30pm; Level 2, 313-315 Flinders Lane, Melbourne; RSVP for lunch to iss@iss.org.au or call (03) 9614 8755.

STARTTS Professional Development workshop: Biofeedback In Working with Trauma Survivors

Friday 18 November, Carramar NSW

Biofeedback techniques are easy to learn and can serve as a useful adjunct to trauma treatment providing an active window into the function and balance of the Autonomic Nervous System. Biofeedback is an exciting field that combines physiology and psychology. Biofeedback therapies are non-pharmacologic treatments that use scientific instruments to detect and amplify internal body activities too subtle for normal awareness, making information about one's body available to the conscious mind. This one-day workshop will provide the theoretical background to Biofeedback and Heart Rate Variability (HRV). The focus is to ensure that all the participants have the opportunity to use the inexpensive Biofeedback software and discuss the potential that Biofeedback and HRV have in their practice with their client groups.

Details: \$149.00 per person (\$99.00 for students); 9:30am-4:30pm; STARTTS, 152-168 The Horsley Drive, Carramar; for further details and to register, visit www.startts.org.au/default.aspx?id=391.

Edmund Rice Centre Lions Awards Night 2011

Saturday 19 November, Madeley WA

Includes special guest performance by Ancestrais Capoeira and other local talent.

Details: tickets \$35.00 includes full buffet, free soft drinks and one complimentary alcoholic drink; doors open 6:30pm; Kingsway Football Club, Hartman Drive, Madeley; for more information and to book tickets contact the Edmund Rice Centre on (08) 9440 0625 or call Joe on 0417 923 873.

3ZZZ Karen Community Radio fundraising event

Saturday 19 November, Werribee VIC

This event will feature Karen music, entertainment and food. Funds raised will be used to support 3ZZZ Karen Community Radio, for program improvement and continuing processes.

Details: 1:00pm-4:00pm; Werribee Baptist Church, cnr Heaths and Derrimut Roads, Werribee; for more information contact E'mer Paw on 0431 035 526.

Multiculturalism: Perspectives from Australia, Canada and China

Monday 21 November to Tuesday 22 November, Sydney NSW

Australia, Canada and China continue to grapple with diversity and equity issues in regard to the provision of educational opportunities and social services to their culturally diverse populations. Each nation continues to assess educational and social needs yet difficulties in policy and strategy implementation arise. Seeking to both celebrate innovation in this field and to offer ideas for the future, this conference is bringing together scholars from leading research-oriented education and social work faculties in the Asia Pacific region.

Details: New Law School Building, University of Sydney; for further details or to register go to http://sydney.edu.au/education_social_work/professional_learning/conferences/2011/multiculturalism_australia_canada_china.shtml.

Intergenerational Family Conflict and Multicultural Young People

Tuesday 22 November, Parramatta NSW

Intergenerational family conflict is a MYAN NSW priority area and an issue that comes up again and again when talking to those working with young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. This forum aims to provide an opportunity to: explore intergenerational family conflict in detail, including current research; hear about good practice programs and services for dealing with family conflict, including referral pathways; and network with other services and consult with the community sector so MYAN NSW can do more advocacy and policy work about this issue.

Details: 9:30am-12:30pm; The Hills Holroyd Parramatta MRC, Level 4, 1 Horwood Place, Parramatta; RSVP to Anne-Marie Taylor on (02) 9281 5522 (ext. 6) or myan@yapa.org.au; for further details visit www.myannsw.org.au.

Changing trends: who are the young refugees settling in Victoria today?

Thursday 24 November, Melbourne VIC

The Centre for Multicultural Youth is hosting a forum looking at the changing face of settlement for young refugees in Victoria. It will look at issues such as diversity of migration and settlement patterns; unaccompanied minors and their particular needs; community detention; and responses from services, and support needed. Morning tea provided.

Details: 10:00am-1:00pm; Multicultural Hub, 506 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne (opposite Queen Victoria Market); RSVP by Thursday 17 November to info@cmv.net.au or (03) 9340 3700.

"Let's talk culture" seminar: Sexuality, culture and mental health

Thursday 24 November, East Perth WA

The "Let's Talk Culture" seminar series aims to assist mental health professionals to work in a culturally responsive way with clients from Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The seminar and panel discussion will discuss: developmental impacts of premature sexualisation; gender, sexuality and traditional pressures to conform; and diverse sexuality, gender issues and mainstream mental health care. Speakers will include Zarrin Siddiqui, Prof Louise Newman and Dani Wright.

Details: 9:30am-12:30pm; Theatrette, Department of Health, 189 Royal Street, East Perth; RSVP by 21 November to Bernadette.Wright@health.wa.gov.au; for further details contact Alyssa Liliee on (08) 9224 0289; for videoconference bookings e-mail ContactUs@mentalhealth.wa.gov.au.

Seminar: Mental Health and Wellbeing for Immigrant and Refugee Women

Thursday 24 November, Collingwood VIC

This seminar will explore the impact of migration and resettlement, and the mental health issues immigrant and refugee women face in their new environment (and how they deal with them). The seminar will also offer an opportunity to better understand the shame and stigma attached to mental health issues in some communities and what this means for immigrant and refugee women's health and wellbeing. Information on accessing linguistically and culturally appropriate services and resources will enhance participants' skills and knowledge about immigrant and refugee women's health and wellbeing.

Details: \$65.00 per person (includes lunch); 9:00am-2:00pm; Multicultural Centre for Women's Health, Suite 207, Level 2, Carringbush Building, 134 Cambridge Street, Collingwood; register by 18 November at www.mcwh.com.au; for further details contact Dr Salma Al-Khudairi (03) 9418 0999, training@mcwh.com.au or Ozana Bozic (03) 9418 0999, reception@mcwh.com.au.

STARTTS workshop: Core Concepts In Working with People From Refugee Backgrounds

Thursday 24 November, Carramar NSW

This one-day introductory workshop is designed to put a framework of understanding around working with refugees and asylum seekers. It focuses on understanding the link between what refugees have been through, the sorts of issues and behaviours refugees may present with, and how to work in way that promotes recovery and minimises the risk of retraumatisation. Participants will be encouraged to think about how to apply the concepts to their own workplace, and will leave the workshop feeling more confident in utilising their skills and experience with refugee clients.

Details: \$149.00 per person (\$99.00 for students); 9:30am-4:00pm; STARTTS, 152-168 The Horsley Drive, Carramar; for further information and to register, visit www.startts.org.au/default.aspx?id=388.

Kabul Kids panel discussion and exhibition

Friday 25 November to Thursday 1 December, Parramatta NSW

Kabul Kids is the result of a photography project that was undertaken in 2009 by Sydney-based freelance photographer Palwasha Yusaf, aiming to shed light on the perspectives of children in conflict situations while providing a creative outlet to the children of war-ravaged Afghanistan. On Friday 25 November, a panel discussion comprising a selection of public spokespersons will take place at Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE), covering topics including the universal experience of the child, representations of trauma and questioning the media-bred illusion of the hostile male. The photographs will remain on display at ICE until 1 December.

Details: panel discussion (Friday 25 November) 6:30pm; 8 Victoria Road (Switch Digital Arts Centre), Parramatta; for further details e-mail shutterseed@gmail.com or visit www.artwhatson.com.au/kabulkids.

Boundless Plains: The Australian Muslim History

Friday 25 November, Melbourne VIC

The National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies proudly presents "Boundless Plains: The Australian Muslim History" Expedition Insight by The Islamic Museum of Australia. Be the first to view a film about Australian Muslim history, followed by a Q&A session with the crew, who covered a vast

amount of Australian terrain, across six states of Australia's outback, interacted, interviewed and experienced the local ways.

Details: 7:00pm-9:00pm Carrillo Gantner Lecture Theatre, Sidney Myer Asia Centre, The University of Melbourne, cnr Swanston Street & Monash Road, Melbourne; admission is free but bookings are essential. Book through www.islamicmuseum.org.au/boundlessplains.

Commemorative dinner in honour of International Year for People of African Descent

Saturday 26 November, Adelaide SA

Organised by the African Community Council of South Australia, this event commemorates the United Nations' proclamation of 2011 as the International Year for People of African Descent. The event will include a three-course meal including complimentary drinks; presentation of certificates to various organisations supporting the African community in South Australia and outstanding community leaders, volunteers and business owners; and entertainment from traditional and contemporary artists.

Details: tickets \$70.00 per person or \$630.00 for a table of ten; 7:00pm; Crowne Plaza Adelaide, Hindmarsh Square, Adelaide; to book tickets go to <http://australia.africomsa.org/accsa>.

Special lunch for asylum seekers

Saturday 26 November, Brunswick VIC

Hosted by the Asylum Seekers Welcome Centre.

Details: for further details contact Paul on (03) 9388 2459 or paul.boyd@uniting.com.au.

New Neighbours Project open day

Sunday 27 November, Parramatta NSW

This open day will showcase the New Neighbours project. A group of people is transforming a decrepit, to-be-demolished building into a vibrant space for exchange of ideas, culture and art making. The group comprises of recently released refugees who made art inside Villawood Immigration Detention Centre and local artists. The space will involve the local community and various refugee support groups in order to strengthen social cohesion and help refugees establish themselves in the community. Members of the community are invited to share a meal and inspect the progress a few weeks into the project.

Details: 3:00pm-5:00pm; 9 Albert Street, Parramatta; for further details contact Chrissie Ianssen on 0431 439 222 or Safdar Ahmed on 0400 312 581.

National Conference on Volunteering

Monday 28 to Wednesday 30 November, Gold Coast QLD

This three-day conference will feature 57 presentations, 17 workshops, plenary sessions and panel discussions with Australian and international keynote speakers.

Details: Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre; for further details and to register visit www.volunteeringaustralia.org/conference.

34th African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific Annual Conference

Wednesday 30 November to Friday 2 December, Adelaide SA

The aim of this conference is to provide a forum in which to bring together academics, scholars, the African community and service providers working with the African community, NGOs, government agencies, foreign embassies and high commissions, to debate and discuss where Africa is situated politically, economically, socially, environmentally and historically. Keynote speakers will include Gashahun Lemessa Fura, Dean of the School of Social Sciences and Law, Jimma University, Ethiopia; Naomi Steer, National Director of Australia for UNHCR; photographer Thomas Mukoya; and John Nze-Bertram, President of the African Chamber of Commerce, South Australia.

Details: Flinders University, City Campus, Adelaide; for further details and to register, visit www.afsaap.org.au/Conferences/2011/2011.htm.

Information day on fines and penalties

Wednesday 30 November, Werribee VIC

Hosted by the Wyndham Humanitarian Network Legal and Consumer Issues working group, this information day will include presentations by Victoria Police, Consumer Affairs, Wyndham Legal Service, Wyndham Legislative Services, Sherriff's Office, Fixed Penalties Office and Werribee Magistrate's Court Registrar. Karen interpreters will be available on the day. Light refreshments will be provided.

Details: 10:00am-12:00pm; Wayaperri House, 106 Duncans Road, Werribee; RSVP by 18 November to Jenny Dunstan on (03) 9742 4013 or jennyd@werribeecc.net; for more information contact Craig Spicer on (03) 9742 4013 or craigs@werribeecc.net.

Year in the Rear 2011: Fundraiser for the Asylum Seekers Centre

Wednesday 30 November, Sydney NSW

Year in the Rear is a rip and read thrash-through the big issues of the last twelve months. This hilarious night re-lives the highlights, the lowlights and the rubbish in-between. Hosted by H.G. Nelson and featuring panellists Mikey Robins, Amanda Keller and James Valentine. The event will also feature a pre-event silent auction in the foyer. All funds raised from ticket sales and activities on the night will support the vital work of the Asylum Seekers Centre of NSW.

Details: tickets \$48.60; 8:00pm; Seymour Centre, University of Sydney; to book tickets, call the Seymour Centre's box office on (02) 9351 7940 or book online at http://sydney.edu.au/seymour/boxoffice/program_yearintherear2011.shtml.

Brimbank City Council Settling Communities Forum

Wednesday 30 November, Sunshine VIC

This forum aims to bring together agencies that work with new and emerging communities in the municipality. It will provide an opportunity to highlight systemic issues, network with other agencies and get to know about the various services that are available for settling communities. Light lunch provided.

Details: 12:30pm-3:30pm; Sunshine Convention Centre, Victoria University, 460 Ballarat Road, Sunshine; RSVP by 28 November with any dietary requirements to Maidelillah Tran maidelillahT@brimbank.vic.gov.au; for further details contact Terri Soumilas on (03) 9249 4496.

State-wide Community Forum

Thursday 1 December, Hobart TAS

Hosted by the Migrant Resource Centre, African Communities Council of Tasmania and CaLD community members of Tasmania, this Forum will bring together Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) community members from around Tasmania who will report on issues identified and solutions around the key areas of police, media, housing, education, employment and health. This State-wide Forum will build upon two earlier forums held this year on April 14 and July 20 held at the Glenorchy Linc and Glenorchy Civic Centre, Hobart.

Details: 10:00am-5:00pm; Stanley Burbury Theatre, University of Tasmania, Hobart; for more information or to RSVP (by 24 November) contact Emma Mathieson emathieson@mrchobart.org.au or Virginia Bashford vbashford@mrchobart.org.au or call (03) 6221 0999.

African-Australian leadership seminar: Leadership Education and Employment

Sunday 3 December, Dandenong VIC

Hosted by the African Think Tank. Places are strictly limited and bookings are essential.

Details: 9:30am-1:00pm; Chisholm Institute of TAFE, 121 Stud Road, Dandenong; to reserve your place, e-mail africanthinktank@hotmail.com.au. For further details, please contact Haileluel Gebre-Selaisse on 0429 009 912 or Joan Howard on 0405 658 095, or visit www.att.org.au.

Chain Reaction Breakfast Cafe: Professor Andrew Markus

Tuesday 6 December, Sydney NSW

At the final Breakfast Cafe for this year, Professor Andrew Markus will share the findings of the Survey of Social Cohesion in Australia, which tracks changes in Australian attitudes towards immigrants and asylum seekers.

Details: 7:45am for an 8:00pm start; KPMG, Level 15, 10 Shelley Street, Kings Wharf, Sydney; bookings are essential, please contact Peggy Cameron on (02) 9953 3287 peggy@chainreaction.org.au.

Seminar on human rights in Asia with Elaine Pearson from Human Rights Watch

Wednesday 7 December, Melbourne VIC

Join the Deputy Director of Human Rights Watch's Asia Division, Elaine Pearson, and SBS's Dateline presenter, Mark Davis, for updates and discussion about situations of concern in Asia including human rights abuses in West Papua and Burma, religious freedom in Indonesia, extrajudicial killings in the Philippines and accountability for war crimes in Sri Lanka. The discussion will also consider what Australia can and should do in the region to better promote and protect human rights.

Details: entry fee \$20.00 (\$15.00 concession) includes lunch; 12:45pm-2:00pm; Maddocks, Level 6, 140 William Street, Melbourne; RSVP by 2 December using this booking form: www.hrlc.org.au/files/HRCL_HRW_Event_Dec2011_HumanRightsinAsia.pdf.

Sutherland Shire Community Picnic
Saturday 10 December, Miranda NSW

A picnic to welcome and engage with refugee and migrant families settling in the St George and Sutherland Shire area. Bring some food to share and have some positive conversations with new friends. Hosted by the Amnesty International Australia Sutherland Shire Action Group in collaboration with Gymea Community Aid and St George Migrant Resource Centre.

Details: 11:00am-1:00pm; Karimbla Reserve, Karimbla Road, Miranda; for further details e-mail amnesty.sutherlandshire@gmail.com.

Seminar: Raising children in more than one language
Sunday 11 December, Melbourne VIC

A free seminar for parents, early childhood and pre-school workers, grandparents, teachers and others interested in bilingual education. Speakers include Dr Susanne Dopke and Prof John Hajek.

Details: 12:30pm-5:00pm; Sidney Myer Asia Centre, (Carrillo Gantner Theatre), Cnr Swanston Street and Monash Road, University of Melbourne; register (essential) by 6 December to rumacc-info@unimelb.edu.au.

ACFID conference: An Australian approach to development?
Monday 12 and Tuesday 13 December, Burwood VIC

This conference will consider how development is understood by Australian aid agencies, how it is practiced by Australian agencies, and it will consider the Australian policies that drive it. It will question what Australian aid agencies are doing and why, and how Australian aid agencies approach a range of issues including aid modalities, ethics of development, bi- and multi-lateral engagement, and the sectoral foci of Australian aid. The conference also allows space for conference participants to discuss different regions (Pacific, Asia, and Africa), sectors (gender, WASH, HIV and AIDS), disaster management and responses, as well as larger questions of the conception of poverty. Perhaps most importantly, this conference also invites people from outside of Australia to provide a critical reflection on what Australian aid agencies are doing. This conference will be of interest to those involved with Australian aid agencies, as well as practitioners, researchers and policy makers.

Details: \$132.00 students, \$330.00 non-students; Deakin University, Burwood Campus; register online at www.deakin.edu.au/arts-ed/sips/events/acfid.

NEW RESEARCH, STATEMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

Legal Information for New Arrivals

The NSW Legal Assistance Forum has developed an online catalogue that lists legal resources targeted at newly arrived migrants and refugees. Topics covered include: languages in which the resource is available, the intended audience for the resource, the name of the agency/organisation that produced the resource, links to websites where it is possible to download or access an electronic copy of the resource, and information about the stage in the settlement process when it may be appropriate to access the resource. Accompanying the catalogue is a flowchart that maps the settlement process in Australia. The catalogue and flowchart are available at www.nlaf.org.au/reports/new_arrivals.html. For further information, email Judith Levitan on jlevitan@lawfoundation.net.au or call (02) 8227 3221.

Migration Policy Index Research and Webinar

SCOA, in collaboration with the Migration Policy Group, held a webinar on Tuesday, 27 September to release the results of the recent study into international standards of settlement policy, specifically focusing on how Australia compares to the rest of the world. The call was interactive with participants able to respond to several poll questions posed throughout the presentation. From the research Australia was found to be ranked 5th out of the 33 MIPEx countries, rating 3rd in the area of citizenship policies. There are areas in which Australia could see some improvement, in particular in relation to anti-discrimination law and providing equal opportunities for migrant workers. A full recording of the event is available on-line at <http://www.mipex.eu/blog/the-australian-perspective-on-migrant-settlement>.

Tenaganita Interview on issues for asylum seekers and refugees in Malaysia

Katrina Maliamauv from Tenaganita spoke about the plight of refugees and asylum seekers in Malaysia on radio. She proposed that the Malaysian government sign the 1951 Refugee Convention and other relevant human rights instruments and actually put it into practice by protecting and promoting rights of refugees. As one of the ASEAN members, the Malaysian government also needs to engage the Burmese government and address the root causes of refugee flight. She emphasized the importance of involving other actors such as NGOs in facilitating the process. You can listen to the interview at <http://bfm.my/refugees-in-malaysia-6-october-2011.html>

Address by Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen

Newly-ordained Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen, the first former refugee to be ordained a Catholic bishop in Australia, gave the Rerum Novarum Oration 2011. To read his compelling oration, visit <http://www.cam.org.au/rno2011.html>.

New t-shirt available

A new refugee advocacy t-shirt "It is not illegal to seek asylum" is now available at <http://www.newint.com.au/shop/tshirt-asylum-grey-ff-10-2950.htm>.

Thailand Burma Border Consortium releases report

The Thailand Burma Border Consortium (TBBC) has released "Displacement and Poverty in South East Burma/Myanmar". It is available for download from www.tbbc.org/resources/resources.htm#idps.

Research on attitudes towards asylum seekers

[Fiona Mckay](#), [Samantha Thomas](#) and [Susan Kneebone](#) have published '*It Would be Okay If They Came through the Proper Channels: Community Perceptions and Attitudes toward Asylum Seekers in Australia*'. The study included community surveys to understand community perceptions and attitudes relating to asylum seekers. Find the report at <http://jrs.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2011/10/22/jrs.fer010.full?keytype=ref&ikey=35VccmpMFoV9T9U#sec-5>

Radio program on the Sudanese community in Melbourne's west

The SBS feature on the Sudanese community in Melbourne's west is available for podcast at <http://www.sbs.com.au/podcasts/Podcasts/radionews/episode/189217/Sudanese-in-the-suburbs>

MensLine Australia Arabic Call Back Service and Tip Sheets

Offering up to six 50-minute counselling sessions with the same telephone counsellor, the Arabic Call Back Service provides culturally appropriate support to men from Australia's Arabic-speaking communities. It is a confidential, non-judgemental service offering support for any type of emotional concern. The service currently operates during limited hours; however, appointments for the service can be made 24 hours a day, seven days a week by calling MensLine Australia on 1300 78 99 78. In conjunction with this service, MensLine Australia has also created Arabic-specific tip sheets on the topics *Children and separation* and *Separation: Looking after yourself*. The tip sheets can be accessed through www.mensline.org.au

Paper on young people with caring responsibilities

ECCV, Carer's Victoria and CMY have released *Refugee and Migrant Young People with Caring Responsibilities*. The paper looks to address the complex circumstances that surround the young people, their families and those whom they care for. The paper suggests strategies for service providers and support agencies, as well as calls for further research. View the paper at <http://eccv.org.au/community/news/refugee-and-migrant-young-people-with-caring-responsibilities-what-do-we-know/>

Resource kit on financial literacy and money management

The Australian Securities Investments Commission (ASIC) has produced a range of educational tools and resources and has a dedicated website called MoneySmart, available at www.moneysmart.gov.au. ASIC is developing an educational resource kit for settlement workers on 10 Money Management topics. The kit will assist workers when informing clients about managing a range of financial literacy/money management issues. The kit will include information for workers, a range of tools and resources including activity sheets, translated fact sheets, visual and audio stories. The kit is expected

to be available in early 2012. For more information contact Michelle Bonardi at 03 9280 3447 or michelle.bonardi@asic.gov.au

Survey for training needs

Family Planning NSW is conducting a training needs analysis with service providers to assess their learning needs. The aim of this needs analysis is to develop relevant and useful resources and training courses which will raise the confidence of professionals to address issues of reproductive and sexual health with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities. This survey is the first phase of the training needs analysis and we would greatly appreciate your input.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CALDneedsanalysis>. The survey will be open to responses until close of business on 18 November.

OPPORTUNITIES

For employment opportunities, go to www.refugeecouncil.org.au/getinvolved/employment.php. For volunteering opportunities, go to www.refugeecouncil.org.au/getinvolved/volunteer.php

Interpreter Scholarship Program

The Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship (OMAC) is offering scholarships to suitable applicants enrolled in the Diploma of Interpreting at RMIT University in Melbourne. Scholarship recipients will receive \$2000. This amount will cover the cost of the course fees for a Government-funded place in the course. Targeted for 2012 are Dinka, Kirundi, Nepali, Oromo, Somali and Tedim (Chin). To apply for scholarships, applicants should be fluent in English and one of the languages being offered. The RMIT courses are approved by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI). Applications close 1 December 2011. For more information see

<http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/projects-and-initiatives/improving-language-services/interpreter-scholarships>

Multicultural Coastal Guides Course

Parks Victoria, in conjunction with the Department of Primary Industry's Marine Discovery Centre and funded by the Department of Planning and Community Development, is offering a free course designed to make parks accessible to culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Victoria. Graduates will be able to lead members of their communities in discovering parks around Victoria. The course will run from 18 to 20 November, 2011. For more information, contact Amy Mallett at 03 8627 4634 or amy.mallett@parks.vic.gov.au, or Alex Giannuzzi at 03 5258 0241 or alex.giannuzzi@dpi.vic.gov.au

The 2011-12 Multicultural Queensland Partnerships program annual grants

This grants round is open and the Government has increased the provision for this year's annual grants round to a record amount of \$1 million. The grants round offers funding for community events and projects that promote multiculturalism, positive community relations and community capacity, including improved access to services. If you are interested in submitting an application for a grant under the 2011-12 annual grants round, the Funding Information Paper can be accessed at www.communities.qld.gov.au/multicultural

Spectrum Seeds for Growth Fund

This is the last chance in 2011 for individuals and community groups from migrant/refugee backgrounds to apply for Seeds for Growth grants. Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre has established the Spectrum Seeds for Growth Fund to mark the organisation's 25th Anniversary and to formalise its community support. The fund provides small amounts of funding to strengthen the capacity of migrant and refugee communities to successfully settle in Melbourne's North West Region (Banyule, Darebin, Hume, Moreland, Nillumbik, Whittlesea, Yarra, Brimbank, Moonee Valley, Maribyrnong, Hobsons Bay, Wyndham, and Melton). Application forms are available at www.spectrum.vic.org.au. Closing date is Friday 18 November.

2012 Community Legal Centres NSW State Conference

Community Legal Centres New South Wales invite all those who work in legal, educational, social justice and community organisations to share knowledge, showcase projects, develop partnerships or offer updates and enhanced learning opportunities to submit ideas for sessions at the 2012 CLCNSW State

Conference. Submissions are welcome from people working in and beyond the community legal sector. To submit your abstract please go to www.clcnsw.org.au/conference2012.

Participants required for Research Project

Researchers from The University of Adelaide and Flinders University are currently conducting research into housing issues and homelessness among newly arrived humanitarian entrants (people within five years of arrival). They wish to interview newly-arrived humanitarian entrants who are struggling with their housing, are homeless, at risk of homelessness or have been homeless in the past. To participate, contact Emily Thwaites-Tregilgas from the University of Adelaide at (08) 8313 0641, 0430 392 611 or emily.thwaites-tregilgas@adelaide.edu.au.

VMC Community Grants Program

The Community Grants Program major round is now open for projects operating in the 2012/13 financial year. Funded projects seek to promote social cohesion, education and awareness of racial and religious tolerance in Victoria. The deadline is 16 December 2011. For more information visit <http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/grants/categories/promoting-harmony-multifaith-and-interfaith>

Introducing the Refugee Employment Advocacy Program (REAP)

REAP aims to train Community Employment Advocates from refugee backgrounds to support people to engage with employment and training. REAP is looking for people from refugee backgrounds interested in being trained to understand the employment/training sector, who will then support other community members to connect with employment/training opportunities and undertake a traineeship or work placement. Contact Maimun for more info on 03 9496 0250 or maimunm@spectrumvic.org.au

Scholarships for refugee background women – Hegg Hoffet Fund for Displaced Women Graduates

Assistance is open to displaced graduate women in any of more than 80 countries. Grants are usually around US\$1000-2000 and are intended as short-term help for a woman to get a few necessary courses or certification so that she can find appropriate employment. In addition to tuition and books, especially if tuition is provided free, the Fund has occasionally funded such necessities as transport, health insurance, or child care costs, to enable the woman to pursue her studies. For more information see www.ifuw.org/hegg-hoffet/index.shtml, or email ifuw@ifuw.org

Macquarie University Foundation Program

Macquarie University is providing an opportunity to people from refugee backgrounds to enter higher education. The Macquarie University Foundation Program is a year-long program that will prepare students for university studies, providing a direct entry into first year university for students successful in the program. The program leads to a wide range of courses including business, science, information technology, media, politics, psychology, teaching and law. For more information, visit www.foundationstudies.mq.edu.au.

REFUGEE ISSUES IN THE MEDIA

A busy person's digest of some recent media coverage of refugee issues:

(Inclusion in this summary does not imply that RCOA agrees with the article's content or vouches for its accuracy)

Surge in numbers of Iranian boat arrivals

Iranians have overtaken Afghans to become the largest group of asylum seekers arriving by boat to Australia, and have been labelled "troublemakers" by immigration officials who are unhappy that they are unable to send home those who fail refugee status. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 3 October) <http://www.theage.com.au/national/surge-in-numbers-of-iranian-boat-arrivals-20111002-113x1.html>

Deal still on, Julia Gillard tells Malaysia

Julia Gillard has called her Malaysian counterpart Najib Razak to reassure him Australia remains committed to the controversial refugee swap. This is despite the debate raging about the morality of processing refugees in Malaysia. (The Australian, 4 October) <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/immigration/deal-still-on-gillard-tells-malaysia/story-fn9hm1gu-1226157591136>

Violence in detention centres

An alleged sexual assault or harassment was reported on average once every 10 days in the immigration detention network, with about half of the total cases referred to police for investigation, the Department of Immigration revealed yesterday. (The Daily Telegraph, 5 October)

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/national/violence-in-detention-centres/story-e6freuzr-1226158503565>

Police gave warning of Villawood security risk

NSW police have slammed security management at the Villawood detention centre, with a senior officer revealing he had warned of problems before the April riots, but he was told "it would never happen". (The Sydney Morning Herald, 6 October)

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/police-gave-warning-of-villawood-security-risk-20111005-1I9qh.html>

ALP on collision course with PM

Labor's draft national platform has set the party on a collision course with the Gillard government over the proposed Malaysia people swap deal, saying Australia must meet its international human rights obligations to refugees. (The Australian, 7 October)

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/alp-on-collision-course-with-pm/story-fn7dlx76-1226160674395>

Open letter calls for end to offshore processing

Former prime minister Malcolm Fraser and former Australian of the Year Patrick McGorry are among a number of prominent Australians who have signed an open letter to the Federal Government calling for an end to offshore processing of asylum seekers. The letter calls for the establishment of an effective onshore processing system. (ABC News, 9 October)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2011-10-09/fraser-mcgorry-call-for-an-end-to-offshore-processing/3403002>

ALP rallies to salvage asylum deal, Crook to be centre of attention

Nationals MP Tony Crook will be the subject of furious last-minute lobbying as Julia Gillard and Tony Abbott seek to secure the West Australian's support for this week's crucial migration vote. (The Australian, 10 October) <http://bit.ly/rdQbT7>

Labor brawl brews on refugees

Prime Minister Julia Gillard has set the scene for another battle within Labor at the December national conference, declaring the party's asylum seeker platform is ambiguous and must be clarified. (The Age, 12 October) <http://www.theage.com.au/national/labor-brawl-brews-on-refugees-20111011-1Ij9i.html>

Crucial WA MP to cut down Gillard's Malaysia Solution

WA Nationals MP Tony Crook will deliver the death blow today to Julia Gillard's bid to resurrect her people-swap deal with Malaysia. Mr Crook said although sending asylum seekers to Malaysia may stop the boats, he felt uncomfortable with the prospect of sending unaccompanied children to uncertain futures in Kuala Lumpur. (The West Australian, 13 October)

<http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/a/-/breaking/10455894/crucial-wa-mp-to-cut-down-gillards-malaysia-solution/>

Switch to onshore processing threatens budget blowout

The collapse of the Malaysia solution will hit the federal budget, torpedoing Treasury forecasts that the government would slash spending on immigration detention next year because boats would stop arriving. The policy shift to onshore processing places further pressure on the Gillard government's pledge to return the budget to surplus in 2012-13. A Refugee Council of Australia board member, Sonia Caton, said: "The continued expansion of community-based alternatives is a crucial step towards addressing the enormous human and financial costs of indefinite mandatory detention." (The Sydney Morning Herald, 15 October) <http://bit.ly/vzOWai>

Off the boat, into the bush

Asylum seekers released from detention on bridging visas could be sent to regional towns with labour shortages to find work and support themselves. The plan, modelled on a successful Howard-era pilot that sent Congolese refugees to Shepparton, is likely to be introduced by the Gillard government as it tries to put the best face on its onshore processing backdown. (The Sun-Herald, 16 October)

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/off-the-boat-into-the-bush-20111015-1Iqnm.html>

Smugglers rush to beat monsoon, fears PM's fortunes rest on borders

People-smugglers from Indonesia are scrambling to launch asylum-seeker boats ahead of the approaching monsoon season amid Labor fears Julia Gillard's job has become irrevocably shackled to her success or failure in securing the nation's borders. (The Australian, 17 October)

<http://bit.ly/neHcmo>

\$5m spent on failed Malaysia swap deal

Mandatory detention had not deterred people trying to reach Australia by boat, Department of Immigration and Citizenship secretary Andrew Metcalfe said yesterday. The Refugee Council of Australia called on the Government to reverse its decision. (The Canberra Times, 18 October)

<http://www.canberratimes.com.au/news/national/national/general/5m-spent-on-failed-malaysia-swap-deal/2327032.aspx?storypage=0>

Malaysia swap cited as asylum arrivals drop

Australia has defied the global trend with a 19 per cent drop in asylum seekers arriving in the first half of this year, data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees shows. The Refugee Council of Australia's chief executive, Paul Power, warned against reading too much into the data because Australia received such a small proportion - 2.5 per cent - of claims globally. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 19 October)

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/malaysia-swap-cited-as-asylum-arrivals-drop-20111018-1lytd.html>

Boatload of trouble for PM's new plan

Prime Minister Julia Gillard yesterday defended her new onshore processing policy after the first boat of asylum seekers arrived in Australia since the collapse of Labor's Malaysia Solution. (The Daily Telegraph, 20 October)

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/sydney-nsw/boatload-of-trouble-for-pms-new-plan/story-e6freuzi-1226171145390>

Tony Abbott firm on 'turning back the boats' despite risk to sailors

Julia Gillard says Tony Abbott's pledge to "turn back the boats" can't be done because the Navy has warned it will put at risk the lives of Australian sailors. But the Opposition Leader says the option will remain a key plank of his asylum seeker policy. (The Herald Sun, 21 October)

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/more-news/abbott-firm-on-asylum-seekers/story-fn7x8me2-1226172281713>

Long wait for refugee family reunion

West African refugee Tonkora Kamara has a dilemma. Mr Kamara, who came to Australia as an "offshore" refugee through the United Nations, knows that many of the people arriving in Australia by boat have genuine cases for resettlement. He said Newcastle had about 900 African refugees. Refugee Council of Australia chief executive Paul Power said Australia was accepting 6000 offshore refugees and 7750 onshore arrivals. (The Newcastle Herald, 22 October)

<http://www.theherald.com.au/news/local/news/general/long-wait-for-refugee-family-reunion/2332027.aspx>

Opposition calls for asylum 'mini budget' after boat interception

The federal opposition has called for a "mini budget" after the latest interception of an asylum seeker boat off Australia. "The number of arrivals so far this year is already a third more than anticipated in this year's billion dollar plus asylum budget," opposition immigration spokesman Scott Morrison said in a statement today. (AAP, 22 October) <http://bit.ly/oJYent>

Three new boats exceed Malaysia's 800 refugee limit

The federal government was battling to defend its bungled Malaysia Solution yesterday after three more boatloads of asylum seekers pushed the number of refugee arrivals beyond the deal's 800-person limit. (The Daily Telegraph, 24 October)

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/three-new-boats-exceed-malaysias-800-refugee-limit/story-e6freuy9-1226174561422>

Stuck like glue: PM on Malaysia, Abbott on Nauru

Julia Gillard has dug in over her Malaysia Solution on border security, vowing she will not change it before the next election, despite the legislation being blocked by parliament. And Tony Abbott has stood firm on his counter-proposal to process asylum-seekers on the Pacific island of Nauru, seizing on the weekend arrival of three boatloads of asylum-seekers to claim Labor has lost control of the borders. (The Australian, 25 October)

<http://bit.ly/sqMitA>

Media claim asylum censorship

Media representatives have accused the Department of Immigration of attempting to censor asylum-seeker issues. The department released strict new rules last week for the media as a condition for official access to immigration detention centres. (The West Australian, 26 October)

<http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/a/-/breaking/10872267/media-claim-asylum-censorship/>

Malaysian PM wants detainee deal revived

Malaysian leader Najib Razak says he still hopes to see his refugee swap deal with Prime Minister Julia Gillard go ahead, despite the political deadlock in Canberra. Mr Razak met Ms Gillard yesterday in the run-up to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Perth, for the first time since the collapse of the deal. People smuggling was high on their agenda. (The Canberra Times, 28 October)

<http://www.canberratimes.com.au/news/national/national/general/malaysian-pm-wants-detainee-deal-revived/2339017.aspx>

ACT offers to take more asylum-seekers

The ACT Government wants to take hundreds more asylum-seekers out of detention each year and put them into the Canberra community. Chief Minister Katy Gallagher has written to Prime Minister Julia Gillard suggesting a dramatic expansion of the territory's role in the humanitarian settlement program, taking 200 more asylum-seekers each year. (The Canberra Times, 31 October 2011)

<http://www.canberratimes.com.au/news/local/news/general/act-offers-to-take-more-asylumseekers/2340971.aspx?storypage=0>