



Refugee Council of Australia

BULLETIN FOR MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS

7 June 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

Join us at the official launches of Refugee Week 2011

The **Sydney** Refugee Week launch will be held on Saturday 18 June from 2:00pm to 5:00pm at the Pitt Street Uniting Church (264 Pitt Street, Sydney). It will feature the Dario Palermo Refugee Art Exhibition, presentation of 2011 Refugee Humanitarian Awards, a screening of the Australian Refugee Film Festival, speakers and entertainment. All members and supporters of RCOA are invited to attend. An invitation can be downloaded at www.refugeeweek.org.au/events/2011_RW_SydLaunch_invitation.pdf.

Melbourne will kick off Refugee Week 2011 with a media event at the Melbourne Multicultural Hub (506 Elizabeth Street, opposite the Queen Victoria Market) from 10:30am to 11:30am (with morning tea provided). Speakers will include the AFL North Melbourne player Majak Daw, former refugee Najeeba Wazefadost, former refugee Carina Hoang and Refugee Council President John Gibson. RSVP to melbourne@refugeecouncil.org.au or on (03) 9600 3302. An invitation can be downloaded at www.refugeeweek.org.au/events/2011_RW_VicLaunch_invitation.pdf.

In **Adelaide**, Refugee Week will be officially launched by Senator Kate Lundy, Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, on Monday 20 June from 10:00am at the Kerry Packer Civic Gallery, University of South Australia City West Campus, Hawke Building Level 3, 50-60 North Terrace, Adelaide. The event will feature the launch of 'Hand in Hand', a student poster exhibition expressing the welcoming of refugees by young people, by the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, Jay Weatherill. Minister for Multicultural Affairs Grace Portolesi will also deliver a message of support for local efforts to highlight Refugee Week on behalf of the State Government. For further details, contact Matti Spellacy on (08) 8217 9510 or admin@mrcsa.com.au.

2011 Refugee Conference just around the corner!

The 2011 Refugee Conference will be held from 14-17 June, 2011 at the University of New South Wales Kensington Campus, Sydney. The conference, which marks the 60th anniversary of the Refugee Convention, will provide a timely opportunity to reflect on the strengths and achievements of the Convention and refugee protection system and to consider what further action is needed to secure the rights of refugees during flight, in countries of asylum and in resettlement. The conference will provide an excellent professional development opportunity for policy makers, academics, refugee advocates and service providers. **Registrations for the conference close Wednesday 8 June.** Further information including registration details and the full conference program can be found at refugeeconf2011.arts.unsw.edu.au.

Joint statement on the Nauru and Malaysian 'solutions'

Australian NGOs have called on the Australian Government and Opposition to abandon policies aimed at punishing asylum seekers and instead focus on addressing protection concerns in the Asia-Pacific region. In a joint statement coordinated by RCOA, the 17 NGOs asserted that neither indefinite detention in the Pacific nor sending asylum seekers to uncertainty in Malaysia can be presented as a just or credible response to the needs of people seeking refugee protection in Australia. The signatories urged policy makers to focus not on the question of how to "stop the boats", but on how to ensure that refugees in Asia-Pacific can receive effective protection. The statement recommends that the Australian

Government and Opposition work cooperatively to develop a regional framework to protect people fleeing persecution. The statement can be read at

www.refugeecouncil.org.au/resources/statements/110606_JS_Nauru_Malaysia.pdf

NGOs around the world condemn Malaysia transfer deal

NGOs from across the Asia-Pacific and around the world have condemned the proposed refugee transfer deal between Australia and Malaysia. The **Asia-Pacific Refugee Rights Network** (APRRN) has issued a joint statement expressing concern about the potential violation of Australia's obligations under the Refugee Convention and Malaysia's record of violating refugee rights. APRRN called on Australia, Malaysia and UNHCR to instead work towards "strengthening international commitments to the rights of refugees, domestic legal frameworks which guarantee the rights of refugees, and the practical ability of refugees in the region to access their rights and to remedies for violations of their rights". The statement can be read at refugeerightsasiapacific.org. In May, a group of **Malaysian NGOs** submitted a joint memorandum to the Australian High Commission in Malaysia encouraging Australia not to proceed with the deal. Irene Fernandez, Chairperson of Tenaganita, a Malaysian NGO which protects and promotes the rights of women, migrants and refugees, described the deal as a "fundamental human rights violation", while Eric Paulsen of Lawyers for Liberty described Malaysia as "one of the world's worst places for refugees". An interview with Irene and Eric can be viewed at www.freemalaysiatoday.com/2011/05/25/refugee-swap-ngos-keep-the-heat-on. **Human Rights Watch** has written to Prime Minister Julia Gillard expressing concern over Malaysia's "poor track-record of refugee protection", particularly the torture and mistreatment of refugees in detention, the risk of refoulement, UNHCR's limited capacity to protect refugees in Malaysia and the lack of recognition of refugees' social and economic rights and right to freedom of movement. It called on Prime Minister Gillard to "reconsider this agreement in light of Australia's international human rights obligations and in anticipation of the unnecessary human suffering it is likely to cause." The letter is at www.hrw.org/en/news/2011/05/26/letter-prime-minister-gillard-regarding-refugee-asylum-seeker-exchange-agreement-mala

Urgent need for detention reform highlighted yet again

The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) report into Villawood Immigration Detention Centre has again highlighted devastating psychological impact of Australia's policy of indefinite mandatory detention of asylum seekers. The report expressed serious concerns about the large number of people being held in immigration detention for prolonged periods of time. At the time of the AHRC's visit, sixty per cent of the 386 people detained at Villawood had been in detention for longer than six months, and more than forty five percent had been in detention for longer than twelve months. The report also called attention to the "noticeable impacts" of prolonged detention on detainees' mental health, describing the "palpable sense of frustration and incomprehension" amongst many detainees and the increasing incidence of self-harm. The full report is available at

www.humanrights.gov.au/human_rights/immigration/idc2011_villawood.html RCOA's media release on the report is at www.refugeecouncil.org.au/news/releases/110526_AHRC_Vwood.pdf

The Villawood report highlights urgent need to look for alternatives to the current detention regime. UNHCR recently released a report on alternatives to immigration detention, which includes a review of international law that governs immigration detention and the alternatives, and provides a critical overview of existing and possible alternatives to detention. The full report is available at www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4dc935fd2.html. The International Detention Coalition also recently launched a new handbook aimed at preventing unnecessary immigration detention and outlining good practice examples of alternatives to detention. The handbook is at idcoalition.org/handbook.

Asylum concerns raised with UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Last month's visit to Australia of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, provided RCOA and other NGOs the opportunity to raise concerns about aspect of Australia's treatment of asylum seekers. In a roundtable with NGOs hosted by Amnesty International, Ms Pillay heard about: the impacts of the policy of indefinite mandatory detention; the lack of procedural fairness for refugees who had been denied security clearances by the Australian Security and Intelligence Organisation; Australia's plans to externalise its asylum policies to neighbouring countries; and the toxic national political debate about asylum. Ms Pillay later spoke to political leaders about her concerns, raising them also in a Sydney public forum hosted by the Australian Human Rights Commission. A summary of Ms Pillay's comments at the forum are at http://humanrights.gov.au/about/media/news/2011/43_11.html

NGOs highlight inaccurate Australian claims about mandatory detention

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process, conducted by the United Nations Human Rights Council, involves a review of the human rights records of all 192 UN Member States once every four years. Australia appeared before the UPR on 27 January 2011. During the review, a significant number of countries asked questions and made recommendations about Australia's immigration policies, in particular the practice of mandatory detention. An Australian delegation gave a preliminary response to those questions during the January review. The response raised alarm for a number of leading human rights and refugee advocacy organisations, as it did not accurately reflect Australian law, policy or practice on refugee and asylum seeker issues. On 4 May, a coalition of NGOs sent a letter to the UN ambassadors of each of the countries which raised concerns about Australia's migration policies. The coalition included RCOA, the Human Rights Law Centre, Human Rights Watch, the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, the Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre and the Migrant and Refugee Rights Project at UNSW. The letter is available at www.hrlc.org.au/files/UPR-Australias-comments-on-Immigration-Detention.pdf.

New statistics reveal high overturn rate for offshore asylum determinations

A new publication on asylum statistics has again raised questions about the robustness of Australia's non-statutory refugee status determination process for irregular maritime arrivals (IMAs) who arrive through excised territories. The statistics revealed a dramatic decrease in the primary Protection Visa grant rate for IMAs, which dropped from around 70% in 2009-10 to less than 30% in the first six months of 2010-11. However, the statistics also revealed that close to 80% of primary decisions were overturned on review, compared to around 50% in the previous financial year. The statistics can be downloaded at www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/asylum

Review finds substandard service provision in Newcastle

Key settlement service providers in Newcastle have been put on notice following the findings of an independent review into refugee support in the region. The review, conducted by Ernst and Young, found that some refugees settling in Newcastle had received substandard services. In response, the Department of Immigration and Citizenship has announced a further independent review of performance measures and contract management processes, an audit of financial management under the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy contract and an inspection all accommodation provided to clients in the area, including the relocation of people in inappropriate residences. A joint media release issued by Minister for Immigration and Citizenship Chris Bowen and Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs Kate Lundy in response to the review's findings, along with links to Ernst and Young's report and recommendations, can be found at www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/cb/2011/cb165699.htm

National Settlement Policy Network update

The National Settlement Policy Network (SPN) quarterly teleconference provides an opportunity for members of RCOA and the Settlement Council of Australia (SCOA) to participate in planning joint advocacy on settlement issues. A report from the 7 April SPN teleconference on *Life after immigration detention: exploring the settlement experiences and challenges faced by former detainees* is now available to download at www.refugeecouncil.org.au/settlement/spn_2011.php. The report outlines key issues raised by a panel of presenters and through participant discussion. Presenters included Sarah Moya and Vicky Fisher, AMES Settlement (Victoria), Tracy Worrall, QPASTT (Queensland) and Abbas Hazara, Australian Hazara Council (Victoria). A report from the 1 June teleconference on *Settlement and mobility* will be posted on the website shortly. To stay informed about upcoming SPN teleconferences, go to www.refugeecouncil.org.au/settlement/spn.php or e-mail info@refugeecouncil.org.au to be added to the SPN mailing list. The SPN webpage includes links to reports on previous teleconferences and to related research and resources.

New AMEP contracts announced

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship has recently announced the successful tenders for the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP), with new 3-year contracts due to start on 1 July. The new AMEP business model will include increased education and vocational counselling and flexible pathways into further ESL courses, education, employment and vocational training. Eligibility for the AMEP has also been extended to 15- to 17-year olds who have discontinued their schooling within the first year of arrival in Australia. The 2011-14 AMEP providers are: Canberra Institute of Technology (ACT); NSW

Department of Education and Communities Consortium and Navitas English (NSW); Charles Darwin University (NT); Training Queensland (QLD); TAFE South Australia (SA); Tasmania Polytechnic (TAS); AMES Victoria and Northern AMEP Consortium (VIC); and Polytechnic West AMEP and Central TAFE (WA). A single national contract has also been awarded to a consortium of AMES Victoria, Navitas English, Charles Darwin University, DeakinPrime and Australia Network to deliver distance/e-learning services and develop e-learning materials for the AMEP and AMEP Flexible Learning Network. Information about these announcements can be found at www.newsroom.immi.gov.au/media_releases

Ahmadi refugees and asylum seekers released from detention in Thailand

On 6 June, 94 refugees and two asylum seekers of Pakistani origin were released on bail from the Bangkok Immigration Detention Centre. The 96 members of the Ahmadiyya faith, a religious minority which faces serious persecution in Pakistan, were arrested in dawn raids in December 2010 and had been detained in Bangkok since. Among the 94 refugees were 34 children under the age of 12. Their release follows months of sustained lobbying by the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand, the Thai Committee for Refugees and the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network. It has been hailed a historic development in light of the large number of detainees released and the leading role of Thai civil society in securing their release. Further details can be found at refugeerightsasiapacific.org

Mandatory sentencing “out of kilter”: NT Supreme Court Judge

On 19 May, Justice Judith Kelly delivered a sentence to Edward Nafi, an Indonesian fisherman who had pled guilty to people smuggling offences after transporting asylum seekers to Australia by boat in June 2010. Under the mandatory minimum sentencing provisions in the Migration Act, Mr Nafi was sentenced to eight years imprisonment with a non-parole period of five years. In handing down the judgement, Justice Kelly described the sentence as “completely out of kilter with sentences handed down in this Court for offences of the same or higher maximum sentences involving far greater moral culpability including violence causing serious harm to victims.” She stated that legislation had compelled her to hand down a harsher sentence than she considered appropriate given the circumstances of the case, noting that had it not been for the mandatory minimum sentencing regime, she would have recommended imprisonment for three years with a non-parole period of 18 months. Justice Kelly’s comments can be read at

www.supremecourt.nt.gov.au/remarks/documents/Nafi_19052011_21102367_SenNet.pdf

Last year, new legislation was introduced which increased the mandatory minimum penalties sentences for people-smuggling offences. In April 2010, RCOA made a submission to the Senate inquiry into this legislation in which we (along with many other organisations) cautioned that mandatory sentencing can result in an inappropriate penalty being delivered. RCOA proposed that the existing provisions on mandatory sentencing in the Migration Act should not be altered and that consideration should be given to removing all provisions on mandatory minimum penalties from the Act. Neither recommendation was adopted. RCOA’s submission can be read at

www.refugeecouncil.org.au/resources/submissions/1004_People_Smuggling_sub.pdf

Senate committee rejects legislation on Commissioner for Children and Young People

A Senate inquiry into legislation to establish a Federal Office of the Commissioner for Children and Young People has recommended that the legislation should not be passed. Due to concerns raised with a number of provisions in the proposed legislation, the Senate committee advised that it should not be passed in its present form. The committee also recommended, however, that issues raised during the inquiry should be considered during deliberations on the role of a National Children’s Commissioner under the National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children. The Greens released a dissenting report recommending that, subject to amendment, the legislation should be passed. Further information about the inquiry can be found at

www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/clac_ctte/cwealth_commissioner_young_people/index.htm.

RCOA’s submission to the inquiry is at

www.refugeecouncil.org.au/resources/submissions/1012_Child_Commissioner_sub.pdf

Sustainable Population Strategy released

Following a public consultation conducted between December 2010 and March 2011, the Australian Government has released its final Sustainable Population Strategy. The strategy includes only a single reference to refugees and humanitarian entrants, acknowledging the need to provide adequate support to new arrivals through the provision of intensive settlement support. The full strategy can be read at

www.environment.gov.au/sustainability/population. RCOA's submission to the public consultation is at [www.refugeecouncil.org.au/resources/submissions/1103 Sustainable Population sub.pdf](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/resources/submissions/1103_Sustainable_Population_sub.pdf)

Congratulations to CASE for Refugees: 2011 Lawyers of the Year

RCOA wishes to extend congratulations to Amanda Goodier and Shayla Strapps, Principal Solicitors at RCOA member organisation CASE for Refugees, who were recently awarded the Law Society of Western Australia's 2011 Lawyer of the Year Award. CASE for Refugees was established as a WA not for profit community legal centre in 2002 to offer free legal advice and immigration assistance to asylum seekers. They provide education and generalist legal services as well as legal education and training to law students, migration agents and lawyers.

COMING EVENTS

Refugee Week: 19-25 June

Dozens of Refugee Week events will be taking place in every state and territory of Australia. To find out about events happening in your area, go to our Refugee Week events calendar:

- Australia wide: www.refugeeweek.org.au/events/national.php
- Australian Capital Territory: www.refugeeweek.org.au/events/act.php
- New South Wales: www.refugeeweek.org.au/events/nsw.php
- Northern Territory: www.refugeeweek.org.au/events/nt.php
- Queensland: www.refugeeweek.org.au/events/qld.php
- South Australia: www.refugeeweek.org.au/events/sa.php
- Tasmania: www.refugeeweek.org.au/events/tas.php
- Victoria: www.refugeeweek.org.au/events/vic.php
- Western Australia: www.refugeeweek.org.au/events/wa.php

The Human Rights Arts and Film Festival (HRAFF)

Thursday 12 May to Sunday 12 June, Australia wide

HRAFF's mission is to make human rights accessible and engaging to everyone through creative media. This annual festival will include film screenings, forums, art exhibitions, music performances, poetry readings and theatre. The festival will be travelling to Melbourne, Canberra, Alice Springs, Brisbane, Sydney, Byron Bay and Adelaide.

Details: for further information including key dates and programs go to <http://hraff.org.au>

New campaign: Give Racism The Finger

From Monday 16 May, Australia wide

All Together Now, a new organisation established to erase racism in Australia, has launched its first national campaign, which will be promoted in The Body Shop stores around Australia. The Body Shop customers will be asked to Give Racism The Finger by dipping their finger in ink and making their mark on a canvas in the store. By doing so, they will be making a commitment to speak up when they witness racism. They will receive a postcard which explains the benefits of bystander action.

Details: for further details go to www.facebook.com/alltognow

Forum: Multiculturalism, Terrorism and Peace - An Indian Experience

Thursday 9 June, Parramatta NSW

This forum will feature guest speaker Professor Priyankar Upadhyay, UNESCO Chair and Professor of Peace Studies at the Bandaras Hindu University, India.

Details: 5:30pm for a 6:00pm start; Room 14 (Lecture Theatre 4), Building EA Level 2, UWS Parramatta Campus; to register your attendance call Debbie Mey on (02) 9678 7374 or register online at www.uws.edu.au/equity_diversity/equity_and_diversity/activities_and_programs/rsvp_nocache

Launch of new resources on developing inclusive sporting clubs

Thursday 9 June, Melbourne VIC

Everyone Wins is a program of resources and practical advice developed to assist community sporting clubs to become more inclusive and welcoming of all community members. Specifically aimed at increasing the involvement of women, girls, Aboriginal people and people from culturally diverse communities, Everyone Wins is about working together with local sports clubs to prevent violence

against women. Speakers will include the Hon. Mary Wooldridge MP, Victorian Minister for Women's Affairs; Sam Lane, sports journalist; Melissa Barbieri, Captain of the Matildas national women's soccer team; and Jenny Morgan, Professor of Law, University of Melbourne.

Details: 10:30am-12:00pm; The Harrison Room, Level 2 of the Ponsford Stand at the MCG; RSVP to everyonewins@vichealth.vic.gov.au or call 0408 147 914.

Career planning workshop for people from refugee backgrounds

Thursday 9 June, Melbourne VIC

Spectrum MRC is holding a Career Planning workshop (delivered by Victoria University Community Gateways) for people from refugee backgrounds. Workshop participants can book a one-on-one appointment with a careers advisor following the workshop.

Details: 10:00am-12:00pm; RSVP to Olivia (03) 9496 0200 or Willow (03) 9496 0277 or e-mail rap@spectrumvic.org.au

Nobel Laureate the 14th Dalai Lama in Tibet to address the Melbourne Press Club

Friday 10 June, Melbourne VIC

The luncheon is titled The Story of the Refugee: Business Ethics, Culture and the Arts and will involve the Dalai Lama in a discussion with four Melbourne residents who were refugees from Burma, Eritrea, China and Vietnam. The guest speakers will provide a compelling personal insight of their incredible life stories from tragedy and adversity in their home countries, to personal and business success, achieved in Melbourne.

Details: tickets range from premium \$495 to silver \$195; contact Janet Tucker eventassistmelb@dalailamainaustralia.org or (03) 9844 5379

Multicultural expo: discovering services for families with young children

Friday 10 June, Chatswood NSW

This expo aims to inform parents from refugee and migrant backgrounds about family support and children services in the local area, offer practical parenting and child rearing skills and provide an opportunity to make contacts with service providers.

Details: 10:00am-1:00pm; Dougherty Community Centre, 7 Victor Street, Chatswood;

2011 Refugee Conference

Tuesday 14 June to Friday 17 June, Sydney NSW

The 2011 Refugee Conference, which marks the 60th anniversary of the Refugee Convention, will provide a timely opportunity to reflect on the strengths and achievements of the Convention and refugee protection system and to consider what further action is needed to secure the rights of refugees during flight, in countries of asylum and in resettlement. Keynote speakers will include Assistant High Commissioner (Protection), UNHCR, Geneva; Rick Towle, Regional Representative, UNHCR; and Dr Jeff Crisp, Head, Policy Development and Evaluation Services, UNHCR. Policy makers, UNHCR representatives, academics, advocates, refugee service providers, refugees, students and community members are encouraged to attend.

Details: conference to be held at the University of New South Wales Kensington Campus, Sydney; further information including key dates and registration details can be found at <http://refugeeconf2011.arts.unsw.edu.au>

Housing Information session

Thursday 16 June, Brisbane QLD

Presented by 4walls Ltd, this session will provide information on accessing accommodation in the private rental market, tenant rights and responsibilities, resolving disputes with landlords, applying for government or community housing and other common issues faced by refugee clients. It will also provide the opportunity to network with other community members and discuss housing issues relevant to your community. Lunch and morning tea will be provided.

Details: 9:30am-1:00pm; Kinections, 5 Reid Street, Woolloongabba; for more information or to RSVP contact Jane on (07) 3891 6100 or SGP@4walls.org.au

Cross cultural women's leadership forum

Thursday 16 June, Melbourne VIC

This inaugural forum will provide an opportunity for women from diverse cultural backgrounds to share experiences and discuss common issues relating to their involvement in ethnic community organisations. Former Victorian Premier and current patron of the Victorian Immigrant and Refugee Women's Coalition, the Hon Joan Kirner AM, will be the keynote speaker.

Details: 11:00am-3:00pm; BMW Edge, Federation Square; to register your interest, please contact crossculturalforum@gmail.com

Launch of CALD COM storyboard

Friday 17 June, Brunswick VIC

CALD COM storyboards are developed by Moreland City Council to communicate with residents from diverse cultural backgrounds. This new storyboard will be launched by Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Senator Kate Lundy.

Details: 10:00am-12:00pm; Brunswick Neighbourhood House, 43A De Carle Street, Brunswick; RSVP to mayor@moreland.vic.gov.au by Tuesday 14 June.

Project planning workshop for community associations

Saturday 18 June, Toowoomba QLD

Hosted by Mercy Family Services, this free regional workshop for refugee and migrant community groups will provide an opportunity to learn about strategies, tools and resources which will assist in project planning. A light lunch will be provided

Details: 11:00am-3:00pm; Lucia Training Rooms, 104 South Street, Toowoomba; to book, contact David Barton on (07) 4617 7600 or e-mail david.barton@mfsq.org.au

News and Sudanese Australians: challenges and solutions

Saturday 18 June, Melbourne VIC

The AuSud Media Project is a journalism training initiative for Sudanese people in Australia run by the Centre for Advanced Journalism at the University of Melbourne. A roundtable discussion will provide an opportunity to explore how news media represent Sudanese Australians and how this can be improved in the future. Lunch will be provided.

Details: 10:00am-1:00pm; Gryphon Gallery, L1 Graduate Centre, 1888 Bldg, University of Melbourne; please register your attendance via email ausud-caj@unimelb.edu.au (include your full name and your organisation details).

Disability awareness session for the Assyrian community

Tuesday 21 June, Fairfield NSW

This session will focus on how disability affects the Assyrian community. Come together to share stories, connect with community leaders, get new ideas to support yourself and your family and explore opportunities to participate in exciting community activities.

Details: 10:00am-1:00pm; Fairfield Community Hall, 25 Barbara Street, Fairfield NSW; for further details contact Carmen Lazar on (02) 9728 2594 or Marlin Babakhan on (02) 9717 4000.

Birthday dinner in honour of Aung San Suu Kyi

Tuesday 21 June, Strathfield NSW

Burma Campaign Australia will be hosting a birthday dinner for Aung San Suu Kyi with Burmese food and cake. All monies raised from this event will go to supporting the work of Burma Campaign Australia.

Details: \$40 per head; 6:30pm-9:30pm; Bagan Restaurant, Shop 4/41 The Boulevard, Strathfield; to book go to www.trybooking.com/10486

Workshop: Biofeedback in working with trauma survivors

Thursday 23 June, Carramar NSW

Hosted by STARTTS, this one-day workshop will provide information on Biofeedback and Heart Rate Variability (HRV). Biofeedback techniques are easy to learn and can serve as a useful adjunct to trauma treatment. The focus of this workshop 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 per person (\$99 for students) includes a training pack and morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea; 9:30am-4:30pm; 152-168 The Horsley Drive, Carramar; for further details go to www.startts.org.au/default.aspx?id=391

Youth vocational pathways expo

Thursday 23 June, Box Hill VIC

Come and discover lots of exciting training and career information and grab the opportunity to win an iPod Touch, JB HiFi vouchers and movie tickets.

Details: 2:00pm-5:00pm; Box Hill Town Hall, Whitehorse Road, Box Hill; for further information call (03) 9285 4844 or go to www.gatewayllen.com.au

Building better partnerships in HACC

Thursday 23 June, Melbourne VIC

ECCV, the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), and the Department of Health is conducting the second intersector interchange forum to foster inter-sectoral partnerships and networking opportunities for the local government and ethnic aged care sectors. A light lunch will be provided at the end of the workshop.

Details: 9:15am-1:00pm; Level 11, 60 Collins Street, Melbourne; for more information please contact Con Pagonis on (03) 9667 5544 or email cpagonis@mav.asn.au

Horn of Africa Cultural Night

Saturday 25 June, Granville NSW

The Horn of Africa Relief and Development Agency's annual cultural night represents an important date for the Horn of Africa communities to celebrate their successful integration into Australian society, and showcase their culture through a night of music, dance and food.

Details: from 6:00pm; Granville Town Hall, 10 Carlton Street, Granville; for further details e-mail harda@harda.org.au

Football at the MCG for asylum seekers

Saturday 25 June, Brunswick VIC

The Asylum Seeker Welcome Centre invites asylum seekers to attend a football day at the MCG.

Details: meet 11:00am at ASWC in Brunswick or 12:00pm in the city; for further details or to book contact Paul on (03) 9388 2459 or paul.boyd@uniting.com.au or visit www.aswc.org.au/saturdayprogram

Fundraising lunch for Bridge for Asylum Seekers Foundation

Sunday 26 June, Balmain NSW

This event will feature leading food columnist John Newton in conversation with Efendy owner and award-winning chef Somer Sivrioglu. Enjoy a sumptuous six-course Turkish feast with a glass of wine or mineral water. Proceeds will go to the Bridge for Asylum Seekers Foundation, to support its work in providing living assistance to 70 adult asylum seekers and numerous children living in the community with no government or income support.

Details: \$75 per head; 12:30pm; Efendy Restaurant and Meze Bar, 79 Elliott Street, Balmain (corner of Darling Street);

Report launch: Multicultural Youth Engagement in Sport

Sunday 26 June, Springvale VIC

ECCV and Springvale Neighbourhood House (SNH) present the launch of a timely new research paper, Multicultural Youth Engagement in Sport. Speakers will include Cr Roz Blades, Mayor, City of Greater Dandenong; Ms Samar Mougharbel, Co-ordinator, SNH; and Mr Sam Afra, Chairperson, ECCV.

Details: 3:00pm-4:30pm; Springvale Neighbourhood House, 46-50 Queens Avenue, Springvale; RSVP to (03) 9349 4122 or email eccv@eccv.org.au

2011 Sports Without Borders Conference

Monday 27 June, Moonee Ponds VIC

The 2011 Sports Without Borders Conference brings together local government managers and workers with sportspeople, sporting clubs, government, sports administrators and educators to learn the facts, hear the stories, and learn about new practices and next practice solutions. Speakers will include Senator Mark Arbib, Senator Kate Lundy, James Demetriou, Grant Hackett and Carmel Guerra.

Details: \$248 (incl. GST); 8:00am-4:30pm; Moonee Valley Racing Club, Members Gate 1, McPherson Street, Moonee Ponds; for more information, please phone (03) 9320 6800 or email service@ourcommunity.com.au

HealthWest Refugee Health Service Coordination Forum

Tuesday 28 June, Hoppers Crossing VIC

Hosted by HealthWest, the purpose of this free forum is to celebrate successes in past refugee health service coordination work; raise awareness of and update the Refugee Care Pathway; identify further opportunities for action; and consider key advocacy opportunities and steps forward.

Details: 9:30am-3:30pm; Wyndham Leisure & Events Centre, 80 Derrimut Road, Hoppers Crossing; to register your attendance, go to <http://healthwest.org.au/events.html>

Inaugural Walter Lippman Memorial Lecture

Wednesday 29 June, Melbourne

ECCV and The Wheeler Centre are proud to present the inaugural Walter Lippmann Memorial Lecture on the topic 'Piecing Australia Together: The Paradox of Cultural Diversity in an Evolving Nation'. The speaker will be Rev Tim Costello AO.

Details: 6:00pm; The Wheeler Centre, Victorian State Library, 176 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne; RSVP to (03) 9094 7800.

Ogaden annual international conference

Friday 1 July, Melbourne

International, national and local Ogaden community delegates will attend the conference to discuss important issues and topics that are of importance to the Ogaden people. The event will also outline the unbearable injustice and human rights violations that are currently taking place in the Ogaden. There will also be live cultural poetry, singing and dance performances. Refreshments will be provided.

Details: 4:00pm-9:00pm; Rydges Bell City Hotel, 205-215 Bell Street, Preston; RSVP by Friday 10 June to Abdi Hussein on 0423 674 009 or ogadencommunity1@gmail.com

African Chamber of Commerce National Awards Dinner

Saturday 16 July, Adelaide SA

The African Chamber of Commerce Awards aim to recognise distinguished Africans and organisations supporting African communities in Australia. The Awards dinner will feature a fashion and beauty parade, three course meal, hot buffet, all you can drink and high energy African rhythms and dance shows.

Details: 7:00pm until late; Adelaide Convention Centre; to reserve a seat e-mail admin@africomsa.org or book online at <http://awards.africomsa.org/reservation>

Public lecture: Human rights, refugees and asylum seekers

Thursday 21 July, Sydney NSW

Presented by the Australian Sociological Association and Macquarie University, this lecture will feature keynote speakers Professor Stephen Castles, University of Sydney and Associate Director International Migration Institute, University of Oxford; and the Hon Catherine Branson QC, President of the Australian Human Rights Commission and Human Rights Commissioner. The lecture will be followed by an expert roundtable discussion on immigration detention with Paul Power, CEO of the Refugee Council of Australia; and Abdul Karim Hekmat, Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre (further speakers to be advised).

Details: 9:30am-1:00pm; Level 3, 175 Pitt Street, Sydney; admission strictly by RSVP to tasa.migration@gmail.com

NEW RESEARCH, STATEMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

Australian Human Rights Commission report on Immigration detention at Villawood

The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) released its findings into the Villawood Immigration Detention Centre after visits in February 2011. The report reinforces AHRC's long-held view that reforms are desperately required for Australia's immigration detention system, including the detrimental effect that prolonged and indefinite detention has on people's mental health and wellbeing. When AHRC visited Villawood detention centre to collect data for the report, 60 percent of people had been detained

for more than six months and 45 percent had been detained for more than a year. The full report, photos and DIAC's response can be found at humanrights.gov.au/human_rights/immigration/idc2011_villawood.html

UNHCR research into alternatives to detention

The UNHCR's Legal and Protection Policy Research Series has released its latest report, *Back to Basics: The Right to Liberty and Security of Person and 'Alternatives to Detention' of Refugees, Asylum-Seekers, Stateless Persons and Other Migrants*. It includes a review of international law that governs immigration detention and the alternatives, and provides a critical overview of existing and possible alternatives to detention (with options drawn from empirical research). These alternatives are examined carefully and presented, with opportunities for shared features able to be replicated in other countries or jurisdictions. The full report is available at www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4dc935fd2.html

Handbook on preventing unnecessary immigration detention

The International Detention Coalition (IDC) has launched a handbook aimed at preventing unnecessary immigration detention throughout the world and outlining good practice examples of alternatives to detention. The IDC's research, conducted in collaboration with La Trobe University, found that immigration detention is not effective as a deterrent and is costly to government and to the individual. Furthermore, alternatives to detention promote better integration outcomes and better cooperation with return requirements. The research found that alternatives to immigration detention are cheaper and more effective in producing good outcomes for all stakeholders. The handbook also introduces CAP, the Community Assessment and Placement model. This conceptual model identifies a range of mechanisms currently in use that enforce immigration law without a heavy reliance on detention. The model highlights effective management of individuals in the community and assists governments to make informed decisions on appropriate placement, management and support options for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. The Handbook is available at idcoalition.org/handbook

New statistics on asylum determinations

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship has released a new publication containing statistics on applications for Protection visas and the refugee status determination process for irregular maritime arrivals. It is available at www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/asylum

New information pack for secondary school teachers

RCOA has joined forces with SBS and Amnesty International Australia to develop a resource for secondary school teachers. The pack aims to dispel myths, provide factual and accessible information and relevance to curriculum across the nation. Every school in the country will receive a pack and we have also made a printable version available on our website. The pack is timed for Refugee Week 2011 and the upcoming SBS series, Go Back To Where You Came From (www.sbs.com.au/shows/goback). The pack can be downloaded free of charge at www.refugeecouncil.org.au/resources/RW_Schools_Pack.pdf

Exit Australia: online simulation of the asylum experience

Developed by SBS in association with RCOA, this online simulation puts you in the shoes of an asylum seeker and exposes you to some of the difficult situations and decisions that are faced by people who are forced to flee their home country. The simulation is at www.sbs.com.au/asylumexitaustralia

Working with refugees: a training resource

New resources developed by settlement service providers aim to support training for all who provide, or engage with, services to refugees in Australia. These training units are accredited under the National Training Framework and available to download free of charge to Registered Training Organisations and agencies seeking to enhance the skills of their staff. Registered Training Organisations can also request an Assessment Manual from AMES. Contact Margaret Piper at margpip@optusnet.com.au

New resources on sexual health

The Multicultural Health and Support Service has released the third edition of its resource manual "CALD communities, sexually transmissible infections and viral hepatitis". This resource for health and community service workers includes information on explaining sexual health terms and working with diverse health beliefs and levels of health literacy. The resource links to support services and resources.

The revised manual, brochures and resources are available for download at www.ceh.org.au/mhss/info_for_service_providers/bbv_sti_resources.aspx

SBS radio plays on domestic violence

SBS Radio is broadcasting three radio plays that aim to provide information about domestic/family violence and the comprehensive support available. These plays cover the following issues: Apprehended Violence Order (AVOs) and court support services that a woman can access when she applies for an AVO; the role of Family Violence Provisions in ensuring that women who have been sponsored to come to Australia by a spouse do not need to remain in a violent relationship with their sponsor for fear of their visa status; and the 'Staying Home Leaving Violence' program. To order copies of the radio plays or get more information please contact 02) 9635 8022 or email women@speakout.org.au

New multilingual website on community education

Lerni is a new website offering multilingual resources for emerging communities. It provides information on and links to educational opportunities at community colleges, neighbourhood houses, libraries, TAFE and migrant resources centres, in a variety of languages including Arabic, Assyrian, Burmese, Dari, Dinka, Farsi, Karen, Somali, Swahili and Tamil. Go to www.lerni.net.au

Profile of Melbourne's Burmese communities

The South Eastern Region Migrant Resource Centre has produced a new community profile entitled "People of Burma in Melbourne: Perspectives of a Migrant and Refugee Community." The profile was produced in recognition of significant numbers of people from Burma settling in the southern, eastern and western regions of Melbourne. Copies of the profile are available at \$20 each (to cover printing and postage costs). To purchase a copy, please call (03) 9706 8933.

New book by Adelaide author telling the story of the Lost Boys of Sudan

"Realising the Dream: Journey of a Lost Boy" tells the story of Adelaide man Akoi Maniel Guong. Born in South Sudan in 1977, Akoi grew up in a traditional Dinka village with life based around cattle and hunting. At the age of nine, his village was attacked by the North Sudanese army. To escape the conflict and reprisals, he and most of the other boys from his region's villages fled into hostile and dangerous country, walking for four weeks into a makeshift refugee camp in Ethiopia. Over 16,000 made this trip and became known as The Lost Boys of Sudan. All proceeds from the sale of Akoi's new book go to the South Sudan Emerging Education Development Foundation International. Copies of the book are available for \$20 from the Migrant Resource Centre of SA, 59 King William Street, Adelaide. To order a copy, call (08) 8217 9510 or e-mail Akoi@mrca.com.au

New research on family reunion and refugee young people

The Victorian Legal Assistance Forum has published a new report highlighting its project supporting young refugees who need legal help to bring their families to Australia. It outlines some of the issues faced by unaccompanied humanitarian minors in relation to family reunion and identifies strategies for addressing these issues. The report is at www.vlaf.org.au/docs/VLAF_family_reunion_report_web.pdf

Family reunion kit for migration agents and volunteers

The Refugee and Immigration Legal Service (RAILS) has developed a resource for volunteers assisting people who are applying to bring family members to Australia under the offshore Humanitarian Program, and particularly as 'immediate family' members (also known as 'split family' applications). The plain English guide is designed for use by registered migration agents giving individual advice and group information sessions; community volunteers assisting in form-filling; and as a 'self-help' kit for those able to prepare their own applications. The kit can be downloaded at www.rails.org.au/education/RefugeeFamilyReunionGuide.pdf

Analysis of spending on responses to unauthorised boat arrivals in the 2011-12 budget

Produced by the Australian Parliamentary Library, this analysis reviews Government expenditure relating to offshore asylum seeker management, the onshore detention network and anti-people smuggling measures in the 2011-12 Federal budget. It is available at www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/RP/BudgetReview2011-12/Boat.htm

Postcard campaign: “Children do not belong in detention”

Save the Children has launched a postcard campaign calling for the release of children from immigration detention. Postcards will be delivered to the office of Minister for Immigration and Citizenship Chris Bowen. If you would like some postcards to circulate among your friends, workplace and networks, please email action@savethechildren.org.au with your details. Alternatively, you can send your name and address to Save the Children and they will send a postcard on your behalf.

Articles on regional cooperation and the Malaysian transfer deal

Inside Story has recently published two articles by Dr Savitri Taylor of La Trobe University and Klaus Neumann of Swinburne University of Technology discussing the new transfer deal between Australia and Malaysia and the need for regional cooperation on refugee protection. The articles are available at inside.org.au/regional-cooperation-and-the-malaysian-solution and inside.org.au/trading-refugees

New online resource on Australia’s population

With support from the Scanlon Foundation, Monash University has developed a new website entitled Mapping Australia’s Population to provide key factual information on Australia’s population. The website includes fact sheets, an inventory of Australian public opinion surveys, current population and immigration statistics, and population maps. It also provides access to the Scanlon Foundation Mapping of Social Cohesion Surveys. The website is at www.arts.monash.edu.au/mapping-population

New website: “Everyday people, everyday rights”

In 2010, the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission partnered with the Neighbourhood Justice Centre to bring the innovative human rights project to document the human rights stories and experiences of people living in the City of Yarra. Over 70 people from diverse lifestyles and backgrounds and a range of ages, from students to retirees, came along to community meetings to share their stories. This new website showcases human rights stories developed from the stories shared at these community meetings. The website is at www.everydayrights.com.au

National Human Rights Action Plan website now live

As part of Australia’s Human Rights Framework, the Australian Government is developing a new National Human Rights Action Plan. The Human Rights Law Centre has created a website to help prepare the human rights and community sectors for the Government’s consultation process for developing the plan. The site includes information and resources on the National Action Plan and key human rights issues, links to submissions, news and event and provides space for NGOs to discuss the progress of the National Action Plan, share ideas and to post information on work being done. The site is at www.humanrightsaactionplan.org.au

The State of the World’s Human Rights 2011

Amnesty International has published its latest annual report on human rights conditions around the world. The report includes an overview of key human rights issues as well as country-by-country analyses of human rights conditions. The report is available at amnesty.org/en/annual-report/2011

OPPORTUNITIES

Leadership training for young Muslims

Latrobe University in partnership with Islamic Council of Victoria is offering a fully subsidised part-time course (June-July 2010) aiming to empower young Muslim men and women to reach their full potential as citizens and future leaders. The course includes meetings with decision makers in Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne. For an application form, contact Heba Ibrahim at the Islamic Council of Victoria or email admin@icv.org.au

Campaign to increase diversity in the NSW Police Force

The NSW Police have launched a recruitment campaign to encourage members of culturally diverse communities to pursue a professional career in the force. For further information about becoming a police officer visit www.police.nsw.gov.au/recruitment

Call for expressions of interest: Multicultural dance show

The Sydney Chinese Dance and Song (SCDASI) Inc is a non-profit organisation which aims to promote Chinese culture in Australia. It also aims to join with other communities in cultural exchanges with the aim of producing multicultural dance shows in NSW. SCDASI welcomes expressions of interest from groups or organisations interested in taking part in a multicultural show. Please contact Maggie Wu on 0402 960 792 or mwu87@hotmail.com

Nominations open for Building Inclusive Communities Awards

A joint initiative of Macquarie University and the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW, these awards recognise activities which have a long-term outlook and a track record of making a positive contribution to the community. The organisers are particularly interested in the "quiet achievers" – projects or contributions of community significance which may not otherwise receive attention or recognition. Contact Anna King on (02) 9850 9703 or via email equityanddiversity@mq.edu.au for more information. **Nominations close Friday 17 June 2011.**

Entries open for NSW Young Writers Competition

The Transcultural Mental Health Centre is calling for undiscovered creative writers aged between 12-24 years across NSW to enter the 2011 Young Writers Competition, TranSCRIBE. Young people throughout NSW have the opportunity to creatively express their views, feelings and experiences about issues that affect young people living in a multicultural society, including the stigma associated with mental illness. For further details, go to www.dhi.gov.au/tmhc/transcribe. **Entries close Monday 1 August 2011.**

Call for abstracts: 2011 African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific Conference

The 34th Annual Conference of the African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific will 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. Abstracts of 200 words are sought for either paper presentations or proposals for panel forums. Paper presentations will be for 20 minutes, with question time to follow. All abstracts and papers will be peer reviewed by AFSAAP and, if accepted, published in the Conference Proceedings. Please email your conference abstracts to africa2011@afsaap.org.au **before Monday August 1 2011.**

Call for papers: Journal for Ethnic and Migration Studies

The Society of Migration Studies (SMS) is a non-profit and non-governmental organisation based in Pakistan. SMS is to publish its first ever biannual Journal for Ethnic and Migration Studies (JEMS) which aims to facilitate research and to provide a platform to university students, independent researchers and policy makers working on the ethnic and migration related issues globally. The editor-in-chief of JEMS welcomes proposals for articles and research projects for the forthcoming special volume due in November 2011. Students, academics and independent researchers are requested to submit papers or projects for consideration. For further details, e-mail info@sms.org.pk or adnanrz99@gmail.com. Papers must be submitted **before Friday 15 July 2011.**

Call for papers: Oxford Monitor of Forced Migration

The Oxford Monitor of Forced Migration (OxMo), the student journal dedicated to protecting and advancing the human rights of forced migrants, is currently accepting submissions for its second issue. For further details of how to submit your articles and to read the latest edition of OxMo, visit www.oxmofm.com

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)

Detainee row escalates as lawyers slam Libs' policy

Civil rights lawyers have condemned a new federal opposition policy promoting the use of force, fines and the removal of phone access for immigration detainees who protest, saying it would turn centres into prisons. The government has meanwhile said that its move to crack down on detainee unrest,

which will require changing the Migration Act, was "much stronger", and the only new element in the Coalition's policy was the fines. (Brisbane Times, 2 May)

www.brisbanetimes.com.au/national/detainee-row-escalates-as-lawyers-slam-libs-policy-20110501-1e377.html

Fast ASIO checks pay off for refugees

Almost 1000 refugees have been given the green light to leave overcrowded detention centres and receive visas after a push to clear the faltering system's security backlog. Human rights groups had criticised the federal government for keeping 1300 people found to be genuine refugees in detention for up to a year as they waited for ASIO to do security checks, the final stage of processing. (Sydney Morning Herald, 3 May)

www.smh.com.au/national/fast-asio-checks-pay-off-for-refugees-20110502-1e571.html

Our shrinking asylum seeker problem

While the focus has been on protesting detainees of late, the numbers of asylum seekers arriving by boat is significantly down on this time last year. By the end of April 2010, over 2100 people had arrived by boat to claim asylum. To the end of April this year, the total was 940. March and April last year had seen 672 and 727 maritime arrivals; this year it was 170 and 356. The key reason is push factors (Crikey, 4 May) www.crikey.com.au/2011/05/04/our-shrinking-asylum-seeker-problem

US Congress requests urgent UN inquiry into Burmese war crimes

Members of the United States Congress are urging President Obama to show greater urgency in setting up a United Nations inquiry into alleged Burmese war crimes. US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, said last August the US would support a UN commission of inquiry, which could lead to charges against Burma's military-backed regime. But activists say the Obama administration's backing has only been rhetorical, with some policy makers saying there is not enough global support for a probe. (Radio Australia 4 May) www.radioaustralianews.net.au/stories/201105/3207247.htm?desktop

Morrison 'misuses' refugee report

A national report on the progress of humanitarian visa holders living in Australia has been used by opposition immigration spokesman Scott Morrison to launch an extraordinary attack on Australia's refugee scheme. The Refugee Council of Australia said Mr Morrison's comments were a deliberate misrepresentation of the facts, and bore little resemblance to the report. (Canberra Times, 6 May)

www.canberratimes.com.au/news/national/national/general/morrison-misuses-refugee-report/2154870.aspx

Julia Gillard turns to Pacific Solution in Papua New Guinea

The Gillard government is poised to revive one of the most controversial elements of the Howard government's Pacific Solution, with Port Moresby expected to agree to host a refugee processing centre in Papua New Guinea. As pressure mounts on Labor to deal with the asylum-seeker issue in the wake of a large influx of boats over the past three years and violent riots at detention centres in recent weeks, the Papua New Guinea cabinet is today expected to endorse a proposal submitted by Canberra for a centre to be located in the country. (The Australian, 6 May)

www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/julia-gillard-turns-to-pacific-solution-in-papua-new-guinea/story-fn59niix-1226050792939

Bowen defends swap amid concerns over treatment

Labor insists its proposed asylum-seeker swap with Malaysia is humane because it takes 4000 refugees from that nation's much-criticised immigration system. Immigration Minister Chris Bowen today defended the government's plan to send 800 newly-arrived asylum-seekers to Malaysia. Critics say the plan is inhumane, because asylum-seekers in Malaysia have no access to work or welfare and are subject to arrests, whippings and deportation. (The Australian, 9 May)

www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/cabinet-told-of-malaysia-plan-hours-before-launch/story-fn59niix-1226052357622

Malaysia outgunned Australia on refugee plan

The federal government was forced to accept increasingly unequal terms from Malaysia in negotiating its refugee swap. Under the agreement in principle announced by the Prime Minister at the weekend, Australia will almost immediately send 800 asylum seekers to Malaysia. In return, Malaysia will send to Australia 4000 whose refugee status has already been approved by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees - a ratio of five to one. This means that during the negotiations the ratio blew out by 2½ fold in Malaysia's favour. (Sydney Morning Herald, 10 May)

www.smh.com.au/national/malaysia-outgunned-australia-on-refugee-plan-20110509-1efvs.html

Malaysian refugee deal condemned from all sides

The Gillard government's controversial refugee swap with Malaysia has been slammed by all sides of politics, with Tony Abbott labelling it a "tragedy" and the Greens calling it an "appalling deal". The Opposition Leader questioned why Julia Gillard would not pick up the phone to the President of Nauru, with his deputy, Julie Bishop, asking if children would be sent back as part of the deal. "I'm not going to take lessons on compassion from people who soiled themselves, soiled themselves in government with a track record," Ms Gillard said. "The fact is this is all a political game for them." (The Australian, 11 May)

www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/malaysian-refugee-deal-condemned-from-all-sides/story-fn59niix-1226053504930

Former refugees fear Malaysian deal

Former refugees have spoken out about the risks for asylum-seekers in being processed overseas as part of an impending deal between the Malaysian and Australian governments. The Federal Government said that those transferred to Malaysia would be treated well, but former refugee Nai Hong Chan said there were still dangers. "The situation over there is not completely safe because even if they are allowed to live in the community, there is no official standards of the refugee recognised by the Malaysian Government," he said. It has been seven years since Mr Chan fled Burma, first on foot then crammed into a pick-up truck with nine others, five years spent waiting in Malaysia. (Canberra Times, 12 May)

www.canberratimes.com.au/news/local/news/general/former-refugees-fear-malaysian-deal/2160961.aspx

Voters reject Labor's Malaysian plan

A recent Herald/Nielsen poll found that 58 per cent voters opposed Australia's refugee swap arrangement with Malaysia, while 35 per cent supported it. Among Coalition voters, 72 per cent were opposed and 23 per cent supportive while Labor voters were split 51 per cent/39 per cent for and against, and Greens voters were almost equal with 45 per cent for and 48 per cent against. The poll of 1400 voters was taken from Thursday night to Saturday night. (Sydney Morning Herald, 16 May)

www.smh.com.au/national/voters-reject-labors-malaysian-plan-20110515-1eocz.html

PNG Islanders want \$16 million compensation over asylum seekers

The people of Manus Island want \$40 million kina (around \$16 million in Australian dollars) if asylum seekers are sent to the PNG island, *The Daily Telegraph* quoted an unidentified PNG government source as saying. A spokesman for Immigration Minister Mr Chris Bowen declined to comment, saying "when we have something to announce we will be able to say more." The revelation comes as the latest boatload of 55 asylum seekers were intercepted off Christmas Island, with 87 people now being held pending the Gillard government signing a deal with PNG or Malaysia. (Daily Telegraph, 17 May)

www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/national/png-islanders-want-16-million-compensation-over-asylum-seekers/story-e6freuzr-1226057063696

Malaysia deal a safe solution

Minister of Immigration and Citizenship Mr Chris Bowen answers to criticisms from the Green and Liberal parties in an op-ed article published in *The Australian*. In response to the Greens' criticism about poor condition of refugee camp in Malaysia, Mr Bowen wrote that the government's plan to resettle 4000 refugees from Malaysia in the next four years meant that more refugees would be able to get away from difficult situations elsewhere around the world. The numbers of refugees constitute 300 percent increase from 340 refugees being resettled from Malaysia in 2010. (The Australian, 18 May)

www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/commentary/malaysia-deal-a-safe-solution/story-e6frgd0x-1226057805927

Hiccup on Malaysia deal

Malaysia has no intention of accepting 107 asylum seekers who have arrived at Christmas Island since its planned refugee swap deal with Australia was announced, despite statements suggesting otherwise by the Gillard government. Three boats have made the trip to Australia from Indonesia since the announcement of the proposed deal 12 days ago, and each time the Australian government has said those on board will be repatriated to another country. The assurances, made in press releases by the Minister for Home Affairs Brendan O'Connor, were puzzling because the deal with Malaysia has not been finalised. (The Age, 19 May)

www.theage.com.au/national/hiccup-on-malaysia-deal-20110518-1et3n.html

Labor to adopt bleak plan to stop the boats

Australia is poised to enforce a two-tier policy to stop the boats, where some asylum seekers face indefinite limbo on Papua New Guinea's Manus Island, with a remote prospect of eventual resettlement in Australia and others are despatched to Malaysia, with no rights to work or welfare and no prospect of ever settling in Australia. (The Age, 20 May)

www.theage.com.au/national/labor-to-adopt-bleak-plan-to-stop-the-boats-20110519-1ev0a.html

Mandatory detention under fire

Tension and violence within Australia's immigration facilities continue to worsen, with new figures revealing authorities responded to almost 900 "critical" incidents in the months leading up to the Christmas Island riots. Private security contractor Serco reported 3431 incidents in the first seven months of this financial year, or 14 incidents a day, according to figures supplied by the Immigration Department. The worst facility was Christmas Island's North West Point. (The Australian, 23 May)

www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/mandatory-detention-under-fire/story-fn59niix-1226060682374

UN questions legality of Malaysia refugee swap

The United Nations high commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, has questioned Australia's asylum seeker deal with Malaysia, saying the plan could violate international law. She also spoke of her distress over Australia's mandatory detention policy, something she said was not effective and cost Australia too much money. Human Rights Law Centre executive director Phil Lynch says the Government should abandon the deal with Malaysia. (ABC, 24 May)

www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2011/05/24/3224958.htm?section=justin

Malaysian asylum deal finished 'in weeks'

The federal government expects to finalise an asylum-seeker swap deal with Malaysia in "coming weeks". But a similar deal with Indonesia is unlikely after it was ruled out by Jakarta. The government has been under pressure to complete the deal with Malaysia's home minister recently indicating that the swap arrangement does not include asylum seekers that arrive by boat before the agreement is finalised. (AAP, 25 May)

news.ninensn.com.au/national/8253254/malaysian-asylum-deal-finished-in-weeks

Thailand unlikely to do asylum seeker deal

Thailand is unlikely to enter into a bilateral deal on asylum seekers with Australia, Foreign Minister Kasit Piromya says. Speaking on the sidelines of a meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement block of countries in Bali, Mr Kasit said Thailand would prefer to address people smuggling and the movement of asylum seekers at a regional level through the Bali Process. (AAP in Sydney Morning Herald, 26 May)

news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-world/thailand-unlikely-to-do-asylum-seeker-deal-20110526-1f5i7.html

Asylum seekers won't be caned: Government

The federal government has rejected suggestions asylum seekers it sends to Malaysia under its controversial swap deal could be caned. A series of Amnesty International reports have detailed how asylum seekers in Malaysia are subjected to abuse and extortion, and live in constant fear of deportation. Thousands are believed to be beaten and caned every year. (Herald Sun, 27 May)

www.heraldsun.com.au/news/breaking-news/asylum-seekers-wont-be-caned-government/story-e6f7jx-1226063570094

Solomons' problems 'too big for refugees'

ANY offer to host an asylum-seeker processing centre in the Solomons must be refused by Canberra, which should stop trying to off-load its problems onto fragile Pacific states, a former Solomon Islands deputy prime minister Fred Fono said yesterday. As revealed in The Weekend Australian, the Solomon Islands government has approached the Gillard government offering to host an asylum-seeker centre after a similar pitch to East Timor collapsed. (The Australian, 30 May)

www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/solomons-problems-too-big-for-refugees/story-fn59niix-1226065204157

Government urged to scrap refugees swap

Another boatload of asylum-seekers has been intercepted en route to Australia as the Federal Government risks a parliamentary slap on the wrist over its plan to swap refugees with Malaysia. The House of Representatives began debating yesterday a Greens resolution condemning the Government's plan to send 800 asylum-seekers to Malaysia in return for accepting 4000 processed refugees from

that country. The motion has passed the Senate and has the support of the Opposition and Independent Andrew Wilkie. (The Canberra Times, 31 May)

www.canberratimes.com.au/news/national/national/general/government-urged-to-scrap-refugees-swap/2179896.aspx?storypage=0