



Refugee Council of Australia

BULLETIN FOR MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS

12 July 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

If you no longer wish to receive this bulletin, please email unsubscribe@refugeecouncil.org.au

NEWS FROM THE REFUGEE COUNCIL

UNHCR “Intransigent” on protection principles in Malaysia negotiations

During the recent UNHCR-NGO Consultations held in Geneva from June 28-30, RCOA CEO Paul Power questioned Antonio Guterres, about UNHCR’s role in the proposed asylum seeker transfer deal between Australia and Malaysia. Mr Guterres replied that he was unsure whether UNHCR would support the deal, noting that the signing of the agreement had been delayed due to UNHCR being “intransigent in relation to a certain number of very clear protection principles”. He noted that UNHCR has established “a certain number of clear bottom lines in relation to the protection of the people involved, but also to the protection environment in Malaysia” which would determine whether UNHCR would be able to support the deal. Mr Guterres also acknowledged the important role of Australian civil society in balancing the pressure from other political forces in Australia which advocate a re-establishment of the Nauru model. A transcript of the question posted to Mr Guterres and his reply is available at www.refugeecouncil.org.au/news/current.php#june_aguterres

A better way: A risk based approach to immigration detention

RCOA has released a statement calling on the Australian Government to replace its policy of indefinite mandatory detention with one that uses detention purely for the purposes of managing genuine risk. The statement outlines a set of principles which should inform Australia’s approach to immigration detention: restricting detention of asylum seekers to a maximum of 30 days in which time an analysis of identity, health and security risks can be undertaken; granting an appropriate bridging visa for those asylum seekers posing no risks and providing adequate support to live in the community; ensuring that anyone not released within 30 days has their case for continued detention reviewed independently; and presuming against the detention of children and families, working to develop a practical model that sees families undergo prompt health, security and identity checks. The statement, which has been endorsed by eight other organisations, can be read at www.refugeecouncil.org.au/resources/statements/110624_RW_detention.pdf

2011 Refugee Conference wrap up

The 2011 Refugee Conference, held at the University of New South Wales from 14 to 17 June, was an brought together over 550 delegates from across Australia and around the world to reflect on past achievements, identify ongoing issues of concern and develop recommendations to be taken forward to the Australian Government and UNHCR. Highlights of the Conference included the Refugee Women’s Dialogue, which brought together women from refugee backgrounds to discuss settlement challenges and strategies for reform; the Youth Forum, at which young people from refugee backgrounds worked together to identify issues of concern and recommendations for change; various contributions by Dr Jeff Crisp, head of UNHCR’s Policy Development and Evaluation Services, including a presentation on the strategies used by refugees to find their own solutions to their situation and a discussion with Professor Jane McAdam of the University of New South Wales’ Law Faculty; the launch by Dr Graeme Hugo of a new research report on the contributions of refugees and humanitarian entrants to Australian society (see below for further details); and an evening event held in honour of the late Dr Kenneth Rivett to commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Refugee Convention, at which six former refugees who arrived in Australia over the past six decades shared their stories of seeking protection.

Suite 4A6, 410 Elizabeth Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010 Australia
Phone: (02) 9211 9333 • Fax: (02) 9211 9288
info@refugeecouncil.org.au • Web: www.refugeecouncil.org.au
Incorporated in ACT • ABN 87 956 673 083

The Refugee Council of Australia represents
non-government organisations and
individuals working with and for refugees
in Australia and around the world

On the final day of the Conference, delegates developed a statement urging UNHCR to condemn the proposed transfer deal between Australia and Malaysia. The statement was presented to UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres, at the UNHCR NGO Consultations in Geneva on June 28. The text of the statement and a list of signatories can be viewed at www.crr.unsw.edu.au

A full Conference report and other key documents will be uploaded onto the Refugee Conference website over the coming months. Speeches from the Kenneth Rivett memorial event can be found at www.refugeefoundation.org.au/krivett.php

Australian advocates take key concerns to Geneva

A team of Australian NGO and refugee community representatives recently travelled to Geneva to attend UNHCR's June Standing Committee meeting, annual NGO Consultations and a series of meetings with senior UNHCR officials and Geneva-based representatives of governments.

The NGO Consultations brought together 415 NGO representatives from 73 countries and included discussion of refugee situations in different regions of the world, alternatives to detention, the role of faith-based organisations in refugee support, responses to the needs of urban refugees, statelessness among children and youth, land and property rights for refugees who return home and the struggle for durable solutions for internally displaced people. RCOA CEO Paul Power led discussions on overcoming barriers to resettlement within resettlement countries, as part of a forum on the use of resettlement as a protection tool.

The highlight of the consultations was the involvement of the 10 representatives of regional refugee women's dialogues – the first time that a significant and representative group of refugee women had played such an active role in this gathering while still living in difficult situations in countries of first asylum. The 10 women were chosen by delegates to regional women's dialogues held as part of the 60th anniversary celebrations for the Refugee Convention in Zambia, Uganda, Jordan, Colombia (for IDP women) and Finland (for resettled refugees). Commissioned by UNHCR, the dialogues were facilitated by the University of NSW's Centre for Refugee Research under the leadership of Dr Eileen Pittaway.

The 10 women who travelled to Geneva spent two weeks there, also addressing the UNHCR Standing Committee in the week prior to the NGO Consultations (June 21 to 23) and participating in numerous additional meetings with UNHCR staff, government representatives and NGOs. The women spoke frankly about the extent and impact of sexual and gender-based violence in the lives of refugee women, girls, boys and young men and the regular failure of authorities to take appropriate action against perpetrators. The women also highlighted some of the many circumstances in which women and girls are forced into prostitution or survival sex just to maintain a basic food supply and shelter. Other concerns raised included the vital need for funding to help young refugees continue their education and the many barriers faced by women and girls because of lack of access to sanitary materials. The importance of supporting the development of women's leadership was also emphasised.

Refugee Week 2011 our most successful celebration ever

With the number of events held across Australia exceeding 200 for the first time ever, Refugee Week 2011 was our most successful celebration to date. Events included film and documentary screenings, music, dance, art and photographic exhibitions, morning teas, sporting events, prayer services, seminars and information sessions, rallies, book and project launches, workshops and public forums. Major launches were held in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, with keynote speakers including Ellen Hansen, Senior Protection Officer at UNHCR Canberra; Gracia Ngoy, former refugee from the DRC and Wollongong Young Citizen of the Year; AFL North Melbourne player Majak Daw; former refugee Najeeba Wazefadost; RCOA President John Gibson; and SA Minister for Multicultural Affairs Grace Portolesi. Transcripts of speeches made at the Sydney and Melbourne launches of Refugee Week will be made available on our website over the coming weeks. RCOA would like to thank the many individuals and organisations who made Refugee Week such a great success: our sponsors, the Victorian Multicultural Commission, NSW Community Relations Commission, SBS, City of Sydney, AMES NSW, AMES Victoria, ACL and Leichhardt Council; our NSW launch partners, STARTTS, Friends of STARTTS and the Australian Refugee Film Festival; Shaun Tan, who designed our beautiful Refugee Week poster; our Refugee Week Ambassadors, who played a key role in promoting Refugee Week; and the volunteers who assisted us in organising Refugee Week and running the NSW launch.

UN refugee figures show asylum fears unfounded

UNHCR's latest *Global Trends* report has confirmed that Australia's share of asylum applications remains at just 1% of the global total. The report reveals that the number of people displaced by

persecution and conflict rose by 400,000 last year to 43.7 million. Of these 15.4 million are refugees, 840,000 are asylum seekers and 27.5 million are displaced within their own countries. Of the 10.55 million refugees under UNHCR's mandate, 75% come from just 10 countries of origin – Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burma, Colombia, Sudan, Vietnam, Eritrea and China. Just 10 countries host 62% of these refugees. They include Pakistan, Iran, Syria, Germany, Jordan, Kenya and Chad. By contrast, Australia hosts 21,805 refugees according to UNHCR, just 0.21% of the global total. In 2010, Australia received 1.04% of the world's asylum applications and, as at December 2010, hosted 0.45% of the world's asylum seekers. Australia's contribution to refugee resettlement is more substantial, being ranked third in the world with 8,516 refugees welcomed last year. The *Global Trends* report can be downloaded at www.unhcr.org/4dfa11499.html. RCOA's media release on the report is at www.refugeecouncil.org.au/news/releases/110620_Global_Trends.pdf

Minister announces 62 per cent of children in community-based detention

On 29 June, Minister for Immigration and Citizenship Chris Bowen announced that 62 per cent of children in immigration detention had been moved into community-based arrangements. He also announced the closure of the detention facilities at the Virginia Palms in Brisbane and the Asti Hotel in Darwin. The expansion of community detention follows the announcement by the Australian Government in October 2010 that it would move the majority of children and vulnerable family groups into community-based accommodation by June 2011. While welcoming this expansion, RCOA remains concerned that a large proportion of children continue to be held in immigration detention facilities over eight months after the expansion of community detention began – a concern also expressed by RCOA after the original announcement in October last year. RCOA's October 2010 media release is at www.refugeecouncil.org.au/news/releases/101018_Release_of_children.pdf

Detention Inquiry a good start but action needed

RCOA has welcomed the announcement of a comprehensive parliamentary inquiry into Australia's immigration detention system. It is hoped that the inquiry will not only reveal the enormous human and financial cost of immigration detention in Australia, but will also lead to comprehensive reform of the failed system. Specifically, RCOA has highlighted the urgent need to end the indefinite detention of asylum seekers without review and address Australia's treatment of children seeking asylum. RCOA has also called for bipartisan support of the anticipated reforms. RCOA's media release on the announced inquiry is at www.refugeecouncil.org.au/news/releases/110602_Parlinq_det.pdf

New report highlights the contributions of refugees

A new report by Dr Graeme Hugo, one of Australia's leading demographers, has highlighted the many economic, civic and social contributions made by refugees and humanitarian entrants to Australian society. The research, involved which interviews with 649 humanitarian families and in-depth discussions with 70 key people and organisations who provide services, employment and education to humanitarian entrants, revealed that refugees and humanitarian entrants have made a significant positive contribution to Australia: filling labour shortages in non-metropolitan areas; starting successful businesses to a greater extent even than skilled migrants; facilitating the development of trade between Australia and their countries of origin; and engaging with the community in a variety of ways, including through volunteering and supporting other new arrivals to settle successfully in their new homes. A booklet containing a summary of the research findings can be downloaded at

www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/research/_pdf/economic-social-civic-contributions-booklet2011.pdf.

The full report can be downloaded at

www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/research/_pdf/economic-social-civic-contributions-about-the-research2011.pdf.

Complementary Protection Bill passes the House of Representatives

The Migration Amendment (Complementary Protection) Bill 2011 was passed the House of Representatives on 25 May 2011. The establish a formal administrative process for assessing the claims of persons who do not fit the Refugee Convention's formal definition of a refugee but who would still be at grave risk of persecution, torture or death if returned to their country of origin. It would enable asylum seekers to apply for protection on the basis that they would suffer "significant harm" if returned to their country of origin. The text of the Bill can be read at www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2011B00022

RCOA submission to Inquiry on multiculturalism

RCOA made a submission to the Joint Standing Committee's on Migration Inquiry into Multiculturalism in Australia in April, welcoming the new policy and making a number of recommendations, including a call for the Government to investigate ways to provide public information and education on multicultural and migration issues, including information on refugees and asylum seekers; the need for specific refugee-related and multicultural components to be included for consideration in the development of the national curriculum; that the Government engage directly with refugee community diasporas in developing bilateral and multilateral relations in regard to economic development and human rights issues; and that DIAC articulate a more detailed settlement framework, explaining the goals of the settlement program and the respective roles of each funding program. The submission is at www.refugeecouncil.org.au/resources/submissions/1104_Multiculturalism_sub.pdf. Further details about the inquiry can be found at www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/mig/multiculturalism

RCOA submission on changes to character test for asylum applicants

RCOA recently made a submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee inquiry into the *Migration Amendment (Strengthening the Character Test and Other Provisions) Bill 2011*. RCOA took issue with the Bill in its entirety, advising that the proposed amendments would not "fix" the problem of unrest in detention centres but instead would likely do more harm to vulnerable groups. Instead of amending the character test, RCOA recommended that the Government consider how to alleviate the pressures of immigration detention. The Committee acknowledged these and similar issues raised by the organisations which made submissions to the inquiry, but contended that DIAC had "been able to satisfactorily clarify most of the issues". The Committee therefore recommended that the Bill's Explanatory Memoranda should be modified to clarify these issues, but that the Bill should be passed without amendment. Greens Senator Sarah Hanson-Young issued a dissenting report recommending that the Bill should not be passed on the basis that the amendments are unnecessary, disproportionate and inconsistent with both domestic and international law. RCOA's submission on the Bill is at www.refugeecouncil.org.au/resources/submissions/1105_Character_Test_sub.pdf. Further details about the inquiry can be found at www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/legcon_ctte/migration_strengthening/index.htm

RCOA submission welcomes proposed detention reforms

RCOA has made a submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee inquiry into the *Migration Amendment (Detention Reform and Procedural Fairness) Bill 2010*. The Bill seeks to amend the Migration Act by repealing provisions relating to mandatory detention and excised offshore places, enshrining in law key principles to inform Australia's approach to immigration detention and introducing a system of judicial review of detention beyond 30 days. RCOA welcomed the proposed amendments and made several recommendations for additional amendments, including the introduction of a requirement for security assessments for asylum seekers within a maximum time period and the inclusion of a clear time limit restricting immigration detention to a period of no longer than six months. RCOA's submission includes detailed case studies and examples demonstrating the urgent need for reform of Australia's immigration detention policy. The submission is at www.refugeecouncil.org.au/resources/submissions/1106_Detention_sub.pdf. Further details about the inquiry can be found at www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/legcon_ctte/migration_detentionreform_proceduralfairness/index.htm

Griffith becomes 74th Refugee Welcome Zone

Griffith City Council is the latest local government area to be declared a Refugee Welcome Zone. Councillor Mike Neville, Mayor of Griffith City Council, signed the Refugee Welcome Zone declaration at a Refugee Week event on 22 June. Griffith is the 34th local government area in NSW and 74th overall to sign the declaration. Further information on the Refugee Welcome Zone initiative can be found at www.refugeecouncil.org.au/getinvolved/rwz.php

Government rejects key UPR recommendations on asylum policy

The Australian Government recently released its official response to recommendations made under the UPR process earlier this year. Overall, 90% of the recommendations were accepted by the Government in whole or in part. However, a number of key recommendations relating to asylum policy were rejected, specifically those relating to mandatory detention and excised offshore places. Additionally, some of the recommendations were accepted by the Government on the basis that they were already reflected in

Australian law and policy when in practice this is not the case. For instance, the recommendation to restrict detention of asylum seekers to the shortest time possible was accepted on the basis of the Government's stated policy that "indefinite or otherwise arbitrary detention is not acceptable", whereas in reality the detention of asylum seekers remains both indefinite and arbitrary. The full response can be read at www.hrlc.org.au/files/Australias-Formal-UPR-Response.pdf

Two new state parties to key conventions on refugees and stateless persons

On 30 May, the President of the Philippines signed the Instrument of Ratification for the 1954 Convention in relation to the Status of Stateless Persons. The Philippines signed the Convention in 1955 but until now had not agreed to be legally bound by the treaty. The ratification will make the Philippines the fourth country in the Asia-Pacific region and the 67th overall to become party to the Convention. On 28 June, Nauru acceded to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, becoming the 19th state in the Asia-Pacific region to do so. The Convention and Protocol now have 145 and 146 parties respectively.

Australians honoured for support for refugees

The Queen's Birthday 2011 Honours List included two people whose work in the community has included the support of refugees: Ms **Cheryl Webster** OAM, from Anglicare Sydney's Migrant Services Team, for service to the community through the provision of assistance to refugees from Africa; and Mr **Michael Dwyer** AM, Board Member of Australia for UNHCR, for service to the community through leadership and executive roles.

Position vacant: RCOA Media and Campaigns Officer

RCOA is advertising for a Media and Campaigns Officer, based in the Sydney office. For more information about the position, see www.refugeecouncil.org.au/getinvolved/employment.php. Applications close Tuesday 26 July. Suitably qualified people, including those of refugee background, are encouraged to apply.

COMING EVENTS

Exhibition of multimedia works by Dinh Q Le: "Erasure"

Friday 8 July to Saturday 10 September, Sydney NSW

Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation presents "Erasure", a newly commissioned work by Vietnamese artist Dinh Q. Le. This is an interactive sculptural and video installation that draws on recent debates in Australia concerning refugees and asylum seekers.

Details: Wednesday to Saturday 11:00am-5:00pm; Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation, 16-20 Goodhope Street, Paddington; for further details visit sherman-scaf.org.au

Come 'n' try sport clinics

From Tuesday 12 July, Mirrabooka WA

Clinics will be held for a range of sports including soccer (12 and 19 July), frisbee (14 July), tennis (15 and 22 July) and softball (21 July). Lunch and all sports equipment will be provided, but participants will need to bring a hat, sneakers and drink bottle.

Details: \$4.00 per session; 11:00am-2:00pm each day; Herb Graham Recreation Centre, Mirrabooka; bookings essential to Natalie on (08) 9205 7335.

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 awards.africomsa.org/reservation

Indonesian cultural night: "East Meets West"

Saturday 16 July, Brisbane QLD

This event will include food, music, traditional dances, traditional costume fashion show and lucky door prize.

Details: tickets \$30.00 per person; 7:00pm-9:30pm; Parklands Room, Urban Hotel, 345 Wickham Terrace, Brisbane; for further details or to purchase tickets, call Linda Reeves 0402 604 450, Rita Brown 0403 741 117, Endah McDonald 0412 915 111 or Diah Campbell 0418 387 810.

**North Melbourne FC feature event for the AFL Multicultural Round
Sunday 17 July, Melbourne VIC**

The day will kick off with a football match between our Indigenous Academy and Multicultural Academy at 2:00pm. Following the match, participants will walk to Etihad Stadium to attend the North Melbourne vs. Western Bulldogs match, starting at 4:40pm. This will be a guided walk (volunteers from the Hotham History club) focusing on cultural and historical landmarks. Community members attending this event will receive a free t-shirt and free tickets to the match at Etihad Stadium.

Details: from 2:00pm; Aegis Park, 204 Arden Street, North Melbourne; for further details, please contact Hamish McCormack on (03) 9320 2442 or 0438 956 898.

**Foundation House workshop: Classroom strategies to support recovery from trauma
Tuesday 19 July, Bendigo VIC**

This workshop showcases a range of activities from Foundation House resources and programs (Klassroom Kaleidoscope, Healthwise, Taking Action, and Rainbow) that help promote safety, dignity, and identity for students who have refugee experiences. These activities also help build connections between new arrivals and the wider student body in the classroom context.

Details: 1:00pm-4:00pm; Bendigo DEECD, Loddon Mallee Regional Centre, 7-5 McLaren Street, Bendigo; for further details and to register, go to www.foundationhouse.org.au/professional_development/index.htm

**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; Abdul Karim Hekmat, Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre; Prabha Gulati, Asylum Seekers Centre of NSW; and Kate Temby, Australian Human Rights Commission. Lunch will be provided.

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

**Foundation House course: The Refugee Experience
Thursday 21 July, Brunswick VIC**

This one-day course provides an overview of the refugee experience using the Foundation House framework for understanding the psychosocial impact of torture and trauma. This module is designed for both new and experienced workers and introduces some key frameworks that are the basis for further professional development modules with Foundation House.

Details: \$210 per person includes light lunch; 9:30am-4:00pm; 6 Gardiner Street, Brunswick; for further details and to register, go to www.foundationhouse.org.au/professional_development/index.htm

**G'Day Multicultural Celebrations 2011
Friday 22 July, Hobart TAS**

This event, hosted by the Tasmania University Union, will include cultural performances, tasty food and prizes.

Details: 4:30pm till late; Uni Cafeteria, University of Tasmania; for further details contact Janez Zagoda at Janez.Zagoda@utas.edu.au

**Auditions for Africa Konnect's annual Hair, Make-up and Fashion Show
Saturday 23 July, Cabramatta NSW**

The aim of African Konnect is to create an African Australian identity through holding an Annual Hair, Make-up and Fashion Show with a retail outlet to follow. This year's theme for the show is 'African

Inspired' designs. These auditions are open to hair stylists, make-up artists and fashion designers from all cultural backgrounds.

Details: 9:00am-5:00pm; The Cabramatta Community Hall, Cnr Railway Parade and McBurney Road, Cabramatta; for further details contact Gladys on 0432 684 553 or Sindy on 0416 042 284.

Taste Food Tours

From Saturday 23 July, Sydney NSW

Taste Food walking tours are designed to showcase the very best of Sydney's amazing multicultural food traditions. A new range of tours starting in July will focus on a range of cuisines in Auburn, Bankstown, Belmore, Campsie, Fairfield, Lakemba and Strathfield. All tours include a sit down lunch.

Details: \$80.00 per tour; 10:00am-2:00pm; for further details on scheduled tours, visit www.tastetours.org.au and click on the "bookings" arrow.

Picnic at Darwin Airport Lodge

Sunday 24 July, Darwin NT

Hosted by DASSAN, this picnic will be held opposite the detention centre at Darwin Airport Lodge. A relaxed family's afternoon entertainment with some good music, food and picnic rugs. A shared experience for the families on the inside and on the outside of the fence. Give the children and the adults something joyful and supportive to look at from the confines of their detention.

Details: 3:00pm-5:00pm; Darwin Airport Lodge; for more information contact Alison or Karen at dassan2011@gmail.com

Focus group session on culturally diverse community events

Monday 25, Tuesday 26 and Wednesday 27 July, Parramatta NSW

The Office of Communities has identified a need to foster skills and capabilities to plan and drive culturally diverse events in Western Sydney. To this end, the Office will be developing a how-to guide and an events training program for event organisers. These focus groups are the initial component of the project and aim to look at the needs, barriers, opportunities and capacity of events and event organisers.

Details: 5:30pm-7:00pm; Parramatta Stadium, Cumberland Lounge; RSVP to ian@cre8ingrowth.com.au with the date of your choice.

Liberian Independence Festival

Friday 29 to Saturday 30 July, Launceston TAS

An event to promote unity amongst Liberians and the wider Australian community through sports, cultural performances, fellowship and different varieties of African food. Festival celebrations will begin on Friday 29 July, an event which will include an address by the Hon. Cass O'Connor MP, Minister for Community Development, as well as music, dance and delicious African food. On Saturday 30 July, a soccer and kickball match and BBQ will be held during the day and an acquaintance night featuring music, dance and food will be held in the evening.

Details: \$5.00 entry for adults and children over 10 at acquaintance night (other events free); festival celebrations (29 July) 4:00pm-12:00am at Launceston Bowls Club, Royal Park; soccer and kickball match 12:00pm at University of Tasmania Sports Ground, Newnham Drive, Newnham; acquaintance night 6:00pm-12:00pm at Launceston Bowls Club, Royal Park; for further details contact Kelvin Quioh on 0412 584 310 or kelvinquioh@yahoo.com, or Adolphus Hill on 040 323 7103 or adolphus2hill@yahoo.com

2011 Herb Feith Memorial Lecture

Tuesday 2 August, Caulfield VIC

This special event features Her Excellency Kirsty Sword Gusmao, Mr Peter Mares and Ms Jemma Purdey, author of 'From Vienna to Yogyakarta: The Life of Herb Feith'.

Details: 6:00pm for a 6:30pm to 8:00pm; H1.16, Ground Floor, Building H, Monash University Caulfield Campus, 900 Dandenong Road, Caulfield East; RSVP by Monday 25 July to Eric Cheng on (03) 9903 4616 or eric.cheng@monash.edu

Film screening: "What Remains of Us"

Saturday 6 August, Katoomba NSW

This documentary explores non-violent resistance in Tibet. Funds raised will allow a Tibetan representative to present the Tibetan cause at ISHR conference in Georgia in October 2011.

Details: \$20.00 includes screening, refreshments, meditation and slideshow of pilgrimage to Tibet; 5:00pm-8:00pm; 207 Katoomba Street, Katoomba NSW; for further details contact Janset on 0405 581 355 or Tamdin on 0413 971 330.

NEW RESEARCH, STATEMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

Call for participants: Scoping study on homelessness amongst humanitarian entrants

Researchers at The University of Adelaide and Flinders University are conducting a scoping study investigating the extent of presentation of humanitarian entrants to specialist homelessness services for accommodation. This research is part of a longer-term project looking at the experience of humanitarian entrants with regard to settlement assistance and homelessness. The study is being undertaken in SA, NSW and Victoria. At this stage, the experiences of asylum seekers are not included in this scoping study. The researchers are seeking representatives from agencies, including specialist homelessness services and key groups involved with supporting and representing humanitarian entrants, to provide feedback on key research questions. If you are able to participate, please contact Selina Tually on (08) 8313 3289 or Debbie Faulkner on (08) 8313 3230.

Rural services online survey by Victorian Refugee Health Network

The Victorian Refugee Health Network is reviewing how their support for service providers is best offered, including through an online survey to rural service providers. To take part, please contact Philippa Duell-Piening on (03) 9389 8909 or at duell-pieningp@foundationhouse.org.au.

Report from the Settlement Policy Network teleconference on Settlement and Mobility

A report from the June 1 National Settlement Policy Network teleconference on *Settlement and mobility: Exploring models of support and challenges faced by recently arrived refugees who move to secondary settlement locations* is now available. The teleconference included presentations and discussion on challenges and successful strategies for supporting humanitarian entrants who relocate in their first five years after arriving in Australia. The report documents some of the key issues raised by presenters and participants, including: definitions, data collection, current trends, perspectives of individuals, communities and service providers, effective service responses and recommendations. The report also includes links to relevant research, resources and projects. Download a copy of the report at www.refugeecouncil.org.au/settlement/spn/110601_SPN_report.pdf.

Interagency networks working on refugee settlement issues

The Refugee Council of Australia has compiled a database of interagency networks working on refugee settlement and asylum seeker issues at a state and national level. The database aims to facilitate the sharing of information and advocacy from a local and state level to the national level. To update, remove or include information about a state or national interagency network that you are involved with that specifically focuses on issues relating to refugee settlement or asylum seekers, please contact RCOA on info@refugeecouncil.org.au or call (02) 9211 9333. The database can be downloaded at www.refugeecouncil.org.au/settlement/services/Interagency_Networks.pdf.

Report on family violence in new and emerging refugee communities

This research report, produced by the Hills Holroyd Parramatta Migrant Resource Centre in partnership with the Centre for Refugee Research, explores the intersection of domestic and family violence and settlement in Australia, focusing on three refugee communities – Afghan, Sierra Leonean and Sri Lankan Tamil – in the first five years of settlement in Australia. Entitled *You Can't Hide It: Family Violence Shows*, the report identifies risk factors of family violence for refugee women and their families during their first five years of settlement in Australia and developed a series of recommendations in consultation with refugee women and service providers. The report is at www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/fv_report_v4.6_final_edited_26_7_10.pdf

Updated special collection on refugees

The Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse special collection on refugees and domestic and family violence has been updated with 17 new resources, including several new Australian reports examining the experiences and provision of services for immigrants and refugees

resettling in Australia. The special collection can be accessed at www.adfvc.unsw.edu.au/specialcollectionsrefugees.htm

Report on legal problems experienced by the Burmese Community

Footscray Community Legal Centre and Financial Counselling Service has published a new research report, "The Burmese Community and the Legal System: A Study in Confusion". The aim of the research was to identify the main legal problems experienced by the Burmese community and determine whether their legal needs were similar to the African clients accessing the Centre. The research showed that the Burmese refugees' lack of experience with Australia's systems and regulations was the main cause of legal problems identified. To access a copy, contact Footscray Community Legal Centre through www.communitylaw.org.au/clc_footscray/cb_pages/about_us.php

Report on crime prevention programs for CALD communities in Australia

This report from the Criminology Research Council reviews key criminal justice issues in relation to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities and provides a summary of relevant protective and risk factors. It also presents a number of CALD-specific crime prevention programs, which serve to promote resiliency and protective factors or inhibit risk factors. The report is at www.aic.gov.au/en/publications/current%20series/rip/1-10/18.aspx

Report on homelessness amongst CALD people with a mental illness

This new report from Multicultural Mental Health Australia identifies gaps in data collection on and service provision for people Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds with a mental illness who are at risk of homelessness. The report confirms little is known about rates of homelessness among people with a mental illness from immigrant backgrounds because data collection is neither mandatory nor consistent. The research also shows that very few organisations which collect data review it or use it to develop specific strategies due to limited staff and financial resources. For more information on the report, e-mail admin@mmha.org.au.

Multilingual fact sheets on asthma

Asthma Australia has produced a series of culturally-specific fact sheets including Asthma Action Plans in some community languages. Visit www.asthmaaustralia.org.au

Multilingual fact sheets on supporting someone at risk of suicide or experiencing mental illness

SANE Australia is a national charity working for a better life for people affected by mental illness through education, research and campaigning. SANE's website contains a range of information and resources about mental health issues and suicide prevention, including multilingual fact sheets in Arabic, Chinese, Greek, Italian, Spanish, Turkish and Vietnamese. Visit sane.org/information/factsheets-podcasts

ChilOut report on children detained on Christmas Island

ChilOut, a citizens group campaigning on behalf of children in immigration detention, has launched a report into detention conditions on Christmas Island. The report highlights the risks of detention to children identified by ChilOut members Dianne Hiles and Jo Hind during their visit to Christmas Island in April. The report is at www.chilout.org/web_images/No%20Place%20for%20Children%20-%20Final.pdf

Parliamentary report on Christmas Island tragedy

The Joint Select Committee on the Christmas Island Tragedy of 15 December 2010 released its report on June 29. The Committee found that the response to the accident was "professional, courageous and as effective as it could possibly be under the prevailing weather conditions." It recommended that counselling and practical support be provided to personnel affected by the tragedy, and the Australian Government liaise with the Christmas Island community to explore options for a permanent memorial to be erected on the island. Senators Trish Crossin and Sarah Hanson-Young made a number of additional recommendations regarding the improvement of rescue operations on Christmas Island, including ensuring reliable radio coverage on all parts of the Island, establishing Community Emergency Management Officer on the Island and establishing an independent review into Australia's border protection surveillance. The report is at www.apf.gov.au/Senate/committee/christmas_island_ctte/christmas_island/report/report.pdf

Report on Australia's relations with the countries of Africa

The Joint Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee has released its report into Australia's relations with the countries of Africa. The report makes a number of recommendations, in particular increasing diplomatic representation, the establishment of an Africa Studies Centre and an Australia-Africa Council, and a specific mechanism to make the dealings of Australian mining companies in Africa more transparent. The report is at www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jfadt/africa%2009/report.htm. RCOA's 2010 submission to the inquiry is at www.refugeecouncil.org.au/resources/submissions/1004_Africa_sub.pdf

The Grantseeker Manual

This new resource for NGOs and agencies that support them provides step-by-step guidance on the important steps involved in seeking funds, including finding the right grant for you, planning and presenting information about your project, planning and writing your application, and ongoing engagement with the grantmaker. The resource also contains a list of web links and additional resources to support NGOs in this process. The manual is at www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/999184_4.html

UNHCR's 2010 Global Trends and Global Report

UNHCR's annual *Global Trends* report reviews statistical trends and patterns and major humanitarian developments amongst populations of concern to UNHCR, including refugees, returnees, stateless persons and certain IDPs. The 2010 *Global Trends* report can be downloaded at www.unhcr.org/4dfa11499.html. UNHCR's annual *Global Report* provides an overview of UNHCR's worldwide operations and issues faced by populations of concern under UNHCR's mandate. It can be viewed at www.unhcr.org/gr10/index.html

New handbook on supporting the settlement of refugees

UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration and the International Catholic Migration Commission have launched a new handbook for policy makers and local practitioners working in the area of refugee reception and settlement. Entitled *Paving the way: A handbook on the reception and integration of resettled refugees*, the handbook provides practical ideas and inspiration for facilitating integration once refugees have arrived in their country of resettlement. The handbook is at www.icmc.net/pubs/paving-way-a-handbook-reception-and-integration-resettled-refugees

PhD thesis into the journeys of Iraqi asylum seekers from the Middle East to Australia.

Sue Hoffman's doctoral thesis *Fear, Insecurity and Risk: Refugee journeys from Iraq to Australia* examines conditions in Iraq under Saddam Hussein; the experiences of Iraqi refugees in countries of first asylum and transit countries; their relations with people smugglers; and the psychological effects of living with uncertainty and stress for protracted periods. The thesis aimed to centre the refugee voice, based on interviews conducted with participants in Perth and Indonesia. It is available online at researchrepository.murdoch.edu.au/4459

OPPORTUNITIES

Call for participants: UNHCR World Resettled Refugees Online Community

In celebration of its 60th Anniversary, UNHCR is planning to create an online social community specifically designed for the use of refugees who have been resettled from their countries of first asylum to any of the following three resettlement countries: USA, Canada or Australia. UNHCR is looking for 20-30 refugees resettled in Australia who may wish to collaborate with and shape the project. This will initially involve taking part in a brief online survey and may involve providing further feedback at a later stage. If you are interested in taking part or would like further details, please e-mail Alex Donato (DONATO@unhcr.org) or Ben Farrell (FARRELLB@unhcr.org).

Leadership Training for Women from African, Iraqi and Afghan backgrounds

Spectrum MRC is holding a Women's Leadership Training for women from African, Iraqi and Afghan backgrounds (sponsored by the African Leadership, Learning and Advocacy Group). Learn about how to apply for funding, managing community projects, and gain valuable work experience. For further details contact Elleni Beshe at Spectrum MRC on 0409 188 791 or ellenib@spectrumvic.org.au

“Opening Doors” Community Leadership Program

“Opening Doors” is designed to support community members interested in addressing social isolation in their local communities. It is available to people living or active in the South East and Inner East of Melbourne (Casey, Cardinia and Greater Dandenong and Boroondara, Manningham, Monash and Whitehorse). For further information, please contact Jane Oldfield or Alex Mills at UnitingCare Community Options on (03) 9239 2500 or visit www.ucco.org.au

English classes at Sydney Community College

Sydney Community College offers a wide range of English courses from beginner to advanced levels including General English, Business English, IELTS Preparation, Pronunciation and Conversation. Classes take place on weekday evenings near Sydney’s Central train station. A new round of classes are beginning in July 2011. For further details including enrolment information, call (02) 9752 7555 or e-mail customer.service@scc.nsw.edu.au

Applications extended for Spectrum Seeds for Growth Funding

Spectrum Seeds for Growth Funding provides small amounts of funding for projects which strengthen migrant and refugee communities in Melbourne’s North and West region. Categories for projects include community events, leadership development and innovative projects. The closing date for applications has been extended to Monday 25 July. For an application form, visit Spectrum MRC’s website www.spectrumvic.org.au or contact Willow Kellock through community@spectrumvic.org.au.

Nominations open for the 2011 Justice Awards

Presented by the Law and Justice Foundation of NSW, the annual Justice Awards acknowledge the efforts that individuals and organisations have made to improving access to justice in NSW, particularly for socially and economically disadvantaged people. Nominations close Friday 29 July. Nominate online at www.lawfoundation.net.au/justice_awards or contact (02) 8227 3200 to request a nomination form.

Nominations open for the 2011 Human Rights Awards

The Australian Human Rights Commission’s Human Rights Awards honour those in the community who have promoted and protected the human rights of others and whose dedication and commitment has made a real difference in promoting a fairer society. A new business category has been introduced this year for those in the business community involved in promoting and advancing human rights. Nominations are now open for Human Rights Medal, Young People’s Human Rights Medal, Law Award, Business Award, Community Award – Individual, Community Award – Organisation, Literature (non-fiction) Award, Radio, Television and Print Media Award. Nominations will close on Friday 9 September, with winners to be presented with their awards at a ceremony on Friday 9 December 2011. For nomination forms and to order your tickets go to www.humanrights.gov.au/hr_awards/index.html

Nominations open for UNAA Media Peace Awards 2011

These awards, presented by the United Nations Association of Australia (UNAA) recognise the role of the media in promoting human rights, social justice and humanitarian issues as well as contributing to public debate and policy change by increasing community understanding and awareness of these issues. Journalists and producers whose work has appeared in the Australian public media between 11 September 2010 and 2 September 2011 are encouraged to nominate now. Nominations close 5:00pm Friday 2 September 2011. For more information, visit www.unaavictoria.org.au.

Nominations open for 2011 NSW Volunteer of the Year Award

The Centre for Volunteering is calling for nominations of individual and corporate volunteers and volunteer teams for the 2011 NSW Volunteer of the Year Award. The Award recognises the outstanding efforts of the 2.4 million volunteers in NSW and promotes the importance of volunteering to the community and to companies. Nominations close on Wednesday 31 August 2011 (one month earlier than previously). To make a nomination, visit www.nswvolunteerawards.com/nominate

Nominations open for Mental Health Matters Awards 2011

Presented by the Mental Health Association NSW, these awards recognise the achievements of individuals and organisations who have worked to improve understanding, awareness, service provision and the general mental health of our community, over the past 12 months (1 July 2010 to 30 June

2011). Nominations close 5:00pm Friday 29 July. A nomination form can be downloaded at www.mentalhealth.asn.au/wellbeingdocs/Awards-NominationForm2011Final-writeable.pdf

Call for papers: 2011 FECCA Conference

The 2011 FECCA Conference, *Advancing Multiculturalism*, will be held in Adelaide on 17-18 November. Registration for the event is now open and conference organisers are currently inviting high quality proposals to present papers or conduct workshops. Abstract proposals are sought in a variety of topic areas relating to culturally and linguistically diverse communities. For more information please visit www.fecca.org.au (click on 'call for papers') or contact Victoria Erlichster on (03) 9005 2351 or victoria@fecca.org.au. The closing date for submissions is the 31 July.

Screen films regarding refugee experiences on new YourWorldView website

The Commonwealth Broadcasting Association is launching a new website called YourWorldView which will share the views of students and young people globally through debates about development issues. The organisers would like to showcase films from emerging filmmakers looking at issues concerning refugees and migrants. For more information and to submit films for consideration, e-mail yourworldview@cba.org.uk.

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)

Solomons opposition slams SIG asylum seeker centre idea

Solomon Islands opposition leader Dr Derek Sikua has attacked the government's plan for an asylum seeker processing centre for Australia on Stirling Island in the Western Province. In return, the Solomon Islands Government wants a stronger Australian security presence in the volatile border region with Bougainville. (Radio Australia, 1 June)

www.radioaustralia.net.au/pacbeat/stories/201106/s3232988.htm

Riot-hit detention compound In use

Lilac, an immigration detention compound on Christmas Island which was damaged in the March riots and due to be decommissioned just a few months ago, has been reopened despite being criticised last year by the Australian Human Rights Commission. Discussions are continuing about the reopening of its neighbouring facility, Aqua. (The West Australian, 2 June)

au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/a/-/breaking/9562373/riothit-detention-compound-in-use

Human rights advocates criticise Australian asylum plan

Australia came under fire from human rights advocates Friday over its plan to send child asylum seekers to Malaysia without their parents under a refugee swap deal being negotiated with the Malaysian government. (The Washington Post, 3 June)

www.washingtonpost.com/world/human-rights-advocates-criticize-australian-plan-to-send-children-asylum-seekers-to-malaysia/2011/06/02/AGkizXHH_story.html

Officials to monitor migrants sent to Malaysia

Australian officials will monitor the treatment of asylum seekers sent to Malaysia, and work with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to implement the swap, the Minister for Immigration, Chris Bowen, said. A senior Malaysian government source backed Mr Bowen yesterday, saying the draft documents obtained by the ABC's Lateline were "way too far from where the draft currently stands". (The Sydney Morning Herald, 4 June)

www.smh.com.au/national/officials-to-monitor-migrants-sent-to-malaysia-20110603-1fl3q.html

Bowen gets veto on deporting children to Malaysia

Immigration Minister Chris Bowen will have the final say on which children are sent to Malaysia under Labor's refugee transfer agreement, with the categories of vulnerable asylum-seekers who will be kept in Australia not specified in the document. (The Australian, 6 June)

www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/chris-bowen-gets-veto-on-deporting-children-to-malaysia/story-fn59niix-1226069778217

Bowen faces back-bench revolt over refugee swap

Immigration Minister Chris Bowen is dealing with a back-bench revolt over the Government's plans to swap 800 asylum-seekers with 4000 refugees from Malaysia. The plight of children under the so-called Malaysian Solution is of the most concern to the Labor MPs. Meanwhile, the Refugee Council of Australia led more than a dozen non-government organisations yesterday in firing off a statement condemning the current asylum-seeker debate. (The Canberra Times, 7 June)

www.canberratimes.com.au/news/national/national/general/bowen-faces-backbench-revolt-over-refugee-swap/2187040.aspx?storypage=0

Abbott to fly to Nauru, challenges Gillard to tour Malaysia's facilities

Tony Abbott will fly to Nauru this week to personally negotiate the reopening of an asylum seeker processing centre on the island. He wants the Gillard Government to send boat people there rather than to Malaysia, and is prepared to guarantee they would get better treatment on Nauru. (News.com, 8 June)

www.news.com.au/national/tony-abbott-to-fly-to-nauru-challenges-julia-gillard-to-tour-malysias-asylum-seeker-facilities/story-e6frfkvr-1226071261624

Refugees sent to Malaysia will be spared the rod

The 800 asylum seekers Australia plans to send to Malaysia will be granted rare immunity from harsh immigration laws to safeguard them from the threat of caning and other human rights abuses. Instead they will be issued with special identity tags and released into the community after spending six weeks in a new local holding centre, which Australia will pay for, in a deal to be signed within days. (The Daily Telegraph, 9 June)

www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/national/refugees-sent-to-malaysia-will-be-spared-the-rod/story-e6freuzr-1226071984388

Door closed to latest boat arrivals: Bowen

The 274 asylum seekers and crew who have arrived on Christmas Island since the Malaysia policy was announced will be processed in another country, Immigration Minister Chris Bowen confirmed yesterday. Malaysia said yesterday it is considering taking at least some of the asylum seekers who arrived ahead of the swap deal being formally signed, a shift from its previous position. (The Age, 10 June)

www.theage.com.au/national/door-closed-to-latest-boat-arrivals-bowen-20110609-1fuxo.html

More rioting as UN slams mandatory detention

Another riot at Christmas Island, sparked by detainees receiving notice their claims had been rejected, has coincided with a UNHCR report finding mandatory detention did not work and led to psychological harm. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 11 June)

www.smh.com.au/national/more-rioting-as-un-slams-mandatory-detention-20110610-1fwzh.html

Abbott's Nauru resurrection draws job-hungry disciples

A primary school with 400 children would have to be moved to enable the reopening of the refugee processing centre on Nauru, where locals have also taken away many portable accommodation buildings to use for housing. (The Age, 13 June)

www.theage.com.au/national/abbotts-nauru-resurrection-draws-jobhungry-disciples-20110612-1fzvbv.html

Nauru moves to overcome obstacles to refugee centre

Nauru has taken a step towards adopting the United Nations Refugee Convention, with its President, Marcus Stephen, saying he had received legal advice there "are no issues" to prevent the tiny island nation becoming a signatory. (The Brisbane Times, 14 June)

www.brisbanetimes.com.au/national/nauru-moves-to-overcome-obstacles-to-refugee-centre-20110613-1g0js.html

Nauru not a solution even if it signs up: Julia Gillard

Prime Minister Julia Gillard has welcomed Nauru's intention to sign the UN refugee convention, but the Prime Minister said she would not send asylum-seekers to the Pacific nation because it did not fit into Labor's regional plan to break the people-smuggler business model. (The Australian, 15 June)

www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/nauru-not-a-solution-even-if-it-signs-up-julia-gillard/story-fn59niix-1226075261367

UN backing sought for refugee deal

The government has sent a delegation to Geneva to meet with senior officials to win support for the proposed refugee swap with Malaysia. The Immigration Minister, Chris Bowen, has assured Labor's Left

that the UNHCR is on board but the discussions in Geneva indicate there is some way to go. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 16 June)

www.smh.com.au/national/un-backing-sought-for-refugee-deal-20110615-1g43e.html

Refugee motion fails to sway PM

Prime Minister Julia Gillard will defy an unprecedented condemnation by both houses of Parliament of her controversial plan to send asylum-seekers to Malaysia. After the vote yesterday, the Coalition claimed the Prime Minister had lost control of Parliament. (The Canberra Times, 17 June)

www.canberratimes.com.au/news/national/national/general/refugee-motion-fails-to-sway-pm/2198513.aspx

Nauru signs UN refugee convention

Nauru has ratified the United Nations Refugee Convention, yesterday releasing a photograph of its president Marcus Stephen signing the document to prove the point. This boosts Opposition leader Tony Abbott's attack on the federal government over its Malaysia refugee swap, because Malaysia is not a signatory to the Refugee Convention. (The Age, 18 June)

www.theage.com.au/national/nauru-signs-un-refugee-convention-20110617-1g830.html

Thousands turn out for World Refugee Day

Thousands of people have taken part in rallies across the country to protest the Federal Government's proposed asylum deal with Malaysia and demand an end to mandatory detention. The World Refugee Day rallies on Sunday saw about 1,000 people protest in Melbourne, another 1,000 in Sydney, 100 in Adelaide and a smaller crowd in Darwin. (ABC News, 20 June)

www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2011/06/19/3247717.htm

Australia ranks 46th in refugee intake table

The United Nations has released figures revealing Australia is ranked 46th on the global ladder of nations hosting refugees and asylum seekers. The UN report shows Australia has more than 20,000 refugees, making up just 0.2 per cent of the global total and just under 0.5 per cent of the world's asylum seekers. Refugee Council of Australia spokesman Paul Power says public and political hysteria has led to many misconceptions about Australia's number of asylum seekers and refugees. (ABC News, 21 June) www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2011/06/21/3249679.htm?section=justin

Some refugees in Australia sending welfare payments abroad

Some refugees in Australia are sending welfare payments abroad as part of a multi-billion-dollar industry to help relatives in poor countries. A report commissioned by the Immigration Department says that many recent arrivals from Africa fear losing social respect if they do not send cash home. (The Herald Sun, 22 June).

www.heraldsun.com.au/news/some-refugees-in-australia-sending-welfare-payments-abroad/story-e6frf7jo-1226079532616

Opposition told to curb its criticism on Malaysian visit

The opposition immigration spokesman, Scott Morrison, will travel to Malaysia on a fact-finding trip at taxpayers' expense. It is understood the Opposition Leader, Tony Abbott, has transferred his remaining overseas travel allowance to Mr Morrison, so in effect Mr Morrison is representing Mr Abbott. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 23 June)

www.smh.com.au/national/opposition-told-to-curb-its-criticism-on-malaysian-visit-20110622-1gfjr.html

Malaysian MP slams Morrison

A senior Malaysian minister has dismissed the visit of opposition Immigration Minister Scott Morrison to the country today as pointless grandstanding. As negotiators seek approval from their governments and the UNHCR's Geneva head office on terms, the Malaysian government is expected to avoid meeting with Mr Morrison. (The Age, 24 June)

www.theage.com.au/national/malaysian-mp-slams-morrison-20110623-1ghfv.html

The politics behind asylum-seekers misses the boat

An opinion article by Andrew Hewett, Executive Director of Oxfam Australia

In the wake of World Refugee Week, the recent television phenomenon of the SBS documentary "Go Back to Where You Came From" and in the year of the 60th anniversary of the Refugee Convention, it is

now more timely than ever to reflect on Australia's approach to the treatment of asylum-seekers. (The Canberra Times, 27 June)

www.canberratimes.com.au/news/opinion/editorial/general/the-politics-behind-asylumseekers-misses-the-boat/2207640.aspx?storypage=0

Gillard criticised for wrist X-rays

Two of Australia's child commissioners have backed criticism of the Gillard government's use of wrist X-rays to determine the ages of Indonesian crew members of asylum seeker boats. Crew members face five years' mandatory jail sentences under harsh people smuggling laws. (The Age, 28 June)

www.theage.com.au/national/gillard-criticised-for-wrist-xrays-20110627-1gneq.html?from=age_sb

Villawood staff had no suicide training, inquest told

A witness has told an inquest into the suicide of a detainee at Sydney's Villawood Immigration Detention Centre that security staff had no training in dealing with detainees who were suicidal. Josefa Rauluni threw himself off a balcony at the centre in September last year, on the day he was due to be deported to Fiji. (ABC News, 28 June) www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2011/06/28/3255708.htm

UN refugee chief raises doubts on Malaysia deal

The head of the United Nations refugee agency has publicly raised doubts about whether his office will support the Gillard government's proposed refugee swap with Malaysia. UN High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres has told a meeting in Geneva that the deal remains unsigned weeks after its announcement because the agency is taking a tough approach. "The only reason why it has not yet been signed is because UNHCR has been intransigent in relation to a certain number of very clear protection principles," Mr Guterres said. "And that policy will be maintained. I don't know if there will be an agreement or not." (The Age, 30 June)

www.theage.com.au/national/un-refugee-chief-raises-doubts-on-malaysia-deal-20110629-1gr35.html