



Refugee Council of Australia

BULLETIN FOR MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS

16 December 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

We need your support to continue our work

As a small not-for-profit organisation, the Refugee Council needs continuing support from the public, through membership and donations. In a complex political environment, an informed and independent voice on refugee policy is vital. Donations to RCOA are tax-deductible. Annual membership fees are just \$55 for individuals (concession rate is \$27.50) and organisational membership is on a sliding scale from \$55 to \$440, depending on annual organisational expenditure. For more information about making a donation or becoming a member of the Refugee Council, see <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/getinvolved/donate.php>

RCOA turns 30

RCOA's Annual General Meeting in Sydney doubled as a celebration of our 30th anniversary as Australia's peak body for refugees and the organisations and individuals that support them. Last month, more than 50 people attended two public forums – one looking back at refugee and asylum seeker policy in 1981 and the other discussing future directions for government policy. The first forum compared Australia's refugee policy in 1981 to 2011, with thought-provoking perspectives from Fraser Government Immigration Minister Ian Macphie, his departmental secretary John Menadue and Dr Thien Nguyen who arrived as an asylum seeker from Vietnam. The second forum gave RCOA members an opportunity to ask Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) Deputy Secretary Wendy Southern about future directions for refugee and asylum seeker policy. Media coverage of the forum is available here www.youtube.com/watch?v=j242K0uSnx0

The 30th anniversary was also acknowledged by the Australian Parliament with a motion by Senator Sarah Hanson-Young agreed to by the Senate. The resolution read: "That the Senate congratulated the Refugee Council of Australia on its 30th anniversary – 30 years of wonderful work, advocacy and promotion of Australia's multicultural society, offering important support to new arrivals and refugees."

New faces on RCOA board

A new RCOA Board was elected on 24 November with four new members voted in or co-opted to replace outgoing members Paris Aristotle, David Bitel, Esta Paschalidis-Chilas and Sky de Jersey (who had left the board earlier this year). The four new members are Wah Wah Naw from STARTTS in Sydney, Dr Ali Nur from the Darwin-based Melaleuca Refugee Centre, Canberra-based Fr Maurizio Pettina from the Australian Catholic and Migrant Resource Office and Muhama Yotham from Adelaide. The new board has people from every State and Territory and from 10 countries of birth and includes five former refugees. Biographical details about RCOA board members are available at: www.refugeecouncil.org.au/about/board.php

Asylum seeker policy on positive pathway

The Federal Government has announced its moves to wind back indefinite mandatory detention for asylum seekers who enter Australia by boat, approving bridging visas and introducing a single system to assess claims for asylum. RCOA and its members have long advocated for a fairer system for asylum

seekers regardless of whether they arrived by boat or by plane. In a statement, RCOA CEO Paul Power said common sense had prevailed but noted with concern that the Government remained committed to its potential arrangement with Malaysia and to retaining the excision legislation in case it was able to expel asylum seekers from Australia in the future. Since the 25 November announcement, RCOA and other NGOs have been involved in discussions with DIAC and the Council for Immigration Services and Status Resolution about how the new arrangements can work in practice. View RCOA's statement at: www.refugeecouncil.org.au/news/releases/111125_community_processing.pdf

A Just Australia bulletin focuses on asylum policy changes

The latest A Just Australia campaign is focusing attention on the need for members of Parliament to get behind the Government's new asylum seeker policy. With community processing becoming a reality in Australia, it's vital to do everything we can to make it work. That includes lobbying MPs to show community leadership and support more humane and mature policies. The AJA bulletin is here: www.ajustaustralia.com

High Court ruling removes barrier for unaccompanied minors seeking family reunion

On 14 December, the High Court of Australia found that a jurisdictional error had been made in the case of an Afghan refugee who arrived in Australia as an unaccompanied minor and subsequently sponsored his mother for resettlement through the Special Humanitarian Program (SHP). Under the SHP, parents are considered part of the sponsor's "immediate family" – the highest priority category for resettlement – only if the sponsor in Australia is under 18 years of age. In order for their applications to be considered the highest priority, unaccompanied minors sponsoring their parents previously had to establish that they were under 18 both at the time they lodged an SHP application and at the time a decision was made on the application. This created a barrier for unaccompanied minors seeking to reunite with their parents, as the often lengthy processing of SHP applications meant that some applicants turned 18 by the time a decision was made. The High Court, however, ruled that it was not a requirement for the grant of an SHP visa for the sponsor to be under 18 both at the time of application and the time of decision. A summary of the decision can be read at www.hcourt.gov.au/assets/publications/judgment-summaries/2011/hca52-2011-12-14.pdf. The full decision can be read at www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/cth/HCA/2011/52.html.

RCOA analyses asylum seeker debate at FECCA conference

RCOA CEO Paul Power spoke about Australia's asylum seeker debate at the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Council of Australia (FECCA) Conference in Adelaide in November, as part of a panel discussion on rights, racism and social cohesion. Paul reminded delegates of the diminishing opportunities for refugee resettlement throughout the world, the lack of protection for refugees and asylum seekers and the need for Australia to advance regional refugee protection through the Bali Process. See www.refugeecouncil.org.au/resources/speeches/111118_FECCA_PPower.pdf.

Intake submission consultations wind up

Over the past two months, RCOA staff completed 43 face-to-face and four telephone consultations with service providers and community members as part of the annual consultation process and submission on Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Program. Work is now underway to finalise a report to be presented to the Federal Government this month. This year, more than 730 people from 33 refugee communities and 187 organisations were represented in consultations with service providers. Details about the intake submission are available here: www.refugeecouncil.org.au/resources/intakesub.php

Public consultation on Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Program

DIAC is inviting other public comment on the composition of Australia's 2012-13 Refugee and Humanitarian Program. A discussion paper will be placed on DIAC's website at www.immi.gov.au/about/contracts-tenders-submissions in late December. Input should be sent by e-mail to humanitarian.submission@immi.gov.au or by post to Humanitarian Program submission, Assistant Secretary, Humanitarian Branch, Department of Immigration and Citizenship, PO Box 25, Belconnen ACT 2616. Submissions should be received by Tuesday 31 January 2012.

2011-12 AUSCO Exchange Program under way

RCOA and the International Organization for Migration have commenced four exchanges under the 2011-12 AUSCO Exchange Program. The purpose of the exchanges, funded by DIAC, is to support the

development of post-arrival orientation programs for refugees which complement the pre-departure orientation provided under the Australian Cultural Orientation (AUSCO) program and to strengthen the links between Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) and AUSCO trainers. In September, RCOA selected four HSS services and their nominated Guest Trainers through an Expression of Interest process to participate in the program. Those selected were: Louise Carter from Anglicare North Coast (Coffs Harbour NSW); Fleur Noonan from PVS Workfind (Perth); Aiah Thomas from Multicultural Development Association (Brisbane) and Regina Betts from Migrant Resource Centre of South Australia. These agencies will each host a two-week attachment for AUSCO trainers from Malaysia, Thailand, Nepal and East Africa. The four Guest Trainers will be deployed to provide support to the AUSCO training programs for a similar period in these countries. All four Guest Trainers attended selected sessions of the AUSCO Conference in Canberra in November and two-week attachments of two AUSCO trainers took place in Perth and Coffs Harbour immediately following the Conference. The other exchanges will take place between January and June.

New Settlement Grants Program funding round open

The latest funding round for the Settlement Grants Program (SGP) was launched by Minister for Immigration and Citizenship Chris Bowen and Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs Kate Lundy at Cabramatta Community Centre on 15 December. The revised SGP aims to focus on long-term projects and core community services rather than individual, ad hoc projects. Grants will now be available for one, two or three year periods, with a provision for a one-off extension for three year grants. The revised program also has a more specific focus on young people and ethno-specific organisations. Applications for the funding round close on 1 February 2012. For further information including details on how to apply for an SGP grant, go to

www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/settlement-grants/applyingforsettlementgrants.htm

UNHCR ministerial meeting makes a “quantum leap” on statelessness

Between 7 and 8 December, UNHCR hosted a ministerial-level meeting in Geneva to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 50th anniversary of the 1961 Statelessness Convention. The meeting resulted in a number of significant breakthroughs on statelessness, with UN High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres describing the meeting as a “quantum leap” forward in improving protections for stateless people. At the meeting, 20 countries pledged to ratify one or both of the two key Conventions on statelessness and 25 countries pledged to improve protections for stateless people. Australia was among the latter, with Minister for Immigration and Citizenship Chris Bowen pledging to improve Australia’s procedures for indentifying stateless people and assessing their claims. Australia also pledged to implement its complementary protection legislation, enhance the delivery of durable solutions, promote increased opportunities for resettlement, prioritise the protection of women and girls and enhance regional cooperation in the Asia-Pacific. Two students from Fairfield High School who arrived in Australia as refugees attended the meeting along with their school principal as part of the Australian delegation. RCOA President John Gibson also attended the meeting as an NGO observer. Minister Bowen’s statement, which includes all of the pledges made by Australia, can be read at www.geneva.mission.gov.au/gene/Statement275.html. Further information about the meeting can be found at www.unhcr.org/pages/4d22fd496.html.

Congratulations to 2011 Human Rights Award winners and finalists

RCOA extends its congratulations to the winners and finalists of the Australian Human Rights Commission’s 2011 Human Rights Awards. This year’s awards included many individuals and organisations whose work has involved supporting refugees or raising awareness about the issues affecting refugees: former refugee **Tshibanda Gracia Ngoy**, winner of the Young People’s Human Rights Medal, who this year was our keynote speaker at the Sydney launch of Refugee Week; the **Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre** (RILC), winner of the Law Award, an RCOA member whose legal team led the High Court challenge of the Malaysia deal earlier this year; **David Manne**, finalist for the Human Rights Medal for his work as Executive Director of RILC; **Andre Dao**, finalist for the Young People’s Human Rights Medal for his work as an author and editor, which has involved promoting the personal stories of refugees; **Rosemarie Milsom**, finalist for the Print and Online Media Award for an article about the resettlement experience of a Congolese refugee living in Newcastle; **SBS**, finalist for the Television Award for its *Go Back to Where You Came From* series; and **Information and Cultural Exchange**, finalist for the Community Organisation Award for its work in providing a platform for diverse and marginalised

voices (including refugee voices) to be heard in Australian cultural life. Further details about the award winners and finalists can be found at www.humanrights.gov.au/hr_awards/finalists.html.

Sir Zelman Cowen 1919-2011

RCOA was saddened by the death of Sir Zelman Cowen, who passed away earlier this month at the age of 92 after a long battle with Parkinson's disease. Sir Zelman was a Patron of the Australian Refugee Foundation, established in 1998 to procure and manage funds for RCOA. He studied Arts and Law at the University of Melbourne and was awarded Rhodes scholarship to Oxford University, where he was made a Fellow of Oriel College and would later serve as its Provost. Upon his return to Australia, Sir Zelman became Professor of Public Law and Dean of the University of Melbourne's Law Faculty. He became Vice-Chancellor of the University of New England in 1967 and of the University of Queensland in 1970. Sir Zelman was knighted in 1976 and became a Knight of the Order of Australia in the following year. He was appointed Governor-General of Australia in 1977 and served in this role until 1982. Sir Zelman was farewelled at a state funeral at St Kilda's Temple Beth Israel synagogue.

Join us on Facebook and Twitter

RCOA's Facebook page features upcoming events and stories, opinion pieces and interviews. Our Facebook page and Twitter feed also provide a platform to share RCOA submissions, reports and media releases. RCOA's Twitter feed is @OzRefugeeCounc. Our Facebook page is at www.facebook.com/pages/Refugee-Council-of-Australia-RCOA/157472830949702.

COMING EVENTS

South Sudanese Australian Interstate basketball tournament

Friday 16 to Sunday 18 December, Seaford VIC

Hosted by Basketball Victoria, the Frankston and District Basketball Association and Victoria Police, this tournament will feature nearly 40 teams from Perth, Adelaide, Canberra, Newcastle, Tamworth, Brisbane, the Gold Coast, Toowoomba, Sydney and Melbourne.

Details: Frankston Basketball Centre, 90 Bardia Avenue, Seaford; for further details, visit www.basketballvictoria.com.au/index.php?id=102&tx_ttnews%5btt_news%5d=572&tx_ttnews%5bbackPid%5d=2&cHash=9c576e4402.

RISE poetry workshop for emerging artists from refugee/asylum seeker backgrounds

Sunday 18 December, Melbourne VIC

An interactive poetry workshop with internationally renowned spoken word artist, Amir Sulaiman. The workshop is free but bookings are essential.

Details: 12:00pm-2:00pm; RISE, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne; application forms available by e-mailing admin@riserefugee.org or sallysaadeldin@riserefugee.org.

Karen New Year celebration

Monday 26 December, Werribee VIC

Hosted by the Australian Karen Organisation, this event will include traditional dance, music, food and entertainment.

Details: 11:00am-3:00pm; Wyndham Event & Leisure Centre, 80 Derrimut Road, Werribee; for further details contact Thantaw 0425 884 019 or Thamay 0433 089 874 or e-mail akovictoria@live.com.au.

Public forum: Opportunities and challenges for migrants and refugees in rural and regional Australia

Thursday 9 February, Melbourne VIC

This exciting public forum brings together a diverse panel of speakers to discuss contemporary issues of regional migration, settlement and multicultural affairs in Australia. Speakers will include Senator Kate Lundy and Professor Graeme Hugo in conversation with Dr Millsom Henry-Waring.

Details: 6:30pm; Sidney Myer Asia Centre, The University of Melbourne; to register, go to www.sps.unimelb.edu.au/research/projects/vmr/events.

Conference: The rural and regional resettlement experiences of visible migrants and refugees

Friday 10 February, Melbourne VIC

This major conference event showcases the work of the Australian Research Council Linkage Project "Resettling Visible Migrants and Refugees in Rural and Regional Australia" and engages leading academics to provide a wider national, international and comparative overview of regional migration

and settlement trends, policies, praxis and reality. Speakers include The Hon. Nick Kotsiras, Stephen Castles, Graeme Hugo, Jock Collins, Michele Grossman and Farida Fozdar.

Details: University of Melbourne; for further information and to register go to www.sps.unimelb.edu.au/research/projects/vmr/events or contact Annika Kearton at VMR-Project@unimelb.edu.au.

Justice for All? The International Criminal Court: A Ten Year Review

Tuesday 14 February to Wednesday 15 February, Kensington NSW

Hosted by the Australian Human Rights Centre and the Faculties of Arts and Law of the University of New South Wales, this conference will mark the 10th Anniversary of the operation of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and discuss the work and impact of the ICC during its first decade. The two key objectives of the conference are to examine the role and success of the ICC in achieving gender justice, and to analyse the participation of the Asia Pacific region in the ICC regime. Speakers will include ICC President, Judge Sang-Hyun Song, ICC Registrar Silvana Arbia, ICC Deputy Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda, Christian Wenaweser President, ASP and a number of renowned academic, government and civil society experts on the Court.

Details: University of New South Wales Kensington Campus; for further details and to register, visit www.justiceforall.unsw.edu.au.

Afro Latino Festival 2012

Saturday 18 February, Casula NSW

The second biennial Afro Latino Festival will present an exciting and unique showcase of African and Afro-Latin American music, cuisine, arts, crafts, dance, history and culture.

Details: Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, 1 Casula Road, Casula; for further details, contact Carlos Encina manager@nswslasa.com.au or Laura Luna on 0411 328 063 or culturaldevelopment@nswslasa.com.au.

Conference: Implementing human rights in closed environments

Monday 20 and Tuesday 21 February, Melbourne VIC

This conference will bring together eminent international and national experts from government agencies, intergovernmental agencies, monitoring and oversight mechanisms, non-government organisations, practitioners, and academics working on implementing human rights in closed environments - prisons, police cells, closed psychiatric and disability settings, and immigration detention. It will enable representatives from different jurisdictions and different sectors, operating under international, regional and domestic frameworks, to examine how human rights are implemented and monitored in closed environments, where the potential risk for abuses is high. It will provide invaluable insights into the experience of comparative jurisdictions, highlighting the successes to date and the ongoing challenges in current practice, particularly the challenge in managing the balance between respecting the human rights of individuals, and the responsibility to maintain security and safety in different closed environments and the broader community.

Details: Monash University Law Chambers, 555 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne; for further details and to register, visit www.law.monash.edu.au/castancentre/events/2012/closed-environments.html.

Funding forum for culturally and linguistically diverse communities

Tuesday 21 February, Perth WA

Hosted by the Office of Multicultural Interests, this forum will provide information on funding opportunities for culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Guest speakers will include representatives from Healthway, the Department of Regional Development and Lands, the Department of the Attorney-General and the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. Light refreshments will be served.

Details: 5:00pm-8:30pm; Gordon Stephenson House, 140 William Street, Perth (directly above Perth's Underground Train Station); RSVP by Friday 10 February to harmony@omi.wa.gov.au; for further details, visit www.omi.wa.gov.au.

STARTTS Workshop: Core concepts in working with people from refugee backgrounds

Thursday 23 February, Carramar NSW

This one-day introductory workshop is designed to put a framework of understanding around working with refugees and asylum seekers. It focuses on understanding the link between what refugees have

been through, the sorts of issues and behaviours refugees may present with, and how to work in a way that promotes recovery and minimises the risk of retraumatisation.

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

Festival of Families and Community

Saturday 25 February, Auburn NSW

Highlights will include pony rides, animal farm, food stalls, performers, face painting, balloons, giveaways, information stalls, entertainment, kids' craft, dancing, henna, hair braiding, capoeira, music, story time and drumming. The event will also provide access free information and an opportunity talk to staff from a wide range of local organisations representing multicultural services, family support, early childhood health, council, employment, child protection, mental health, relationship support, early intervention, legal, road safety, migrant settlement services, parenting support, family day care, disability services and more.

Details: 10:00am-3:00pm; Auburn Park, Macquarie Road, Auburn (in wet weather the event will be held at Auburn Centre for Community, right next to Auburn Park); for further details, contact Himali Wettasinghe on (02) 9649 6955 .

NEW RESEARCH, STATEMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

HSS review released

The Federal Government has released the *Review of Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) Performance Measures and Contract Management*. The Government accepted all the recommendations from the report by David Richmond AO into the adequacy of the performance measures and framework, as well as the Immigration Department's contract management processes. The *Review of Humanitarian Settlement Services* and the forensic audit can be accessed at:

www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/settle-in-australia/find-help/hss/hss-performance-review.htm.

New training resources: Working with Refugees and Bicultural Work with Refugees

People working with refugees need knowledge and skills distinct from and additional to that needed for their work with other client groups. Until now, there has been no national accredited training targeting this area. Now there are two new units in the National Training Framework: Work Effectively with Forced Migrants (CHCSW401A) and Undertake Bicultural Work with Forced Migrants in Australia (CHCSW402A:). The materials can be downloaded from: AMES Victoria: www.ames.net.au/bookshop; ACL/Navitas English: www.acl.edu.au; and the Multicultural Development Association: www.mdainc.org.au. For further information, contact Margaret Piper at margpiper@optusnet.com.au.

Report from the UNSW refugee conference on refugee young people

The 2011 Refugee Conference Youth Forum Report, *Celebrating the voices of young people from refugee backgrounds*, has recently been released. Prepared by Anne-Marie Taylor for the Centre for Refugee Research at UNSW, the report captures the findings of both the Youth Forum and the Australian Youth Forum online discussion topic. Download from:

www.myan.org.au/file/file/RefugeeYouthForumReport.pdf.

Media from the Integration: Building Inclusive Societies (IBIS) Forum

Media and other materials from the 6 October IBIS forum are now available online, including a report, transcripts, video and audio files. Access from:

www.deakin.edu.au/arts-ed/ccg/events/conferences/11-ibis/media.php#transcript.

A Place To Call Home: The World's Refugee Dilemma

Video from the One Just World forum held in Albury in October on the theme "A Place to Call Home: The World's Refugee Dilemma" is now online. Speakers include RCOA's Lucy Morgan and RCOA Board Member Dr Melika Sheikh-Eldin. View at: www.onejustworld.com.au/forums/a-place-to-call-home.

Fact Sheet: Refugee young people and health

NSW Refugee Health Service has developed a fact sheet that includes an overview of physical, sexual and reproductive and mental health issues and refugee young people, and tips for working effectively with refugee young people in a health setting. Download from:

www.sswahs.nsw.gov.au/sswahs/refugee/pdf/Resource/FactSheet/FactSheet_12.pdf.

Report: Refugee and Migrant Young People with Caring Responsibilities

The Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) has published a discussion paper in partnership with the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV) and Carers Victoria. "Refugee and Migrant Young People with Caring Responsibilities: What do we Know?" provides insight into the lives, hopes and needs of young carers in Victoria from refugee and migrant backgrounds. Download from:

www.cmy.net.au/Assets/1783/1/RefugeeandMigrantYoungPeoplewithCaringResponsibilities.pdf.

Recommended readings: Refugee and migrant young people

A bibliography and links to recommended reading on refugee and migrant young people has been published by the Centre for Multicultural Youth. Download from:

www.cmy.net.au/Assets/1778/1/CMYRecommendedReadingList.pdf.

Research on support provided for Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors

Families SA Refugee Service supports unaccompanied humanitarian minors (UHMs) in South Australia as well as providing recruitment, training, assessment and monitoring of carers who are mainly recruited from a similar ethnic background as the UHMs. This report from Flinders University documents findings from research that aimed to identify the successes and gaps of the current Alternative Care Service for refugee minors and recommend strategies for bridging gaps identified and for maintaining and building on the successes of the Alternative Care Program. Download from:

www.dfc.sa.gov.au/pub/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=bo_gJ5m3_NE%3d&tabid=636.

New kit helps understand how to buy or build a house

Footscray Community Legal Centre (CLC) and Financial Counselling Service have produced a kit for refugees and new settlers to assist them to understand the complexities of buying or building a house in Australia. In two DVDs, "What you need to know before you buy or build a house" illustrates the type of problems that people can get into because of their lack of understanding of the processes, costs and implications of buying or building a house and training materials. The digital stories have been recorded in English, Dinka, Burmese, Chin, Karen, Arabic and Nuer. For further information and how to obtain copies of the DVDs, contact: Footscray CLC, Level 1, 72 Buckley Street, Footscray, VIC, 3011 and (03) 9689 8444.

Discussion paper: The Impact of Visa Restrictions on Young People

Young people from refugee backgrounds arrive in Australia on a variety of visa sub-classes. Those who live in Victoria as Temporary or Permanent Residents do not automatically have full access to welfare entitlements and other services. Depending on the visa that they hold, they may experience restricted access to Youth Allowance, to a Health Care Card and therefore concession rates, to employment assistance or to subsidised education. The following discussion paper from the Centre for Multicultural Youth highlights the impact of visa restrictions on young people. Download from:

www.cmy.net.au/Assets/1789/1/Impactofvisarestrictions.pdf.

2012 Calendar with a Conscience by Global Backyard

Don't miss your chance to purchase Global Backyard's calendar, featuring the diverse faces of Sydney's refugee community. The 2012 Global Backyard calendar is a collection of beautiful images and stories of the remarkable people that have come from around the world and are now proud to call Australia home. Not only will it make the perfect Christmas gift, but the calendar is also designed with tear-out postcards, so that these stories and images can be passed on. The calendar will raise money for both Global Backyard and will go towards Global Backyard's mentoring, education, media and art, as well as social enterprise projects for women without literacy. Purchase online at www.globalbackyard.com.au.

Two new children's books out for Christmas

The experience of Vietnamese refugees coming to Australia has been detailed in two new children's picture books, *A Safe Place to Live* by Melbourne mum Bic Walker and *The Little Refugee* by comedian Anh Do and his wife Suzanne. Find out more about the two books here:

www.heraldsun.com.au/news/learn/australia-a-place-of-refuge/story-e6frf7nf-1226209089811.

Flickering Lights: A collection of poems about refugee character

“Flickering Lights” is a collection of poems by Ron Browning, a Melbourne-based friend of the Karen people for several years. The Karen people’s struggle for peace and freedom, rarely mentioned in the media, has been long and continues. Many Karen have been cruelly treated and displaced from their villages. Some have moved to border camps and others have recently resettled in Australia. These poems trace this journey, focusing on a people’s amazing inner strength, loyalty and rich culture in the face of oppression. For more information about purchasing a copy of this collection, go to www.ginninderrapress.com.au/poetry.html.

Multilingual video: Using a registered migration agent

The Office of the MARA has released a multilingual YouTube video entitled “Using a registered migration agent”. This information video shows clients how to find an agent and what they can expect from them. The YouTube clip has also been translated into Arabic, Chinese, Persian, Portuguese, French, Korean, Vietnamese and Tamil. To view the clip, go to: www.youtube.com/user/ImmiTV?feature=mhee#p/u/0/uEKxeUrZ-YU.

MyLanguage: A new website for multicultural Australia

MyLanguage, a web portal to millions of multilingual information resources for new and emergent Australian communities, has been re-launched. The new portal provides links to multilingual search engines, web directories, government websites, online dictionaries, and syndicated news headlines. It also contains translations of online government and community information relating to health, legal issues, settlement, education and public libraries along with information on multilingual library collections around Australia. Go to: mylanguage.gov.au.

New Ethiopian FM radio program on 92.3 FM 3ZZZ

A new Ethiopian radio program has been launched on 92.3FM (3ZZZ). The Voice of Ethiopian (VOE) is a non-political and non-religious community radio program for Ethiopians from all walks of life and diverse ethnic groups living in Australia. Organisations, service providers and government agencies can contact the program if they have any community announcements or messages for Ethiopian communities in Australia. The program is broadcast all over Australia in Amharic languages and can be accessed online at www.3zzz.com.au. The program will be on Wednesdays, 11am to 12noon. For more information, e-mail voe.australia@gmail.com or call 0401 974 730 or 0412 649 423.

Discrimination Toolkit

Fully revised and updated, the “Discrimination Toolkit” is a joint publication of Legal Aid NSW, Kingsford Legal Centre and Elizabeth Evatt Community Legal Centre. The toolkit is a plain English guide to State and Federal discrimination law. Topics include discrimination basics, strategies for dealing with discrimination, what to expect if you make a formal complaint and where to get help. Order or download at www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au.

Multilingual Emergency 000 posters

The ACMA has produced A3 posters in 33 languages promoting the Triple Zero (000) emergency help service and providing basic information for display in your organisation. You can download free copies of the posters from: www.triplezero.gov.au.

Website on protracted refugee situations

The Refugee Studies Centre at the University of Oxford has developed a website on protracted refugee situations (PRS) that provides key facts and figures on protracted displacement and offers access to a variety of documents and other resources. The website provides information and resources for some of the challenges and policy issues most commonly associated with protracted displacement, such as: security; peacebuilding; human rights; livelihoods; solutions to protracted situations of displacement; and the effects of protracted displacement on specific groups. Go to: www.prsproject.org.

New Journal: Migration Policy Practice

IOM and Eurasyllum Ltd have launched a new bi-monthly journal, Migration Policy Practice, featuring articles by policymakers in national, regional and international administrations as well as from civil society worldwide. The journal, overseen by policymakers and civil society, was founded on the premise that the majority of existing publications in the field of international migration are mostly targeted at the academic community and/or at specialised practitioners. Migration Policy Practice was established to

offer a new medium for public officials and civil society to reflect on and write about their day-to-day policy practice, their decisions and their experience, and to share such insights with like-minded colleagues nationally and internationally. Go to:

www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/policy-research/migration-policy/migration-policy-practice.

Report: A global review of refugee education

UNHCR's Policy Development and Evaluation Service has published a global, independent and illustrated review of the state of refugee education. The report concludes that education for refugees is limited and uneven, particularly for girls and at secondary levels. Refugee education is generally of a very low quality and, as a result, many refugee children are learning very little in schools. The report concludes that refugee education is not serving its protective function due to a lack of focus on learning. Finally, the review sets out a six-point "agenda for change", intended to improve refugee access to education, the quality of refugee education and the protective role of education. The report can be accessed from: www.unhcr.org/4ebd3dd39.html.

Report: Malaysia: A blow to humanity

A new report from Amnesty International reveals how Malaysia practises widespread torture and other ill-treatment by subjecting thousands of refugees, migrants and Malaysian citizens to judicial caning each year. Download the report from: www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA28/013/2010.

Study: Mapping Statelessness in the United Kingdom,

A joint UNHCR and Asylum Aid study, this research maps the number and profile of stateless persons in the UK and puts a human face on their situation. It also examines the UK's legal obligations to stateless persons under international law and analyses the impact of current policy and practice. Available at: www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4ecb6a192.html.

Policy Briefing: Stabilising the Congo

This Policy Briefing is the outcome of a series of activities conducted by the Refugee Studies Centre at the University of Oxford on the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 2010 and 2011. The Briefing considers the "stabilisation approach" adopted by the international community to address continued insecurity in the DRC. In this Briefing the political implications of the stabilisation agenda are brought into sharper relief by focusing on the question: stabilisation by whom and for whom? All RSC Policy Briefings are available at www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications/policy-briefings.

Interview with Cecilia Malmström on Europe's Asylum and Migration system

In this interview produced by Ruth Reichstein for Radio1812, European Commissioner for Home Affairs Cecilia Malmström talks about the many challenges the European Union and its Member States face in developing a Common European Asylum and Migration System. To listen or download, go to: www.radio1812.net/article/interview-european-commissioner-cecilia-malmstroem.

Money smart resources for CALD communities

The Australian Securities Investments Commission (ASIC) has produced a range of educational tools and resources and has a dedicated website called MoneySmart www.moneysmart.gov.au. ASIC is developing an educational resource kit for settlement workers on ten Money Management topics. The kit will assist workers when informing clients about managing a range of financial literacy and money management issues. In this kit there will be information for the worker, a range of tools and resources including activity sheets, translated fact sheets, visual and audio stories. This important resource will cover all the key components of the Money Management Section of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship's Onshore Orientation Framework. The kit is expected to be available in early 2012. For more information contact Michelle Bonardi on (03) 9280 3447 or michelle.bonardi@asic.gov.au.

OPPORTUNITIES

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

Request for Volunteer Trustee, Australian Refugee Foundation

The Australian Refugee Foundation (ARF) is seeking a fundraising professional with networks and experience in the commercial and philanthropic community. The successful applicant will provide professional strategic and operational advice for the fundraising activities of the ARF which enable RCOA to expand its outreach and support for refugee communities. Expressions of Interest should be addressed to: projects@refugeecouncil.org.au.

Multicultural Arts and Festivals Grants

In February 2011, the government launched *The People of Australia – Australia's Multicultural Policy*. One of the policy's key initiatives was to provide funding for Multicultural Arts and Festivals Grants (MAFG). Through the MAFG, community groups and organisations can apply for grants of up to \$5000 for multicultural arts and festivals projects. Applications may be made at any time during 2011-12, unless the annual program funds have been exhausted. Organisations are encouraged to apply several months prior to their project taking place. Details on eligibility and how to apply, including an Application Information Booklet are available at www.harmony.gov.au/dscp/mafg/eligibility-apply.htm.

Applications sought for the Inclusion and Professional Support Program

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) is seeking applications from suitable organisations for funding to deliver activities under the Inclusion and Professional Support Program (IPSP) from 1 January 2013. The Request for Application (RFA) documentation, including the IPSP Guidelines for 2013-2016, are now available from the DEEWR website at www.deewr.gov.au/IPSPapplications. Applications close 2:00pm Friday, 24 February 2012.

Used furniture available from Ryde Furniture Freighters

Ryde Furniture Freighters provides a range of services including charity. They are seeking to donate a range of used furniture (such as chairs, wardrobes, tables, desks and beds) as soon as possible due to a lack of storage space. For further details, please contact Monika at operations@rff.com.au.

New Refugee Employment Advocacy Program (REAP)

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

Scholarships for women from refugee backgrounds

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

New Interpreters project

The National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters Ltd (NAATI) is administering a national project, namely the New Interpreters Project, funded by the Australian Government. The Project aims to increase the number of NAATI interpreters around Australia. The Project will target areas to increase the number of interpreters in new/emerging languages, rarer languages and languages for which there are shortages in rural and regional areas. Applications for the New Interpreters Project must be received by the 20 January 2012 to be considered for the workshop. Visit www.naati.com.au for further details.

Interviews about racism

All Together Now is conducting interviews to find out what people think racism is, how it has affected them or others, and what can be done about it. Each interview is filmed for distribution online, and will take less than half an hour. We are interviewing individuals, as well as groups of colleagues representing a business. For more information visit

www.alltogethernow.org.au/news/do-you-have-something-say-about-racism.

Nominations sought for Nansen Refugee Award

UNHCR has opened nominations for the annual Nansen Refugee Award. The award is named after the late Norwegian polar explorer Fridtjof Nansen who was the first High Commissioner for Refugees appointed by the League of Nations. It recognises extraordinary and dedicated service by individuals who make great personal sacrifices to assist refugees. Nominations close on 29 February 2012. Further details are available at www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/nansen

Oxford Monitor of Forced Migration call for papers

OxMo, the student journal dedicated to protecting and advancing the human rights of refugees and forced migrants, is accepting submissions for its third issue, in three categories – Policy Monitor, Academic Articles, and First Hand. For further information and to read the latest edition of OxMo, please visit www.oxmofm.com. Closing date for submissions is 6 February 2011.

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)

Concerns over ASIO evaluation

Asylum seekers given negative security assessments by ASIO, preventing community release, should have the right to an independent review of the decision, the Refugee Council of Australia says. (The Age, 1 November) www.theage.com.au/national/concerns-over-asio-evaluation-20111031-1msb9.html

Review push for denied asylum seekers

The Refugee Council and 16 church, social service and multicultural organisations met 20 federal parliamentarians yesterday to push their support for community processing of boat arrivals. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 1 November)

www.smh.com.au/national/review-push-for-denied-asylum-seekers-20111031-1ms95.html

Up to 20 feared dead after asylum seeker boat sinks off Indonesia

The Federal Government is urging the Coalition to reconsider its opposition to the Malaysia people-swap solution in light of the drowning deaths of asylum seekers en route to Australia. But the Opposition says the tragic event should not be used for political purposes. (The Herald Sun, 2 November)

www.heraldsun.com.au/news/asylum-seekers-drown-on-way-to-australia/story-e6frf7jo-1226182962789

Turning back boats risky, Navy chief says

The chief of Australia's Navy has warned of inherent risks involved in turning asylum seeker vessels back to Indonesian waters – a policy advocated by the Opposition. (ABC News Online, 3 November)

www.abc.net.au/news/2011-10-19/turning-back-boats-risky-says-admiral/3579976

Traumatised family suffered 'degrading detention'

The Immigration Department has been found to have breached the human rights of an Iranian family who suffered severe mental health conditions during three years of detention. The Yousefi family came to Australia by boat in 2001, but were traumatised and psychologically damaged after being separated in detention at Woomera. The Human Rights Commission has recommended a formal apology, along with more than \$1 million in compensation and sweeping changes to the immigration system. (ABC News Online, 4 November)

www.abc.net.au/news/2011-11-03/hrc-recommends-compo-for-detained-family/3625872

Surveys in Pakistan and Afghanistan aim to deter asylum seekers

The Australian government has conducted more than 6000 one-on-one interviews in Pakistan and Afghanistan in the largest research project on prospective asylum-seekers ever undertaken. The findings were used to run a large public information campaign aimed at deterring asylum seekers from trying to travel to Australia by boat. (The Australian, 7 November)

www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/surveys-in-pakistan-and-afghanistan-aim-to-deter-asylum-seekers/story-fn59niix-1226187095194

Nauru plan was drawn for Coalition victory

Days before last year's federal election, Canberra officials were told to start preparing a new agreement with Nauru for a refugee processing centre in case the Coalition won government. Heavily censored versions of the document were released by the department in response to a Freedom of Information application. (The Australian, 8 November)

www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/immigration/nauru-plan-was-drawn-for-coalition-victory/story-fn9hm1gu-1226188159669

Our contract with Serco

Today New Matilda publishes the contract signed between the Department of Immigration and Serco, obtained under the Freedom of Information Act. New Matilda has gained exclusive access to the first publicly available version of the 2009 Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) contract with British multinational Serco. (New Matilda, 8 November)

newmatilda.com/2011/11/09/exclusive-our-contract-serco

Firm admits detention makes people sick

The company contracted to run health services in immigration detention has admitted in a confidential letter to the Immigration Department that prolonged detention of asylum seekers has created high demand for psychiatric services which its staff cannot meet. (The Age, 9 November)

www.theage.com.au/national/firm-admits-detention-makes-refugees-sick-20111108-1n5kp.html

Compensation payouts to asylum seekers reach \$23m

The federal government has been forced to pay \$18 million in compensation to asylum seekers for unlawful detention, and \$5 million to former detainees for negligence. (Sydney Morning Herald, 10 November)

www.smh.com.au/national/compensation-payouts-to-asylum-seekers-reach-23m-20111109-1n7i0.html#ixzz1dLpLJf00

Hussain Ali: "we need protection, not detention"

Hussain Ali, an ethnic Hazara Afghan, has experienced first-hand the flaws in Australia's mandatory detention policy. For more than 21 months, he has been held at the Curtin Immigration Detention Centre, one of eight high-security facilities across Australia for boat people, unsure whether his application for refugee status will be accepted or not. From the remote facility in Western Australia's far north – the nation's largest with an operational capacity of more than 1,200 detainees – the 25-year-old told IRIN why he fled his homeland. (IRIN News, 11 November)

www.irinnews.org/hovreport.aspx?reportid=94175

How WA's noodle king fled Pol Pot

He narrowly escaped death under the brutal Pol Pot regime and worked in slave labour camps in the infamous Killing Fields of Cambodia. He survived on coconuts and rice while being chased through the jungle by the Khmer Rouge, enduring tragedy, terror, malnutrition, exhaustion and racism before turning his life around in Australia. So you would think waking up every day in a palatial riverside mansion in Perth would be enough to make Ian Han deliriously happy. But the man who presides over a franchise chain of 23 cafes turning over \$15 million a year still needs constant reminders. (Sunday Times, 13 November)

www.perthnow.com.au/news/western-australia/how-was-noodle-king-fled-pol-pot/story-e6frg15c-1226193439601

Afghan deportation down to the wire

A legal move to stop the deportation of an Afghan asylum seeker has been adjourned just days before he's due to be sent home. Counsel for Ismail Mirzajan, 27, filed an application on Wednesday in the Federal Court to stop his forcible deportation scheduled for Saturday. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 16 November)

news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-national/afghan-deportation-down-to-the-wire-20111116-1nj28.html

Court stops forced deportation of asylum-seeker

The federal government's plan to deport an Afghan asylum seeker by force for the first time has been stopped by the courts. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 19 November)

www.smh.com.au/national/court-stops-forced-deportation-of-asylum-seeker-20111118-1nnds.html

58,000 Illegal Immigrants In Australia have arrived by plane

Nearly all of the 58,400 people in Australia illegally arrive by plane and both sides of politics have been panned for playing up the myth that we are being swamped by boat people. There are 13 times more illegal immigrants than there are asylum seekers in detention who have arrived by boat. Refugee Council of Australia chief executive officer Paul Power said the figures helped put boat arrivals into context. (The Adelaide Advertiser, 21 November)

www.adelaidenow.com.au/ipad/illegal-immigrants-arrive-by-plane/story-fn6bqpiu-1226200643944

Australian rights body to probe child people smugglers

Australia's Human Rights Commission said Monday it would hold an inquiry into the treatment of suspected people smugglers who claim to be children, with an immediate focus on Indonesian crew. Commission president Catherine Branson said she had concerns that at least 20 people now held in adult jails and who claimed to be children had been wrongly assessed as adults. (AFP, 21 November)

au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/a/-/world/11894781/australian-rights-body-to-probe-child-people-smugglers

Detention centre company fined \$14.8m

The company that runs Australia's immigration detention network has been fined \$15 million for failing in its duty of care to asylum seekers and underperformance. The immigration department has told a federal parliamentary inquiry it had docked \$14.8 million from monthly payments to SERCO between March 2010 and June 2011 because of poor management of the detention centres, and docked another \$215,000 from SERCO's contract to run immigration housing centres. (The Age, 23 November)

www.theage.com.au/national/detention-centre-company-fined-148m-20111122-1nsx4.html

Boats prompt new call for swap deal

The Federal Government has used the arrival of two asylum-seeker boats on the same day to push its case for offshore processing. The Government has put on hold legislation that would have enabled it to proceed with a people-swap deal it brokered with Malaysia. (The Herald Sun, 24 November)

www.heraldsun.com.au/news/breaking-news/boats-prompt-new-call-for-swap-deal/story-e6frf7jx-1226204364988

Govt moves asylum seekers into community

At least 100 asylum seekers who arrive by boat will be moved into the community on bridging visas every month under the federal government's softened onshore processing system. Refugee Council of Australia head Paul Power said the announcement was an important first step towards ending the suffering of detainees. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 25 November)

news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-national/govt-moves-asylum-seekers-into-community-20111125-1nyf1.html

Advocates applaud asylum visa decision

Refugee groups welcomed Immigration Minister Chris Bowen's announcement yesterday the Federal Government would wind back the inequitable treatment of asylum-seekers who arrive by boat and air. Refugee Council of Australia chief Paul Power welcomed the announcement. (The Canberra Times, 26 November)

www.canberratimes.com.au/news/national/national/general/advocates-applaud-asylum-visa-decision/2371570.aspx?storypage=0#

Detainee numbers blamed for detention unrest

An independent report into riots at the Christmas Island and Villawood detention centres earlier this year has attributed the incidents to a surge in the number of detainees. It has made 48 recommendations to improve security at detention centres, including a clarification on the roles of the federal police, local police and the Immigration Department. (ABC News, 29 November)

www.abc.net.au/news/2011-11-29/detainee-numbers-blamed-for-detention-unrest/3702082

Brothers join UN meeting

Fairfield High School principal Robert Mulas, student Ameer Saeed and his brother Daniel Saeed will join McMahon MP and Immigration Minister Chris Bowen at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees meeting on December 7 and 8. "We've lived through hard days," Daniel said. "I left my home country [Iraq] when I was 12 years old with no money and no education. My brother was only 10 and we left our country to save our lives. So I think this is a chance for us to raise awareness that not all refugee people are bad people. And this is our first step." (Fairfield City Champion, 29 November)

www.fairfieldchampion.com.au/news/local/news/general/brothers-join-un-meeting/2374878.aspx