



Refugee Council of Australia

BULLETIN FOR MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS

18 April 2013

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

Paul Power, CEO, Refugee Council of Australia

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NEWS FROM THE REFUGEE COUNCIL

People displaced by climate change require new solutions

In response to an article in UK newspaper *The Guardian*, that claimed RCOA had called for the Australian Government to create a new refugee category for people affected by climate change, President Phil Glendenning issued a statement to clarify RCOA's position. RCOA's view is that the crisis responses necessary and available to refugees will not be an answer to future displacement caused by climate change. The statement stressed that people in affected Pacific nations did not consider themselves as future refugees and their leaders were looking for better answers to their concerns than traditional refugee solutions. Mr Glendenning, who has worked closely with government and community organisations in Kiribati on climate change issues in his role as Director of the Edmund Rice Centre, said: "People facing displacement from climate change are not, and do not want to be regarded as refugees. If they have to, their aim is to migrate with dignity and with skills, but their deep desire is to remain in their countries. They will require new solutions, and international support, to do this." Read the full statement here: http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/130417_ClimateChange.pdf

Funding for local SGP services to increase by 5.2%

Funding for local projects under the Settlement Grants Program will increase by 5.2% to \$40.1 million in 2013-14, with services to be provided through 143 organisations. The Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Senator Kate Lundy, announced grants under the 2013 funding round on 8 April, noting that the increase in funding includes \$1.39 million "to support the implementation of recommendations of the Report of the Expert Panel on Asylum Seekers" (i.e. to provide SGP services to the increasing number of Refugee Program entrants). RCOA welcomes this increase and also the fact that SGP funding was announced earlier than in previous years. The total value of grants announced in the 2013 funding round is smaller than in previous years (\$19.2 million, compared to \$60.2 million last year) but this is due to the large number of multi-year grants announced in 2012. RCOA has produced an analysis of the SGP funding round, including a full list of the organisations receiving funding in 2013-14 – see http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/rpt/SGP_2013-14.pdf

Federal Court decision on Afghan removals welcomed

RCOA welcomed a Full Federal Court decision that found the Australian Government's assessment of a Hazara asylum seeker's protection claim was not made lawfully. In a media statement, RCOA said the Court's decision was significant and should allow more than 100 other Hazara and other asylum seekers the opportunity to restate their claims for refugee protection. CEO Paul Power said the claims of Hazara and other asylum seekers facing deportation must be remitted to the Refugee Review Tribunal for lawful consideration against international human rights Conventions that Australia has signed. Read the statement at: http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/130320_FedCourt.pdf.

Parliament urged to support Bill to resolve indefinite detention of refugees

RCOA CEO Paul Power appeared before the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee inquiry into the *Migration and Security Legislation Amendment (Review of Security Assessments) Bill 2012* to argue for alternatives to detention for recognised refugees with adverse ASIO security assessments. Mr

Power told the Senate Inquiry that a Bill before the Parliament should be passed because it would provide procedural fairness for refugees, allow for adverse decisions to be challenged and limit detention to the extent necessary to ensure national security and public safety. Read our media release here: http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/130322_ASIOSenate.pdf

Government urged to release children from Manus Island detention

RCOA backed a call by Expert Panel on Asylum Seekers member Paris Aristotle for the Australian Government to urgently review the policy of keeping children in immigration detention on Manus Island. In a statement, RCOA CEO Paul Power said the children arbitrarily detained on Manus should be returned to Australia and be supported in community arrangements. The statement also expressed disappointment that no apparent progress had been made at the Bali Process ministerial meeting on building safer pathways to refugee protection through regional cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. Read the statement at: http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/130405_BaliProcess.pdf

Questions raised about rescue of asylum seekers at sea

Former diplomat and author of “Reluctant Rescuers” and “A Certain Maritime Incident”, Tony Kevin, has argued for high and consistent rescue-at-sea protocols and practices in Australia’s border protection system and raised questions about Australia’s record in rescuing asylum seekers at sea. Tony Kevin has produced a brief overview of recent asylum seeker tragedies for RCOA. His overview can be found here: http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/130416_TonyKevin.pdf

Call for applications for refugee leaders to participate in advocacy with UNHCR

In memory of our former President John Gibson, who passed away in September 2012 after a long battle with cancer, RCOA has established an annual Leadership Grant to support advocates from refugee backgrounds to take part in high-level international advocacy on refugee issues. One advocate will be selected each year to join the Australian NGO team at the annual consultations between the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and NGOs in Geneva, Switzerland. The grant recipient will be provided with financial and in-kind support to participate in and undertake advocacy at the UNHCR-NGO Consultations and side meetings. For further information about the grant including details of how to apply, go to: http://refugeecouncil.org.au/g/2013_JGibsonGrant.pdf

Refugee Week 2013

Refugee Week is two months away and will be celebrated between Sunday, 16 June and Saturday, 22 June with the “Restoring Hope” theme which reminds us that, while a refugee’s journey begins with danger, it also begins with hope. The Sydney launch of Refugee Week will be held on Saturday, 15 June at the Pitt Street Uniting Church between 2pm and 5pm. A launch will also be held in Victoria. Organisations holding events during Refugee Week are encouraged to register them on our Refugee Week website. Registration forms are available here: <http://www.refugeeweek.org.au/events/register.php>. The Refugee Week poster is currently in the design phase and will be distributed to organisations in coming weeks.

NSW Refugee Week Small Grants program

To encourage community groups and organisations to celebrate Refugee Week by holding local events and functions, RCOA is offering a limited number of small grants of \$250 or \$500 to NSW-based organisations. These grants are made possible through the generous support of the NSW Community Relations Commission. The grants are designed to enable grass-roots community participation in events that include refugee communities during Refugee Week. The aim of events is to encourage Australians to think about the reasons refugees flee their homelands, the importance of providing safety and lasting security to people fleeing persecution and the positive contributions that refugees make to Australian society. Events should reflect this year’s theme, “Restoring Hope”. The deadline for applications is 5:00pm, Tuesday, 30 April. To apply for a NSW Refugee Week Small Grant, please download the grant guidelines and application form here: <http://www.refugeeweek.org.au/grants.php>

Multiculturalism ‘an indisputable success story’

The Joint Standing Committee on Migration tabled its report on the inquiry into Multiculturalism in Australia on 13 March. The report affirmed that “multiculturalism is an indisputable success story for Australia” and noted the important contributions made by migrants, refugees and humanitarian entrants in areas such as building diplomatic and trade relationships, building and sustaining

Australia's long-term productive capacity and enhancing the "cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity which defines the character of Australian society". It also acknowledged a range of challenges faced by people from refugee backgrounds, including negative media coverage and the adversarial political debate on refugee issues, racism and discrimination, securing affordable housing and finding employment. Some of the report's key recommendations included the promotion of inclusiveness, respect for diversity and interfaith and intercultural dialogue and understanding; the development of a national, whole-of-government approach to planning, policy and service provision to communities from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds; the establishment of an independent collaborative institute for excellence in research into multicultural affairs; the development of programs to address issues faced by women and young people from diverse backgrounds; and a range of reforms relating to recognition of overseas qualifications, English language training, aged care services and employment support services. The report can be downloaded here: http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_Representatives_Committees?url=mig/multiculturalism/report.htm

Migration and Settlement Awards winners

Refugee community organisations and individuals were among the winners at the inaugural Australian Migration and Settlement Awards held at Canberra in March. Winners included Say Htoo Eh Maero from Wyndham Community and Education Centre; the Luv-a-Duck program; North Melbourne AFL's The Huddle; the "Go Back To Where You Came From" program and the Legal Services Commission of South Australia. Find out more at: <http://www.pm.gov.au/press-office/australian-migration-and-settlement-awards>.

Guest speaker, SBS journalist, Karen Middleton recounts her family's experiences in welcoming humanitarian arrivals to Australia. Read the speech here: http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/spch/130319_MCouncilawards.pdf

Keep up to date with RCOA through Facebook and Twitter

The best way to keep up with RCOA is through Facebook and Twitter. We regularly publish links to new RCOA statements and research and to interesting articles in the media on refugee issues. Our Facebook page is at www.facebook.com/pages/Refugee-Council-of-Australia-RCOA/157472830949702. Our Twitter feed is @OzRefugeeCounc.

COMING EVENTS

City of Sydney Living in Harmony festival

Friday 1 March to Tuesday 30 April, across Sydney NSW

The Living in Harmony festival celebrates Sydney's rich cultural diversity through events across the city, including tours which explore Sydney's multicultural heritage, cultural days, talks, workshops, exhibitions and panel discussions.

Details: to view the calendar of events, visit

<http://whatson.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/events/16715-living-in-harmony-festival-2013>.

Autumn Scarf Dinners

Mondays between 8 April and 6 May, Abbotsford VIC

Scarf provides hands-on hospitality training and mentoring to young people who face barriers to fair training and employment opportunities, including new migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, people with disabilities and Australian youth who are disengaged from education. Scarf borrows restaurants when they would normally be closed in order to run Scarf dinners. Throughout autumn, Scarf dinners will be held at Three Bags Full cafe in Abbotsford.

Details: Three Bags Full, cnr Nicholson and Mollison Streets, Abbotsford; to book, e-mail bookings@scarfcommunity.org; for further details, visit <http://scarfcommunity.org/>.

Baha'i Ridvan festival

Saturday 20 April, Logan QLD

Ridvan is the most holy day in the Baha'i calendar, commemorating the occasion when the Baha'i faith was established. The event will include dinner and entertainment.

Details: 6:00pm-10:00pm; Logan Central Community Centre, 9 Jacaranda Avenue, Woodridge; RSVP to logan@bahai.org.au or call Duncan on 0433 431 280.

Workshop: Working with CALD and refugee communities in the child and family welfare setting

Monday 22 April, Eight Mile Plains QLD

Presented by Jatinder Kaur, Director of JK Diversity Consultants, this workshop will cover the following topics: including early intervention and prevention, statutory child protection intervention, out-of-home care, cultural diversity in CALD/refugee communities, migration and settlement issues, communication and language considerations, diverse child rearing practices, assessment frameworks and cultural sensitive practice considerations and the cultural needs of CALD/refugee children in out-of-home care.

Details: \$150.00 per person; 9:00am-4:00pm; Key Assets Fostering, Conference Room, Building 7, Freeway Office Park, 2728 Logan Road, Eight Mile Plains; to register, e-mail support@jkdiversityconsultanst.com.au or call 0422 887 579.

Refugee Rights National Convergence 2013

Friday 26 to Sunday 28 April, Northam WA

Refugee rights groups around the country will be converging on Yongah Hill Detention Centre on the ANZAC Day weekend to visit detainees and protest against the mandatory detention of asylum seekers.

Details: for further details and to register, visit <http://refugee-rights.net/converge/tag/northam-2013>.

Art show and auction fundraising event

Friday 26 and Saturday 27 April, Balmain NSW

The auction includes works by Pixie O'Harris, Judy Cassab, Pro Hart, and Aboriginal artists from Yuendumu as well as asylum seekers. Funds raised will support the work of the Bridge for Asylum Seekers Foundation. Donations of artworks are welcome.

Details: viewing from 6:00pm 26 April and 10:00am 27 April, auction from 4:00pm-7:00pm 27 April; Watch House, 179 Darling Street, Balmain; for further details or to donate artworks, contact Virginia Walker on 0418 261 160 or (02) 9712 7784, or e-mail asylumseekersfoundation@bigpond.com.

Ageing in Australia: Cultural diversity in aged care expo

Saturday 27 April, Melbourne VIC

This free event will provide information about aged care and other support services. It will provide an opportunity to meet service providers, ask questions, receive advice and collect information in your language about aged care, dementia, palliative care, stroke, continence, carer support and community nursing.

Details: 10:00am-4:00pm; Melbourne Town Hall; to book tickets, call (03) 8823 7979 or visit <http://www.culturaldiversity.com.au>.

Stand Up! Conference: Eliminating all forms of violence against CALD women

Sunday 28 April to Tuesday 30 April, Canberra ACT

Hosted by the Australian Migrant and Refugee Women's Alliance, this conference will bring together experts from various fields and grassroots to discuss, debate and make recommendations on eliminating all forms of violence against CALD women and breaking the circle of violence.

Details: Level 1, Rydges Lakeside, London Circuit, Canberra; for further details and to register, visit <http://amarwaconference.org>.

Forum: Sexual Health, Cultural Diversity and Young People

Monday 29 April, Carlton VIC

Hosted by the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria, this forum will discuss perceptions and understandings of sexuality and sexual health amongst multicultural young people. With the assistance of our expert panel, key issues, emerging challenges and best practice approaches will be identified and discussed.

Details: 9:30am-11:30am; Meeting Room A, Statewide Resources Centre, 150 Palmerston Street, Carlton; for further details and to register, visit <http://eccvsexualhealthforum.eventbrite.com.au>.

Asylum seeker policy forum: From Despair to Action

Tuesday 30 April, Paddington NSW

Sydney's Paddington Uniting Church, Amnesty International, ChiIOut, Welcome to Australia and the Australian Coalition to End Immigration Detention of Children are hosting a forum on asylum seeker policy to discuss actions to change the national conversation to one of compassion and hospitality.

Details: 7:00pm-9:00pm; Paddington Uniting Church, 395 Oxford Street, Paddington; to register, go to <http://asylumseekerforum.eventbrite.com.au>; for further details, go to <https://www.facebook.com/events/554133877942313>.

Foundation House workshop: Incidental Counselling

Wednesdays 1 and 8 May, Dandenong VIC

This two-day course provides an approach for working with refugee survivors of torture and trauma in a range of settings. Participants will gain skills and strategies for building relationships with refugee clients, and for handling difficult and distressing situations. Light lunch provided.

Details: \$330.00; 9:30am-4:00pm; Foundation House, 155 Foster Street, Dandenong; register online at www.trybooking.com/BMVL; for registration enquiries, call (03) 9389 8965 or e-mail pdregistrations@foundationhouse.org.au.

Forum: Supporting humanitarian entrants with a disability

Wednesday 1 May, Bankstown NSW

Hosted by ADHC and the NSW Refugee Health Service, this forum will provide an opportunity to share information and expertise, develop a better understanding of the services available and existing referral pathways for humanitarian entrants with a disability and identify strategies to address some of the barriers experienced by humanitarian entrants with a disability.

Details: 9:30am-4:30pm; Bankstown Sports Club, 8 Greenfield Parade, Bankstown; RSVP to Tina Khoury tina.khoury@facs.nsw.org.au or Daniela Oliveira daniela.oliveiro3@facs.nsw.gov.au.

Foundation House workshop: Trauma-Focused Counselling

Thursdays 2 and 9 May, Brunswick VIC

This two-day course provides counsellors with additional skills for working with refugee survivors of torture and trauma. Light lunch provided.

Details: \$330.00; 9:30am-4:00pm; Foundation House, 6 Gardiner Street, Brunswick; register online at www.trybooking.com/CFOG; for registration enquiries, call (03) 9389 8965 or e-mail pdregistrations@foundationhouse.org.au.

STARTTS workshop: Clinical practice and new developments in the treatment of refugee survivors of torture and trauma

Thursday 2 and Friday 3 May, Carramar NSW

This two-day workshop aims to provide clinicians with additional skills for clinical practice. It includes the latest information on neuroplasticity and the link between the brain and psychotherapy. It will discuss the strengths and limitations of well-known treatment modalities when working with refugee clients, as well as more innovative approaches such as Biofeedback and Neurofeedback.

Details: \$249.00 (students \$149.00); 9:30am-4:30pm; STARTTS, 152-168 The Horsley Drive, Carramar; register online at <http://www.startts.org.au>.

Multiculturalism conference: Strengthening Diversity

Thursday 2 May, Preston VIC

The conference will examine how multiculturalism can be misunderstood, how service providers need to prepare to work in a more competitive environment and government commitments relating to ethnic communities in Australia.

Details: \$130.00 for not-for-profit organisations and students, \$195.00 for government departments and other institutions; \$55.00 for unfunded organisations and individuals (limited number of subsidies); 8:30am-4:00pm; Darebin Arts and Entertainment Centre, cnr Bell Street and St Georges Road, Preston; for further details and to register, visit <http://www.amcservices.org.au>.

2013 Edmund Rice Public Address: Would You Wait a Lifetime?

Thursday 2 May, Adelaide SA

Melbourne barrister and asylum seeker advocate Jessie Taylor will explore the difficulties surrounding Australia's refugee policy and the important questions we need to be asking our politicians in this election year. The event takes as its theme the situation of registered refugees in Indonesia, who currently face a 40-60 year wait for resettlement to Australia.

Details: entry by gold coin donation; 7:00pm-9:00pm; Hetzel Lecture Theatre, State Library of South Australia, North Terrace, Adelaide; to book or for more information, contact Lee on (08) 8354 2100 or lahack@edmundrice.org.

2013 Human Rights Dinner

Friday 3 May, Melbourne VIC

The annual Human Rights Dinner raises funds for the Human Rights Law Centre and Public Interest Law Clearing House. The keynote speaker at the event will be Justice Edwin Cameron of the Constitutional Court of South Africa.

Details: tickets \$170.00 (\$100.00 not-for-profit/concession) from 6:30pm; Sofitel Melbourne On Collins, 25 Collins Street, Melbourne; book tickets online at <https://register.pilch.org.au/civicrm/event/register?cid=0&reset=1&id=8>.

CatholicCare African Dads and Kids Camp: Malmsbury

Friday 3 to Sunday 5 May, Malmsbury VIC

The African Dads and Kids Program takes fathers away with one of their children for a weekend of fun, bonding activities and learning. The men explore the differences between being a father in Africa and a father in Australia and discuss how to address the challenges they and their children face in adapting to a new culture and new roles. Topics to be explored include: respecting traditional cultures and a new way of life; parenting in Africa and parenting in Australia; bonding with children; understanding each other's strengths; and child discipline and Australian law. The Malmsbury camp is designed for new dads and kids.

Details: to register your interest, contact Kate on 0418 446 692 or e-mail africandadsandkids@ccam.org.au.

Screening of "Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea"

Saturday 4 May, Belrose NSW

"Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea" is a documentary looking at the circumstances and decisions that can lead to someone having to become a "boat person". The screening will be preceded by a Fair Trade mini market and followed by a panel discussion with Najeeba Wazefadost (President, Hazara Women of Australia), Rev Dr John Jegasothy, Johnny Sharpe and Sally Irwin.

Details: tickets \$10.00-\$15.00; market from 5:00pm, screening and panel discussion from 7:00pm; St Stephens Anglican Church, 16 Lockwood Avenue, Belrose.

"One World - One Day" Peace Festival

Sunday 5 May, Warwick QLD

This event will feature football action from migrant and local teams, multicultural food and craft stalls, children's tent with crafts and games, music and dance performances, workshops for young and old, circus skills, musical performances, drumming workshop with the Samba Blisstas Brazilian-style troupe, agency stalls and a harmony walk.

Details: Queens Park, Warwick; for further details, visit <http://www.peacefestival.org.au>.

Workshop: Working with CALD and refugee communities in the child and family welfare setting

Monday 6 May, Sydney NSW

Presented by Jatinder Kaur, Director of JK Diversity Consultants, this workshop will cover the following topics: including early intervention and prevention, statutory child protection intervention, out-of-home care, cultural diversity in CALD/refugee communities, migration and settlement issues, communication and language considerations, diverse child rearing practices, assessment frameworks and cultural sensitive practice considerations and the cultural needs of CALD/refugee children in out-of-home care.

Details: \$220.00 per person; 9:30am-4:30pm; Centre for Community Welfare Training, Level 4, 699 George Street, Sydney; to register, call (02) 9281 8822, e-mail ccwt@acwa.asn.au or visit http://www.acwa.asn.au/Course_Details11.php?recid=7219.

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

Tuesday 7 May, Coffs Harbour 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 they may present with, and how to work in a way that

fosters feelings of trust, safety and control, while minimising the risk of retraumatisation. Participants will be encouraged to think about how to apply the concepts to their own workplace, and will leave the workshop feeling more confident in utilising their skills and experience with refugee and asylum seeker clients.

Details: \$149.00 (students \$99.00); 9:30am-4:30pm; North Coast Regional Botanic Garden, Display Room, cnr Hardacre and Coff Streets (off Harbour Drive), Coffs Harbour; register online at <http://www.startts.org.au>.

The Baulkham Hills African Ladies Troupe

Thursday 9 to Saturday 18 May, Parramatta NSW

"The Baulkham Hills African Ladies Troupe" is a celebration of the resilience, courage and spirits of four remarkable African Australian women. The troupe has been driven by a passion to create an honest, challenging, yet joyfully alive show, bringing audiences a new understanding and appreciation of the contribution of African women to the Australian community. They are also taking a stand to break the culture of silence surrounding violence against women in all our communities.

Details: tickets \$47.00 (\$42.00 concession, \$37.00 under-30s, \$30.00 full-time students); Riverside Theatre, cnr Church and Market Streets, Parramatta; for further details and to book tickets, visit <http://riversideparramatta.com.au/show/the-baulkham-hills-african-ladies-troupe>.

Reflections on Motherhood: Mother's Day Lunch hosted by Australia for UNHCR

Friday 10 May, Sydney NSW

Julie McCrossin and special guest speakers Jacinta Tynan, Sky News presenter, columnist, author and mother; Ann Sherry AO, CEO Carnival Australia; Professor Anthony Zwi, Professor of Global Health and Development at University of NSW; and Australia for UNHCR Special Representative and former refugee, Aminata Conteh, will share their stories, thoughts and wisdom on the triumphs and challenges of motherhood from remote refugee camps to the suburbs of Sydney. Funds raised at the event will support women and children who are refugees.

Details: tickets \$175.00 (\$1,750.00 for a table of ten) includes two-course lunch, complimentary drinks and a gift bag; 12:00pm-2:30pm; The Ivy Ballroom, The Ivy, 320-330 George Street, Sydney; for further information and to reserve your seat, visit www.unrefugees.org.au/get-involved/attend-an-event.

"My Beloved Mother" play

Saturday 11 May, Perth WA

This is a story of the betrayal of a devoted, ailing and vulnerable mother by her own family. Proceeds will go to a charity that supports women refugees who don't have access to medical care or accommodation. The cast is from a diverse cultural background. There will also be music, poetry and food available

Details: tickets \$16.50 or \$53.50 for a group of five; 6:10pm-9:10pm; Don Russell Performing Arts Centre, Murdoch Road, Perth; book tickets online at http://www.stickytickets.com.au/10957/my_beloved_mother_play.aspx.

NEW RESEARCH, STATEMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

On-line resource to help reunite refugee families

Refugees United has developed a web platform and mobile tools to streamline the family tracing process for both NGOs and individuals. The resource also gives refugees the ability to become directly involved in their search for missing family via an anonymous and safe forum, easily accessible tools and an ever-expanding, user-driven family finding network. Find out more here: <http://info.refunite.org/>

New website creates awareness about children in detention

Chilout and GetUp have joined forces to launch a new website that highlights the plight of children held in immigration detention on Manus Island. It features telephone interviews and animates some of the harrowing illustrations produced by children. Find out more at: www.outofsight.org.au

Settlement Council of Australia discussion paper on domestic violence

The Settlement Council of Australia has published a discussion paper that identifies ways to improve responses to family violence and recommendations to improve the settlement sector's responses. Access the discussion paper here: <http://www.scoa.org.au/content/latest-scoa-downloads>

Scoping Study of Migration and Housing Needs

Researchers from Australian National University have undertaken a scoping study, examining the housing characteristics of recently-arrived permanent and temporary migrants by their visa category, using data from a number of sources including the 2006 population census and the 2006 and 2010 General Social Surveys. Migrant groups that are examined include permanent migrants in the Family and Humanitarian program. Household and housing characteristics that are examined include household type, household size, location, housing tenure and housing costs. Comparisons are made with the Australian-born population where relevant. The research, conducted for the Commonwealth Department of Treasury is available at: http://www.nhsc.org.au/content/research/downloads/migration_and_housing_needs.pdf

Report on persecution of ethnic Chin Christians in Burma

The Chin Human Rights Organisation-produced “Threats to Our Existence”: Persecution of Ethnic Chin Christians in Burma”, adds a cautionary note to the political reforms under way in Burma. Despite the positive signs, many challenges are yet to be resolved. Read more at: http://www.chro.ca/images/stories/files/PDF/Threats_to_Our_Existence.pdf

Understanding situation of Hazara people in Indonesia

A Radio National report has documented the realities for Hazara people in Indonesia hoping to find refugee protection in Australia. Listen to the report here: <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/lawreport/hazaras-in-indonesia/4589070>

Go on the Road to Refuge Journey

A new on-line resource, “Road to Refuge”, invites people to understand the hopes, fears and the options available to refugees forced to flee their homes. Take the journey and see how hard you would fight for your safety and those of the ones you love. Access Road to Refuge at: <http://www.roadtorefuge.com/>

Refugee Facts

The Centre for Policy Development’s “Refugee Facts” provides quick facts and comprehensive background information on asylum seekers and refugees for journalists, editors and advocates on asylum seeker issues. Access the guide here: <http://refugeefacts.cpd.org.au/>

Human rights standards for immigration detention

The Australian Human Rights Commission has released the “Human rights standards for immigration detention”. The project, jointly funded by the AHRC, the Commonwealth Ombudsman and Commonwealth Attorney-General’s Department, develops a set of human rights-based standards to guide the monitoring of immigration detention facilities that is undertaken by independent monitoring bodies like the AHRC. Access the guidelines at: http://www.humanrights.gov.au/human_rights/immigration/idc_guidelines2013.html

Community acts to confront racism

“One Parramatta” is a community project managed by All Together Now in partnership with other organisations to address interpersonal racism in the Parramatta area among 18 to 34-year olds. The project features seven one-minute short films comprising interviews with passers-by and shoppers. The films are screened in local cinemas during interval and are available on YouTube. The project will provide young people with information about how to speak up when they witness racism in the community and encourage them to reflect on their behaviour towards people of different ethnicities and cultural backgrounds. See more here: <http://oneparramatta.com/>

Refugees: Where Do They Come From?

One Just World has posted a forum held at Bunbury and February that explores the reasons behind the movement of refugees and asylum seekers world-wide. View the forum here: <http://www.onejustworld.com.au/forums/refugees-where-do-they-come-from-bunbury>

New publications on refugee protection and international law

“Refuge from inhumanity: enriching refugee protection standards through recourse to international humanitarian law by Jean-François Durieux and David Cantor, summarises the proceedings at a conference held in London in February that brought together new contributions from more than 20 leading specialists in the fields of international humanitarian law and refugee law. Download the report at: <http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications/rsc-reports/cr-refuge-from-inhumanity-150413.pdf/view>

OPPORTUNITIES

For employment opportunities, go to <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/g/job.php>. For volunteering opportunities, go to <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/g/vol.php>.

NSW Humanitarian Awards nominations open

Nominations are now open for people or organisations that are making an exceptional contribution to refugee issues. The Humanitarian Awards are an opportunity to acknowledge, thank and promote the hard work and achievements of both individuals and organisations in various fields that play a substantial role in improving the lives of refugees. Categories include: Refugee Community Worker, Refugee Supporter, Youth, Education, Media, Sport, Rural and Regional and Business, Government and Legal and a new category – Best Project. Nominations close Friday, 17 May and can be made online at <http://form.jotform.co/form/30577520740855> or by email, post and fax. Go to www.startts.org.au for more information and to download the information pack and nomination form.

Entries open for Heartlands Refugee Art Prize

The Heartlands Refugee Art Prize celebrates the contribution of refugee artists who have arrived in Australia since 1970. Entrants’ painting, drawing, photography and mixed media works must reflect and express the theme ‘I wish to see...’. This year a total prize pool of \$20,000 is on offer as well as the opportunity for short-listed entries to be displayed at Heartland exhibitions. Entries close 5pm, 10 May, 2013 and must be submitted to: Multicultural Arts Victoria, 208-220 Bank Street South Melbourne between 10am - 5pm. Email digital copies can be sent to: fiesta@multiculturalarts.com.au. Please contact Trinidad Estay or Deshani Wickremasinghe Multicultural Arts Victoria on 03 9188 3681 Monday to Friday or Email: fiesta@multiculturalarts.com.au. To speak to somebody who can assist you with completing your application please contact: (Mondays and Fridays only): Eh Htoo Saw Weeku (Karen) 0434 306 108; Basim Sulaiman (Arabic) 0405 538 331; Rosa Vasseghi (Dari and Farsi); 0427 563 801; Latifa Ali (Hazaragi and Urdu) 0469 278 685; Sukte (Chin dialects: Falam, Lautu, Haka, Tiddim & Zomi) 0430 978 048. Find out more at: <http://multiculturalarts.com.au/events2013/heartlands.shtml>

Volunteering RocksCorps style

Global youth movement RockCorps, together with Optus are inviting young people to help improve their communities through volunteering. Young people who volunteer four hours of their time to improve a designated area in their local community will earn a ticket to an exclusive music event, featuring international and local artists The Script, Labrinth, and Guy Sebastian. To go to the Optus RockCorps concert, you can’t buy a ticket, you can’t win a ticket, you have to earn a ticket. More details are available here <http://www.optusrockcorps.com.au/>

Help your community with tax

The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) is looking for volunteers who are able to assist people from non-English speaking backgrounds. Volunteers are trained to prepare and lodge tax returns using e-tax. The ATO is looking for people with a good command of English who can use a computer and can volunteer their time between July and October. Applications close this month. More information is available at www.ato.gov.au/taxhelp or by emailing diversity@ato.gov.au.

Call for paper for migration law conference

The Australian National University has issued a call for papers for a conference, “Unintended Consequences: the Impact of Migration Law and Policy”, to be held in Canberra on 25 and 26 October. The conference explores the unintended consequences of domestic migration policy, legislation or the application of relevant treaty obligations. ANU is inviting diverse critical and institutional perspectives on the legal challenges and social ramifications arising as a consequence of migration law and policy on: education; employment; human rights; political landscape; society and culture; and tourism. For more

information, including the online Abstract Submission form, go to: <http://law.anu.edu.au/conferences/unintended-consequences>

Closing date for submissions is 30 April, 2013. Accepted speakers will be eligible for a reduced conference registration rate.

Submissions sought for Forced Migration feature on 'Crisis migration'.

Forced Migration Review's December 2013 edition will include a major feature on 'Crisis migration', focusing on people who move or become 'trapped' in the context of diverse humanitarian crises but do not fit well within existing legal, policy and operational frameworks for the protection of refugees and internally displaced people. Please see the full call for articles at www.fmreview.org/crisis. The deadline for submission of articles is 2 September. People interested in preparing a submission are strongly advised to contact the editors at fmr@geh.ox.ac.uk to avoid duplication of material already planned for publication.

Volunteers needed for African Reading Club

The African Reading Club (ARC) is run by African Communities Foundation Australia in partnership with Save the Children Australia. Run by staff and volunteers, the ARC provides African primary school children aged between four and ten with a quality learning environment to assist with their reading, homework and literacy development. If you have two hours to spare each week, between 3.30pm and 5.15pm at The Community Room on Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, Melbourne, and are looking for a rewarding volunteer experience then volunteering at the ARC, contact Jen on 0408 375 916.

Colourfest film festival entries wanted

Australia's Multicultural Film Festival, Colourfest, is inviting entries in two categories - "Australian Stories" (focused on films made in Australia featuring stories and characters from culturally diverse backgrounds) and "I am Diaspora" (films that reflect the migrant experience from around the world). Organisers are particularly interested in the post-colonial movements of people of colour and will prioritise films that involve processes of authentic storytelling where the writer, director or producer is a member of the community of which the story is about. Entries close on 14 May, 2013. All films must be produced in the last two years and be under 20 minutes in length. Entry form and guidelines are available here: <http://colourfest.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/ColourfestFilmFest2013EntryForm.pdf>. For more details about Colourfest, see: <http://colourfest.com.au/>

Multicultural Youth Sports Partnership Program

The third round for the Multicultural Youth Sports Partnership Program is now open. The program provides grants to organisations of between \$5,000 and \$50,000 to help youth from new and emerging communities and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to participate in sport within their local communities. Applications close on 2 May, 2013 and successful applicants will be announced in July 2013. To apply, visit: http://www.ausport.gov.au/participating/all_cultures/get_involved/grant

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)

Few asylum seekers charged with crime

Asylum seekers living in the community on bridging visas are about 45 times less likely to be charged with a crime than members of the general public. Figures released to Fairfax Media by the department of immigration and citizenship show that since November 2011, 12,100 asylum seekers have been released into the community on bridging visas. A department spokeswoman said that "a handful" - or five or less - had been charged with a crime. This equates to just 41.32 people per 100,000 people. (The Age, 1 March)

<http://www.theage.com.au/opinion/political-news/few-asylum-seekers-charged-with-crime-20130228-2f98h.html>

Immigration refutes Abbott's bridging visa claim

The Immigration Department says asylum seekers already face a range of reporting requirements, despite claims by Opposition Leader Tony Abbott that people on bridging visas are just "disappearing" into the community. (ABC News, 1 March)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-03-01/immigration-department-challenges-abbotts-bridging-visa-claims/4547274>

'Behavioural protocols' for asylum seekers "fear-mongering"

A senior Anglican figure has accused Australian politicians of wielding words like "weapons" in the asylum-seeker debate. The Very Revered Dr Peter Catt, a member of the recently-formed National Council of Churches of Australia asylum-seeker taskforce, accused opposition immigration spokesman Scott Morrison of "pure fear-mongering" after he demanded a range of "behavioural protocols" for asylum seekers. (Queensland Times, 1 March)

<http://www.qt.com.au/news/behavioural-protocols-asylum-seekers-fear-mongerin/1775939/>

Freezing asylum visas not racist: Abbott

Calling for the freezing of bridging visas for asylum seekers is not a form a racial vilification, federal Opposition Leader Tony Abbott says. (Herald-Sun, 1 March)

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/breaking-news/wong-defends-bridging-visa-policy/story-e6frf7kf-1226588194428>

Asylum seekers must be allowed to work

Asylum seekers must be allowed to work so they can provide for themselves and avoid being housed in "squalid conditions", Australian Greens senator Sarah Hanson-Young says. (The Australian, 1 March)

<http://bit.ly/WpThkF>

Asylum seekers given a light touch: Morrison

Asylum seeker boat arrivals are given a "light touch" security assessment before being released into the community, opposition immigration spokesman Scott Morrison says. But his claim has been rejected by Prime Minister Julia Gillard, who says asylum seekers on bridging visas are given health and identity and security checks. (The Australian, 3 March)

<http://bit.ly/Zz1Yn7>

Taxpayers foot \$184m Nauru bill

Taxpayers have been slugged more than \$184 million for the running of the Nauru asylum seeker processing centre for just 12 months. Another \$80.5 million was given to another firm this month to run the Manus Island processing centre in PNG, also for a year. (The Daily Telegraph, 4 March)

<http://www.news.com.au/national-news/nsw-act/taxpayers-foot-184m-nauru-costs/story-fndo4bst-1226589495280>

Detained children 'fear going mental'

The first children's commissioner to speak freely with teenage asylum seekers in an Australian immigration detention centre has warned they are bored, uncertain and in danger of suffering poor mental health. Tasmanian Commissioner for Children Aileen Ashford says the 137 unaccompanied minors held at the Pontville centre, 30km north of Hobart, fear they will "go mental". (The Australian, 4 March)

<http://bit.ly/Y9wyDt>

Human rights chief warned off islands visit

The federal government's top legal adviser has told Australia's Human Rights Commissioner Gillian Triggs she cannot visit Nauru and Manus Island to assess and act on complaints from asylum seekers about conditions on the islands. (The Age, 5 March)

<http://www.theage.com.au/opinion/political-news/human-rights-chief-warned-off-islands-visit-20130304-2fyg9.html>

Furore over Australian detention of immigrant children

Australia is failing in its international obligations to protect the rights of close to 2,000 children now in immigration detention, say rights groups and legal experts. (IRIN News, 5 March)

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report/97591/Furore-over-Australian-detention-of-immigrant-children>

Sri Lanka's navy accused of helping people smugglers

Sri Lanka's navy is alleged to be a major player in the island's people-smuggling operations, helping asylum seekers leave the country in boats bound for Australia. At the same time as the navy receives equipment and training from Australia to combat people-smuggling operations, it has been accused by returned asylum seekers, Tamil politicians, community leaders and non-governmental organisations of allowing certain boats to pass, even escorting some out of Sri Lankan waters, while stopping others not party to its operations. The navy denies the allegations. (The Age, 6 March)

<http://bit.ly/XRqJyh>

UN estimates Syrian refugees top 1 million

One million people have fled Syria's civil war, piling pressure on the country's neighbours who are struggling to support them, the United Nations refugee agency says. (ABC News, 6 March) <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-03-06/un-estimates-syrian-refugees-top-1-million/4556928>

Morrison stands by refugee comments

Opposition immigration spokesman Scott Morrison has explained the kind of behavioural protocol he thinks asylum seekers should live by when they are released into the community. (The Australian, 7 March) <http://bit.ly/11k9erL>

Thai military accused of shooting fleeing refugees

The Thai military has been accused of shooting Rohingya asylum seekers fleeing conflict in western Burma. People who were on the boat have told the ABC that they jumped into the water and swam when Thai authorities began towing it out into international waters. It is claimed Thai soldiers then fired shots. The military has denied shooting the asylum seekers, but Thai villagers say they later retrieved two bodies from the water, one with a gunshot wound to the head. (ABC News, 9 March) <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-03-08/accusations-thai-military-shot-fleeing-refugees/4561958>

Syrian refugees may double or triple: UN

The number of Syrian refugees, which just passed the million mark, could double or triple by the end of the year if no solution is found to the conflict, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres says. (Perth Now, 10 March) <http://bit.ly/YmdRMG>

Malaysia rescues 136 Rohingya asylum seekers

Malaysian authorities have rescued at least 136 people believed to be Rohingya Muslims fleeing violence in Burma onboard a boat off the coast of Penang. (Radio Australia, 11 March) <http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/international/2013-03-11/malaysia-rescues-136-rohingya-asylum-seekers/1099920>

Thai military accused of trafficking refugees

There are mounting allegations the Thai military is trading Rohingya refugees from Western Burma to human traffickers. (Radio Australia, 11 March) <http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/international/2013-03-11/thai-military-accused-of-trafficking-refugees/1099972>

Processing to begin on Nauru next week

Asylum seekers in Australia's immigration centre on Nauru will start to have their refugee claims processed next week. The federal government on Tuesday said it had awarded contracts to Craddock Murray Neumann Lawyers and Playfair Visa and Migration Services to assist would-be refugees with their protection claims. The asylum seekers will have to apply to the Nauruan justice secretary to be recognised as a refugee. (7 News, 12 March) <http://au.news.yahoo.com/latest/a/-/article/16352401/processing-to-begin-on-nauru-next-week/>

Australia warned against returning Afghan refugees

A group of 30 Afghan MPs has written to the Federal Government urging it to abandon plans to return asylum seekers to Kabul. The ABC has obtained a copy of the letter, which says the security situation in the Afghan capital is getting worse and attackers are targeting members of the Hazara ethnic group. (ABC News, 12 March) <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-03-12/afghan-letters/4568656>

New website to share asylum seeker stories

Refugee advocacy group Chilout' has launched a website which it says will give a voice to asylum seekers the federal government is trying to censor. ChilOut says the Australian government has gone to extraordinary lengths to keep would-be refugees on Papua New Guinea's Manus Island facility "out of sight and out of mind". The new website www.outofsight.org.au, launched on Wednesday, features a phone interview with a detainee and drawings by children at the facility. (Nine News, 13 March) <http://news.ninemsn.com.au/national/2013/03/13/20/03/new-website-to-share-asylum-seeker-stories>

Fears for failed asylum seekers ahead of deportation

Refugee advocates say they fear for the safety of two failed asylum seekers set to be deported to Afghanistan and Pakistan. (Radio Australia, 15 March) <http://bit.ly/16w1wgH>

Asylum-seeker transfers heighten Manus Island concerns

Pregnant women and children held at the Manus Island asylum-seeker detention centre have been brought to Australia for medical treatment and critics say it's further proof offshore processing is failing. The 19 asylum-seekers were yesterday transferred in family groups from the Papua New Guinea Island to the Inverbrackie detention facility outside of Adelaide in South Australia. (The Australian, 15 March) <http://bit.ly/XEVc5e>

Asylum seeker's deportation on hold after court win

An Afghan asylum seeker has recorded a significant win over the Government in the Federal Court. In a unanimous decision, the court found the man's application for refuge had not been considered fairly and as such, his deportation to Kabul is now on hold. (Radio Australia, 20 March) <http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/international/2013-03-20/asylum-seekers-deportation-on-hold-after-court-win/1104688>

Myanmar dismisses UN call to relocate Rohingyas

Myanmar has dismissed a United Nations report calling for urgent action to protect tens of thousands of Rohingya refugees this monsoon season. (Radio Australia, 20 March) <http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/international/2013-03-20/myanmar-dismisses-un-call-to-relocate-rohingyas/1104074>

Asylum seeker families in fear

Terrified asylum-seeker families who feel threatened being housed near violent males on remote Manus Island have led to a transfer halt of single Middle Eastern men to PNG. The Australian government has responded to concerns raised by the PNG government over outbursts at the centre, which now has a constant police presence, an official has revealed. (Herald-Sun, 21 March) <http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/national/asylum-seeker-families-in-fear/story-fndo317g-1226601956886>

Asylum seeker numbers rise by more than a third

The number of people arriving in Australia to claim asylum jumped by more than a third last year, driven by a spike in numbers from Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Pakistan. In 2012, 15,800 people claimed asylum in Australia, up 37 per cent from 2011. Afghan nationals (3079) and Sri Lankans (2345) accounted for more than a third of asylum seekers to reach Australian shores. (The Age, 23 March) <http://www.theage.com.au/national/asylum-seeker-numbers-rise-by-more-than-a-third-20130322-2gled.html>

Fire kills dozens at refugee camp in Thailand

Rescue workers are picking through the ashes of a refugee camp in northern Thailand after a deadly blaze killed 35 people. (Radio National, 24 March) <http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/international/2013-03-23/fire-kills-dozens-at-refugee-camp-in-thailand/1105996>

Asylum seekers die with officials on board

Two asylum seekers drowned and two more were seriously injured when their boat was hit by two freak waves minutes after being boarded by two border protection officials within 15 nautical miles of Christmas Island on Monday. The deaths of a young boy and a woman in her 30s, believed to be from Afghanistan, have led to calls for a review of protocols for intercepting asylum seekers' boats. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 26 March) <http://www.smh.com.au/national/asylum-seekers-drown-with-officials-on-board-20130325-2gqd6.html>

Australia urges Malaysia boatpeople swap after tragedy

Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard Tuesday renewed calls for a refugee swap with Malaysia to deter boatpeople after two asylum-seekers drowned in the latest tragedy at sea. (The Star, 26 March) <http://bit.ly/12eVyOg>

Behaviour protocols part of asylum policy: Morrison

Opposition Immigration spokesman Scott Morrison has confirmed a Coalition government would impose behaviour protocols for asylum seekers on bridging visas. (ABC News, 26 March) <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-03-26/refugee-behaviour-protocols-part-of-policy-morrison-says/4595480>

John Howard had it right, says smuggler Sayed Abbas

Sayed Abbas, allegedly one of the most prolific people-smugglers operating out of Indonesia in the past five years, says John Howard knew how to stop the trade but Kevin Rudd re-opened the gates. (The Australian, 27 March) <http://bit.ly/10cFb1p>

More deaths predicted as two more boats arrive and numbers soar

Two boatloads of asylum seekers arrived at Christmas Island on Tuesday, bringing the total to 11 since Friday amid an unprecedented surge in irregular immigration by sea. Less than 24 hours after the tragic capsizing of a boat that left a woman in her 30s and a young boy dead, the vessel Ocean Protector took the latest boat - this time carrying 105 passengers - to shore. (The Age, 27 March) <http://bit.ly/12deU9C>

Boats will blow out Australian immigration budget

A surge in boat arrivals will almost certainly blow out the immigration budget with a second rescue of asylum seekers on an overcrowded boat revealed yesterday. The government budgeted for just 12,000 asylum seekers this financial year but the latest two boats, carrying 105 and 83 people, took the number of arrivals for 2012-13 past 15,200. (The Advertiser, 27 March) <http://bit.ly/105tlrn>

Self-help plan for boat arrivals

Hundreds of asylum-seeker families will be released from community detention and left to fend for themselves under a plan being shaped by the cash-strapped Federal Government. The desperate idea is being considered as record numbers of asylum-seeker vessels continue to arrive in Australia, placing a huge strain on the detention network. (The West Australian, 27 March) <http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/a/-/breaking/16451384/self-help-plan-for-boat-families/>

97 Australia-bound asylum seekers caught by Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka's navy says it has seized a fishing trawler carrying at least 97 asylum seekers on their way to Australia. (news.com.au, 27 March) <http://bit.ly/16IW392>

Pakistani refugee in frame for Ashes as Australia's backup spinner

Pakistani refugee Fawad Ahmed could be a new passport away from the Ashes with the national selectors believing his story could blossom into a "wonderful thing for Australian society". (The Courier-Mail, 27 March) <http://bit.ly/XK6bt3>

Turning back the boats helps stem the Sri Lankan tide

Co-operation between Sri Lanka and Australia - and turning back asylum boats - is helping to beat people-smugglers, says Sri Lanka's high commissioner Thisara Samarasinghe. (The Australian, 28 March) <http://bit.ly/Xd9PMS>

Julia's boats baby bonus

A pregnant asylum seeker deemed a security risk by ASIO was offered free domestic help and childcare while another detainee has had drooping eyelids fixed by taxpayers. An array of non urgent medical treatment provided to detainees has been revealed including a suspected war criminal who had his impacted wisdom teeth removed at no cost to him. (The Daily Telegraph, 28 March) <http://bit.ly/13QehUJ>

Families may be freed on limited visas

Asylum seeker families could be released into the community on bridging visas to relieve pressure on an overwhelmed budget and on a border protection system struggling against an unprecedented surge in new arrivals. With nearly 300 individuals entering Australian territory by boat this week and another vessel detected on Wednesday carrying 147 people, authorities fear a further 400 or so people are on the water and due to arrive in coming days. (The Age, 28 March) <http://bit.ly/YRSKGy>

Mainland loophole for asylum seekers

The arrival of an asylum seeker boat carrying almost 150 people near Darwin has aroused concerns that would-be refugees are trying to reach mainland Australia to avoid being sent to offshore processing centres. (news.com.au, 29 March) <http://bit.ly/12eXwxs>

Hazaras flee 'systematic genocide' in Pakistan

Despite the risks of the long, slow boat trip to Australia - made starkly evident by the Christmas Island disaster this week when two asylum seekers drowned - hundreds of ethnic Hazaras in Pakistan are

planning the same trip. Facing what they have described as a "systematic genocide" in Pakistan, more and more Hazaras are trying to leave by any means possible. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 30 March)
<http://www.smh.com.au/world/hazaras-flee-systematic-genocide-in-pakistan-20130329-2gyv.html>