



Refugee Council of Australia

BULLETIN FOR MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS

17 May 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

Federal Budget analysis

The 2013-14 Federal Budget has confirmed an increase of \$64.7 million in funding for refugee and migrant settlement services, largely to accommodate the expansion of the Refugee and Humanitarian Program to 20,000 places. Total costs of detention-related services and offshore asylum seeker management will also increase by \$762 million to \$2.97 billion. An RCOA report analyses the impact of the Budget on refugees and people seeking humanitarian protection, focusing on the refugee and humanitarian program, general migration, settlement services, immigration detention, support for asylum seekers, border security and disruption activities, regional refugee protection, overseas aid and human rights. The full analysis can be accessed here: <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/bud/2013-14-Budget.pdf>

Refugee Week update

RCOA is encouraging organisations around Australia to organise events for Refugee Week 2013, which will be celebrated between Sunday 16 June and Saturday 22 June. The theme, "Restoring Hope", 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 2.00pm and 5.00pm. A launch will also be held in Geelong, Victoria on Monday, 17 June. The Adelaide launch will be held on Monday, 17 June between 2.30pm and 4.00pm at the Kerry Packer Civic Gallery, Hawke Building, University of South Australia. 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 being printed and will be distributed to organisations in coming weeks. This year's poster captures children playing at the Kochi refugee camp in the outskirts of Karachi, Pakistan: <http://www.refugeeweek.org.au/events/Ref%20Week%20Poster%202013%20A2%20ART.pdf>. The 2013 Refugee Week ambassador profiles are also posted on our dedicated site at: <http://www.refugeeweek.org.au/ambassadors.php>. We also thank this year's sponsors of Refugee Week: Victorian Multicultural Commission (principal sponsor); Navitas (major sponsor); as well as AMES (Victoria), NSW Teachers Federation and NSW AMES.

Excision law a new low in refugee protection

RCOA warned the international system of asylum would collapse if other countries followed the lead of the Australian Parliament which passed legislation to expand its excision policy to the entire country.

In a statement, RCOA chief executive officer Paul Power said the new laws set an international precedent, seriously undermined Australia's claim to uphold its international obligations under the Refugee Convention, set a poor example to countries in the Asia Pacific region at a time when regional leadership was needed and served as further punishment for people who were being singled out because they arrived by boat to seek asylum. The statement urged Australia to shift the focus from deterrence measures to constructive policies to address the desperate lack of refugee protection that forces asylum seekers to undertake dangerous boat journeys from countries in the Asia Pacific region to Australia. Read the statement here: http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/130516_Excision.pdf

Work rights denied for asylum seeker families

The Federal Government's decision to deny work rights to bridging visas issued to asylum seeker families who arrive by boat has raised fears that vulnerable people will be left destitute on the lowest form of Centrelink assistance. While RCOA welcomed the use of bridging visas for asylum seeker families, chief executive officer Paul Power said people should not be denied the right to support themselves. A statement issued by RCOA highlighted the hardships already faced by those asylum seekers living on bridging visas without the right to work. Read the media release here: http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/130507_BVEfamilies.pdf

Children sent to immigration detention facilities

RCOA was appalled by the Australian Government's decision to send children to immigration detention centres at Wickham Point near Darwin and the remote Curtin facility in Western Australia. In a media statement, RCOA chief executive officer Paul Power questioned the Government's commitment to use detention as a last resort for children. "Faced with an increasing number of asylum seekers arriving by boat, the Government's response has been to increase the capacity for the detention of children when its focus should be releasing children into the community at a faster rate in line with its own policy," the statement said. RCOA noted that in recent months, the numbers of children detained in closed facilities in Australia were higher than ever before, with the 1221 children detained as at 31 December 2012 significantly higher than previous recorded highs. The statement can be accessed here: http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/130501_ChildrenDetention.pdf

Australian NGOs heading for Geneva

In June, representatives from Australian NGOs working with refugees and asylum seekers, including RCOA CEO Paul Power, will be travelling to Geneva to take part in the annual consultations between the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR) and NGOs from around the world. In preparation for the meeting, RCOA has sought feedback from individuals and refugee community groups on current issues of concern for people living in refugee situations overseas, which will form the basis of RCOA's advocacy with senior UNHCR personnel. After receiving several strong applications, RCOA has selected Abdul Karim Hekmat, Youth Development Worker at Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre and Hazara community representative, as the recipient of the inaugural John Gibson Refugee Community Leadership Grant. The grant, which is being funded by Caritas Australia, provides an opportunity for advocates from refugee backgrounds to join the Australian NGO team at the UNHCR-NGO Consultations and take part in high-level international advocacy on refugee issues. Paul Power will also be attending the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement, which bring together governments, NGOs and UNCHR personnel involved in refugee resettlement, to share ideas and discuss current priorities and challenges.

Senate Inquiry recommends strengthened review process for ASIO assessments

On 30 April, the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee released the findings of its inquiry into a Bill put forward by Greens Senator Sarah-Hanson Young to establish a statutory review process for adverse security assessments made by ASIO in relation to Protection Visa applicants. While the Committee recommended that the Bill not be passed, it affirmed that "the right of refugees to seek independent review of adverse security assessments is of such importance that it should not merely be an administrative process" and made a number of recommendations to strengthen the review process for people who have received negative assessments. These included enshrining in law the role of Independent Reviewer of Adverse Security Assessments, preferably in a manner which would make the Reviewer's decisions binding, and allowing Protection Visa applicants who have received negative assessments to appeal to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. There are currently more than 50 refugees being detained indefinitely in Australia due to receiving negative assessments. The Committee's report can be read at <http://bit.ly/16lzRjL>. RCOA's submission on the proposed legislation can be read at <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/r/sub/1212-ASIO.pdf>

Two new Refugee Welcome Zones

Sydney's City of Ryde Council and Melbourne's Morning Peninsula Shire Council have joined the Refugee Welcome Zone initiative, bringing the number of local councils to become Refugee Welcome Zones to 82. Find out more about the initiative at: <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/g/rwz.php>

Keep asylum seekers warm In Sydney and Melbourne

Community organisations in Sydney and Melbourne have launched appeals to help asylum seekers through the winter months. In Sydney, the Refugee Women's Health Network has launched a "Keep Them Warm" campaign. Donations of pre-loved winter clothes and blankets are needed, in particular: children's winter clothes; winter jackets; jumpers; scarves; gloves; socks; beanies; men's and women's long-sleeved tops; and warm winter blankets. The following items are *not* needed: clothes that are ripped, stained or faded; electric blankets; winter underwear and pyjamas; winter shoes, winter bed sheets, pillow cases and bed covers. Items must be in good condition, washed or cleaned. All donations will be accepted until 31 May, 2013. Donations can be deposited at the NSW Refugee Health Service (Suite 1, Level 3, 157-161 George Street, Liverpool from Monday to Friday between 8.00am and 5.00pm); Australian Red Cross Parramatta (Level 1, 30 Cowper Street, Parramatta, Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm); and the Leichhardt Women's Community Health Centre (55 Thornley Street, corner Cary Street, Leichhardt, Monday to Friday 9.30am to 5.30pm). In Melbourne, RISE is running its first Winter Coat Appeal, appealing for donations of new (with tags) or near-new coats, jackets, jumpers or other winter accessories. Men's, women's and children's clothing in all sizes is needed. To assist, visit <http://www.givenow.com.au/riserefugee>. To donate clothing items, visit the RISE Hub during work hours or post clothing to: Attn: RISE Coat Appeal, RISE, Level 1, Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane Melbourne, 3000.

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.

You, too, can support an informed, independent voice on refugee policy

The work of the Refugee Council cannot survive without the financial support of people who share our belief in the importance of fair treatment of refugees and asylum seekers. 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/g/don.php>.

COMING EVENTS

Your rights and responsibilities as an asylum seeker

First Friday of the month, May to December, Fitzroy VIC

These free information sessions for asylum seekers, hosted by the Brotherhood of St Laurence and Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre, will provide information on issues such as work rights and responsibilities, the Australian workplace, employment options for people with overseas qualifications, managing stress, budgeting and money matters, how the Australian Government works and support available to permanent residents. Transport reimbursements are available.

Details: all sessions 5:30pm to 7:30pm; Ecumenical Migration Centre, 123 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy; for further information and to register, contact Marta Kreiser at mkreiser@bsl.org.au, 0420 961 717 or (03) 8412 8706, Jeremiah Temple at jeremiaht@spectrumvic.org.au 0407 338 965 or (03) 9496 0200.

Human Rights Arts and Film Festival

May and June, across Australia

The Human Rights Arts and Film Festival (HRAFF) is a Melbourne based not-for-profit organisation devoted to the exploration of human rights issues through an annual film and arts festival and an ongoing schools and community program. This year's festival will travel to Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra, Perth, Brisbane and Alice Springs during May and June.

Details: for further details including the festival program and information about purchasing tickets, visit <http://hraff.org.au>.

Foundation House workshop: Incidental Counselling

Thursdays 16 and 30 May, Brunswick 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, 6 Gardiner Street, Brunswick; register online at www.trybooking.com/BLRI; for registration enquiries, call (03) 9389 8965 or e-mail pdregistrations@foundationhouse.org.au.

STARTTS workshop: Jungle Tracks - A therapeutic storytelling program for children and adolescents

Friday 17 May, Carramar NSW

This one-day workshop is designed to equip participants with appropriate knowledge and skills to run Jungle Tracks within an integrated therapeutic model. Jungle Tracks is a program that includes five short stories that mirror real life struggles related to the lives of children, adolescents and parents with a background of refugee trauma. The stories promote hope and empowerment and assist the reader/listener to process and reconcile their past experiences and ongoing difficulties in transition.

Details: \$199.00 (students \$149.00); 9:30am-4:30pm; STARTTS, 152-168 The Horsley Drive, Carramar; register online at <http://www.startts.org.au>.

Author talk: Najaf Mazari

Friday 17 May, Research VIC

Former refugee from Afghanistan and co-author of "The Rugmaker of Mazar-e-Sharif" and "Honey Thief" will be speaking at this event about his life and the Masawat Development Fund.

Details: 8:00pm-9:30pm; Eltham College Performance Centre, Main Road, Research (enter via Bells Hill Road through boom gate near tennis court).

Free guided tours of Courage to Care

Sunday 19 and Sunday 26 May, Enoggera QLD

Courage to Care is a travelling exhibition and community outreach initiative that aims to inform and educate Australians about the importance of standing up to bullying, prejudice and discrimination whenever it occurs. It educates visitors towards an understanding of the roles of victim, perpetrator and bystander by exposing them to survivors of the Holocaust and their rescuers. The guided tours are free but bookings are essential.

Details: 11:00am-4:00pm; Mt Maria College, Enoggera Campus, 340 South Pine Road, Enoggera; to book, contact Gyongyi Horvath on (07) 9361 6035 or info@couragetocare.com.au.

Free film festival: Celebrate Our Diversity

Tuesday 21 May, Mornington VIC

Hosted by Colourfest Films and Mornington Peninsula Shire in celebration of World Day for Cultural Diversity, this film festival will feature eight Australian movies portraying culturally and linguistically diverse Australians and showcasing an authentic and inclusive image of Australian as a nation of diversity.

Details: 6:30pm-8:30pm; Mornington Peninsula Shire, Council Chambers Mornington, 2 Queen Street, Mornington; for further details and to reserve your place, visit http://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/Whats_On/Events/Free_film_festival_%E2%80%93_celebrate_our_diversity.

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

Wednesday 22 May, Newcastle 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; Building M, Newcastle TAFE Campus, Maitland Road, Tighes Hill, Newcastle; register online at <http://www.startts.org.au>.

"Bring Your Bills" day

Wednesday 22 May, Tarneit VIC

This event will provide a free drop-in service for people who need help understanding their bills. The service can provide assistance to people who have been door knocked and changed their electricity and gas accounts due to pressure from the salesperson; people who are having problems paying electricity, gas, telephone or internet accounts; and people who have received bills or fines that they do not understand. Financial counsellors and lawyers will be available on the day, along with representatives from the the Energy and Water Ombudsman, Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman, City West Water, Centrelink and the Department of Human Services. Please note that no money will be paid towards any bills.

Details: 10:00am-2:00pm; Tarneit Community Learning Centre, 150 Sunset Views Boulevard, Tarneit; for further details, contact Wyndham Legal Service on (03) 9741 0198 or admin@wyndhamls.org.au or Footscray Community Legal Centre on (03) 9689 8444 or admin@footscrayclc.org.au.

"Tree of Life" performances, Casula

Thursday 23 and Friday 24 May, Casula NSW

"Tree of Life" tells the true life stories of young refugees from Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran and Serbia who attend Miller High School and Intensive English Centre, Liverpool Boys High School and Fairvale High School. It provides a powerful insight into the refugee experience as told by the children who experienced it.

Details: tickets \$25.00 (\$15.00 concession/children under 16) or \$2.00 for school groups; Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, 1 Powerhouse Road, Casula; for performance times and to book tickets, call (02) 9824 1121 or visit <http://www.casulapowerhouse.com/booknow>.

Fundraising trivia night for Karenni community

Friday 24 May, Werribee VIC

On Friday 22nd March a massive fire broke out in a Karenni refugee camp in the Khun Yuam District, Mae Hong Son Province, Thailand. The incident left 37 dead and others seriously injured, and completely ravaged two sections of the camp destroying 395 houses and the limited possessions of 2,300 refugees (two-thirds of the camp population). The Karenni Federation of Australia is raising funds to support families affected by the fire. There will be a raffle and games on the night so bring your gold coins to play along. BYO food and drink.

Details: \$10.00 per person; 6:30pm for a 7:00pm start; Wayaperri House, 106 Duncans Road, Werribee; numbers are limited. To book, contact Ruth on 0428 762 378 or csi@citywestwater.com.au, or Kathy on (03) 9742 4013) or kathyb@wyndhamcec.org.au.

Job seeking strategies for migrants and refugees

Friday 24 May, Friday 31 May and Friday 7 June, Bonnyrigg NSW

These information sessions are designed for migrants and refugees who are currently looking for work and are interested in working in the community services industry. Topics covered will include an introduction to the community services industry, job seeking strategies and networking.

Details: 10:00am-1:00pm each day; NSW SLASA Central Office, Bonnyrigg Community Centre, Bonnyrigg Plaza Shopping Centre, Bonnyrigg; for more information or to confirm your attendance, please contact Carlos Encina at 0414 825 085 or slasacarlos@yahoo.com.au, or Miguel Ferrero at otpnnsw@gmail.com.

RIDE for Refugees Brisbane

Saturday 25 May, Nundah QLD

An initiative of International Teams, RIDE for Refugees Australia is a non-competitive, family-friendly cycling event designed to raise awareness and funds for refugee ministries both in Australia and around the world.

Details: 9:00am-3:00pm; Albert Bishop Park Criterium Circuit (enter from Hedley Avenue). Nundah; for further details and to register, visit <https://rideforrefugees.com.au/brisbane>.

Africa Day Festival

Sunday 26 May, Brisbane QLD

The festival brings together African communities to celebrate their cultures with each other and the broader community. The event showcases African art, clothing, dance, music and food, with many

activities for families and children. There will be workshops on African drumming, dancing and many other activities. Enjoy an authentic African lunch, browse the many African inspired craft stalls and stay for the traditional performances on stage.

Details: 10:00am-5:00pm; African House, 38 Lytton Road, East Brisbane; for further details, visit <http://www.qacc.com.au>.

VicHealth seminar: Reducing race-based discrimination

Tuesday 28 May, Carlton VIC

This event will feature two presentations. In the first, Dr Dennis Wollersheim and Lee Koh and from La Trobe University will provide an overview of their recently completed VicHealth Innovation Research project entitled "Overcoming social isolation and disadvantage among refugee women through mobile phone peer support". The project aimed to explore if a system of peer support with peer listening training sessions and increased access to service providers through the provision of mobile phones could improve refugee women's resettlement outcomes and psychosocial wellbeing. In the second, Associate Professor Yin Paradies from Deakin University will report on the latest research on bystander intervention against racism. Associate Professor Paradies will discuss Victorians' views on a range of racist scenarios and report what they actually did the last time they witnessed racism.

Details: 12:30pm-2:00pm; VicHealth Seminar Rooms, 15-31 Pelham Street Carlton; RSVP by 20 May to cmckeone@vichealth.vic.gov.au or call (03) 9667 1368.

CEH workshop: Understanding the sexual health and wellbeing needs of refugee young people

Wednesday 29 May, Richmond VIC

The migration and refugee experience often means young people miss out on sexual health and wellbeing education prior to settlement in Australia. The stigma surrounding sexually transmitted infections and other sexual health issues, along with low English proficiency, can prove to be a major barrier to these people seeking out information. This workshop aims to help participants build refugee young people's knowledge, their access to services and capacity to make informed choices. Hosted by the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health (CEH).

Details: \$150.00 includes morning tea and lunch; 9:15am-1:00pm; North Richmond Community Health, 23 Lennox Street, Richmond; register online at <http://centrech.wufoo.eu/forms/sexual-health-needs-of-refugee-young-people>; for further information, call (03) 9481 9929 or e-mail <mailto:enquiries@ceh.org.au>.

Darwin Waterfront Harmony Solree

Saturday 1 June, Darwin NT

This event provides an opportunity for multicultural community groups to showcase their culture and talent to the wider community. It will include food, entertainment, come and try activities and a lantern flotilla.

Details: from 4:00pm; Darwin Waterfront Precinct.

Open days at Rooty Hill mosque

Saturday 1 and Sunday 2 June, Mount Druitt NSW

Hosted by Noble Mission Australia, the aim of this event is to provide an opportunity for different communities to come closer together and understand each other better. Highlights will include guided tours of the mosque, an Islamic exhibition, Q&A sessions, a BBQ, face painting and jumping castle.

Details: 10:00am-4:00pm; 33 Headcorn Street, Mount Druitt; for further details including transport information, call 1800 786 000 or visit <http://www.noblemission.com.au>.

"Tree of Life" performances, Kirribilli

Monday 3 June and Monday 22 July, Kirribilli NSW

"Tree of Life" tells the true life stories of young refugees from Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran and Serbia who attend Miller High School and Intensive English Centre, Liverpool Boys High School and Fairvale High School. It provides a powerful insight into the refugee experience as told by the children who experienced it.

Details: tickets \$35.00 (\$20.00 concession/children under 16) or \$10.00 for school groups (matinee); Ensemble Theatre, 78 McDougall Street, Kirribilli; for performance times and to book tickets, call (02) 9929 0644.

"No Closed Doors" forum

Monday 3 June, Bankstown NSW

Presented by Metro Migrant Resource Centre, this forum is about improving employment outcomes for newly arrived migrants and refugees. The keynote speaker will be Dr Prins Ralston, Executive Leader, Mission Australia, who will present his approach on helping individuals overcome barriers which prevent them from finding and staying in work.

Details: 9:00am for a 9:30am start followed by a networking lunch at 12:30pm; Gillawarna Room, Level 2, Bankstown Sports Club, 8 Greenfield Parade, Bankstown; RSVP by 27 May to metromrc@metromrc.org.au or call (02) 9789 3744.

Free Foundation House workshop: Schools and Families Working Together

Tuesday 4 June, Brunswick VIC

This workshop will look at how schools can build on their existing practices and provide bridges into the language and unwritten 'rules' of participating in school life in Australia. This workshop also provides an opportunity to consider the role of social inclusion as part of school life and the role that teachers and schools can play in contributing to this.

Details: 4:00pm-7:00pm; Foundation House, 6 Gardiner Street, Brunswick; register online at <http://www.trybooking.com/CDSZ>; for registration enquiries, call (03) 9389 8965 or e-mail pdregistrations@foundationhouse.org.au.

Asylum: Obligation to Need

Wednesday 5 June, Carlton VIC

Presented by Raimond Gaita is Professorial Fellow at Melbourne Law School and the Faculty of Arts, University of Melbourne, this lecture will discuss the implications of the likely increase in forced displacement during the 21st century resulting from deepening political instability in many regions of the earth and the effects of climate change. This event is part of the "Wednesday Lectures" series.

Details: 7:00pm-8:30pm; Melbourne Law School, 185 Pelham Street, Carlton; this is a free event but bookings are essential. Register online at <http://www.law.unimelb.edu.au>, e-mail law-events@unimelb.edu.au or call (03) 9035 1111.

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

Thursday 6 June, 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 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; STARTTS, 152-168 The Horsley Drive, Carramar; register online at <http://www.startts.org.au>.

News from Nauru and Messages from Manus

Thursday 6 June, Sydney NSW

This event will feature presentations from Ellen Hansen, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR Regional Office, Canberra, on UNHCR's reports on its missions to the offshore processing centres in Nauru and Manus Island; Professor Gillian Triggs, President, Australian Human Rights Commission, on the Commission's human rights concerns relating to offshore processing; and barristers and solicitors currently representing asylum seekers in Nauru.

Details: 6:00pm-8:00pm; Wotton + Kearney, Level 5, Aurora Place, 88 Phillip Street, Sydney; RSVP to comms@pilchsw.org.au.

NEW RESEARCH, STATEMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

Report on returns of South Sudanese refugees

"Do Not Send Us So We Can Become Refugees Again: From 'nationals of a hostile state' to deportees: South Sudanese in Israel", examines Israel's collective non-removal policy towards asylum seekers. The report focusses in particular on the case of the South Sudanese following Israel's decision to no longer

apply this policy and its aggressive campaign of arrest and deportation in mid-2012 of 1,038 asylum seekers to the newly independent state. Download the full paper at:

http://www.ardc-israel.org/sites/default/files/do_not_send_us.pdf

Former Burundian refugees in Tanzania

A new report examines the predicament of 162,000 former Burundian refugees living in legal limbo in Tanzania. Having been accepted for naturalisation and having denounced their Burundian nationality, they are now unable to get certificates confirming their new status. The situation facing this group is the subject of a paper launched by the International Refugee Rights Initiative. "I can't be a citizen if I am still a refugee" builds on research conducted in 2008. The new research, conducted in late 2012, asked whether or not naturalisation has translated into genuine citizenship for this group of (former) refugees both legally and practically. Based on 101 interviews with former refugees, local government officials and members of the host community, as well as engagement with national government officials, the findings show that the former refugees are caught between refugee status and the genuine assertion of their new citizenship. Download at: <http://www.refugee-rights.org/htdocs/Assets/PDFs/2013/ICantBeACitizen-FINAL.pdf>

Human rights report on abuses against Rohingya in Burma

A Human Rights Watch report "All You Can Do is Pray: Crimes Against Humanity and Ethnic Cleansing of Rohingya Muslims in Burma's Arakan State", describes the role of the Burmese government and local authorities in the forcible displacement of more than 125,000 Rohingya and other Muslims and the ongoing humanitarian crisis. Read the report at: <http://hrw.org/node/114882>

Refugee protection for LGBTI people

The *Forced Migration Review* report on "Sexual orientation and gender identity and the protection of forced migrants" is now online at www.fmreview.org/sogi. Around the world, people face abuse, arbitrary arrest, extortion, violence, severe discrimination and lack of official protection because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. This latest issue of FMR includes 26 articles on the abuse of rights of forced migrants who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex. Authors discuss both the challenges faced and examples of good practice in securing protection for LGBTI forced migrants.

New SBS Radio schedule to include six new languages

SBS has launched a new analogue and digital radio schedule which includes programs in six new languages, expansion of existing programming for language groups which have grown significantly and a new digital only channel for 21 languages that is available on digital television, online and mobile apps. For the first time SBS will deliver news and information in Malayalam, Dinka, Hmong, Pashto, Swahili and Tigrinya. For more information on the new SBS Radio Schedule please visit: www.sbs.com.au/radio or contact Nikita Jacka, Communications Specialist at nikita.jacka@sbs.com.au or Marina Saggars, Corporate Communications Specialist at marina.saggars@sbs.com.au

Kids Helpline Information sheet

The Kids Helpline has published an information sheet on Cultural and Linguistic Diversity (CALD), which outlines issues affecting children and young people who have arrived as refugees. Read more at: <http://www.kidshelp.com.au/upload/22935.pdf>

Analysis of long-term immigration detention

Humanitarian Research Partners has published an analysis of the Commonwealth Ombudsman's review of asylum seekers held in long-term immigration detention. The analysis found that of the 2012 reviews, 184 (61%) were asylum seekers who had been in immigration detention for two years or more, while 80% of asylum seekers reviewed suffered from mental health problems. The analysis is available at: <http://bit.ly/10X0FyS>

Fact sheet on bridging visas

The Australian Human Rights Commission has released a fact sheet on asylum seekers released into the community on bridging visas. Access the fact sheets at: <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/tell-me-about-bridging-visas-asylum-seekers>

Urban refugee protection policies

According to current estimates, as many as almost 7 million refugees and asylum seekers are living in cities, potentially more than half of the world's refugees. This UNHCR study of urban refugees is based on a detailed survey sent to the agency's 24 programs with urban refugee programs that numbered more than 5,000. The survey attempts to gauge the rate of implementation for each of the 24 UNHCR operations against the 12 protection strategies outlined in the policy. Read more here: <http://bit.ly/15Ox6bV>

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>.

Community Engagement Officers needed for AEC

The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) is recruiting Community Engagement Officers to work on an intermittent basis for six months (with possible extension) in Western Sydney on programs to inform communities on their electoral rights and responsibilities in the lead-up to the September 2013 election. The officer will use their community networks to identify opportunities for delivering electoral education and will deliver these sessions with support from AEC staff. An understanding and/or interest in Australia's electoral system is desirable. A current driver's license is also a requirement. Applicants will need strong social networks and proficiency in one or more of the following languages: Vietnamese; Cantonese; Arabic; Mandarin; Korean; Spanish; Khmer, Iraqi (Assyrian neo-Aramaic); Persian-Farsi; Afghani; Burmese; and Sudanese (Dinka). Officers will be trained in program content, equipped with suitable resources and supported by an AEC officer to deliver the education sessions. Further details about the positions and selection criteria can be obtained by calling AEC Recruitment Services on 02 6271 4730 or visit <http://www.aec.gov.au/employment/>

Nominate for Victorian Refugee Recognition Record

Nominations for the 2013 Victorian Refugee Recognition Record have been extended to 5pm, Tuesday, 21 May. The VRRR celebrates and documents the diverse contributions that people of refugee background have made to their own communities and to the State of Victoria. Since its inception in 2004, over 170 individuals have been inducted to the VRRR. Nomination forms are available at www.multicultural.vic.gov.au. Contact the Victorian Multicultural Commission on (03) 9651 0638 for further information.

Call for papers on statelessness

The *Tilburg Law Review* is accepting contributions for a Statelessness Special Issue to be published in January 2014. The deadline for the submission of abstracts for approval is 1 June, 2013. The deadline for submissions (between 2,000 and 3,000 words) is 15 September, 2013. Enquiries can be directed to tilburglawreview@uvt.nl

Let's talk to help refugees with conversational English

Amnesty International in Western Australia is starting a trial project to assist new arrivals with non-accredited, conversational English and general life skills. Volunteer tutors will provide hourly one-on-one sessions on a variety of general topics like transport, shopping and connecting with the community. To assist or participate as a student, contact waaia@amnesty.org.au (attention: Let's Talk) or call 08 9476 4800. Sessions at Amnesty's Perth office in Suite 70, Plaistowe Mews (opposite City West train station) start in May-June on Mondays between 10am and 2pm. Bookings are essential.

Workshops in Victoria to understand self-destructive behaviour

Safe in Oz are holding accredited training workshops on working with individuals who have self-destructive behaviour. The two-day workshops will be held at Ballarat, Geelong, Bairnsdale, Pakenham, Sale and Shepparton starting in May. The workshops aim to provide participants an insight into the headspace of a person who participates in self-destructive behaviour/s in order to better understand their 'real' world and life experiences. The workshop will discuss the connection of this behaviour and suicide, BPD (Borderline Personality Disorder), mental illness, sexual assault and domestic violence, offering an insight of the link with adolescence. The presentation is interactive and activity-based and

includes real case studies, PowerPoint presentation, DVD and an interactive game. Places are limited. Please see www.safeinoz.com.au for details.

Plural + video competition open

The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) are inviting young people up to 25 years of age from around the world to submit original and creative videos of five minutes focusing on PLURAL+ themes: migration, diversity and social inclusion. Three winners in the age categories of 9 to 12; 13-17; and 18-25 will be invited to New York, all travel expenses paid, to present their work at the PLURAL + 2013 Awards Ceremony at the Paley Center for Media on the 5th of December 2013. The deadline for video submissions is 30 June, 2013. Early submissions are encouraged. Further information, including guidelines, regulations, awards, and the entry form can be found at the PLURAL+ website at: www.unaoc.org/pluralplus. Further details can be accessed via plural@unaoc.org

Dorothea Mackellar CRC NSW Poetry Award

Entries are open for the Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards, the largest poetry writing competition for school students in Australia. The Community Relations Commission NSW sponsors one of the awards in the competition which is given to a poem highlighting the value of cultural diversity within Australian community, in particular by commenting on the cultural diversity of people (or their descendants) who have migrated to Australia, exploring interactions and experiences of migrants (or their descendants) after their arrival in Australia, or reflecting on the life of migrants (or their descendants) in Australia in comparison to their life before coming to Australia. The winner receives a trophy, prize pack, and \$500 cheque, presented at a ceremony. Entries close 30 June, 2013. For more details, visit <http://www.dorothea.com.au/awards.php>

Community services job discussion

Refugees currently looking for work and interested in working in the community services industry are invited to attend group discussions with presenters and other job seekers at Bonnyrigg, Western Sydney. The presentations – a partnership between the Spanish and Latin American Association for Social Assistance (NSW SLASA) and Overseas Trained Professionals Network, and funded by Mounties Club – are held on Fridays between 10.00am and 1.00pm starting with an introduction to the community services industry Friday, 24 May; looking for jobs in the industry (Friday, 31 May); and networking in the industry (Friday, 7 June). The discussions will be held at the NSW SLASA Central Office, Bonnyrigg Community Centre, Bonnyrigg Plaza Shopping Centre. For more information and/or to confirm your attendance, please contact Carlos Encina at slasacarlos@yahoo.com.au and 0414 825 085 or Miguel Ferrero at otpnsw@gmail.com.

Express yourself in writing

Young people aged 12 to 29 years who have a migrant or refugee background are being sought to be part of an exciting creative expression and writing workshop series at The Hub in Heidelberg West, Melbourne. The free workshops will be held fortnightly between May and November. Submissions will be published and authors paid \$100 for the final piece. To enquire or apply contact Alia on 03 9094 7891 or global@expressmedia.org.au

Women building resilient communities training course

The Victorian Immigrant and Refugee Women's Coalition is holding a seven-day training course in Dandenong on Wednesdays and Fridays between June and August. The free course is limited to 20 places and is suitable for women aged 18 years and over from African, Middle Eastern or Asian background who live in Casey, Greater Dandenong, Frankston or Monash and have a passion for building peaceful and harmonious communities. Applications close 9 June. To apply or to find out more, contact 0487 386 507 or su.sullivan@virwc.org.au

REFUGEE ISSUES IN THE MEDIA

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

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

Iranians now Australia's largest nation of asylum-seekers

Three south Asian countries are surfacing on people smugglers' manifolds this year as the changing face of asylum seekers is revealed in new figures. More Vietnamese and Burmese people are braving the perilous sea journey to Australia than ever before and nearly 250 people have arrived from Bangladesh this year - the first time the country has appeared in official statistics. (Herald-Sun, 1 April)

<http://bit.ly/11dnBBR>

Two more asylum boats arrive

Foreign Minister Bob Carr has once again called on Australian Opposition Leader Tony Abbott to compromise on border protection policy and help the government resurrect its refugee swap deal with Malaysia. (Sky News, 1 April) <http://www.skynews.com.au/national/article.aspx?id=859585>

Take more 'official refugees', Indonesia says

Indonesia will ask Australia to accept more refugees through official channels to lighten its burden as tens of thousands of asylum seekers make their way to Australia. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 2 April)

<http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/political-news/take-more-official-refugees-indonesia-says-20130401-2h36b.html>

New rewards a chance for asylum seekers to win on points

Asylum seekers are being given rewards for good behaviour in Christmas Island's detention centre, in an attempt to avoid a return to the tensions that led to riots and violent clashes with authorities two years ago. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 2 April)

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/new-rewards-a-chance-for-asylum-seekers-to-win-on-points-20130401-2h32q.html>

Australia seeks new partners to help process asylum seekers

People smuggling and human trafficking will be "more thoroughly criminalised" across the Asia Pacific region as Australia struggles to deal with the latest influx of asylum seekers. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 2 April) <http://bit.ly/1OuWr23>

Govt wants more refugee processing deals

Australia has appealed to other countries in the region to consider establishing refugee processing centres similar to those already in place on Nauru and Manus Island in Papua New Guinea. Immigration Minister Brendan O'Connor says the Australian government is keen to discuss the possibility of setting up refugee processing centres in other countries in the region. (The Australian, 2 April)

<http://bit.ly/13oWlr9>

Libs reject call to back Malaysia deal

The opposition has rejected a call from Foreign Minister Bob Carr to help resurrect the refugee swap deal with Malaysia, calling it a "bad deal for Australia". The deal, which would have seen 800 asylum seekers sent to Malaysia for processing in exchange for 4000 processed refugees, was in 2011 ruled unlawful by the High Court. (The Australian, 2 April) <http://bit.ly/16PMW5p>

Govt asylum seeker policy fails: Greens

The federal government has fundamentally failed to stop asylum seekers from making the journey to Australia and they must immediately resettle people here to prevent more tragedy, the Australian Greens say. Senator Sarah Hanson-Young said experts have frequently said the best way to reduce the number of people making the dangerous journey to Australia was to give them a safe passage here. (The Australian, 2 April) <http://bit.ly/10tOkUr>

UN warning on 'unilateral' boat action

A senior United Nations official has welcomed a regional agreement on efforts to combat people smuggling, but has warned against nations taking "unilateral action" to address the problem. (The Australian, 3 April) <http://bit.ly/13dRL5g>

Children should leave Manus: Aristotle

Asylum seeker children and their families should be taken off Manus Island if the Australian government can't ensure adequate safeguards, a member of the government's asylum review panel says. (The Australian, 4 April) <http://bit.ly/11P5Xic>

Asylum views not exclusive to Aust: PM

Prime Minister Julia Gillard says anti-asylum seeker views are not exclusive to Australia and her government has not sought to demonise would-be refugees. Ms Gillard was asked by a BBC reporter at a Foreign Correspondents' Association event in Sydney if she took responsibility for the "ugly" debate about asylum seekers in Australia. The prime minister denied the issue was an Australian phenomenon, saying a similar debate was occurring in European countries. (The Australian, 4 April) <http://bit.ly/YBmbin>

Refugees to learn of ASIO's findings

Refugees kept in indefinite detention by adverse ASIO assessments will be told why they have been deemed threats to national security for the first time, an independent reviewer says. Retired Federal Court judge Margaret Stone told asylum seekers and their lawyers that she expected to receive all unclassified summaries of ASIO's reasons by the end of April, which would then be forwarded to their lawyers. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 5 April) <http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/political-news/refugees-to-learn-of-asios-findings-20130404-2h9td.html>

Asylum seeker flood highlights weakness in Malaysia deal, opposition says

More than 800 asylum seekers - the amount the government wanted to send to Malaysia under its people swap deal to stop ongoing arrivals - have arrived in Australia in only a week. (news.com.au, 8 April) <http://bit.ly/14PdW3L>

If you won't free us, kill us instead, say hunger-strikers

Refugees branded threats to national security are asking the government to release them from detention - or kill them. The 28 asylum seekers - 25 Tamils, two Burmese Rohingyas and one Iranian - at the Melbourne Immigration Transit Accommodation in Broadmeadows began a hunger strike in the early hours of Monday. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 9 April) <http://bit.ly/12Bhgi1>

Alarm as asylum-seeker boat reaches mainland

Two brothers testing out a new dinghy in Geraldton yesterday came across the first asylum-seeker boat in five years to come within sight of mainland Australia undetected, carrying 66 Sri Lankans. (The Australian, 10 April) <http://bit.ly/11P6Pn4>

Fight over next port of call for Geraldton asylum seekers

Refugee advocates fear the Sri Lankan asylum seekers who survived an epic 8000-kilometre journey by sea to Geraldton will be returned without their protection claims being heard. Immigration Minister Brendan O'Connor said on Wednesday the group would be sent to Christmas Island, despite having landed on the mainland, to deter others from making the same journey. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 11 April) <http://bit.ly/12Km4Pf>

Coalition tow-back plan could be 'act of piracy'

Former Defence chief Chris Barrie says the Coalition's vow to turn boats around on the high seas could constitute piracy in some circumstances. He said if boats were seaworthy and appeared to be exercising their freedom of movement on the high seas, any move by the navy to board the boat could be a breach of international laws. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 12 April) <http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/political-news/coalition-towback-plan-could-be-act-of-piracy-20130411-2hobd.html>

Asylum seeker boat sinks, killing five

At least five asylum seekers are believed to have drowned after their boat sank in the Sunda Strait while on the way from Indonesia to Australia. Details of the unfolding tragedy emerged after authorities in Indonesia spent the day scrambling for information following reports that an asylum seeker vessel had sunk earlier on Friday. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 13 April) <http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/political-news/asylumseeker-boat-sinks-killing-five-20130412-2hr30.html>

Rohingyas the next wave to seek Australian refuge

Two years ago the Indonesian office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees had less than 50 Rohingya asylum-seekers on its books. Today there are more than 800 and nearly all are trying to get to Australia. (The Australian, 13 April) <http://bit.ly/13pEEND>

Asylum seekers to be live-in help

Asylum seekers will be used as live-in companions for retirees and to "help out" on farms across WA under a new homestay scheme starting next month and backed by the Immigration Department. Live-Every West Australian with a spare room is being urged to sign up for the Homestay Helping Hand program, with hosts paid \$50 a week for each asylum seeker in exchange for providing board and food. (The Sunday Times, 14 April)

<http://www.perthnow.com.au/news/western-australia/live-in-asylum-help/story-fnhocxo3-1226619913670>

PNG asylum centre needs upgrade: DIAC

Australia's immigration department says its asylum seeker processing centre on Papua New Guinea's Manus Island is cramped, lacks proper amenities and needs an urgent upgrade. (The Australian, 15 April) <http://bit.ly/107TYOv>

Liberal ad links asylum seekers to street crime

The Liberal Party has posted an ad on social media linking the arrival of asylum seekers to street crime in western Sydney. The banner was posted on the Liberal Party of Australia's Facebook page yesterday and was 'liked' by more than 680 people. (ABC News, 15 April)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-04-15/liberal-party-ad-links-asylum-seekers-to-street-crime/4630088>

Policies unaffected by hunger strikes: PM

Prime Minister Julia Gillard says asylum seekers going on hunger strike won't succeed in pressuring the government to change its policies. Ms Gillard was commenting on a group of 27 asylum seekers on hunger strike at a Melbourne detention centre. (The Australian, 15 April) <http://bit.ly/ZpTfle>

Opposition to send all boat arrivals offshore

A coalition government will send all asylum seekers arriving by boat to offshore processing centres, Opposition Leader Tony Abbott says. Temporary protection visas would be reintroduced and he would reserve the option of turning asylum seeker boats around, where it was safe to do so. A coalition government would also continue the policy of processing boat arrivals offshore. (9 News, 16 April)

<http://news.ninemsn.com.au/national/2013/04/16/14/33/opn-to-send-all-boat-arrivals-offshore>

Manus Island detention centre 'inhumane, unsafe'

The Immigration Department has slammed temporary accommodation facilities for asylum seekers on Papua New Guinea's Manus Island at a parliamentary committee. In a submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, the Department says a permanent facility is urgently needed to replace the current temporary processing centre on Manus Island. (SBS Radio, 17 April)

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/1757002/Manus-Island-presents-health-risk-to-detainees-Immigration-Dept>

38 Geraldton boat arrivals sent back to Sri Lanka

The federal government has forcibly returned 38 asylum seekers who made an epic 44-day boat voyage to Geraldton last week. They will not be entitled to reintegration assistance. Immigration Minister Brendan O'Connor said none of those returned had raised issues that engaged protection obligations. (The Age, 19 April)

<http://www.theage.com.au/opinion/political-news/38-geraldton-boat-arrivals-sent-back-to-sri-lanka-20130418-2i31q.html>

'Don't let me die over a fax error'

An errant fax could be the difference between life and death, Ethiopian asylum seeker Dereje Tessema says. Mr Tessema was a high-ranking government official in Ethiopia before defecting and moving to Melbourne in 2011, where he claimed asylum. But he faces forcible deportation in as little as two weeks, after an administrative bungle meant his appeal to the Refugee Review Tribunal was not sent. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 19 April) <http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/political-news/dont-let-me-die-over-a-fax-error-20130418-2i2yw.html>

Govt slammed for sending back Sri Lankans

The immigration department has been accused of denying 38 failed Sri Lankan asylum seekers access to legal advice before sending them back to their homeland. Australian Human Rights Commission president Gillian Triggs said she was profoundly concerned that Australia had employed an "enhanced screening process" in recent months for Sri Lankan boat arrivals. (The West Australian, 19 April)

<http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/a/-/national/16810274/govt-slammed-for-sending-back-sri-lankans/>

No lawyer contact for expelled asylum seekers

Some of the Sri Lankan asylum seekers deported on Thursday did not speak with lawyers before they were expelled, Immigration Minister Brendan O'Connor has confirmed. The government on Thursday sent 39 Sri Lankans home on a charter flight, including 38 of the 66 asylum seekers who arrived in Geraldton after 44 days at sea last week. The group was sent back after being subject to "enhanced screening" processes, in which people are "screened out" of the refugee determination process, before they have entered into the formal processing period. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 20 April)

<http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/political-news/no-lawyer-contact-for-expelled-asylum-seekers-20130419-2i4ni.html>

Serco profits rise as detention contracts hit \$1.86m

Private security company Serco's contracts with the government have blown out by \$1.5 billion, as Australia's border protection system strains under the weight of increased flows of asylum seekers. Serco Australia, a division of a British multinational, provides immigration detention services for the government, and has two contracts with it that have been active since 2009. But those contracts have ballooned from \$323 million four years ago to a record \$1.86 billion this year. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 20 April)

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/serco-profits-rise-as-detention-contracts-hit-186bn-20130419-2i5ln.html>

Asylum seeker industry's \$8 billion money spinner

A surge in asylum seekers held in detention centres on Australia's mainland and Pacific island outposts is proving to be a growing money spinner for companies contracted by the Immigration Department. A long list of companies including charter airlines, hire firms and blue-chip transport companies entered into, or held, contracts with the department last year. Across all its operations, the department had contracts worth more than \$8 billion last year. (The Sunday Age, 21 April)

<http://www.theage.com.au/national/asylum-seeker-industrys-8-billion-money-spinner-20130420-2i781.html>

ASIO justifies 'black hole' for refugees

ASIO has made startling allegations - such as plots to kill, training soldiers or terrorists, forging documents and people smuggling - to justify the indefinite incarceration of dozens of refugees as security threats to Australia. But ASIO has given no detailed explanation to back up its assertions, raising serious doubts about the sincerity of a new review into the cases and an escape for what has been dubbed a "legal black hole" of indefinite detention. (The Sun-Herald, 21 April)

<http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/political-news/asio-justifies-black-hole-for-refugees-20130420-2i72o.html>

Carr reveals plan to take lead role in aid for Syrian refugees

Australia has taken a lead role in Syria's humanitarian crisis amid warnings that if not resolved within months, the world would have to deal with the greatest exodus of refugees since World War II. Foreign Minister Bob Carr last night took an emergency aid plan to a meeting of European foreign leaders and the Arab League last night, which will see Australia immediately boost its medical and food aid by \$24 million for the two million people so far forced from their homes. (The Australian, 22 April)

<http://bit.ly/10legkx>

Abbott sparks ire with talk of 'illegals'

Tony Abbott's office has defended his continued use of the word "illegal" when describing the arrival of asylum seeker boats by referring to the UN Refugee Convention. But the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, based in Canberra, says it does not use the word "illegal", and nor does it encourage people to use the word to describe asylum boats. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 23 April)

<http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/political-news/abbott-sparks-ire-with-talk-of-illegals-20130422-2i9zq.html>

Curtin centre's future 'not decided'

No decision has been made on reopening Western Australia's Curtin detention centre to children and families, Immigration Minister Brendan O'Connor has said. Reports on Monday suggested the Immigration Department was preparing to open a section of the centre to children. (The Age, 23 April) <http://www.theage.com.au/national/curtin-centres-future-not-decided-20130422-2iaqm.html>

Abbott defends asylum tow-back plan

Federal Opposition Leader Tony Abbott has defended the coalition's plan to turn asylum seeker boats back to Indonesia, after warnings from Jakarta that it would be problematic. Mahfudz Siddiq, head of Indonesia's parliamentary commission for foreign affairs, says the plan to be implemented if the coalition wins government demonstrates Mr Abbott "doesn't understand the problem". (9 News, 23 April) <http://news.ninemsn.com.au/national/2013/04/23/09/11/abbott-a-risk-to-indon-relations-govt>

Asylum seekers a risk to farmers: Libs

Farmers in Western Australia's mid-west fear biosecurity risks if asylum seeker boats reach the mainland, federal MP Barry Haase claims. Mr Haase joined Opposition Leader Tony Abbott at a media conference in Geraldton, where a boat crammed with Sri Lankan asylum seekers arrived earlier this month after travelling more than 5000km. Some locals expressed concern Mr Abbott was using the incident to push his political agenda. But Mr Haase said it was pleasing the Liberal leader came to hear how they felt about it. (The Australian, 23 April) <http://bit.ly/ZMseiY>

Detainees in Christmas Island brawl

Security staff at the Christmas Island detention centre intervened to break up two brawling groups of detainees, the Department of Immigration has confirmed. The disturbance broke out on Sunday evening in a section of the detention centre that houses asylum seeker families and Indonesian crew members. (The Australian, 23 April) <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/detainees-in-christmas-island-brawl/story-e6frg6n6-1226627304507>

Nauru asylum centre faces legal challenge

Australia's asylum seeker processing centre on Nauru will face a legal challenge in the Pacific island nation's Supreme Court. The case involves 10 asylum seekers who are facing rioting and wilful damage charges. (Herald-Sun, 24 April) <http://bit.ly/15vJgps>

Permanent housing on Manus a mistake: Save the Children

The agency contracted to provide services to young asylum seekers on Manus Island's processing centre has urged the government not to proceed with plans to build a permanent facility on the island. Despite describing the detention centre's living conditions as "inadequate", Save the Children argues that the government should send children back to the mainland rather than construct permanent facilities for asylum seekers in the remote PNG island camp. (Coastal Leader, 24 April) <http://www.coastalleader.com.au/story/1454039/permanent-housing-on-manus-a-mistake-save-the-children/?cs=12>

Two attempt suicide at detention centre

Two people tried to commit suicide within two hours of each other at the Broadmeadows detention centre on Wednesday. One was a 17-year-old boy, who attempted suicide at the centre about 3.30pm. His condition was unclear late on Wednesday, with asylum seekers reporting an ambulance was on scene treating the boy. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 25 April) <http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/political-news/two-attempt-suicide-at-detention-centre-20130425-2ifqw.html>

Liberals promise to close Inverbrackie detention centre

The Federal Coalition will close down the Inverbrackie detention centre in the Adelaide Hills if it wins the September Federal Election. Opposition immigration spokesman Scott Morrison said policies to deter asylum seekers on boats would mean Inverbrackie, at Woodside, was no longer needed and it would be shut "as soon as practicable". (The Daily Telegraph, 28 April) <http://bit.ly/12cWlhN>

Seven months pregnant, a floor for a bed and \$6 a day for meals

Hanel Akbari is seven months pregnant and has been sleeping on the carpeted concrete floor of the dilapidated rental property in Melbourne's south-east that she and her husband, Luhru, moved into in February. With little more than a blanket to keep them warm at night, basic items such as a bed, table

and chairs are luxuries the Iranian couple cannot afford on the combined \$54 a day they receive from the federal government. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 28 April) <http://bit.ly/129wExa>

Offshore processing can't work alone: govt

The coalition's opposition to the Malaysia people swap deal has made it harder for Australia to manage asylum seeker policies, the federal government says. Immigration Minister Brendan O'Connor has again urged the opposition to help resurrect the refugee swap deal with Malaysia, saying it will act as a "significant deterrence" against dangerous boat journeys. (SBS News, 28 April)

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/1760680/Offshore-processing-cant-work-alone-govt>

Doctor says Manus Island a 'disaster' for children

Four Corners uncovers alarming conditions at the immigration facility on Manus Island, with a doctor who worked there calling it a disaster for children. A doctor who worked at the immigration centre on Manus Island says he informed authorities that the facility was inappropriate for children well before they were sent there, but nothing was done about it. (Radio Australia, 30 April)

<http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/international/2013-04-29/doctor-says-manus-island-a-disaster-for-children/1123128>

Families may be moved out of Manus: oppn

Asylum seeker families may soon be moved from Australia's Manus Island processing centre into a detention facility in Darwin, opposition immigration spokesman Scott Morrison says. Mr Morrison's comments come a day after former staff at the Papua New Guinea centre told ABC's Four Corners program that it lacked proper medical supplies and was not fit for children. (Brisbane Times, 30 April)

<http://bit.ly/16eU4YA>

Unease over Coalition detention closure plan

Despite some vehement opposition when it was announced, the Inverbrackie detention centre in the Adelaide hills had won acceptance from the local community, said the area's mayor. Bill Spragg said he feared a Coalition plan to shut the centre if it won Government would lead to loss of jobs and economic benefits for the area around the town of Woodside. (ABC News, 30 April)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-04-30/unease-over-coalition-detention-centre-plan/4659372>

Close down Manus, says ALP senator Cameron

Labor Senator Doug Cameron says the Manus Island detention centre is no place for women and children and Immigration Minister Brendan should close it.

Labor Senator Doug Cameron says the federal government's Manus Island asylum seeker processing centre is no place for women and children and should be closed down. (SBS News, 30 April)

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/1761240/Manus-asylum-centre-'adequate':-O'Connor>

Analysis: 'Illegals' and the erosion of empathy

'Illegal entries', 'stop the boats', 'jump the queue'. Why do politicians repeat prejudiced clichés? It keeps empathy at bay, so voters don't have to think too much, says one expert. Repetition of a simple phrase like 'illegal boats' influences the way you think about a subject even if it's wrong, former political advisor and author Don Watson says. (SBS News, 30 April)

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/1761364/Comment-Illegal-boats-a-political-trick-to-control>