



Refugee Council of Australia

BULLETIN FOR MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS

7 June 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

Join in the celebration of Refugee Week 2013

Refugee Week celebrations start next Saturday, 15 June with the NSW launch to be held at Pitt Street Uniting Church in Sydney between 2.00pm and 5.00pm. This year's keynote speaker is Yarrrie Bangura, star of the Baulkham Hills African Ladies Troupe, who will reflect on the significance of the Refugee Week theme "Restoring Hope". The audience will also hear from RCOA President Phil Glendenning, followed by the presentation of the 2013 NSW Humanitarian Awards, the Australian Refugee Film Festival and Dario Palermo Refugee Art Exhibition. The event will emceed by SBS News journalist and presenter Ricardo Goncalves. Entertainment, tea, coffee and refreshments will be available. Entry is free. The Victoria launch will be held in partnership with Diversitat on Monday, 17 June between 10.30am and 11.30am at the Northern Community Hub, Arunga Avenue, Norlane, Geelong. The program includes keynote speakers, presentation of the RCOA Refugee Champion Awards and live music. 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. For launch details, visit <http://www.refugeeweek.org.au/events/launches.php>. 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>. It's not too late to order Refugee Week posters via admin@refugeecouncil.org.au. 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, the NSW Community Relations Commission (major sponsor); as well as AMES (Victoria), NSW Teachers Federation and NSW AMES.

Refugee protection concerns taken to senior UNHCR officials

RCOA and the Centre for Refugee Research of the University of NSW are working together with a group of refugee community representatives and NGO representatives to raise issues of concern with the senior leadership of UNHCR in Geneva in the coming week. The issues, gathered through RCOA's consultation processes and through submissions from refugee communities in Australia, will be raised at UNHCR's NGO Consultations (11-13 June) and in six additional meetings with senior officials responsible for refugee protection, resettlement and regional bureaux of UNHCR. The issues relate to the treatment of vulnerable groups of refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons from a range of countries in Asia, Africa and the Middle East, as well as concerns about the international impacts of recent policy changes in Australia. The Australian group travelling to Geneva includes representatives of Australia's Afghan, Iraqi, Bhutanese, Somali and Sudanese communities and 10 NGOs. The NGO Consultations agenda includes discussion of a range of matters relating to refugee protection, immigration detention, resettlement and UNHCR's partnerships with NGOs.

Australian NGOs engage in global resettlement dialogue

Next week's meetings in Geneva will be followed in early July with the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (1-3 July), which will bring together NGO, government and UNHCR representatives from around 30 countries involved in refugee resettlement. Four Australian NGO representatives – Paul Power of RCOA, Cedric Manen of Settlement Council of Australia, Dr Melika Sheikh-Eldin (AMES Victoria)

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

and Paris Aristotle (Foundation House) – will participate in the dialogue, along with Australia’s designated refugee representative, Alfred Kamara, a former refugee from Liberia who works in employment services for Access Community Services in Queensland. The Department of Immigration and Citizenship’s team will be headed by Jim O’Callaghan, Assistant Secretary, Humanitarian Branch. Matters for discussion will include current resettlement needs, planning for resettlement in countries of asylum and a range of post-arrival settlement challenges.

New RCOA bibliography explores role of refugee community organisations

RCOA has published an annotated bibliography that provides a snapshot of Australian and international research on the role of refugee community organisations in supporting the settlement of new arrivals. This bibliography ties into research currently being undertaken and soon to be released by RCOA that explores the important but often unrecognised role played by refugee community organisations in settlement as well as the challenges that these organisations face. It highlights that a strengths-based approach to assisting refugees to resettle must not only focus on individual and family resilience and strengths, but also the strengths and resilience within refugee communities. Download the bibliography at: <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/rpt/2013-AnnotatedBibRCO.pdf>

RCOA reinforces concerns about pilot sponsorship program

RCOA reiterated its disappointment with the Australian Government’s pilot private sponsorship program, noting that it will create difficulties for volunteer groups to sponsor significant numbers of refugees and place greater burdens on refugee support organisations. In a statement issued after the Government formally announced the program, RCOA CEO Paul Power said the program was expensive and the refugee places would not be in addition to the 20,000 set aside under the Refugee and Humanitarian Program, which would remove incentives for achieving increased resettlement through private sponsorship. The statement also expressed concerns that the program would place additional burdens on professional refugee migrant service providers and community organisations working with them. “The Government is expecting these organisations to deliver services to assist newly-arrived refugees to a standard expected from humanitarian settlement service providers, but entirely at the cost of each organisation,” the statement said. Read more here: http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/130603_PilotProgram.pdf

Submission highlights unacceptable nature of regional processing

RCOA made a submission to the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights Examination of the Migration (Regional Processing) Package of Legislation. The submission argues that many of the measures proposed by the Expert Panel on Asylum Seekers – subsequently implemented by the Australian Government – do not provide an acceptable or effective means of addressing the tragic loss of asylum seekers’ lives at sea. It focuses on the impact of offshore processing and family reunion policy changes in Nauru and Papua New Guinea on the human rights of asylum seekers, their families as well as children and minors. The submission also addresses Australia’s obligations under the Refugee Convention, acknowledges some positive aspects of some legislative changes and argues for the Australian Government to invest more effort in regional cooperation. Read the submission here <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/sub/1304-EP.pdf>.

RCOA recommends changes to national employment services program

The Federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) has posted RCOA’s submission on Employment Services: Building on Success Discussion Paper. The submission offers a number of recommendations to further improve government-funded employment services delivered through Job Services Australia (JSA) to humanitarian entrants. The recommendations, based on RCOA’s consultations with refugee communities and refugee and asylum service providers include: better collaboration between Centrelink and settlement service providers; reviewing resourcing of JSA; introducing more tailored support to refugees in a future JSA model; development of cultural competency training for mainstream JSA staff; increasing the level of support available to asylum seekers on bridging visas; creation of a national refugee employment strategy; and greater collaboration between DEEWR, JSA providers and settlement and asylum seeker services to forge better links between employers and new arrivals looking for job opportunities outside traditional settlement areas. Read the submission here: <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/sub/1303-DEEWR.pdf>

New Policy Brief on regional cooperation

RCOA's latest Policy Brief focuses on a practical and constructive alternative to Australia's current asylum seeker policies: regional cooperation on refugee protection. It looks at the challenges faced by people seeking protection in the Asia-Pacific region, the ways in which countries in the region could work together to address gaps in protection and support, lessons learned from previous attempts at regional cooperation and practical steps Australia could take to advance regional cooperation and improve protections for refugees and asylum seekers. The brief can be downloaded at <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/pb/PB1306-Regional.pdf>

Tell us your *Bright Ideas!*

RCOA is launching a new publication called *Bright Ideas*, which will highlight innovative programs, initiatives and projects developed to support refugees, asylum seekers and other humanitarian entrants. It aims to provide a way to share ideas, success stories and good practice to improve service provision and assist organisations and communities in addressing key issues and challenges. *Bright Ideas* will be circulated amongst RCOA's members and supporters and published on our website. If you would like to share information about a project or initiative through *Bright Ideas*, contact RCOA's Information and Policy Officer, Lucy Morgan, on (02) 9211 9333 or info@refugeecouncil.org.au

Inquest into asylum boat tragedy

Marco Tedeschi, a barrister based in Perth, is seeking information relating to the inquest into the deaths of people on a boat which sank between Indonesia and north-west Australia on 21 June 2012. Mr Tedeschi is counsel assisting the coroner for the inquest, which is likely to begin in late June. The inquest will examine the circumstances of the sinking of the vessel and the rescue efforts by various parties, including the Indonesian authorities and Australian Maritime Authority. The inquest will, as well, seek to establish the identification of the deceased persons, which persons are missing, presumed dead and the cause of death. Recommendations may be made concerning emergency communications and international rescue efforts. Should survivors, families of people who were on the boat or concerned agencies wish to raise specific matters of concern that they could do so by contacting Mr Tedeschi by phone on (08) 9323 7704, by fax on (08) 6315 3399 or by email at mteseschi@johntoohychambers.net.au

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

For information about Refugee Week events taking place across Australia, visit www.refugeeweek.org.au

Mornington Peninsula Interfaith Festival

Sunday 9 June, Mornington VIC

This annual festival is a celebration of multiculturalism and multifaith in the Mornington Peninsula area and across Victoria. The festival celebrates the diversity of cultures and faiths through music, dance, art, film, workshops and food. Highlights include a Multifaith Blessing, art and film exhibitions, stalls, food, kids' activities and a multicultural concert with performances from Aboriginal, Cook Islands, African-Ghanese and Maori communities.

Details: 12:30pm-5:30pm; Mornington Community Theatre, cnr Nepean Highway and Wilsons Road, Mornington; for further details, visit <http://www.interfaithfestival.com.au>.

Conference: Multiculturalism and Future of CALD Community Organisations

Wednesday 12 June, Canley Vale NSW

This conference aims to provide a platform to discuss the current situation and future of CALD community organisations in NSW. Speakers will include the Hon Chris Bowen MP, member for McMahon; the Hon Kate Lundy MP, Minister for Multicultural Affairs; Stepan Kerkysharian AO, Chairperson of the NSW Community Relations Commission; and Jock Collins, Professor of Social Economics at the University of Technology, Sydney.

Details: Cabra-Vale Diggers, 1 Bartley Street, Canley Vale; for further details, contact Carlos Encina on 0414 825 085.

Get Started: Small business finance for new Australians

Wednesday 12 June, Toowoomba QLD

This information session is for migrant community members interested in setting up a small business. Many new Australians have run small businesses in their previous country of residence but say a major hurdle in restarting their businesses again in Australia is finding out how to raise small business finance so as to kick start their business efforts. The session is suitable for new Australians from all cultural backgrounds.

Details: 5:15pm-7:30pm; Burke and Wills Hotel, 554 Ruthven Street, Toowoomba; for further details, contact David Barton at Mercy Family Services on (07) 4617 7600 or david.barton@mfsq.org.au.

Drum Circle facilitator and teacher training

Friday 14 June to Sunday 16 June, Penrith NSW

This training program allows teachers and community leaders to gain the skills and tools to both facilitate interactive drumming experiences and teach an African Drumming program in schools, community organisations or non-profit groups

Details: \$395.00 (early bird rate \$375.00); Friday 6:00pm-9:00pm, Saturday 9:00am-6:00pm, Sunday 10:00pm-5:00pm; for further details and to book, visit <http://afrobeat.com.au/Training.php>.

Sydney launch of Refugee Week 2013

Saturday 15 June, Sydney NSW

Hosted by RCOA and Friends of STARTTS in partnership with the Australian Refugee Film Festival, the Sydney launch of Refugee Week will feature the Dario Palermo Refugee Art Exhibition, presentation of 2013 Refugee Humanitarian Awards, a screening of the film festival, speakers and entertainment. All members and supporters of RCOA are invited to attend.

Details: 2:00pm-5:00pm; Pitt Street Uniting Church, 264 Pitt Street, Sydney; for further details about Refugee Week, visit <http://www.refugeeweek.org.au>.

Workshop: Developing cultural competence in Out of Home Care

Monday 17 June, Eight Mile Plains QLD

Presented by Jatinder Kaur, Director of JK Diversity Consultants, this workshop is designed for foster and kinship carers, residential and youth workers and caseworkers in Out of Home Care agencies.

Details: Key Assets Fostering, Conference Room, Building 7, Freeway Office Park, 2728 Logan Road, Eight Mile Plains; to register, e-mail support@jkdiversityconsultants.com.au or call 0422 887 579.

Simple steps: Preparing families for floods and storms

Wednesday 17 June, Toowoomba QLD

Hosted by the Agencies CALD Action Group, this workshop will explain Toowoomba's weather and seasons; how to prepare the home for floods and storms; knowing when to prepare; risks in the home during floods and storms; risks outside in floods and storms and who comes to the door during an emergency.

Details: 9:30am-12:00pm; Toowoomba Refugee and Migrant Service (TRAMS), 123 Neil Street, Toowoomba.

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

Tuesday 18 June, Armidale 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; Armidale City Bowling Club, Dangarsleigh Room, 92-96 Dumaresq Street, Armidale; register online at <http://www.startts.org.au>.

Improving mainstream support for 18-25 year olds from migrant and refugee backgrounds

Tuesday 18 June, Melbourne VIC

This half-day forum will: examine what mainstream youth service support looks like; identify challenges, gaps and good practice models in working with refugee and migrant young people; assess the factors which contribute to young people settling well and having every opportunity to succeed in Australia; include presentations from academics, service providers and government, and panel discussions with representatives from Monash University and Western Young People's Independent Network.

Details: 9:30am-1:00pm; Multicultural Hub, 506 Elizabeth Street (opposite Queen Victoria Market), Melbourne; RSVP by Friday 14 June on (03) 9340 3700 or ntan@cmv.net.au.

CEH training workshop: Improving cross cultural communication

Wednesday 19 June, Richmond VIC

Hosted by the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health (CEH), this workshop provides staff working in health and community organisations with strategies and skills to efficiently engage with individuals who have low English proficiency.

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

Immigration in diversified Australia

Thursday 20 and Friday 21 June, Melbourne VIC

While Australian society today is considered to be harmonious, controversies surrounding population, migration, and multiculturalism persist. This conference aims to provide an important framework for a review of the developments, achievement and challenges which continue to surround and impact on Australia's management of flows and settlement. It brings together regional, national and local researchers, practitioners and community agents to ask how we ensure sustainable and resilient societies in light of inevitable population growth and the increasing ethnic and religious diversity that follow.

Details: The Spot Basement Theatre, 198 Berkeley Street, University of Melbourne; for further details and to register, visit http://asiainstitute.unimelb.edu.au/events/feature_events/pmmsn_events/event_1.

Impact of intergenerational relationships on young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds

Saturday 22 June, Melbourne VIC

Young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds are constantly balancing often delicate relationships between their communities and families, and their peers. This forum will provide an opportunity and support for migrant and refugee young people aged 14 to 25 to come together and talk about issues and barriers facing them; to publicly communicate their vision for a socially cohesive Australia; and to develop practical strategies for promoting social unity in their schools and local communities.

Details: 12:00pm-4:00pm; Melbourne Multicultural Hub, 506 Elizabeth Street (opposite the Queen Victoria Market), Melbourne; RSVP by Friday 21 June to the Centre for Multicultural Youth on (03) 9340 3700 or info@cmv.net.au.

North Korea: Action to Improve human rights In the world's most brutal regime

Monday 24 June (Sydney) and Wednesday 26 June (Melbourne)

Hosted by the Human Rights Law Centre, these public lectures will feature Jared Genser, the legal counsel for the International Coalition to Stop Crimes Against Humanity in North Korea which successfully petitioned the UN to establish a Commission of Inquiry into human rights violations in North Korea. The events will canvass the current human rights situation in North Korea and also provide an opportunity to discuss Jared's work in pursuing freedom for prisoners of conscience across the globe.

Details: 12:45 to 2:00pm (Sydney) at DLA Piper Sydney, Level 38, 201 Elizabeth Street; and 6:15pm-7:30pm (Melbourne) DLA Piper Melbourne, Level 21, 140 William Street; for further details and to book tickets, visit <http://www.hrlc.org.au/category/primary/events>.

No Fire Zone: Sri Lanka's Killing Fields

Monday 24 June to Sunday 30 June, across Australia

This feature-length documentary film is about on the final months of the 26-year-long Sri Lankan civil war, told by the people who lived through it. The Australian tour of the documentary is being hosted by the Australian Tamil Congress.

Details: screenings in Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne and Perth; for further details and to book tickets, visit <http://www.australiantamilcongress.com/en/index.php/newsletter-footer/287-no-fire-zone-sri-lanka-s-killing-fields-australian-tour>, e-mail admin@australiantamilcongress.com or call 1300 660 629.

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

Tuesday 25 June, Wollongong 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; Illawarra Leagues Club, The Orchid Room, 97-99 Church Street, Wollongong; register online at <http://www.startts.org.au>.

2013 Foundation House oration: "What Prospects for the Pursuit of Global Justice?"

Wednesday 26 June, Brunswick VIC

Professor Tim McCormack, Special Adviser on International Humanitarian Law to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in The Hague and Professor of Law at the Melbourne Law School, will assess the efficacy of the global justice project. The event marks the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. Light refreshments will be provided.

Details: 6:00pm for a 6:15pm start; Foundation House, 6 Gardiner Street, Brunswick; RSVP by 21 May to Siobhan O'Mara at omaras@foundationhouse.org.au or (03) 9389 8923.

National Practitioners Forum: Building resilience in a time of uncertainty

Wednesday 26 June, Carlton VIC

Hosted by the Australian Red Cross, this one-day national forum will bring together staff, volunteers and community representatives working with asylum seekers to actively engage and discuss sustainable strategies for working with clients in a constantly changing environment. It offers an opportunity for organisations and individuals from around Australia to share information and establish best practice for the common purpose of increasing and deepening the impact of the services we offer to clients.

Details: 9:30am-3:30pm; GM15 Theatre Room, Law Building, The University of Melbourne Parkville Campus, 185 Pelham Street, Carlton; register by Tuesday 11 June via redcross_practitionersforum@redcross.org.au.

Asylum: "A Community of Nations"?

Wednesday 3 July, Carlton VIC

Presented by Dr Savitri Taylor, Associate Professor in the Law School at La Trobe University, 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 hosted by Raimond Gaita. 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.

**Short course: Strangers, Migrants and Refugees in the Bible
Wednesday 3 to Saturday 6 July, Pennant Hills NSW**

This short course will allow participants, whether they are students or pastoral ministers, to integrate a critical interpretation of various biblical passages with theology, spirituality and pastoral concerns confronting migration issues today. It will address effective pastoral responses to the issue of human dislocation and migration in our world today. The course will be presented by vanThanh Nguyen, Associate Professor of New Testament Studies and Director of the Master of Divinity Program at Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, USA.

Details: Broken Bay Institute, Caroline Chisholm Centre, 423 Pennant Hills Road (enter via City View Road), Pennant Hills; for further details and to register, visit <http://www.bbi.catholic.edu.au/news-and-events/fx-view-event.cfm?loadref=132&id=21>.

**National forum on children and young people from refugee backgrounds
Monday 15 and Tuesday 16 July, Sydney NSW**

This two-day forum will showcase research, policy and practice from around Australia relating to young people from refugee backgrounds. Day One will focus on research, presenting findings from an ambitious national multi-disciplinary project that has been examining asylum, resettlement and settlement issues as they relate to refugee children and youth. Day Two, auspiced by the Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network, will provide an opportunity for professional development and cross-sectoral collaboration for people working with young people from refugee backgrounds around Australia in the fields of health, education and training and migration law.

Details: University of Sydney Law School; for further details and to register, visit <http://sydney.edu.au/law/forum>.

NEW RESEARCH, STATEMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

Overseas aid and asylum policy

The Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce has published a policy paper to encourage the Government and Opposition to maintain and increase the protection of refugees in the countries from which they are fleeing or being hosted. The paper argues that increasing the levels of overseas aid and funding projects in refugee-source countries will prevent refugees from making the dangerous journey to Australia, and will save the Australian Government millions of dollars in the establishment and resourcing of asylum seeker services and detention centres in Australia. Read the full paper at: <http://www.australianchurchesrefugeetaskforce.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Policy-Paper-May-13.pdf>

Asylum information translated into community languages

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) website which provides information on procedures for asylum seekers arriving by boat has been translated into a number of community languages commonly spoken by people who have arrived by boat. The translations enhance the accessibility of information about how people have their protection claims processed. The site can be accessed at: www.immi.gov.au/ima

Report into Australia's female genital mutilation laws

The Federal Government has released a report into the effectiveness of Australia's laws on female genital mutilation. The report finds that female genital mutilation is comprehensively criminalised by existing laws in every Australian State and Territory but does identify a number of opportunities to further strengthen these laws and their enforcement, which State and Territory Attorneys-General have agreed to consider further. Read the report at: <http://bit.ly/12rH6Xt>

Research on young refugee children

A new study on young people of culturally and linguistically-diverse and refugee background has been undertaken by the Centre for Excellence for Child and Family Welfare (CFECFW). In Australia there are

more than 37,000 children and young people in out-of-home care, however the number of children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) or refugee background entering the child protection system is currently unknown. The study is available at: <http://bit.ly/15omWuo>

Home Safe Home report

International Social Service Australia has published “Home Safe Home” – a report on children who migrate to Australia for kinship care. The findings of the research suggest that the majority of children and young people who migrate on Orphan Relative visas to Victoria, and more broadly to Australia, do so without statutory involvement from their country, which means that comprehensive assessments of the best interests of the child and the suitability of the carer do not occur. Access the report here: <http://bit.ly/11Xk4X4>

Seasonal ‘flu fact sheets for refugees

The United States Centers for Disease Control has produced a range of fact sheets to improve knowledge of seasonal ‘flu in refugee populations. Access the resource at <http://1.usa.gov/11gbxt9>

Free online course in refugee health

A free online Course in Immigrant and Refugee Health is available from Global Health Medicine, University of Minnesota. The seven-hour, lecture-based introductory course includes lectures from global health experts. Follow the links from the ‘Practicing Health Care Providers’ section at <http://www.globalhealth.umn.edu/free-intro-course/index.htm>

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>.

Building Multicultural Communities

The Federal Government has announced the opening of \$4.55 million in funding for the Building Multicultural Communities Program. The one-off funding program will be available to organisations for infrastructure, equipment and capital works including computers, printers, photocopiers, or refurbishments of facilities. The program will empower communities to embrace the benefits of multiculturalism and maintain cohesive and socially inclusive neighbourhoods. Interested organisations have until 5:00pm AEST on 28 June 2013 to submit an application. For more information visit www.immi.gov.au/bmcp. Enquiries can be directed to 02 6277 7977.

NSW Justice Awards

Nominations are being sought for the Law and Justice Foundation of NSW annual Justice Awards. The Awards recognise the contributions that individuals and organisations have made to improving access to justice in NSW, particularly for socially and economically-disadvantaged people. Applications close 5.00pm, Friday 21 June. For selection criteria and nomination forms, visit www.lawfoundation.net.au/justice_awards. Further information is available by contacting Maria Leonardis on (02) 8227 3203 or justiceawards@lawfoundation.net.au.

NSW Human Rights Awards

The Award recognises Australian citizens or permanent residents who make a lasting and meaningful contribution to the advancement of human rights. It was established in memory of the Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg who saved tens of thousands of lives during World War II. The winner will be presented with a medal and \$5000 cash prize and will serve as a NSW Human Rights Ambassador for the following 12 months. Nominations must be supported by two referees. Nominations close at 5.00pm on 26 June. Nomination forms should be posted to: The NSW Human Rights Award, Community Relations Commission, PO Box A2618, Sydney South, NSW, 1235, or hand delivered to: Level 8, 175 Castlereagh Street, Sydney or email to haward@crc.nsw.gov.au. Further details are available at: http://www.crc.nsw.gov.au/Awards_and_Sponsorships/nsw_human_rights_award

Media training for young leaders

Young people from culturally and linguistically-diverse backgrounds have the opportunity to access a media training program to be held in Adelaide during July. Between 15 and 20 young people aged 16 to

25 are eligible. Training is free, and catering will be provided. This is a 10 day training and will take place in the semester break of July 2013. The training project, called *The Next Generation Media Training Project*, offers training on radio broadcasting, the media landscape, critical thinking and leadership. Further information is available from Hsin-Yi Lo on (03) 9486 9549 or at: http://youth.nembc.org.au/info_pages_youth.php/pages_id/438

Call for papers: Unity in Diversity International Conference

A call for papers has been issued for the Unity in Diversity conference to be held in Townsville in August. The conference will go beyond the rhetoric to explore how the everyday meaning of multiculturalism of Australia works and how to address, resolve and grow issues of cultural and social change. Among the topics to be discussed is how can multiculturalism frame human rights policies affecting all Australians and those seeking asylum. Abstracts and biodata is due by 15 June with full papers due 15 July. To download the call for papers brochure, go to www.unityindiversityconference.com/

'Our Neighbourhood' Community Program

Australia Post is seeking applications from organisations who are interested in becoming National Community Partners in the "Our Neighbourhood" program. Through the program, Australia Post aims to connect partners with one-another to help build healthier, more vibrant and more inclusive communities across Australia (with a particular focus in regional and remote communities). "Our Neighbourhood" Community Grants are open to eligible registered charities and community organisations for amounts between \$1000 and \$25,000 to support local projects. Applications close Friday, 28 June 2013 at 5.00pm (AEST). For more information about the program, including how to apply see: <http://auspost.com.au/about-us/community-program-applications.html>

African leadership training and mentoring program

The Brotherhood of St Laurence's African Australian Community Centre (AACC), with support from Maribyrnong Council, will conduct training to foster the leadership and advocacy capacity of aspiring and established African community leaders who live, study or work (and, or whose members do so) in the Melbourne suburbs of Braybrook, Footscray, West Footscray, Kingsville, Maidstone, Maribyrnong, Seddon, Tottenham and Yarraville. The training will be held at the AACC for three weeks over six evenings with meals provided. Enquiries about the course can be directed to Abraham Mamer on (03) 8412 8804, amamer@bsl.org.au or mobile 0408 641 771. Details about this course and further forms will be available from www.bsl.org.au/aacc

Refugee Youth in Focus

Registrations are open for the first ever national forum showcasing Australian research, policy and practice concerning children and young people from refugee backgrounds. The Refugee Youth in Focus conference will be held on Monday 15 and Tuesday 16 July at the University of Sydney. The forum is suitable for anyone working with young people from a refugee background or asylum seekers in the areas of health, education, youth, settlement and migration law. Places are limited. Register at <http://sydney.edu.au/news/law/457.html?eventcategoryid=164&eventid=10241>

Entries open for Building Inclusive Communities Awards

The Building Inclusive Communities Awards, a joint initiative of the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW and Macquarie University, recognise and showcase individuals, groups, government and companies in NSW whose work promotes harmony and understanding of others and makes a significant contribution in helping build a diverse and tolerant Australia. Entries close on 14 June. The Awards will be presented by NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell on Thursday, 29 August at NSW Parliament. Download the entry form at: http://www.mq.edu.au/on_campus/diversity_and_inclusion/building_inclusive_communities_awards/how_to_enter/

Refugee Health Forum

Limited places are available for a Refugee Health Forum at Auburn Hospital on Tuesday, 11 June. Presenters from NSW Refugee Health, settlement services and refugee health clinics will share information about the refugee community in Western Sydney. A panel discussion, refreshments and network opportunities are also built into the two-hour program. RSVP by 7 June to Trish Doyle on 02 8759 4060 and trish.doyle@swahs.health.nsw.gov.au. Similar forums are being planned for Westmead Hospital on 15 October and Blacktown-Mt Druiitt Hospital (details to be confirmed).

Youth Leaders Day and Symposium

The Community Relations Commission NSW is inviting young people to showcase projects at the 2013 Community Relations Commission Youth Leaders Day and Community Relations Commission Symposium. The events will be held on Tuesday 6 and Wednesday 7 August 2013 in Parramatta with the first day, the Community Relations Commission Youth Leaders Day, being dedicated entirely to the voices of young people. Community leaders, community organisation members, government agency representatives and young people come together each year at the Community Relations Commission Youth Leaders Day and Community Relations Commission Symposium to explore major issues confronting multicultural NSW. These events offer a perfect platform to showcase your successful project. Further details are available at http://www.crc.nsw.gov.au/Projects_and_Activities/symposia If you have any questions or would like to receive an Expression of Interest form in the post, please contact Cecilia Tsai on (02) 8255 6819 or via email at symposiumcoordinator@crc.nsw.gov.au

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

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)

Government backdown over asylum seeker families on Manus Island

Government officials have drawn up a plan to bring families on Manus Island back to Australia as fishermen chanced upon the latest suspected asylum boat. If returned the families would be eligible for release into the Australian community after a brief period in detention, likely at Wickham Point near Darwin which has been designated to house families. (The Daily Telegraph, 1 May) <http://bit.ly/14ZYMGU>

Plight of 55 weelhs on Labor conscience

Labor is under pressure from within its own ranks to allow 55 refugees - locked in indefinite detention after ASIO branded them a threat - some avenue of appeal to the secret assessments. Labor senator Trish Crossin warned the group's mental health is "spiralling backwards" and said those refugees with adverse security findings by ASIO deserve "fairness and natural justice". (The Age, 1 May) <http://www.theage.com.au/opinion/political-news/plight-of-55-weelhs-on-labor-conscience-20130430-2iqr9.html>

Refugee children to be held at Darwin detention centre

Children will again be held in mainland detention centres, with authorities setting aside a compound for families at Wickham Point centre near Darwin. It is a significant shift for Labor, which has long opposed detaining children. Staff have been told minors could be held within the grounds of the detention centre by the end of the week. (The Age, 1 May) <http://bit.ly/18jzS4w>

Review of ASIO analysis of refugees

A review of the cases of 55 refugees branded threats by ASIO is expected to be complete "within weeks", raising hopes they could escape indefinite detention in Australian immigration centres. (The Age, 1 May) <http://bit.ly/10ZyMgY>

Manus problems fixed: immigration dept

The immigration department insists problems at the Manus Island asylum seeker detention centre have been fixed, but admits a permanent facility needs to be built soon. Department secretary Martin Bowles, in a submission to a parliamentary hearing about the Papua New Guinea based facility, referred

to the department's assessment in March that the centre had major issues and needed an urgent upgrade. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 1 May) <http://bit.ly/111y6aW>

Manus Island detainees face malaria risk, officials admit

Immigration officials say they are "actively managing" a malaria risk on Manus Island, where controversy surrounds conditions at the Australian-run detention centre. Giving evidence to a parliamentary inquiry into the infrastructure upgrades needed at the remote Papua New Guinea regional processing centre, department officials confirmed there is a "very active management strategy" in place on the island to prevent detainees from contracting the life-threatening mosquito borne disease. (The Australian, 2 May) <http://bit.ly/18nLnb4>

Amnesty reveals abuses in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is intensifying its crackdown on critics and increasing human rights abuses, an investigation by Amnesty International has found. Particularly at risk are those who have criticised the regime during the war, including the media, judiciary human rights activists and opposition politicians. (The Age, 2 May) <http://www.theage.com.au/national/amnesty-reveals-abuses-in-sri-lanka-20130501-2it3m.html>

Greens push Coalition to get children off Manus

The Greens have issued a challenge to the Coalition to help them bring asylum seeker children back from Manus Island to the mainland. When parliament resumes later this month, the party's immigration spokeswoman Senator Sarah Hanson-Young will move to amend the Migration Act. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 2 May) <http://bit.ly/16rOnGY>

Libs urge help for 'dumped' boat people

An urgent review of the federal government's bridging visa program is necessary to ensure asylum seekers are not being dumped in the community without adequate support, Coalition immigration spokesman Scott Morrison says. Mr Morrison said there was a pressing need for a better process, especially now that Labor planned to release families on bridging visas. (The Sunday Age, 5 May) <http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/political-news/lib-urge-help-for-dumped-boat-people-20130504-2j06r.html>

Boarder fix for asylum

More than 200 Australians, including 38 in WA, have signed up to rent out spare rooms to asylum seekers. *The Sunday Times* last month revealed boat people would become live-in companions for retirees and "help out" on farms under a new homestay scheme supported by the Immigration Department. (The Sunday Times, 5 May) <http://bit.ly/10d5XGu>

Children smuggled into Australia on boats in record numbers

A record number of children are being loaded into asylum boats by people smugglers, sparking fears more kids will drown. About 3000 children have arrived so far this financial year, compared with 1909 in all of 2011-12 and 1062 in 2010-11 and up from just 78 in 2008-09. (The Sunday Telegraph, 5 May) <http://bit.ly/114UW1h>

Asylum boat arrivals strain detention centre capacities

The arrivals of almost 900 asylum seekers in the first four days of May have pushed Christmas Island beyond capacity. Another eight mainland detention centres are overcrowded, after the occupants of boats which have sailed reached close to the Northern Territory in recent days were taken to Darwin centres. (The Daily Telegraph, 7 May) <http://bit.ly/10YZkYO>

Federal Court appeal for two North Koreans facing deportation

The fate of two North Koreans facing deportation may depend upon what they scribbled down on forms when they first arrived in Australia. (The Herald-Sun, 7 May) <http://bit.ly/19ihHzl>

Asylum seeker families eligible for release on bridging visas

Asylum seeker families will be released into the community with no work rights and just minimal financial support, under changes announced by Immigration Minister Brendan O'Connor. Mr O'Connor said families would be eligible for release into the community on bridging visas while their claims for protection are heard, arguing detention took a toll on people's mental health. (The Age, 8 May) <http://bit.ly/16dOYOh>

Refugee mum, branded 'security threat', has chance at defending herself

The Tamil refugee Ranjini – incarcerated when pregnant after ASIO branded her a security threat – had the first chance to put her side of the story on Wednesday to a retired judge examining her case. (The Age, 9 May) <http://bit.ly/114K1ij>

Oppn seeks update on Afghan resettlement

The federal opposition has called on the government to detail the progress being made on the resettling of Afghan interpreters in Australia. Opposition immigration spokesman Scott Morrison said this was a pressing and urgent matter. (The Australian, 10 May) <http://bit.ly/ZTo74B>

PM announces new Manus refugee centre

Construction of a new permanent processing centre in Papua New Guinea for asylum seekers will begin in July, Prime Minister Julia Gillard revealed at the end of her first visit as leader to Australia's near neighbour. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 11 May) <http://bit.ly/19NXaDe>

More asylum seekers sent to Manus Island

The federal government has transferred more Vietnamese asylum seekers to its detention centre on Papua New Guinea's Manus Island. The 21 men departed Darwin early this morning and have now arrived in PNG, the immigration department says. (SBS World News Australia, 11 May) <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/1765150/More-asylum-seekers-sent-to-Manus-Island>

Asylum seekers coaxed off boat in Bali

Indonesian authorities have coaxed a number of asylum seekers from a boat in Bali's main harbour following a standoff which began when they were stopped as the vessel was leaving for Australia. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 12 May) <http://bit.ly/19eNsXq>

Manus detention challenge heads to PNG court

A legal challenge to the Australian-run Manus Island detention centre will face dismissal proceedings in Papua New Guinea's courts next month. (The Australian, 14 May) <http://bit.ly/171gihk>

\$1bn siphoned from foreign aid

The government expects to divert nearly \$1 billion from the aid budget to cover domestic asylum-seeker costs over the four years to 2015-16, while it has clawed back \$2bn in savings by deferring its aid target yet another year to 2017-18. The budget papers show that foreign aid expenses on asylum-seekers are likely to be \$943 million higher by 2015-16 after the government placed a \$375m cap on the amount that can be diverted within a single year. (The Australian, 15 May) <http://bit.ly/19qHwKM>

Funds to boost people smuggler crackdown

More money will be spent trying to crack down on people-smugglers as asylum-seeker costs spiralled out of control in last night's budget. Customs and Border Protection will be given an additional \$68.4 million for the 2012-13 and 2013-14 financial years to boost surveillance in Australia's northern waters, as a record number of people continue to make the dangerous boat journey to Australia. (The Australian, 15 May) <http://bit.ly/150rOWS>

Boat arrivals cost blows out by \$3.2 billion

The asylum seeker budget has blown out by more than \$3.2 billion since the government's February forecast, as Immigration Minister Brendan O'Connor admitted the record rate of boat arrivals "is not acceptable in terms of the risks to human life, or the impact of the budget". (The Canberra Times, 15 May) <http://www.smh.com.au/business/federal-budget/boat-arrivals-cost-blows-out-by-32b-20130514-2jkg8.html>

Charities overwhelmed by asylum seeker pleas

Charities say they are being overwhelmed with pleas for help from asylum seekers who are released from detention without enough to live on. Record numbers of boat arrivals have blown out the Government's asylum seeker budget by more than \$3.2 billion. (ABC 7.30, 15 May) <http://bit.ly/18KNvga>

Mainland excised from Australia's migration zone

The government and opposition have rejected a bid to open the offshore detention centres on Nauru and Papua New Guinea for inspection by Australia's Human Rights Commissioner. They have also

blocked an attempt to give the Australian media the same access to the centres that it has to mainland and Christmas Island detention facilities. (The Canberra Times, 16 May) <http://bit.ly/16IRjpO>

More screening to stem asylum arrivals

The Government could roll out controversial "enhanced screening" procedures for asylum seekers on a much wider scale as it seeks new measures to slow boat arrivals. But any move to tighten the asylum assessment process will be fiercely opposed by refugee advocates and would likely be met with rebuke from international human rights agencies. (The West Australian, 16 May) <http://yhoo.it/11wckcO>

Two more asylum seekers die trying to reach Australia

Two more would-be asylum seekers have died on the ocean trying to get to Australia while their 46 shipmates survived a boat journey that contained equal parts tragedy and luck. The survivors, among them five children under six years old, endured 10 days without power, food or fresh water before they were spotted by an Australian Maritime Safety Authority plane and rescued by a cargo ship. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 17 May) <http://bit.ly/149uQI2>

Gillard rejects UN asylum breach claim

Prime Minister Julia Gillard has rejected claims Australia is flouting a United Nations convention by excising the mainland from the migration zone. The Greens have accused the government of contravening the UN convention on refugees by discriminating against asylum seekers who arrive by boat. (The Australian, 17 May) <http://bit.ly/Zbaqxl>

Legal expert criticises migration zone decision

The move to excise Australia's mainland from the migration zone is unprecedented for a country signatory to the UN's Refugee Convention, and a refugee legal expert says a previous attempt to do so in Europe failed. (SBS World News Australia, 17 May) <http://bit.ly/18P7QRI>

Refugee takes new freedom challenge to High Court

The federal government is facing another High Court challenge to the indefinite detention of more than 50 refugees deemed security risks by the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation. The refugee who last year won a landmark judgment in the court against the government and the Immigration Department has issued new proceedings asserting his continuing detention is unlawful and seeking his release. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 18 May) <http://bit.ly/14yyB9t>

Overwhelming majority of boat arrivals deemed to be refugees

More than 90 per cent of asylum seekers who arrived by boat were found to be genuine refugees in the March quarter, figures to be released on Monday show. But those who arrived by plane - despite being eligible for release into the community and not having to face years of detention on Nauru or Manus Island - were almost twice as likely to be rejected as refugees. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 20 May) <http://bit.ly/17QUwgg>

Christmas Island crowds children in tents in face of record influx

Children are among hundreds of asylum seekers sleeping in tents at an overcrowded Christmas Island facility amid record boat arrivals, including 2000 people this month. (The Daily Telegraph, 21 May) <http://bit.ly/15ab3rC>

Asylum self harm linked to detention time

The federal government watchdog says asylum seeker applications must be processed within 90 days and warns rates of self harm are strongly linked to the time spent in detention. In a report released on Tuesday, commonwealth ombudsman Colin Neave said cases of self harm increased "rapidly" from early 2011, with recorded incidents peaking around September 2011. (The Australian, 21 May) <http://bit.ly/11tgEnP>

Sharp fall in self-harm among asylum seekers

Self-harm rates among asylum seekers detained in Australian detention centres have dramatically fallen since September 2011. But an independent report compiled by the Commonwealth and Immigration Ombudsman has lambasted the record-keeping practices of the department of immigration

and its service provider Serco, saying they make inaccurate reporting "practically inevitable". (The Age, 22 May) <http://www.theage.com.au/opinion/political-news/sharp-fall-in-selfharm-among-asylum-seekers-20130521-2jytt.html>

Refugee advocates say housing shortage worsening

Housing advocates say the critical shortage of rental accommodation in Perth is worsening, particularly for refugees struggling to establish a new life in Western Australia. (ABC News, 22 May) <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-05-22/refugee-advocates-says-housing-shortage-critical/4705206?section=wa>

UN refugee agency faults Australian policy

The UN refugee agency has taken Australia to task over a tough new policy that allows boat people who reach its mainland to be sent to remote Nauru or Papua New Guinea for detention while their asylum claims are processed. The so-called "excision" rules, passed last week, extend previous legislation which only allowed the authorities to send boat people for detention in the Pacific nations if they reached Australian offshore territories. (The Australian, 23 May) <http://bit.ly/1OnBjvg>

ASIO backs down on threat ruling

A refugee widow and her six-year-old son will taste freedom in Australia after ASIO dramatically reversed an assessment she posed a threat to national security. The decision followed an internal ASIO review into her case and is not related to an inquiry by a former federal court judge into 55 refugees trapped in indefinite detention inside Australia's immigration network. (The Age, 23 May) <http://bit.ly/1a6U9ez>

Australia fails asylum seekers, says Amnesty

Australia has "failed abysmally" to protect asylum seekers, Amnesty International says in its annual report, released on Thursday morning. (The Canberra Times, 23 May) <http://bit.ly/10whljl>

Cost of educating asylum seeker children \$55m over four years

Educating asylum seeker children will cost more than \$55 million over four years amid a record number of minors arriving on boats. The Opposition has accused the government of cutting university funding while spending millions on meeting the educational needs of asylum seeker children with more than 3000 arriving so far this financial year. (The Herald-Sun, 24 May) <http://bit.ly/16WXpwF>

Tamil asylum seekers granted lawyers after court plea

Immigration Minister Brendan O'Connor has granted lawyers access to two Tamil asylum seekers who feared they would be removed to Sri Lanka. The asylum seekers – who cannot be named – emailed refugee lawyer David Manne from Christmas Island on Wednesday seeking his help to apply for refugee protection. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 24 May) <http://bit.ly/16WXpwF>

Capsized boat details mired in secrecy and difference in accounts

Secrecy still surrounds the events before an asylum seeker boat capsized, leaving 17 men drowned and another 73 missing, presumed dead, as the federal government keeps an official review of the incident under wraps. (The Sun-Herald, 26 May) <http://bit.ly/18p54DR>

Fears raised of new asylum surge as two African boats intercepted

A sudden influx of African asylum seekers on two boats in two days has sparked new questions about Australia's border protection. (The Daily Telegraph, 27 May) <http://bit.ly/1ao4Ucx>

Estimates committee told smugglers earned \$400m in past six years

Government figures have exposed a people smuggling industry worth up to \$400 million amid revelations at least ten asylum seekers released into the community have been charged, including with a mugging at knifepoint. (The Australian, 27 May) <http://bit.ly/1ardeby>

Nauru 'monitored': fears camp has infiltrator agents for smugglers

Vulnerable asylum seekers in Nauru are being monitored because they are being threatened by "suspected agents" for people smugglers who have also arrived on boats and are in the offshore camp. (The Australian, 27 May) <http://bit.ly/ZpPBAr>

Nauru asylum claims to be decided in weeks

Asylum seekers on Australia's processing centre on Nauru will find out in the next few weeks whether their refugee applications have been accepted. Immigration department secretary Martin Bowles told a budget estimates hearing in Canberra on Monday that refugee claims are expected to be finalised in the coming weeks, after Nauruan officials began processing applications in March. (The Herald-Sun, 27 May) <http://bit.ly/18p5JVW>

No benefit policy puts 20,000 into oblivion

Nearly 20,000 asylum seekers have been waiting since August, when the government introduced its no-advantage policy, for any action on their claims for protection. The numbers of asylum seekers have skyrocketed this financial year, with up to 25,000 now expected - almost five times more than initial Immigration Department forecasts. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 28 May) <http://bit.ly/1164yGm>

Alarm over asylum underclass

A new underclass of 100,000 asylum seekers, living on as little as \$220 a week and with no rights to work, could be created in just five years if current trends continue. Charities have warned they are unable to cope with the rising tide of impoverished asylum seekers, with one centre in Melbourne's south-east closing its doors to new clients after being "swamped" with requests for food aid. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 29 May) <http://bit.ly/112YOFt>

PNG move on death penalty raises concerns for asylum seekers

Asylum seekers on Manus Island will be subject to the death penalty, the department of immigration has confirmed. Papua New Guinea's parliament on Tuesday passed laws allowing execution by a range of methods, including hanging, electrocution, lethal injection, and firing squad, while repealing its contested sorcery act. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 29 May) <http://bit.ly/18sVxvy>

AFP denies Christmas Island riot claims

The Australian Federal Police has denied claims it deliberately pulled officers from Christmas Island before the 2011 riots to highlight security failings at the immigration detention centre. The AFP also rejected claims its officers later misled a parliamentary committee that examined the riots. (The Herald-Sun, 29 May) <http://bit.ly/ZfJeNW>

Senate hears Human Rights Commission concern over legal aid

The president of the Australian Human Rights Commission has launched another attack on the Government's asylum seeker strategy, questioning the legality of key parts of the policy. At a Senate estimates hearing in Canberra, Professor Gillian Triggs described the so-called "no advantage" policy as having no legal content and no comparison in international law. (ABC Radio Australia, 30 May) <http://bit.ly/176xFNK>

Terrorist was cleared by ASIO as asylum seeker

A convicted Egyptian terrorist who arrived in Australia by boat as an asylum seeker was mistakenly cleared by the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation to be released into the community even though he was on an Interpol red alert list. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 31 May) <http://bit.ly/16tM1IS>

Hell of a life in Ilmbo for refugees living in squalor and poverty

Melbourne's outer suburbs have become home to a growing humanitarian crisis, with thousands of asylum seekers living below the poverty line while banned from working. (The Herald-Sun, 31 May) <http://bit.ly/19qQ1sm>

Coroner slams dept over asylum inquest response

The WA coroner has criticised the Department of Immigration and Citizenship after a Perth court heard the department planned not to translate and forward letters to the survivors and relatives of asylum seekers who died after a boat capsized north of Christmas Island last year. (The West Australian, 31 May) <http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/a/-/wa/17391843/coroner-slams-dept-over-asylum-inquest-response/>