



# Refugee Council of Australia

## **BULLETIN FOR MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS**

**6 September 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](mailto:admin@refugeecouncil.org.au).

*Paul Power, CEO, Refugee Council of Australia*

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## **NEWS FROM THE REFUGEE COUNCIL**

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### **Election guide profiles policies of major parties and minor party Senate candidates**

RCOA has produced election guides outlining the refugee and asylum policies of the major parties as well as the minor party candidates for the Senate. With 529 candidates standing for the 40 Senate positions up for election in eight states and territories, political analysts believe that minor parties could be critical to the Senate election outcome. RCOA has also updated its summaries of the policy platforms for the Australian Labor Party, the Liberal-National Coalition and the Australian Greens. Access the summary of major party policies at <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/rpt/2013election.pdf> and the guide to the policies of Senate candidates at <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/rpt/2013senate.pdf>

### **New Bright Ideas briefs highlight strategies to support refugees and asylum seekers**

Two more Bright Ideas briefs have been released, focusing on better health outcomes for refugees and a volunteer-led program to establish music classes in immigration detention centres. The Optimising Health and Learning Project profiles an education and health partnership to improve identification of health issues likely to impact on the learning of refugee students. Music for Refugees charts the development of an initiative to source donated musical instruments and encourage music classes for people in immigration detention centres. Access the Bright Ideas briefs at <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/brightideas.php>. If you have an initiative you think could be profiled in Bright Ideas, contact [info@refugeecouncil.org.au](mailto:info@refugeecouncil.org.au) or (02) 9211 9333.

### **Call for Australia to release refugees with adverse security assessments from indefinite detention**

RCOA called for the Australian Government to release a number of recognised refugees living in indefinite detention on the basis of adverse ASIO security assessments following a critical UN Human Rights Committee report into 46 cases. In a statement, RCOA CEO Paul Power said the Government had options available depending on the circumstances of individual refugees, ranging from unconditional release – as has applied to a number of people held previously – to appropriate supervisory arrangements. Earlier this year, RCOA met with 24 refugees with adverse security assessments detained in Melbourne and listened to their despair and hopelessness for themselves and for their families living in dire situations overseas. Read the RCOA media release at [http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/130823\\_Un-asio.pdf](http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/130823_Un-asio.pdf). The UN Human Rights Committee statement and reports are at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=13648&LangID=E>

### **Jakarta meeting another lost opportunity to protect region's refugees**

RCOA expressed its disappointment at the lack of progress on regional refugee protection after 13 countries, including Australia, met in Jakarta. The 13 countries issued a Declaration on Addressing Irregular Movement of Persons which recognised the need for a protection-sensitive regional approach to irregular movement, greater access to legal migration pathways, harmonisation of assessment processes and timely search and rescue operations to reduce deaths at sea. But RCOA CEO Paul Power said these points were given far too little emphasis in a communique which viewed a growing humanitarian crisis in terms of border control. In a statement, Mr Power said people fleeing persecution needed genuine alternatives to using a people smuggler, including ensuring that refugees and asylum seekers have secure legal status, sustainable livelihood opportunities and access to education and

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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

health services while longer term answers are found for them as well as prompt processing of refugee claims and ensuring that people found to be refugees have access to durable solutions. Read the statement here: [http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/130821\\_JakartaDeclaration.pdf](http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/130821_JakartaDeclaration.pdf)

### **Federal Coalition denial of legal advice risks asylum seekers' lives**

A proposal by the Federal Coalition to remove government-funded legal assistance to asylum seekers who have arrived by boat could place the lives of asylum seekers at risk if implemented, RCOA has warned. In a statement, CEO Paul Power said denying legal advice would inevitably result in people being returned to persecution and danger. The statement said independent and skilled advice was essential for highly vulnerable people who have suffered significant trauma, violence and torture. RCOA will ask the Coalition to reverse the policy announcement. "Access to legal aid for asylum seekers who have no means is to the benefit of everyone involved – asylum seekers, the government and the Australian public. Without it, we cannot be confident that highly vulnerable people are getting a fair hearing and that our nation is not turning its back on people at their time of greatest need," Mr Power said. Read the statement at <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/130901-Legal-aid.pdf>

### **Life member Harold Grant remembered**

The refugee sector lost one of its strongest supporters with the passing of RCOA life member Harold Grant on 23 August. Mr Grant, 92, who devoted more than 40 years of his life to supporting refugees, was farewelled at a funeral in Canberra on 31 August. He worked for the Department of Immigration, the Intergovernmental Committee for Migration (now International Organization for Migration) and remained involved with refugees through his writing, poetry and support of church and community organisations. In 1993, Mr Grant was awarded the Paul Cullen Award for his service to refugees and was made an honorary life member of RCOA in 1998. Read more in our statement at <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/130830-HaroldGrant.pdf>

### **First Refugee Welcome Zone for Northern Territory**

The City of Palmerston has become the first council in the Northern Territory to declare itself a Refugee Welcome Zone. There are now 85 Refugee Welcome Zones, covering every Australian State and Territory with a local government structure. Find out more about the Refugee Welcome Zone initiative at: <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/g/rwz.php>

### **Follow us on 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](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Refugee-Council-of-Australia-RCOA/157472830949702). Our Twitter feed is @OzRefugeeCounc.

## **COMING EVENTS**

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### **Photographic exhibition: Seeking Refuge In Nhill**

**Until 14 January, Melbourne VIC**

Nhill is a small agricultural town in the semi-arid Wimmera region of central Victoria. It is a long way from the tropical Thai-Burma border where more than 140,000 refugees, many of them minority Karen people, live in UNHCR administered camps. Over the last four years a community of Karen refugees have settled in the township of Nhill, finding a welcoming home and new friends. This exhibition explores the journey, settlement, struggles and achievements of the Karen Community in Nhill.

**Details:** entry \$10.00 (concession and children 3-16 years free); daily 10:00am-5:00pm; Immigration Museum, Old Customs House, 400 Flinders Street, Melbourne; for further details, visit <http://museumvictoria.com.au/immigrationmuseum/whatson/current-exhibitions/seeking-refuge-in-nhill/>.

### **2013 Heartlands Refugee Art Prize Exhibition**

**Sunday 1 to Saturday 14 September, Werribee**

Now in its fourth year, the 2013 Heartlands Refugee Art Prize Exhibition was presented by AMES and Multicultural Arts Victoria in partnership with Parks Victoria, VicHealth and the Victorian Multicultural Commission. Seventy talented refugee artists submitted their work for this year's prize and artists from sixteen countries were represented in the artworks that were shortlisted. The exhibition will showcase the shortlisted entries, including all the winning artworks.

**Details:** 10:00am-4:00pm (5:00pm weekends); Werribee Park, Werribee; for further details, visit <http://www.ames.net.au/heartlands-refugee-art-prize/2013-heartlands-refugee-art-prize.html>.

**Afghanistan: Hidden Treasures from the National Museum, Kabul**  
**Thursday 5 September to Monday 27 January 2014, South Brisbane QLD**

Visiting Australia for the first time, this exhibition, with more than 230 priceless treasures, some thousands of years old, offers a rare opportunity to discover the surprising, untold story of the long and extraordinarily rich culture that is Afghanistan. For years these artefacts were thought lost or destroyed as war and instability shook the country. In 2003, they were uncovered from vaults in the central bank of the presidential palace, where they had been placed in secrecy by a few courageous staff from the National Museum, Kabul. The exhibition will feature precious artefacts of gold, bronze and stone sculptures, ivories, painted glassware and other ancient works of art.

**Details:** museum open 9:30am-5:00pm daily; Queensland Museum South Bank, cnr Grey and Melbourne Streets, South Bank; for further information, visit <http://www.southbank.qm.qld.gov.au/Events+and+Exhibitions/Exhibitions/2013/09/Afghanistan>.

**Exhibition: Unseen Habitation**

**Saturday 6 September to Monday 15 September, Carlton VIC**

Unseen Habitation is a site-specific exhibition, a walk through maze of installations created by five Australian Artists of colour from diverse migration experiences: Somalia, Eritrea/Egypt, Vietnam and Bosnia. Each artist will explore how communities reconstruct place and home post-migration making use of various art forms, including sculpture, installation, mixed media and photography.

**Details:** Goodtime Studio 746 Swanston Street, Carlton (opposite Melbourne University); for further details, call Dominic Golding on 0403 851 240.

**Gold Coast Multicultural Festival**

**Sunday 8 September, Bundall QLD**

The Gold Coast Multicultural Festival provides a venue to celebrate and showcase the skills and talents of our city's diverse cultural communities through a variety of exciting and educational multicultural activities culminating in the main Festival Day. Highlights will include art and craft displays, food stalls, international music, dance and other entertainment, poetry and reading, multicultural films, interactive workshops, children's rides and activities, a citizenship ceremony and prize giveaways.

**Details:** 10:00am-4:00pm; Evandale Parklands, cnr Crombie Avenue and Bundall Road, Bundall; for further details, visit <http://www.goldcoastculturalfestival.org>.

**Comedy debate: Is multiculturalism ruining our country?**

**Sunday 8 September, Brisbane QLD**

As part of Queensland Multicultural Week, the Multicultural Development Association and the Powerhouse brings together eight comedians in a comedy debate to explore our attitudes towards multiculturalism, and laugh at ourselves along the way. Featured comedians will include Henry Stone, Katrina Davidson, Greg Sullivan, Steve Allison, Jimmy Poulos, Fred Lang and B105's Stav Davidson.

**Details:** 6:30pm; Brisbane Powerhouse, 119 Lamington Street, New Farm; for further details, visit <http://www.mdainc.org.au/comedyfest>.

**Seminar: Colonialism, Asylum Seekers, Border Protection**

**Tuesday 10 September, North Melbourne VIC**

This seminar will review the politics of deterrence strategies in the light of international legal and humanitarian concerns and canvas approaches in alternative registers. Speakers will include David Manne, Executive Director, Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre, who led the challenges in the High Court which struck down the "Malaysian solution"; and Ghassan Hage, Future Generation Professor of Anthropology and Social Theory at the University of Melbourne.

**Details:** entry \$5.00 (\$3.00 concession); 7:30pm; North Melbourne Uniting Church Hall, Elm Street, North Melbourne; for further details, visit <http://ipcs.org.au/home/events/event/colonialism-asylum-seekers-border-protection/>.

**Refugees, the rule of law and the ethics of protection**

**Wednesday 11 September, Adelaide SA**

Human rights advocate David Manne tackles one of the most complicated and contentious geopolitical issues of our time. Drawing on recent examples, he examines the ever-increasing tension between government policy and the law. He examines what can be done to better protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of every individual, whether citizen or not - and the consequences if we fail to protect these rights. Hosted by the University of South Australia's Hawke Centre.

**Details:** 5:30pm for a 6:30pm start; Allan Scott Auditorium, UniSA City West campus, Hawke Building, 55 North Terrace, Adelaide; RSVP via (08) 8302 0215 or

[http://w3.unisa.edu.au/hawkecentre/events/2013events/AmnestyInternational\\_DavidManne.asp](http://w3.unisa.edu.au/hawkecentre/events/2013events/AmnestyInternational_DavidManne.asp)

### **Exhibition: The Dancing Boys of Afghanistan**

**Thursday 12 September to Saturday 5 October, Surry Hills NSW**

This photograph exhibition features the work of Hazara photographer Barat Ali Batoor, who was forced to flee to Australia after documenting the stories of Afghanistan's 'dancing boys', young men who are abducted or sold into sexual slavery.

**Details:** viewing times 11:00am-6:00pm Wednesday to Saturday by appointment; 10x8 Gallery, Level 5, 56-60 Foster Street, Surry Hills; to make an appointment, call (02) 9029 2404 or 0416 053 665.

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

**Wednesday 11 September, Lismore 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; ACE Community Colleges Lismore, Lismore Community College, 2/32 Carrington Street (upstairs in laneway beside The Dragonfly Cafe), Lismore; register online at <http://www.startts.org.au>.

### **Debate: Is Australia still the land of the fair go?**

**Thursday 12 September, Sydney NSW**

Hosted by IQ2, this debate will feature Akram Azimi, Young Australian of the Year and former refugee from Afghanistan; Professor Peter Shergold, Chancellor of the University of Western Sydney; Amanda Vanstone former Federal Minister for Immigration, and for Employment, Education, Training and Youth affairs; Dr Bob Brown, former leader of the Greens Party Australia; Jonathan Holmes, television journalist and former host of the ABC's "Media Watch"; and Professor Larissa Behrendt, Professor of Law and Director of Research at the Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning at the University of Technology, Sydney.

**Details:** tickets \$32.00 (\$22.00 concession); 6:45pm-8:30pm; City Recital Hall Angel Place, Sydney; for further details and to book tickets, visit <http://iq2oz.com/Sydney-September-12>.

### **STARTTS workshop: Biofeedback in working with trauma survivors**

**Friday 13 September, Carramar NSW**

Biofeedback therapies are non-pharmacologic treatments that use scientific instruments to detect and amplify internal body activities too subtle for normal awareness, making information about one's body available to the conscious mind. They can be a useful adjunct to trauma treatment, are easy to learn and inexpensive. This one-day workshop will provide the theoretical background to Biofeedback and Heart Rate Variability and the participants will have the opportunity to use the Biofeedback software.

**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>.

### **Women Leading Change: Women, peace building and human rights**

**Saturday 14 September, Auburn NSW**

Hosted by the Humanitarian Crisis Hub, this forum aims to support, foster and empower women's active role in promoting human rights and peace building in their country of origin.

**Details:** 1:00pm; Auburn Centre for Community, 44A Macquarie Road, Auburn; please e-mail [wlc@crisishub.org.au](mailto:wlc@crisishub.org.au) if you are interested in attending.

## **Australian Citizenship Day**

**Tuesday 17 September, Australia-wide**

Australian Citizenship Day is an opportunity to reflect on the value and meaning of being an Australian citizen, whether by birth or by choice. It is also a day to recognise and value the contributions citizens make within our local communities. Organisations and communities are encouraged to participate in celebrations. Register your event online to receive free Australian Citizenship Day promotional products.

**Details:** for further details or to register an event, visit <http://australiancitizenshipday.govspace.gov.au/>

## **Public lecture: New Migration Histories**

**Wednesday 18 September, Parkville VIC**

This event is part of "Australia in the World", a lecture and seminar series that presents international and transnational perspectives on the past. The series highlights the inter-connectedness of past worlds and future challenges with speakers from around the country and across the globe. This event will feature presentations on Chinese Australian family migration in the late 19th and early 20th centuries; post-war Greek migrant communities in Australia; and displaced persons from the Soviet Union who ended up in Australia after the Second World War.

**Details:** 4:00pm-6:00pm; Gryphon Gallery, 1888 Building, The University of Melbourne, Parkville; for further details and to register, visit <http://alumni.online.unimelb.edu.au/newmigration>.

## **Burma: Issues in gender, cultural diversity and social empowerment**

**Wednesday 18 September, Sydney NSW**

This event will feature presentations from Professor Andrew Jakubowicz, Dr Nina Burridge, Dr Rick Flowers and Dr Sai Thet Naing Oo, on recent research on social change and cultural diversity in Burma.

**Details:** 4:00pm-6:00pm; Cosmopolitan Civil Societies Research Centre, UTS City Campus Level 3, Mary Ann House, 645 Harris Street, Sydney; RSVP to [ccs@uts.edu.au](mailto:ccs@uts.edu.au).

## **Seminar with Professor Richard Falk, UN Special Rapporteur on Palestinian Human Rights**

**Thursday 19 September, Sydney NSW**

Professor Falk will speak on the topic "The Palestinian Struggle for Self Determination and the Ordeal of Occupation". Hosted by the Sydney Peace Foundation and Coalition for Justice and Peace in Palestine.

**Details:** tickets \$25.00 (\$15.00 concession); 6:30pm; Footbridge Theatre, The University of Sydney; to book tickets, visit <http://www.trybooking.com/DJUC>.

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

**Thursday 19 September, 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>.

## **Settling in Western Australia: Government, service provider, community and researcher forum**

**Wednesday 25 September, Mirrabooka WA**

This forum will showcase research, policy and practice concerning migrant settlement in Western Australia. It provides an opportunity for networking and discussion among policy makers, practitioners and researchers on a range of key issues. Anyone working with migrants, either as a researcher or practitioner, is invited to attend or present a paper. This forum is free to attend and afternoon tea will be provided.

**Details:** 1:00pm-4:30pm; Youth and Family Centre, Metropolitan MRC, 17 Chesterfield Road, Mirrabooka; RSVP by Friday 13 September on (08) 9345 5755.

## **ART4refugees Charity Art Show**

**Friday 27 to Sunday 29 September, Wollongong NSW**

ART4refugees raises funds to support the work of SCARF (Strategic Community Assistance to Refugee Families). Artists have donated paintings, photographs, sculpture, jewellery, textiles and ceramics to

help fund SCARF's programs like Homework Help, Volunteer Mentoring and L2P Learner to Provisional Driver.

**Details:** opening night 27 September from 7:00pm; The Illawarra Grammar School (TIGS) hall, Powell Street, West Wollongong; to book tickets for the opening night event, visit <http://www.art4refugees.org.au>.

### **Building Multiculturalism, Inclusion and Participation: Lessons from the Research**

**Tuesday 1 October, Sydney NSW**

In partnership with the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW, Macquarie University's Pro Vice Chancellor (Social Inclusion), Professor Gail Whiteford, will host a full day forum which brings research on multiculturalism to the community. Keynote speakers and panel discussions will uncover what we have learnt from research on multiculturalism, participation and inclusion and how we can make it useful in the workplace and the community. Keynote speakers include Professor Lucy Taksa and Professor Ingrid Piller.

**Details:** \$75.00 per person; 9:15am-4:45pm followed by networking until 6:00pm; State Library of New South Wales, Shakespeare Place entry, off Macquarie Street, Sydney; for further details and to register, visit [http://www.mq.edu.au/multiculturalism\\_forum](http://www.mq.edu.au/multiculturalism_forum).

### **Emerge Festival, Wyndham**

**Saturday 5 October, Werribee VIC**

Produced by Multicultural Arts Victoria in partnership with local government, Emerge Festivals are presented annually in different locations around Victoria to celebrate and acknowledge the important contributions of local newly-arrived refugee and emerging multicultural communities. The Wyndham festival will feature music, dance, food, craft and traditional ceremonies. Bookings are essential.

**Details:** 12:00pm-5:00pm; Wyndham Cultural Centre, 177 Watton Street, Werribee; to book, call the Wyndham Cultural Centre Box Office on (03) 8734 6000.

### **2013 Refugee Ball**

**Wednesday 9 October, Sydney NSW**

The Refugee Ball raises funds to support the work of the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS). Highlights will include speakers, a three course meal and drinks, music and dancing, refugee community performances and a charity auction.

**Details:** tickets \$150.00 (\$1500.00 for a table of ten); 7:00pm-12:00am; Dockside, Balcony Level, Cockle Bay Wharf; for further details and to RSVP, e-mail [refugeeball@startts.org.au](mailto:refugeeball@startts.org.au).

### **STARTTS workshop: Core concepts in working with children and adolescents from refugee backgrounds**

**Friday 11 October, Carramar NSW**

This one-day introductory workshop focuses on providing a framework for understanding the unique issues and challenges faced by refugee children and adolescents. It will look at the impact of war and violence from a developmental perspective, with attention paid to attachment and resilience.

**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>.

## NEW RESEARCH, STATEMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

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### **New asylum policy resource launched**

“Asylum Insight”, a non-profit, volunteer-run organisation has launched a new resource to provide information and commentary on Australian asylum policy in the context of global forced migration. The resource injects international context and fact-based analysis into Australian asylum questions. Find out more at [www.asyluminsight.com](http://www.asyluminsight.com)

### **Life as an asylum seeker – the story of Balan**

Balan, a Tamil asylum seeker living in western Sydney, describes the persecution that drove him from his homeland, his boat journey to Australia and his time in detention. He also talks about the uncertainties of his current existence, separated from his family and barred from work by the conditions of his visa. It ends with an emotional plea to the Australian government. See Balan’s story at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uusTw8sjki8&feature=youtu.be>

### **Relive the 2013 South Western Sydney Refugee Week Conference**

Presentations, resources and photographs from the South West Sydney Refugee Week Conference are now on-line. About 200 specialist and classroom teachers attended the conference which featured presentations by young refugee students and film director, writer, and former Young Australian of the Year Khoa Do. For more, visit <http://www.swsrefugeeweek.com/>

### **Consumer rights in community languages**

Consumer protection agencies in Australia have joined forces to develop an innovative communication tool called “My Consumer Rights” in English, Arabic, Dinka, Farsi, Karen, Nepalese and Tamil, to help provide awareness to new migrants, including emerging communities, about their shopping rights and responsibilities under the Australian Consumer Law. The video covers shopping rights, refunds, guarantees and warranties, contracts, lay-by agreements, resolving issues and lodging complaints. The videos can be seen on NSW Fair Trading’s YouTube channel on <http://www.youtube.com/NSWOFT> and website on [http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/ftw/About\\_us/Video\\_and\\_audio/My\\_consumer\\_rights.page](http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/ftw/About_us/Video_and_audio/My_consumer_rights.page).

### **Transcultural Mental Health consumer medication brochures**

The Transcultural Mental Health Centre has published consumer medication brochures in a number of community languages which contain detailed information about specific types of medications to treat mental health disorders and illnesses. The brochures give a detailed explanation of the medicines, how they work, side effects, how they should be used and where to seek help if needed. To access the brochures, visit <http://www.dhi.health.nsw.gov.au/tmhc/CMB/CMB/default.aspx>

### **Guide for on-line access to Centrelink services**

Self-service step-by-step guides have been translated and are now available from the Department of Human Services website. The guides are available in Arabic, Chinese, Karen (Burmese), Persian (Farsi) and Vietnamese from this site <http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/information-in-your-language/>. Information on the guides are available at <http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/centrelink-online-services> and [http://newshub.dhs.gov.au/our\\_business/step-by-step-guides-make-online-services-a-breeze/](http://newshub.dhs.gov.au/our_business/step-by-step-guides-make-online-services-a-breeze/)

## OPPORTUNITIES

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

### **NSW entries sought for Multicultural Advantage Grants Program**

The Community Relations Commission (CRC) NSW is inviting applications from not-for-profit organisations under the Multicultural Advantage Grants Program - Community Inclusion. Grants of up to \$20,000 are available for projects with a particular focus on inter-cultural and inter-faith activities, bringing diverse groups of people together, mentoring small or emerging communities targeted at geographically or socially-isolated communities, Applications must be received at any of CRC office or by email at [inclusion.grants@crc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:inclusion.grants@crc.nsw.gov.au) no later than 5:00 pm on Friday, 27 September 2013. Further

details and application forms are available at [http://www.crc.nsw.gov.au/multicultural advantage grants program](http://www.crc.nsw.gov.au/multicultural_advantage_grants_program) or from any CRC offices.

### **Applications open for VMC Multicultural Festivals and Events Grants**

Applications are now open for the second round of the Victorian Multicultural Commission's Multicultural Festivals and Events Grants. The grants are for events and festivals held between 1 January 2014 and 30 June 2014 that promote and celebrate Victoria's cultural diversity. Applications for activities during Cultural Diversity Week (15 to 23 March 2014) are encouraged. The closing date for applications is 20 September, 2013. For more information or to apply, go to <http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/grants/apply-for-a-grant>. Further information on the program and copies of the application form are available from the Grants Information Line on 1300 366 356 between 8.30am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday or [community.grants@dpc.vic.gov.au](mailto:community.grants@dpc.vic.gov.au).

### **Award for Muslim and non-Muslim Understanding**

The International Centre for Muslim and non-Muslim Understanding is seeking nominations to honour people and organisations working towards creating a better understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims in Australia. Nominations are sought for any Australian citizen or permanent resident of any or no religious affiliation, or an organisation based in Australia. Winners will be announced in December 2013 at the University of South Australia. Nominations close on 20 September, 2013.

To download the application form visit

<http://www.unisa.edu.au/Global/EASS/MnM/MUSLIM%20AWARD%20NOM%20FORM%202013.pdf>

### **Community singers wanted for women's choir in Adelaide**

The World of Women Choir is inviting women of all nationalities to join a community choir in Adelaide. No previous experience is necessary. The choir will meet at Payneham Hall in the library complex on Wednesday evenings between 6.30pm and 8.30pm from October to rehearse for performances planned in March and April 2014. Cost per week is \$10 or \$5. Any proceeds from the performances will benefit the Australian National Committee for UN Women. For further information and to register, contact Sue Morley at [threadshed@bigpond.com](mailto:threadshed@bigpond.com).

### **Study participants sought for study on attitudes towards refugees**

A Deakin University research project exploring Australians' attitudes towards refugees in Australia is seeking participants. The study will examine the link between attitudes towards refugees and education level, age, cultural background and gender of Australians to better understand why people hold negative attitudes towards refugees. The study require participants of any age group, gender or cultural background to complete short surveys for about 15 minutes, including a demographic questionnaire and a questionnaire relating to attitudes towards refugees. The link to the online survey is available at <http://www.deakin.edu.au/psychology/research/refugees>

## **REFUGEE ISSUES IN THE MEDIA**

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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)

### **Australia moves first asylum-seekers to PNG after policy shift**

Australia has transferred the first group of asylum-seekers to Papua New Guinea under its new offshore resettlement policy, officials say. Forty people, mostly Afghan and Iranian men, were flown from Christmas Island to PNG's Manus Island. (BBC, 1 August)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-23527603>

### **Heaven and hell: asylum shift leaves lives in limbo**

Indonesian officials are turning people away from immigration detention centres, brutish places that asylum-seekers usually avoid at all costs, saying the camps are overburdened and have two to three-month "waiting lists". (The Australian, 1 August) <http://bit.ly/13AgMUD>

### **WA coroner rules sinking of asylum seeker boat an accident**

The West Australian coroner has found the deaths of more than 100 asylum seekers whose boat sank last year were an accident, but that more could be done by Australian and Indonesian authorities to prevent such tragedies. (7 News, 1 August) <http://yhoo.it/13gLAxU>

### **Aust in asylum bidding war: ex-US diplomat**

A former top US diplomat says Australia's major political parties are engaging in a bidding war on asylum seekers, and has labelled Papua New Guinea as unstable. (The Australian, 1 August) <http://bit.ly/15wFWpj>

### **Govt to spend \$30m advertising its PNG asylum policy**

The government plans to spend \$30 million on its anti-asylum boats advertising blitz, making it more costly than 90 per cent of government information campaigns in recent years, despite the campaign being exempted from normal rules around political messaging. (The Age, 2 August) <http://bit.ly/13CbN63>

### **Abbott plan could reap windfall for Nauru**

Nauru stands to reap up to \$5 million each month in visa fees alone should an Abbott government go ahead with plans for a massive expansion of asylum seeker numbers on the tiny Pacific island. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 2 August) <http://bit.ly/18UHZE8>

### **Malaysia to help in boats battle**

Asylum seekers face another hurdle in their bid to reach Australia after Malaysia announced a visa crackdown after lobbying by the Rudd Government. (The West Australian, 2 August) <http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/a/-/breaking/18296915/malaysia-to-help-in-boats-battle/>

### **Third Nauru camp ramps up asylum seeker solution**

A third asylum seeker camp will be built on the tiny island nation of Nauru as Labor attempts to further ramp up its Pacific Solution. (The Age, 3 August) <http://www.theage.com.au/national/third-nauru-camp-ramps-up-asylum-seeker-solution-20130802-2r521.html>

### **Mixed messages on Nauru settlement**

Nauru's government is assuring its citizens that Australia will eventually relocate all refugees off the island, although some will have limited rights "for a long-term stay". (The Sydney Morning Herald, 6 August) <http://bit.ly/16pWfpg>

### **Speaker buckets Rudd on refugees**

Labor MP and former house speaker Anna Burke has admitted she often wonders why she ever joined the party, delivering another spirited attack on her leader's asylum seeker policy. (The Daily Telegraph, 6 August) <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/speaker-buckets-rudd-on-refugees/story-fni0cx4q-1226691723683>

### **PNG to legislate on Manus Island facility**

The Papua New Guinea government will legislate to shield the Australian run asylum seeker centre on Manus Island from constitutional challenges, as both nations solidify their controversial border protection policy. (ninemsn, 6 August) <http://news.ninemsn.com.au/world/2013/08/06/15/50/oppn-playing-politics-on-png-deal-burke>

### **Solomons PM rejects taking asylum seekers**

Solomons Prime Minister Gordon Darcy Lilo says he has dismissed an Australian approach to send asylum seekers to the islands for processing. The Solomon Islands government says it has rejected a request from Australia to accept asylum-seekers. (SBS, 6 August) <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/1796969/Solomons-PM-rejects-taking-asylum-seekers>

### **Australian 'outsourcing' of refugees to PNG challenged**

The Australian asylum policy of rejecting boat arrivals has been condemned by the United Nations Refugee Agency, Pacific island leaders, migration experts and human rights organizations. (The Jakarta Globe, 7 August) <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/international/australian-outsourcing-of-refugees-to-png-challenged/>

### **Boat people 'seek refund from smugglers'**

Immigration Minister Tony Burke says asylum seekers waiting in Indonesia are demanding their money back from people smugglers in a sign the Rudd Government's hardline PNG Solution is starting to work. (The West Australian, 8 August)

<http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/a/-/breaking/18405093/boat-people-seek-refund-from-smugglers/>

### **Teen refugees excluded until adulthood**

Teenage refugees joining the so-called queue in Indonesia to apply officially for protection visas, instead of jumping on a boat, say they are being told Australia will not take them until they are 18 years old. (The Age, 11 August)

<http://www.theage.com.au/national/teen-refugees-excluded-until-adulthood-20130810-2rore.html>

### **Burke signals new refugee laws**

Tony Burke has raised the possibility of new legislation as a way of reducing the high success rate for asylum claims – a factor considered by insiders to be a magnet for asylum-seekers. (The Australian, 12 August) <http://bit.ly/15AOMIB>

### **NGOs urge asylum seeker policy rethink**

Sixty-four church groups, charities and refugee advocates have called for an end to the "negative and distorted" political debate on asylum seekers. The non-government organisations (NGOs) say the federal government's deterrent policies haven't worked. They also took a swipe at the opposition's "regressive" boat policies. (The Australian, 13 August) <http://bit.ly/1cvvnhh>

### **QC Julian Burnside outlines plan for asylum seekers to live in country towns**

Letting asylum seekers live and work in country towns - after a short detention for health and security checks - could help Australia "regain its soul" when it comes to border policy, a leading barrister says. (Herald Sun, 13 August) <http://bit.ly/1e1bNHC>

### **Rohingya look to Australia despite PNG solution**

Myanmar's Rohingya are fleeing their country in unprecedented numbers – and more and more are looking to Australia for sanctuary. Undeterred by threats of resettlement offshore or years in immigration detention, increasing numbers of Myanmar's Muslim ethnic minority are paying people smugglers up to \$5000 to board boats for a complicated journey through Malaysia, Indonesia and, for those who can afford it, ultimately to Australia. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 13 August)

<http://www.smh.com.au/world/rohingya-look-to-australia-despite-png-solution-20130813-2ru99.html>

### **Internal disquiet bubbles over tough asylum policy**

Australia will send asylum seeker families to the tiny island nation of Nauru within weeks, Immigration Minister Tony Burke announced, as disquiet grows in Labor ranks over the party's new asylum seeker policy. (The Age, 14 August) <http://bit.ly/160UG2W>

### **Immigration Minister says discussions with asylum seekers prove PNG deal's worth**

Immigration Minister Tony Burke says he has spoken "face-to-face" with asylum seekers opting to return home rather than undergo processing on PNG. Last month, Kevin Rudd announced that all asylum seekers who arrived by boat would be sent to PNG and, if found to be refugees, resettled there. (Radio Australia, 15 August) <http://bit.ly/15FpBgY>

### **Coalition unveils hardline plan on asylum seekers & refugees**

The opposition has announced a hardline plan to deal with more than 30,000 asylum seekers who arrived by boat and are already being processed by Australia, which will strip them of the right to permanently settle in the country, and the right to have a decision on their asylum claim reviewed by the courts. (The Guardian, 16 August)

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/aug/16/coalition-hardline-plan-asylum-seekers>

### **PNG shuns boat claims**

Papua New Guinea has denied the two central elements of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's tough new asylum-seeker policy - that PNG will settle all those determined to be refugees and that none will end up in Australia. (The Age, 17 August)

<http://www.theage.com.au/federal-politics/federal-election-2013/png-shuns-boat-claims-20130816-2s2cy.html>

### **People smugglers take to the sky**

People smugglers are concocting a new and expensive product to sell their asylum seeker clients - flying them into Australia on fake tourist visas to sidestep the harsh policies of both political parties aimed at boat arrivals. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 18 August)

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/federal-election-2013/people-smugglers-take-to-the-sky-20130817-2s3zd.html>

### **Workers rate jobs more important than refugees**

Australian workers are more worried about job security and the ability to pay their bills than they are about refugee policies, according to a large poll of union members. (The Sun-Herald, 18 August)

<http://bit.ly/1bHSqio>

### **'PNG solution' challenge launched in federal court**

The attorney general has confirmed a legal application challenging the government's controversial "PNG solution" has been lodged in the federal court. (The Guardian, 19 August)

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/aug/19/federal-court-challenge-png-solution>

### **PNG solution illegal, court will hear**

The Rudd government's Papua New Guinea Solution faces its first legal challenge, with lawyers representing an asylum seeker who has been sent to Manus Island set to launch High Court action on Tuesday. (The Age, 20 August)

<http://www.theage.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/png-solution-illegal-court-will-hear-20130819-2s710.html>

### **ASIO reverses adverse finding against Tamil refugee detained four years**

A Tamil refugee detained for more than four years in immigration detention as a security threat is now free. ASIO has unexpectedly withdrawn its secret assessment that the man - who lost one leg below the knee in a bomb blast during Sri Lanka's civil war - could pose a risk to Australia's national security. (The Age, 20 August) <http://bit.ly/12p3C00>

### **All asylum policies are cruel, ours too: Turnbull**

The Coalition's asylum seeker policy is "cruel" and "harsh" but so are all asylum seeker policies, according to opposition communications spokesman Malcolm Turnbull. (The Age, 20 August)

<http://bit.ly/1aRQ7f8>

### **Small steps, no major breakthroughs at conference**

The Indonesian President's special conference to stop the flow of refugees has ended with a few small steps towards deterring people smugglers from working in the region, but no major breakthroughs. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 21 August) <http://bit.ly/12n7dMI>

### **Lawyers launch High Court challenge to PNG refugee program**

A High Court challenge to the Rudd government's decision to process and resettle refugees in Papua New Guinea claims the policy is invalid and in breach of Australia's international treaty obligations. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 21 August) <http://bit.ly/13P6b9W>

### **People sent offshore will include children**

The first group of unaccompanied minors will be sent to processing camps on Manus Island or Nauru "before long", a defiant Tony Burke declared on Wednesday after seven asylum-seeker families were sent to Nauru from Christmas Island. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 22 August) <http://bit.ly/16eM7NJ>

### **PNG fears over asylum flood**

Kevin Rudd's plan to house thousands of asylum-seekers in tents on Manus Island would be beyond the capacity of Papua New Guinea to deliver, with its most senior immigration official pleading "God help us" when he was briefed on the plan. (The Australian, 23 August) <http://bit.ly/151pYCa>

### **Morrison announces plan to buy back boats**

A boat buy back scheme and bounties paid in Indonesia are part of a planned crackdown on people smuggling under a Coalition government. Australian taxpayers would purchase leaking fishing boats

from poor fishermen where intelligence identified they planned to sell them to people smugglers. (The Courier-Mail, 23 August) <http://bit.ly/18Nkr6q>

### **Australia violated refugees' human rights, UN says**

Australia has been found guilty of almost 150 violations of international law over the indefinite detention of 46 refugees in one of the most damning assessments of human rights in this country by a United Nations committee. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 23 August) <http://bit.ly/1751Q15>

### **Tony Abbott, Scott Morrison announce new 'regional deterrence framework'**

The Coalition has unveiled its plan for more regional action to stop people smuggling, pledging \$420 million for policy measures that include paying Indonesian villagers for information about smugglers and buying unseaworthy boats. (ABC News, 23 August)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-08-23/coalition-announces-asylum-policy/4908186>

### **UN urges common sense in Aussie policy debate**

The head of UN refugee agency UNHCR has said that he hopes common sense will prevail in Australia's election-season debate about how the country treats asylum seekers. (Gulf Times, 24 August)

<http://www.gulf-times.com/australia/244/details/363672/un-urges-common-sense-in-aussie-policy-debate>

### **Greens pledge to launch Senate inquiry into "shameful" asylum seeker policy**

The Greens have pledged to instigate a Senate inquiry into Australia's "shameful" refugee policy and to introduce national air quality standards, as the party seeks to reconnect with its environmental roots. (Brisbane Times, 24 August) <http://bit.ly/1akVkn3>

### **Libs promise asylum places for Egypt Copts**

Opposition immigration spokesman Scott Morrison has told hundreds of anti-Muslim Brotherhood protesters that a coalition government would offer asylum to persecuted Coptic Christians from Egypt. (The Australian, 24 August) <http://bit.ly/14sPcKU>

### **Asylum-seeker child tries to take his life in detention**

A Somali teenager subject to Labor's new policy to deny boatpeople asylum in Australia was seriously ill at Royal Perth Hospital last night after being found hanging on Christmas Island. (The Australian, 28 August) <http://bit.ly/1dnTBHY>

### **No way out: Abbott to scrap review of refugees held for security**

An Abbott government plans to shut down an independent review of ASIO security assessments that have condemned almost 50 refugees – including a mother and her three children – to indefinite detention (The Sydney Morning Herald, 30 August) <http://bit.ly/15opYwl>

### **Coalition pledges to stop funding public funding of asylum claims**

Asylum seekers will be denied free Government advice on lodging claims and launching appeals under a controversial Coalition plan to end taxpayer funded support for boat arrivals (Herald Sun, 31 August)

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/coalition-pledges-to-stop-funding-public-funding-of-asylum-seeker-claims/story-fnij5s3y-1226707854915>