



Refugee Council of Australia

BULLETIN FOR MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS

7 November 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

138 organisations combine to object to divisive use of “illegal”

RCOA this week spearheaded a joint statement which was sent to the Prime Minister to voice objection to the Australian Government's recent decision to refer to asylum seekers who enter Australia by boat as “illegal maritime arrivals”. The statement brought together 138 non-government agencies, faith-based organisations and community groups who reminded the Prime Minister that seeking asylum was not illegal under Australian and international law. Appealing to the Prime Minister's intention to govern for all Australians, the joint statement said political leadership by Government had a profound effect on the nation. Legitimising the word “illegal”, it was feared, could lead to instances of fear and hatred in the community, much of it directed against humanitarian arrivals. The statement noted the shift in sentiment towards asylum seekers in Europe in the aftermath of the tragic boat sinking off the coast of Lampedusa, Italy and pleaded for the Prime Minister to place a higher value on cooperation, diplomacy, respect and honesty rather than harsh policy and language to dehumanise asylum seekers. Read the full statement at http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/r/s&l/131105_TAbbott_Illegal.pdf.

RCOA national consultations on Refugee and Humanitarian Program in full flight

RCOA's national consultations on the future of Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Program are underway, with 37 face-to-face and six teleconference consultations being held between 23 October and 26 November. This year, RCOA's consultations with service providers, refugee community members and interested members of the public are being held in eight states and territories. These consultations inform RCOA's annual submission to the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship on issues the Australian Government should consider in planning the coming year's refugee program. RCOA has produced a discussion paper to assist people participating in the consultations. The schedule of consultations is still being finalised but the current schedule, discussion paper and a list of RCOA research and resources are available at <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/isub.php>. If you cannot make it to an information and consultation meeting but would like to contribute your views, please contact us to arrange a phone interview or email your thoughts to admin@refugeecouncil.org.au.

UNHCR representative to speak at RCOA AGM forum in Canberra

The implications of changes to Australian refugee policy will be the topic for discussion when RCOA holds its 2013 Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Members' Forum in Canberra on Tuesday 26 November. The AGM will be held from 1pm at the Asia Pacific College of Diplomacy, Hedley Bull Centre, Australian National University (ANU), corner of Garran Road and Liversidge Street, Acton. The members' forum on refugee policy will begin at 2.30pm, with guest speakers to include UNHCR Regional Representative, Richard Towle, and Professor Pene Mathew of the ANU. This will be the first AGM in Canberra in RCOA's 32-year history and one of the final opportunities to hear Mr Towle speak before his term as UNHCR representative in Canberra concludes in December. For details on the AGM and members forum see <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/a/agm.php>.

Return to TPVs needlessly punitive and counter-productive

RCOA registered its strong opposition to the reintroduction of temporary protection visas by the new Government. In a statement, CEO Paul Power said TPVs were needlessly punitive and counter-productive. The statement recalled the former Howard government's use of TPVs between 1999 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

2007, emphasising the uncertainty, unfairness and fear they created and the negative impacts they would have on asylum seekers already in Australia on bridging visas. RCOA said the Government could not claim TPVs as a possible deterrent for future arrivals in light of its pledge that future arrivals will be processed offshore and will never be settled in Australia. Read the statement here http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/131019_TPv.pdf. RCOA has also published a Policy Brief on TPVs which can be accessed at http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/r/pb/PB1324_TPVs.pdf. The Department of Immigration has published a fact sheet on the new TPV policy, available at <http://www.immi.gov.au/ima/en/arrived/temporary-protection-visas/>.

RCOA pleads for renewal of expired bridging visas

In response to concerns raised by asylum seekers and service providers, RCOA has been lobbying the Australian Government on the impacts of the non-renewal of Bridging Visas for asylum seekers. For asylum seekers who arrived by boat, no Bridging Visas have been renewed in the two months since the 7 September Federal election. As a result, many asylum seekers have been left without legal status and people who have had the right to work have lost jobs as a result. After discussions with the Immigration Minister's office and the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, RCOA produced a summary of the impacts of this non-renewal of visas, sending it to the Minister, the Assistant Minister and the Department. The Government is saying that visas will be renewed shortly after it considers the timing of introducing new conditions for visa holders, including behavioural protocols and mutual obligation requirements. The briefing produced for the Government by RCOA can be viewed at <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/doc/131023-BV-expiry.pdf>.

Bright Ideas series features Hobart's Bridging Visa Social Club

The latest project to be featured in RCOA's "Bright Ideas" series – our celebration of the constructive responses developed by organisations in our network – is the Bridging Visa Social Club (BVSC), developed by Tasmanian Asylum Seeker Support (TASS). The BVSC was formed to provide support, friendship and recreational activities for asylum seekers living in Hobart after being released from Tasmania's Pontville detention centre. Activities have included walks, visits to galleries, tenpin bowling, seeing movies, swimming, playing cricket and soccer and flying kites. To view our summary of this project and other "Bright Ideas", visit <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/brightideas.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. Our Twitter feed is @OzRefugeeCounc.

COMING EVENTS

Photography exhibition: "Unsafe Haven"

Saturday 19 October to Saturday 7 December, Smithfield NSW

"Unsafe Haven" is an exhibition of photographs of the Hazara people in Afghanistan taken by former refugee Abdul Karim Hekmat. The exhibition provides an insight into the plight of the Hazara people and challenges the view that Afghan asylum seekers are no longer in need of protection.

Details: gallery open Tuesday to Saturday 10:00am-4:00pm; Fairfield City Museum and Gallery, cnr The Horsley Drive and Oxford Street, Smithfield.

Australian screenings of "Free China"

Throughout November in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne

This documentary film exposes the widespread human rights violations taking place in China and the efforts by people of conscience to end the persecution and abuse. It focuses on issues relating to freedom of speech, freedom of belief, information censorship, forced labour and unethical conduct by international corporations.

Details: for screening details and to book tickets, visit <http://freechina.ntdtv.org/screenings/>.

Fundraiser for Hobson's Bay Refugee Network

Friday 8 November, Yarraville VIC

The Hobson's Bay Refugee Network is hosting a screening of "One Chance", a 2013 British film about Britain's Got Talent winner Paul Potts. Funds raised will be used to purchase for re-conditioned washing machines and fridges for the asylum seekers living in the community without work rights.

Details: tickets \$20.00; 7:00pm; Sun Theatre, 8 Ballarat Street, Yarraville; for further details, call Dorothy (03) 9397 6000, Ann 0477 319 000, Neil 0402 817 673 or John (03) 9397 6401.

75th anniversary of Kristallnacht

Sunday 10 November, Sydney NSW

The guest speaker at this event will be Race Discrimination Commissioner Dr Tim Soutphommasane. As a feature of the event, the Embassy of Israel will recognise Josifas and Agripina Meskenas as Righteous Among the Nations on behalf of Yad Vashem for their courageous actions during the Holocaust.

Details: 6:30pm; The Great Synagogue, Sydney; for further details, call (02) 9360 1600.

Emerge Festival In Brimbank

Sunday 10 November, St Albans VIC

Presented by Multicultural Arts Victoria in partnership with Brimbank City Council, the Emerge Festival is a free arts and cultural event showcasing local refugee and emerging communities who now call Brimbank home. The festival offers entertainment for the whole family including a talent quest, music, dance, food, fashion and craft.

Details: 12:00pm-5:00pm; Errington Community Centre, Princess Street, St Albans; for further details, visit http://multiculturalarts.com.au/events2013/emerge_brimbank.shtml.

Braving the seas: Sri Lanka's post-war troubles

Monday 11 November, Canberra ACT

This public lecture will look at why thousands still flee Sri Lanka, some using legal routes but many others braving the high seas despite the terrible dangers that this involves. The guest speaker will be Kishali Pinto-Jayawardena, a prominent lawyer, media columnist and human rights defender currently serving as deputy director of the Law and Society Trust in Colombo, and as head of its civil and political rights program.

Details: 5:30pm-6:30pm; Lecture Theatre 1, Hedley Bull Centre (130), corner of Garran Road and Liversidge Street, Australian National University, Canberra; for further details, visit http://asiapacific.anu.edu.au/researchschool/events/event_details.php?id=10036.

Engaging men to prevent gender-based violence in their new and emerging communities

Tuesday 12 November, Adelaide SA

Speakers will include, Mr Andrew O'Keefe, Immediate Past Chair, White Ribbon Australia; Mr Hieu Van Le AO, Lieutenant Governor of South Australia; Ms Vanessa Swann, Director, Office for Women; Ms Libby Davies, CEO, White Ribbon Australia; Hon Christopher Kourakis, Supreme Court Justice; and Dr Joseph Masika OAM, White Ribbon Ambassador. Hosted by the Migrant Resource Centre of SA in association with White Ribbon Australia, Office for Women and Myriad Consultants.

Details: 10:00am-1:30pm; 59 King William Street, Adelaide; for further details and to register, call (08) 8217 9500 or e-mail admin@mrca.com.au

Fundraising strategies workshop

Tuesday 12 November, Bonnyrigg NSW

Hosted by the NSW Spanish and Latin American Association for Social Assistance (SLASA), this workshop will provide an overview of the basic steps needed to develop fundraising strategies. The workshop is specially designed for cultural performing and community groups.

Details: 9:30am-12:00pm; NSW SLASA Community Hub, Bonnyrigg Community Centre, Bonnyrigg Plaza Shopping Centre, 26 Bonnyrigg Avenue, Bonnyrigg; for further details or to register, call (02) 9610 0288.

Law for community sector workers: Immigration law workshop

Tuesday 12 November, Sydney NSW

This workshop will cover refugee and humanitarian visas, family stream migration, the review options available to clients and the issues around family breakdown and visa cancellation.

Details: 12:30pm-3:30pm; Legal Aid NSW, Level 12, 323 Castlereagh Street, Haymarket; to register (essential), visit www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/register, e-mail cle@legalaid.nsw.gov.au or call (02) 9219 5879.

CEH workshop: Negotiating between health beliefs

Wednesday 13 November, Richmond VIC

Presented by the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health, this workshop will provide strategies and methods for practitioners to negotiate between health beliefs with CALD clients to improve health outcomes. It will help participants to: identify key components of the world's major health belief systems; elicit from clients their understanding of health, illness and treatment; and employ a five-step process to negotiate between your own and your client's health beliefs, to reach mutually-agreed goals.

Details: \$150.00; 9:15am-1:00pm; 23 Lennox Street, Richmond; to register, visit <http://www.ceh.org.au/training/workshops>.

Public forum: Are democratic and human rights under threat in Australia?

Wednesday 13 November, Melbourne VIC

This forum will focus on issues such as workplace rights, international free trade agreements, asylum seeker and refugee rights and civil and political rights. Speakers will include ACTU President Ged Kearney, Vice President of Liberty Victoria Anne O'Rourke, human rights lawyer David Manne and historian and activist Humphrey McQueen. The forum will be chaired by democratic rights lawyer Rob Stary.

Details: 6:30pm-8:30pm; The Wheeler Centre, 176 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne VIC; for further details, contact Lou 0407 022 335 or Shirley 0417 456 001.

Turn Up and Play: The 'Informal Sport' Opportunity

Wednesday 13 November, Melbourne VIC

Many young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds actively volunteer within their own communities to recruit, train and organise sporting activities but feel locked out of the clubs system. This forum will focus on the social impact of sport and the way sport participation contributes to social mobility of disadvantaged young people, and how clubs can capitalise on the 'informal sport' opportunity, increase membership and volunteer base. The forum will also provide an opportunity to network and share ideas. Speakers will include Emma Sherry from La Trobe University and representatives from Brimbank City Council, Rugby Union and the Centre for Multicultural Youth.

Details: 9:30am-12:30pm; La Trobe University City Campus, Level 20, 360 Collins Street, Melbourne; to register, visit <http://turnupandplay.eventbrite.com.au>.

Book launch and signing: "Living Among Wolves"

Thursday 14 November, Manuka ACT

This new novel by Australian musician and lecturer Kurt Hahn tells the story of a Jewish family and a Mennonite family who were forced over a period of 200 years to move from one country to another in hope of finding peace and security, while trying to make sense of their lives amid betrayal and persecution.

Details: 6:30pm; Paperchain Bookstore, 34 Franklin Street, Manuka; RSVP via (02) 6242 5882 or 0419 436 305, or email write.now@bigpond.com.

Converge on Canberra to take action for refugee rights

Monday 18 November, Canberra ACT

On 18 November, people from across Australia will be travelling to Canberra to protest against the Australian Government's current policies on asylum seekers and refugees during the first sitting of parliament. Participants can register to travel independently or book tickets for buses travelling from Melbourne, Newcastle and Sydney.

Details: meet on the lawn in front of Parliament House at 11:00am; to book bus tickets, go to <http://www.trybooking.com/64849> or <http://bit.ly/GYvu4>; for further details, visit <http://rac-vic.org/?p=825>.

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

Tuesday 19 November, 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>.

Women Rising Above Conflict

Thursday 21 November, Sydney NSW

Hosted by the Australian Tamil Congress, this event will mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Australian women from the Tamil, Afghan and Kachin (from Burma) communities will highlight the role militarism plays in perpetuating violence against women their countries of origin. Registration is essential.

Details: tickets \$5.00; 6:00pm for a 6:30pm start to 8:00pm; Wesley Conference Centre, 220 Pitt Street Sydney; to book tickets, visit <http://www.trybooking.com/Booking/BookingEventSummary.aspx?eid=66550>; for further details, call 1300 660 629.

Book launch: "A Country to Far"

Friday 22 November, Woolloongabba QLD

"A Country Too Far" is a new anthology featuring works by twenty-seven of Australia's finest writers, focusing on the issue of asylum seekers. Edited by award-winning writers Rosie Scott and Thomas Keneally, the book includes works by Anna Funder, Christos Tsiolkas, Elliot Perlman, Gail Jones, Raimond Gaita, Les Murray, Rodney Hall and Geraldine Brooks. Hosted by the Multicultural Development Association and Penguin Books.

Details: tickets \$15.00 (includes drinks and canapes); 6:00pm; Brisbane Multicultural Centre, 28 Dibley Street, Woolloongabba; book tickets online at <http://acountrytoofar.eventbrite.com.au>; for further details, call (07) 3198 2538.

STARTTS workshop: Clinical approaches in the treatment of refugee child and adolescent survivors of torture and trauma

Friday 22 November, Carramar NSW

This one-day workshop aims to provide clinicians with additional skills for clinical practice in the treatment of child and adolescent refugee survivors of torture and trauma. It will reflect the shift in the formulation of the impacts of trauma on the developing brain. An integrated psychological, social and neurological approach to developmental trauma and treatment will be presented. Participants will be encouraged to reflect on the strengths and limitations of various therapeutic approaches.

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>.

CatholicCare African Dads and Kids Camp: Yarra Junction

Friday 22 to Sunday 24 November, Yarra Junction VIC

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

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

Holroyd African Summer Festival

Saturday 23 November, Merrylands NSW

The Holroyd African Summer Festival (HASFest) celebrates the diversity of African heritage represented in Australia. The festival will feature live music, performances, dance, food stalls, market stalls, a jumping castle and much more.

Details: 10:00am-4:00pm; Holroyd Gardens, Pitt and Walpole Streets, Merrylands; for more information, e-mail hasfest@africanfind.com, visit www.hasfest.africanfind.com or call Kate on 0488 182 292.

Workshop on speaking skills for African community members

Saturday 23 November, Toowoomba QLD

This free workshop will focus on speaking skills for events and activities, for African Australian community members and their friends. Topics will include: how to build up confidence when asked to speak; protocols for welcoming important guests; tips for making speeches and presenting reports in meetings; skills for networking in social gatherings; body language and the dos and don'ts; and increasing listening skills and mobile phone etiquette. Free parking and a buffet lunch will be provided.

Details: 11:00am-2:30pm; Mercy Family Services, 104 South Street Toowoomba; for further details, call Paul Mabior Garang on 0431 652 803.

Fundraising concert with David Helfgott

Saturday 23 November, Bellingen

This event will feature pianist Helfgott performing works by Rachmaninov, Beethoven and Chopin and award-winning composer and performer Yantra de Vilder performing her improvisation "Play of Lights" with stunning visuals. Funds raised will support the work of Sanctuary Australian Foundation in assisting refugee families to settle in Australia. Seating is limited so bookings are essential.

Details: tickets \$60.00 (includes supper and wine); 8:00pm; Memorial Hall, Bellingen; to book tickets, call the Sanctuary Australia Foundation on (02) 6652 2127, Park Beach Music and HiFi on (02) 6652 3725 or Robbie Spence on (02) 6655 1236.

Fairfield Multicultural Festival

Sunday 24 November, Bonnyrigg NSW

Organised by the NSW Spanish and Latin American Association for Social Assistance (SLASA), this festival will feature 15 performing groups from Africa, Latin America, Asia, the Middle East and Europe.

Details: 12:00pm-6:00pm; Bonnyrigg Community Centre; for further details, call the NSW SLASA Community Hub on (02) 9610 0288 or 0414 825 085.

Sultan's Feast fundraiser for Bridge for Asylum Seekers Foundation

Sunday 24 November, Balmain NSW

This fundraising event will feature leading food columnist John Newton in conversation with Efendy owner and award-winning chef Somer Sivrioglu. The ticket price includes a six-course Turkish feast with a glass of wine or mineral water. Proceeds will support the work of Bridge for Asylum Seekers Foundation, which provides living assistance to 40 to 60 adult asylum seekers and numerous children living in the community with no government or income support.

Details: tickets \$75.00 (\$40.00 of which is tax deductible); 12:30pm; Efendy Restaurant and Meze Bar, 79 Elliott Street (corner Darling Street), Balmain; to book tickets, contact Susan via basfevents@gmail.com or (02) 8090 4467.

Leaders forum on mental health in CALD communities

Monday 25 November, Sydney NSW

Hosted by the Mental Health Commission of NSW in partnership with the Transcultural Mental Health Centre, this forum will inform the development of the Strategic Plan for Mental Health in NSW and CALD communities. It will focus on identifying issues, gaps and opportunities and drafting a set of recommendations for further discussion and refinement through the Mental Health Commission of NSW process.

Details: 10:00am-5:00pm; Australian Maritime Museum, 2 Murray Street, Darling Harbour; RSVP by Wednesday 13 November to Fiona Hawkes fiona.hawks@swahs.health.nsw.gov.au or (02) 9840 3940.

Public forum: Eyewitness from Nauru

Monday 25 November, Sydney NSW

This forum will give an eyewitness insight into conditions in the offshore processing centre on Nauru, the recent riot and the dangers of placing asylum seekers there. The guest speaker will be Mark Isaacs, who worked with the Salvation Army at the Nauru processing centre between October 2012 and June 2013.

Details: 6:00pm; NSW Teachers Federation building, 23-33 Mary Street, Surry Hills; for further details, email refugeeactionsyd@gmail.com.

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

Thursday 28 November, Wagga Wagga 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; Meeting Room One, Wagga RSL Club, Dobbs Street, Wagga Wagga; register online at <http://www.startts.org.au>.

NEW RESEARCH, STATEMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

New report on young unaccompanied adults

The Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) has published a new report focused on the settlement experiences of young adults aged between 18 and 25 who arrived in Australia unaccompanied. The report explores the issues facing young people once they turn 18 years and are no longer eligible for the specialist services available for unaccompanied minors. The paper was developed in response to a number of concerns being raised by service providers who were working with this group of newly arrived young people, particularly young men who had arrived onshore by boat and later been granted refugee status. It seeks to explore the specific issues facing 18 to 25 year old unaccompanied young adults (UYAs) who arrive onshore, and how their overall settlement can be better supported. It outlines key issues for consideration, guided by the Australian Government's settlement policy, and highlights positive strategies and recommendations. Read the report. Access the report at <http://www.cmy.net.au/Assets/2410/1/SettlingorSurviving.pdf>

Snapshot: Australian refugee policy and human rights

The Australian Human Rights Commission has issued a new report summarising the key human rights issues raised by Australia's current policies regarding asylum seekers and refugees who arrive by boat. The Commission's report is available at

<http://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/asylum-seekers-refugees-and-human-rights-snapshot-report>.

Report examines best-practice work with refugee youth

Foundation House has analysed two projects independently initiated in Western Melbourne, in response to concerns raised by community and local services that mainstream services encountered difficulties engaging young people from refugee backgrounds, especially those considered marginalised and 'at risk'. The projects targeted young men, aged between 15 and 25 years from refugee backgrounds, who were disengaged or disengaging from family, community and educational and employment pathways, had been engaging in high-risk behaviours, such as alcohol and drug misuse and were becoming marginalised from society. The report shares reflections from the projects and draws on the experience of the host organisations and the literature, offers recommendations for the consideration of policy makers, service providers and staff to enable them to engage and work more effectively with young people of refugee backgrounds who may be particularly vulnerable to alcohol and drug misuse. Read the report at <http://bit.ly/16KsP4N>

Urban refugee study in India

The Joint IDP Profiling Service and the Feinstein International Center have collaborated with UNHCR to profile Afghan, Somali and Burmese refugee households in India. The research is designed to

supplement UNHCR's existing knowledge with new information that will contribute to more effective programming and advocacy, in particular UNHCR's work on promoting self-reliance. The study gathered data on different aspects of refugee livelihoods, including employment, housing and financial security, as well as on physical safety and children's access to education. In addition to describing differences between refugee groups and their Indian neighbours, the report examines the factors affecting refugees' access to livelihoods, including legal status, social capital, human capital, and length of stay in Delhi. Access the report at <http://sites.tufts.edu/feinstein/2013/urban-profiling-of-refugee-situations-in-delhi>

Humanitarian arrivals tell their settlement stories

Life Without Barriers has published a collection of stories from eight young men it has provided support for. Each story, though different, explores the shared themes of adversity, family and belonging, and highlights the results of programs that focus on supporting people within their community. "I Now Call Australia Home" is available at <http://www.lwb.org.au/shared/publications/SRAS%20Profiles.pdf>

Multicultural mental health state of play

This Mental Health in Multicultural Australia (MHiMA) report on mental health research and evaluation in multicultural Australia looks at what is known about the mental health of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities in Australia, whether mental health research pays adequate attention to cultural and linguistic diversity, and whether national data collections support evidence informed mental health policy, practice and reform in multicultural Australia. The MHiMA report makes independent recommendations for policy makers, researchers and others. To access this document go to <http://bit.ly/1cnHMBz>

Audio files in community languages provide access to mental health support

Mental Health in Multicultural Australia has produced a series of audio files in community languages, covering the range of mental health support services for people and for people supporting others with depression and anxiety. Access the audio files at: <http://bit.ly/16i9db6>

UNHCR guidance on mental health support for refugees and asylum seekers

UNHCR's operational guidance on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support covers specific points of good practice to consider for operations in camp and non-camp settings. For more details visit <http://reliefweb.int/report/world/operational-guidance-mental-health-psychosocial-support-programming-refugee-operations>

Fast Facts on refugee access to domestic violence services

The latest Fast Facts from the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse highlights key issues for immigrant and refugee victims and common recommendations from the literature on how to improve their access to justice, services and protection. For more details visit: <http://bit.ly/1f0SCuV>

New Amnesty magazine

Four university students have devoted their time to create the first online magazine for Amnesty International in Australia. AM-UNITY Magazine aims to showcase the activism work of Amnesty youth and identifies pathways that young people passionate about human rights can pursue. Find out more at <http://amunitymagazine.com/index.html>

Consumer rights multilingual videos launched in WA

Consumer Protection WA has launched a series of multilingual animatic videos in Arabic, Dinka, Karen, English, Farsi, Nepalese and Tamil. The topics covered include guarantees and warranties, contracts, refunds, lay-bys, resolving issues and complaint lodging and general consumer rights under the Australian Consumer Law. The videos are available at www.youtube.com/ConsumerProtectionWA or at www.commerce.wa.gov.au/myrights

Fire safety in community languages

The NSW Rural Fire Service has published a range of publications and resources about fire safety covering issues including bush fire awareness and keeping your home safe. Access the resources at http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/fact_sheets/non_english.cfm

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>.

Site to lodge expressions of interest for the Community Proposal Pilot

Expressions of interest for the new Community Proposal Pilot (CPP) program can be lodged through a website at <http://cpp-apo.net/>. The pilot, which began in June 2013, makes available up to 500 places for people identified by individuals or community organisations as in need of resettlement. Community members or organisations can identify, pay for and support applications for refugee and humanitarian visas. Details about the program can also be accessed at <http://www.immi.gov.au/visas/humanitarian/offshore/community-proposal-pilot.htm>.

School program to create awareness about asylum seekers and refugees

Red Cross in Western Australia is running a new program to create greater awareness about asylum seekers and refugees. "In Search of Safety" is aimed at year 6 students, helping dispel the myths around asylum seekers and their journey to Australia. Public, private and independent schools have been participating in the program. Red Cross WA is planning to continue the program in 2014. For further information contact Red Cross at WA_MSP_INFO@redcross.org.au (with 'In Search of Safety' in the subject line) or call (08) 9225 8830.

Participants wanted for mental health project in WA

The National Mental Health Commission, Black Dog Institute, Ethnic Disability Advocacy Centre and Transcultural Mental Health Service are inviting people are inviting former refugees and migrants who have experienced mental health issues, emotional stress or are supporting a family member with mental health concerns to a forum to be held at Subiaco, Perth on Tuesday, 19 November. The forum is an opportunity to help the forum improve its service delivery with communities. Lunch is provided. Please contact the Commission by Tuesday, 12 November via Bernadette Wright on 08 9224 1760 and Bernadette.Wright@health.wa.gov.au or Wendy Rose on 08 9388 7455 and wendyrose@edac.org.au. The forum will be held at the Ethnic Disability Advocacy Centre, 320 Rokeby Road, Subiaco between 10.30am and 12.30pm.

Refugee rights bus to Canberra

The Refugee Advocacy Network is organising a peaceful protest in Canberra against recent asylum and refugee policies on Monday, 18 November from 11am in front of Parliament House. Enquiries can be directed to trconcepts@netspace.net.au or by calling 0409 252 673. Organisers are seeking registrations by 10 November. For further details contact <http://www.trybooking.com/Booking/BookingEventSummary.aspx?eid=64849>

New social enterprise to empower disadvantaged communities

The Australian Network of Team Services (AUNTS) – a social enterprise created to empower disadvantaged communities is holding its inaugural Annual General Meeting at the Parramatta Library in Sydney on Friday, 8 November. Registration starts at 9.30am for a 10am start and ends at 2pm. The event is an opportunity to meet staff and volunteers, contribute ideas and discuss the work undertaken by AUNTS. To attend, contact Alex Mijalkovic at AUNTSASM@gmail.com

Victoria Community Grants Program 2014-15 now open

Applications for the Victorian Multicultural Commission's (VMC) Community Grants Program are open for 2014-15. Applicants can apply for one or more of five categories including: Organisational Support; Strengthening Multicultural Communities; Buildings and Facilities Improvement; Multifaith Initiatives and Interfaith Networks; and Community Language Schools Program. For more information, please call the Grants Information Line on 1300 366 356 (cost of a local call) on any weekday between 8.00am and 10.00pm (except public holidays) or the VMC grants team on 03 9651 0653 between 9.00am and 5.00pm. Further details are available at <http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/grants>

Inaugural Victorian African Community Awards

Nominations are open for the first ever Victorian African Community Awards (VACA). Organised by Africa Media Australia (AMA), the Awards are open to individuals and organisations. Nominations are

encouraged for individuals within the broader Victorian African community, as well as other “friends of Africans” (Non-African Australians) whose work is connected to Africans and deserving of recognition and celebration. Nominations are also welcome from not-for-profit bodies providing settlement and services to African-Australian communities and corporations running programs to assist members of the African community in Victoria. Nominations close 30 November 2013 with the winners announced at a gala dinner at Richmond Town Hall in Melbourne on 7 December. Award categories and information on how to nominate are available at http://www.africamediaaustralia.com/?page_id=2812. To book a seat to attend the dinner, visit http://www.africamediaaustralia.com/?page_id=2816

Diaspora Diaries: Sri Lanka

Diaspora Diaries is a series of documentaries telling the personal stories of members of the Sri Lankan diaspora and is seeking contributions which will broaden the discussion and add to the richness of the diaspora story. Send your own video diary, photo story or written piece to: communications@international-alert.org. Submission guidelines are available at <http://www.international-alert.org/news/diaspora-diaries-call-submissions>

Community language guide to digital TV switch in Sydney

On 3 December 2013 the analog free-to-air TV signals are switching off in Sydney and surrounding areas. For more information in community languages about the switch to digital-only TV signals call 1800 20 10 13 or visit the Digital Ready website www.digitalready.gov.au. The Translating and Interpreting Service is also available on 131 450.

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)

Minister denies Australia delayed sending help to doomed asylum boat

Immigration Minister Scott Morrison has rejected claims that Australian authorities took too long to respond to distress calls from an asylum seeker boat which went down off the coast of Java, killing at least 31 people. (ABC News, 1 October)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-09-30/scott-morrison-press-conference/4989396>

Prime Minister reassures Indonesia he will respect its sovereignty on asylum seekers

Prime Minister Tony Abbott has guaranteed he will respect Indonesia's sovereignty when implementing his asylum seeker policies, while Indonesia has agreed greater bilateral cooperation is needed. (ABC News, 1 October)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-09-30/abbott-says-will-respect-indonesian-sovereignty-asylum-seekers/4989734>

'Immigration levels can go up': Labor leadership hopeful Bill Shorten outlines vision

Australia should increase its immigration levels, Labor leadership hopeful Bill Shorten has declared, saying the next arrival could “be the next Albert Einstein or a good taxpayer”. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 1 October) <http://bit.ly/1aENHx5>

Syria's neighbours demand greater international assistance for refugees

Syria's neighbours have pleaded for more international support to tackle the huge influx of refugees fleeing the civil war, warning the burden could destabilise the whole region. (ABC News, 1 October)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-10-01/syria-at-un-compares-militant-onslaught-to-911-attacks/4990250>

Sri Lankan Tamils say they would still be prepared to pay people smugglers

Tamils in northern Sri Lanka say they are still prepared to pay people smugglers to get them to Australia, despite the new Government's crackdown. (ABC News, 1 October)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-09-30/tamils-say-they-would-still-be-prepared-to-pay-people-smugglers/4989894>

Lebanese asylum seekers warned not to use Syria as cover to come to Australia

Immigration Minister Scott Morrison says Lebanese people using the Syrian conflict as a cover to come to Australia will be rejected. (ABC News, 1 October)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-10-01/morrison-warns-lebanese-asylum-seekers-not-to-get-on-boats/4991370>

Tony Abbott softens line on asylum-seekers following talks with Jakarta

Tony Abbott has moved to soften his rhetoric on key Coalition boatpeople pledges, arguing Indonesian co-operation is the key to beating people-smugglers and the most important objective is to stop the boats. (The Australian, 1 October) <http://bit.ly/19SReqD>

Australia responds to UNHCR request and agrees to resettle 500 Syrian refugees

The Federal Government has announced it will resettle 500 Syrian refugees as part of its humanitarian refugee program. The places will be quarantined for Syrians within the existing annual refugee intake, which is capped at 13,700. (ABC News, 3 October) <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-10-03/australia-to-resettle-500-syrian-refugees/4997312>

Pregnant asylum seekers to give birth on Nauru

Pregnant asylum seekers will give birth in Nauru for the first time since 2004 under the Abbott government's "no exemptions" approach to offshore detention. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 4 October) <http://bit.ly/GAcHfo>

West Papuans threaten legal challenge against deportation

Asylum seekers from the Indonesian province of Papua say they hope to mount a legal challenge against what they say was their irregular deportation. Seven asylum seekers from the Indonesian province of Papua say they hope to mount a legal challenge against what they say was their irregular deportation from Australia to PNG. (SBS World News Australia, 4 October) <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2013/10/04/west-papuans-threaten-legal-challenge-against-deportation>

PNG refuses to guarantee boat turnaround target of 48 hours

Papua New Guinea has cast doubt on the Abbott government's target of transferring asylum seekers to Manus Island within 48 hours, vowing it won't break its own immigration laws to meet the deadline. (WA Today, 5 October) <http://www.watoday.com.au/national/png-refuses-to-guarantee-boat-turnaround-target-of-48-hours-20131004-2uzv2.html>

Apology to Malaysia for Coalition's criticism of Labor's asylum seeker swap deal

The Prime Minister has moved to mend relations with Malaysia by apologising for the Coalition's strident criticism of Labor's failed asylum seeker swap with the south-east Asian nation. (ABC News, 8 October) <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-10-08/abbott-apologises-to-malaysia-for-swap-deal-criticism/5009180>

Jon Stanhope hits out at 'odious' Labor asylum-seeker, refugee policy

Christmas Island administrator and former Labor chief minister Jon Stanhope has lashed out at his party's "odious" position on asylum seekers, calling on the new leader to apologise for the harsh stance taken in this year's election. (The Canberra Times, 11 October) <http://bit.ly/GIDqqb>

UN slams boat returns as possible rights breach

The United Nations has slammed as a possible breach of the Refugee Convention the Abbott government's plans to speedily send a group of Sri Lankan asylum seekers home. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 12 October) <http://bit.ly/1gyLnfh>

Second asylum centre for Manus

A second regional processing centre for asylum seekers will be built on Manus Island. (Islands Business, 15 October) <http://www.islandsbusiness.com/news/papua-new-guinea/3192/second-asylum-centre-for-manus/>

Refugee policies slammed by forum

"Stop the boats" refugee policies put in place by the Gillard, Rudd and Abbott governments place human lives at risk, demean Australian values and threaten the survival of global accords on the rights of asylum seekers, a forum of academics, lawyers and aid workers has found. (The Canberra Times, 15 October) <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/refugee-policies-slammed-by-forum-20131014-2vi31.html>

Plibersek torn on asylum seeker issue

TANYA Plibersek's view on refugees and migrants is shaped by a deeply personal experience, but that doesn't mean the deputy Labor leader will be soft on asylum-seeker policy. (Herald Sun, 15 October)

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/breaking-news/stay-tough-on-asylum-seekers-carr/story-fni0xqi4-1226740050651>

Tamil refugee tried to hang himself in detention, asylum advocates say

A Tamil refugee who won a landmark high court case that led to the review of adverse ASIO security assessments tried to hang himself in a Melbourne detention centre on Monday, according to refugee advocates and friends of the detainee. (The Guardian, 15 October)

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/15/tamil-refugee-tried-to-hang-himself-in-detention-asylum-advocates-say>

Second pregnant woman in Nauru detention a 'serious health concern'

Facilities on Nauru are 'inappropriate' for such cases, says Royal Australasian College of Physicians. A second pregnant woman is being held in immigration detention on Nauru, the UNHCR has confirmed to Guardian Australia. (The Guardian, 17 October)

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/15/second-pregnant-woman-in-nauru-detention-a-serious-health-concern>

Archbishop urges new refugee debate

The Anglican Archbishop of Adelaide has called for a sane conversation on asylum seekers after Australia's major parties descended to the political basement on the issue during the election campaign. (ninemsn, 18 October)

<http://news.ninemsn.com.au/national/2013/10/18/19/38/archbishop-urges-new-refugee-debate>

Manus Island detention centre staff evacuated after incident

Immigration Minister Scott Morrison has confirmed that staff at the Manus Island detention centre were moved to safety after an incident this morning. (ABC News, 18 October) <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-10-18/asylum-seekers-refugees-manus-island-christmas/5031730>

UNHCR: Syrian refugees need safe harbor

The U.N. refugee agency on Friday appealed to European and other states to grant asylum to more Syrians as increasing numbers flee their country in perilous journeys across the Mediterranean. (Reuters, 18 October)

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/10/18/us-syria-crisis-refugees-idUSBRE99HOMB20131018>

Refugee Council says TPVs punitive

The Refugee Council of Australia has branded the government's reintroduction of temporary protection visas (TPVs) as needlessly punitive and counter-productive. (ninemsn, 19 October)

<http://news.ninemsn.com.au/national/2013/10/19/15/33/refugee-council-says-tpvs-punitive>

Minister wants boat people called illegals

Immigration Minister Scott Morrison has instructed departmental and detention centre staff to publicly refer to asylum seekers as "illegal" arrivals and as "detainees", rather than as clients. The directive has been criticised as a "profound" shift by a leading asylum seeker agency, which says the new terminology is designed to dehumanise people. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 20 October)

<http://bit.ly/1hozx7Z>

Majority don't want asylum seekers: survey

Australians say they support multiculturalism but a new survey reveals that a third think asylum seekers arriving by boat should not be allowed to settle in the country. The Mapping Social Cohesion report says the proportion of people who say asylum-seeker boats should be turned back has risen from 23 per cent in 2010 to 33 per cent this year. (ninemsn, 20 October)

<http://news.ninemsn.com.au/national/2013/10/21/00/15/majority-don-t-want-asylum-seekers-survey>

'Illegal' asylum seeker tag is 'extremely dangerous'

The Anglican Church of Melbourne says the Federal Government should stop using the word 'illegal' to describe asylum seekers arriving by boat. Immigration Minister Scott Morrison, who regularly uses the term himself, has refused to apologise for directing public servants to refer to asylum seekers as illegal. (SBS News, 21 October)

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2013/10/21/illegal-asylum-seeker-tag-extremely-dangerous>

Scott Morrison defends use of term 'illegal arrivals', plays down PNG police incident

Immigration Minister Scott Morrison has defended the use of the term "illegal arrivals" to describe asylum seekers, saying he is "calling a spade a spade". (Radio Australia, 22 October) <http://bit.ly/18B9TJx>

Refugees at risk under return policy: AHRC

Asylum seekers from Sri Lanka risk being returned to potentially harmful situations under the government's enhanced screening process, the Australian Human Rights Commission says. (Herald Sun, 22 October) <http://bit.ly/HcM68j>

Claims of sexual assault rife in immigration detention, reports show

Dozens of serious allegations of sexual assault have been made by staff, adults and children in Australian immigration detention centres, according to incident reports obtained under freedom of information laws. (The Guardian, 24 October)

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/24/claims-sexual-assault-immigration-detention>

Tighter border checks for Australia-bound asylum seekers

The Home Ministry will intensify efforts to prevent Malaysia from becoming a transit point for alleged Australia-bound asylum seekers and people-smuggling rings with the use of biometric technology. (New Straits Times, 24 October)

<http://www.nst.com.my/latest/tighter-border-checks-for-australia-bound-asylum-seekers-1.384124>

Australia 'neglecting UN obligations' by deporting West Papuan asylum seekers

Experts in refugee law have warned that Australia cannot pass off to Papua New Guinea its responsibility to process the claims of seven West Papuan asylum seekers. (The Guardian, 24 October)

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/24/australia-neglecting-responsibilities-west-papuans>

Asylum seekers' choice: go home or face indefinite detention

Australian immigration officials have been telling more than 2,000 asylum seekers held on Christmas Island they have a choice - return to their country of origin or face indefinite detention. (ABC News, 25 October)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-10-25/asylum-seekers-told-choose-between-going-home-or/5044810?section=nt>

Minister gives no details on Manus Island sexual assault report

The immigration minister, Scott Morrison, is refusing to provide details about an independent review of sexual assault allegations at Manus Island regional processing centre that was scheduled to be completed over a month ago. (The Guardian, 25 October)

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/25/scott-morrison-gives-no-details-on-manus-island-sexual-assault-report>

Grave twist in asylum bids

People smugglers in Indonesia are offering to lock asylum seekers in shipping containers and send them to industrial ports in Australia to try to get around Australia's tough deterrents for boat arrivals. Secret audio recordings heard by Fairfax Media also reveal smugglers are telling customers that New Zealand is now a better option and can be reached either in shipping containers or by air. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 27 October)

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/grave-twist-in-asylum-bids-20131026-2w8pn.html>

UN: Refugee numbers at highest in 19 years

The UN says there are now more refugees than at any time since 1994. Thousands of asylum-seekers, mainly from Afghanistan and the Middle East, head to Indonesia each year to make the dangerous voyage across the Indian ocean to Australia. (Al-Jazeera, 27 October) <http://aje.me/1aMpfrH>

Many Sri Lankans in danger if sent back, lawyers warn

Hundreds of Sri Lankan asylum seekers are being sent home to face persecution because Australian authorities are rushing through refusals of their protection claims, human rights lawyers say. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 28 October) <http://bit.ly/HcMEen>

People-smugglers struggle to find customers for asylum-seeker boats

Key people-smugglers operating in Indonesia are believed to have forged a new "super syndicate" in a bid to overcome a massive downturn in demand from asylum-seekers for boats to Australia. (The Australian, 30 October) <http://bit.ly/1aUxpOM>

Five deaths in immigration detention

Five people have died in immigration detention in the past financial year. The immigration department's annual report does not say whether they were all seeking asylum, however, 83 per cent of people in detention are asylum seekers who arrived in Australia by boat. (Herald Sun, 30 October) <http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/breaking-news/five-deaths-in-immigration-detention/story-fni0xqi4-1226749906605>

Indonesia to send navy patrols to Timor Sea for asylum seekers

Indonesia will offer to step up naval patrols in the ocean between Java and Australia in an attempt to combat people smuggling. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 30 October) <http://www.smh.com.au/world/indonesia-to-send-navy-patrols-to-timor-sea-for-asylum-seekers-20131030-2whb1.html#ixzz2jF05FWCA>

Australia and Iran discuss return of asylum seekers

Julie Bishop has begun high-level efforts to strike an agreement with the Iranian Government to repatriate its nationals whose refugee claims have been rejected by Australia. (The West Australian, 31 October) <http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/a/-/breaking/19613145/bishop-iran-discuss-return-of-asylum-seekers/>

Labor 'opened gates for child asylum surge', The Australian says

Labor presided over an explosion in the number of child asylum-seekers coming to Australia as families became more confident of favourable treatment by authorities. (The Australian, 31 October) <http://bit.ly/16NPXzm>