



# Refugee Council of Australia

## **BULLETIN FOR MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS**

**7 February 2014**

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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### **Australia's refugee communities and services urge greater focus on refugee protection**

Following months of research and consultations with refugee communities and service providers, RCOA has completed its annual submission on Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Program. Last month, the draft submission and recommendations were presented to Immigration Minister Scott Morrison at the Minister's annual discussion on the Humanitarian Program with peak bodies and community representatives. Key recommendations include: increasing the number of refugees it accepts under the annual intake program to help bridge the widening gulf between global resettlement needs and available places; helping improve conditions for refugees who will never be resettled; reviewing Australia's migration program to identify opportunities for refugees to enter Australia through skilled and family streams; revising the Community Proposal Pilot to ease access for applicants; developing a separate Humanitarian Family Reunion Program; increasing support available to asylum seekers in the community; abandoning offshore processing, and; restoring a single statutory system of onshore processing. RCOA's submission was based on consultations held late last year throughout Australia with about 845 participants, representing 195 organisations and more than 35 different national and ethnic groups. The submission and recommendations can be accessed at <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/isub.php>

### **Temporary Humanitarian Concern visas used as an alternative to TPVs**

The Australian Government has begun to grant Temporary Humanitarian Concern visas (subclass 786) to refugees who entered Australia by boat to seek asylum. This new policy follows the Senate's decision in December to disallow the regulation which reintroduced Temporary Protection Visa (subclass 785). RCOA has produced a fact sheet on this policy which outlines what is currently known about the provisions which will apply to refugees given Temporary Humanitarian Concern visas. Read the fact sheet at: [http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/pb/THC\\_140206.pdf](http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/pb/THC_140206.pdf). In October, RCOA raised concerns about the impacts of temporary protection on refugees and views these new arrangements as having the same impacts on people found by the Australian Government to be in need of protection from persecution.

### **Inquiry into immigration detention of children welcomed**

RCOA welcomed an Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) inquiry into the mandatory and closed detention of children seeking asylum in Australia. In a statement, RCOA CEO Paul Power said he hoped the inquiry would bring greater public attention to impacts of detention on vulnerable children, and highlight the successful alternatives to detention available to the Australian Government. Read the statement here: [http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/140203\\_ChildDetention.pdf](http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/140203_ChildDetention.pdf). Find out more about the inquiry at <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/news/stories/inquiry-announced-time-reassess-children-held-immigration-detention>

### **Fears for asylum seekers under family reunion changes**

RCOA was critical of a new ministerial directive issued by Minister for Immigration Scott Morrison that consigned family visa applications lodged by refugees who arrived by boat to the lowest processing priority. RCOA Chair Sonia Caton said the punitive measure would put lives at risk by cutting off the sole lifeline available to some refugee families living in dangerous and desperate circumstances overseas. In

a statement, RCOA said: “Family sponsorship is often their only hope of getting to safety. Tragically, RCOA is already aware of cases where family members of refugees in Australia have been killed overseas following delays in family reunion”. Read the statement here: <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/140110-Family.pdf>

### **RCOA submissions call for rejection of migration amendment bills**

RCOA has sent two submissions to the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, recommending two migration amendments Bills before the Parliament not be passed. Responding to the *Migration Amendment (Regaining Control Over Australia’s Protection Obligations) Bill 2013*, the submission argues against repealing the complementary protection provisions of the *Migration Act 1958*, citing case studies of people found to be owed protection under this framework. The submission warns that a return to a discretionary and non-compellable Ministerial intervention mechanism risked undermining refugee protection for people at risk of serious human rights violations. Read the submission in full at: <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/sub/1401-CP.pdf>. RCOA also made a submission in response to the *Migration Amendment Bill 2013 (Provisions)*, raising concerns that the amendments would restrict opportunities for refugee protection. Read the submission here: <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/sub/1401-Provisions.pdf>

### **Asylum seeker concerns raised with Australian Government**

In late December, RCOA wrote to the Government to raise concerns raised by RCOA members involved in supporting asylum seekers living in the community. In a letter to the Secretary of the Immigration Department, RCOA expressed fears for young adult asylum seekers (aged 18 to 21) who have had their Asylum Seeker Assistance Scheme payments reduced by around \$80 a fortnight – see [http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/s&l/131231\\_Bowles-payments.pdf](http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/s&l/131231_Bowles-payments.pdf). Concerns were also raised with the Immigration Minister about the very broad nature of the Code of Behaviour being applied to asylum seekers on bridging visas and the Minister’s public comments linking the code to concerns about overcrowding – see [http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/s&l/131231\\_SMorrisoncode.pdf](http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/s&l/131231_SMorrisoncode.pdf). Responses to the letters have not yet been received. In January, RCOA received a response from the Prime Minister to the November joint letter coordinated by RCOA and supported by 138 organisations objecting to the Government’s use of the term “illegal maritime arrivals” to refer to asylum seekers who had arrived by boat – see [http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/s&l/140115\\_PMletterillegal.pdf](http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/s&l/140115_PMletterillegal.pdf).

### **Refugee and asylum seeker workers honoured on Australia Day**

The service of 14 people who work with refugees and asylum seekers was acknowledged in the 2014 Australia Day Honours List. In a statement, RCOA chief executive officer Paul Power said the honours recognised the efforts of individuals and also demonstrated community support for newly arrived refugees and people seeking asylum. “While politicians and others argue publicly about aspects of refugee policy, thousands of Australians quietly work to welcome new arrivals and help them with learning English and the practical tasks of settling into a new society. This work rarely comes to public attention but has been an important aspect of Australian life for many decades,” Mr Power said. Read more about those recognised in the Honours List in our media release at: [http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/140128\\_AusDay.pdf](http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/140128_AusDay.pdf)

### **Former refugee is inaugural New Australian of the Year**

Former refugee from Bhutan, Parsuram Sharma-Luitai, was awarded the inaugural New Australian of the Year Award by the Victorian Australia Day Council. RCOA nominated Parsu for the award in recognition of his support for migrant and refugee communities and his broad contribution to Australian society. In a statement, RCOA chief executive officer Paul Power said: “Parsu has an extraordinary passion to help others, which he has demonstrated over the past 12 years in so many ways, from his voluntary work with refugee communities and charities through to his advocacy on policy issues with peak bodies and government agencies”. Read more about Parsu and the Award at: [http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/140124\\_NewAustralian.pdf](http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/140124_NewAustralian.pdf)

### **Refugee Convention’s 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary**

Last month, RCOA highlighted (through interviews on a number of radio networks) the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Australia acceding to the Refugee Convention. On 22 January 1954, the Liberal-Country Coalition Government of Robert Menzies created history with Australia’s accession to the Convention enabling it

to come into force. In line with Article 43, the Refugee Convention came into force on 22 April 1954, 90 days after the sixth state (Australia) had ratified or acceded to it.

### **Latest editions of Bright Ideas focus on refugee health and spoken English classes**

The latest instalments in our Bright Ideas series profile the Water Well Project which was established in Melbourne to improve the health and wellbeing of refugees and migrants by improving health literacy, and the Association of Bhutanese in Australia's Spoken English Classes. The Water Well Project aims to improve access to, and utilisation of, Australian healthcare services by working with established migrant and refugee organisations to provide free, culturally-appropriate, interactive health education sessions to their clients and communities. The Spoken English Classes assist new arrivals in gaining confidence speaking English and provide work experience opportunities to volunteer facilitators. To view our summary of this project and other "Bright Ideas", visit <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/brightideas.php>

### **Local councils encouraged to sign on as Refugee Welcome Zones**

RCOA is encouraging local councils to join the Refugee Welcome Zone initiative by encouraging a culture of welcome to new arrivals. In a statement, RCOA chief executive officer Paul Power said local councils were uniquely-placed to play a positive leadership role on refugee issues. RCOA has issued a research paper, "Refugee Welcome Zones: Local Councils building a culture of welcome for refugees" which explains how local councils throughout Australia are welcoming refugees in their communities. The Refugee Welcome Zone initiative comprises 89 local councils which have made a commitment in spirit to welcoming refugees into the community. Read the media release here [http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/140130\\_RWZ.pdf](http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/140130_RWZ.pdf). To access the research paper, visit: [http://refugeecouncil.org.au/g/131219\\_RWZ.pdf](http://refugeecouncil.org.au/g/131219_RWZ.pdf)

### **Two new Refugee Welcome Zones from Tasmania**

Derwent Valley and West Tamar councils have joined the Refugee Welcome Zone initiative, bringing to 89 the number of local governments to express a commitment in spirit to welcome refugees into the community. To find out more about the Refugee Welcome Zone initiative, visit: <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/g/rwz.php>

### **Vacancy at RCOA – Settlement Policy Officer**

RCOA is seeking a part-time Settlement Policy Officer, to be based in our Melbourne office. As our organisation is small, vacancies are relatively rare. This is the first time in five years that a position has become available in Melbourne. If you are interested or know anyone who is, please see the job description and details at [http://refugeecouncil.org.au/g/2014\\_Settlement\\_Policy\\_Officer.pdf](http://refugeecouncil.org.au/g/2014_Settlement_Policy_Officer.pdf). The position has become available as a result of Louise Olliff's decision to begin work on a PhD at the University of Melbourne. Louise has won a Human Rights Scholarship to conduct research on the role of diaspora community organisations in international refugee protection. We are pleased that Louise will remain involved in RCOA, assisting us with research and advocacy on international refugee issues. This week, we have also welcomed a new colleague, Effie Mitchell, as part-time Office Manager (based in Sydney). Effie is well known to many for her previous role as Research Associate and Office Manager of the Centre for Refugee Research, University of NSW. Prior to this, she worked in executive roles with the Commonwealth Bank.

### **Update on the Community Proposal Pilot**

The Migrant Resource Centre of South Australia will join AMES, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Illawarra Multicultural Services and Liverpool Migrant Resource Centre as an Approved Proposing Organisation in the Community Proposal Pilot. These organisations work with supporting community organisations to identify people to propose, support their visa application, and if successful, help them to settle in Australia. An information sheet has been developed and is also available in Arabic, Farsi and Urdu. For more details, visit the Community Proposal Pilot page at website: <http://www.immi.gov.au/visas/humanitarian/offshore/community-proposal-pilot.htm>

The Community Proposal Pilot is a program of up to 500 visa places under Australia's Humanitarian Program. It allows approved proposing organisations to propose someone in a humanitarian situation outside of Australia for a Refugee and Humanitarian (Class XB) visa.

### **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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### **Community forums: An End to Racial Profiling in Sight?**

**Wednesday 12 to Wednesday 26 February, across Melbourne VIC**

After years of community campaigning, the Victoria Police have launched a plan to address concerns about discriminatory policing and racial profiling. The three-year plan includes a 'receipting' trial, collecting data on street stops, an increased focus on community engagement and changes to police training. In a series of forums across Melbourne, speakers from a range of community organisations, and the Flemington Kensington Community Legal Centre will outline the 'Equality is not the Same' report and discuss the steps ahead to end racial profiling. Forums will take place in North Melbourne, Footscray, Springvale and Werribee.

**Details:** all forums start 5:00pm; for dates, venue details and to register, visit <http://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/community-forums-an-end-to-racial-profiling-in-sight-tickets-10480709083?aff=mcivte>.

### **Crossing Borders: Mental health and the experience of seeking asylum**

**Friday 14 February, Sydney NSW**

This one-day symposium will bring together experts in the area of mental health, including Professor Beverley Raphael, Associate Professor Suresh Sundram, novelist and human rights advocate Dr Arnold Zable and community representatives with their own stories of resettling, to explore how the needs of asylum seekers can be supported.

**Details:** registration \$150.00 (students \$70.00) with early bird discounts available; 9:00am-4:30pm; University of Notre Dame Sydney Campus, 104 Broadway, Sydney; to register, go to [http://www.conferenceonline.com/conference\\_invitation.cfm?id=18045&key=666FC199-8A37-47AF-8976-89B6511B08EC](http://www.conferenceonline.com/conference_invitation.cfm?id=18045&key=666FC199-8A37-47AF-8976-89B6511B08EC).

### **CEH workshop: Organisational health literacy**

**Wednesday 19 February, Richmond VIC**

Health literacy is a state and federal health policy priority, and aims to improve individuals' capacity to understand and apply health information. This workshop provides methods to embed organisation-wide health literacy strategies into systems, operations, planning and workforce development. Hosted by the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health (CEH).

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

### **NSW Multilingual Health Information Stakeholders' Forum**

**Thursday 20 February, Gladesville NSW**

Hosted by the NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service, this forum will provide participants with an opportunity to provide feedback on and discuss issues relating to the NSW Ministry of Health's Policy and Guidelines on the production of multilingual health resources.

**Details:** 10:00am-12:00pm; Building 39, Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW, off Punt Road, Gladesville Hospital; RSVP (essential) by Friday 14 February to Chris Gollan on (02) 9816 0545 or [chris.gollan@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:chris.gollan@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au)

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

**Friday 21 February, Carramar NSW**

This one-day introductory workshop is designed to put a framework of understanding around working with refugees and asylum seekers. It focuses on understanding the link between what refugees have been through, the sorts of issues and behaviours they may present with, and how to work in a way that fosters feelings of trust, safety and control, while minimising the risk of retraumatisation. Participants will be encouraged to think about how to apply the concepts to their own workplace, and will leave the workshop feeling more confident in utilising their skills and experience with refugee and asylum seeker clients.

**Details:** \$149.00 (students \$99.00); 9:30am-4:30pm; 152-168 The Horsley Drive, Carramar; for further information and to register, visit <http://www.startts.org.au/training>.

### **Meet, Learn and Eat: Refugee-hosted cooking class**

**Sunday 23 February, Bondi NSW**

Presented by Amnesty International's NSW Refugee Network and the House of Welcome, this hands-on cooking class will be led by asylum seekers and people from refugee backgrounds. Five chefs will share their personal stories and recipes from Bangladesh, Iran, Pakistan and more.

**Details:** entry fee \$35.00 (includes lunch); 10:00am-2:00pm; 'Our Big Kitchen', 36 Flood Street, Bondi; to book your place, go to

<http://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/meet-learn-eat-refugee-hosted-cooking-class-tickets-10303156017>.

### **Aboriginal cultural appreciation for CALD workers**

**Thursday 27 February, Rooty Hill NSW**

Presented by the Family Worker Training and Development Programme (FWTDP), this interactive one day workshop is designed for community sector service providers born overseas. The focus of this workshop is on providing participants with a better understanding of Australian colonial history and the impacts of government policy on Aboriginal people, past and present. The workshop will provide an opportunity for participants to explore practical strategies to achieving more effective, culturally inclusive ways to build cross-cultural understanding in the community and to engage local Aboriginal Elders and families in relevant community events and programs.

**Details:** \$77.00 for members of FWTDP, \$132.00 for NGO non-members, \$165.00 for government; 8:45am-4:00pm; Rooty Hill RSL; for further details and to register, visit <http://fwtdp.org.au>.

### **Afghanistan: Hidden Treasures from the National Museum, Kabul**

**Thursday 6 March to Sunday 1 June 2014, Sydney NSW**

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 10:00am-5:00pm daily; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Art Gallery Road, The Domain, Sydney; for further information, visit

<http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/media-office/afghanistan-hidden-treasures>.

### **Foundation House workshop: The Refugee and Asylum Seeker Experience - An introduction to working with refugees and asylum seekers**

**Thursday 6 March, Dandenong VIC**

This interactive one-day workshop provides a comprehensive introduction to working with people from a refugee background, including asylum seekers. Participants will gain knowledge of the refugee and asylum seeker experience and ways of working with this highly vulnerable group. Establishing positive working relationships and maintaining worker resilience in a highly challenging policy environment are covered.

**Details:** \$210.00; 9:30am-4:30pm; 155 Foster Street, Dandenong; for further information and to register, visit [http://www.foundationhouse.org.au/professional\\_development/index.htm](http://www.foundationhouse.org.au/professional_development/index.htm).

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

**Friday 7 March, 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; 152-168 The Horsley Drive, Carramar; for further information and to register, visit <http://www.startts.org.au/training>.

### **Foundation House workshop: School's In for Refugee Background Students**

**Friday 7 March, Brunswick VIC**

This comprehensive introduction is recommended as the foundational professional development from Foundation House for those working with refugee background students. It is appropriate for those working in and with schools and other educational settings, at early childhood, primary, secondary and post-compulsory levels.

**Details:** 9:30am-4:30pm; 4 Gardiner Street, Brunswick; for further information and to register, visit [http://www.foundationhouse.org.au/professional\\_development/index.htm](http://www.foundationhouse.org.au/professional_development/index.htm).

### **2014 Toowoomba Multicultural Fashion Expo**

**Saturday 8 March, Toowoomba QLD**

The 2014 Multicultural Fashion Expo will be a parade of traditional to contemporary costumes and fashions from around the world and from Toowoomba's own regional migrant communities including fashion styles from Africa, India, Korea, Japan, China, Germany, Finland and Philippines.

**Details:** from 11:00am; Centre Court, Level 1, Grand Central Shopping Centre, Toowoomba; for further details, contact David Barton at [david.barton@mercycs.gov.au](mailto:david.barton@mercycs.gov.au) or (07) 4617 7600.

## **NEW RESEARCH, STATEMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS**

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### **If you were an asylum seeker, what would you do?**

Jewish Aid Australia's "What Would You Do?" campaign features community leaders answering the difficult questions about what they would do if they were forced to seek asylum and find safety for their family. Find out more about the campaign at <http://www.whatwouldyoudo.org.au/>

### **Best-practice framework for refugee health**

A new research paper from the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute provides a framework for the delivery of accessible and coordinated primary health care to refugees. The report found that refugees face profound and complex health and social challenges and concludes that there are inadequacies in the health care system. Access the framework at:

[http://sapcru.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Coordinated-PHC-for-Refugees\\_FULL-REPORT.pdf](http://sapcru.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Coordinated-PHC-for-Refugees_FULL-REPORT.pdf)

### **Welcoming the Stranger: Affirmation for Faith Leaders**

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) declaration, the "Affirmation of Welcome", the first to involve UNHCR and a spectrum of faith-based groups, sets out principles to guide faith leaders in providing welcoming environments for refugees and displaced people, and those without citizenship, including through promoting community understanding and tolerance, and combatting xenophobia. Read the Affirmation here: <http://www.unhcr.org/51b6de419.html>

### **Refugee Youth in Focus: report back from national forum**

The proceedings of a national forum on young people from refugee background have been published by the Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN), providing an overview of panel presentations and recommendations made by sessions focused on education and employment, health, youth-specific settlement issues and migration law. Read the report here: [http://gallery.mailchimp.com/7195f465e2ddfb560ce39cd77/files/MYAN\\_National\\_Forum.2013.pdf](http://gallery.mailchimp.com/7195f465e2ddfb560ce39cd77/files/MYAN_National_Forum.2013.pdf)

### **Guide to recent refugee policy changes for health workers**

The Victorian Refugee Health Network has produced a snapshot of government policy changes over the past 18 months to help health professionals understand changes to the offshore and onshore programs. Access the guide at: <http://bit.ly/1fs1FXb>

### **Study of refugee populations in New Delhi**

"Urban profiling of refugee situations in Delhi" is a study of refugees from Myanmar, Afghanistan and Somalia alongside their local Indian neighbours which is designed to support UNHCR's work on promoting self-reliance. Access the study at: [http://www.daii.org.in/images/stories/original\\_urban\\_profiling\\_of\\_refugees\\_situations\\_in\\_delhi.pdf](http://www.daii.org.in/images/stories/original_urban_profiling_of_refugees_situations_in_delhi.pdf)

### **Database for organisations working with people forcibly displaced in urban areas**

"Good Practices for Urban Refugees" is a web-based database for organizations working with forcibly displaced people in urban areas. It provides a platform for organisations to compile best-practice initiatives acts as a repository for research papers, evaluations, tools and guidelines, and multi-media

pieces related to urban refugees. Find out more and contribute to the database at <http://urbangoodpractices.org/>

### **Hidden Bruises: challenges facing refugee women and girls in Uganda**

This Refugee Law Project documentary highlights the challenges faced by refugee women and girls living in Kampala city where they find themselves caught in a web of survival. Many of them have suffered sexual and gender based violence such as rape leaving them with children born out of rape; while many young unaccompanied refugee girls are ill prepared for the rigors of life and thus face numerous challenges as they strive to survive in the city. The documentary can be viewed at [www.refugeelawproject.org/index.php/resources/video-documentaries/video/latest/hidden-bruises.html](http://www.refugeelawproject.org/index.php/resources/video-documentaries/video/latest/hidden-bruises.html)

### **Human Rights Commission fact sheet on Temporary Protection Visas**

The Australian Human Rights Commission has published a new fact sheet about Temporary Protection Visas, explaining the differences between them and bridging visas and the impact of these visas on the mental health and wellbeing of asylum seekers. Access the fact sheets at: <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/tell-me-about-temporary-protection-visas>

### **Consolidated data on youth humanitarian arrivals in WA**

The Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN) has developed an information sheet on humanitarian youth arrivals in Western Australia over the past five years. Access the fact sheet at: [http://gallery.mailchimp.com/7195f465e2ddfb560ce39cd77/files/WA\\_Youth\\_Settlement\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](http://gallery.mailchimp.com/7195f465e2ddfb560ce39cd77/files/WA_Youth_Settlement_Fact_Sheet.pdf)

### **Cross-cultural mental health care resource kit for GPs**

The Transcultural Mental Health Centre's resource kit for GPs provides advice on accessing interpreters, assessment guidelines, prescribing medication, culturally-appropriate counselling and more. Access the kit at: <http://bit.ly/1khDo7i>

### **Policy to support Queensland Government Cultural Diversity Action Plan**

The Queensland Government has produced a new Cultural Diversity Policy ahead of the expected finalisation this year of the first Queensland Government Cultural Diversity Action Plan. The policy is available at: <http://www.datsima.qld.gov.au/culturaldiversity/publications/queensland-cultural-diversity-policy>

## **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>.*

### **Volunteer interpreters needed to support asylum seeker claims in Sydney**

The Sydney-based Refugee Advice and Casework Service (RACS) is seeking volunteer interpreters to assist at the Legal Help for Refugees Clinic on Monday nights. There are large numbers of asylum seekers who have not been allocated an IAAAS lawyer and have been here since August 13 2012 and still need legal assistance. To volunteer, contact (02) 9114 1600 or email [admin@racs.org.au](mailto:admin@racs.org.au). Further information about RACS is available at <http://www.racs.org.au/>

### **Diploma opportunity for community workers from refugee background**

Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University is offering experienced community workers, particularly from refugee backgrounds the chance to apply for a Diploma of Community Development. The program is offered two days a month over one year and participants must complete a community project as part of their study. The deadline for enrolment is 13 February, 2014. Further information is available at: <http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=C5247>

### **Unity Through Partnerships Grants open**

Funding of up to \$100,000 is available under Victoria's Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship's Unity Through Partnerships Grants Program for projects undertaken in partnership by two or more of Victoria's diverse ethnic, cultural and religious communities, culminating in a public festival, event or gathering. Applications will be accepted for festivals and/or events that are scheduled to run between 1 July, 2014 and 30 June, 2015. The deadline for applications is 28 February, 2014. Visit [www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/grants](http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/grants) for further details or contact (03) 9651 2931 or

[claire.millar@dpc.vic.gov.au](mailto:claire.millar@dpc.vic.gov.au).

### **Information sessions on NSW community grants**

A new round of NSW Community Relations Commission (CRC) Community Inclusion grants will open on 11 February 2014 and close on 14 March 2014. The grants are for up to \$20,000 for projects with a particular focus on mentoring and on inter-cultural activities and inter-faith activities that bring diverse groups of people together. The Commission is also keen to receive applications that assist smaller communities through projects that strengthen community infrastructures and cultural initiatives. To assist the community to understand the guidelines and the process to submit their application, four information sessions will be held. Contact 02 8255 6781 or [shabnam.tavakol@crc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:shabnam.tavakol@crc.nsw.gov.au).

### **NSW Premier's Multicultural Community Medals and Honour Roll**

Nominations are open for the Premier's Multicultural Community Medals and the Multicultural Honour Roll. These Awards honour the outstanding contribution of migrants, and those who work in the field of multiculturalism, to this State. The Medals will be presented at the annual Premier's Harmony Dinner where the Premier will announce new members of the Multicultural Honour Roll, which posthumously records the legacy of the inductees' exceptional multicultural service in NSW. For more information on eligibility criteria, judging and award categories or to nominate a member of your community, please visit [http://www.crc.nsw.gov.au/Awards\\_and\\_Sponsorships/nsw\\_premiers\\_multicultural\\_awards](http://www.crc.nsw.gov.au/Awards_and_Sponsorships/nsw_premiers_multicultural_awards).

Nominations close 5.00pm, Friday 21 February, 2014. Contact the Awards Coordinator 02 8255 6819 or at [premiermulticulturalawards@crc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:premiermulticulturalawards@crc.nsw.gov.au).

### **Volunteer with Jewish Aid Australia**

Jewish Aid Australia is holding information sessions in Melbourne and Sydney for potential volunteers with skills in tutoring, mentoring, arts and crafts, administration, research and writing, events, fundraising, childcare, English language support, sewing and leadership. The Melbourne session will be held on Sunday, 16 February, 2014 between 10.30am and 12noon and the Sydney session on Wednesday, 19 February, 2014 between 7.30pm and 8.30pm. Enquiries to [volunteer@jewishaid.org.au](mailto:volunteer@jewishaid.org.au)

### **Learn skills and practice English through Culinary Tales**

Culinary Tales is seeking people who have a love of cooking and are willing to teach the secrets of their national cuisine at classes being run at the North Sydney Community Centre over the next five months. Participants will be able to practice their English. Classes will be held between 10.30am and 1.00pm on 15 February, 9 March, 12 and 26 April, 3 and 24 May and 7 June. Further details are available at <http://www.culinary-tales.com/> at 0403 958 499 and [culinarytales@sydneyenactus.org](mailto:culinarytales@sydneyenactus.org)

### **Donate a ride to support refugees in Brisbane**

A new initiative in Brisbane is raising funds to help refugees overcome the obstacles of public transport so they can afford fares to attend volunteering opportunities in the city.

Find out more at: <https://give.everydayhero.com/au/giving-back-to-those-who-are-giving-back>

### **Refugee bike program helps asylum seekers in Melbourne**

A refugee advocate and an asylum seeker have started a program to fix bikes and donate them to asylum seekers in Melbourne. Anyone who would like to help can visit <https://www.facebook.com/BicyclesForAsylumSeekers> and contact 0402 330 478.

### **NGO supports African refugee women in Sydney**

Nakango Vision is an NGO founded by African refugee women from who speak Swahili Language. The organisation runs Swahili Speaking Women Advocacy Services in Sydney and provides services, education, counselling and advice. Find out more at: <http://www.nakangovision.org/>

## **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)

### **Government to introduce new asylum seeker measures after TPVs blocked in Senate**

Prime Minister Tony Abbott insists the Government will act to ensure refugees who arrived by boat will not stay permanently in Australia, despite the Senate blocking moves to restore temporary visas. (ABC News, 3 December)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-12-03/government-introduce-new-asylum-seeker-policy-after-tpvs-blocked/5131080>

### **Immigration Minister Scott Morrison freezes visas for refugees**

The government has banned new permanent protection visas for asylum seekers already in Australia, slamming the door shut on permanent residency for the 33,000 boat arrivals held in detention centres or on bridging visas. (The Daily Telegraph, 4 December) <http://bit.ly/L55x4C>

### **Search on for Rohingya asylum seekers on Christmas Island**

Australian federal police are searching heavy jungle on Christmas Island for nine asylum seekers believed to be part of a group that camped undetected on a beach after their boat sank. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 6 December) <http://bit.ly/1hHcpQV>

### **Three asylum seekers, including toddler, die on way to Christmas Island**

Three would-be asylum seekers, including a toddler, were killed off the coast of Java on Monday when their wooden fishing vessel sank on the way to Christmas Island. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 10 December) <http://bit.ly/1dK6pT1>

### **Asylum seekers: former chief justice condemns politicians' approach**

The former high court chief justice Gerard Brennan has prepared a damning assessment of a "whatever it takes" approach to politics, questioning the asylum-seeker policies of both parties. (The Guardian, 10 December)

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/10/asylum-seekers-former-chief-justice-condemns-politicians-approach>

### **Amnesty report accuses Manus Island detention centre of humiliating asylum seekers**

Asylum seekers are being subjected to humiliating treatment and appalling conditions on the Manus Island detention centre in a deliberate effort to pressure them to go back to where they came from, Amnesty International has alleged. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 12 December) <http://bit.ly/1dK6xSt>

### **Asylum seeker debate lacks sense of compassion, Sam Dastyari tells Senate**

Australia's debate about asylum seekers lacks a real sense of compassion, the new Labor senator Sam Dastyari has declared in a speech condemning politicians for exploiting the public's "natural fear of difference". (The Guardian, 12 December) <http://bit.ly/1dBxKZK>

### **Labor's \$1.2 billion bomb rips a hole in the Federal budget**

THE Abbott government will take a further \$1.2 billion hit to its budget with the discovery Labor left its offshore processing policy for asylum seekers grossly underfunded.

The revelations will be in next week's nightmare mid-year economic and fiscal outlook, to be released by Treasurer Joe Hockey. (The Australian, 13 December) <http://bit.ly/1aZrmN3>

### **Australia rejects refugee cruelty claims**

Australia has rejected allegations that asylum seekers at a processing camp in Papua New Guinea were treated inhumanely in violation of international law, insisting that the off-shore processing regime would remain in place. (Al-Jazeera, 13 December) <http://aje.me/1etXDtk>

### **Error in case of Sri Lankan refugee Ranjini by Immigration Dept, High Court rules**

The Immigration Department erred in the handling of the case of a Sri Lankan refugee with a negative security assessment from ASIO, the High Court has ruled. (ABC News, 13 December)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-12-12/high-court-ruling-refugee-case/5153742?section=australianetworknews>

### **Salvation Army dumped from role supporting asylum seekers on Nauru, Manus Island**

The Federal Government has dumped the Salvation Army as a long-term partner in providing services in offshore processing centres. (Radio Australia, 14 December) <http://bit.ly/1jZrFtY>

### **Morrison 'monitoring' resettlement program after reports Afghan interpreter killed**

Immigration Minister Scott Morrison insists he is closely monitoring an Afghan resettlement program after reports an interpreter waiting to come to Australia has been killed by the Taliban. (Radio Australia, 15 December) <http://bit.ly/1mQD66G>

### **Refugee health group gutted**

The federal government has gutted the independent body that oversees asylum seekers' health as a new survey showed half of all detainees were taken to hospital emergency wards, most commonly for psychiatric illnesses and self-harm. (The Age, 16 December)

<http://www.theage.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/refugee-health-group-gutted-20131215-2zfc9.html>

### **Abbott says criticism over axing of Immigration Health Group is 'complete beat-up' -**

Prime Minister Tony Abbott has dismissed criticism of a decision to axe an independent committee that provides advice on the health needs of asylum seekers as "a complete beat-up". (Radio Australia, 16 December) <http://bit.ly/1naRA4p>

### **Asylum seekers required to follow government's new code of conduct**

The Australian Government has introduced a code of conduct for asylum seekers living in the country on bridging visas. (Radio Australia, 17 December) <http://bit.ly/1c6wpx9>

### **Sir Deane urges Australians to reflect on their own migrant journeys**

The former governor general Sir William Deane is urging Australians to reflect on their family's migrant journeys to Australia to better understand the plight of asylum seekers. (The Guardian, 18 December)

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/17/australians-urged-reflect-own-migrant-journeys>

### **Decmil wins \$147m Manus Island contract**

Engineering and construction business Decmil Group has won a \$147 million contract for work on the expansion of the Manus Island detention centre. (SBS News, 18 December)

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2013/12/18/decmil-wins-147m-manus-island-contract>

### **Rush to send asylum seekers offshore may risk lives, doctors warn**

The rush to move asylum seekers from Christmas Island to Nauru and Manus Island may place lives at risk and has compromised the ethical and medical responsibilities of healthcare professionals, according to serious allegations in a letter documenting a first-hand account of the process. (The Guardian, 20 December)

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/20/rush-to-send-asylum-seekers-offshore-may-risk-lives-doctors-warn>

### **Scott Morrison moves to revoke government's freeze on protection visas**

Immigration Minister Scott Morrison says he did not "backflip" when reversing his freeze on protection visas for asylum seekers, arguing the regulation was no longer necessary because he has since introduced stronger rules. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 20 December) <http://bit.ly/1aE76mF>

### **Scott Morrison's new rules to put asylum seekers back in detention**

Immigration Minister Scott Morrison has identified asylum seekers congregating in large numbers in apartments as the type of "antisocial" behaviour that could see them thrown into detention under a new code of conduct for more than 20,000 irregular immigrants living in the community on bridging visas.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, 21 December) <http://bit.ly/1hHk7e3>

### **Leaked report reveals fears of doctors conducting health checks at Christmas Island**

A leaked report on the medical care of asylum seekers on Christmas Island has raised alarm that health services "fall well below accepted standards for clinical practice and are unnecessarily dangerous".

(Radio Australia, 22 December) <http://bit.ly/M7OCiz>

### **Boat people: warning on rising cost of refugees - up to \$500,000 each**

Each asylum seeker who tries to reach Australia on a boat could cost taxpayers almost half a million dollars, the latest budget data suggests. The federal government is also expecting a massive decline in the number of boat refugees over the next few years. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 23 December)

<http://bit.ly/1i5MC5N>

### **Inhumane asylum seeker treatment clear from letter, Gillian Triggs says**

President of the Australian Human Rights Commission, Gillian Triggs, has read the full report of the Christmas Island doctors and finds clear and chilling evidence that Australia's treatment of asylum seekers appears inhumane. (The Guardian, 23 December) <http://bit.ly/1cobQeO>

### **Female asylum seeker alleges sexual assault by Christmas Island detainee**

Australian Federal Police are investigating an allegation of sexual assault made by an asylum seeker detained on Christmas Island. (The Guardian, 2 January) <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/02/female-asylum-seeker-alleges-sexual-assault>

### **Manus Island reports reveal four months of suffering for asylum seekers**

Four months of official reports have revealed the scale of the violence and chaos inside the controversial Manus Island offshore processing facility. A major data and freedom of information investigation by Guardian Australia lays bare the traumatic realities of life in the centre for those held there – including children. (The Guardian, 7 January) <http://www.theguardian.com/world/interactive/2014/jan/06/manus-detention-reports-four-months#undefined>

### **Scott Morrison refuses to confirm turnback of asylum seeker boat**

Immigration and border protection minister Scott Morrison will not confirm or deny reports that the Australian navy has turned a boat carrying asylum seekers back towards Indonesia. (The Guardian, 7 January) <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/07/scott-morrison-tight-lipped-on-turnback-of-asylum-seeker-boat>

### **Lifeboat plan to turn back boats**

Asylum seekers intercepted on unseaworthy boats could be bundled on to lifeboats and turned back to Indonesia by the Australian navy. (The West Australian, 8 January) <http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/wa/a/20642575/lifeboat-plan-to-turn-back-boats/>

### **Morrison won't confirm lifeboats purchase**

Immigration Minister Scott Morrison says the government will take "all necessary steps" to stop asylum seeker vessels, but has refused to confirm reports it will buy 16 hard-hulled lifeboats. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 8 January) <http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-national/morrison-wont-confirm-lifeboats-purchase-20140108-30fyh.html>

### **An \$8,000 Gag Visa**

The Nauruan parliament has endorsed a 3,900 per cent increase in the visa application fee for journalists – making it prohibitively expensive for the media to report from the Pacific island republic where Australia now detains hundreds of asylum seekers who arrive by boat. (The Global Mail, 8 January) <http://www.theglobalmail.org/feature/an-8000-gag-visa/804/>

### **Asylum seekers claim mistreatment in being turned back**

The Australian Navy has been accused of manhandling asylum seekers in the first public descriptions of how the Government is turning back the boats. Two men - who say they were on two boats that were turned back by Australian authorities and then beached on Indonesia's Roti Island - told the ABC they were mistreated and denied food and water. (Herald-Sun, 8 January) <http://bit.ly/1d5vyrc>

### **Australians want boat arrivals treated more harshly: poll**

Most Australians think asylum seekers who arrive by boat are not genuine refugees and there is strong support for the Abbott government to treat boat arrivals more harshly. A nationwide opinion poll by UMR Research shows that 59 per cent of people think most boat arrivals are not genuine refugees. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 8 January) <http://bit.ly/1cogkSu>

### **Military chiefs in bid to defuse boat turn-back row**

The head of Indonesia's military said he had reached a private agreement with the Chief of the Australian Defence Force to accept turned-backs boats as a way of defusing the diplomatic row over the policy. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 9 January) <http://bit.ly/1jDgVng>

### **Navy now 'towing' back the boats**

The Abbott government is implementing a radical policy of towing asylum boats back to Indonesian waters. Details of at least one boat being towed back and another being forced back emerged yesterday as Indonesia's military chief said he and his Australian counterpart had agreed to the policy as part of Operation Sovereign Borders. (The Australian, 9 January) <http://bit.ly/1bugOm6>

### **Operation to stop boats like a war: Tony Abbott**

Tony Abbott has likened the fight against people-smugglers to war, while defending the detention centres asylum-seekers are held in as effective and humanely run. (The Australian, 10 January) <http://bit.ly/1ecYdiF>

### **Scott Morrison insists boats policy is in line with international law**

Immigration Minister Scott Morrison has rejected claims by the United Nations refugee agency that the government's policy of towing or turning back asylum-seeker boats may breach Australia's obligations under international law. (The Australian, 11 January) <http://bit.ly/1b3wSv3>

### **Indonesian military chief rejects asylum seeker boat turn back policy**

Indonesia's opposition to Australia's boat turnback policy is building, with the country's military chief rejecting reports that said he backed the policy. (The Guardian, 13 January) <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/10/indonesian-military-chief-rejects-boat-turnback-policy>

### **Asylum critics want open borders: Truss**

Deputy Prime Minister Warren Truss believes there is widespread public satisfaction with the government's asylum-seeker policies, and says critics really just want open borders. (The Australian, 14 January) <http://bit.ly/1liXeTF>

### **High court challenge could enable asylum seekers to stay in Australia**

More than 33,000 asylum seekers already in Australia could be able to apply for permanent visas if a new high court challenge succeeds – thwarting ongoing attempts by the Abbott government to ensure no boat arrivals can stay permanently. (The Guardian, 14 January) <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/13/high-court-challenge-could-enable-asylum-seekers-to-stay-in-australia>

### **Four immigration centres to close**

The Abbott government has announced the closure of four immigration detention centres. Immigration Minister Scott Morrison says the closures will save the government at least \$88.8 million a year. (The Australian, 15 January) <http://bit.ly/1gIRt5u>

### **Navy sailors now on 'war footing' to turn back boats**

Navy personnel carrying out border protection were quietly stripped of some workplace safety protections and obligations last month in an apparent preparation for dangerous operations such as turning back boats. (The Age, 15 January) <http://bit.ly/1j6dg00>

### **Scott Morrison says he will stop holding weekly asylum seeker briefings**

Immigration Minister Scott Morrison has indicated he will no longer hold a weekly press conference to update journalists about the Government's border protection operations. (Radio Australia, 15 January) <http://bit.ly/1liXxD>

### **Too early to call Operation Sovereign Borders a success: General Angus Campbell**

The commander of the federal government's border protection operation says he will not be able to call Operation Sovereign Borders a success until the monsoon season ends in late March. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 15 January) <http://bit.ly/1j6uA6a>

### **Australia turns back asylum seeker boat from Indonesia**

Australia has turned back another boat which Indonesian authorities believe was unseaworthy, leaving local villagers to rescue stranded asylum seekers from the ocean. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 16 January) <http://bit.ly/1anUCNh>

### **Refugee fall cited in bid to beat boats**

The government is trumpeting a sharp decline in asylum-seekers registering as refugees in Indonesia as an indicator they have all but given up on Australia as a destination. (The Australian, 16 January) <http://bit.ly/1iFkh9l>

### **Coalition offers Indonesia extra money to help halt flow of asylum seekers**

Australia is offering Indonesia extra money and help to reduce the number of transiting asylum seekers as the Abbott government maintains silence on the widespread belief that it is towing boats back to the Indonesian maritime border. (The Guardian, 16 January) <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/15/coalition-offers-indonesia-extra-money-to-halt-flow-of-asylum-seekers>

### **Scott Morrison admits Australia breached Indonesian waters during boat operation**

The Abbott government has admitted Australia breached Indonesian territorial waters during an operation to intercept a boat of asylum seekers. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 17 January) <http://bit.ly/1i5U6pA>

### **Scott Morrison denies navy fired gunshots while stopping asylum seeker boats**

Immigration Minister Scott Morrison has denied gunshots have been fired by Australian navy personnel while intercepting asylum seeker boats travelling from Indonesia. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 17 January) <http://bit.ly/1i5Uc0g>

### **First lifeboat used to return 56 asylum seekers**

Australia has used one of its new life boats for the first time to send a group of 56 asylum seekers back to Indonesia in a move that is likely to plunge the bilateral relationship to a new low. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 17 January) <http://bit.ly/1ed02fM>

### **Four detainees attempt suicide as others resort to self-harm**

Asylum seekers in detention on Christmas Island are cutting themselves with glass and razor blades as protests spread to the facility that houses families, sources in the centre say. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 17 January) <http://bit.ly/19DSD9k>

### **Australia's naval incursion will worsen relations, Indonesia warns**

Indonesia has warned the revelation that Australian navy vessels entered its waters several times while conducting Operation Sovereign Borders will worsen relations between the two countries. (The Guardian, 17 January) <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/17/scott-morrison-australia-indonesian-waters>

### **Towed asylum seekers said to have jumped in suicide attempt**

Two asylum seekers jumped off their boat into the water as the Australian navy was escorting them back to Indonesia in December, in what one fellow passenger said was a suicide attempt. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 20 January) <http://bit.ly/1d5wAUd>

### **Aust marks 60 years in refugee convention**

Australia will have been part of the United Nations refugee convention for six decades this week. (The Australian, 21 January) <http://bit.ly/1hKaZWs>

### **Tony Abbott defiant on boat turn-backs, amid tensions with Indonesia**

Tony Abbott has strongly reasserted Australia's right to turn back asylum boats to Indonesia, amid growing tensions with Jakarta over the policy. (The Australian, 22 January) <http://bit.ly/1f8kv35>

### **African asylum seekers say Australian navy inflicted burns, kicked them**

Australian navy personnel inflicted burns on a group of African asylum seekers this month by making them hold hot parts of their boat's engine, the asylum seekers and local Indonesian police chief, Hidayat, have claimed. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 22 January) <http://bit.ly/1colZYQ>

### **Australia's reputation on human rights damaged by asylum policies, NGO says**

Australia's harsh treatment of asylum seekers, patients with mental illnesses and silence on rights abuses in other countries has damaged its standing as a protector of human rights, according to the 2014 Human Rights Watch world report. (The Guardian, 22 January) <http://bit.ly/1ar899c>

### **Four detainees caught after scaling fences of Yongah Hill in daylight breakout**

The Federal Government is considering introducing "sanctions" against asylum seekers who break out of detention. Immigration Minister Scott Morrison said he was currently looking at "options" following the fourth escape yesterday from the Yongah Hill Detention Centre in five months. (Perth Now, 22 January) <http://bit.ly/1jDlaiG>

### **Interrogations blamed for escapes**

The Commonwealth Ombudsman has been investigating complaints of Vietnamese detainees being verbally abused during "interrogations" by their country's secret police at Yongah Hill detention centre, leading to their families in Vietnam being beaten up and arrested. (The West Australian, 23 January) <http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/a/20952789/interrogations-blamed-for-escapes/>

### **Stop the boats policy 'morally corrupt and indefensible', former Navy officer says**

A retired senior Royal Australian Navy (RAN) officer has hit out at the Federal Government's stop the boats policy as "morally corrupt and totally indefensible". (ABC News, 27 January) <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-01-27/coalition-boats-policy-morally-indefensible-says-john-ingram/5220886>

### **Christmas Island worse than Jordan refugee camp**

Asylum seekers being held in harsh conditions on Christmas Island are more depressed, scared and anxious than those being housed in the world's second-largest refugee camp, says Greens senator Sarah Hanson-Young. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 28 January) <http://bit.ly/1jDIAFU>

### **No bridging visa, no job: Life's tough for asylum seekers and groups that support them**

Local welfare groups are struggling to cope with demand- created by asylum-seekers unable to work because- of the non-renewal of bridging visas for 'illegal maritime arrivals'. (Herald Sun, 28 January) <http://bit.ly/MnIG5Y>

### **Criticism of response to rape allegations in detention centre**

An Iranian asylum seeker in the Christmas Island detention centre is criticising the way Australian authorities are handling rape allegations, leaving her feeling desperate and in danger. (SBS News, 29 January) <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2014/01/29/criticism-response-rape-allegations-detention-centre>

### **Asylum seekers who swear or spit could be sent offshore, says leaked warning**

Spreading rumours, persistently irritating someone, spitting and swearing in public could all lead to asylum seekers in the community being sent offshore or having support payments cut, according to a leaked draft of an explanation of the new asylum seeker code of behaviour. (The Guardian, 30 January) <http://bit.ly/Lbs5AK>

### **Morrison cracks down on failed asylum seekers, signs contract for 'voluntary' returns**

Several hundred asylum seekers whose claims for refugee status were rejected are being returned to indefinite detention or prepared for imminent deportation under a crackdown by the Abbott government. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 30 January) <http://bit.ly/1dc6hvw>

### **Detention provider Serco facing industrial action after detention, prison escapes**

The multi-national company that runs Australia's immigration detention centres is under siege, facing industrial action around the country and calls for an inquiry in Western Australia. (ABC News, 31 January) <http://ab.co/1a5cj68>

**Cricket Australia right to help Fawad Ahmed become an Australian citizen**

A key backer of Fawad Ahmed's refugee claim has denied Cricket Australia helped him out because of a desire to find the next Shane Warne, and maintains that the threat to his life, had he returned to Pakistan, was real. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 31 January)

<http://bit.ly/1cB8vJh>

**Manus guards leave G4S after Facebook posts ridiculing asylum seeker**

Three G4S guards who joked about an asylum seeker on Manus Island swallowing a pair of nail clippers are no longer working for the company, which was hired to run the detention centre. (The Guardian, 31 January)

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/31/manus-island-guards-facebook>