



Refugee Council of Australia

BULLETIN FOR MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS

13 March 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.

Paul Power, CEO, Refugee Council of Australia

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NEWS FROM THE REFUGEE COUNCIL

Manus Island death an appalling tragedy

The death of an asylum seeker and the injuries suffered by more than 70 others at Manus Island was described by RCOA as an appalling tragedy and a failure of Australian Government policy. RCOA chief executive officer Paul Power said the conditions that led to the serious unrest on the island was the result of a specific and intentional Government policy to prevent asylum seekers by boat from being resettled as refugees in Australia and warned that until asylum seekers were given pathways to finalise their refugee status, more serious incidents would occur on Manus Island, Nauru and in facilities like Christmas Island where people are being detained for long periods of time. RCOA said the Australian Government must abandon offshore processing and reintroduce alternatives to detention that provide prompt processing of refugee claims while asylum seekers are supported in the community in Australia. Read the statement at http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/140218_Manus.pdf

Permanent Protection Visa freeze causes more anguish for refugees

The Australian Government's decision to suspend the granting of new permanent Protection Visas was described by RCOA as the latest in a relentless punishment of refugees. In a statement, RCOA said the Minister for Immigration's directive to cap the number of permanent Protection Visas at 2,750 for 2013-14 was a mean-spirited move that left Australia out of step with other resettlement countries. This policy will affect people who entered Australia on valid visas (usually by plane), applied for asylum and were found to be owed refugee protection. Once the limit of 2,750 visas has been reached, refugees will have to wait until the next financial year before being considered for a permanent Protection Visa. Read the statement at http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/140309_Visafreeze.pdf

International condemnation for Australia's asylum policies

Australia's asylum policies were strongly criticised at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Standing Committee, with an international NGO statement itemising a long list of measures that failed to honour commitments to uphold international protection standards. The NGO Statement condemned Australia for expelling asylum seekers to Nauru and Manus Island where violence, self-harm, riots, an alleged murder and rape have been reported, its decision to suspend permanent Protection Visa grants for refugees who arrived by boat, the decrease in the number of refugees accepted under the Humanitarian Program and pushing back asylum seekers to Indonesia. In a statement, RCOA president Phil Glendenning said Australia's deterrence measures to repel asylum seekers were destructive in every way, impacting on the mental health and wellbeing of some of the world's most vulnerable people and setting back much-needed efforts to build regional refugee protection in the Asia-Pacific region. "The only credible policy is a regional approach where Australia uses its leadership as a Refugee Convention signatory to encourage other countries in the Asia-Pacific region to improve protection for refugees and create genuine solutions for people fleeing persecution," the statement said. Read more at http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/140305_UNHCRStanding.pdf. The UNHCR Standing Committee report on Asia and the Pacific can be accessed at: <https://icvanetwork.org/>

Australia's turning back of boats scrutinised at international refugee law conference

Australia's interception of boats of asylum seekers came in for close scrutiny when academics from Yale, Harvard, UCLA and Georgetown universities combined to organise a conference on high seas interdiction of boats of asylum seekers. Held at Yale Law School in New Haven, USA on March 7 and 8, the conference brought together refugee law experts from USA, Europe and Australia to look at current government policies in the light of the 20th anniversary of a significant US Supreme Court decision (*Sale vs Haitian Centers Council*). Speakers included UNHCR Deputy High Commissioner Alex Aleinikoff, Professor Guy Goodwin-Gill of Oxford University, Professor Harold Hongju Koh of Yale Law School, Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen of the Danish Institute for Human Rights and Azadeh Dastyari of Monash University. RCOA CEO Paul Power was invited to speak about recent developments in Australia and highlighted boat turnbacks, Australia's incursions into Indonesian waters and the use of lifeboats to effect forced returns. His speech is at http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/140308_Yaleuni.pdf. Summaries of the conference presentations are being posted at <http://opiniojuris.org/>

Time spent in long-term detention hits two-year high

RCOA warned the Australian Government it risked facing more incidents of self-harm and unrest among asylum seekers, following the release of statistics showing the average length of time spent by people in closed detention had increased to the highest level in more than two years. In a statement, RCOA expressed concern about the well-being of those asylum seekers liable to be sent to offshore facilities in Nauru and Manus Island. The statement also urged the Government to make the greatest use possible of the successful alternatives to detention first introduced by the Howard Government in 2006 and expanded by the Labor Government in 2010. Read the statement at http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/140212_Detention.pdf

Denial of work rights for asylum seekers a cruel punishment

RCOA welcomed a new report detailing the experiences of asylum seekers living in the community on bridging visas without work rights. The "Policy as Punishment" report showed the Australian Government policy to punish asylum seekers for travelling by boat to seek refugee protection was causing distress and financial hardship for vulnerable people. RCOA chief executive officer Paul Power said the asylum seekers' accounts in the Curtin University report were consistent with those expressed at RCOA's annual consultations late last year. "Releasing asylum seekers into the community is welcome but they should not be left destitute and denied the right to support themselves. Instead of being welcomed as part of our local communities, asylum seekers without work rights feel isolated, marginalised and defeated. Work rights must be reinstated so asylum seekers can support themselves, play an active role in the community and contribute to our economy," he said. Read the RCOA statement at http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/140224_Workrights.pdf. The "Policy as Punishment" report is available at <http://bit.ly/1fa4AOe>

New resource for NSW Government agencies on working with humanitarian entrants

RCOA has launched a new resource designed to assist NSW government agencies to understand and meet the needs of asylum seekers and people from refugee backgrounds settling in NSW. It provides information on Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Program, settlement trends in NSW, typical experiences of people fleeing persecution and support services available to humanitarian entrants. The resources also include a glossary, a directory of relevant support services in NSW and a chart detailing the entitlements of humanitarian entrants by visa subclass. The resource, which was funded by the Community Relations Commission of NSW, can be downloaded at <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/r/rpt/2013-NSWGovt.pdf>

John Gibson Refugee Community Leadership Grant

Nominations are open for the annual John Gibson Refugee Community Leadership Grant, which supports advocates from refugee backgrounds to take part in high-level international advocacy on refugee issues. One advocate is selected each year to join the Australian NGO team at the annual consultations between the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and NGOs in Geneva, Switzerland from 17 to 19 June, 2014. Nominations are open and close at 5.00pm, Monday, 28 April, 2014. For further details visit http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/2014_JGibsonGrant.pdf

Invitation for submissions to 2014 UNHCR-NGO consultations

Individuals and refugee community groups are invited to lodge submissions on current issues of concern for people living in refugee situations overseas, as part of the annual UNHCR-NGO consultations to be held in Geneva, Switzerland in June. The submissions are being sought by the Australian Refugee Rights Alliance (ARRA) - a coalition of Australian NGOs, refugee advocates and academics who engage in advocacy at an international level with and on behalf of refugees in Australia and the region. Submissions are due by Monday, 14 April, 2014. Find out more about the submission process at http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/2014_UNHCRsub.pdf

Bright Ideas profiles Flying Mountain Project

The latest profile in our Bright Ideas series showcases the Centre for Multicultural Youth's Flying Mountain Project which engages newly-arrived young men in Melbourne's south-east through kite-making and kite-flying. The project helps address the social isolation felt by many single Afghan men who experience isolation and worry about their future and their families living in desperate circumstances overseas. To view our summary of this project and other "Bright Ideas", visit <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/brightideas.php>

School students learn more about refugees through pilot program

RCOA has started a pilot program to increase awareness in schools of the experiences and contributions of former refugees. The program started at Magdalene Catholic High School, in Sydney's south-west with William Wol, who fled Sudan as a 5-year-old, sharing his story with year 10 students. Supported by the Australian Government's Diversity and Social Cohesion Program, the pilot program has seen the training of 12 co-presenters to work with RCOA staff in presentations over the next three months in Sydney, Wollongong and Melbourne.

Latest refugee and asylum statistics released

RCOA has released a statistical snapshot of the needs of refugees and asylum seekers internationally and in Australia. The snapshot of key data is part of RCOA's annual submission to the Australian Government on the 2014-15 Refugee and Humanitarian Program. Access the snapshot at http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/1402_RefugeeSnapshot.pdf

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

Living In Harmony Festival

Saturday 1 to Monday 31 March, Sydney NSW

The City of Sydney's annual Living in Harmony Festival will include student forums, tours, talks, workshops, exhibitions, intergenerational debates and more events which explore Sydney's multicultural heritage.

Details: for further information and to view the Festival program, visit <http://whatson.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/events/21832-living-in-harmony-festival-2014>.

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>.

Theatre: Seven kilometres north-east**Saturday 8 to Saturday 22 March, Sydney NSW**

"Seven kilometres north-east" is the work of a young Australian who stays in a hotel in Bosnia and learns on returning home of the atrocities against women committed in the hotel building during the recent wars. She is outraged at the whitewashing of history, after the building is redecorated and opened as a hotel.

Details: tickets \$33.00 (\$29.00 concession, \$25.00 students); Reginald Theatre, Seymour Centre, corner of City Road and Cleveland Street, Chippendale to book tickets, call (02) 9351 7940 or visit <http://secure.seymourboxoffice.com.au/tickets/production.aspx?PID=96821>.

Cultural Diversity Week**Saturday 15 to Sunday 23 March, Victoria-wide**

Cultural Diversity Week is an opportunity for Victorians to come together to share aspects of their culture, faith and language, and celebrate the benefits multiculturalism brings to our state. All Victorians are encouraged to participate in an established event, or to organise their own activity to mark the week.

Details: for more information and to register events, visit <http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/projects-and-initiatives/cultural-diversity-week>.

2014 Africultures Festival**Saturday 15 March, Auburn NSW**

The Africultures Festival is an annual festival showcasing the rich African heritage and culture of Africa. The event will feature poetry, dance, music, fashion shows, comedy, acrobatics, exhibitions of technology, community information, foods and African arts and crafts.

Details: 11:00am-5:30pm; Auburn Park, Macquarie Road, Auburn; for more information, visit <http://www.africultures.com.au>.

Harmony Day Festival**Saturday 15 March, Springfield QLD**

Organised by the World Harmony Society, this event will feature children's activities, stalls, international food, multicultural performances, rides and a laser and fireworks spectacular.

Details: 3:00pm-8:00pm; Robelle Domain Park, Education City Drive, Springfield Central; for further information, call 0401 567 618 or 0401 742 649, or email worldharmonysociety@gmail.com.

Foundation House workshop: Course for incidental counsellors working with young people of refugee background**Monday 17 and Monday 31 March, Dandenong VIC**

This two day workshop provides an approach to working with people from a refugee and asylum seeker background in a range of settings. Participants will gain incidental counselling and other skills for handling difficult and distressing situations. The workshop involves presentations, practical exercises, role plays and discussions in large and small groups.

Details: \$330.00; 9:30am-4:30pm; 155 Foster Street, Dandenong; for further information and to register, visit http://www.foundationhouse.org.au/professional_development/index.htm.

Workshop: Working with young people from multicultural backgrounds**Monday 17 March, Parramatta NSW**

This one-day training workshop is for workers whose roles involve working with young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. The workshop will explore the challenges and issues effecting multicultural young people, and help workers to understand and address these issues. Participants will develop greater awareness and confidence, in order to develop programs and services that support the needs of all young people.

Details: 9:30am-4:00pm; Community MRC, Level 4, 1 Horwood Place, Parramatta; to register, email andrew@myannsw.org.au or call Andrew on 0435 146 979.

CEH workshop: Health literacy in practice**Wednesday 19 March, Richmond VIC**

The degree to which individuals can obtain and understand health information has a significant impact on their capacity to make appropriate health decisions. This workshop provides practitioners with strategies to review practices and systems, and with tools to check client/patient understanding of health information. 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>.

Armidale Sanctuary 10th Annual Human Rights Lecture

Wednesday 19 March, Armidale NSW

The speaker at this year's Human Rights Lecture will be Matthew Cleary, President of the Board of Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) Australia, who will speak on the topic "Humanitarian Access and the Right to Healthcare". Matt joined MSF in the field in 2005 in West Darfur and later worked as a field coordinator in Niger and Somalia, as program coordinator for MSF in Mogadishu, Niger and Somalia and was Deputy Medical Director in 2006. He has also spent time in the Evaluation Department in Paris working on projects in South Sudan, Kurdistan and Jordan.

Details: entry \$10.00 (\$5.00 students); 6:30pm-8:00pm; Arts Theatre 1A, Armidale campus, University of New England.

Light the park

Thursday 20 March, Warwick QLD

This event has been organised by concerned locals from a diverse range of traditions. It will provide a chance to show your community, your children and your families that you do not support inhumane detention centres and that the actions of our elected leaders do not represent the real, compassionate Australia. Bring a candle and join us to say "not in my name".

Details: 6:30pm; Leslie Park Youth Space, Warwick; for further details, call Sue Hamlet 0427 619 381 or Val Gray 0409 611 930.

2014 Harmony Day Symposium: Whose Harmony? Exploring Global Diversity and Workforce Sustainability

Friday 21 March, Darling Harbour NSW

Speakers at this event will include Prof Bruce Downton, Vice-Chancellor, Macquarie University; Prof Lucy Taksa, Head of the Department of Marketing and Management, Macquarie University; Peter Doukas, ECC Chair; Vic Alhadeff, Chair, NSW Community Relations Commission; Dr Tim Soutphommasane, Race Discrimination Commissioner; Prof Jean-Francois Chanlat, Chaire Management et Diversite, Paris-Dauphine University, France; Robert Lattimer, Senior Fellow, Diversity Studies at John J Heldrich Centre for Workforce Development, Rutgers University, USA; Caroline Romeo, Multicultural Access Officer, ECC NSW, Member of Ministerial Advisory Committee on Ageing; Loc Trinh, Director, Access and Diversity Unit, Australian Taxation Office; and Ms Daryl Karp, Director, Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House, Non-executive Director, SBS.

Details: 9:00am-4:30pm; National Maritime Museum, Darling Harbour; to register, go to <http://be.mq.edu.au/harmonyday>.

Harmony Day Liverpool

Friday 21 March, Liverpool NSW

This event will feature Art in the Park, cultural talents and open mic, Wanderers player appearances at 1:30pm, children's soccer clinic with the Wanderers and much more.

Details: 12:00pm-3:30pm; Bigge Park, Liverpool.

Harmony Day celebration in Lithgow

Friday 21 March, Lithgow NSW

Hosted by Lithgow Information and Neighbourhood Centre, this event will feature Aboriginal music from Bob Suitor, classical Indian dance from Niki Shepherd and music from and Andy Busuttill and John Robinson. Please bring a plate to share.

Details: 12:00pm-3:00pm; 1 Padley Street, Lithgow; for more information, call (02) 6352 2077.

Afro Latino Festival

Saturday 22 March, Casula NSW

For centuries Latin American and African cultures have combined to create a unique amalgamation of music, dance and art. The Afro Latino Festival is the only festival in Sydney which celebrates both cultures. Highlights will include cultural performances, dance, live music, arts and crafts, food stalls, workshops and soccer.

Details: free entry; 11:00am-5:00pm; Casula Powerhouse, 1 Powerhouse Road, Casula (enter via Shepherd Street, Liverpool); for further details, visit <http://afrolatinofestival.org.au>.

Harmony Day Festival

Saturday 22 March, Bankstown NSW

The annual Harmony Day outdoor festival hosted by the Lebanese Muslim Association and Bankstown City Council aims to promote multiculturalism and harmony by providing a family-friendly space of eclectic tastes, sounds, performances and activities for the Western Sydney community to enjoy. Highlights will include free rides, prizes, cooking demonstration with Masterchef contestant Aminah Elshafei, local performances and food.

Details: Paul Keating Park, Bankstown.

Harmony Day celebration in Bathurst

Saturday 22 March, Bathurst NSW

A night to celebrate the cultural diversity of the Bathurst community. Highlights include live music, entertainment, delicious food and activities for the kids. Hosted by Bathurst Information and Neighbourhood Centre.

Details: tickets \$10.00 (children under 12 free, children over 12 \$5.00, families \$20.00); 6:00pm-10:00pm; Christian Life Centre, cnr Gilmour and Hereford Streets, Bathurst. Tickets to be purchased before the night by calling (02) 6332 4866.

Viva Victoria Festival

Sunday 23 March, Melbourne VIC

With music and dance across four stages, food, workshops, fashion, arts, crafts, a kids zone with free activities and face painting and much more, this free public event is the ultimate celebration of Victoria's cultural diversity. Highlights of the 2014 Viva Victoria Festival will include: delicious food from around the world, a Kids' Zone, roving performers, an exhibition of short films featuring culturally-diverse Australians, an exhibition of children's art, sports clinics and cultural demonstrations.

Details: Federation Square, Melbourne; for more information, visit <http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/projects-and-initiatives/cultural-diversity-week/viva-victoria>.

Harmony Day: Writing a new story for Sri Lanka

Sunday 23 March, Glen Waverly VIC

This free concert and cricket event is presented by Sri Lanka Invites, a group of Sri Lankans from various backgrounds who are continuing a journey of peace and reconciliation. Its primary aim is to pave the way for Sri Lankans living in Australia to meet and form links beyond religious, ethnic, political, cultural and other divides. The event will feature food, cricket, speakers and performers.

Details: 12:00pm-6:00pm; Wesley College Auditorium and Grounds, 620 High Street Road, Glen Waverly; for more information, contact Larry Marshall (03) 31 2678 larry.marshall@victas.uca.org.au, Maheshini Perera (03) 9801 4349 mheshini@optusnet.com.au or Dev Anandarajan (03) 9504 3077 gunam58@optusnet.com.au.

Wyndham Multicultural Flesta

Sunday 23 March, Werribee VIC

A world of live entertainment on stage, diverse range of food, craft bazaar, hands-on workshops, demonstrations, free children's activities, sports clinic and more. BYO picnic rug.

Details: free entry; 11:00am-4:00pm; Great Lawn, Werribee Mansion, K Road, Werribee; for more information, call Kathy Brunton on (03) 9742 4013.

Foundation House workshop: Asylum seekers in education settings

Monday 24 March, Brunswick VIC

This interactive workshop explores ways in which schools and other education settings can better support students and families who have arrived in the community seeking asylum in Australia. Building on the knowledge gained in the workshop 'School's In for Refugee Background Students', participants

will consider the range of experiences which asylum seekers may have had and the psychosocial impact of torture and trauma. Emphasis will be placed on the skills and knowledge needed to work with this highly vulnerable group, which will include the effects of prolonged detention, uncertainty and family separation on young people seeking asylum. Establishing relationships, catering for educational needs and modifying policies and procedures whilst maintaining worker resilience will also be discussed.

Details: 4:00pm-7:00pm; 4 Gardiner Street, Brunswick; for further information and to register, visit http://www.foundationhouse.org.au/professional_development/index.htm.

The truth about Manus Island and mandatory detention: A panel discussion
Monday 24 March, Pennant Hills NSW

Presented by the Amnesty International Pennant Hills Group, this panel discussion will feature Graeme Mcgregor, Refugee Campaign Coordinator for Amnesty International, who will speak on the recent Amnesty International visit to Manus Island detention centre; Fr John Jegasothy, who will speak about his long-term involvement with refugees at Villawood Immigration Detention Centre; Tony Kevin, who will speak on maritime safety; Gaby Judd, who will share her experiences visiting refugees at Villawood; and Anni Tokatlian, who will share her experiences supporting refugees newly released into the community on various visas.

Details: 7:00pm; Pennant Hills Bowling Club, 52 Yarrara Road, Pennant Hills; RSVP via ph.amnesty@gmail.com or (02) 8004 8598.

Workshop: Reproductive and sexual health issues with CALD communities
Tuesday 25 March, Blacktown NSW

Based on the DVD "Down There", this one day workshop is designed to build confidence and support for service providers to talk about reproductive and sexual health issues with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. "Down There" also now includes new content to update participants on core reproductive and sexual health topics including STIs and contraception. Presented by Family Planning NSW.

Details: \$310.00; 9:00am-4:30pm; SydWest Multicultural Services, Level 2, 125 Main Street, Blacktown; for further information or to register, call (02) 8752 4300, email education@fpnsw.org.au or visit <http://www.fpnsw.org.au>.

Violence: responses, prevention and Intervention
Wednesday 26 March, Westmead NSW

The forum, focusing on violence in young people's lives, provides an opportunity for attendees to meet, update knowledge and skills, exchange information and strengthen the youth health network, in order to provide the best possible support for young people in NSW. The forum will include a session run by STARTTS on refugee young people's experience of violence. Hosted by Youth Health Forum.

Details: \$35.00 (\$20.00 for organisations on Youth Health Forum organising committee, free for the unwaged and people aged 24 and under); 8:30am-12:30pm; Lorimer Dods Lecture Theatre, The Children's Hospital at Westmead; for further information and to register, contact Marney on (02) 9526 1221 or helpline@vmsconferences.com.au.

Free accidental counsellor workshop
Wednesday 26 March, Lakemba NSW

This accidental counsellor workshop is organised by the Lebanese Muslim Association and facilitated by Pure Magic International Training Solutions. It is for people with no counselling experience who may find from time to time they are required to deal with people facing difficult issues or people with challenging behaviour.

Details: 9:30am-2:30pm; LMA, Level 3, 71-75 Wangee Road, Lakemba; for further details, contact Fatima Elcheikh on felcheikh@lma.org.au or (02) 9750 6833 ext. 122

STARTTS workshop: Core concepts in working with people from refugee backgrounds
Thursday 27 March, 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>.

STARTTS workshop: 'Accidental' counsellors - Responding to refugee trauma-related behaviours

Thursday 27 and Friday 28 March, Carramar NSW

This two-day workshop has been designed to give workers not trained as counsellors some basic tips and skills for how to recognise and deal with difficult behaviours in trauma clients in the workplace. The first day will give an understanding of the complex issues faced by refugee clients, how to recognise refugee trauma and how to work with clients in ways that promote a sense of safety and control. The second day will be mostly practical focusing on a series of case studies and role plays to develop skills in dealing with trauma reactions.

Details: \$249.00 (students \$149.00) for two days, \$149.00 (students \$99.00) for one day; 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: Refugee sexual and reproductive health for nurses

Thursday 27 March, Brunswick VIC

The focus of this workshop is sexual and reproductive health inclusive of sexual diversity with refugee and asylum seeker clients. The session includes culturally appropriate assessment and management approaches that are sensitive to refugee and asylum seekers experiences and cultural context.

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.

Opening of the first mosque in Toowoomba

Sunday 30 March, Toowoomba QLD

Speakers at this event will include the Hon. Ian Macfarlane, Federal Minister of Industries and Toowoomba MP; Mr Darby McCarthy, Aboriginal elder; Mr Hafez Kassem, President of AFIC, Peak body of Australian Muslims; Bishop Robert McGuckin, Catholic Church of Toowoomba; the Hon. Dr John McVeigh, Queensland Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; Professor Mohamad Abdalla, Griffith University; Cr Ms Ros Scotney, representing the Mayor of Toowoomba; and Prof Ken Udas DVC of USQ representing the Vice Chancellor. The event will also feature and international food from Australia, Europe, Middle East and South Asia and rides for children.

Details: free entry (gold coin donation accepted); 11:00am-7:00pm; 217 West Street, Harristown, Toowoomba.

"Mary Meets Mohammad" screening

Tuesday 1 April, Melbourne VIC

The film Mary Meets Mohammad follows the arrival of Tasmania's first detention centre through the eyes of local Christian woman and knitting club member Mary and Muslim Afghan Hazara asylum seeker Mohammad, who is detained inside the centre, as they connect through the gift of a knitted beanie. After the film, there will be a Q&A with Pamela Curr of the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre and Ali Reza Adibnia. Before and after the screening, attendees can check out the Engage and Act Stalls which will include Welcome to Australia, The Welcome Group, Edmund Rice Asylum Seeker Project and Road to Refuge. The Melbourne Uni Labor Club, Melbourne Uni Greens Club and the Victorian Young Liberals (TBC) will also have stalls. This is a fundraising event for Road to Refuge.

Details: tickets \$15.00 (\$10.00 concession); 5:30pm; Union House Theatre, Union House, Melbourne University; book tickets online at <http://www.trybooking.com/EMAA>.

Training workshop: Culturally reflective casework practice

Thursday 3 April, Sydney NSW

A joint initiative of NSW Community Services and the Centre for Community Welfare Training (CCWT), this course will examine culturally reflective casework practice for working with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) clients and families. Participants will examine needs and challenges that can impact clients and families from CALD backgrounds and learn to apply the Culturally Reflective Practice model in a broad range of service types, thereby ensuring that service delivery meets client needs.

Details: \$225.00 (\$205.00 for members); 9:30am-4:30pm; ACWA/CCWT, 699 George Street, Sydney; to register, go to http://www.acwa.asn.au/Course_Details_WL11.php?recid=7605.

Multicultural Youth Leadership Conference 2014

Saturday 5 and Sunday 6 April, Homebush NSW

This free two-day conference, hosted by the Mission of Hope, will provide an opportunity for young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds to develop skills in advocacy, relationship building, critical thinking and problem solving. The conference will include guest speakers, presentations and workshops.

Details: 9:00am-5:00pm; Giants Learning Life Centre, V1 Olympic Boulevard, Sydney Olympic Park, Homebush; to register (essential), go to <http://bit.ly/1c7qBEt>; for further information, contact Sara on 0404 567 082 or s.saleh@missionofhope.org.au.

NEW RESEARCH, STATEMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

Australia-Sri Lanka relationship under human rights microscope

A new Human Rights Law Centre report has found that Australia's cooperation with Sri Lanka to prevent asylum seekers from seeking refuge protection in Australia is riddled with human rights risks and should be stopped immediately. Read the "Can't flee, can't stay: Australia's interception and return of Sri Lankan asylum seekers" report at <http://bit.ly/1kjONfm>

New fact sheets on asylum law and policy

The Andrew and Renata Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law at University of New South Wales has posted a range of fact sheets on asylum law and policy, which includes offshore arrangements on Nauru and Manus Island, Cambodia and refugee protection, ASIO security assessments, complementary protection, detention, regional cooperation, enhanced screening and more. Access the fact sheets at: <http://www.kaldorcentre.unsw.edu.au/node/121>

Facts sheets on recent changes to asylum policy

The Refugee Advice and Casework Service (RACS) has produced new facts sheets about recent changes to Australia's asylum laws, people's rights in detention and important information for people who arrived by boat to seek asylum, as well as updates on the Australian Government's new Temporary Humanitarian Concern visas. Access the fact sheets at: <http://www.racs.org.au/factsheets/>

Chilout report on detention of children in Darwin

In December 2013, Chilout inspected Alternative Places of Detention in Darwin and met with families affected by the detention of children. The report "Darwin Detention: Damaging Children" is available at <http://media.virbcdn.com/files/11/7ab4e1dd0c5ca616-DarwinReportF.pdf>

Study on appropriate housing for refugees in Western Australia

The Brotherhood of St Laurence has published a study on safe, appropriate housing for successful settlement of refugees. Find out more at <http://bit.ly/1czjCoa>

CMY paper on negotiating adolescence in migrant and refugee youth

"Negotiating Adolescence" explores the impact of adolescence on family relationships, from a young migrant and refugee perspective. Read the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) report at: <http://www.cmy.net.au/Assets/2456/1/NegotiatingAdolescenceinAustralia.pdf>

Report on mental health among young migrants and refugees

The Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) report on mental health, "Mind Matters", explores the under-reporting of mental health concerns and low rates of professional help seeking among multicultural young people. Access the report at: <http://www.cmy.net.au/Assets/2461/1/MindMatters.pdf>

Dental health DVD and fact sheets

The NSW Refugee Health Service has produced a multilingual DVD to improve oral health knowledge and reduce dental problems in refugee communities living in NSW. The DVD covers general information about nutrition, cleaning teeth, seeing a dentist, accessing public dental health clinics and provides information about dental care for babies and young children. The DVD is available in Arabic (Iraqi and

Sudanese), Dari, English, Karen, Nepali, Tamil and Urdu. A fact sheet is also available in Arabic, Burmese, Dari, English, Farsi, Karen, Nepali and Tamil. Further information and details about how to obtain the guides is available at: http://www.swslhd.nsw.gov.au/refugee/oral_health.html

Strengthening Communities supports best-practice settlement services

Mercy Community Services and Toowoomba Agencies CALD Action Group have produced a new training resource for migrant and refugee communities. "Strengthening Communities" is designed for agencies supporting migrant and refugee families settling in Queensland. The resource contains training modules, facilitation methods and materials for delivering workshops on issues affecting family and community life to new arrivals in migrant and refugee communities. Copies can be obtained from www.mercycs.org.au or David Barton at david.barton@mercycs.org.au.

Immigration detention and rule of law: 25 principles of protection

The British Institute of International and Comparative Law has identified 25 safeguarding principles to promote practical and effective protection under the rule of law. The report draws on legal instruments, promulgated standards, UNHCR and NGO Guidelines, working illustrations and judicial observations from national, regional and international contexts. The guidelines are relevant to immigration detention where it is practised, designed and scrutinised under the rule of law. Find out more at: http://www.biicl.org/binghamcentre/activities/immigrationdetention/final_documents/

Report: Afghan civilian casualties increase in 2013

The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) mid-year report found the number of Afghan civilians killed or injured in the first half of 2013 rose by 23 per cent, owing mainly to the increased use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) by insurgents. The report documented 1,319 civilian deaths and 2,533 injuries – a total of 3,852 civilian casualties – in the first half of 2013. Read the report at http://unama.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMA/human%20rights/Feb_8_2014_PoC-report_2013-Full-report-ENG.pdf

App brings Australians face-to-face with everyday racism

A world-first mobile phone app, "Everyday Racism" is a game/education app, which challenges players to live a week in the life of someone who experiences racism. Participants receive texts, tweets, images and videos that will challenge people's assumptions and show the importance of speaking up when you witness racism. Access the app at: <http://alltogethernow.org.au/news/campaigns/everydayracism/>

New DVD helps new arrivals find the right help

The "Getting the Right Help' DVD", produced by the Bankstown Area Multicultural Network (BAMN) informs people from diverse backgrounds about how to access services. The DVD provides advice on people's rights, suggests questions to ask, and encourages people not to give up when searching for the help they need. The DVD, funded by the NSW Government, is available in English and dubbed into Arabic, Cantonese, Korean, Mandarin, Turkish and Vietnamese. Further details are available by calling 02 9796 3717 or at haccadmin@bamn.org.au

New human rights guide to the Australian Curriculum

"Human Rights Examples for the Australian Curriculum" assists teachers in identifying practical opportunities in English, History, Geography, Science and Maths for teaching human rights-related content to students up to year 10. Access the guide at <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/rightsed-human-rights-education-resources-teachers>

Working with the Karen community: a guide

This report is part of a three-year project between members of Melbourne's Karen community and service providers and identifies the strengths, opportunities and challenges for the Karen community settling in western parts of Melbourne. Aimed at service providers, the report provides a better understanding of the Karen people and their experiences of settlement in Australia. Read the report at: <http://www.healthwest.org.au/images/stories/healthwest/Prevention/karenreportwebversion.pdf>

Teachers' Resource Kit on cultural diversity

The Victorian Multicultural Commission has developed a Teachers' Resource Kit, to provide teachers with inspiration for lesson plans, activities, excursions and events to explore themes around cultural diversity. The kit includes information on how to invite guest speakers and performers to schools,

celebrations and how to explore family and local history. Access the Kit at: <http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/projects-and-initiatives/cultural-diversity-week/cultural-diversity-week-and-schools>

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>.

Free English classes for asylum seekers in Western Sydney

The NSW Spanish and Latin American Association for Social Assistance (NSW SLASA) is hosting free English classes for refugees and asylum seekers at Bonnyrigg between 2.00pm and 5.00pm on Thursdays and Fridays at 26 Bonnyrigg Avenue, Bonnyrigg Plaza in Sydney. For more information, contact 02 9610 0288.

Free courses on Australian and global history for asylum seekers in Melbourne

The Melbourne Free University is holding free courses on Australian history and culture and global politics in Melbourne between 12 March and 28 May. The courses will be held on Wednesdays between 6.30pm and 8.00pm at the Victorian Trades Hall, 54 Victoria Street, Carlton. There is no need to enrol or register and participants are free to attend any week they wish. Babysitting is available if asylum seekers have children but they must email melbournefreeuniversity@gmail.com in advance. For more information about the Melbourne Free University's programs for asylum seekers, visit http://melbournefreeuniversity.org/?page_id=3873

Welcome Dinner Project seeks support

The Welcome Dinner Project, an initiative that brings refugees, migrants and local Australians together over cross-cultural feasts is seeking in-kind support for its up-coming exhibition on March 21-22 in Martin Place, Sydney. Organisers require 15 trestles and 160 chairs for the two-day event and eight lights for a marquee, as well as one security guard for three evenings. Enquiries can be directed to Penny Elsley on 0434 881 994 and penny@joiningthedots.org. Everyone is invited to visit the exhibition, which is open from 8.00am-6.00pm on Friday 21 and Sat 22 March. Information about the event is available at www.joiningthedots.org

Dignity for asylum seekers asking Australia for refugee protection

Catholic Religious Australia has launched a campaign calling for care and dignity in the treatment of asylum seekers who ask Australia for refugee protection. Find out more about the National Lament at <http://www.catholicreligiousaustralia.org/index.php/component/k2/item/1260-national-lament>

My Story campaign highlights Australia's cultural diversity

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) has launched a "My Story" campaign in the lead-up to Harmony Day on 21 March. The campaign is seeking contributions from individuals and organisations that reflect multiculturalism or plans for celebrating Harmony Day. Every day until Harmony Day, "My Story" will highlight photos and insights into Australian multiculturalism. For more information about the 'My Story' campaign or for further details about how you can get involved, please contact the FECCA Office on (02) 6282 5755 or visit <http://bit.ly/1go4Qfz>

Tell your own refugee story through Unique Voices

"Unique Voices" is a new website that provides a platform for refugees to tell their own stories. Find out more at: <http://uniquevoices.org/>

Youth Reps Training Program for Wollongong

The Multicultural Youth Affairs Network (MYAN) NSW's Multicultural Youth Program brings together young people aged 15 to 25 from refugee, migrant or CALD backgrounds who are passionate about advocating for issues that affect them. Over a two-day course on April 5 and 12 in Wollongong, the Youth Reps will participate in activities including advocacy, media training, campaigns, delivering workshops and will also act as a consultative group for MYAN NSW. For more details, contact Andrew at Andrew@myannsw.org.au or Anthony at Anthony@mcci.org.au or visit <http://www.myan.org.au/nsw/youth-reps/>

Colourfest short film competition

The Colourfest short film competition is accepting international and Australian short films depicting migrant and diaspora stories. Entries close 1 May, 2014. Find out more at:

www.colourfest.com.au/yourfilm/#sthash.LsoTst9h.dpuf

Workshop: supporting children from refugee backgrounds settle in early childhood

FKA Children Services in Melbourne is holding interactive workshops for service providers working with children and families to help them better understand the needs of refugee children and families. The workshop will be held on Thursday, 10 April between 2.00pm and 4.00pm at 9-12, Stewart Street, Richmond. The cost is \$64 for FKACS members and \$80 for non-members. Further details are available at <http://bit.ly/1eZf21Q>

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)

Lifeboat reportedly used by Australia to return asylum seekers found in Java

A lifeboat reportedly being used by Australian authorities to send asylum seekers back to Indonesia has washed up on the coast of Java. (The Guardian, 1 February)

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/01/lifeboat-australia-return-asylum-seekers-found-java>

Boats secrecy is to 'save lives'

Top border protection officials have defended the secrecy over turning back asylum seekers at sea, claiming the war-like approach is required to save lives, avoid upsetting neighbouring countries and ultimately stop the boats. (The West Australian, 1 February)

<http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/latest/a/21211464/boats-secrecy-is-to-save-lives/>

Scott Morrison won't say if he read files before making them secret

Immigration and Border Protection Minister Scott Morrison has refused to say if he had read official documents before classifying them as secret under public interest immunity provisions. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 1 February) <http://bit.ly/1fNvX7d>

Australian Human Rights Commission orders inquiry into children in detention

A national inquiry is needed into the handling of children in detention because the immigration department has refused to cooperate with the Australian Human Rights Commission, its president says. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 3 February) <http://bit.ly/1mJG1U2>

Human Rights Commission boss Gillian Triggs blocked from visiting Nauru

The Abbott government has blocked a bid by the president of the Australian Human Rights Commission, Gillian Triggs, to visit child asylum seekers sent to Nauru under its "stop the boats" policy. (The Age, 4 February) <http://bit.ly/1eIXPZJ>

Government questions kids in detention inquiry

The federal government has expressed disappointment that an inquiry into children in immigration detention was not launched under the previous Labor government. However, refugee advocacy groups are welcoming the inquiry, saying it's time to put politics aside and put children first. (SBS News, 4 February)

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2014/02/04/government-questions-kids-detention-inquiry>

Struggle to fill asylum boats

People smugglers are struggling to fill vessels despite offering big discounts to asylum seekers as the Federal Government's policy on boats appears to be working as it intended. (The West Australian, 5 February)

<http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/latest/a/21267818/struggle-to-fill-asylum-boats/>

Last-minute High Court decision delays deportation of elderly Afghan man

The High Court in Sydney has delayed the deportation of an elderly Afghan man, just hours before he would have been forcibly flown to Kabul. (ABC News, 5 February)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-02-04/high-court-delays-deportation-of-elderly-afghan-man/5238426>

ABC admits mistakes in reporting asylum-seeker burns claims

The ABC has bowed to pressure from the Abbott government and media rivals by admitting it gave too much credence to claims asylum seekers had suffered burns because of treatment by the navy. (The Canberra Times, 5 February) <http://bit.ly/1eD3OuT>

Sri Lankan security forces blamed in report for crimes against humanity

Sri Lankan security forces were responsible for the "vast majority" of alleged war crimes during the final months of its bloody civil war, and may have systematically destroyed mass burial sites of civilians in an apparent effort to destroy evidence, a new report has found. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 5 February) <http://bit.ly/1hXOQrb>

Malaysia aligns in new asylum-seeker boats war tactic

Australia is poised to sign a new asylum-seeker deal with Malaysia as relations with Indonesia continue to hamper regional border protection operations. (The Daily Telegraph, 6 February) <http://www.news.com.au/national/malaysia-aligns-in-new-asylumseeker-boats-war-tactic/story-fncynjr2-1226819035061>

Lifeboat carrying asylum seekers lands on Indonesian coast

Asylum seekers discovered on Wednesday night on the Indonesian coast say they were nearly ready to disembark at Christmas Island when the Australian Navy sent them back. (ABC News, 7 February) <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-02-06/lifeboat-carrying-asylum-seekers-lands-on-indonesia-coast/5243990>

Lawyers launch constitutional challenge to detention of 10 asylum seekers on Nauru

Four Australian human rights lawyers have launched a constitutional challenge to the detention of 10 asylum seekers being held at the immigration detention centre on Nauru. (Radio Australia, 7 February) <http://bit.ly/NBOuKI>

Coalition finds fresh way to bring back temporary visas for asylum seekers

The federal government has found a backdoor way to start granting temporary visas to asylum seekers after an earlier bid to reintroduce temporary protection visas failed. (The Guardian, 7 February) <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/07/coalition-finds-backdoor-way-to-reintroduce-temporary-visas-to-refugees>

Asylum seeker tow-back exposed

The Federal Government is staying silent about video footage that apparently reveals the highly secretive Operation Sovereign Borders. (Herald Sun, 7 February) <http://www.news.com.au/national/asylum-seeker-towback-exposed/story-fncynjr2-1226821002259>

Natalegawa: turn backs 'not helpful', Greens accuse govt of lying about boat arrivals

Indonesia's Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa has again attacked the Abbott government's policy of boat "turn-backs", as the Greens accuse the government of lying about boat arrivals. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 7 February) <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/marty-natalegawa-says-turn-backs-not-helpful-as-greens-accuse-government-of-lying-about-boat-arrivals-20140207-325hk.html>

Morrison denies inquiry into burns allegations

Immigration Minister Scott Morrison has accused Labor of undermining "the honour" of Defence personnel by calling for an independent inquiry into claims asylum seekers were deliberately burnt by navy personnel. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 9 February) <http://bit.ly/1hXQCZA>

Lifeboats used to send asylum seekers back to Indonesia only used once

The specially bought lifeboats on which Australia is controversially sending asylum seekers back to Indonesia are believed to cost at least \$50,000 but are being used just once each. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 11 February) <http://bit.ly/1o9V9p2>

New visas bypass Senate decision: Labor

The Abbott government is trying to bypass the Senate decision which vetoed temporary protection visas for asylum seekers, Labor says. (The Australian, 11 February) <http://bit.ly/1eD82Tq>

Australian cartoon warns asylum-seekers not to waste their money on smuggler boats

The Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship has released a cartoon depicting the life of a young Afghani immigrant, as part of a campaign that appears to be aimed at deterring asylum seekers from the country. (The Independent, 11 February)

<http://ind.pn/1bVuqub>

Sri Lankan asylum-seekers turn attention to New Zealand

Sri Lankan police say 75 asylum-seekers arrested in the first such bust for months were trying to reach New Zealand instead of the previously favoured Australia. (The Australian, 12 February)

<http://bit.ly/1ced7qM>

Asylum towbacks: Senate demands details on lifeboat costs and numbers

The Senate has extended its demand for documents surrounding Operation Sovereign Borders, formally ordering the Abbott government to explain how many lifeboats it purchased, the cost and the procurement process. (The Guardian, 12 February)

<http://bit.ly/OI18cY>

Asylum seekers: consultancy behind graphic campaign holds \$2m contract

A graphic novel used by the Australian government to dissuade Afghan asylum seekers from coming to Australia was produced by the same consultancy company that just a few months earlier advised that "unpalatable conditions" in Afghanistan made "onward movement the most rational choice" for many Afghans. (The Guardian, 12 February)

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/12/asylum-seekers-consultancy-graphic-2m-contract>

Refugees angered by government's graphic novel campaign

Refugees in Australia have reacted angrily to a new graphic novel campaign by the federal government aimed at deterring asylum seekers. (SBS News, 13 February)

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2014/02/13/refugees-angered-governments-graphic-novel-campaign>

Health panel sacked over 'conflict of interest' with immigration

The immigration department sacked an expert health panel because of fears its members would leak information about Operation Sovereign Borders to the media, government documents reveal. (The Australian, 14 February) <http://bit.ly/NHgVWu>

Churches warn Scott Morrison against 'playing God' with asylum seekers' lives

The biggest church denominations in Australia have warned Immigration Minister Scott Morrison against amending a core migration act that could give him unparalleled power to "play God" and deport asylum seekers. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 14 February)

<http://bit.ly/1gGb9fU>

Manus Island riot sparked by resettlement news

Asylum-seekers broke out of the Manus Island detention centre after being told they would be settled in Papua New Guinea and would receive no help to go to another country. (The Australian, 17 February)

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

Manus Island: 1 dead, 77 injured and 1 shot in buttock at Australian asylum center

One person has been killed and 77 injured, one by a gunshot, in unrest at Australia's asylum seeker detention centre on Papua New Guinea's Manus Island, immigration minister Scott Morrison has confirmed. (The Guardian, 18 February)

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/18/manus-island-unrest-one-dead-dozens-injured-and-man-shot-in-buttock>

Inquiry launched into PNG violence

A government inquiry is to be held into violent clashes on Manus Island that left one Iranian asylum seeker dead and scores of others severely injured. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 19 February)

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/inquiry-launched-into-png-violence-20140218-32yib.html>

Immigration Department data lapse reveals asylum seekers' personal details

The personal details of a third of all asylum seekers held in Australia – almost 10,000 adults and children – have been inadvertently released by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection in one of the most serious privacy breaches in Australia's history. (The Guardian, 19 February) <http://bit.ly/O6xsUk>

General flies to Manus Island as detainees' personal details leaked

The three-star general in charge of stopping asylum seeker boats will arrive on Manus Island today in the wake of Monday's deadly confrontation between detainees and PNG police. (Herald-Sun, 19 February) <http://bit.ly/1hucLeB>

Armed PNG locals behind vicious attack on Manus Island

PNG locals employed by security guards at the Manus Island detention centre attacked asylum seekers with machetes, knives and rocks, an interpreter employed by the Immigration Department has claimed. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 20 February) <http://bit.ly/1dHdZiv>

Asylum seeker death no deterrent to 'firm' border protection policy, says Tony Abbott

Tony Abbott says he will not be deterred or succumb to "moral blackmail" when it comes to running a "firm" detention centre on Manus Island. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 20 February) <http://bit.ly/1jEAVUr>

G4S Security firm guarding Manus body

The body of an asylum seeker suspected of being killed during a riot on Manus Island is being guarded and monitored by the same security company whose officers are suspects in the man's death. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 21 February) <http://bit.ly/1jVNiOx>

Decision to deport asylum seeker's baby to be challenged in high court

A legal bid to stop an Australian-born asylum seeker baby from being deported has reached the high court in a test case for Australia. (The Guardian, 21 February) <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/21/decision-to-deport-asylum-seekers-baby-to-be-challenged-in-high-court>

Scott Morrison holds firm over death of asylum-seeker on Manus Island

Immigration Minister Scott Morrison dismissed calls for his sacking after having to correct claims a deadly riot occurred outside the Manus Island detention centre, saying people-smugglers won't "be so lucky" to see him out of the job. (The Australian, 23 February) <http://bit.ly/1mKrR1C>

Tony Abbott stands by Morrison: 'You don't want a wimp running border protection'

Tony Abbott has defended his Immigration Minister Scott Morrison against calls for the minister to be sacked, saying the Australian people would not want a "wimp" defending their borders. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 24 February) <http://bit.ly/1mHVxzV>

A lot of questions still be answered on Manus riot: Scott Morrison

Scott Morrison admits there are still questions to be answered about the violence and death of an asylum-seeker at the Manus Island detention centre. (The Australian, 24 February) <http://bit.ly/1gGbUp8>

Australia asks Cambodia to take asylum seekers amid violent crackdown

The Abbott government wants to send some asylum seekers to Cambodia, at a time when the country's strongman prime minister, Hun Sen, is overseeing a brutal crackdown on dissent in one of south-east Asia's poorest nations. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 24 February)

Former Sri Lankan military officer now acting manager of Manus detention centre

Human rights and asylum seeker advocates are condemning a decision to employ a former Sri Lankan military officer as acting manager of the Manus Island detention camp. (Radio Australia, 24 February) <http://bit.ly/1coOB6r>

Manus Island and Nauru centres to be run by Transfield in \$1.2bn deal

Transfield Services has been granted a \$1.2bn contract to manage Australia's offshore detention centres at Nauru and Manus Island, following a chaotic week on Manus Island.

(The Guardian, 24 February)

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/24/manus-island-and-nauru-centres-to-be-run-by-transfield-in-12bn-deal>

Scott Morrison knew he was wrong on brawl death

Border Protection Minister Scott Morrison has confirmed he knew a week ago his initial statements about a fatal brawl at the immigration detention facility on Manus Island were likely to have been wrong but has refused to say why he waited to correct the record until Saturday night. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 25 February) <http://bit.ly/1c1SluA>

Asylum seekers turned back to Indonesia by Abbott government in lifeboat

Australia has sent a group of asylum seekers back to Indonesia in a lifeboat, in the latest "turn back" under the Abbott government. (Herald-Sun, 25 February) <http://bit.ly/1oa1uAU>

Manus detention centre security staff allowed armed locals into facility witnesses say

A witness to violence at the Manus Island detention centre last Monday night says guards from the security firm G4S allowed locals armed with makeshift weapons into the facility. (ABC News, 25 February) <http://bit.ly/NBd8JT>

Asylum-seekers say they opted for abortion in face of conditions in Nauru centre

A pregnant Rohingya couple seeking asylum in Australia but transported to Nauru say the conditions are so bad there that they decided to get an abortion. (ABC News, 25 February)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-02-24/asylum-seekers-opt-for-abortion-in-face-of-nauru-conditions/5280826>

Manus guards let residents into centre as extra manpower, says G4S witness

G4S guards on Manus Island allowed locals in the detention centre on the night of the riot, where they began attacking asylum seekers inside the compound, according to a witness account broadcast by the ABC. (The Guardian, 25 February) <http://bit.ly/1hCWDrT>

PNG staff to keep security jobs at Manus Island detention centre

The new operator of Manus Island detention centre will continue to use local security staff even though they are implicated in last week's deadly clashes with asylum seekers. (The Age, 25 February)

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

Asylum seekers' details available on Immigration Dept website for more than 8 days

The Immigration Department has revealed that asylum seekers' personal details were publicly accessible for eight-and-a-half days. (Radio Australia, 25 February) <http://bit.ly/1i83ZX6>

Deadly clash on Manus said to have begun after asylum seekers were told about 'lies'

The deadly clashes on Manus Island last week flared after asylum seekers realised the Australian government was "lying to them" about plans to resettle them in Papua New Guinea, a migration agent who worked on the island has said. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 26 February) <http://bit.ly/1Ive0Oq>

Revealed: G4S guard says he invited in PNG police dog squad before Manus riot

The Papua New Guinean police dog squad was invited into the Manus Island detention centre under instruction from a senior G4S guard before a riot erupted on 17 February, according to a graphic statement seen by Guardian Australia. (The Guardian, 26 February) <http://bit.ly/1elruOy>

Asylum seeker had access to baby: review

An independent review into claims an asylum seeker mother was separated from her newborn baby has found adequate access and treatment provisions were in place. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 26 February)

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/asylum-seeker-had-access-to-baby-review-20140225-33g27.html>

Fear of Manus transfer sparks suicide attempt by Hobart-based asylum seeker

A Tasmanian-based asylum seeker threatened with deportation is in a Hobart hospital after a suicide attempt. (The Mercury, 26 February) <http://bit.ly/1gBdPvI>

Manus violence: Fatal violence occurred after G4S guards went in, PNG report finds

The violent clashes on Manus Island that left an Iranian asylum seeker dead happened after local G4S descended on protesting asylum-seekers, a preliminary police briefing has indicated. (The Age, 27 February) <http://bit.ly/1jMY6fk>

Onshore immigration detention: Morrison flags shift to Top End as centres close

Darwin will be the centre of Australia's onshore immigration detention network as the Federal Government looks to close down other centres around Australia. (ABC News, 28 February) <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-02-28/scott-morrison-on-shift-in-detention-centre-focus-nt-mou/5290332>