



# Refugee Council of Australia

## **BULLETIN FOR MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS**

**18 November 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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### **RCOA AGM forum to focus on protection at sea**

RCOA will hold its 2014 Annual General Meeting in Melbourne on Monday 24 November, with issues relating to the protection of asylum seekers at sea being the focus of the public forum to follow the AGM. The question of protection at sea is a major focus of international discussion this year, as UNHCR prepares for a High Commissioner's Dialogue on this topic in Geneva in December (see <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/5357caed6.html>). The Melbourne forum will feature presentations and discussions from panellists including former UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Protection Erika Feller, a former refugee from Afghanistan and Melbourne academics Dr Antje Missbach and Associate Professor Michelle Foster. RCOA's media release about the forum is available at: [http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/141114\\_ProtectionForum.pdf](http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/141114_ProtectionForum.pdf). The forum will be preceded by RCOA's 2014 AGM and a consultation for RCOA members and supporters to share their ideas about priorities for the organisation in 2015. Information about the AGM is available at <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/a/agm.php>.

### **Devastating Impacts of TPVs raised at Senate Inquiry**

RCOA CEO Paul Power highlighted the devastating impact of the Australian Government's plans to reintroduce Temporary Protection Visas when he appeared before the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee in Canberra on the *Migration and Maritime Powers Legislation Amendments (Resolving the Asylum Legacy Caseload) Bill 2014*. Mr Power said families known by the Government to be experiencing the impacts of persecution would be indefinitely separated if Parliament passed the Bill in its current form. He told the Senate Committee there was no justification for the further punishment of asylum seekers already living in Australia given current arrangements provided for all future boat arrivals to be sent to Nauru and Manus Island, who will never be given the opportunity to settle in Australia. He also argued for the Government to resolve the status of asylum seekers living in the community by processing their refugee claims under existing legislation. Mr Power's address is included in the RCOA statement at: [http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/141114\\_AsylumBillSenate.pdf](http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/141114_AsylumBillSenate.pdf) Read RCOA's submission at <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/sub/1410-Legacy-Caseload.pdf>.

### **UN Committee Against Torture takes close look at Australia's treatment of asylum seekers**

Australia's asylum policies attracted the scrutiny of the United Nations Committee Against Torture with RCOA forwarding a submission to the Committee and contributing to a joint NGO Report. In a statement, RCOA said NGOs were concerned that Australia's policies of turning back asylum boats, returning asylum seekers to Sri Lanka under "enhanced screening" and weakening safeguards in the Migration Act failed to protect asylum seekers from being returned to situations where they may face torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. RCOA also said asylum seekers were being subjected to prolonged indefinite detention, offshore processing in harsh conditions and faced extended delays in the processing of their refugee claims while asylum seekers living in the community in Australia were forced to subsist on the lowest level of income support and were denied family reunion opportunities. "The cumulative effect of these punitive measures, reserved exclusively for asylum seekers, is to inflict a level of suffering so severe that it can be considered a form of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment," CEO

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Paul Power said. Read the statement at: [http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/141111\\_UNCATsub.pdf](http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/141111_UNCATsub.pdf) and RCOA's submission at <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/sub/1410-CAT.pdf>. The NGO report can be accessed at: [http://hrlc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/CAT\\_NGO\\_Report\\_Australia\\_2014.pdf](http://hrlc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/CAT_NGO_Report_Australia_2014.pdf)

### **The Home Stretch research investigates housing challenges**

The challenges faced by asylum seekers and people from refugee backgrounds in finding affordable, appropriate and sustainable housing has been researched in a new RCOA report, "The Home Stretch". Access to suitable and affordable housing is consistently raised as one of the primary issues affecting humanitarian entrants in Australia. This report identifies strategies to assist humanitarian entrants overcome barriers and includes profiles of local projects. Read the report at: <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/rpt/HomeStretch.pdf>

### **RCOA national consultations on Refugee and Humanitarian Program underway**

RCOA's national consultations on the future of Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Program are underway, with 49 face-to-face consultations being held between October and 4 December. The national consultations with service providers, refugee community members and interested members of the public inform RCOA's annual submission to the Minister for Immigration on issues the Australian Government should consider in planning the coming year's refugee program. RCOA has produced a discussion paper to assist people participating in the consultations. The discussion paper and details of consultations are available at <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/isub.php>.

### **Newly-formed refugee advocacy network urges rejection of migration Bill**

Members of a newly-formed advocacy network of former refugees in Victoria wrote to Government, Opposition and cross-benchers urging the Parliament to reject *Migration and Maritime Powers Legislation Amendment (Resolving the Asylum Legacy Caseload) Bill 2014* currently before the House of Representatives. The Refugee Communities Advocacy Network (RCAN) had only formed two weeks earlier, as part of an RCOA initiative to provide refugee communities with opportunities to discuss, prioritise and advocate on local, state, national and international issues of concern including Australia's refugee and humanitarian program, family reunion, employment, education, housing, asylum policies and international refugee protection. In letters to the politicians, RCAN members called for the immediate processing of refugee claims and highlighted the destructive nature of Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs), which the Government wishes to reintroduce. Members who attended the inaugural meeting in Dandenong indicated that had these laws been in place when they sought refugee protection, many would have been sent back to persecution or be condemned to a life in limbo on TPVs. Read RCOA's media release at [http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/141107\\_RCANBill.pdf](http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/141107_RCANBill.pdf). RCOA issued an earlier release about the formation of the RCAN at [http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/141020\\_RCAN.pdf](http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/141020_RCAN.pdf)

### **Write To Be Heard campaign for fairer refugee and asylum policies**

The A Just Australia Write To Be Heard campaign has issued bulletins encouraging members to write to Immigration Minister Scott Morrison to request the suspension of the forcible return of asylum seekers to Afghanistan and another to MPs asking them to vote against the Government's proposed Asylum Legacy Caseload Bill. At least once a month, people will be invited to consider a current issue of concern to asylum seekers and refugees and to write to political representatives about it. Further details about Write To Be Heard can be found at [www.ajustaustralia.com](http://www.ajustaustralia.com)

### **Bhutan's "gross national hypocrisy" on human rights challenged**

RCOA called for Australia and other nations resettling Bhutanese refugees to challenge the endless repetition of Bhutan's claims about "Gross National Happiness" and focus attention on addressing the nation's human rights abuses. The call was made during the visit to Australia of the fourth wife of Bhutan's former king. In a statement, RCOA chief executive officer Paul Power said the visit was an opportunity to press Bhutan on the terrible suffering it had inflicted on more than 100,000 of its people who have endured the denial of citizenship, beatings, arrests, detention and burning of their homes. The statement said that despite the scale of the international efforts to resettle refugees displaced by Bhutan's ethnic and religious violence, Bhutan remained largely unchallenged. The statement said Australia must do everything it can to increase diplomatic pressure on Bhutan to accept the refugees who wish to return to the country and address the statelessness of more than 25,000 Nepalese-speaking Bhutanese who

remain in the country. Read the statement at:  
<http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/141028%20Bhutan.pdf>

### **Submission on character raises fears of indefinite detention**

A number of concerns were raised about the impact of the Migration Amendment (Character and General Visa Cancellation) Bill 2014 in an RCOA submission, including the risk of visas being cancelled unjustly or unnecessarily, potentially resulting in prolonged indefinite detention. The submission also argued the Bill would grant the Minister with an inappropriate level of discretion to refuse or cancel visas and overturn decisions made by tribunals. Read the submission at: <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/sub/1410-Character.pdf>

### **RCOA airs concerns about border protection costs and high visa charges**

RCOA's submission to the Joint Review of Border Fees, Charges and Taxes has recommended the adoption of alternatives to the costly detention regime and measures to make family reunion applications easier and accessible for humanitarian entrants. The submission, based on consultations RCOA has held with refugee communities, also highlights the high cost involved in participating in the Community Proposal Pilot. Read the submission at: <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/sub/1410-Border-Fees-Review.pdf>

### **Human rights issues highlighted in response to Human Rights Commission discussion paper**

The Australian Human Rights Commission's Rights and Responsibilities Discussion Paper provided RCOA with an opportunity to highlight human rights issues relating to refugees and asylum seekers. Read the response at: <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/sub/1411-AHRC-Rights-Responsibilities.pdf>

### **NSW and WA councils join Refugee Welcome Zone initiative**

The Refugee Welcome Zone initiative has welcomed Goulburn Mulwaree Council in regional New South Wales and the Shire of Katanning in Western Australia, bringing to 111 the number of councils to make a commitment in spirit to welcoming refugees. To find out more about the Refugee Welcome Zone initiative, visit: <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/g/rwz.php>

### **New Bright Ideas profile on Refugee Art Project**

The latest Bright Ideas brief profiles the Refugee Art Project which since its inception in 2010 has resulted in more than 500 artworks, created by refugees and asylum seekers, placed on public exhibition. Find out more about the initiative at [http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/brightideas/Bright\\_Ideas16\\_RefugeeArt.pdf](http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/brightideas/Bright_Ideas16_RefugeeArt.pdf). Access the Bright Ideas briefs at <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/brightideas.php>. If you have an initiative you think could be profiled in Bright Ideas, contact [info@refugeecouncil.org.au](mailto:info@refugeecouncil.org.au) or (02) 9211 9333.

### **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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### **“Last resort” art exhibition**

**Sunday 16 November to Sunday 8 February, Langwarrin VIC**

Alex Seton's solo exhibition “Last resort” explores the human cost of Australia's current asylum seeker policies. It asks us to consider the attempts of people to reach Australia at great personal risk and the safety and privilege in which we live our day-to-day lives.

**Details:** gallery open 10:00am-5:00pm Tuesday to Sunday; McClelland Sculpture Park and Gallery, 390 McClelland Drive, Langwarrin; for more information, visit <http://www.mcclellandgallery.com>.

### **CEH workshop: Health literacy in practice**

**Wednesday 19 November, 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>.

### **Suitcase Stories**

**Thursday 20 and Friday 21 November, Parramatta NSW**

Suitcase Stories is a new production by Treehouse Theatre, the markers of Tree of Life. Young refugees perform their own stories providing a powerful insight into the refugee experience as told by the children who experienced it. The cast is made up of young refugees from Sri Lanka, Palestine, Pakistan, Sudan, Iraq, Afghanistan and Bhutan who attend Evans High School and Intensive English Centre.

**Details:** tickets \$38.00 (\$22.00 concession and children, \$5.00 school groups); Riverside Theatre, cnr Church and Market Streets, Parramatta; book tickets online at <http://riversideparramatta.com.au/show/suitcase-stories>.

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

**Thursday 20 November, Wollongong NSW**

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

**Details:** \$149.00 (students \$99.00); 9:30am-4:30pm; Illawarra Leagues Club, The Orchid Room, 97-99 Church Street, Wollongong; for further information and to register, visit <http://www.startts.org.au/training>.

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

**Thursday 20 and Friday 21 November, Wollongong 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; Illawarra Leagues Club, The Orchid Room 97-99 Church Street, Wollongong; for further information and to register, visit <http://www.startts.org.au/training>.

### **Symposium: Oral health in refugees and asylum seekers**

**Friday 21 November, Carlton VIC**

Oral health and oral health services are one of the most neglected areas of health for refugees and asylum seekers, with a wide disparity existing in the oral health of these population groups in comparison to the wider Australian population. This symposium seeks to develop a better understanding of the factors that contribute to this situation and the strategies needed for more effective responses. This event is suitable for oral health professionals, health and public health professionals, medical doctors, health promotion professionals, hospital and clinical directors, educators, policy-makers, students and those interested in health issues among refugee and asylum seeker populations. The keynote speaker will be Senator Richard Di Natale.

**Details:** \$100.00; 9:00am-5:00pm; Carrillo Gartner Theatre, Sidney Myer Asia Centre, cnr Swanston Street and Monash Road, University of Melbourne, Carlton; for further details and to register, visit <http://www.oralhealthcrc.org.au/content/symposium-oral-health-refugees-and-asylum-seekers>.

### **Women and Girls at Risk symposium**

**Friday 28 November, Fairfield NSW**

Organised by Immigrant and Refugee Women's Network, this event will include speeches from The Hon. Pru Goward, NSW Minister for Women and Minister for Planning; and The Hon. Michaelia Cash, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women and Assistant Minister for Immigration and Border Protection.

**Details:** 11:00am-2:30pm; Stars Palace Reception Hall, 15a Railway Parade, Fairfield; RSVP by 15 November to (02) 9726 4044.

### **Workshop on school to university pathways for refugee background students**

**Wednesday 3 December, Canberra ACT**

This workshop, entitled "Supporting refugee background students into tertiary education and keeping them there", will disseminate the findings and resources from a cross-institutional, Australian Office for Learning and Teaching funded project. The project focused on identifying the distinct teaching, learning and cultural needs of students from refugee backgrounds which may enable and/or constrain their access to tertiary education.

**Details:** 9:00am-1:00pm; Teal Room, Inspire Centre, Building 25, University of Canberra, Pantowor Street, Bruce; RSVP by Friday 21 November to Dawn Bolger [d.bolger@uws.edu.au](mailto:d.bolger@uws.edu.au).

### **WEFTshop fundraiser**

**Sunday 7 December, Marrickville NSW**

WEFTshop is a Sydney-based non-profit enterprise collaborating with and supporting refugee artisans from Burma to create unique textile products and earn a fair income safely. This event, featuring music performed by Miriam Leberman, Lara Goodridge and Kate Adams, will raise funds to support WEFTshop's work.

**Details:** tickets \$45.00; 6:30pm for a 7:30pm start to 11:00pm; Django Bar at Camelot Lounge, Marrickville; book tickets online at

[https://www.stickytickets.com.au/20713/weftshop\\_fundraiser\\_%40\\_django\\_bar.aspx](https://www.stickytickets.com.au/20713/weftshop_fundraiser_%40_django_bar.aspx).

### **Unionists for Refugees meeting**

**Tuesday 9 December, Perth WA**

A group of unionists in Perth is building a network to campaign for a humanitarian and welcoming refugee policy. Interested union members or supporters are invited to meet on the second Tuesday of every month.

**Details:** 5.30pm; Level 6, CSA Building, 445 Hay Street, Perth; for further information, email [unionists4refugees@gmail.com](mailto:unionists4refugees@gmail.com) or visit <https://www.facebook.com/unionistsforrefugeeswa>.

### **Launch of "Reaching In by Joining up" evaluation report**

**Wednesday 10 December, Ashfield NSW**

This event will launch a Law and Justice Foundation of NSW report on the legal assistance partnership between Legal Aid NSW and Settlement Services International. The report will be launched by Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Social Services.

**Details:** 9:00am-10:15am; Settlement Services International, 2/158 Liverpool Road, Ashfield; RSVP by 1 December via (02) 9219 5925 or [Gordana.Stevanoska@legalaid.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Gordana.Stevanoska@legalaid.nsw.gov.au).

### **2014 Human Rights Awards ceremony**

**Wednesday 10 December, Sydney NSW**

Presented by the Australian Human Rights Commission, these awards recognise people and organisations who have made an outstanding contribution to the advancement of human rights in Australia. The finalists for this year's Community Organisation Award include two RCOA members: the Refugee Advice and Casework Service and Settlement Services International.

**Details:** tickets \$120.00 (\$70.00 for not-for-profit organisations, \$60.00 concession); 5:30pm-7:30pm; Museum of Contemporary Art, Circular Quay, Sydney; book tickets online at

<https://hrawards.humanrights.gov.au/ticket-order-form>.

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

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### **Beyond the Boats: building asylum and refugee policy for the long term**

A report from a roundtable on asylum and refugee policy investigates the policies needed to construct a long-term national asylum and refugee policy. Key recommendations include raising Australia's humanitarian intake, phasing out mandatory detention apart from initial screening and establishing regional dialogue. Download the report through the Centre for Policy Development at <http://cpd.org.au/2014/11/beyond-boats-refugee-report/>

### **Q and A on migration bills**

The Human Rights Law Centre's Daniel Webb explains the implications of the Government's proposed legislative changes in the *Migration and Maritime Powers Legislation Amendment (Resolving the Asylum Legacy Caseload) Bill 2014*. The interview provides a clear concise explanation as to what this bill could do to Australia's human rights. A 20-minute overview is available at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9eETzMYgEaM&feature=em-upload\\_owner](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9eETzMYgEaM&feature=em-upload_owner) while a six-minute summary can be accessed at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hA5QAcVjdk&feature=em-upload\\_owner](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hA5QAcVjdk&feature=em-upload_owner)

### **CALD Youth Census 2014**

The first Australian census data analysis of young people from culturally and linguistically-diverse backgrounds looks at education, employment, and family and living arrangements for refugee youth. The report also includes comparative data across states. Download the report at: <http://www.myan.org.au/file/file/CALD%20Census%20Report%202014.pdf>

### **Law Council of Australia releases asylum policy**

The peak body representing the legal profession in Australia has developed an asylum policy that sets out rule of law principles and human rights standards and provides a framework to assess proposed laws and policies. For more information visit <http://www.lawcouncil.asn.au/lawcouncil/index.php/current-issues/immigration-detention-and-asylum-seekers>

### **“Are We Listening?” Syrian refugee women speak**

An International Rescue Committee report illustrates the challenges facing displaced Syrian women and girls, expressed in their own words. Access the report at: <http://www.rescue.org/arewelisting>

### **TED Talk on refugee education by UNHCR**

In a TED Talk at the TED Global Conference in Rio de Janeiro, UNHCR's Melissa Fleming delivered a strong case for investing in refugees' education while they are in exile and support to make refugee camps healing places where people can develop skills needed to rebuild their homes. Access the talk at: [http://www.ted.com/talks/melissa\\_fleming\\_let\\_s\\_help\\_refugees\\_thrive\\_not\\_just\\_survive](http://www.ted.com/talks/melissa_fleming_let_s_help_refugees_thrive_not_just_survive)

### **Freedom Stories highlights contributions of asylum seekers in Australia**

This documentary project centres on the contributions made by former asylum seekers who arrived by boat around 2001 and charts their progress from indefinite mandatory detention, life on a Temporary Protection Visa and new lives as Australian citizens. Find out more at <http://freedomstoriesproject.com/>

### **UN Human Rights Committee takes aim at immigration detention practices**

The UN Human Rights Committee, which monitors compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, includes some important statements on immigration detention in paragraph 12 and affirms that children should not be deprived of liberty, except as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time. Read more at: [http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fGC%2f35&Lang=en](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fGC%2f35&Lang=en)

### **Protection failures in Sri Lanka: new report**

“Inhumanity and Humanitarian Action: Protection failures in Sri Lanka” explains how division and discrimination did not disappear at the conclusion of Sri Lanka's civil war in 2009. Read the report from Tufts University at: <http://reliefweb.int/report/sri-lanka/inhumanity-and-humanitarian-action-protection-failures-sri-lanka>

### **UN General Recommendation on refugee and stateless women**

The UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women has issued a General Recommendation to account for gender equality and non-discrimination in asylum processes for women refugees, asylum seekers and stateless people. For more details visit: <http://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/cedaw/pages/cedawindex.aspx>. The new General Recommendation is part of UNHCR's campaign to end statelessness within 10 years. Details about the campaign are available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/stateless2014/>

### **Fair and accurate? Refugee young people, crime and the media**

The Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) report aims to gain an accurate picture of migrant and refugee youth offending by comparing media portrayals with available police, census other data. The report also documents the negative impact misinformed public perception can have on the lives of young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

Read the report at:

[http://cmy.net.au/sites/default/files/publication-documents/Fair\\_and\\_Accurate.pdf](http://cmy.net.au/sites/default/files/publication-documents/Fair_and_Accurate.pdf)

### **Report on mental health literacy of resettled Iraqi refugees in NSW**

This report summarises the results of a collaborative research project conducted by the University of Western Sydney in partnership with NSW Refugee Health Service and the University of Melbourne. The project addresses the question of what and what does not influence some resettled refugees to seek psychological treatment. Read the project at:

[http://www.uws.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/761373/MHL\\_of\\_Iraqi\\_Refugees.pdf](http://www.uws.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/761373/MHL_of_Iraqi_Refugees.pdf)

### **Report on citizenship, participation and belonging**

This paper by the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) explores the ways in which young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds choose to participate formally and informally in Victoria. The research identifies barriers to participation and motivations for involvement. Access the report at:

<http://cmy.net.au/sites/default/files/publication-documents/CMY%20Active%20Citizenship.pdf>

### **Culturally-sensitive practice in out-of-home care**

JK Diversity Consultants, Life Without Barriers, Key Assets and PeakCare have combined to develop a resource targeted towards those working in the child and family welfare sector, child protection system, out-of-home care, foster and kinship carer agencies, residential youth workers and policy and program officers. Access the guide at

<http://www.jkdiversityconsultants.com.au/PracticeGuide/practiceguide2014.html>

### **Educational expectations of Bhutanese refugee parents**

Researchers at James Cook University have compiled a study into the educational expectations of Bhutanese refugee parents in the Cairns, Queensland. The study by Debbie Lau and Philemon Chigeza, reveals that Bhutanese refugee parents held high expectation that their children would attend secondary school in Australia and that some young people were denied enrolment to high school because of their age. Read the report at: [http://apo.org.au/files/Resource/lau\\_chigeza\\_research\\_paper.pdf](http://apo.org.au/files/Resource/lau_chigeza_research_paper.pdf)

### **Education resources for homework club tutors**

The Centre for Multicultural Youth has produced five tutor training videos to inspire and support tutors at homework clubs across Victoria. Find out more at:

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?action\\_edit=1&list=PLaoWaTMfh0ciEpiG7vGBmJn0ltPfWeLcW](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?action_edit=1&list=PLaoWaTMfh0ciEpiG7vGBmJn0ltPfWeLcW)

### **Fact sheet on young people on Remaining Relative and Orphan Relative visas**

The Centre for Multicultural Youth fact sheet is for frontline staff working with young people from culturally and linguistically-diverse backgrounds who have migrated to Australia on these visas and explains the challenges, entitlements and referral options. Read the fact sheet at:

<http://cmy.net.au/publications/young-people-remaining-relative-visas-115-and-orphan-relative-visas-117>

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

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### **Boundless Plains Project seeks refugee input**

People of refugee background have the opportunity to be part of the Boundless Plains Project. The project offers a creative space for refugees to contribute and explore Australian media through photo story, with the aim of shifting negative perceptions of refugees to positive ones within Australia. To register your interest, contact [boundlessplainsproject@hotmail.com](mailto:boundlessplainsproject@hotmail.com). Find out more at

<http://www.boundlessplainsproject.com/>

### **AFL Diversity Day in Melbourne**

Youth Foundation Manningam and students from Whitefriars College are running an AFL Diversity Day for young migrants. A guest AFL player will attend and there will be prizes, certificates, ribbons and custom-

made jerseys. Diversity Day will be held on Saturday 29 November between 10.00am and 12.00pm at Whitefriars College, 156 Park Road, Donvale. Further details are available at [Katherine.georg@gmail.com](mailto:Katherine.georg@gmail.com)

### **Refugee and Casework Services (RACS) short film competition**

Sydney-based RACS is offering a short film competition to help change the conversation about asylum seekers and refugees. In two categories – School Entry and Open – entries of no longer than two-and-a-half minutes are sought on the importance of legal assistance to asylum seekers and the reasons why people seek asylum. The deadline for entries is 31 March, 2015. For further details email [admin@racs.org.au](mailto:admin@racs.org.au) with “Short Film Comp” in the subject line.

### **FECCA New and Emerging Community Organisations survey**

The national peak body representing Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, the Federation of Ethnic Communities’ Councils of Australia (FECCA) is conducting a survey aimed at understanding how new and emerging community organisations operate, foster social cohesion and represent the needs of the diverse communities in which they work. Information gathered will be compiled into a summary report. The survey closes 5.00pm, 21 December, 2014. To complete the survey, visit <https://adobeformscentral.com/?f=SS05pS-kS4lfRDlcChldYg#>. For information, contact [admin@fecca.org.au](mailto:admin@fecca.org.au) or 02 6282 5755.

### **ANU short course on refugee law and practice**

The Australian National University is offering a short course in Australian refugee law and practice in November. The course is suitable for lawyers working in migration law, migration agents, officers of Legal Aid Commissions, public servants, NGOs and community groups and students who have completed the Graduate Certificate in Migration Law and Practice. Further details are available at: <http://law.anu.edu.au/migration/australian-refugee-law-practice>

### **Survey on youth workers engaged with young migrants of African background**

A Charles Darwin University survey seeks to discover a youth worker’s perspective on the impact of migration on the identity of young people of African background. To participate in the survey visit: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Z5DKWWL>

### **Petition to stop denial of human rights to asylum seekers**

Almost 4000 people have signed a petition to pressure the Senate to reject legislation that denies human rights to asylum seekers. The petition against the proposed changes to the Asylum Legacy Caseload Bill can be accessed at:

<https://www.communityrun.org/petitions/stop-legislation-denying-human-right-for-asylum-seekers>

### **Scattered People turn musical talents to asylum and refugee debate**

Australian musicians, refugees and asylum seekers are collaborating to produce a musical album that tells the refugees’ stories. Scattered People is comprised of asylum seekers, refugees and locals who take their music on weekly visits to the Brisbane Immigration Detention Centre. Find out more and how to show your support for their work by visiting: <http://www.chuffed.org/project/scatteredpeoplemusic>

*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>.*

## **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)

### **Asylum seekers say they were raped and tortured after Australia sent them back to SL**

Asylum seekers returned from Australia to Sri Lanka say they have since been raped and tortured in their homeland. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 1 October) <http://goo.gl/gp2Efz>

### **Asylum seekers ‘posed sabotage threat’ to Customs ship: lawyers**

Australian authorities had to keep 157 asylum seekers in the dark about plans to return them to India because of fears of sabotage, government lawyers argue. (The Australian, 1 October) <http://goo.gl/fm1Gcw>

### **New Christmas Island chief's hardline approach over conditions for asylum seekers**

The newly-appointed administrator of Christmas Island has taken a hardline approach to asylum seekers, denying that incidents of self-harm in the detention centre are a result of lengthy off-shore processing. (The Daily Mail, 2 October) <http://goo.gl/oe4Zmz>

### **History will treat Australia 'very poorly' over its treatment of asylum seekers**

History will judge Australia "very, very poorly" in relation to its treatment of asylum seekers, the outgoing administrator of the Australian Indian Ocean territories has said. (The Guardian, 3 October) <http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2014/oct/02/history-treat-australia-poorly-treatment-asylum-seekers>

### **Inquiry into Nauru 'self-harm coaching' of asylum-seekers**

Allegations charity workers engaged in a propaganda campaign, fabricated sex abuse and misconduct claims and coached asylum-seekers on Nauru to self-harm so they could be evacuated from the island are under investigation. (The Australian, 4 October) <http://goo.gl/IKYStH>

### **Mandatory detention of children 'abusive', say Australian paediatricians**

Australian doctors are increasingly troubled by the treatment of children in offshore processing centres and the gag clauses that prevent them talking about it, Australia's human rights commissioner says. (The Guardian, 6 October) <http://goo.gl/GTYsnc>

### **Four-year budget of \$20 million spent in one year to stop the boats**

Elaborate advertising campaigns commissioned by the Labor and Abbott governments to stop refugees seeking protection in Australia have cost taxpayers almost \$23 million in one year. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 6 October) <http://goo.gl/EVFXBg>

### **Iran wants to stop the boats**

Iran has warned its citizens to stay off "death ships" sailing with asylum seekers from Indonesia to Australia, saying refugees are mistreated on Manus Island. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 8 October) <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/iran-wants-to-stop-the-boats-20141008-1137px.html>

### **'Torture' of deported Afghan Hazara asylum seeker to be investigated**

The Australian government will investigate the reported kidnapping and torture by the Taliban of an Afghan asylum seeker deported from Australia in August, but the immigration minister will not intervene in further planned deportations of ethnic Hazaras. (The Guardian, 9 October) <http://goo.gl/nZ6ITv>

### **Australia presses for Human Rights Council seat despite UN criticism**

Foreign Minister Julie Bishop says Australia is a leading contender to win a seat on the United Nations' pre-eminent human rights body despite scathing recent criticism from the UN of the government's asylum seeker policies. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 12 October) <http://goo.gl/Ha3B47>

### **Tamil asylum seekers detained at sea for four weeks get court hearing**

The high court is set to examine a month-long stand-off on Tuesday involving the detention of 157 asylum seekers on a Customs boat, as the United Nations seeks to join the case. (The Guardian, 14 October) <http://goo.gl/mGwFvR>

### **Dramatic decrease in asylum-seeker deaths**

The number of asylum-seekers who have died seeking refuge in Australia has dramatically decreased, as the world confronts a spike in migration-related deaths and the Mediterranean emerges as the deadliest zone for refugees. (The Australian, 14 October) <http://goo.gl/g6YOgR>

### **Tamil asylum seeker held at sea wasn't asked basic questions, high court hears**

Australia's right to intercept boats on the high seas and return asylum seekers to foreign countries has been challenged by a Tamil asylum seeker in the high court, with lawyers for the man arguing the government failed even to ask whether he faced persecution. (The Guardian, 14 October) <http://goo.gl/NjS9E9>

### **Australian-born children of asylum seekers at risk of deportation under new laws**

New laws that would strip Australian-born children of asylum seekers of protection visa rights threaten to quash a legal bid to save a stateless infant called Ferouz from offshore detention. (The Guardian, 14 October) <http://goo.gl/djDNLA>

### **'No basis' for persecution fears**

The Sri Lankan asylum-seeker who is challenging the federal government's boat interception and turn-back powers had no permission to come to Australia and had breached Australian laws in attempting to do so, the High Court has heard. (The Australian, 15 October)

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/no-basis-for-persecution-fears/story-e6frg6n6-1227090579986>

### **Baby Ferouz, born to asylum seekers in Brisbane, denied protection visa**

A baby born in Brisbane to asylum-seeker parents in detention does not have a right to stay in Australia as a refugee, the federal circuit court has ruled in a landmark case. (The Guardian, 15 October)

<http://goo.gl/q445cB>

### **Tamil asylum seekers held at sea given no chance to claim asylum, court hears**

Australia abandoned even its minimum screening process for the 157 Tamil asylum seekers held for a month on board an Australian ship, court documents revealed on Wednesday. (The Guardian, 15 October)

<http://goo.gl/VFAMM7>

### **India was the 'obvious place' to send 157 Sri Lankan asylum seekers: Immigration**

The federal government has said it acted lawfully when detaining 157 asylum seekers on board a Customs boat for a month, telling the High Court that India was an "obvious place" to send them. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 16 October) <http://goo.gl/BGiORL>

### **Asylum baby born in Australia but refused visa could be sent to Nauru despite appeal**

An Australian-born baby of asylum seekers, who has been refused a protection visa, could be sent to Nauru at any time, despite lawyers asking for an urgent hearing. (The Courier-Mail, 16 October)

<http://goo.gl/hvW8Ek>

### **Asylum seeker policy immoral: Vic church**

About 800 Victorian church leaders have openly deplored Australia's treatment of asylum seekers. (The Australian, 17 October) <http://goo.gl/2JqneL>

### **Cambodians protest Australia refugee deal**

More than 1,000 Cambodians including monks, students, victims of land eviction and representatives of unions and non-government organisations have marched in Phnom Penh's streets to demand the abolition of the refugee resettlement deal signed by Cambodian and Australian governments to permanently resettle refugees from Nauru to Cambodia. (SBS News, 17 October)

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2014/10/17/cambodians-protest-australia-refugee-deal>

### **Manus holds 87 people awaiting specialist medical treatment in Australia or PNG**

Asylum seekers detained on Manus Island's detention centre are living in grimy buildings, with pictures showing filthy conditions, mould and rust in the centre. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 17 October)

<http://goo.gl/7k93mY>

### **Morrison says refugee policy has benefited Indonesia**

Immigration Minister Scott Morrison has hailed Australia's hardline asylum seeker policy as a blessing for incoming Indonesian President Joko Widodo and his nation. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 18 October)

<http://goo.gl/yZGusd>

### **Asylum seekers' personal details stolen in second immigration data breach**

The personal details of hundreds of asylum seekers on Nauru have been stolen in a second major data breach within Australia's immigration detention system. (The Guardian, 18 October) <http://goo.gl/CEXAYS>

### **AMA formally notifies NT Govt of harm to asylum children at Wickham Point facility**

The Australian Medical Association (AMA) has made formal notifications to the Northern Territory Government that federal immigration detention is harming children. (ABC News, 18 October)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-10-17/ama-informs-nt-govt-about-detention-harm-to-asylum-children/5822322>

### **Anti-refugee protest dogged by xenophobia**

Hundreds of demonstrators marched through central Phnom Penh yesterday morning calling for a controversial refugee resettlement deal between Australia and Cambodia to be scrapped. (Phnom Penh Post, 18 October)

<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/post-weekend/anti-refugee-protest-dogged-xenophobia>

### **Young refugees denied visas to reunite family**

Hundreds of young refugees who arrived in Australia by boat as unaccompanied minors are being denied visas that would reunite them with their families. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 20 October)

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/young-refugees-denied-visas-to-reunite-family-20141019-118dt3.html>

### **PNG says refugee resettlement deal to be revised due to lack of public support**

The Australian Government's agreement to resettle refugees in Papua New Guinea is again facing further delays after the PNG prime minister announced a brand new policy would be prepared because of a lack of public support. (The Guardian, 20 October) <http://goo.gl/FMLRIO>

### **Offshore detention centres: annual costs hit \$1 billion**

The federal government has spent more than \$1 billion this financial year to house about 2200 asylum seekers in offshore detention centres in Papua New Guinea and Nauru. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 20 October) <http://goo.gl/sGrGbv>

### **Lack of asylum-seeker boats 'to save \$2.5bn'**

The financial dividend of tougher border protection measures can be sustained if asylum-seeker boat arrivals remain low, despite a combined \$1.2 billion-a-year bill to run the Nauru and Manus Island offshore processing centres. (The Australian, 21 October) <http://goo.gl/8W184T>

### **Asylum seekers: Andrew Wilkie takes Australia to international criminal court**

Andrew Wilkie has written to the international criminal court (ICC) asking it to investigate the Abbott government for crimes against humanity. (The Guardian, 22 October) <http://goo.gl/k1gzh7>

### **Cambodia to give Nauru refugees 'realistic' picture of resettlement**

Cambodian government officials will travel to Nauru as early as this week to give refugees there a "realistic" assessment of life in that country, the Phnom Penh Post has reported. (The Guardian, 22 October) <http://goo.gl/4x7MzY>

### **Scott Morrison personally intervenes to block claims for permanent protection**

The immigration minister, Scott Morrison, has intervened to refuse refugee protection claims and has stripped refugees of any right to appeal against his decisions in an unprecedented new push to block permanent settlement. (The Guardian, 22 October) <http://goo.gl/ORV1ei>

### **Bill to expand immigration minister's border powers hangs in the balance**

The fate of a controversial border protection bill that would expand the powers of the immigration minister hangs in the balance, with Labor signalling that it is unlikely to vote for the legislation in its current form. (The Guardian, 23 October) <http://goo.gl/4vDuaU>

### **Alleged rape on Nauru: Greens accuse Govt for trying to cover-up asylum seeker claim**

The Federal Government has been accused of trying to cover-up the alleged rape of an asylum seeker on Nauru. (ABC News, 23 October)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-10-23/govt-accused-of-covering-up-asylum-seeker-rape-claim/5835060>

### **Asylum seekers win appeal over immigration department data breach**

A group of asylum seekers who took the immigration department to court over the exposure of their personal details in a major data breach have won a federal court appeal, and the immigration minister has been ordered to pay their costs. (The Guardian, 24 October) <http://goo.gl/gTUrbX>

### **Australia seeks NGO blessing for Cambodia refugee deal, likely to include Manus**

Australia's boat-stopping supremo Immigration Minister Scott Morrison is hoping he has found an answer to a thorny problem: just who can help oversee the government's internationally controversial decision to resettle refugees in south-east Asia's second-poorest country? (Crikey, 24 October) <http://www.crikey.com.au/2014/10/24/australia-seeks-ngo-blessing-for-cambodia-refugee-deal-likely-to-include-manus/>

### **Temporary protection visa deal with Palmer United Party looking shaky**

The "deal" between the Palmer United Party and the immigration minister to reintroduce temporary protection visas is looking shaky as PUP expresses deep concerns Scott Morrison's legislation goes far beyond what was agreed. (The Guardian, 24 October) <http://goo.gl/dbtxol>

### **Government to investigate torture claims of deported asylum seeker Zainullah Naseri**

The federal government is investigating claims the first Afghan asylum seeker to be forcibly deported from Australia was held hostage and tortured by the Taliban within weeks of his return. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 27 October) <http://goo.gl/83nrhq>

### **Manus Island asylum seeker writes to UN in bid to access healthcare**

An asylum seeker who had an eye gouged and lost several teeth during unrest at Manus Island detention centre in February has written to the United Nations in a desperate plea to receive proper medical care. (The Guardian, 27 October) <http://goo.gl/gTUrbX>

### **Scott Morrison ignored departmental advice on visas for boat arrivals**

Scott Morrison ignored his department's advice that it was illegal for him to refuse permanent visas for boat arrivals found to be refugees, and defied warnings from bureaucrats that the move would be challenged in the high court and he would lose. (The Guardian, 27 October) <http://goo.gl/Sso9Lw>

### **Scott Morrison washes his hands of children attacked on Nauru**

The Australian government will take no responsibility for the safety of asylum seekers who are resettled in Nauru, despite a group of refugee children living in the community being attacked by locals and threatened that they would be killed. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 28 October) <http://goo.gl/6HHBeR>

### **Call for moratorium on deportation of asylum seekers to Afghanistan after claims**

Refugee advocates are calling for a moratorium on the deportation of failed asylum seekers to Afghanistan as the Australian Government prepares to forcibly return a 20-year-old Hazara man to Kabul. (ABC News, 28 October) <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-10-27/calls-to-stop-deporting-failed-asylum-seekers-to-afghanistan/5845544>

### **Labor's Left, Right quarrel over turning back boats**

Senior Labor Right MPs have rounded on the party's Left faction, declaring the party must settle its asylum seeker policy before the next election and conceding turning back boats containing asylum seekers may be part of the policy mix. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 28 October) <http://goo.gl/tmd6JN>

### **Australia criticised over Ebola visa decision**

West African leaders and the United Nations have criticised Australia's decision to suspend entry visas for people from Ebola-affected countries. (SBS News, 29 October) <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2014/10/29/australia-criticised-over-ebola-visa-decision>

### **Activists attempt to prevent Hazara man deportation at Perth airport**

Activists have been campaigning at Perth International Airport to try to prevent a man from the minority Hazara community in Afghanistan being deported. (ABC News, 29 October) <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-10-29/activists-attempt-to-prevent-man-being-deported/5849432>

### **Executive jobs to go as Immigration, Customs merge to form Australian Border Force**

The purge of federal public service jobs will spare most immigration and customs staff, as they prepare to form the new Australian Border Force in eight months' time. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 30 October) <http://goo.gl/zuOove>

### **Immigration won't reveal Ebola refugee ban advice because of 'national security'**

The government has refused an order by the Senate to reveal the reasons behind its ban on accepting refugees from Ebola-stricken Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, saying to disclose its advice would risk national security. (The Guardian, 30 October) <http://goo.gl/5Kv6Fy>