



Refugee Council of Australia

BULLETIN FOR MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS

19 December 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

Senate passes asylum laws to fast-track vulnerable people to danger

RCOA was dismayed by the passage of the Australian Government's asylum legislation which will result in asylum seekers facing the grave risk of being returned to danger. The Asylum Legacy Caseload Bill required support from three of the cross-bench Senators. While the Senators secured concessions resulting in the release of children from detention, the reinstatement of some places previously cut from the Refugee and Humanitarian Program and the restoration of work rights to asylum seekers on bridging visas, RCOA said this masked the disturbing reality that: "Some 30,000 asylum seekers in Australia now face the grave risk of being deported to danger without receiving a fair hearing on their refugee claim. The legislation is designed to produce as many negative decisions as possible, but these decisions are a matter of life and death for asylum seekers." The RCOA statement decried the use of children in detention as bargaining chips to secure passage of a Bill that would seriously weaken refugee protection with CEO Paul Power saying: "To use children as an inducement to pass legislation will be seen for what it is – a desperate and obscene act of political self-interest." Read the statement at http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/141205_AsylumBill.pdf

Australia's focus on deterrence challenged at UNHCR global forum

Last week, around 300 representatives of governments, NGOs, inter-governmental organisations and experts were invited to Geneva to participate in the UNHCR High Commissioner's Dialogue on protection at sea. Australian civil society was represented by Paul Power of RCOA, David Manne of the Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre and Professor Susan Kneebone of Monash University. RCOA took the opportunity to promote the concept that the key to protection at sea is to improve protection strategies on land and to respond to Australian Government's promotion of its "regional deterrence network". The dialogue explored issues of safety at sea, the drivers of forced migration and options for international cooperation. It included some plain speaking from senior UN officials, including the High Commissioners for Refugees and Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur on Migrant Rights who called for an end to heartless policy responses to the needs of vulnerable people. RCOA's report of the dialogue, including links to key documents and relevant speeches, can be found at <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/r/urpt/1412-HCDialogue.pdf>. During the dialogue, RCOA released a statement about the debate in the opening plenary in which Mr Power challenged the Australian Government's position, saying that Australia was now leading the world among Refugee Convention signatory states in the harshness of its responses to people fleeing persecution. Read RCOA's media release at http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/141211_HCdialogue.pdf.

RCOA AGM in Melbourne focuses on Protection at Sea

RCOA's Annual General Meeting was held in Melbourne with CEO Paul Power and President Phil Glendenning reflecting on the 60th anniversary of Australia's ratification of the Refugee Convention and Australia's punitive policy responses to people seeking protection. Other issues discussed included RCOA's strong involvement with NGOs in the Asia-Pacific region and the focus on increasing the involvement of former refugees through the Face to Face school incursion program and the newly-established Refugee Communities Advocacy Network in Victoria. The AGM was followed by a members'

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consultation, providing an opportunity for RCOA to hear about the direction and issues members wish the organisation to pursue. A public forum on Protection at Sea was also held to inform RCOA's contribution to the United Nations High Commissioner's Dialogue in Geneva. An overview of the public forum is available at <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/a/agm/141124-ProtectionAtSea-summary.pdf>

Campaign to release children from immigration detention gains momentum

RCOA and members of A Just Australia continued to press the Australian Government to release children from immigration detention. In a letter to the Prime Minister, RCOA compared Australia's detention of more than 700 children in Australia and Nauru with the approach taken by the United Kingdom where the responsible minister cannot detain a child for longer than seven days. In September, there were no children detained in UK detention facilities and just seven in October. A copy of the letter is available at http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/s&l/141202_Children.pdf. RCOA's media release can be accessed at http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/141202_PMChildren.pdf. A Just Australia's "Write To Be Heard" campaign also mobilised support, urging members to contact MPs and Senators to take action. Details about the "Write To Be Heard" campaign are at <http://www.ajustaustralia.com/>

Australia's asylum policies singled out by UN Committee Against Torture

A United Nations Committee Against Torture report singled out the Government's Asylum Legacy Caseload Bill for criticism and recommended that asylum seekers have access to a free, independent and fair process for assessing their claims. RCOA said the report confirmed fears that the Bill would strip away the already limited safeguards for people seeking asylum. The report was also critical of the interception and turning back of boats, mandatory detention, children in detention and conditions endured by asylum seekers on Manus Island and Nauru. In a statement, RCOA CEO Paul Power said Australia's adoption of policies found by a United Nations body to violate some of the most basic of all human rights "shows how low the Government is prepared to go in pursuit of its narrow-minded and short-sighted domestic political strategy." Read the statement at http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/141201_UNCAT.pdf. The report is available at http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CAT/Shared%20Documents/AUS/CAT_C_AUS_CO_4-5_18888_E.pdf and RCOA's submission to the Committee at <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/sub/1410-CAT.pdf>

Ending resettlement from Indonesia damages regional refugee protection

Australia's decision to stop the resettlement of refugees who sought protection in Indonesia after June 2014 was met with dismay by RCOA who said it would send a clear signal to the Asia-Pacific region that the Australian Government was more interested in pursuing small-minded political objectives than in supporting its neighbours to better protect refugees. In a statement, RCOA CEO Paul Power said the decision was based on the idea that it was only valid for people to seek protection in a country neighbouring their own and noted that if this approach was adopted across the world, the pressure on countries at the frontlines of refugee crises would become immeasurably worse. "Would the Government hold this view if Australia shared a border with Afghanistan, Somalia or Syria, rather than being an isolated island nation? We have sunk so low in our treatment of refugees that Australians are entitled to question whether their Government is on the side of the persecuted or on the side of the persecutors," the statement said. Read more at: http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/141120_Indonesia.pdf

Face to Face program for schools and colleges in Sydney, Wollongong and Melbourne

RCOA is offering an incursion program for schools in the Sydney and Melbourne metropolitan areas and Wollongong region. Under the Face to Face program, a representative from RCOA and a speaker of refugee background present to students, teachers and other interested groups about the refugee experience. Refugee speakers share personal stories and give students the opportunity to learn about their experiences and their contributions to Australia. The presentations are linked to the school curriculum and cover who refugees are and where they come from, facts about refugees worldwide and in Australia, conditions faced by refugees overseas and Australia's refugee policies. Incursions can be delivered as one-hour interactive presentations or two-hour workshops incorporating small group activities. The presentation package includes a comprehensive Resource Guide for teachers that contain links to lesson plans, follow-up activities and further reading. Find out more at <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/F2Fbrochure.pdf>

Submission on Adult Migrant English Program

RCOA's submission to the Federal Department of Industry's evaluation of the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) recommended greater input from former refugees into the design and implementation

of the program, arguing this would assist in addressing the various English language needs of new arrivals. The submission also stressed the need for asylum seekers and people on temporary visas to access AMEP. For more background and recommendations, read the full submission at <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/sub/1412%20AMEP%20submission.pdf>

Submission on Review of Humanitarian Settlement Services and Complex Case Support

A number of strategies to meet the challenges faced by Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) providers and the people they work with were made in RCOA's submission to the Department of Social Services' review. Recommendations included the need for a new regional settlement strategy, better support for young people and humanitarian entrants with disabilities, longer-term contracts for service providers and greater involvement of refugee communities in the settlement process. Read the full submission and recommendations at <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/sub/1411-HSS-CCS.pdf>

Tasmania's Kingborough Council Joins Refugee Welcome Zone Initiative

The Refugee Welcome Zone initiative has welcomed its eighth Tasmanian council, Kingborough, bringing to 112 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: Stepping Stones

The latest Bright Ideas brief profiles Stepping Stones, a micro-enterprise program for women of refugee and migrant backgrounds. An initiative of the Brotherhood of St Laurence with funding support from the AMP Foundation, Stepping Stones provides mentoring, training and support in small business. Find out more at http://refugeecouncil.org.au/r/brightideas/Bright_Ideas17_SteppingStones.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 or (02) 9211 9333.

RCOA's Communications Manager moves on

Next week, RCOA's Communications Manager, Andrew Williams, will leave the organisation to take up the role of Manager, Media and Communications for the NSW Aboriginal Land Council. Andrew has given RCOA more than three years of fantastic support and has been a sane and steady hand communicating our message in the chaos and divisiveness of Australia's debate about asylum. He'll be missed by all of us but will be a great asset for the NSW Aboriginal Land Council. His resignation creates a rare vacancy in our organisation. We are seeking candidates for a wider role of Communications Director, with responsibility for our communications, campaigns and fundraising work, to be based in either Sydney or Melbourne. For qualified candidates keen to join a feisty and credible organisation at the heart of a critically important policy debate, details of the position are at <http://refugeecouncil.org.au/g/job.php>

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter

The best way to keep up with RCOA is through Facebook and Twitter. We regularly publish links to new RCOA statements and research and to interesting articles in the media on refugee issues. Our Facebook page is at www.facebook.com/pages/Refugee-Council-of-Australia-RCOA/157472830949702. Our Twitter feed is @OzRefugeeCounc

COMING EVENTS

"Seedlings"

Saturday 20 December, Blacktown NSW

"Seedlings" is a theatre piece devised by Gabriela Florek, based on a series of interviews collected with immigrants about their experience of gardens. More broadly, the piece explores themes of immigration, the refugee experience and reconciliation. It is a free show which is open to all ages.

Details: 11:00am, 3:00pm and 5:00pm (performances run for 20 minutes); Village Green, Campbell Street, Blacktown.

"Refoulement" art exhibition

Friday 19 December to Sunday 15 February, St Kilda VIC

Alex Seton's solo exhibition "Refoulement" 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 11:00am-4:00pm Tuesday to Sunday (until 8:00pm Wednesday); Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts, 26 Acland Street, St Kilda; for more information, visit <http://www.lindenarts.org>.

Asylum Explained Information sessions

Monday 22 and Tuesday 23 December, Noble Park VIC

In response to the passing of the Migration and Maritime Powers Legislation Amendment (Resolving the Asylum Legacy Caseload) Act, the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre is holding information sessions to explain the changes to the law for people seeking asylum. The Monday session is organised in collaboration with the Australian Tamil Congress and the Human Rights Law Centre and will be presented in English and Tamil. The Tuesday session is organised in collaboration with the Shamama Association of Australia and will be presented in English, Hazaragi and Persian.

Details: 6:00pm-7:30pm; Noble Park Community Centre, Ross Reserve, Memorial Drive, Noble Park.

Afghan Sports Festival

Friday 26 to Monday 29 December, Gepps Cross SA

Hosted by the Afghan Sports Federation of Australia, the first Afghan Sports Festival aims to give participants an opportunity to support the culture of sports in the Afghan community, create a bridge between communities and reinforce a culture of tolerance and acceptance. Sports will include martial arts, volleyball, soccer, cricket, table tennis, chess, body building and gymnastics.

Details: 10:00am-10:00pm daily (opening ceremony 27 December at 6:00pm); State Sports Park, Main North Road, Gepps Cross; to register or for further information, email yunusnoori@hotmail.com or call 0422 291 108.

Refugee Association of Logan Celebration Day

Saturday 17 January, Springwood QLD

A combined celebration of Christmas Day, New Year's Day and Australia Day. Join the Logan Central refugee and asylum seeker community to share food, cultural performances, Christmas gifts for children face painting and more.

Details: donations upon entry much appreciated; from 11:00am; Logan Uniting Church, 129 Dennis Road, Springwood; RSVP by 10 January to Cherie Johnston or Chris Miranda on 0432 938 487 or ral.logan.qld@gmail.com.

Stakeholder forum on the development of a multicultural women's hub

Wednesday 21 January to Thursday 29 January, Liverpool, Bankstown, Granville and Blacktown NSW

The NSW Government, through Multicultural NSW, is seeking the views of multicultural women's organisations and those working with women from culturally diverse backgrounds on the potential for creating a multicultural women's hub in Western Sydney. Such a hub could be a central point for empowering women from different cultural backgrounds through access to information, support and networks. Multicultural NSW is keen to find out from women whether a hub is needed and, what kind of role a hub could play for culturally diverse women in the community and what it might look like. Please note that this is a women-only event.

Details: for dates, times and venues, see individual listings at

<http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/n/event.php>

African National Youth Forum

Saturday 7 February, Granville NSW

Hosted by the Relief Hope Agency Nation Development Service, this forum aims to provide an opportunity for communities in NSW to work together in developing peace and harmony within communities, increase heritage development and receive information about local services.

Details: 9:30am-8:00pm; Granville Town Hall, 10 Carlton Street, Granville; for further information, call 0470 011 656, email dimo@reliefhopeagency.org or visit <http://www.reliefhopeagency.org>.

Inaugural Asia-Pacific Conference on Gendered Violence and Violations

Tuesday 10 to Thursday 12 February, Kensington NSW

Gendered violence is increasingly recognised as a major global problem and constitutes a violation of human rights for women, men, children and elders. This international conference with an Asia-Pacific focus will combine and expand interdisciplinary research and practitioner knowledge to encourage innovation and best practice in responding to gendered and sexualised violence. It will also be an

opportunity to explore less visible violations related to gendered inequality and injustice, including the continuing effects of colonisation.

Details: University of NSW Kensington Campus; for further information and to register, visit <https://gvrnconference.arts.unsw.edu.au>.

Inaugural International Conference on Migration, Social Disadvantage and Health

Wednesday 11 to Friday 13 February, Melbourne VIC

This conference brings together researchers, administrators, policy makers, industry representatives, students and stakeholders from key government and non-government organisations from all over the globe to collectively contribute towards knowledge transfer in migration, social disadvantage and health.

Details: Rydges on Swanston, 701 Swanston Street, Carlton; for further information and to register, visit <http://www.international-migration-conference2015.net.au>.

Cultural diversity and the law: Access to justice in multicultural Australia

Friday 13 to Saturday 14 March, Sydney NSW

This two-day conference, organised by the Migration Council of Australia and the Australasian Institute of Judicial Administration, will focus on strategies to ensure access to justice for people from culturally diverse backgrounds. The keynote speaker will be the Hon Robert French AC, Chief Justice of Australia.

Details: registration \$850.00 or \$350.00 for not-for-profits; Sofitel Sydney Wentworth, 61-101 Phillip Street, Sydney; for further details and to register, visit <http://www.cdlc.org.au>.

NEW RESEARCH, STATEMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

Best-practice refugee job support in Sydney profiled

Sydney-based Bright Employment's success in transitioning former refugees into full-time work has been profiled on ABC-TV. Bright Employment was established 18 months ago to assist humanitarian entrants and migrants into the workforce and the ABC profile highlights some of the success stories. Find out more at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-12-07/agency-helps-newly-arrived-refugees-and-migrants-get-jobs/5948084>. Information about Bright Employment can be accessed at <http://www.brightemployment.com.au/>

School resources on human rights

The Australian Human Rights Commission has produced a series of education resources to help students understand human rights and responsibilities. The RightsED resources are mapped to the national curriculum and available at <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/education/human-rights-school-classroom>

Human Rights Watch report on Cambodia

A Human Rights Watch report has found that Cambodia has failed to legally resettle a single refugee and raises doubts about the country's capacity to resettle refugees under a deal reached with Australia. Read the report at <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/11/20/australia-reconsider-瑙鲁-refugee-transfers-cambodia>

City of Ryde Council Welcome Guide for refugees and asylum seekers

Sydney's City of Ryde Council, a Refugee Welcome Zone, has partnered with the Intercultural Network Ryde Area to produce a multilingual Welcome Guide for Asylum Seekers and Refugees. The guide is designed to help asylum seekers and refugees participate in community life and advises service providers about information and contacts for humanitarian arrivals. The guide includes sections on community and information centres, libraries, free services, finding a home, language assistance, transport, meeting new people, where to seek help, shopping, health and wellbeing and places of worship. Access the guide at <http://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/Council/News+and+Public+Notices/Welcome+Guide+for+Asylum+Seekers+and+Refugees>

Research into refugee entrepreneurs

Academics from the University of Technology Sydney and Charles Sturt University have received a grant to conduct further research into refugee entrepreneurs. The research will seek to understand refugees' contribution to innovation, productivity and trade and will investigate barriers refugee entrepreneurs face and how they overcome them. The research endeavours to identify strategies and policies that will support existing enterprises and stimulate the creation of new ones. Find out more at <http://goo.gl/8fD1OZ>

Everyday life in Domiz refugee camp

Refugee Republic is an online documentary detailing everyday life of Syrian refugees in Domiz camp in northern Iraq. Access the documentary at <http://refugeerepublic.submarinechannel.com/>

Video explains Emergency Relief services in Victoria

A short awareness clip helps raise awareness of Victoria's emergency relief services and how easy it is for people to help their local community. The emergency relief sector provides support to refugees and asylum seekers with financial or material assistance to people experiencing hardship. Access the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CgPdoBNayzc>

Mental health resources in Arabic, Dari, English and Mandarin

Beyondblue has developed resources on how to recognise and understand signs of anxiety and depression and how to talk to someone you are concerned about. Access the resources at <http://www.beyondblue.org.au/resources/for-me/multicultural-people/having-the-conversation-with-multicultural-people>

OPPORTUNITIES

New asylum seeker support centre in Western Sydney

Jesuit Refugee Service has opened a new drop-in centre to support asylum seekers in Western Sydney. Arrupe Place, on 4 Victoria Road, Parramatta, opens 28 January, 2015 and will offer a variety of services including legal aid, food assistance and casework. Plans are underway to expand services next year to include English classes and employment support. Find out more at <http://www.jrs.org.au/jrs-launches-asylum-hub-western-sydney/>

Free training opportunity on LGBTI protection issues

RCOA this month partnered with the Organization for Refuge, Asylum and Migration (ORAM) to deliver events and training on issues relating to queer asylum seekers and refugees. With the support of King & Wood Mallesons, the Human Rights Law Centre, ORAM and RCOA hosted "Somewhere over the rainbow: the perils of protection for queer asylum seekers" in Sydney and Melbourne. Both events included panel discussions about challenges and human rights violations facing queer asylum seekers and refugees. A former refugee who was persecuted because of her LGBTI activism and identity also shared her story at the event. ORAM conducted free training in Sydney and Melbourne for refugee professionals to better understand issues of sexual and gender non-conformity. ORAM, a US-based organisation with specialist expertise on issues for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex asylum seekers and refugees, may return in 2015 to conduct further free training. Anyone interested in attending the free training can contact RCOA at research@refugeecouncil.org.au. Further information on ORAM's work is available at <http://www.oraminternational.org/en/>

"We're Better Than This" – Australians take a stand against child detention

Prominent Australians including Ian Chappell, Ita Buttrose, Deb Mailman, Thomas Keneally, Bryan Brown, Rachel Ward, George Gregan, Margaret Pomeranz and Janet Holmes a Court have joined forces to oppose the Australian Government's detention of children under the "We're Better Than This" campaign. Find out more at <http://wbttaus.org/>

Jump Up&Down 4 Kids

A new campaign aimed at ending the immigration detention of children is asking people to take a video or photo of them jumping up and down and then posting the video or photo on social media. Find out how to become involved at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Jump-UpDown-4-Kids/1504561866496496>

Australia Day music festival fund-raiser

Australian music acts Frenzal Rhomb and The Smith Street Band will headline a major music festival on the Australia Day weekend in Melbourne to raise funds for RCOA, the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre and Oxfam. The concerts are for people aged 18 years and over. Details are available at <http://musicfeeds.com.au/news/frenzal-rhomb-the-smith-street-band-to-play-australia-day-weekend-fundraisers/>

Teach refugees and asylum seekers English in Sydney

Sydney-based Human Care Welfare is seeking volunteer teachers to teach English to refugees and asylum seekers. The centre runs three classes every day and is looking for volunteers to teach at Beginner Level

between 10.00am and 11.30am and Level 1 and 2 between 6.00pm and 7.30pm. Contact Human Care Welfare at <http://www.hcwsyd.com/> and <https://www.facebook.com/HumanCareWelfareSydney?ref=hl>

Nominations open for 2014 Nansen Refugee Award

UNHCR is seeking nominations from individuals and groups for the 2015 Nansen Refugee Award which honours outstanding instances of working with refugees, the internally displaced or stateless people. The deadline for submissions is 6 February, 2015. For more information and to submit your nomination, please visit <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/txis/vtx/nansen>

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 or 02 6282 5755.

Local screenings of Hollywood film "The Good Lie" available

The distributor of "The Good Lie" is offering the opportunity to buy access to stage local screenings of the film, which features Reese Witherspoon, from April and May 2015. The trailer and further information is available at <https://getfeedback.com/r/Nf7mJhNM>

Australian Artists for Asylum Seekers

A number of Australian artists have recorded an album of 25 previously unreleased tracks with proceeds benefiting the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre. For further details visit <https://australianartistsforasylumseekers.bandcamp.com/>

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

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)

Human Rights Committee finds Immigration proposals violate international law

Proposed Abbott government changes to the Migration Act are incompatible with Australia's human rights obligations, says a parliamentary committee on human rights chaired by a Liberal senator. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 2 November) <http://goo.gl/C8zQWr>

VP of Cambodia's National Assembly urges Australia to rethink refugee deal

A senior member of Cambodia's National Assembly has called on Australia to reconsider its refugee transfer deal with his country, pointing to fears of "negative impacts", including threats to the health of Cambodians. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 2 November) <http://goo.gl/7WYb3v>

Clive Palmer sends 'please explain' note over temporary protection visa deal

Clive Palmer has sent a "please explain" letter to the immigration minister, Scott Morrison, after a parliamentary human rights committee including five members of the Coalition found the government's proposed new migration laws were incompatible with human rights. (The Guardian, 2 November) <http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2014/nov/02/clive-palmer-please-explain-temporary-protection-visa-deal>

Hard line on asylum boats sparks passport scam

Fake Australian passports are being peddled online, as illegal immigrants fly to Australia to bypass the Abbott government's stop-the-boats policy. (The Australian, 3 November) <http://goo.gl/5qCHW4>

Afghan asylum seeker sought advice about suicide before taking his own life

An Afghan asylum seeker who died in a Darwin detention centre asked other detainees how to take his life two weeks before his death, an inquest heard, but the information was not passed on to medical staff treating him. (The Guardian, 3 November)

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2014/nov/03/afghan-asylum-seeker-sought-suicide-advice-before-taking-life>

Scott Morrison 'using asylum seeker children as bargaining chips'

Children in immigration detention are being used as "bargaining chips" by the immigration minister in order to win passage for his temporary protection visa legislation, Australia's human rights commissioner has said. (The Guardian, 4 November)

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2014/nov/04/scott-morrison-asylum-seeker-children-bargaining-chips>

Asylum seekers allegedly tortured, threatened with rape over Reza Berati death

An asylum seeker at the Manus Island detention centre has alleged he and another detainee were tortured, physically assaulted, threatened with rape and forced to sign papers withdrawing their witness accounts about the night Iranian asylum seeker Reza Berati died. (ABC News, 4 November)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-11-03/asylum-seekers-on-manus-island-allegedly-tortured-and-threatene/5861120>

Refugees attacked as tensions escalate on Nauru and Manus

Tensions continue to escalate on Australia's offshore island detention centres, with a further series of assaults on refugees on Nauru and rising disquiet on Manus Island reported by sources. (The Guardian, 4 November)

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2014/nov/04/refugees-attacked-as-tensions-escalate-on-nauru-and-manus>

Australia needs long term policy to handle immigration, says major new report

The Abbott government may have claimed victory in stopping the boats, but that should only be the beginning of Australia's response to the long-term humanitarian crisis of displaced people, a major report into the country's asylum seeker policy has warned. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 5 November)

<http://goo.gl/R7K4cj>

Papua New Guinea to offer bridging visas to Manus refugees

Papua New Guinea has insisted that a permanent agreement on resettlement of refugees is still being determined but has signalled temporary concessions for those held in Manus Island detention centre by offering them bridging visas and "cultural training". (The Guardian, 5 November)

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2014/nov/05/papua-new-guinea-to-offer-bridging-visas-to-manus-refugees>

Minister denies claims asylum seekers offered deal if statements on death withdrawn

Federal Immigration Minister Scott Morrison has denied statements made by prominent human rights lawyer Julian Burnside QC that asylum seekers were offered relocation to Australia in return for withdrawing witness statements about the death of Iranian detainee Reza Berati. (ABC News, 7 November)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-11-06/julian-burnside-slams-federal-government-for-human-rights-abuse/5870280>

Jon Stanhope ramps up attack on ALP over 'cruel' asylum seeker policies

Former ACT Labor chief minister Jon Stanhope has ramped up his attack on his own party over its asylum policies. (ABC News, 7 November)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-11-06/stanhope-hits-out-at-cruel-alp-asylum-seeker-policies/5869868>

Scott Morrison: asylum seeker boat turn-back policy is here to stay

The Abbott government will never move away from its policy of turning back asylum seeker boats, the immigration minister, Scott Morrison, says. (The Guardian, 8 November)

<http://goo.gl/4613qy>

Syrian, Iraqi refugees fleeing IS militants resettling in Australia on humanitarian visas

More than 1,000 Syrian and Iraqi refugees are resettling in Australia after being granted special humanitarian visas, but this is just a fraction of the estimated number of those forced from their homes by the advance of Islamic State militants. (ABC News, 9 November)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-11-08/syrians-and-iraqis-fleeing-is-boosting-refugee-numbers/5875960>

Group floats plan for Tassie refugee hub

It's still strictly offshore processing, but a plan to make Tasmania the national hub for assessing refugees has found favour on the island state. (The Australian, 10 November)

<http://goo.gl/wcD4ig>

UN anti-torture inquiry to grill Australia on human rights record

Australia will defend its human rights record and asylum-seeker policies when officials front a United Nations anti-torture inquiry in Geneva on Monday night. (The Guardian, 10 November)

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/10/un-anti-torture-inquiry-to-grill-australia-on-human-rights-record>

Asylum-seeker conditions inhuman and unlawful, UN committee tells Australia

Conditions on Manus Island and Nauru – the island states to which Australia sends asylum seekers – amount to “cruel, inhuman, and unlawful” punishment, the UN Committee Against Torture has told the Australian government, while new laws to make it easier to forcibly return asylum seekers to their homeland could breach the Convention Against Torture. (The Guardian, 11 November)

<http://goo.gl/oxkUtk>

Greens Senator vows to ‘lift lid’ on Cambodia refugee resettlement deal

Greens Senator Sarah Hanson-Young has vowed to get to the bottom of Australia’s deal to resettle in Cambodia those found to be refugees on Nauru during a visit to the South-East Asian nation next week.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, 11 November) <http://goo.gl/onGKiQ>

Manus asylum seekers ask Clive Palmer for temporary protection visas

More than 100 asylum seekers on Manus Island have signed a handwritten letter to MP Clive Palmer, begging to be included in the government’s plans for temporary protection visas. (The Guardian, 11 November)

<http://goo.gl/xkYLIU>

Asylum seekers’ healthcare ‘comparable to that in Australia’, government tells UN

The Australian government says asylum seekers in offshore detention receive healthcare “comparable to that in Australia” but that Papua New Guinea and Nauru are legally responsible for their welfare. (The Guardian, 12 November)

<http://goo.gl/sLm8YQ>

Detention centre operators to be monitored by new independent team, Morrison says

A new team is being set up within the Immigration Department to investigate and monitor abuse and misconduct by service providers contracted to run detention centres, Immigration Minister Scott Morrison says. (ABC News, 12 November)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-11-11/team-to-monitor-detention-centre-administrators/5882472>

Asylum data breach: immigration unlawfully disclosed personal details

Australia’s privacy commissioner, Timothy Pilgrim, has found the immigration department unlawfully disclosed the personal details of almost 10,000 asylum seekers in a damning report into a major data breach that has led to more than 1,600 complaints. (The Guardian, 12 November)

<http://goo.gl/xH050i>

PNG grants refugee status to Manus asylum seekers for first time

Papua New Guinea’s immigration minister has granted refugee status to asylum seekers on Manus Island for the first time – but has only granted the 10 men one-year temporary protection visas. (The Guardian, 12 November)

<http://goo.gl/ZtMH0z>

High Court rebuffs bid to force Afghan asylum seeker home

The High Court has rebuffed a move by Immigration Minister Scott Morrison to force an Afghan asylum-seeker to return home on the expectation that he switch careers to avoid Taliban persecution. (The Australian, 12 November)

<http://goo.gl/ifi3Ug>

More than 5700 submissions on Scott Morrison’s controversial immigration bill

A parliamentary committee has received more than 5700 submissions against a controversial bill introduced by Immigration Minister Scott Morrison that could allow Australia to neglect its human rights obligations under international law if passed by the Senate. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 14 November)

<http://goo.gl/M1L5mP>

Lib senator admits TPV plan is draconian

A Liberal senator has admitted government plans to fast-track the processing of about 30,000 asylum-seeker claims contains draconian measures. (The Age, 14 November)

<http://news.theage.com.au/breaking-news-national/lib-senator-admits-tpv-plan-is-draconian-20141114-3kauu.html>

New visa types cannot be used until fresh legislation is passed

The federal government will need to make more changes to immigration laws before asylum seekers can move from proposed working visas to other visa classes. (The Guardian, 14 November)

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2014/nov/14/asylum-seeker-visa-changes-immigration-laws-must-be-altered>

New migration visa is not a 'charade', inquiry hears

The Immigration Department has assured federal senators that a new visa devised by Minister Scott Morrison to entice Clive Palmer's support is not a "charade", an inquiry has heard. (The Age, 14 November) <http://goo.gl/PsyO10>

Law changes could see legitimate refugees sent back, Senate Inquiry told

Sweeping changes to Australia's asylum seeker laws are likely to cause major delays in courts and increase the risk legitimate refugees will be returned to their countries of origin, a Senate inquiry has heard. (The Guardian, 14 November) <http://goo.gl/mGgGYh>

Scott Morrison adviser says asylum claim proposals put refugees at risk

Plans to fast-track asylum seeker claims could mean genuine refugees will be returned home, a member of the immigration minister's advisory council has warned. (The Guardian, 17 November)

<http://goo.gl/aCYiAi>

Morrison hits out at Hanson-Young's refugee resettlement mission

Immigration Minister Scott Morrison is urging Australians to ignore Greens senator Sarah Hanson-Young's fact-finding mission to Cambodia, predicting the senator will only "whinge and complain like she always does". (The Australian, 17 November) <http://goo.gl/fmR5F4>

Nauruan letter threatens island's refugees and asylum seekers

Nauruan locals have written a threatening letter to refugees and asylum seekers living on the island, warning them to stop taking their jobs, flirting with local women and telling them to get out of their country. (The Age, 18 November) <http://goo.gl/faUata>

Ian Chappell, Ita Buttrose join campaign to remove children from detention centres

High profile Australian sports stars, actors and media personalities have come together in a slick television and online campaign with a simple message to the Australian government: remove children from immigration detention. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 18 November) <http://goo.gl/q5vmfb>

Scott Morrison cuts off access to Australia for refugees in Indonesia

Australia has taken its stand against boat arrivals to a new level, saying it will no longer resettle asylum seekers found to be refugees by the United Nation's refugee agency in Indonesia who registered after July 1. (The Age, 18 November) <http://goo.gl/Sdn3R7>

Greens senator slams government's Cambodia refugee plan as 'madness'

Australian Greens senator, Sarah Hanson-Young, says she has hardened her opposition to the Abbott government's resettlement on refugees in Cambodia after touring slums in the riverside capital Phnom Penh, declaring the plan "madness, absolute madness". (The Age, 20 November) <http://goo.gl/OEp0R7>

Australia reviewing its global humanitarian resettlement program: United Nations

The Abbott government is reviewing its global humanitarian program, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has said, raising the possibility refugees registered with the United Nations could be banned from resettling in Australia. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 19 November)

<http://goo.gl/p5Jckh>

Indonesia says Australia created a burden after decision to cut resettlement intake

Indonesia says Australia has burdened it with the responsibility of looking after thousands of refugees and asylum seekers, after the Federal Government decided to cut its resettlement intake. (ABC News, 20 November) <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-11-20/indonesian-minister-says-australia-has-created-a-burden/5904714>

Children in detention worries Aussie kids

One in four Australian children have said that children's rights to protection in their country are not being met, according to a new global survey of over 6,000 children. (Pro Bono News, 20 November) <http://www.probonoaustralia.com.au/news/2014/11/children-detention-worries-aussie-kids>

Critics slam Australian government's ban on some global refugees from UN

Refugee advocates say Immigration Minister Scott Morrison is in "complete denial" about how the global refugee system works, after his decision to block genuine refugees from resettlement in Australia if they arrived in Indonesia after July. (The Age, 21 November) <http://goo.gl/kOjUfJ>

Asylum seeker boat lands on small Micronesian island

An asylum seeker boat has turned up on a small Micronesian island with those on board reportedly saying they were told they could get to Australia from there. (ABC News, 21 November) <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-11-21/asylum-seeker-boat-lands-on-small-micronesian-island-tying-to-5908060>

Cambodia unlikely to cope with resettlement of refugees, report finds

In five years of processing a tiny number of refugees, Cambodia has failed to legally resettle a single refugee, raising concerns about the country's capacity to cope with a new influx resettled from Australia, Human Rights Watch has found. (The Guardian, 21 November) <http://goo.gl/wpHbVF>

Indonesia calls in envoy over Morrison shift on refugee resettlement

Jakarta has officially warned Canberra of its "strong concerns" over new restrictions on resettling refugees from Indonesia and their risk to the bilateral relationship. (The Australian, 22 November) <http://goo.gl/YtcOTs>

ADF staff scarred by Operation Sovereign Borders asylum trauma

One in three Australian Defence Force members involved in Operation Sovereign Borders have reported "human degradation and misery on a large scale" in the previous year. (The Australian, 22 November) <http://goo.gl/sWcevN>

Govt visa plan faces shaky Senate

Senate crossbenchers may yet block the government's plan to reintroduce temporary protection visas. (The West Australian, 24 November) <https://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/national/a/25593733/govt-visa-plan-faces-shaky-senate/>

Baby Ferouz appeal: 107 asylum seeker children wait on decision

The right of more than 100 Australian-born children to seek refugee visas hangs in the balance after the full bench of the federal court reserved its decision in the case of baby Ferouz. (The Guardian, 24 November) <http://goo.gl/NbGW2u>

Religious leaders stage asylum seeker sit-in

Eleven female religious leaders have been arrested and taken into police custody after staging a protest at the West Perth office of federal minister Michaelia Cash. (The West Australian, 24 November) <https://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/wa/a/25600315/religious-leaders-stage-asylum-seeker-sit-in/>

Asylum bill: Labor and Greens express grave concerns over sweeping changes

Labor and the Greens have expressed "grave concerns" over a wide-ranging bill, after a government-dominated Senate committee recommended it be passed late on Monday night. (The Guardian, 25 November) <http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2014/nov/25/asylum-bill-labor-greens-have-grave-concerns>

Jakarta backlash triggers talk of island detention

Jakarta has responded to Australia's toughened line on accepting refugees now living in Indonesia by reviving a plan to force asylum-seekers into an island settlement. (The Australian, 26 November) <http://goo.gl/8a7Ftl>

Push to end asylum claim uncertainty

Victoria and NSW have emerged as home to the largest concentration of nearly 25,000 asylum-seekers living on community bridging visas, as Scott Morrison steps up efforts to end their uncertainty and to begin processing refugee claims. (The Australian, 26 November) <http://goo.gl/nfnEEh>

Famous Australians record song condemning treatment of asylum seeker children

A group of more than 30 high-profile Australians, including actors Bryan Brown, Claudia Karvan and Deborah Mailman, businesswomen Ita Buttrose, author Thomas Keneally and former Wallabies captain George Gregan, have come together to record a song that highlights the plight of child asylum seekers in detention. (The Guardian, 26 November) <http://goo.gl/33BFg7>

Montagnards viewed as test

As Cambodia faces increasing scrutiny over its controversial refugee agreement with Australia, its response to a group on Montagnards seeking asylum from alleged persecution in Vietnam could prove to be a crucial test. (Phnom Penh Post, 26 November) <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/montagnards-viewed-test>

Scott Morrison may be forced to give 31,000 asylum seekers chance of settlement

The government would be forced to provide 31,000 asylum seekers with the possibility of a permanent visa or else abandon sweeping new asylum laws under a plan being negotiated by Labor, the Greens, the Palmer United party and other crossbench senators. (The Guardian, 27 November) <http://goo.gl/rhgZIJ>

Immigration Minister Scott Morrison defends media monitoring spend

The Immigration Minister Scott Morrison and the Assistant Immigration Minister Michaelia Cash have spent nearly \$120,000 monitoring the media for mentions of their names and the immigration portfolio, eclipsing cabinet colleagues including Foreign Minister Julie Bishop. (The Age, 27 November) <http://goo.gl/OuDM9K>

ALP sees 'merit' in push for refugees to fill bush worker shortages

Labor immigration spokesman Richard Marles has left open the prospect of considering support for special visas that encourage refugees to live and work in regional areas experiencing acute labour shortages. (The Australian, 27 November) <http://goo.gl/ROzEMv>

Doctor Max Mehta, on US child sex abuse charge, worked on Christmas Island

A radiologist wanted in the United States on a child sex charge was hired by the detention health care contractor on Christmas Island to provide medical care for asylum seekers. (The Guardian, 27 November) <http://goo.gl/Wgnial>

Lift 'shroud of secrecy' in refugee deal: NGOs

A group of Cambodian NGOs once again expressed "deep concern" yesterday over the Kingdom's controversial refugee deal with Australia and called for the "shroud of secrecy" surrounding the accord to be lifted. (Phnom Penh Post, 27 November) <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/lift-%E2%80%98shroud-secrecy%E2%80%99-refugee-deal-ngos>

Closing Jakarta UNHCR office the 'solution' to boat people

The solution to Indonesia's overstrained refugee problem is to close the door to the Jakarta-based UN refugee agency, says an Indonesian international law expert. (The Australian, 28 November) <http://goo.gl/8zTNUg>

Manus Island asylum seeker had to rip out infected tooth, says case worker

Medical care at the Manus Island detention centre was so bad one detainee ripped out his severely infected tooth after months of vain attempts to get treatment, a former caseworker says. (The Guardian, 28 November) <http://goo.gl/HTbCBm>

Asylum seekers: UNHCR urges Australia and other countries to stop detaining children

The United Nations refugee agency is urging Australia and other countries to end the detention of child asylum seekers, saying it is against international law and breaches the rights of children. (ABC News, 28 November) <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-11-28/unhcr-wants-australia-to-stop-detaining-children/5924108>

Asylum seeker alleges she was raped in family compound on Nauru

An asylum seeker woman in Nauru has alleged she was raped twice by a male asylum seeker, whom she claims was immediately given a visa by the Immigration Department after she complained about the assault. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 28 November) <http://goo.gl/4nFu7m>

Asylum seekers beg Barack Obama to be saved from 'Australian Guantanamo'

Asylum seekers held by Australia in detention on Manus Island in Papua New Guinea have taken the extraordinary step of writing to other countries, begging for asylum here. (The Guardian, 28 November) <http://goo.gl/Y1nXt8>

Manus Island detainee fears jail for homosexuality if rape reported to police

An asylum seeker on Manus Island says he has been raped twice in detention in the past four months, but fears going to the police because he has been told he will be jailed for being homosexual. (The Guardian, 28 November)

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2014/nov/28/manus-island-detainee-fears-jail-homosexuality-rape>

Scott Morrison under pressure to compromise on Temporary Protection Visas

Immigration Minister Scott Morrison is under mounting pressure from crossbench senators to compromise if legislation to restore temporary protection visas is to pass into law next week. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 28 November) <http://goo.gl/tCz50i>

Morrison defends Australia's border protection policies against UN criticism

Immigration Minister Scott Morrison has brushed aside international condemnation of his hard-line asylum seeker policies, saying Australia's border protection protections will always be "made in Australia" under the Coalition. (The Age, 29 November) <http://goo.gl/RGjllhk>

Sri Lanka arrests 37 asylum seekers sent back by Australia

Sri Lanka's police have arrested 37 nationals turned back by Australian authorities on the high seas after attempting to seek asylum in the first such case in four months. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 29 November) <http://www.smh.com.au/national/sri-lanka-arrests-37-asylum-seekers-sent-back-by-australia-20141129-11wj9f.html>

Asylum seekers 'staying indoors' after signing Federal Government's code of behaviour

Asylum seekers living in Australia are staying indoors for fear of breaching the Federal Government's new "code of behaviour", which they say is vague and confusing. (ABC News, 29 November)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-11-29/refugee-code-of-conduct-stressful-asylum-seekers-say/5923700>