



Refugee Council
of Australia

October 2, 2007

RESPONSE TO OUTLANDISH CLAIMS ABOUT BENEFITS TO REFUGEES

The Refugee Council of Australia has called on Australians to ignore an email which continues to be circulated nationally and claims that a single refugee receives \$1458 more per month than an aged pensioner.

The email is statement is blatantly inaccurate and intended to create resentment towards refugees and fuel disharmony.

A refugee who has permanent residency in Australia receives exactly the same social security benefit as any Australian-born person in the same circumstances. Refugees apply for social security through Centrelink like everyone else and are assessed for the different payment options in the same way as everyone else.

A single person applying for Newstart Allowance (whether or not he or she is a refugee) will receive \$424.38 per fortnight, whereas a single person on an Aged Pension Payment will receive a fortnightly payment of \$525.10. A single aged pensioner therefore receives more than \$100 per fortnight more than a single refugee (or a single Australian-born person) who qualifies for Newstart – not \$1458 per month less, as claimed in the email.

Refugees have fled persecution in their own country and sought safety and peace in Australia. The authors of this email are intentionally trying to create ill feeling towards refugees by spreading false information.

The Refugee Council recommends that anyone receiving this scam email should delete it and should inform the person who forwarded the email that the information it contains is false.

Statements about this email have been issued by the Federal Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. These statements can be viewed through the following links:

http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/Minister3.nsf/print/pension_email_scam_17aug07.htm

<http://www.immi.gov.au/media/media-releases/2007/d07033.htm>

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The Refugee Council of Australia represents
non-government organisations and
individuals working with and for refugees
in Australia and around the world