



# Refugee Council of Australia

## **BULLETIN FOR MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS**

**6 July 2010**

Welcome to the latest bulletin from the Refugee Council of Australia. We welcome feedback, ideas or information worth sharing. Please contact us at [info@refugeecouncil.org.au](mailto:info@refugeecouncil.org.au).

*Paul Power, CEO, Refugee Council of Australia*

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### **NEWS FROM THE REFUGEE COUNCIL**

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#### **Refugee Week 2010 our most successful celebration to date**

With more than 175 local events having taken place across Australia, Refugee Week 2010 was our most successful celebration to date. Events included festivals, film and documentary screenings, music, dance, theatre, art and photographic exhibitions, sporting events, personal stories and speeches, public seminars, information and training sessions, rallies, book launches, a prayer vigil, tree planting, fund raising events and even river and harbour cruises. Major launches took place in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, with keynote speakers including former Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser, NSW Minister for Citizenship, John Hatzistergos, and SA Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Grace Portolesi. RCOA would like to thank the many individuals and organisations who made Refugee Week such a great success, particularly our sponsors, the Victorian Multicultural Commission, AMES Victoria, NSW Community Relations Commission, City of Sydney, AMES NSW, ACL, Leichhardt Council and Mallesons Stephen Jaques; our Refugee Week Ambassadors, who played a key role in promoting Refugee Week; and the volunteers who assisted us in organising Refugee Week and running the NSW launch.

Transcripts of some of the speeches made at Refugee Week events are available at [www.refugeecouncil.org.au/resources/speeches.html](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/resources/speeches.html) and more will be added in coming days.

#### **UNHCR statistics expose spin on asylum issues**

Statistics released by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) highlight that political scaremongering about asylum seekers entering Australia has little to do with the facts. An analysis of UNHCR's 2009 *Global Trends* reveals that just 0.5% of the 1.18 million new asylum applications in 2009 were lodged in Australia. RCOA's media release on the new statistics can be viewed here: [www.refugeecouncil.org.au/docs/releases/2010/100623\\_UNHCR\\_stats.pdf](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/docs/releases/2010/100623_UNHCR_stats.pdf)

#### **Australian refugee representatives take concerns to UNHCR-global consultations**

Four former refugees have taken concerns from refugee communities in Australia to UNHCR's annual global NGO Consultations and to a series of meetings with senior UNHCR officials and Geneva-based representatives of governments. Dr Melika Sheikh-Eldin, Parsuram Sharma-Luitai, Endalkatchew Gage and Deena Yako were part of a larger group of Australian NGO representatives who participated in the meetings, raising concerns including the impact of protracted displacement in camps in Africa and Asia, gender-based violence and exploitation, family reunion concerns, detention and international access to refugee status determination. These concerns were gathered through consultations and a request for submissions circulated by RCOA. Financially supported by Oxfam Australia, Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre, AMES, Caritas Australia and Amnesty International, the refugee delegates were part of a larger Australian NGO team coordinated by RCOA and University of NSW's Centre for Refugee Research. The Australian delegates worked together under the banner of the Australian Refugee Rights Alliance (ARRA), supported by a team of eight self-funded UNSW interns who assisted with research and documentation of the formal meetings.

Papers from this year's UNHCR meetings can be found on the new ARRA website, [www.arra.org.au](http://www.arra.org.au), along with information from previous years' meetings. Among the new documents available for

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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

download is a draft summary report of the 2010 UNHCR Standing Committee meeting, which took place from 22 to 24 June, and four new briefing papers on key advocacy issues at this year's meetings. More reports from the UNHCR NGO Consultations will be posted in coming weeks. The consultations were UNHCR's most diverse to date, involving 370 NGO delegates from 83 countries.

Four Australian delegates remain in Geneva this week to take part in the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement, the annual meeting of UNHCR, governments and NGOs from countries involved in refugee resettlement. RCOA, with input from the Settlement Council of Australia, has produced a summary of Australian refugee resettlement research for distribution to delegates from other countries. This summary can be found at [www.refugeecouncil.org.au/resources/resettlement.html](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/resources/resettlement.html)

### **Join us for the launch of three new settlement research reports**

Over the past two years, RCOA has conducted three major projects on settlement issues, focusing on education programs for refugee young people, sustainable employment pathways for refugees and the role of sport in assisting refugee settlement. The projects aimed to map the key issues faced by newly arrived refugees when settling in Australia and seek out models of best practice to assist settlement agencies and others working with refugees to develop successful settlement programs. The research reports from the three projects will be formally launched at a special event on **Tuesday 27 July 2010, from 9:30am-11:30am at Parramatta Town Hall, 182 Church Street Mall, Parramatta NSW**. Copies of the reports will be made available on the day. All are welcome to attend. Please RSVP to [info@refugeecouncil.org.au](mailto:info@refugeecouncil.org.au)

### **Inquiry recommends reforms to migration health requirements**

The report of Joint Standing Committee on Migration Inquiry into the Migration Treatment of Disability was released on 21 June. In relation to humanitarian and refugee migration, the report recommended the amendment of the Migration Regulations to provide access to consideration of a waiver to offshore refugee visa applicants, and their extended family members, involving disability or health conditions on compelling and compassionate grounds; and the creation of a priority visa category for refugees who have sustained a disability or condition as a result of being a victim of torture and trauma, with similar visa considerations provided to immediate family members within the offshore refugee program. While these reforms would represent a significant improvement on the current Migration Regulations, the Committee's recommendations fell short of those put forward in RCOA's submission to the inquiry. RCOA advocated a waiver of the health requirement for all offshore humanitarian applicants and the extension of waiver eligibility to all applications for family reunion made by refugees and humanitarian entrants under the general Migration Program. The report of the inquiry can be viewed here:

[www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/mig/disability/report.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/mig/disability/report.htm) RCOA's submission can be viewed here: [www.refugeecouncil.org.au/docs/resources/submissions/1003\\_JSCM\\_disability\\_submission.pdf](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/docs/resources/submissions/1003_JSCM_disability_submission.pdf)

### **Settlement Grants Program (SGP) funding announced**

Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Settlement Services, Laurie Ferguson MP, has announced the funding for the programs and projects that will help refugees make the transition into life in Australia. The aim of the SGP is to fund services which help former refugees to participate equitably in Australian society as soon as possible after arrival. Services provided through the SGP are targeted towards those communities and locations in greatest need of settlement assistance. The \$35.8 million funding will be delivered through over 224 programs throughout Australia. To view the Parliamentary Secretary's media release, visit

[www.minister.immi.gov.au/parlsec/media/media-releases/2010/lf10029.htm](http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/parlsec/media/media-releases/2010/lf10029.htm)

To see the breakdown of funding by state/territory, visit

[www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/settlement-grants/2010-11-grants-recipients.htm](http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/settlement-grants/2010-11-grants-recipients.htm)

### **New human rights bills introduced to Parliament**

Two new bills aiming to improve parliamentary scrutiny of human rights were introduced to the Australian federal Parliament on 2 June. The *Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Bill* and the *Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) (Consequential Provisions) Bill* will establish a Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights to examine legislation for compatibility with Australia's international human rights obligations and inquire into human rights matters referred to it by the Attorney-General. The bills also introduce a requirement that new legislation must be accompanied by a statement assessing its compatibility with human rights. The text of the bills can be accessed through [www.aph.gov.au/bills](http://www.aph.gov.au/bills)

### **Queen's Birthday Honours recognise Australians working with refugees**

The Queen's Birthday Honours List included five people whose work in the community has included the support of refugees: **George Lekakis AO**, Chairperson of the Victorian Multicultural Commission, for distinguished service to the community through leadership roles in multicultural organisations, and to the development and implementation of services to support those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; **Maryanne Loughry AM**, Associate Director of Jesuit Refugee Service, for service to the community as an advocate for displaced persons and refugees; **Dianne Hiles AM**, former chair of A Just Australia and Board member of ChilOut (Children out of Detention), for service to the community as an advocate for human rights and social justice, particularly for asylum seekers and children in detention; **Gail Ker OAM**, Vice-chair of the Settlement Council of Australia and CEO of ACCES Services, for service to the multicultural community of Queensland; and **Audrey Ledwich OAM**, for service to the community through the Ecumenical Refugee Support Group.

## **COMING EVENTS**

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### **Tuesday 6 and Wednesday 7 July – Hobart**

#### **Power Hip Hop**

Ten young, talented and culturally diverse hip hop artists have been mentored by Tasmania's best musicians to create new works for the Symphony Orchestra. This concert is a triumph of creativity and collaboration between one of the world's best orchestras and Tasmania's leading youth Community Cultural Development company. The concerts are aimed at both the general public and school groups, with an educational package being provided to all school groups who attend the concert. *Details:* 6th July 1:30pm and 7th of July 10:00am, 11:30am and 8:00pm; Theatre Royal, Hobart. Cost: \$22.50 or \$10 Concession. Primary and High School groups \$6.50p.p. Bookings can be made through the Theatre Royal Box Office on [www.theatreroyal.com.au](http://www.theatreroyal.com.au) or (03) 6233 2299.

### **Tuesday 6 July to Saturday 10 July – Sydney**

#### **Biennial global conference of the International Peace Research Association (IPRA)**

This conference is made up of plenary sessions, which focus on specific issues that continue to influence the peace and conflict process significantly, as well as panels and roundtables organised by IPRA's Commissions and Working Groups, plus special events. The theme of the conference is "Communicating Peace". Keynote speakers will include Indigenous Australian activist Patrick Dodson, former Secretary General of Amnesty International Irene Khan, distinguished senior researchers such as Johan Galtung, Oliver Richmond, Ursula Oswald Spring and George Kent, and international peace advocates from Guam (LisaLinda Natividad), West Papua (John Ondawame) and Palestine (Samah Sabawi). The conference is hosted by the University of Sydney's Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies. *Details:* for more information, visit [www.iprasydney2010.org](http://www.iprasydney2010.org)

### **Thursday 8 July – Melbourne**

#### **Multiculturalism and Social Inclusion Conference**

The Australian Sociological Association and Deakin University's Centre for Citizenship and Globalisation present this free half-day event to bring together academics, policy makers and practitioners to advance dialogue on multiculturalism and social inclusion. It aims to foster networking in this key social policy area. Presenters will include Professor Andrew Jakubowicz, University of Technology and Chairperson of the Institute for Cultural Diversity; Mr George Lekakis, Chairperson of the Victorian Multicultural Commission; and Ms Jenny Semple, South Eastern Region Migrant Resource Centre and Settlement Council of Australia. Presentations will be followed by group discussions on key areas such as employment, education and new and emerging communities to develop recommendations. *Details:* 9:30am-1:00pm; Multicultural Hub, 506 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne VIC; RSVP to [tasa.migration@gmail.com](mailto:tasa.migration@gmail.com); places are limited so RSVP to reserve your seat.

### **Saturday 10 July – Sydney**

#### **Festival of Tibet**

The Tibetan Community of Australia (NSW) Inc, in association with Dalai Lama in Australia Limited and the Tibetan and Chinese Friendship Association, will host the Festival of Tibet event in honour of the 75th birthday of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the spiritual and temporal leader of the Tibetan people.

The event is an opportunity to share and enjoy famous Tibetan culture, song, dance and traditional Tibetan food.

*Details:* 11:30am-3:30pm; entry fee \$20 (or \$15 concession), which includes a Tibetan meal at lunchtime; Allambie Heights School Community Centre, Allambie Heights NSW; for more information, e-mail [jigmedatsa@yahoo.com.au](mailto:jigmedatsa@yahoo.com.au) or call 0414 739 462

### **Saturday 10 July – Sydney**

#### **African Cultural Dance**

Sierra Unite Inc presents this fundraising and community development event featuring professional masked dancers from Africa.

*Details:* 5:00pm-1:00am; Bankstown City Hall, cnr Richard and Chapel Roads, Bankstown NSW; free gifts to the first 100 ticket holders; for ticket enquiries, contact Raymond Bangura on 0422 462 740.

### **Saturday 10 July – Brisbane**

#### **Kiribati 31<sup>st</sup> independence celebration**

The Kiribati Australia Association invites you to come and join in this annual celebration. The evening will feature Kiribati and other Pacific Island dances as well as competitions and prizes to be won.

*Details:* 5:30pm for a 6:00pm start; \$15 single, \$30 family (children 17 and under are free), includes buffet meal, dessert and tea/coffee; Marymac Centre, 616 Ipswich Road, Annerley. RSVP by Wednesday 7 July. For more information or to RSVP, contact Wanita Limpus on 0401 742 649 or [limpus@optushome.com.au](mailto:limpus@optushome.com.au), or Kamrang Hackenberg on 0421 352 558.

### **Sunday 11 July – Melbourne**

#### **Screening of *The Sun Behind the Clouds***

This special screening of *The Sun Behind the Clouds*, a film which focuses on Tibet's struggle for freedom over the course of a year that included the 2008 protests in Tibet, the international response to it, the Beijing Olympics, and the breakdown in talks between the Dalai Lama's representatives and the Chinese government, will raise money for Tibetan earthquake victims.

*Details:* 7:30pm; tickets \$20; Cinema Nova, 380 Lygon Street, Carlton VIC; visit [www.chrishooper.com.au](http://www.chrishooper.com.au) or phone (03) 9844 5379 to book tickets.

### **Wednesday 14 July – Sydney**

#### **Screening of *Fire Under the Snow***

This film follows the story of a Tibetan Monk who has been dubbed the Nelson Mandela of Tibet.

The event will include a special address by Amnesty International Australia.

*Details:* 8:15pm; tickets \$15; Manly Cinemas, 25/43-45 East Esplanade, Manly NSW; contact Leona on 0408 448 739 or Tenpa at [thetibeteffect@gmail.com](mailto:thetibeteffect@gmail.com)

### **Tuesday 15 July to Sunday 25 July – Melbourne**

#### **Cloaks of Many Cultures exhibition**

A group of young Melbourne women from diverse cultural backgrounds have just completed a series of Saturday visual arts workshops at the National Gallery of Victoria. From April to July 2010 they learnt about art, viewed exhibitions, kept a journal and created art. Come and see what they have made at the Cloaks of Many Cultures exhibition.

*Details:* opening night 15 July at 6:00pm; for daily opening times call (03) 9356 6999; Hume Global Learning Centre, 1093 Pascoe Vale Road, Broadmeadows VIC; for more information contact Vessal Safaei on (03) 9340 3700 or 0400 029 207 or e-mail [vsafaei@cmv.net.au](mailto:vsafaei@cmv.net.au)

### **Friday 16 July – Sydney**

#### **Launch of Refugee African Muslim Youth project book**

The Refugee African Muslim Youth (RAMY) project, funded by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, is working with African Muslim communities to encourage more active participation in sporting, social, arts-based, and other activities as a way of promoting their inclusion in mainstream society. The RAMY book documents the project, telling the stories in first-person accounts of a range of participants' experiences involved in hip-hop, African dance, drawing, painting, sculpture and photography among many different activities undertaken by the participants. Federal MP for Sydney and Minister for Housing and the Status of Women, Tanya Plibarsek will officially launch the book and RCOA board member Sky de Jersey will speak at the event.

Details: 1:00pm; South Sydney South Sydney Community Aid and Multicultural Neighbourhood Centre, Alexandria Town Hall, 73 Garden Street, Alexandria NSW; for more information contact (02) 9319 4073 or [mnc@ssca.org.au](mailto:mnc@ssca.org.au)

### **Sunday 18 July – Melbourne**

#### **Burma Revealed**

Members of the Temple Beth Israel (TBI) Social Justice Group will contextualise the current situation in Burma in an eye-opening presentation which will overview the recent political history of this country. A TBI member, Gina Flash, will also share with you a personal account of her experiences living as a Buddhist nun close to the Thai-Burma border and her voluntary work with a small NGO supporting refugees in Thailand and internally displaced ethnic minorities inside Burma.

Details: 3:00pm-5:00pm; Temple Beth Israel, 76 Alma Road, St Kilda VIC.

### **Wednesday 21 July – Brisbane**

#### **Romero Centre 10<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration**

The Romero Centre is in its 10th year and we think this is an opportunity to celebrate the work, the passion and the achievements. If you have been involved with the Romero Centre in any way, either as staff, volunteer, refugee or an organisation we have partnered with, then please come and celebrate with us.

Details: 11:30am to 1:30pm; Romero Centre, 20 Dutton Street, Dutton Park QLD; for further details call (07) 3846 3250 or e-mail [admin@romerocentre.org.au](mailto:admin@romerocentre.org.au)

### **Until Wednesday 28 July – Sydney**

#### **Art for Tibet**

The ART tree Group and Complete Framing Gallery is proud to present the *Together* exhibition.

Details: Complete Framing Gallery, Studio 4, 410 Pittwater Road, North Manly NSW; for more information contact Tashi Dorjee on 0401 917 506 or [Tashi33us@yahoo.com](mailto:Tashi33us@yahoo.com)

### **Sunday 1 August – Melbourne**

#### **Photo exhibition: *Deadly Legacy***

The Australian Network to Ban Landmines invites you to an exhibition of photos by internationally renowned photo-journalist John Rodsted. Entitled *Deadly Legacy*, the exhibition focuses on the impacts of cluster munitions. The exhibition coincides with the coming into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Details: 12:00pm-5:00pm; Waratah Room, St Michael's Uniting Church Administration Building (at the rear of the church), 120 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC.

### **Thursday 5 August – Melbourne**

#### **Training day: *Understanding Sexuality: Supporting Same-Sex Attracted Women from Immigrant and Refugee Communities***

Same-sex attracted people from ethnic communities have a strong need for culturally-appropriate support and understanding about their sexuality, both from the mainstream GLBTIQ (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer) community as well as from their own ethnic communities. Based on extensive consultations with representatives from multicultural GLBTIQ groups, community workers and health professionals, the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health (MCWH) has developed the *Understanding Sexuality* training program for bilingual and bicultural community workers. The training program covers a number of topics such as diversity within sexuality, health issues of same-sex attracted women, disclosure (coming out), heterosexism and homophobia and supporting same sex-attracted women. Guest speakers include Carolyn Poljski and Susan Chong.

Details: 9:30am-2:00pm; this is a free event (lunch provided); Multicultural Centre for Women's Health, Suite 207, Level 2, Carringbush Building, 134 Cambridge Street, Collingwood VIC; RSVP by Thursday 29 July; contact Carolyn Poljski on (03) 9418 0999 or [carolyn@mcwh.com.au](mailto:carolyn@mcwh.com.au)

### **From Thursday 5 August – Sydney**

#### **Screening of *Mother Fish***

In this film, the present melds with the past as a Vietnamese factory worker recalls the time she took to sea in a creaky riverboat in search of a better life. The film was directed by former refugee and 2005 Young Australian Of the Year Khoa Do.

Details: screening at Chauvel Cinema, Paddington Town Hall, Cnr Oxford Street and Oatley Road, Paddington, NSW; visit [www.chauvelcinema.net.au](http://www.chauvelcinema.net.au) to book tickets; for more information about the film, visit [www.facebook.com/pages/Mother-Fish/311800653545](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Mother-Fish/311800653545)

**Monday 9 August to Wednesday 11 August – Sydney**  
**MyLanguage Conference 2010**

The first national MyLanguage Conference will be a major event presented by the State and Territory Libraries of the ACT, Northern Territory, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia. These libraries form the MyLanguage project consortium which began in 2004 with the development of the MyLanguage website, [www.mylanguage.gov.au](http://www.mylanguage.gov.au). The website hosts a wide range of publically available information resources in over 60 languages. The theme of the conference is using digital technology to empower culturally and linguistically diverse communities to achieve greater social inclusion and maintain cultural and linguistic identity.

Details: State Library of NSW, Sydney; for more information e-mail [conference@mylanguage.gov.au](mailto:conference@mylanguage.gov.au)

**Saturday 14 to Sunday 15 August – Canberra**

**Radioactive Multicultural and Indigenous Youth Media Conference 2010**

The National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters' Council together with the Australian Indigenous Communications Association and 1CMS, Canberra's multicultural community radio station, invite you to attend the 2010 National Radioactive Multicultural and Indigenous Youth Media Conference in Canberra. Radioactive is a conference for young people from all backgrounds to engage in community media and become informed about media career pathways. Over two days you will hear from industry professionals, learn media skills, explore what it means to be a media maker and get the chance to meet young people who currently broadcast. It's a chance to get connected with community media outlets, find out about training and internship opportunities and learn from people in the media industry.

Details: 10:00am-5:00pm (both days); registration \$30; Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre, 2nd Floor, 180 London Circuit, Civic, Canberra ACT; partial subsidy for travels costs for participants may be available; for more information please contact [youth@nembc.org.au](mailto:youth@nembc.org.au) or call (03) 9486 9549.

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

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**New report highlights barriers faced by African Australians**

A new report released in 18 June by the Australian Human Rights Commission documents the result of three years of consultation with African Australian communities around the country. Entitled *In our own words – African Australians: A review of human rights and social inclusion issues*, the report highlights barriers to the settlement and inclusion faced by African Australians and identified the need to develop strategies to address racism and discrimination and support the involvement of African Australian communities in the development and delivery of programs and services for their communities. The report is available from [www.humanrights.gov.au/africanaus](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/africanaus)

**Research into African Refugees in Indonesia**

Dr Savitri Taylor and Brynna Rafferty-Brown's new research, *African refugees in Indonesia: An uncertain future*, is now available. The research examined the impact on asylum seekers of Australia's border control cooperation with Indonesia. The research includes extensive interviews with African asylum seekers and refugees now in Indonesia and interviews with Indonesian government officials and others who interacted with these asylum seekers. The article is available at [www.pambazuka.org/en/category/comment/64916](http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/comment/64916)

**Refugees' Australian Stories now live**

The Researchers for Asylum Seekers have launched their multimedia project, *Refugees' Australian Stories: Building Bridges Across Communities*. Using images and the spoken and written word, *Refugees' Australian Stories* tells the compelling stories of refugees from around the world who have made Australia their home. It aims to give a human face to public discussions of asylum seekers and refugees and hopes to show that they have been great co-workers, neighbours and friends to other Australians for many years and fears associated with them not "fitting in" are unfounded. The project provides a platform for recent and established refugees from many parts of the world to tell their "Australian" stories. These stories are reminders that most refugees go on to lead normal lives and

contribute positively to our country. To see these stories, visit [www.ras.unimelb.edu.au/Refugees Australian Stories/index.html](http://www.ras.unimelb.edu.au/Refugees%20Australian%20Stories/index.html)

### **The United Nations Alliance of Civilization (UNAOC) online community now live**

The UNAOC's website has now been launched. Working in partnership with governments, international and regional organizations, civil society groups, foundations, and the private sector, the Alliance supports a range of projects and initiatives aimed at building bridges among a diversity of cultures and communities. An Australian report is currently the featured practice. Visit the website at [www.unaoc.org/communities/migrationintegration](http://www.unaoc.org/communities/migrationintegration)

### **Bi-lingual resources launched for teaching human rights**

This new human rights curriculum resource from the Australian Human Rights Commission, entitled *Being Me: Knowing You*, is designed for 11-15 year olds enrolled in community language schools. The aim of the curriculum package is to increase student awareness of everyday human rights and discrimination and its impact on people and communities, while learning to speak their community language. The resource contains take-home activities for students to work on with their families. Students are encouraged to respectfully engage with their family about the human rights messages learned in class. The master English version of the resource is available to download here: [www.humanrights.gov.au/education/being\\_me\\_knowing\\_you](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/education/being_me_knowing_you) The resource will also be available in Arabic from early August 2010. The Commission encourages interested community language schools to translate the resource into additional languages.

### **Podcast of Good Spirit Festival**

When Aboriginal community members invited Africans living in Tasmania to join with them on an island off southern Tasmania to share story, song and dance, neither knew what to expect. But what emerged from the gathering, the Nayri Niara (or Good Spirit) Festival was a shared sense of identity and solidarity, and a unique space to collaborate with one another. This podcast from ABC Radio's *Away!* program features music and performance recorded on location on Bruny Island from didgeridu players Ash Dargan and Jeremy Donovan, the WAYPA Tasmanian Aboriginal Dancers and Kobya, a singer-songwriter from Mozambique, who lives in Melbourne. The podcast can be accessed through [www.abc.net.au/rn/away/stories/2010/2908921.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/rn/away/stories/2010/2908921.htm)

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

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### **Applications open for NSW Community Building Partnership program**

Applications are now open for the NSW Government's Community Building Partnership (CBP) program. CBP contributes \$300,000 to each electorate for investment in community infrastructure and is open to local councils and not-for-profit organisations, such as sporting groups, P&Cs and charities in the local area. Applications close on July 23, 2010. For more information please visit [www.communitybuildingpartnership.nsw.gov.au](http://www.communitybuildingpartnership.nsw.gov.au)

### **Australia's Human Rights Framework education grants**

As part of Australia's new Human Rights Framework, the Australian Government will provide funding to non-government organisations to prepare and deliver human rights education programs to the Australian community. The Government will fund a range of community organisations to develop and /or deliver programs that are appropriately targeted and address the information needs of different groups. Grants will be made available for a range of programs, including one-off events, short-term activities or longer-term programs running over one to three years. Applications for grant funding for the 2010-11 financial year will open on 1 July 2010 and close at 5:00pm on 30

### **PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival - call for entries**

PLURAL+ is a youth video festival on migration, diversity and social inclusion, organised by the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). PLURAL+ invites young media makers up to 25 years of age to submit dynamic and forward-thinking videos focusing on these issues. The deadline for entries has been extended to 9 July 2010. For more information, visit [www.unaoc.org/pluralplus](http://www.unaoc.org/pluralplus)

### **Call for entries for My Tribe project**

ABC Radio National's 360documentaries program is calling for entries for *My Tribe*, a public exhibition that explores identity and community. Entries should focus on a group of people or community that you belong to or love or identify with. You can share your story in any form: writing, audio, video, photos or any other medium you like. Entries will be in the running to be selected for the 360documentaries online Showcase, broadcast on ABC Radio National's 360documentaries or screened at Federation Square in Melbourne. The producer of the best audio piece will also win the chance to work as a freelancer on their own radio documentary with the 360documentaries team. The closing date for entries is 30 July 2010. For information on how to enter, visit [www.abc.net.au/rn/360/features/mytribe](http://www.abc.net.au/rn/360/features/mytribe)

### **Youth Without Borders project**

Youth Without Borders is a fun and interactive cultural exchange project, run by the Southern Ethnic Advisory and Advocacy Council, which brings youth in the south-eastern region of Melbourne together to learn about other cultures, addressing false beliefs and stereotypes, increasing contact and co-operation among groups who would otherwise have limited interaction. This fun and interactive program is FREE for all young people from the age of 12 to 25. Currently Youth Without Borders is running every Mondays from 4:00pm-6:00pm at Springvale Neighbourhood House, 46-50 Queens Avenue, Springvale. If you are interested in taking part, please contact Minthura on (03) 9563 4130 or [minthura@seaac.org.au](mailto:minthura@seaac.org.au) or visit [www.seaac.org.au](http://www.seaac.org.au)

### **African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific (AFSAAP) call for papers**

AFSAAP's 33rd conference will be hosted by Victoria University at their Melbourne city campus and will be held from December 2 to 4 2010. The conference web page is located at [www.afsaap.org.au/Conferences/2010/2010.htm](http://www.afsaap.org.au/Conferences/2010/2010.htm). All enquiries should be directed via email to Gael Andrews, the Conference Organiser, [info@afsaap.org.au](mailto:info@afsaap.org.au). The deadline for submissions of abstracts and panel proposals is 15 July.

### **Call for manuscripts for Journal of Migration and Society**

Sookmyung Institute for Multicultural Studies invites manuscripts for the second issue of OMNES, the Journal of Migration and Society, to be published biannually from 2010. OMNES welcomes manuscripts that deal with themes concerning the global movement of people; human security related to migration; multicultural society, cultural diversity, social integration; and other relevant topics. The deadline for submission is 30 November 2010. If you wish to submit a manuscript, please send the title or a one-paragraph outline to [omnes@sm.ac.kr](mailto:omnes@sm.ac.kr) For more information, please e-mail [omnes@sm.ac.kr](mailto:omnes@sm.ac.kr) or visit [www.omnesjournal.org](http://www.omnesjournal.org)

### **Call for papers for first International Conference on Human Rights of Southeast Asia**

The first International Conference on Human Rights of Southeast Asia, organised by the Southeast Asian Human Rights Studies Network and the Centre for Human Rights Studies and Social Development, Mahidol University, Thailand, will take place from October 14-15 2010 at the Royal River Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand. The conference seeks to explore the ways researchers and civil society have begun to make more critical contributions to deepening the understanding of human rights-based framework and actual issues through in-depth engagement with localised sites within the Southeast Asian region. Those who wish to present a paper at the conference are invited to submit an abstract of by 7 July 2010. For information on submitting a paper, visit [www.seahrn.org](http://www.seahrn.org)

### **Entries open for National Multicultural Marketing Awards**

The NSW Community Relations Commission's National Multicultural Marketing Awards have officially opened for 2010. The Awards are open to anyone in business in Australia. A total of seven awards will be presented including awards in the area of community, commercial sectors, advertising and government. Entries closing on 31 August 2010 and winners will be officially announced at a Gala Presentation on 1 November 2010. For more information, visit [www.crc.nsw.gov.au/Awards\\_and\\_Sponsorships/mma\\_2010](http://www.crc.nsw.gov.au/Awards_and_Sponsorships/mma_2010) or [twitter.com/crcmma](http://twitter.com/crcmma) (simply register to find out more about the awards).

### **Nominations open for Human Rights Medals and Awards**

Since 1987, the Australian Human Rights Commission has recognised the immeasurable contribution to Australian society of a wide variety of men, women and organisations committed to issues of human

rights, social justice and equality through the annual Human Rights Medals and Awards. They may have made an outstanding contribution within their communities or through the practice of law, through writing books about human rights issues or through their work in the media. Nominations close 5:00pm, Monday, 4 October 2010. For more information about the awards and making a nomination, visit [www.humanrights.gov.au/hr\\_awards](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/hr_awards)

### **Nominations open for United Nations Association of Australia Media Peace Awards**

Journalists and producers whose work addresses humanitarian and social justice issues are encouraged to nominate for the United Nations Association of Australia (UNAA) Media Peace Awards 2010. The nominated work must have been published or broadcast in the Australian media between 12 September 2009 and 10 September 2010. Nominations close 5:00pm Friday 10 September 2010. For more information, entry criteria and nomination forms, please visit [www.unaavictoria.org.au](http://www.unaavictoria.org.au) or contact the UNAA Victoria office on (03) 9670 7878 or [office@unaavictoria.org.au](mailto:office@unaavictoria.org.au)

### **Employment and Volunteering opportunities**

Please visit [www.refugeecouncil.org.au/getinvolved/volunteer.html](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/getinvolved/volunteer.html) for employment and volunteering opportunities.

## **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)

### **Ruddock urges tougher stance on asylum-seekers**

Philip Ruddock, who was immigration minister for seven years in the Howard government, said Indonesian officials had complained about a lack of effort on Australia's part towards stopping people-smuggling and said the number of asylum-seekers heading to Australia would continue to increase unless the government took a tougher stance. But Immigration Minister Chris Evans said it was the policy of turning the boats around that Indonesia objected to. "The point is they have said they will not have us turning boats back into their territorial waters. They see it as a sovereignty issue; they're not interested in that proposition." (The Australian, June 1)

[www.theaustralian.com.au/politics/ruddock-urges-tougher-stance-to-end-flow-of-asylum-seekers/story-e6frqczf-1225873743951](http://www.theaustralian.com.au/politics/ruddock-urges-tougher-stance-to-end-flow-of-asylum-seekers/story-e6frqczf-1225873743951)

### **Backbenchers tell Rudd to tackle border myths**

During a Labor caucus meeting about five MPs told of "a sense of fear" in their electorates caused by asylum seekers and urged Prime Minister Kevin Rudd to help demolish the myths that were being circulated and feeding the fears. David Bradbury, who holds the western Sydney seat of Lindsay, said it was more a sense of unfairness, rather than racism, that was motivating the fears. With Labor hemorrhaging votes to the Greens, Mr Rudd agreed. After caucus, he used a media conference to declare he would not be engaging in a "race to the bottom" with Opposition Leader Tony Abbott, after Mr Abbott promised last week to restore the "Pacific solution" and temporary protection visas. (Sydney Morning Herald, June 2)

### **750 asylum seekers head to Australian mainland centres**

The Federal Government says it plans to transfer all asylum seekers affected by the suspension of refugee processing to mainland detention centres - about 600 Afghans and 150 Sri Lankans have arrived by boat since the suspension took effect in April. Immigration Minister Chris Evans said the first arrivals will probably go to Curtin, but the Government is looking for more mainland sites. Senator Evans says he hopes the improving situation in those countries will soon allow the Government to send some of the asylum seekers back. (ABC News Online, June 3)

### **Petro Georgiou uses valedictory speech to lambast asylum policy**

Retiring Liberal backbencher Petro Georgiou has used his valedictory speech to Parliament to condemn both sides of politics for treating asylum seekers like a "political football". He told the Parliament that both Labor and the Coalition had re-opened a "dark chapter" in Australia's history over their treatment of asylum seekers. (ABC News Online, June 4).

[www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/06/03/2917211.htm?section=justin](http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/06/03/2917211.htm?section=justin)

A full transcript of Mr Georgiou's speech can be viewed here:

[www.smh.com.au/opinion/politics/our-fundamental-obligations-20100603-x1wz.html](http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/politics/our-fundamental-obligations-20100603-x1wz.html)

### **Abbott Pacific plan picks up poll support**

Tony Abbott's promise to bring back a version of the Pacific Solution has won support from 42 per cent of Labor voters, while only a bare majority of them - 51 per cent - oppose it. The clearest message from all Nielsen polling over the past decade was that most Australians were likely to support policies presented as tough and less likely to support policies perceived as soft. (The Age, June 7)

[www.theage.com.au/national/abbott-pacific-plan-picks-up-poll-support-20100606-xn9u.html](http://www.theage.com.au/national/abbott-pacific-plan-picks-up-poll-support-20100606-xn9u.html)

### **Asylum Seekers arrive in Leonora**

21 asylum seeker families, 87 men, women and children from Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Iran were last night settling in to their new accommodation at the West Australian outback town of Leonora, as the government considered transferring more. The government is yet to settle on a longer-term detention site on the mainland for families seeking asylum and would use Leonora for up to six months. The closed detention centre at Curtin is set to open in "the next week or two" for 300 single men affected by the freeze on claims from Afghanistan and Sri Lanka. (Sydney Morning Herald, June 8)

[www.smh.com.au/national/overflow-takes-detainees-to-the-outback-20100607-xqua.html](http://www.smh.com.au/national/overflow-takes-detainees-to-the-outback-20100607-xqua.html)

### **Australian officials to help reintegrate Afghan deportees**

Australia is preparing to deport hundreds of asylum seekers to Afghanistan, and immigration officers will be sent to Kabul to reintegrate them. In a significant policy shift, the federal government has allocated \$5.8 million for two immigration staff to work on the reintegration of returned Afghan nationals in the capital. It has set aside \$8 million to complete a housing project just outside Kabul for deportees with no property to return to. CEO of the Refugee Council of Australia, Paul Power, yesterday cautioned against the presumption that Afghanistan was a safe place to return asylum seekers. Mr Power said it was "surprising" the government predicted refugee claims from Afghanistan would fail in sufficient numbers to warrant a special arrangement to reintegrate them. (Sydney Morning Herald, June 9)

[www.smh.com.au/world/australian-officials-to-help-reintegrate-afghan-deportees-20100608-xtsh.html](http://www.smh.com.au/world/australian-officials-to-help-reintegrate-afghan-deportees-20100608-xtsh.html)

### **Alleged people smugglers to face court**

The Australian Federal Police say they have arrested and charged 10 people with people smuggling. The group from Indonesia will face the Brisbane Magistrates Court tomorrow. The Immigration Department says the 10 were transferred into police custody today. The department says they had previously been in immigration detention in Darwin. (ABC News Online, June 11)

### **First asylum seekers arrive at Curtin**

The first group of 94 asylum seekers has been transferred from the Christmas Island detention centre to the remote Curtin airbase about 40 kilometres south-east of Derby in the north Western Australia. Another 95 people are expected to arrive today. Immigration Minister Chris Evans said all 189 were single male Afghan asylum seekers whose claims had been placed in limbo by the processing suspension announced by the government in April. (Sunday Age, June 13)

### **Merak passengers among 12 boatpeople drowned**

Up to 12 asylum-seekers are believed to have drowned last week after a failed attempt to reach Australia from Indonesia. The Afghans and Sri Lankans who died are understood to have been trying to transfer from a small fishing boat to a larger Australia-bound vessel in stormy weather at night when their craft capsized. Only two asylum-seekers and one crewman escaped, according to fellow refugees who have been in contact with the survivors. The two survivors, as well as two of the dead, were from the Jaya Lestari, the 30m wooden cargo boat bound for Australia that Indonesia seized off western Java last October as a favour to the Prime Minister in order to send a message to people-smugglers. Dozens of the original 254 people on board the Jaya Lestari escaped early this year. The remaining 122 were eventually transported to the Australian-built detention centre at Tanjung Pinang, on Bintan Island. (The Australian, June 14)

[www.theaustralian.com.au/news/merak-passengers-among-12-boatpeople-drowned/story-e6frg6n6-1225879215583](http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/merak-passengers-among-12-boatpeople-drowned/story-e6frg6n6-1225879215583)

### **Door slammed on Afghan asylum seekers**

More than 40 per cent of Afghan asylum-seekers are being rejected as refugees, down sharply on the 95 per cent who were being waved through less than one year ago. Immigration Minister Chris Evans yesterday said more than 220 Afghans had been denied "in the last month or two". Afghans comprise

the biggest group of asylum-seekers who arrived at Christmas Island last year and so far this year. (The Australian, June 17)

[www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/door-slammed-on-afghan-asylum-seekers/story-e6frq6nf-1225880615043](http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/door-slammed-on-afghan-asylum-seekers/story-e6frq6nf-1225880615043)

### **New arrivals learn from those who came before**

A state government support program has teamed postwar migrants with newer arrivals, from African nations such as Sudan, Bhutan and Liberia, to help the most recent residents settle in. Members of the Greek Orthodox Community have taken Sudanese refugees under their wings by adopting mentoring roles, allowing them to share services such as halls and computers and taking part in activities together. (Adelaide Advertiser, June 18)

### **Anti-refugee leaflet**

Queensland's Liberal National Party has been accused of scare-mongering over an anti-refugee leaflet being distributed in Brisbane. The Queensland Greens have accused the party of trying to paint refugees and asylum seekers as people to be feared. (Adelaide Advertiser, June 19)

### **More child refugees**

New figures reveal nearly three children a day have risked the sea journey to Australia over the past month and the number of asylum seekers on Christmas Island has continued to rise despite largescale transfers to the mainland. The total number of children in detention has now passed 500, or almost one child for every six adults. Figures released by the Federal Attorney-General, Robert McClelland, show that as of June 11 there were 508 minors held in immigration facilities, up from 452 on May 21. (Sunday Mail, June 20)

### **McGorry slams refugee policy 'failure'**

Australian of the Year Patrick McGorry wants the major parties to show moral leadership with a bipartisan approach to asylum seekers instead of using them as a political football.

Professor McGorry was addressing a Melbourne rally, one of several staged across the country on Sunday to mark World Refugee Day. He appealed for what he termed "bipartisan morality" on asylum seekers from Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Opposition Leader Tony Abbott. (Sydney Morning Herald, June 21)

<http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-national/mcgorry-slams-refugee-policy-failure-20100620-yow2.html>

### **Christian voters put Rudd, Abbott to the test**

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Opposition Leader Tony Abbott have been put to the test by Australia's Christian leaders in what could be the final week of Parliament before the next election. Mr Rudd and Mr Abbott spoke to churchgoers at a major gathering organised by the Australian Christian Lobby (ACL) in Canberra. Mr Abbott was asked to explain his stance on asylum seekers. "Sanctuary and residency are not necessarily the same things," he said. (ABC News Online, June 22)

[www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/06/22/2933184.htm?section=justin](http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/06/22/2933184.htm?section=justin)

### **Man in suicide bid at detention centre**

An asylum seeker attempted suicide by hanging in Darwin Detention Centre yesterday. He was discovered by one of the fellow detainees, who saved his life. The man is one of 31 Burmese asylum seekers who have been protesting for more than a week, holding a hunger strike. One member had earlier been taken to RDH and was then returned to the detention centre. The president of the Burmese Rohingya Community in Australia, Kyaw Maung Shamsul Islam, said the men were upset because other asylum claims had been processed much more quickly. He said the men had been in detention between eight and 11 months so far, while other claims had been processed within three months. (Northern Territory News, June 23)

### **Australia 'slow to protect refugees'**

An analysis of a United Nations report on trends in refugee movements shows just 0.2 per cent of the 10.4 million refugees listed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 2009 were protected in Australia, ranking the nation 68th on a per capita basis. Refugee Council of Australia chief Paul Power said the figures in the UN report showed that very few asylum seekers were heading to Australia compared with other countries. Mr Power said the UNHCR report highlighted that most of the world's refugees were being protected in countries much poorer than Australia. The report also shows

that just 0.5 per cent of 1.18 million asylum applications in 2009 were lodged in Australia. (Sydney Morning Herald, June 26)

<http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-national/australia-slow-to-protect-refugees-20100623-yyrh.html>

### **Prime Minister Gillard's first asylum comments**

In her first public comments on the issue as Prime Minister, Julia Gillard chose to take aim at Tony Abbott, accusing him of conducting a base debate, devoid of facts. "I've got no truck at all with elevating and fear-mongering about a problem for political advantage, which is what I believe the opposition is seeking to do," Ms Gillard said at her first conference as leader. "But I am full of understanding of the perspective of the Australian people that they want strong management of our borders, and I will provide it." (The Australian, June 25)

### **PM looks to a regional response to stem flow of boats**

Julia Gillard will try to take some of the political heat out of the asylum seeker debate by pursuing policies similar to those she advocated in opposition, working for closer co-operation in the region to reduce the flow of boats. The Prime Minister, who faces her first major decision on asylum policy in the next 10 days, indicated yesterday she wanted to see closer interaction between Australia and neighbouring states like Indonesia. (Sydney Morning Herald, June 28)

### **Leonora asylum centre 'full'**

Leonora Shire has claimed the makeshift immigration detention centre in the town is full and local councillors are unlikely to approve its expansion without the blessing of Premier Colin Barnett. Another planeload of asylum seekers on Sunday brought the total number of detainees in the Goldfields town to 159, well below the 200 flagged by Immigration Minister Chris Evans. The latest asylum seekers, made up of 45 predominately Afghan and Sri Lankan family groups, were settling in well and were generally welcomed by the community. (West Australian June 29)

### **Don't renew Sri Lankan freeze: Refugee Council**

The Refugee Council is calling on Prime Minister Julia Gillard to end the freeze on processing claims from Sri Lankan asylum-seekers. Council president John Gibson said yesterday any extension of the freeze, which is due to expire next week, could create indefinite detention for vulnerable people. "This may set a precedent for the suspension of Afghan cases, despite a clearly unstable security situation there," he said. "We urge the Prime Minister not to renew the suspensions, and to ensure that people who arrive in Australia seeking our protection are able to have their claims tested in a timely fashion." The Refugee Council says it is a breach of the refugee convention to hold asylum-seekers in detention without processing their claims. The Opposition joined the call yesterday, saying the Federal Government should not discriminate against one group of people. (Canberra Time, June 30)