



Refugee Council of Australia

BULLETIN FOR MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS

3 February 2012

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.

Paul Power, CEO, Refugee Council of Australia

If you no longer wish to receive this bulletin, please email unsubscribe@refugeecouncil.org.au

NEWS FROM THE REFUGEE COUNCIL

RCOA presents community views on Refugee and Humanitarian Program

After three months of hard work, RCOA has completed its annual submission on Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Program and, on January 25, presented recommendations to Immigration Minister Chris Bowen. Key recommendations include: a five-year plan to expand offshore resettlement to 20,000 places; continued progress on regional refugee protection through the Bali process and the development of an uncapped onshore protection program. The submission reflects feedback from more than 730 people and 187 organisations, representing 33 communities through 47 consultations held throughout Australia. The submission, along with national and global statistics and summaries of community views on refugee settlement and asylum issues, is available here: www.refugeecouncil.org.au/resources/intakesub.php

Plight of refugees with adverse ASIO findings raised with Canberra

Last month, RCOA, representing lawyers and NGOs, wrote to new Federal Attorney-General Nicola Roxon urging action on the predicament of more than 50 recognised refugees who remain in immigration detention because of adverse ASIO findings. The letter urged the new Minister to investigate changes to: advise refugees of the reasons for security refusals; provide a mechanism to challenge findings; and pursue alternatives to detention. The letter is available here http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/resources/statements/120119_NRoxon_adverse_security.pdf

Nauru is not an option

RCOA acted strongly to reject any return to offshore processing in Nauru following revelations the Federal Government was willing to negotiate with the Opposition on asylum seeker policy. In a statement RCOA CEO Paul Power said a return to Nauru would further set back genuine progress on regional cooperation. RCOA implored both sides of politics to start the hard work of solving the problem at its source – in Asia where refugees and asylum seekers lack adequate protection. Read our statement here: http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/news/releases/111222_Nauru_return.pdf

Public lecture on resettlement at University of Melbourne

As part of its role as chair of international discussions on resettlement in 2011-12, Australia will be hosting the Working Group on Resettlement (WGR) meeting in Melbourne from 20-23 February. The WGR meeting will bring together representatives from UNHCR, governments and NGOs from around the world to discuss post-arrival support for resettled refugees. Attendance at the WGR meeting is restricted to organisations which have been previously involved in international discussions on resettlement. However, as part of the WGR, a public lecture will be held on the topic "International Refugee Protection: Partnerships, Challenges and Opportunities". Speakers will include Wei-Meng Lim-Kabaa (Deputy Director, Comprehensive Solutions, Division of International Protection, UNHCR); Anastasia Brown (Director of Resettlement Services, US Conference of Catholic Bishops); Professor Graeme Hugo (Australian Research Council Fellow and Professor of Geography, University of Adelaide); and Senator Kate Lundy (Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs). The lecture will be held on Wednesday 22 February from 7:00pm-8:30pm, at The Sidney Myer Asia Centre, Swanston Street,

Suite 4A6, 410 Elizabeth Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010 Australia
Phone: (02) 9211 9333 • Fax: (02) 9211 9288
info@refugeecouncil.org.au • Web: www.refugeecouncil.org.au
Incorporated in ACT • ABN 87 956 673 083

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

University of Melbourne. Contact Tamsin Courtney on 03 8344 8985 or tamsinc@unimelb.edu.au to register. A map of the venue is here: <http://maps.unimelb.edu.au/parkville/building/158>

Refugee sector figures among Australia Day Honours list

The Australia Day Honours List recognised the outstanding contributions of a number of people who have dedicated a large part of their lives to supporting asylum seekers and refugees. Recipients include: Xuan Tiep Nguyen (OAM) from Liverpool for services to the Vietnamese community, Faddy Zouky (OAM) for service to Victoria's multicultural community; Victoria's Ruth Wraith (OAM) for services to community health, particularly children recovering from trauma; Balmain for Refugees advocate Deborah Nicholls (OAM); Perth's Sister Margaret Culhane (OAM) for services to refugees from Africa and Asia; Dr Jillian Benson (AM) from Adelaide for mental health support for refugees and asylum seekers; former Department of Immigration and Citizenship Secretary Andrew Metcalfe (AO) and the Department's special advisor to the Secretary Martin Bowles (PSM). The full list is available at <http://www.gg.gov.au/res/file/2012/honours/ad2012/S%201%20Embargo.pdf>

NGOs deplore Thailand's forced deportation of refugee to Laos

RCOA was one of 17 signatories to an open letter from the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network to the Prime Minister of Thailand about the deportation of Ka Yang to Laos on December 17. It was the second time Thailand had deported Ka Yang – a UN-recognised refugee – to danger in Laos. The letter urged Thailand to review its policies on people seeking asylum in Thailand. The letter to Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra is here:

<http://refugeerightsasiapacific.org/2011/12/27/open-letter-to-the-prime-minister-of-thailand-yingluck-shinawatra/>

Burmese Government signs ceasefire agreements

On January 12, the Burmese Government signed a ceasefire agreement with the Karen National Union (KNU). The ceasefire ends decades of fighting between Government and KNU forces, which began when Burma became an independent nation in 1948. The agreement follows the signing of ceasefires with the Shan State Army South and the Chin National Front in December and January respectively.

For further details, see www.mizzima.com/news/inside-burma/6402-knu-govt-sign-cess-fire-agreement.html and chinlandguardian.com/news-2009/1666-breakthrough-cnf-signed-ceasefire-deal-with-govt.html.

2012-14 Refugee Week theme: 'Restoring Hope'

RCOA has chosen 'Restoring Hope' as the Refugee Week theme for 2012 to 2014. The theme reminds us that, while a refugee's journey begins with danger, it also begins with hope. Refugees flee their homelands not only because they fear persecution, but also because they have hope: they hope to find freedom from persecution, and safety and security for themselves and their families; they hope to be given a chance to start a new life and recover from past trauma. The theme also calls attention to the role of countries which, through offering protection to refugees and providing them an opportunity to rebuild their lives, restore hope for a future free from fear, persecution, violence and insecurity. Finally, the theme aims to highlight the situation of refugees whose hopes have not been fulfilled – those who remain in seriously protracted situations, facing ongoing discrimination, violence and uncertainty, with little hope for a resolution in the near future. The theme calls on us to consider how we can provide solutions for these refugees and restore their hopes for a brighter future. Refugee Week 2012 will be celebrated from Sunday 17 June to Saturday 23 June, to coincide with World Refugee Day (June 20). For more information about Refugee Week, visit www.refugeeweek.org.au.

AUSCO Exchange Program update

In November, four Guest Trainers participating in the 2011-12 AUSCO Exchange Program met AUSCO trainers at an annual Conference organised by DIAC in Canberra. Following the conference, Beam Teasdale was attached to Anglicare North Coast for two weeks and Mingkhawan Sinthuwong-Kae linked with PVS Workfind in Perth. Guest Trainer Louise Carter (Anglicare North Coast, Coffs Harbour) is currently working for ten days with Beam on the AUSCO Program in Kuala Lumpur and Fleur Noonan (PVS Workfind, Perth) will be deployed to Mae Sot to work with Kae in Mae Sot in early February 2012. Regina Betts (Migrant Resource Centre of South Australia) will be deployed to work on the AUSCO program in Nepal in late February and the AUSCO trainer from Nepal will be attached to MRCSA following Regina's return to Australia. It is expected that the fourth and final exchange for this financial year, between the AUSCO Trainer Egypt to Multicultural Development Association in Brisbane and the deployment of Aiah Thomas to Kenya, is expected to take place in April-May 2012.

Join us on Facebook and Twitter

RCOA's Facebook page features upcoming events and stories, opinion pieces and interviews. Our Facebook page and Twitter feed also provide a platform to share RCOA submissions, reports and media releases. RCOA's Twitter feed is @OzRefugeeCounc. Our Facebook page is at www.facebook.com/pages/Refugee-Council-of-Australia-RCOA/157472830949702.

We need your support to continue our work

As a small not-for-profit organisation, the Refugee Council needs continuing support from the public, through membership and donations. In a complex political environment, an informed and independent voice on refugee policy is vital. Donations to RCOA are tax-deductible. Annual membership fees are just \$55 for individuals (concession rate is \$27.50) and organisational membership is on a sliding scale from \$55 to \$440, depending on annual organisational expenditure. For more information about making a donation or becoming a member of the Refugee Council, see <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/getinvolved/donate.php>

COMING EVENTS

DVD launch: 'A Karen Gambling Story'

Thursday 9 February, Werribee VIC

Using characters and scenarios familiar to the Karen community, 'A Karen Gambling Story' highlights the impact of problem gambling, responsible gambling practices and options for seeking help. Afternoon tea will be provided.

Details: 3:30pm-5.00pm; Wayperri House, 106 Duncans Road, Werribee; RSVP by Monday 6 February to Ms Waan Tardiff on (03) 9974 1700. If you cannot attend the launch but would like an education session accompanied by a screening of the DVD, please contact Diana Pitruzzello on (03) 9296 1247.

Public forum: Opportunities and challenges for migrants and refugees in rural and regional Australia

Thursday 9 February, Melbourne VIC

This exciting public forum brings together a diverse panel of speakers to discuss contemporary issues of regional migration, settlement and multicultural affairs in Australia. Speakers will include Senator Kate Lundy and Professor Graeme Hugo in conversation with Dr Millsom Henry-Waring.

Details: 6:30pm; Sidney Myer Asia Centre, The University of Melbourne; to register, go to www.ssps.unimelb.edu.au/research/projects/vmr/events.

Conference: The rural and regional resettlement experiences of visible migrants and refugees

Friday 10 February, Melbourne VIC

This major conference event showcases the work of the Australian Research Council Linkage Project "Resettling Visible Migrants and Refugees in Rural and Regional Australia" and engages leading academics to provide a wider national, international and comparative overview of regional migration and settlement trends, policies, praxis and reality. Speakers include The Hon Nick Kotsiras, Stephen Castles, Graeme Hugo, Jock Collins, Michele Grossman and Farida Fozdar.

Details: University of Melbourne; for further information and to register go to www.ssps.unimelb.edu.au/research/projects/vmr/events or contact Annika Kearnton at VMR-Project@unimelb.edu.au.

'Sisters for Sisters' fundraising event for Fitzroy Learning Network

Sunday 12 February, Melbourne VIC

A night of music, dance, spoken word and creative expression from sisters of diverse cultural background. Money raised will fund a Women's Wellness project within the Refugee Support Program at Fitzroy Learning Network. Brothers are welcome too.

Details: entry \$15.00; doors open 8.00pm; Toff in Town, 2/252 Swanston Street, Melbourne.

Film screening: 'Into the Current - Burma's Political Prisoners'

Saturday 18 February, Sydney NSW

Funds raised from the screening will be donated to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma) and Burma Campaign Australia.

Details: \$10.00 per person; 2:00pm; Tom Mann Theatre, 136 Chalmers Street, Surry Hills; for more information e-mail admin@aucampaignforburma.org.

Conference: Implementing human rights in closed environments

Monday 20 and Tuesday 21 February, Melbourne VIC

This conference will bring together eminent international and national experts from government agencies, intergovernmental agencies, monitoring and oversight mechanisms, non-government organisations, practitioners, and academics working on implementing human rights in closed environments - prisons, police cells, closed psychiatric and disability settings, and immigration detention. It will enable representatives from different jurisdictions and different sectors, operating under international, regional and domestic frameworks, to examine how human rights are implemented and monitored in closed environments, where the potential risk for abuses is high. It will provide invaluable insights into the experience of comparative jurisdictions, highlighting the successes to date and the ongoing challenges in current practice, particularly the challenge in managing the balance between respecting the human rights of individuals, and the responsibility to maintain security and safety in different closed environments and the broader community.

Details: Monash University Law Chambers, 555 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne; for further details and to register, visit www.law.monash.edu.au/castancentre/events/2012/closed-environments.html.

Funding forum for culturally and linguistically diverse communities

Tuesday 21 February, Perth WA

Hosted by the Office of Multicultural Interests, this forum will provide information on funding opportunities for culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Guest speakers will include representatives from Healthway, the Department of Regional Development and Lands, the Department of the Attorney-General and the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. Light refreshments will be served.

Details: 5:00pm-8:30pm; Gordon Stephenson House, 140 William Street, Perth (directly above Perth's Underground Train Station); RSVP by Friday 10 February to harmony@omi.wa.gov.au; for further details, visit www.omi.wa.gov.au.

Book launch: 'Us Karen'

Wednesday 22 February, Werribee VIC

'Us Karen' is a beautifully written and illustrated picture book for preschool and junior primary age children, depicting the journey of the Karen from Burma to Australia. The story has been written by Richard Dove and illustrated by Tha Do. Copies of the book will be available on the night and both author and illustrator will be signing copies. Light refreshments will be available after the official launch.

Details: 7:00pm-9:00pm; Wyndham Civic Centre, 45 Princes Highway, Werribee; RSVP by 15 February to Lyndall Zurek on (03) 9742 4013 or lyndallz@werribeecc.net.

Launch of resource on enhancing the lives of older refugees

Wednesday 22 February, Cabramatta NSW

This resource aims to raise awareness, provide guidance, information and resources for aged care workers when working with older people from a refugee or refugee-like background.

Details: Cabra Vale Leisure Centre, Broomfield Street, Cabramatta; for more information contact Yvonne Santalucia at Yvonne.santalucia@swsahs.nsw.gov.au.

Getting to know your rights: Human rights education for immigrant and refugee women

Thursday 23 February, Collingwood VIC

Each year the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health (MCWH) presents a series of seminars about immigrant and refugee women's health and wellbeing. The first seminar of 2012 will focus on sharing experiences for developing human rights education programs tailored to immigrant and refugee women. It will explore effective strategies for human rights education including the use of story sharing as a method for enabling women to make sense of human rights issues and problems in relation to their day-to-day lives.

Details: \$88.00 per person (includes lunch); 9:00am-2:00pm; Multicultural Centre for Women's Health, Suite 207, Level 2, Carringbush Building, 134 Cambridge Street, Collingwood; for further information contact Dr Salma Al-Khudairi (03) 9418 0999 training@mcwh.com.au or Ozana Bozic (03) 9418 0999 reception@mcwh.com.au; register online at www.mcwh.com.au.

Foundation House Professional Development Course: The Refugee Experience

Thursday 23 February, Brunswick

This one-day course provides an overview of the refugee experience using the Foundation House framework for understanding the psychosocial impact of torture and trauma. This module is designed for both new and experienced workers and introduces some key frameworks that are the basis for further professional development modules with Foundation House. Registration is essential.

Details: \$210.00 per person (includes light lunch); 9:30am-4:00pm; Foundation House, 6 Gardiner Street, Brunswick VIC; for registration enquiries, contact Miranda on (03) 9389 8965 or e-mail pdregistrations@foundationhouse.org.au;

for further details visit www.foundationhouse.org.au/professional_development/index.htm.

STARTTS Workshop: Core concepts in working with people from refugee backgrounds

Thursday 23 February, Carramar NSW

This one-day introductory workshop is designed to put a framework of understanding around working with refugees and asylum seekers. It focuses on understanding the link between what refugees have been through, the sorts of issues and behaviours refugees may present with, and how to work in a way that promotes recovery and minimises the risk of retraumatisation.

Details: \$149 per person (\$99 for students); 9:30am-4:30pm; STARTTS, 152-168 The Horsley Drive, Carramar; for further details and to register, visit www.startts.org.au/default.aspx?id=388.

Pako Festa

Saturday 25 February, Geelong VIC

Pako Festa is the largest free celebration of cultural diversity in Australia. Managed by Diversitat, it incorporates an extravagant street parade featuring around ninety floats and hundreds of performers representing forty-five affiliated ethnic communities and around sixty other community groups and organisations. The street is lined with stalls selling traditional foods and arts and crafts, and nine separate stages in the precinct offer performances of music and dance as well as interactive workshops and exhibitions.

Details: 9:00am-6:00pm (parade from 11:00am-12:00pm); Pakington Street, Geelong West; for further details e-mail diversitat@diversitat.org.au or visit www.pakofesta.com.au.

African Festival 2012

Saturday 25 February, Adelaide SA

Details: 10:00am-5:00pm; Hindmarsh Square (cnr Grenfell & Pulteney Streets) Adelaide; for further details contact Ida on (08) 8344 9048.

Afro Latino Festival 2012

Saturday 3 March, Casula NSW

The second biennial Afro Latino Festival will present an exciting and unique showcase of African and Afro-Latin American music, cuisine, arts, crafts, dance, history and culture.

Details: 11:00am-6:00pm; Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, 1 Casula Road, Casula; for further details, contact Carlos Encina manager@nswslasa.com.au or Laura Luna on 0411 328 063 or culturaldevelopment@nswslasa.com.au.

STARTTS Workshop: Core concepts in working with children and adolescents from refugee backgrounds

Friday 9 March, Carramar NSW

This one-day introductory workshop focuses on providing a framework for understanding the unique issues and challenges faced by refugee children and adolescents. It will look at the impact of war and violence from a developmental perspective, with attention paid to attachment and resilience.

Details: \$149.00 per person (\$99.00 for students); 9:30am-4:30pm; STARTTS, 152-168 The Horsley Drive, Carramar; for further details and to register, visit www.startts.org.au/default.aspx?id=389.

NEW RESEARCH, STATEMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

Review of Humanitarian Settlement Services report released

In December, Immigration Minister Chris Bowen and Parliamentary Secretary Kate Lundy released the report of the *Review of Humanitarian Settlement Services Performance Measures and Contract Management* and the executive summary of the Forensic Review of Resolve FM's financial management in the Hunter region. The Review, conducted by David Richmond found that overall the HSS was well managed and was delivered effectively by professional and committed service providers across the country. However, the Review noted the HSS is a program under stress and has made some 70 recommendations, all of which Minister Chris Bowen has said the government accepted. The report is available at:

<http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/settle-in-australia/find-help/hss/hss-performance-review.htm>

Good practice guides: Working with refugee young people

The Centre for Multicultural Youth has produced a series of five Good Practice Guides on the topics: Culturally-Competent Intake and Assessment; Culturally-Competent Youth Work; Working with Interpreters; Youth Work in the Family Context; and Youth work with Young People from Migrant and Refugee Backgrounds. Download these from the CMY website:

www.cmy.net.au/ResourcesfortheSector#GPGs

Evaluation of Primary Healthcare Needs of Refugees in SE Metropolitan Melbourne

This report details the complex health needs of refugees and humanitarian entrants living in Melbourne. It describes the 'greater burden' of mental and maternal health among refugees and humanitarian entrants and the higher occurrences of infectious and chronic disease.

<http://sapcru.org/services/consulting/>

'Your Business and Tax': In-language tax help for small businesses

The Australian Tax Office has compiled a video that uses every day language and case studies to explain the Australian Tax System for small business owners. The video is available in Arabic, Cantonese, Korean, Mandarin, Vietnamese and English. See: *Your business and tax* on the ATO's YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/AusTaxOffice

Australian Human Rights Commission human rights websites

The 'Something in Common' and 'Tell me something I don't know' projects are designed to encourage people to discuss human rights through everyday outlets like social media. The websites include a summary of issues, videos, polls, film reviews and avenues for action. More information accessible at:

www.tellmesomethingidontknow.gov.au and www.somethingincommon.gov.au

Discrimination Toolkit: Your Guide to Making a Discrimination Complaint

A joint publication of Legal Aid NSW, the Kingsford Legal Centre and the Elizabeth Community Legal Centre, the Second Edition of the Discrimination Toolkit is a simple English guide to State and Federal discrimination law. The guide provides strategies for dealing with discrimination and includes example and tips for anyone who would like to take action for being discriminated against. Available for download at: <http://lacextra.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/Publications/Website/Publications/Details/29>

My Life In Oz

My life in Oz is a website allowing people residing in Australia the opportunity to share their culture and understand the ways of others. Stories about communities, politics, identity, journeying to Australia, origins and passions are all shared and Australia's multicultural community celebrated.

www.mylifeinoz.com.au/

Money Smart resources for culturally and linguistically diverse communities

The Australian Securities Investments Commission (ASIC) has produced a range of educational tools and resources for settlement workers on ten money management topics including financial literacy and a wide range of fact sheets and resources. The kit will be made available in early 2012. For more information see the Money Smart Website: www.moneysmart.gov.au/

Trends in Displacement, Protection and Solutions: Ten Years of UNHCR Statistics

The 2010 edition of the UNHCR Statistical Yearbook is now available for use. The yearbook reports a record 43.3million people displaced due to conflict at the end of 2010 with a total population of 33.9 million people of concern to the UNHCR: www.unhcr.org/4ef9cc9c9.html

Gaps in responding to boat people and other migrants arriving in Southern Europe

"MAYDAY! Strengthening responses of assistance and protection to boat people and other migrants arriving in Southern Europe" is a new report from the International Catholic Migration Commission detailing the experiences of refugees and other migrants who die trying to reach Southern Europe from North Africa – a record 1971 in 2011. Issues faced by boat people, including prolonged detention and humanitarian abuses, have been researched as an outcome of the Differentiation for Refugee Identification and Vulnerability Evaluation (DRIVE) project. Download from: <http://bit.ly/uSYIIT>

Review of UNHCR response to Protracted Stateless Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh

In December 2008 UNHCR launched a special initiative into protracted refugee situations focusing, among others, on the plight of stateless Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. Currently only about 10% of the refugee population in Bangladesh have access to the services of UNHCR and other NGOs. This review includes an action plan and suggested measures to solve what has become a regional problem. Available from: www.unhcr.org/4ee754c19.html

Photo project: 'Thailand: See What I See'

A project run by the Jesuit Refugee Service, "Thailand: See What I see" is a compelling series of photos taken by over two months by seven refugees in Bangkok depicting the helplessness of their daily lives. See the photo series online at: www.jrsap.org/news_detail?TN=NEWS-20111208102430

OPPORTUNITIES

For employment opportunities, go to www.refugeecouncil.org.au/getinvolved/employment.php. For volunteering opportunities, go to www.refugeecouncil.org.au/getinvolved/volunteer.php

Consultations on Access and Equity

The Australian Government is seeking feedback on whether government services are responding to the needs of people from all cultures and language backgrounds and how access to services can be improved. A paper containing consultation questions for communities and clients is available for download in 26 languages at <http://tinyurl.com/79fxosp>. Submissions close 24 February.

Mental Health and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

The Mental Health Council of Australia is currently compiling information about the experiences of CALD community with mental health services. They seek the input CALD mental health carers for their current *MH Carers Survey* which has been translated into Arabic, Chinese, Italian and Greek. The English survey is available at <http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/569049/Mental-Health-Carers-Survey-2011-12> or more information is available at www.MHCA.org.au.

PhD study on post-traumatic growth of new arrivals in South Australia

University of Adelaide PhD Student, Teresa Puvimanasinghe, seeks members of the African-Australian community in South Australia to research their experience travelling to, and settling into, Australia. Discussion is expected to last 60 to 90 minutes. Group discussions can be facilitated if preferred. E-mail: teresa.puvimanasinghe@adelaide.edu.au

Do you have something to say about racism?

All Together Now is currently conducting interviews to ask people what they know about racism, how they think it can affect people and what can be done to erase it. The interviews will take less than half an hour and are filmed for distribution online. The campaign seeks to start the conversation about racism in families, communities and businesses around Australia. For more details, visit <http://www.alltogethernow.org.au/news/do-you-have-something-say-about-racism>.

2012 Nansen Refugee Award – Nominations Open

Nominations for the 2012 UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award are now open until the 29 February 2012. The Nansen Refugee Award seeks to award individuals, groups or organisation whose work has had a positive impact on the life of refugees, forcibly displaced or stateless people. Email nansen@unhcr.org or see www.NansenAward.org for more information.

Multicultural Arts and Festival Grants

The Australian Government community grants program has been allocated \$125,000 funding to support multicultural arts and festival projects in 2011-12. Grants of up to \$5000 are available for community groups and organisations organising projects that encourage social cohesion and mutual understanding, educate groups about other cultures and address issues like tensions between community groups. Applications can be made at anytime during 2011-12 while funds are still available. See www.harmony.gov.au/dscp/mafg/eligibility-apply.htm for more information.

Education courses available

A number of multicultural education courses will begin soon at Randwick College. For more information, call (02) 9469 8594 or email Amir.Salem@tafensw.edu.au.

Call for participation in poetry project

The 100 Years from Gallipoli Poetry Project has called for submissions from poets in Australia and New Zealand. The aim of the project is to present as diverse a range of views as possible (including from migrant and refugee communities). Further information can be found at <http://ozzywriters.com/index.php/100-years-from-gallipoli>

Call for papers: Is the 1951 Refugee Convention Outdated?

For its special issue on the 60th anniversary of the Refugee Convention, REFUGE invites submissions that explore the debate surrounding the relevance of this historic treaty. In particular, there is interest in papers that recognise the diverging assessments in order to propose approaches that might address current and future problems in a more effective manner. For further information, please contact: Prof Michael Barutciski, Editor-in-Chief REFUGE c/o Centre for Refugee Studies, York Research Tower, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Toronto (Ontario), Canada M3J 1P3, or on refuge@yorku.ca. The submission deadline is 30 March, 2012.

Launch of SBS TV Trainee Scheme

SBS TV has launched a Multicultural Television Production Trainee Scheme to provide short-term work placements (12 weeks) for participants from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds on SBS commissioned productions. SBS has partnered with Film Victoria to offer two placements on commissioned programming before June 2012. The first placement is for a 2nd Assistant Editor with a prominent innovative production company in Melbourne. Minimum skills required for this position are basic knowledge of Final Cut Pro. The contract is for 12 weeks, commencing around the 7 May, 2012. All enquiries should be directed to factual@sbs.com.au or call Katherine on (02) 9430 3905. The deadline for applications is 15 February, 2012.

New webWise project at CMY

The Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) is looking for committed young people to deliver education sessions as part of a new project. webWise – Staying Safe in Cyber Space. The project informs and resources young people from newly arrived and refugee backgrounds and their parents about safe internet and mobile phone use. Find out more at www.cmy.net.au or contact Yohana Jury on yjury@cmy.net.au or phone (03) 9091 8230.

Request for Volunteer Trustee, Australian Refugee Foundation

The Australian Refugee Foundation (ARF) is seeking a fundraising professional with networks and experience in the commercial and philanthropic community. The successful applicant will provide professional strategic and operational advice for the fundraising activities of the ARF which enable RCOA to expand its outreach and support for refugee communities. Expressions of Interest should be addressed to: projects@refugeecouncil.org.au.

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)

Push to boost refugees

Immigration Minister Chris Bowen will propose an almost doubling of Australia's refugee intake in a bid to win support at this weekend's ALP national conference for his controversial Malaysian people-swap agreement to deter boat arrivals. (The Age, 1 December)

<http://www.theage.com.au/national/push-to-boost-refugees-20111130-1o775.html>

Critics blast Australian minister's refugee proposal

Australia's Opposition party has criticised the Immigration Minister's plan to substantially boost the nation's refugee intake to 20,000 a year. The internal debate comes as authorities intercept two boats carrying more than 200 asylum seekers. (ABC Radio Australia News, 2 December)

<http://www.radioaustralianews.net.au/stories/201112/3381628.htm?desktop>

Labor platform endorses offshore processing of asylum-seekers

Labor has effectively endorsed offshore processing of asylum-seekers in its party platform for the first time. The policy shift follows a factional deal that also backs the use of bridging visas to move detainees into the community while their refugee claims are processed. (The Herald Sun, 3 December)

<http://bit.ly/zkoOWG>

Refugee activists disappointed by Labor policy shift

Refugee advocates say the handling of asylum seeker policy at Labor's national conference had nothing to do with human rights and everything to do with domestic politicking. Immigration Minister Chris Bowen yesterday won support for his proposal to aspire to increase Australia's refugee intake while embracing offshore processing. (ABC Sydney, 4 December) <http://bit.ly/u0Q7Ho>

Two asylum boats intercepted in 24 hours

The navy has intercepted a second asylum seeker boat within 24 hours, this one carrying more than 160 passengers. This follows the arrival of another vessel on Monday night carrying 54 asylum seekers, near Lacedpede Islands, off West Australia's north-west coast. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 6 December)

<http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-national/two-asylum-boats-intercepted-in-24-hours-20111206-1og3q.html>

Asylum arrivals hit 542 in a week

The third-largest boat to arrive since Labor took office, carrying 167 asylum seekers and crew, was unloaded at Christmas Island yesterday as another vessel crept within 12 nautical miles of the West Australian coast. Six boats in six days have carried 542 people into Australian waters. (The Age, 7 December)

<http://www.theage.com.au/national/asylum-arrivals-hit-542-in-a-week-20111206-1oh9j.html>

Asylum policy 'a bridge to Indonesia'

Labor may as well have built a bridge between Australia and Indonesia given the number of pull factors it has created to attract asylum seekers, Opposition Leader Tony Abbott says. The federal government on Friday announced the seventh boatload of asylum seekers to arrive this week as Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) officials faced a parliamentary inquiry. (Sydney Morning Herald, 9 December)

<http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-national/asylum-policy-a-bridge-to-indonesia-20111209-1on0e.html>

Refugee inquiry to tackle backlog

The former attorney-general Michael Lavarch will conduct an independent review of the refugee and migration tribunals amid a backlog of cases and allegations that the process is being abused. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 12 December)

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/refugee-inquiry-to-tackle-backlog-20111212-1orij.html>

Boat carrying 54 people intercepted

Australian border protection have intercepted a boat carrying 54 people off the coast of Western Australia overnight. Opposition Leader Tony Abbott said boats will continue to arrive because the federal government has no effective policy. (Sky News, 13 December)

<http://www.skynews.com.au/national/article.aspx?id=696110&vld=>

Detention centre censors media reports

Immigration Department officials will have the right to censor information gathered by journalists during a tour of the Inverbrackie detention centre today. Strict rules have been imposed on media outlets that agreed to attend, including reporters being banned from interviewing or "engaging in any substantive communication with any detainee clients", or even moving away from their departmental tour guide. (Adelaide Advertiser, 14 December)

<http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/south-australia/centre-censors-media-reports/story-e6frea83-1226221325949>

Surge in Iranian asylum seekers

A surge in Iranian asylum seekers has contributed to a new wave of boat arrivals in recent months. Department of Immigration figures show that Iranians are now by far the most common arrivals, followed by Afghanis. Two years ago there were only 72 Iranians who came to Australia by boat. (The Herald Sun, 15 December)

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/more-news/surge-in-iranian-asylum-seekers/story-fn7x8me2-1226222307153>

Refugee cleared to sponsor mother

Refugee advocates have welcomed a High Court ruling that allows an Afghan refugee who came to Australia as a child to sponsor his mother for a humanitarian visa. Paul Power, chief executive of the Refugee Council of Australia, said processing delays meant young refugees had often been denied the chance to be reunited with their family, even if they lodged their visa applications several years before they turned 18. (Canberra Times, 15 December)

<http://www.canberratimes.com.au/news/national/national/general/refugee-cleared-to-sponsor-mother/2393749.aspx>

Bowen touts Malaysia deal on shipwreck anniversary

Immigration Minister Chris Bowen has expressed his frustration at not having offshore processing on the first anniversary of the Christmas Island boat tragedy. Up to 50 asylum seekers drowned last year when their boat smashed against the island's coastline in bad weather. (ABC, 15 December)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2011-12-15/bowen-renews-call-for-offshore-processing/3733252>

A year on from Christmas Island tragedy debate rages

On the anniversary of the Christmas Island tragedy, the government has rejected asylum seekers arriving by boat will receive automatic bridging visas. Immigration Minister Chris Bowen has rejected opposition suggestions that asylum seekers arriving by boat will be granted bridging visas. (The Australian, 15 December) <http://bit.ly/yTBsjk>

A year on, a sad Christmas Island return

Sayed Hossien Hossieni finally said goodbye to his wife Mariem yesterday as he stood on the treacherous Christmas Island coastline where, a year ago, she and his three-month-old son Saam perished in an angry sea. (The Australian, 16 December) <http://bit.ly/ufFV7V>

Protest as teenage asylum seekers are detained with adults

Eight teenage asylum seekers, all minors, have had their community housing revoked and been moved into adult detention facilities in the past fortnight, while another has run away and is missing. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 16 December)

<http://www.smh.com.au/world/protest-as-teenage-asylum-seekers-are-detained-with-adults-20111215-1owyf.html>

Burmese refugees may be en route to Aust: activists

Human rights groups say up to 25 boats of Burmese Muslim Rohingya refugees have set off from Bangladesh since September for Malaysia or Indonesia and may head on to Australia. (Canberra Times, 16 December) <http://bit.ly/sHvk1E>

Refugees promised visas, housing, internet access

Almost 1000 asylum seekers have arrived in 17 days, some of them expecting to be freed into the community within months. As the latest boat arrived yesterday with 76 people aboard, it emerged smugglers had promised visas, housing and internet access. (The Herald Sun, 17 December)

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/more-news/people-smugglers-step-up-pressure/story-fn7x8me2-1226224442908>

Australian government blamed for asylum boat sinking

Refugee groups and lawyers have sought to link federal government border security policies for the sinking of an asylum-seeker boat, carrying more than 200 people. So far rescuers have plucked 87

people from the sea as refugee groups call on the government to decriminalise people smuggling. (The Daily Telegraph, 18 December) <http://bit.ly/wpdNZd>

160 asylum seekers feared dead

More than 160 asylum seekers are feared dead after their boat sank off Java on Saturday, victims of increasingly brazen people-smuggling syndicates that are funnelling their clients through Jakarta's airport, taking them by bus across Java, and packing them on unsafe boats bound for Christmas Island. Paul Power, the chief executive of the Refugee Council of Australia, said the government had to look beyond the failed Malaysia plan and seek genuine regional co-operation. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 19 December) <http://www.smh.com.au/world/160-asylum-seekers-feared-dead-20111218-1p0v8.html#ixzz1gvXYEFPj>

Minister defends offshore processing

Immigration Minister Chris Bowen has defended the Government's policy to process asylum-seekers offshore, saying the latest boat sinking in Indonesian waters was what he wanted to see avoided. The Opposition would not agree to legislation seeking to overturn the court ruling, leaving the Government with no option but to return to onshore processing for now. (Canberra Times, 20 December) <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/news/national/national/general/minister-defends-offshore-processing/2398550.aspx>

Greens lashed by Chris Bowen on onshore solution

Immigration Minister Chris Bowen has attacked the humanitarian credentials of the Australian Greens after his attempt to end the stalemate over offshore processing failed amid fresh brawling with the Coalition. (The Australian, 21 December) <http://bit.ly/vdgTmn>

Abbott offers PNG option but no one is 'talking turkey'

The Opposition Leader, Tony Abbott, has said Nauru isn't the only option for offshore processing and the Coalition would be "perfectly happy for boat people to go to Manus Island". Speaking on radio yesterday, Mr Abbott nominated re-opening the Manus Island centre in Papua New Guinea as common ground with the federal government on border protection. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 22 December) <http://www.smh.com.au/national/abbott-offers-png-option-but-no-one-is-talking-turkey-20111221-1p5lj.html>

Labor yields over refugees

The Gillard government has yielded to Opposition Leader Tony Abbott's demand that it put in writing its willingness to send asylum seekers to Nauru, as it pushes to strike an urgent deal on offshore processing. The Refugee Council said the move was a setback for refugee protection. (The Age, 23 December) <http://www.theage.com.au/national/labor-yields-over-refugees-20111222-1p7a1.html>

Opposition waits for asylum seeker talks

Negotiations between the government and the opposition to reinstate offshore processing remain in limbo, with a date for the next round of talks yet to be confirmed. (The Australian, 27 December) <http://bit.ly/yITIR8>

Nauru ready and willing to discuss reopening of asylum-seeker camp

Nauru's president, Sprent Dabwido, says his government remains open to talking with Canberra if it wants the asylum seeker detention camps re-opened. This comes after last week the Julia Gillard government indicated it could agree to the use of Nauru, in a trade off with the opposition over the use of Malaysia as a processing centre. (Radio New Zealand International, 27 December) <http://www.rnzi.com/pages/news.php?op=read&id=65251>

Church leaders call for end to asylum stalemate

There was standing room only in churches around Australia yesterday as religious leaders used their Christmas Day sermons to urge political leaders to end the stalemate over asylum-seekers. (The Australian, 26 December) <http://bit.ly/xvkgLJ>

Christmas boat lifts tally of asylum-seekers to 4573

The detection of an overcrowded asylum-seeker vessel on Christmas Eve has pushed this month's boat arrivals past 1000. (The Australian, 26 December) <http://bit.ly/vGi5P7>

Boat with 116 arrives: figures almost as high as Tampa arrival

An asylum seeker boat carrying 116 passengers has arrived in local waters, bringing December to the brink of recording the most boat arrivals since the Tampa sailed into a diplomatic controversy in mid-2001. (The Daily Telegraph, 26 December) <http://bit.ly/z1f5K7>

Christmas arrivals stir claims of boat crisis

The arrival of another boatload of asylum seekers on Christmas Eve is more evidence Australia is caught in a "border protection crisis", according to the opposition. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 26 December)

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/christmas-arrivals-stir-claims-of-boat-crisis-20111225-1p9ih.html>

Another asylum boat picked up on Australian waters

More than 100 asylum seekers have been picked up off Australia's coast, increasing pressure on the Federal Government and Opposition to break the political impasse over offshore processing. (The Herald-Sun, 26 December)

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/more-news/more-asylum-seekers-sailing-in/story-fn7x8me2-1226230321559>

Door will stay open on border protection

A meeting between government ministers and their opposition counterparts has failed to break the deadlock on border protection policy, with the parties agreeing only to keep talking. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 24 December)

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/door-will-stay-open-on-border-protection-20111223-1p8k5.html>

Labor seeks end to asylum impasse

The Gillard Government could cede more ground to Opposition Leader Tony Abbott on border protection including tougher visa rules as part of a deal to discourage asylum seekers. (Courier-Mail, 24 December)

<http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/national/labor-seeks-end-to-asylum-impasse/story-e6freoo-1226229769967>

Opposition seizes on smuggler claim

The Coalition has seized on reports that people smugglers have placed touts at a Jakarta airport to lure asylum seekers onto boats. (The Age, 28 December)

<http://www.theage.com.au/national/opposition-seizes-on-smuggler-claim-20111227-1pbo1.html>

People smuggling may soar

Citing economic benefits, Indonesia is slated to relax its visa policy next year for four countries known as sources of illegal immigrants bound for Australia. (The Jakarta Post, 27 December)

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2011/12/27/people-smuggling-may-soar.html>

Jakarta the destination for asylum seekers to get to Australia

They travel from all over the Middle East by plane, ferry or midnight trek. But the destination is always the same - Jakarta. The Indonesian capital is the gateway through which people smugglers funnel all asylum seekers to Australia. (The Daily Telegraph, 26 December) <http://bit.ly/vCSZwR>

TV crews curbed on showing images of boat arrivals

The Immigration Department has successfully lobbied to impose new restrictions on TV networks showing images of asylum-seekers arriving by boat and has called on the media watchdog to vigorously pursue broadcasters who breach the new regime. (The Australian, 28 December) <http://bit.ly/uGHbTr>

Court questions persecution application 'signed' by tot

A court has questioned how a 17-month-old boy could have completed and signed the paperwork for a visa application. (The Herald-Sun, 26 December)

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/more-news/court-queries-papers-signed-by-tot/story-fn7x8me2-1226230313764>

Surge of migrant women in refuges

Women's refuges are struggling to shelter an increasing number of migrant women who don't have permanent visas. (The Age, 26 December)

<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/surge-of-migrant-women-in-refuges-20111225-1p9ji.html>

Offshore talks to continue: Gillard

Julia Gillard has praised the opposition for continuing negotiations to reinstate offshore processing, but won't say when the next round of meetings will take place. (The Australian, 28 December) <http://bit.ly/vqx5jx>

More refugees set for Indonesia

Australia could face a new wave of asylum seekers, with Indonesia reportedly planning to make it easier for people to enter the nation from unstable countries such as Afghanistan and Sri Lanka. (The West Australian, 29 December)

<http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/a/-/breaking/12466572/more-refugees-set-for-indonesia/>

Guidelines 'not aimed at asylum seekers'

Australia's media watchdog has dismissed suggestions its new privacy guidelines are aimed at stopping TV networks from showing asylum seekers arriving by boat. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 29 December)

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/guidelines-not-aimed-at-asylum-seekers-20111228-1pczg.html>

Pressure points for media privacy guidelines

The media watchdog has conceded that its new privacy guidelines could be used to force television stations to blur the faces of asylum-seekers, and the Immigration Department says it may use the rules to pressure TV broadcasters to do so. (The Australian, 30 December)

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/media/pressure-points-for-media-privacy-guidelines/story-e6frg996-1226232899411>

Sinkings fail to dissuade refugee boats

Indonesian authorities have thwarted two attempts by asylum seekers to travel by boat to Australia since the disastrous sinking of a vessel two weeks ago, proof that even the loss of as many as 200 lives at sea will not stop people making the dangerous crossing. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 31 December)

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/sinkings-fail-to-dissuade-refugee-boats-20111230-1pfjf.html>

Department denies new Curtin facility is part of expansion

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship says a new "central kitchen" is not part of an expansion of the Curtin Detention Centre near Derby in the Kimberley. But a state Greens politician has visited the centre and says the new facility could cater for up to 3000 people. (ABC Radio, 30 December)

<http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2011/12/30/3400015.htm>

Clampdown on media is ominous

The Australian Communications and Media Authority's new guidelines have the stench of political interference attached. The first consequences of the new "privacy" restrictions on broadcasters have become immediately clear - television networks must no longer film asylum seekers arriving on our shores by boat. (The Herald Sun, 4 January)

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/opinion/clampdown-on-media-is-ominous/story-e6frfhqf-1226235973003>

Indonesia change: more may take boats

Tony Abbott has warned Indonesia that changes to its visa system could create a problem for Australia if the plans facilitated an easier passage for asylum-seekers to Indonesia. The Indonesian government has proposed devolving responsibility for the granting of visas in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka from Jakarta to diplomatic missions in both countries. (The Australian, 5 January) <http://bit.ly/yErK0j>

Sri Lankan boat adds to visa concerns

The interception by the Sri Lankan navy of a group of asylum-seekers bound for Australia has heightened concerns that Indonesia's plans to relax its visa restrictions could lead to a sharp spike in the number of boatpeople attempting the hazardous journey. (The Australian, 9 January) <http://bit.ly/wBirFO>

Indonesia, Australia boost people-smuggling fight

Jakarta and Canberra on Monday agreed to boost their fight against people-smuggling, amid concerns that Indonesia's planned visa policies may result in a surge of asylum-seekers to Australia. Australian Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd met his Indonesian counterpart Marty Natalegawa in Jakarta to discuss joint efforts to combat the growing number of illegal migrants using Indonesia as a springboard to Australia by boat, often in perilous journeys that end in tragedy. (AFP, 9 January)

<http://www.mysinchew.com/node/68778>

New wave of asylum seeker boats raises Aussie ire

The asylum seekers who head to Australia in rickety fishing boats are just a trickle in the global flow of refugees. But given the top-tier debate they have ignited in Australia, they might as well be an invading armada. Paul Power, of the Refugee Council of Australia advocacy group, said the prominence of the asylum seeker debate is difficult to rationalise. (AP, 11 January)

http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-501712_162-57356733/new-wave-of-asylum-seeker-boats-raises-aussie-ire/

Asylum visa plan to ease overcrowding makes a slow start

A program to ease the strain on overcrowded detention centres by placing boatpeople in the community has issued barely 100 bridging visas, despite more than 2000 asylum-seekers having arrived here by boat since the policy shift was announced. (The Australian, 13 January) <http://bit.ly/x00hVo>

Labor tries to put holes in Tony Abbott's boats plan

Julia Gillard has warned Tony Abbott's "reckless" pledge to turn back asylum seeker boats will put Australian lives at risk. The Prime Minister yesterday attacked the Liberal leader's renewed threat to enlist the Australian Navy to turn back boats to Indonesia, a policy that critics say could prompt asylum seekers to jump into the sea or sabotage boats and force the navy to rescue them. (The Sunday Telegraph, 22 January)

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/labor-tries-to-put-holes-in-tony-abbotts-boats-plan/story-e6freuy9-1226250291194>

Chris Bowen reveals move to shift policy on asylum seekers

Immigration Minister Chris Bowen agreed to consider a controversial return to temporary protection visas, as demanded by Opposition Leader Tony Abbott, in an effort to break the asylum seeker deadlock. But the Coalition rejected the offer, exposing Mr Abbott to accusations he didn't want to end the stalemate. (The Daily Telegraph, 25 January) <http://bit.ly/AEyvKN>

Bowen reveals Nauru's \$1.7b price tag

The Immigration Minister has released to the ABC the full costings report from his Department about re-opening the offshore processing centres on the Pacific island of Nauru. Chris Bowen yesterday revealed that the cost of setting up the detention centres would be nearly \$2 billion over four years - much more than previously estimated. (ABC Sydney, 25 January)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-01-25/govt-releases-nauru-costings/3791948/?site=sydney>

Australian of the Year Rush pushes for asylum seeker mini-series

Australian of the Year Geoffrey Rush has urged local writers to tell the stories of asylum seekers who try to make the perilous journey to Australia by boat. The multi-award winning actor on Wednesday was named Australian of the Year at a ceremony outside Parliament House in Canberra in front of a 10,000-

<http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/refugee-appeals-cost-millions/story-e6freoof-1226256227449>

Get tough on arrivals without papers: Opposition

The federal opposition has seized on a media report that thousands of asylum seekers are ditching their passports before they get to Australia, saying the government needs to get tough with those not carrying documentation. (AAP, 30 January)

<http://news.ninemsn.com.au/national/8410762/get-tough-on-arrivals-without-papers-oppn>