



Refugee Council of Australia

BULLETIN FOR MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS

20 February 2015

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

Paul Power, CEO, Refugee Council of Australia

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NEWS FROM THE REFUGEE COUNCIL

Report of Australian Human Rights Commission's Inquiry into detention of children released

The report of the Australian Human Rights Commission's National Inquiry into Children in Immigration Detention was tabled in Parliament on the evening of 11 February. The report, which draws on interviews in detention facilities with more than 1000 children and their parents, provides shocking evidence on the harm inflicted on children by Australia's policy of indefinite mandatory detention. The inquiry documented cases of children developing serious mental health disorders, engaging in self harm (including attempted suicide), experiencing developmental delays and being subjected to physical and sexual assault. The report's key recommendations include: the release of all children and their families from detention in Australia and Nauru as soon as practicable; changes to the *Migration Act 1958* to ensure that children can only be detained for a strictly limited period of time necessary to conduct health, identity and security checks; and the establishment of a Royal Commission to examine Australia's policies on the detention of children. The full report can be read at <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/asylum-seekers-and-refugees/publications/forgotten-children-national-inquiry-children>

More than 230 organisations call for legislative change to end detention of children

In response to the release of the Australian Human Rights Commission's report on children in detention, more than 230 organisations and community groups signed a joint statement calling on the Australian Parliament to take action to end the detention of children once and for all. The statement, which was coordinated by RCOA, urged the Australian Parliament introduce legislation to prevent children from being held in closed immigration detention in the future, take action to end the offshore processing of asylum claims and refer allegations of child sexual abuse in Australian-funded detention centres to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The statement can be read at <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Joint-statement-end-detention-of-children.pdf>.

Write To Be Heard campaign focuses on children in detention

RCOA's Write To Be Heard campaign is asking you to join us in calling for legislative change to protect children from prolonged indefinite detention and demanding the release of all children from immigration detention facilities in Australia and Nauru. For further information and resources, including a sample letter and contact details for all Federal MPs and Senators, go to <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/campaigns/current-campaigns/children>

RCOA briefing paper on Legacy Caseload Act

The *Migration and Maritime Powers Legislation Amendment (Resolving the Asylum Legacy Caseload) Act 2014*, passed in December 2014, has made sweeping changes to Australia's processes for managing asylum seeker claims and providing protection to refugees who arrive in Australia without visas. RCOA has developed a briefing paper which summarises the key changes and their implications for people seeking protection. It can be downloaded at

<http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/1502-Legacy-Caseload.pdf>

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Tensions on Manus Island cause fear of another tragedy

In response to the unrest and protests at the Manus Island detention centre, RCOA issued a statement urging the Australian Government to take immediate action to end offshore processing in order to prevent another death. The statement highlighted indefinite detention, woefully inadequate living conditions, prolonged delays in the assessment of refugee claims and lack of information provided by the Papua New Guinean and Australian Governments as factors contributing to the unrest and noted that the Government had been warned repeatedly that such conditions would lead to these kinds of dire circumstances. RCOA described the Manus Island detention centre as “a human rights and financial sinkhole” and warned that the Government’s policies “are endangering the lives of people Australia should be protecting”. The statement can be read at

<http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/150119-Manus.pdf>

UNHCR figures show forced displacement continues to rise

UNHCR’s *Mid-Year Trends 2014* report reveals that the total number of refugees under UNHCR’s mandate had risen to 13 million by the end of June 2014 – the highest number since 1996 and almost 1.3 million more people than at the start of 2014. Syria has officially overtaken Afghanistan as the world’s largest country of refugee origin, with more than three million people having fled the country. Almost a quarter of the refugees under UNHCR’s mandate are Syrian. Lebanon is now the world’s second-largest country of asylum, having moved from 69th to second position within a span of just three-and-a-half years. Asylum applications are also on the rise, with the number of asylum seekers waiting for a decision on an individual application for refugee status having risen by more than 100,000 between January and June 2014. The full report can be read at <http://www.unhcr.org/54aa91d89.html>

New Refugee Week theme: ‘With courage let us all combine’

RCOA has chosen “With courage let us all combine” as the theme for Refugee Week in Australia for 2015 to 2017. Taken from the second verse of the national anthem, the theme celebrates the courage of refugees and of people who speak out against persecution and injustice. It serves as a call for unity and for positive action, encouraging Australians to improve our nation’s welcome for refugees and to acknowledge the skills and energy refugees bring to their new home. In 2015, Refugee Week will take place from Sunday 14 to Saturday 20 June. Further information about Refugee Week can be found at

<http://www.refugeeweek.org.au>

RCOA submission on sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex rights

RCOA made a submission to the Australian Human Rights Commission’s consultation on sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex rights, focusing on issues affecting same-sex attracted asylum seekers. The submission highlighted concerns relating to the assessment of asylum claims based on sexual orientation, the potential impacts of recent changes to migration legislation on people seeking protection from persecution based on their sexual orientation and the risks faced by same-sex attracted asylum seekers sent to Manus Island. The submission can be read at <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/1502-SOGII.pdf>. Further information about the consultation can be found at

<http://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/sexual-orientation-sex-gender-identity/projects/sogii-rights>

RCOA submission on proposed changes to offshore Refugee and Humanitarian Program visas

RCOA has made a submission responding to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection’s discussion paper on the proposed simplification of offshore Refugee and Humanitarian Program visas. The submission raised a number of concerns about the proposed changes, including ... changes to the criteria for assessing family reunion applications and the inclusion of the allocation for the Community Proposal Pilot within the Refugee and Humanitarian program intake. RCOA also called for a more substantial review of the Refugee and Humanitarian Program to examine how it can better respond to current global protection needs and provide more accessible opportunities for family reunion. The submission can be read at

<http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/1502-RefugeeProgram.pdf>.

The Department’s discussion paper can be read at

<http://www.immi.gov.au/pub-res/Documents/discussion-papers/simple-framework-refugee-humanitarian-visa.pdf>

Latest Bright Ideas profile focuses on innovative training program at Sydney café

Our latest Bright Ideas profile focuses on the International Shift program, held at the Parliament on King café in the Sydney suburb of Erskineville. The International Shift provides free training to refugees and asylum seekers with the hope that participants will gain employment in the hospitality industry after the program. The program currently trains six people every five weeks and has assisted refugees from Bangladesh, Iran, Pakistan, Georgia, Cameroon, and Nigeria. Read the full profile at http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Bright_Ideas18_International-Shift.pdf

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter

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

COMING EVENTS

Seeking Humanity: Portraits of asylum seekers and refugees by Wendy Sharpe

Tuesday 17 February to Thursday 12 March (lunch event 27 February), Ultimo NSW

Presented by the Asylum Seekers Centre, Seeking Humanity is an exhibition of portraits of 39 asylum seekers and refugees Australian artist Wendy Sharpe, former winner of the Archibald Prize. The exhibition aims to put a human face to those who have fled situations of great danger in their home country in search of safety and freedom in Australia. On 27 February, join Wendy Sharpe for a three-course lunch with all profits to be donated to the Asylum Seekers Centre.

Details: tickets for lunch event \$100.00, admission to exhibition free; open 10:00am-4:00pm Tuesday to Sunday; The Muse, Sydney TAFE, cnr Harris and Mary Anne Streets, Ultimo; to book tickets for lunch event, email Sl.TheApprentice@tafensw.edu.au or call (02) 9217 5527.

Launch of *The Drownings' Argument*

Saturday 21 February, Balmain NSW

Published by Labor for Refugees, *The Drownings' Argument* scrutinises the argument that Australia's offshore processing policy is necessary to prevent drownings at sea. The event will be hosted by Verity Firth, Labor candidate for the State seat of Balmain, and will include special guest Julian Burnside AO QC.

Details: 2:00pm; Balmain Town Hall meeting room, Darling Street, Balmain; for further details, email Labor4RefugeesNSW@gmail.com

Rally: Justice for Reza Barati

Saturday 21 February, Brisbane QLD

Organised by the Refugee Action Collective Queensland, this protest will demand justice for Reza Barati, who was beaten to death one year ago in the Australian-funded detention centre on Manus Island, and call for an end to offshore processing of asylum claims.

Details: 11:00am; King George Square, Brisbane; for further information, visit <https://www.facebook.com/events/626326077473505/>

Australian Psychological Society webinars on refugees and asylum seekers

Tuesday 24 February to Tuesday 12 May, Australia-wide

This series of webinars explore a range of critical topics in understanding the psychology of being a refugee and asylum seeker and what psychological interventions and support can be undertaken to help. It will provide clinicians, therapists and workers new to working with refugees and asylum seekers an opportunity to develop professional knowledge and skills in this complex and often highly charged area. For those experienced in this area it offers an update of issues and a refresher of the key considerations in working with this group of highly vulnerable people.

Details: for further details and to register for the webinars, visit <http://www.psychology.org.au/Events/EventView.aspx?EventID=15508>

RESPECT youth interfaith soccer round robin and fun day

Sunday 1 March, Doncaster East VIC

A free soccer clinic hosted by the Manningham Interfaith Youth Network with the support of Manningham City Council and Victoria Police

Details: 12:00pm-6:30pm; Anderson Park, 117 Anderson Creek Road, Doncaster East; to register, visit <http://respectroundrobin.wix.com/manningham>

Boundless plains to share? Recent changes to Australian refugee law

Thursday 5 March, Brisbane QLD

Recent changes to refugee law hold profound justice implications, from stripping away permanent protection for refugees to empowering the Federal Minister to detain people on the high seas. Hear about the effects of the amendments and what can be done to promote a more humane response to those seeking protection on our shores. This panel discussion, chaired by Radio National's Paul Barclay, will feature Professor Penelope Mathew, Griffith Law School Dean; Kon Karapanagiotidis, CEO and Founder of the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre; and Erika Feller, former United Nations Assistant High Commissioner for Refugees. This event is presented by Caxton Legal Centre, Griffith Law School and the Refugee and Immigration Legal Service.

Details: tickets \$10.00 (\$7.00 concession); 5:30pm-6:30pm; Banco Court, 415 George Street, Brisbane; to book tickets, visit <http://bit.ly/1E4CMxb>

Premier's Harmony Dinner

Thursday 12 March, Rosehill NSW

Hosted by the Hon Mike Baird MP, Premier of NSW, this event will celebrate cultural diversity with an array of performances and provide valuable networking opportunities.

Details: individual tickets \$120.00 (\$1,100 for table of ten) or \$80.00 for communities (\$750.00 for table to ten); 6:30pm; Grand Pavilion, Rosehill Gardens, James Ruse Drive, Rosehill; for further information and to book tickets, visit

http://www.crc.nsw.gov.au/awards_and_events/multicultural_march/premiers_harmony_dinner

2015 Toowoomba Multicultural Expo

Saturday 14 March, Toowoomba QLD

This event to celebrate Harmony Day will feature a multicultural fashion parade, art and craft activities, dance performances, pop-up multicultural shops and cultural displays.

Details: 11:00am-2:30pm (pop-up shops 9:00am-5:00pm); Grand Central Shopping Centre.

Cultural Diversity Week

Saturday 14 to Sunday 22 March, across Victoria

Cultural Diversity Week is held annually to coincide with the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on 21 March, and is an opportunity for all Victorians to come together to share their culture, faith and language. The week kicks off with the Premier's Gala Dinner and concludes with the Viva Victoria Multicultural Festival at Federation Square. Hundreds of communities host their own events across Victoria to celebrate our diversity and the benefits that multiculturalism brings to Victoria.

Details: for further information and to find events in your area, visit <http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/projects-and-initiatives/cultural-diversity-week>.

Radical appeal: Young people and religious extremism

Monday 16 March, Ashfield NSW

The first event in SSI's 2015 Speakers' Series will explore how and why young people in contemporary Australia might be attracted to an extreme religious ideology. Presentations and panel speakers will also discuss how young Muslims perceive religious extremism; how are young people marginalised in this discussion, and what is being done and what can still be done to counter it.

Details: entry by donation; 6:00pm-7:30pm; Auditorium, SSI Head Office, Level 2, 158 Liverpool Road, Ashfield; for further details and to register, visit <http://ssispeakersseriesmarch2015.eventbrite.com.au>

Harmony Day Music Festival

Saturday 21 March, Brisbane QLD

This event will feature Goldstool, Phil Monsour, Lincoln Kurt Howe, Weezal, Punxie and the Poison Pens, Boho Mofos, George Higgins, Ellie Jane and more, plus barefoot bowls, face painting, competitions and activities for children.

Details: entry \$10.00 (with funds raised to support Rise Up for Refugees); 3:00pm-11:00pm; Club Greenslopes, 131 Ridge Street, Greenslopes, Brisbane; for further details, visit <https://www.facebook.com/events/761648103921603>

Book launch: Still a Pygmy

Saturday 21 March, Glebe NSW

This book by former refugee Isaac Bacirongo is a memoir which tells the story of how Isaac grew up as a Pygmy hunter-gatherer in the forest of Congo and now finds himself in Sydney, Australia.

Details: 3:30pm for a 4:00pm start; upstairs at Gleebooks, 49 Glebe Point Road, Glebe; RSVP for catering purposes by Wednesday 18 March to laura@finch.com.au; for more information about the book, visit <http://finch.com.au/books/still-a-pygmy>

Australian Lawyers for Human Rights annual dinner

Friday 27 March, Sydney NSW

This fundraising event will feature a keynote address by renowned Australian barrister, human rights advocate and recipient of the 2014 Sydney Peace Prize, Julian Burnside AO QC.

Details: tickets \$100.00 (\$70.00 community sector, \$50.00 concession) includes three-course dinner; 7:00pm-11:00pm; Sky Phoenix Restaurant Level 6, Shop 6001, 188 Pitt Street, Sydney; for further information and to book tickets, visit <http://alhr.org.au/alhr-dinner-2015-special-guest-julian-burnside-ao-qc/>

Stormy Waters: A play about us and them

Sunday 29 March, Melbourne VIC

Telling stories through song, images and humour, four actors take the audience on a journey through two hundred years of Australian history to reflect on Australia's current asylum seeker policies. At the play's conclusion, audience members will have the opportunity to walk together to the State Library to join the Palm Sunday march for refugee rights.

Details: free admission; 12:30pm-1:15pm; Wesley Church, 148 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne.

NEW RESEARCH, STATEMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

The Good Lie community screenings

The Good Lie is a film set during the second Sudanese Civil War and follows four children who walk 800 miles to a refugee camp in Kenya. Heritage Films is encouraging communities to show screenings of the film at community centres, schools and churches to help raise awareness of the situation in South Sudan. If you are interested in organising a screening, please visit <https://getfeedback.com/r/Nf7mJhNM>. The film has partnered with UNICEF and others to raise money for children in South Sudan. For more information visit <http://thegoodlifund.org>.

Project TYRES - Talking with Young Refugees about Experiences of Services

Foundation House interviewed young people from refugee backgrounds who had accessed mental health services about their experiences. Based on the young people's comments and recommendations, suggested guidelines for mental health practitioners have been compiled and are available at <http://www.foundationhouse.org.au/project-tyres>.

Working with young people from refugee backgrounds

It is important that those working with young people from refugee backgrounds understand the very particular challenges faced by the younger arrivals. A consortium of agencies with expertise in the sector worked in partnership to develop a package of targeted training materials. The package contains a comprehensive Trainer's Guide and a Participant's Handbook and both are available free of charge to Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and agencies wanting to enhance the skills of their staff. The materials can be downloaded from <http://www.ames.net.au/Books/viwe/78>. For more information, contact Margaret Piper at margpiper@optusnet.com.au.

Diversity In Focus

Diversity in Focus is an Australian Taxation Office (ATO) initiative designed to provide regular tax updates to those who support people from non-English speaking backgrounds. A range of GST and record keeping instructional videos have been released in different languages. For more information, please visit <http://www.ato.gov.au/otherlanguages>.

“Why do children undertake the unaccompanied journey?”

A research paper published jointly with the Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit on the motivations for Afghan children to undertake the journey to industrialised countries from the perspective of children, families and residents. The paper can be accessed via <http://www.unhcr.org/548ea0f09.html>.

Discussion paper on UNHCR’s policy and practice of incentive payments to refugees

Although incentive payments are widely used in UNHCR operations, there is no formal guidance on approaches to and standards for incentive work. This paper outlines the suggested guidelines for the programming of incentive payments. The paper can be accessed via <http://www.unhcr.org/5491577c9.html>.

Repatriation through a trust-based lens: refugee-state trust relations on the Thai-Burma border and beyond

This paper puts forward the argument that substantive attention to the phenomenon of 'trust' constitutes a surprising missing chapter in contemporary repatriation policy and theory. It argues that emphasis on these refugee-state trust relations presents a logical development, both of contemporary theory on the political content of repatriation and of due consideration of the formidable barrier to repatriation posed by refugees' distrust of their state of origin. The paper can be downloaded from <http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications/repatriation-through-a-trust-based-lens-refugee-state-relations-on-the-thai-burma-border-and-beyond>

OPPORTUNITIES

For employment opportunities, go to <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/get-involved/employment>. For volunteering opportunities, go to <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/get-involved/volunteering>.

Young African Australian Star Awards – Nominations Open

The Young African Australian Star Awards seek to recognise and celebrate Young African Australians in Queensland who are high performers and demonstrate outstanding achievement. From winners across the seven categories, one will be selected as the Young African Australian Star. The categories include education, professional work, citizenship and community service, the arts, leadership and sports. Young people aged between 15 and 25 years of African heritage living in Queensland are eligible for the awards across the seven categories. For more information, visit <http://www.qacc.com.au>.

Road to Refuge Volunteer Position – Event Coordinator

Road to Refuge is a volunteer, not-for-profit organisation that runs community education events and workshops to educate the Australian public on issues regarding asylum seekers and refugees. Road to Refuge is looking for an events coordinator to manage the organisations events. During a busy period, the role would involve roughly four hours of work over a week. For more information about the position, please contact info@roadtorefuge.com.

African Australian Inclusion Program (AAIP) Information Session

AAIP is a program of paid work experience and development for suitably qualified African-Australians. Seven work experience positions are being made available in NAB Sydney across: Business Administration, Marketing, Finance, Technology, Business Analysis and Customer Service. If you wish to apply for the program, please attend the information session being held on Monday 23 February from 4.50pm to 6.30pm at NAB, Level 15, 255 George Street, Sydney. To register for the information session, send an email to inclusion@jss.org.au. Provide your full name and contact number. For more information about the program, please visit <http://www.nab.com.au/about-us/careers/trainee-programs/african-australian-inclusion-program>.

Culturally Competent Practice with Vulnerable Families

VICSEG is offering a two-day course in Culturally Competent Practice with Vulnerable Families. VICSEG's cultural competence training is designed for professionals working with children and young people. For further information, please contact Judi Gray, Service Development and Partnerships on jgray@vicsegnewfutures.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)

Federal Government approves plans for new detention centre near Port Moresby

Australia is building a new immigration detention facility near Papua New Guinea's capital that PNG officials say is specifically for asylum seekers currently on Manus Island. (ABC News, 2 December) <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-12-01/australian-government-approves-new-immigration-jail-in-png/5931504>

Manus Island inquiry report delayed

A report on the fatal violence at a detention centre in Papua New Guinea has been held up. (SBS News, 3 December)

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2014/12/03/manus-island-inquiry-report-delayed>

Senate votes to bring back temporary visas after deal to get children off Christmas Island

An anguished Ricky Muir complains of "being forced into a corner to decide between a bad decision and a worse decision" as the Senate passes laws to re-introduce temporary protection visas. (ABC News, 5 December)

<http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/international/2014-12-05/temporary-protection-visas-senate-votes-to-bring-back-temporary-visas-after-deal-to-get-children-off/1396133>

Sunday Explainer: The unprecedented immigration powers awarded to Scott Morrison

A narrow Senate vote has allowed the government to again significantly recast the laws covering how it deals with asylum seekers and refugees arriving by boat. What will the changes mean? (The Age, 7 December)

<http://www.theage.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/sunday-explainer-the-unprecedented-immigration-powers-awarded-to-scott-morrison-20141206-121lo6.html>

Malcolm Fraser savages Scott Morrison's new asylum seeker laws and senators who passed them

Australia is now known around the world as the most inhumane, the most uncaring and the most selfish of all the wealthy countries, former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser has declared. (Sydney Morning Herald, 10 December)

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/malcolm-fraser-savages-scott-morrison-s-new-asylum-seeker-laws-and-senators-who-passed-them-20141210-124bp1.html>

Senate committee report says violence at Manus Island was 'eminently foreseeable'

The violence at the Manus Island detention centre in February that resulted in the death of an Iranian asylum seeker was "eminently foreseeable" according to a Senate committee report. (ABC News, 11 December)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-12-11/violence-at-manus-eminently-foreseeable-senate-report/5960752>

Iraqi refugees' visas deliberately delayed by immigration department

An 84-year-old Iraqi refugee and her daughter have had their visa grants deliberately delayed by the immigration department until the government's new temporary protection visa laws come into force, and are considering returning home to Iraq. (The Guardian, 13 December)

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2014/dec/13/iraqi-refugees-visas-deliberately-delayed-by-immigration-department>

Australia ignoring its obligation to refugees sets a dangerous precedent

The draconian Migration and Maritime Power Legislation bill is what every asylum seeker has dreaded. Many asylum seekers, who have already spent an average of two years on bridging visas, can't digest the news. (The Age, 14 December)

<http://www.theage.com.au/comment/australia-ignoring-its-obligation-to-refugees-sets-a-dangerous-precedent-20141213-124s4e.html>

Scott Morrison allows asylum seeker babies to be processed in Australia

More than 30 babies born to asylum seeker mothers in Australia will be able to stay in the mainland with their families and not be processed on Nauru under a secret deal struck by crossbencher Ricky Muir. (The Age, 18 December)

<http://www.theage.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/scott-morrison-allows-asylum-seeker-babies-to-be-processed-in-australia-20141218-12a1os.html>

Asylum seekers sue the government for negligence

An asylum seeker who suffered serious burns to his face in Iran before fleeing to Australia has initiated a class action in the Supreme Court against the Australian government, Transfield and the former security contractor G4S on Manus Island for negligence. (Sydney Morning Herald, 20 December)

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/asylum-seekers-sue-the-government-for-negligence-20141220-12az8a.html>

Manus Island detainees being put in medical isolation at rate of one a day

Almost a quarter of the 1,028 asylum seekers on the island have needed medical isolation, hospitalisation or other treatment in the past eight months, detention centre data shows, and 18 had to be emergency evacuated to Australia with a life-threatening illness. (The Guardian, 29 December)

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2014/dec/30/manus-island-detainees-being-put-in-medical-isolation-at-rate-of-one-a-day>

Refugees living on Nauru say they want to return to detention to flee violence

Refugees on Nauru say they have pleaded with Australian immigration authorities to return them to detention centres because of violence and harassment from some members of the local population. (The Guardian, 31 December)

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2014/dec/31/refugees-living-on-nauru-say-they-want-to-return-to-detention-to-fee-violence>

Focus of Immigration Department moves from resettlement to enforcement

Immigration Minister Peter Dutton wants to create the "hardest borders possible" for criminals, as he prepares to merge the immigration and customs departments into the Australian Border Force to focus heavily on weaponry and force rather than processing and settlement. (Sydney Morning Herald, 1 January)

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/focus-of-immigration-department-moves-from-resettlement-to-enforcement-20141231-12g2uo.html>

Vietnamese migrant daughter's experience mirrors that of asylum seekers

Diana Nguyen describes herself as a bit of a weird one who has grown up to excel at what her mother would call a hobby, writes Neil McMahon. (The Age, 4 January)

<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/vietnamese-migrant-daughters-experience-mirrors-that-of-asylum-seekers-20150103-12hahn.html>

Manus refugees fear being killed as they are forced into PNG community

Australia is preparing to move the first cohort of refugees on Manus Island into temporary accommodation on the island, but detainees are resisting, saying they fear being killed if moved into the community. (The Guardian, 6 January)

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/jan/06/manus-detainees-recognised-as-refugees-will-be-forced-into-png-community>

World losing capacity to prevent conflicts amid 'mega-crises' in Iraq and Syria: UN refugee chief Antonio Guterres

The world is losing its ability to prevent conflicts and the lack of "effective leadership" has led to the worst displacement situation since World War II, the UN refugee chief has warned. (ABC News, 7 January)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-01-07/world-losing-capacity-to-prevent-conflict-says-un-refugee-chief/6003544>

Abbott attacks Gillian Triggs over call to free convicted refugee John Basikbasik

Tony Abbott has launched a blistering attack on the head of Australia's human rights watchdog, calling into question her judgment. (The Guardian, 8 January)

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/jan/08/abbott-attacks-gillian-triggs-over-call-to-free-convicted-refugee-john-basikbasik>

Iranian asylum seeker resumes hunger strike in Darwin, in hospital with infected foot

An asylum seeker from Tehran who staged a hunger strike for 53 days last year has resumed his protest, saying he is now acting on behalf of 35 other Iranian migrants who are being forced to return home by the Immigration Department or face indefinite detention, his lawyers say. (The Age, 12 January)

<http://www.theage.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/iranian-asylum-seeker-resumes-hunger-strike-in-darwin-in-hospital-with-infected-foot-20150112-12mlkc.html>

Refugees kept in detention despite being told they had security clearance

There are grave concerns for the mental health of two refugees who have been in immigration limbo for over five years following adverse security findings. (The Guardian, 12 January)

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/12/refugees-detention-despite-security-clearance>

Hundreds of asylum seekers stage protest on Manus Island, detainees and advocates say

Asylum seekers inside the Manus Island processing centre have sewn their lips together in protest at their lengthy detention, poor living conditions and the prospect of resettling in Papua New Guinea. (ABC News, 15 January)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-01-14/manus-island-asylum-seekers-protest-png/6016126>

Manus Island: four asylum seekers placed in solitary confinement as tensions escalate

Amid escalating tensions inside the Manus Island detention centre, four men have been taken to the notorious "Chauka" solitary confinement unit, two for the second time since July when the men – who say they witnessed the death of Reza Barati – claim they were tied to chairs and beaten. (The Guardian, 18 January)

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/jan/18/manus-island-four-asylum-seekers-solitary-confinement-tensions-escalate>

Peter Dutton accuses protesting Manus Island asylum seekers of 'aggressive behaviour'

Protesting asylum seekers on Manus Island have been labelled "irresponsible" by Immigration Minister Peter Dutton, who urged them to stop their hunger strike. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 19 January)

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/peter-dutton-accuses-protesting-manus-island-asylum-seekers-of-aggressive-behaviour-20150119-12t1nx.html>

Manus Island asylum seekers say police, guards preparing to enter compound by force; PNG denies claim

Asylum seekers who have barricaded themselves inside a compound at the Manus Island detention centre say police and guards are preparing to enter the compound by force, a claim the PNG government denies. (ABC News, 19 January)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-01-19/manus-island-asylum-seekers-say-police-will-enter-by-force/6024962>

Baby Ferouz, born to asylum seekers in Brisbane, released from detention

Baby Ferouz, the infant son of asylum seekers who was confined in an Australian detention centre since his birth almost 15 months ago, has been released with his family into the community. (The Guardian, 20 January)

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/jan/20/baby-ferouz-released-from-detention>

Journalists reporting on asylum seekers referred to Australian police

Journalists reporting on the federal government's asylum-seeker policies have been repeatedly referred to the police in attempts to uncover confidential sources and whistleblowers, a Guardian Australia investigation can reveal. (The Guardian, 20 January)

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/jan/22/journalists-reporting-on-asylum-seekers-referred-to-australian-police>

Australian-run asylum detention centres see sharp rise in serious incidents

Documents obtained under FOI reveal self-harm, assaults and infectious medical conditions among the hundreds of injuries sustained in past year by staff and asylum seekers. (The Guardian, 21 January)
<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/jan/21/australian-run-asylum-detention-centres-see-sharp-rise-in-serious-incidents>

Australia's refugee deal with Cambodia uncertain as almost all refuse offer

Australia's controversial \$40m deal to resettle refugees in Cambodia may founder because almost all are refusing to go. (The Guardian, 22 January)
<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/jan/22/australias-refugee-deal-with-cambodia-uncertain-as-almost-all-refuse-offer>

Christmas Island asylum seeker children still waiting for release into community

Children who were promised to be moved off Christmas Island and into the community by former immigration minister Scott Morrison remain in a Darwin immigration facility. (Sydney Morning Herald, 22 January)

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/christmas-island-asylum-seeker-children-still-waiting-for-release-into-community-20150122-12vn1t.html>

NSW Premier Mike Baird tells Prime Minister Tony Abbott: 'do more' to help refugees

Premier Mike Baird has called on Prime Minister Tony Abbott to "do more" to accept refugees, saying Australia's economic strength means nothing unless we help the world's vulnerable. (Sydney Morning Herald, 23 January)

<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/nsw-premier-mike-baird-tells-prime-minister-tony-abbott-do-more-to-help-refugees-20150123-12wwcj.html>

Eight former Australians of the Year call for release of asylum seeker children

Eight former Australians of the Year have used Australia Day to call for the immediate release of all refugee and asylum seeker children from immigration detention. (The Guardian, 26 January)

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/jan/26/eight-former-australians-of-the-year-call-for-release-of-asylum-seeker-children>

Australian citizenship end of 'long journey' for Congolese family

For Bukasa Tshilengi, who escaped war torn Democratic Republic of Congo along with most of his family, a citizenship ceremony in Wollongong today marked the welcome "end of a long journey". (ABC News, 26 January)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-01-26/australian-citizenship-ends-long-journey-for-congolese-family/6047164>

Manus Island hunger strike continues as six refugees released into community

The fortnight-long hunger strike on Manus Island continues, though some compounds have decided to end the protest, and some detainees have begun life outside the wire. (The Guardian, 27 January)

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/jan/27/manus-island-hunger-strike-continues-as-six-refugees-released-into-community>

A touch of humanity, please, for Australia's Manus Island refugees

The refugees and asylum seekers in Manus and Nauru came here seeking our assistance ... they remain Australia's responsibility. (The Age, 28 January)

<http://www.theage.com.au/comment/a-touch-of-humanity-please-for-australias-manus-island-refugees-20150128-12zw9r.html>

Australia confirms 15 boats carrying 429 asylum seekers have been turned back

Immigration minister announces Operation Sovereign Border figures as commander says some turnbacks were done without Indonesian cooperation. (The Guardian, 28 January)

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/jan/28/australia-confirms-15-boats-carrying-429-asylum-seekers-have-been-turned-back>

First day at school brings hope for African refugee family

This week marks the start of the school year for thousands of Australian children. But for African-born woman, Hope, seeing her five-year-old daughter start school was an extra special moment. (ABC News, 29 January)

<http://www.abc.net.au/local/photos/2015/01/29/4170492.htm>

Asylum seeker advocates dismayed by High Court

Refugee advocates have slammed a High Court ruling that the Australian Government acted lawfully when it detained 157 asylum seekers at sea for a month last year. (Pro Bono News, 29 January)

<http://www.probonoaustralia.com.au/news/2015/01/asylum-seeker-advocates-dismayed-high-court-ruling>

Our obligations still apply despite High Court win

The High Court decision on the detention of Tamil asylum seekers at sea turned on a technical reading of statutory provisions, not an assessment of Australia's international refugee and human rights obligations. (Sydney Morning Herald, 30 January)

<http://www.smh.com.au/comment/our-obligations-still-apply-despite-high-court-win-20150129-1316fm.html>

Manus Island: UN questions PNG's plans to return asylum seekers, says lives are at risk in Iraq, Iran

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees has questioned Papua New Guinea's plans to send back asylum seekers currently detained on Manus Island. (ABC News, 30 January)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-01-30/un-questions-return-of-asylum-seekers-from-manus-island/6056752>

Sinhalese asylum seekers' on-water claims accepted by UN

Asylum seekers sent back to Sri Lanka after Scott Morrison's 'on-water' interviewing have been confirmed as refugees by the UNHCR. (The Saturday Paper, 31 January)

<https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/news/politics/2015/01/31/sinhalese-asylum-seekers-water-claims-accepted-un/14226228001441>