



# Refugee Council of Australia

## **BULLETIN FOR MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS**

**11 June 2015**

Welcome to the latest bulletin from the Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA). Of course we are very excited and busy, with Refugee Week preparations and thanks to all of you who have gone to such great effort to host an event – we have more than 140 registered on our calendar. It's such a great opportunity to highlight the positive contributions that so many refugees have made to Australia. We always welcome feedback, ideas or information worth sharing, so please contact us at [admin@refugeecouncil.org.au](mailto:admin@refugeecouncil.org.au).

*Paul Power, CEO, Refugee Council of Australia*

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## **NEWS FROM THE REFUGEE COUNCIL**

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### **Refugee Week 14-20 June**

Refugee Week 2015 will officially begin this weekend. The NSW Refugee Week launch will be held on Friday 12 June from 10:30am to 12:00pm at Warrawong High School near Wollongong. The event, organised by RCOA, the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS), Settlement Services International (SSI) and Illawarra Multicultural Services (IMS) will feature speakers from refugee backgrounds and entertainment, MC'ed by Janice Petersen from SBS News. Victoria will kick off Refugee Week 2015 with a launch in Sunshine at the VISY Cares Hub Theatre on Monday 15 June from 9:45am to 12:00pm, organised in partnership with Brimbank City Council. The event will feature key note speakers, live music and a fashion show (RSVP via [cpevents@brimbank.vic.gov.au](mailto:cpevents@brimbank.vic.gov.au)). In Adelaide, Refugee Week will be launched on Monday 15 June at 5.00pm-6pm at Government House (entry is by invitation only). Dozens of events will be taking place across the country during the week. To find out about events happening in your areas, go to <http://www.refugeeweek.org.au/events>. Events are being continually added to our calendar so keep checking the website for the latest details. If you haven't done so already, you can register your event using the form at <http://www.refugeeweek.org.au/events/register-your-event> or send through your event flyer to [media@refugeecouncil.org.au](mailto:media@refugeecouncil.org.au).

### **Refugee Council calls for Australian action to protect Rohingya lives at risk**

Last month, the long-standing Rohingya refugee situation in South-East Asia reached a point of crisis as thousands of people fleeing by boat across the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea became stranded on the ocean. As the crisis escalated, RCOA wrote to every member of the Federal Parliament to bring their attention to this matter and to ask that they strongly encourage the Australian Government to advocate for the development of a comprehensive response to the situation of the Rohingya people. Our CEO Paul Power and Communications Director Tim O'Connor also travelled to Canberra to discuss the issue directly with parliamentarians. We issued several media releases over two weeks, calling on the Australian Government to play a more constructive role in supporting regional efforts to respond to the situation of the humanitarian crisis: [Call for Australian action to protect Rohingya](#), [Why are Australian's silent on Rohingya deaths at sea](#) and [Australia closes door on persecuted Rohingya](#). Our full briefing [Understanding and responding to the Rohingya crisis](#) can be downloaded here.

### **Mean-spirited Budget will harm Australia's global reputation**

RCOA has labelled the 2015-16 Federal Budget as 'mean-spirited' and 'short-sighted' for its failure to respond to the world's growing humanitarian crises. RCOA CEO Paul Power said that "The massive cut in the overseas aid budget and the Government's failure to begin reversing its 2013 cut to the Refugee and

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Humanitarian Program will be viewed internationally as signs that Australia is indifferent to the massive displacement of refugees in the Middle East or the large-scale humanitarian crises in Asia and Africa.” [Our media release on the 2015-16 budget](#) can be read at and our [summary of budget measures affecting refugees and asylum seekers can be downloaded here](#).

### **RCOA hosts inaugural Refugee Community Advocacy Conference**

On 30-31 May, RCOA hosted the inaugural Refugee Community Advocacy Conference in Melbourne. The statewide conference brought together refugee community representatives from across Victoria to discuss, prioritise and advocate on local, state, national and international issues of greatest concern to them. The provided a unique opportunity for former refugees to learn and share amongst each other so that they may both focus and amplify their efforts to improve the situation for asylum seekers and people from refugee backgrounds in Australia. The conference, which was generously hosted by Colin Biggers and Paisley Lawyers, also offered participants a chance to meet with Federal and State parliamentarians. The conference represented the culmination of RCOA’s work over the past year to build a statewide advocacy network in Victoria for people from refugee backgrounds.

### **Refugee Council welcomes NSW opening doors to refugees**

RCOA has welcomed the commitment of the NSW Government to sign up to the Federal Government’s Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV) scheme which encourages refugees to work or study in regional areas. In his announcing the NSW Government’s policy, NSW Premier Mike Baird said that NSW had “an obligation to open its arms to those who are refugees”, noting that his state would “take more than our fair share” in areas outside Wollongong, Newcastle and Sydney. Paul Power, CEO of RCOA, said “While there is no doubt that the visa category was developed as part of the Federal Government’s punitive response to persecuted people who arrived by boat, NSW Premier Mike Baird has demonstrated a much more constructive and welcoming attitude to refugees than his Federal counterparts in agreeing to participate.” Read our [statement here](#).

### **Australia’s refugee deal with Cambodia repugnant and unsustainable**

As the first refugees arrived in Cambodia under its so-called resettled arrangement with Australia, RCOA criticised the spending of \$55.5 million to send just four people to Cambodia to prevent them seeking asylum in Australia as “morally repugnant”. RCOA CEO Paul Power said that “The Australian Government’s decision to spend \$55 million to send just four confirmed refugees to one of the world’s least developed countries, is in breach of Australia’s international obligations, financially unsustainable for the Australian taxpayer and sets a morally repugnant precedent.” [Read our full statement here](#).

### **Refugee Council to UN: Detention conditions on Nauru ilke ‘Lord of the Flies’**

In May, RCOA met delegates of the UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment to raise serious ongoing concerns regarding the lack of oversight, safety and protection for asylum seekers detained at Australia’s behest on Nauru. We expressed serious ongoing concerns regarding the safety and protection of asylum seekers, particularly children and women have not been adequately investigated nor addressed on Nauru. Paul Power, CEO of RCOA, said “The situation for children, women and men in detention on Nauru is like ‘Lord of the Flies’, particularly at night time when the sense of lawlessness is at its worst. There must be accountability for the children and adults affected by this abuse and importantly, the Australian Government’s culpability needs to be urgently investigated by an independent body.” Read our [full media release here](#).

### **Increase In Australian refugee intake needed now, not later**

RCOA is calling on the Australian Government to immediately increase the Refugee and Humanitarian Program to at least 20,000 places in the coming year and rapidly scale-up the intake to 30,000 places in light of escalating global protection needs. The world is facing the worst crisis in global displacement since World War II with more than 51 million people displaced, including more than 18 million refugees requiring safety and protection. For every resettlement place offered by the international community, there are 11 refugees who are in urgent need of resettlement. This year less than one per cent of the world’s refugees will get the opportunity to be safely resettled. While we welcome the Australian Government’s medium term plan to increase the number of people it resettles, it is clear that Australia must do much more in assisting the global community deal with the growing challenge of displaced people and refugees. [Read our full media release here](#).

## **RCOA raises concerns about Australian Border Force legislation**

RCOA made a submission to the Senate inquiry into the legislation which will amalgamate the Department of Immigration and Border Protection and the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service into a single agency, the Australian Border Force. We raised a number of concerns about the legislation, in particular the provisions which may hamper Australian Border Force employees and contractors from revealing cases of misconduct or abuse, prevent consideration of work health and safety issues and grant inappropriate powers to some staff members. RCOA also expressed overriding concerns about the shift from a facilitation-centred approach to migration, refugee protection and citizenship to an enforcement-centred approach. [The submission can be read here.](#)

## **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 here](#) Our Twitter handle is @OzRefugeeCounc

## **COMING EVENTS**

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This month, dozens of events are being held across the country to celebrate Refugee Week. Find events in your area using our [online Refugee Week calendar](#).

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

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### **Mental health impact of settlement experiences amongst refugees and asylum seekers**

Refugee Trauma and Recovery Program (RTRP) is conducting a study on the mental health impact of settlement experiences amongst refugees and asylum seekers. Participation in this project is open to all refugees and asylum-seekers who have arrived in Australia since January 2011 and are over 18 years of age. Participation involves completing a series of online surveys containing questions about their experience as a refugee or asylum seeker, in their own language. The survey is currently available in Farsi, Arabic, Tamil and English. Eligible participants will be reimbursed for taking part (a \$25.00 voucher every time they complete a survey). Visit <http://www.rtp-research.com/refugeeadjustmentstudy> or call 1300 130 700.

### **Israel's coercion of asylum-seekers to return home**

*Where there is no free will*, a recent report from Israeli organisations document Israel's myriad methods aiming at disguising deportation of Eritreans and Sudanese asylum seekers as 'voluntary return'. Over the past two years, 9,000 African asylum-seekers have "voluntarily" left Israel, 1,205 of which to third countries. The report demonstrates how Israel coerces asylum-seekers, especially those detained in Holot detention centre, into returning to their homelands or third countries, such as Uganda and Rwanda, where they face human rights violations. <http://hotline.org.il/en/publication/where-there-is-no-free-will/>

### **Civilian perspectives on the conflict in Sudan's Southern Kordofan State**

A new report [We just want a rest from war](#) launched by the International Refugee Rights Initiative and the National Human Rights Monitoring Organisation brings the voices of civilians living through the conflict in Sudan's Southern Kordofan State to the international community. Focusing on the devastating impact of the conflict on every aspect of people's lives, the report highlights the extraordinary resilience and resistance of the civilian population. Inevitably, however, this resilience is also being worn away by the continuing onslaught.

### **Syrian Refugees In Turkey: The Long Road Ahead**

[This Report by the Migration Policy Institute](#) provides an overview of Turkey's migration landscape and the position of Syrian refugees in Turkey today. It assesses current policy approaches to displaced Syrians in Turkey, looks at changes in Turkey's asylum and protection regime and discusses ongoing challenges and future policy directions in this area.

### **Working with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) adolescents.**

[This resource highlights the issues research has identified](#) as commonly experienced by CALD adolescents. It provides links to evidence-based reports, resources and practice examples for hands-on

application when working with CALD young people. Responses to specific issues are available throughout the resource to support professionals in the child, family and community welfare sectors.

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

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Click [here for employment opportunities](#), and [here for volunteering opportunities](#).

### **2015 Australian Migration & Settlement Awards.**

Nominations are now open for these national awards which provide a unique opportunity to recognise and celebrate the work of extraordinary individuals and organisations that go above and beyond in assisting new migrants to settle and feel included. Nominate at [www.migrationcouncil.org.au](http://www.migrationcouncil.org.au) before midnight, 19 June 2015. Winners of each category will be announced at a Gala Dinner, in the Great Hall of Parliament House on 18 August 2015.

### **Parenting in a New Culture early intervention and prevention program**

Developed by Spectrum MRC provides culturally sensitive parenting education through facilitated workshops and downloadable family resources, supported by professional instruction materials. New resources have been developed to build the capacity of the community services sector in response to increasing demand for specialist family intervention and parenting support in refugee and migrant communities in metropolitan Melbourne and can be accessed at <http://www.parentinginaculture.org.au>.

### **Global Refugee Youth Consultations (2015-2016)**

Led by UNHCR and the Women's Refugee Commission, these consultations aim to promote dialogue and provide an environment for refugee youth to build alliances and networks at a national and global level, provide opportunities for refugee youth (girls and boys, young men and women) to emerge as leaders, and to strengthen understanding of the needs and desires of refugee youth and in the process contribute to the development of better programmes for their benefit. Settlement Services International (SSI) is leading implementation of consultations in Australia and is seeking expressions of interest from organisations who would like to volunteer to contribute to the consultations prior to February 2016. This will be the first time that the UNHCR consultations have focussed on youth and will be a unique opportunity to ensure that young people's voices are heard from all over the world and that the protection needs of youth may be given greater weight in the future. Please email [UNHCRyouth@ssi.org.au](mailto:UNHCRyouth@ssi.org.au)

## **REFUGEE ISSUES IN THE MEDIA**

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A busy person's digest of some recent media coverage of refugee issues:

(Inclusion in this summary does not imply that RCOA agrees with the article's content or vouches for its accuracy)

### **Hunger striker close to death, Greens call for Federal Government to 'show compassion'**

The Greens have called on the Federal Government to "show compassion" towards an Iranian asylum seeker believed to be near death from a hunger strike in a West Australian hospital. (ABC News, 1 April) <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-04-01/greens-call-for-compassion-for-hunger-striker/6364584>

### **Asylum seekers transferred to maximum security prison in WA**

A group of immigration detainees involved in recent protests or deemed "high risk" have been moved to Perth's maximum security Casuarina prison. (ABC News, 2 April) <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-04-02/asylum-seekers-held-in-prison-in-wa/6368220>

### **Perth's Archbishop calls for compassion for hunger striker near death in hospital**

The Catholic Archbishop of Perth has used his Good Friday message to ask for compassion to be shown to an Iranian asylum seeker who is near death in hospital. (ABC News, 3 April) <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-04-03/perth-archbishop-calls-for-compassion-for-hunger-striker/6370296>

### **Real Australians Say Welcome: New street-art campaign highlights diversity**

A new street-art campaign was launched today aimed at getting people talking about multiculturalism and embracing diversity. (SBS News, 6 April)

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2015/04/06/new-street-art-campaign-aims-make-australians-more-welcoming>

### **Bladin Point Immigration Detention facility shuts down near Darwin**

The Bladin Point Immigration Detention Facility near Darwin has officially shut. Refugee support groups are pleased about its closure, but Melaleuca Refugee Centre director Caz Coleman said she was also worried about what it meant for asylum seekers who were moved next door to the Wickham Point Detention Centre. (ABC News, 7 April)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-04-07/darwin-immigration-detention-facility-shuts-down/6376158>

### **Mental health workers say Australia knew of refugee child abuse**

A group of psychiatrists and social workers formerly employed at an Australian offshore immigration detention center publicly accused the government on Tuesday of failing to act over systemic child sexual abuse at the controversial facility. (Reuters, 7 April)

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/04/07/us-australia-refugees-abuse-idUSKBNOMYOD020150407>

### **Syrian refugee site assault 'beyond inhumane'**

Conditions in the one-time Yarmouk refugee camp in the Syrian capital have been described as "beyond inhumane", with thousands trapped in the rubble, pounded from the air by government jets and stalked on the ground by Islamist gunmen. (The Australian, 8 April)

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/syrian-refugee-site-assault-beyond-inhumane/story-e6frg6so-1227294733423>

### **A full inquiry is needed into detention regime**

Editorial calling for an inquiry into Australia's immigration detention system both onshore and offshore and the release of all children from detention (The Age, 9 April)

<http://www.theage.com.au/comment/the-age-editorial/a-full-inquiry-is-needed-into-detention-regime-20150408-1mgnyd.html>

### **Nauru refugees 'less than second class citizens'**

A refugee advocate says a new law on protesting in Nauru shows the government views refugees as being less than second class citizens. Ian Rintoul of the Refugee Action Coalition says a new law, which is directed at refugees, requires protesters to give seven days notice before demonstrating or they face \$3000 fines (Australian dollars) or two years in jail. (Radio New Zealand, 10 April)

<http://www.radionz.co.nz/news/pacific/270871/nauru-refugees-'less-than-second-class-citizens'>

### **View from the Street: Government miniseries targeted at lucrative 'refugee' demographic**

The government has revealed plans to make a \$4.1 million telemovie to dissuade asylum seekers from coming here, because of course they are. The plan is that it will be shown "in refugee hotspots including Syria, Afghanistan and Iran", since there's nothing that refugees in war-torn countries enjoy more at the end of a long, terrifying day than kicking back to watch some pulse-pounding, action-packed, foreign government-approved television. (Sydney Morning Herald, 12 April)

<http://www.smh.com.au/comment/view-from-the-street/view-from-the-street-government-miniseries-targeted-at-lucrative-refugee-demographic-20150412-1mjdj.html>

### **Peter Dutton defends asylum seeker work rights process amid backlog of applicants**

Immigration Minister Peter Dutton has defended the process for granting work rights to asylum seekers living in the community. (ABC News, 13 April)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-04-13/peter-dutton-defends-work-rights-process-for-asylum-seekers/6389996>

### **Refused asylum seekers face personal data disclosure by Immigration department**

Refused asylum seekers can have their personal information disclosed to foreign governments in order to obtain travel documents if they are involuntarily deported, according to an immigration department manual. (The Guardian, 13 April)

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/apr/13/failed-asylum-seekers-face-personal-data-disclosure-by-immigration-department>

### **Fear of being sent to Manus or Nauru the cause of asylum seeker self-harm in Darwin detention, advocates say**

Fear of being sent to offshore detention on Manus Island or Nauru has caused a sudden spike in self-harm incidents at Darwin's detention centre, with up to 15 in the past three weeks, advocates said. (ABC News, 14 April)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-04-13/manus-and-nauru-fear-causes-self-harm-asylum-seekers-darwin/6388572>

### **Graduation day for former Christmas Island refugee Hadi Hosseini**

Hadi Hosseini remembers the experience of living in detention like living in "a factory for making people crazy." Born in an Iranian refugee camp to Afghan parents, Mr Hosseini arrived on Christmas Island aged 17 in 2010. He knew not a word of English. (Sydney Morning Herald, 15 April)

<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/graduation-day-for-former-christmas-island-refugee-hadi-hosseini-20150415-1mlkuz.html>

### **Refugees volunteer to be flown to Cambodia for resettlement 'in a safe country'**

The first group of refugees from the tiny Pacific island of Nauru are expected to be flown to Cambodia as early as next week as part of a controversial \$40 million resettlement deal. Up to 10 people are believed to have said they will abandon their hopes of living in Australia and make the journey to impoverished Cambodia, sources say. (Sydney Morning Herald, 16 April)

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/refugees-volunteer-to-be-flown-to-cambodia-for-resettlement-in-a-safe-country-20150415-1mlzv2.html>

### **Detention centre interpreters need more training for 'hazardous' work – report**

Interpreters who are deployed to immigration detention centres should be given resilience training so that they can prepare for the "challenging and hazardous" conditions of the facilities, a report has recommended. (The Guardian, 17 April)

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/apr/17/detention-centre-interpreters-need-more-training-for-hazardous-work-report>

### **UNICEF urges Australia, Cambodia to protect rights of child refugees in Nauru**

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) raised concerns today regarding reported decisions by the Governments of Australia and Cambodia to start transferring refugees currently in an Australian-funded processing centre in Nauru to Cambodia for settlement. (UN News, 17 April)

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=50612#.VVRW3Fmqkpk>

### **Cambodia says no refugee arrivals imminent, contradicting Peter Dutton**

Cambodian officials have confirmed they are sending a delegation to Nauru to discuss settlement plans, but have said no arrivals were imminent from the island, contradicting comments by Australia's immigration minister, Peter Dutton. (The Guardian, 20 April)

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/apr/20/cambodia-says-no-refugee-arrivals-imminent-contradicting-peter-dutton>

### **Asylum seeker lawyers given Christmas Island access ahead of demolition plans**

Lawyers for asylum seekers who were held on Christmas Island are set to gain unprecedented access to the detention centre after a judge ordered any demolition plans in the island be halted. (The Guardian, 21 April)

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/apr/21/asylum-seeker-lawyers-given-christmas-island-access-ahead-of-demolition-plans>

### **Legal action being taken to stop 5yo asylum seeker with PTSD in Wickham Point detention centre being returned to Nauru**

A five-year-old asylum seeker in a Darwin detention centre is suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and has been prescribed anti-depressants amid fears she may be sent back to Nauru, a Darwin lawyer says. (ABC News, 21 April)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-04-21/5yo-asylum-seeker-with-ptsd-in-darwin-detention/6407632>

### **Immigration officials screened Vietnamese asylum seekers aboard navy ship**

Immigration Department officials evaluated and rejected the asylum claims of 46 Vietnamese aboard an Australia navy vessel before the entire group was handed back to the Communist government last week, Fairfax Media has learned. (Sydney Morning Herald, 22 April)

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/immigration-officials-screened-vietnamese-asylum-seekers-aboard-navy-ship-20150422-1mqo6i.html>

### **Europe seeks Aust advice on boat influx**

European foreign ministers have sought Australia's advice in dealing with their asylum seeker crisis following 800 drowning deaths in the past week. Foreign Minister Julie Bishop says the ministers have raised the matter with her during her visit to Europe and it was discussed during the North Atlantic Council meeting on Friday. (SkyNews, 25 April)

<http://www.skynews.com.au/news/politics/national/2015/04/25/europe-seeks-aust-advice-on-boat-influx.html>

### **The Vietnamese refugees who changed white Australia**

More than 80,000 Vietnamese people moved to Australia in the decade following the Vietnam War, many as refugees. Thursday, April 30 marks 40 years since the North Vietnamese took the South's capital of Saigon and renamed it Ho Chi Minh City after their former nationalist leader. (SBS News, 28 April)

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2015/04/14/vietnamese-refugees-who-changed-white-australia>

### **SBS's interactive graphic novel *The Boat* brings Vietnamese refugee experience to life**

White sticks of rain spear down across the screen. A ship dips toward a swelling grey ocean as the crane on its deck swings recklessly about. Wind howls, thunder cracks. A black cloud lingers above. The boat is sinking. "Scroll down" to see what happens next. (Sydney Morning Herald, 28 April)

<http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/books/sbss-interactive-graphic-novel-the-boat-brings-vietnamese-refugee-experience-to-life-20150428-1muwo7.html#ixzz3YeXtOeN9>

### **As refugees set to arrive for resettling, Cambodians keep leaving**

Tens of thousands of Cambodians are paying to be smuggled into other south-east Asian countries to work illegally, as Australia prepares to send refugees to their country from Nauru. A new United Nations report says criminal gangs are using south-east Asia as a source and destination for illegal labour but the workers have little ability to assert their basic rights and become vulnerable to abuse, trafficking and exploitation. (Sydney Morning Herald, 30 April)

<http://www.smh.com.au/world/as-refugees-set-to-arrive-for-resettling-cambodians-keep-leaving-20150430-1mwhm8>

### **Abbott boat policy will not solve long-term crisis of asylum: Lowy Institute**

The Abbott government's success in stopping the boats has "sullied Australia's global standing" and, whilst proving a short-term success, the hard line policy will not solve the long-term asylum seeker crisis, a leading foreign policy and migration expert says. (Sydney Morning Herald, 30 April)

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/abbott-boat-policy-will-not-solve-longterm-crisis-of-asylum-lowy-institute-20150429-1mw5g8.html>

### **'New restrictions imposed' on refugees on Manus Island**

A refugee advocacy group says Australian immigration authorities are removing refugees' basic rights on Papua New Guinea's Manus Island to make them leave detention. (SBS News, 1 May)

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2015/04/30/new-restrictions-imposed-refugees-manus-island>

### **Friendship Cafe offers community support for refugee women**

A friendship program is helping refugee and migrant women overcome the difficulties of their past to thrive in their new lives. The Victorian Immigrant and Refugee Women's Coalition's 'Friendship Cafe' offers community support to refugee and migrant women in the form of weekly gatherings and classes. (SBS News, 2 May)

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2015/05/02/friendship-cafe-offers-community-support-refugee-women>

### **Asylum seekers distressed as Facebook blocked in Nauru**

The Nauru government has blocked access to Facebook under the guise of a crackdown on online pornography, an opposition MP says. (Sydney Morning Herald, 3 May)

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/asylum-seekers-distressed-as-facebook-blocked-in-nauru-20150503-1myopr.html>

### **Citizenship for sale: government explores price-based immigration system**

The Australian government would sell the right to immigrate to Australia - with migrants no longer accepted based on their skills or family connections - under radical proposals being examined by the government's independent think tank. (Sydney Morning Herald, 4 May)

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/citizenship-for-sale-government-explores-pricebased-immigration-system-20150503-1myvwk.html>

### **Asylum seekers' mental health data collected but not used, says expert**

Mental health screening data on asylum seekers held in detention is still being collected but not used or analysed, a former mental health director within Australia's immigration detention system has said. (The Guardian, 5 May)

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/may/05/asylum-seekers-mental-health-data-collected-but-not-used-says-expert>

### **Health screening program for refugee and migrant children under funding threat**

Serious illnesses in vulnerable refugee and migrant children risk going undetected if a New South Wales screening program fails to secure state government funding. (The Guardian, 6 May)

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/may/06/health-screening-program-refugee-migrant-children-funding-threat>

### **UN rights experts urge Nauru to set up monitoring body for asylum-seekers detained on island**

A group of United Nations human rights experts today called on Nauru to set up an independent monitoring body to ensure that the country meets its obligations to treat people in detention correctly. (UN News, 6 May)

[http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=50782#.VXkde\\_mqpBd](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=50782#.VXkde_mqpBd)

### **Australia to send small refugee group to Cambodia 'very shortly': Dutton**

A small group asylum seekers will be transferred to Cambodia 'very shortly', Immigration Minister Peter Dutton has told reporters in Sri Lanka. (SBS News, 7 May)

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2015/05/07/australia-send-small-refugee-group-cambodia-very-shortly-dutton>

### **Report to UN busts asylum seeker myths: Researcher**

A comprehensive report to the United Nations busts common myths about people smuggling, according to its Queensland-based author. (Brisbane Times, 9 May)

<http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/queensland/report-to-un-busts-asylum-seeker-myths-researcher-20150508-ggvo2n.html>

### **Australia is last country Thailand should consult on refugee problem**

During Australian Foreign Affairs Minister Julia Bishop's visit to Thailand on Friday it was announced that Australia would join a regional summit on the refugee problem, to be hosted by Thailand. (Nation, 11 May)

<http://www.nationmultimedia.com/opinion/Australia-is-last-country-Thailand-should-consult-30259850.html>

### **Malaysia detains hundreds of migrants arriving on boats**

Malaysian police say more than 1,000 migrants from Myanmar and Bangladesh have been "illegally" trying to enter the country at the popular resort island of Langkawi. The 1,018 migrants, many thought to be members of Myanmar's long-persecuted Rohingya Muslim community, landed on Langkawi late on Sunday night. (Aljazeera, 11 May)

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/05/150511065720103.html>

### **Budget 2015: Christmas Island detention facilities to close, centre 'disaster' for community: shire president**

The immigration detention centre on Christmas Island has been a "disaster" for the community, the shire's president has said, in the wake of this year's federal budget outlining the winding down of detention facilities. (ABC News, 13 May)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-05-13/christmas-island-detention-centre-to-close/6465266>

### **Peter Dutton confirms refugee transfers from Nauru to Cambodia**

Immigration Minister Peter Dutton has confirmed that a small number of refugees from Nauru are in the process of being transferred and resettled in Cambodia. This is the first group of refugees to be transferred to the Asian country after the deal worth \$40 million was signed by the Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen in September last year. (Sydney Morning Herald, 14 May)

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/peter-dutton-confirms-refugee-transfers-from-nauru-to-cambodia-20150514-gh1bcj.html>

### **Lawyers appalled at asylum seeker's treatment after suicide attempt on Nauru**

Lawyers for a 23-year-old Tamil asylum seeker say they are appalled at the way she was treated when she was brought to Australia for medical help after attempting suicide on Nauru. (ABC News, 15 May)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-05-14/lawyers-appalled-at-asylum-seekers-treatment/6471132>

### **Somalian refugee Abdi Aden tells his story of survival**

I arrived in the city – the capital of Romania, in Eastern Europe – in 1991. I was 16. With my parents and sister gone, I'd raided the cache of money in our house in Mogadishu and bought a ticket to Cairo then Bucharest, where I moved from house to house. You are not a refugee simply because you have no home and no country. No, you become a refugee little by little. (The Australian, 16 May)

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/life/weekend-australian-magazine/somalian-refugee-abdi-aden-tells-his-story-of-survival/story-e6frg8h6-1227356489843>

### **Stranded Rohingya migrants say: 'We're dying on board'**

A boat filled with around 380 men, women and children from Western Myanmar and Bangladesh was found off the coast of Sathun Province, Thailand, last week. Those on board say the ship's traffickers and captain escaped, leaving them without food or water. (Aljazeera, 17 May)

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/05/stranded-rohingya-migrants-dying-board-150517130244345.html>

### **Stand firm on boats, says Tony Abbott**

Tony Abbott has warned that more people will die at sea unless tougher action on people-smugglers is taken across Southeast Asia and North Africa, amid increasingly desperate diplomatic efforts to confront the deepening crisis in the region. (The Australian, 18 May)

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/immigration/stand-firm-on-boats-says-tony-abbott/story-fn9hm1gu-1227358293135>

### **'They hit us, with hammers, by knife': Rohingya migrants tell of horror at sea**

Crowded under tarpaulin tents strewn with rubbish and boxes of water, the Burmese and Bangladeshi migrants speak of horrors at sea: of murders, of killing each other over scarce supplies of food and water, of corpses thrown overboard. (The Guardian, 18 May)

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/17/they-hit-us-with-hammers-by-knife-rohingya-migrants-tell-of-horror-at-sea>

### **South East Asian migrant crisis: Three boats rescued and thousands more stranded at sea**

The United Nations refugee agency is warning that thousands of migrants stranded in the seas off South East Asia will die if no one mounts a search and rescue effort to find them. (ABC Radio, 18 May)

<http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2015/s4237632.htm>

### **Nauru abuse inquiry: Senior managers unable to answer key questions**

Senior managers of the Australian company running the Nauru detention facility have been unable to answer key questions at a Senate Inquiry into abuse allegations, prompting a Senator to describe their lack of knowledge as "extraordinary". (SBS News, 19 May)

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2015/05/18/nauru-abuse-inquiry-senior-managers-unable-answer-key-questions>

### **Philippines to accept refugees stuck at sea after being rejected across south-east Asia**

Philippines raises hopes of a breakthrough in the south-east Asian migrant crisis, saying it will accept boat people rejected by Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia. (Telegraph UK, 19 May)

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/philippines/11614909/Philippines-to-accept-refugees-stuck-at-sea-after-being-rejected-across-south-east-Asia.html>

### **South-east Asian countries meet to discuss refugee crisis in the Andaman Sea**

South-east Asian countries will today meet to discuss the humanitarian disaster unfolding in the Andaman Sea. (ABC Radio, 20 May)

<http://www.abc.net.au/radio/programitem/pg0J7005IG>

### **Iraqi man sentenced to 10 years in jail for organising two asylum seeker boats to Australia**

An Iraqi man has been sentenced to 10 years in jail for organising two asylum seeker boats to go to Australia in 2001. Sayed Omeid, 43, from Erbil in Iraq's north, had pleaded guilty to the people smuggling charges in March. (ABC News, 20 May)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-05-20/iraqi-people-smuggler-sentenced/6483612>

### **Cambodia approves taking first four refugees from Australia as part of \$40m deal**

Cambodia has approved the transfer of four refugees from Australia as part of a controversial agreement under which the south-east Asian nation has received almost \$40 million in additional aid from Canberra. (Sydney Morning Herald, 21 May)

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/cambodia-approves-taking-first-four-refugees-from-australia-as-part-of-40m-deal-20150521-gh7360.html>

### **Labor's left faction pushes for ban on asylum seeker boat turnbacks**

Labor left figures are pushing the federal leadership to explicitly prohibit turning asylum boats back to Indonesia or elsewhere in the lead-up to Labor's national conference in July. (The Guardian, 21 May)

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/may/21/labors-left-faction-pushes-for-ban-on-asylum-seeker-boat-turnbacks>

### **Rohingya refugee crisis: finding a regional solution won't be easy**

Efforts to find a regional solution to the Rohingya refugee crisis will fail unless members of the international community such as Australia lend their full support, writes Trevor Wilson.

(ABC The Drum, 22 May)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-05-22/wilson-rohingya-refugee-crisis-finding-a-regional-solution/6490526>

### **Indonesia slams Australia's refugee resettlement refusal**

Indonesia has criticised Australia's refusal to settle any of the thousands of people stranded at sea in south-east Asia. Indonesia has criticised Australia's refusal to settle any of the thousands of people stranded at sea in south-east Asia. (SBS News, 22 May)

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2015/05/22/indonesia-slams-australias-refugee-resettlement-refusal>

### **PNG leader Peter O'Neill calls for Australian Intervention In Myanmar Rohingya crisis**

Papua New Guinea's leader Peter O'Neill has called on Australia and other countries to intervene more robustly to address the humanitarian crisis in Myanmar, warning that developing nations like his cannot resettle refugees indefinitely. (Sydney Morning Herald, 24 May)

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/png-leader-peter-oneill-calls-for-australian-intervention-in-myanmar-rohingya-crisis-20150524-gh8gui.html>

### **Migrants Flooding Into Malaysia and Indonesia Trade One Nightmare for Another**

GELUGOR, Malaysia – The more than 3,000 migrants from Bangladesh and Myanmar who recently landed in Indonesia and Malaysia ended weeks of a nightmare at sea only to fall into an administrative limbo that could last years, even decades. (NY Times, 25 May)

[http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/26/world/asia/migrants-flooding-into-malaysia-trade-one-nightmare-for-another.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/26/world/asia/migrants-flooding-into-malaysia-trade-one-nightmare-for-another.html?_r=1)

### **Vietnamese asylum seekers secretly held at sea for more than a month, commander tells Senate estimates**

A group of Vietnamese asylum seekers were held secretly at sea for more than a month before being sent back to their home country, the commander in charge of Australia's border operations has revealed. (ABC News, 26 May)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-05-25/australia-confirms-vietnamese-asylum-seekers-detained-at-sea/6496290>

### **More than 280 assaults reported in detention centres in three months, Immigration Department reveals**

The Immigration Department has revealed there have been fifteen allegations of sexual assault – two involving children – and 270 reports of other types of assault in immigration detention centres in the past three months. (ABC News, 27 May)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-05-26/hundreds-of-assaults-reported-in-detention-centres-gov-says/6499000>

### **Court orders Immigration to compensate lawyers over blocked camp access**

The Immigration Department has been forced to pay at least \$10,000 compensation to lawyers who were denied access to a compound at the Christmas Island detention centre, after the Victorian Supreme Court found staff at the centre had behaved in a "high-handed" manner, with an "unacceptable disregard" for the rule of law. (Sydney Morning Herald, 28 May)

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/court-orders-immigration-to-compensate-lawyers-over-blocked-camp-access-20150527-ghap96.html>

### **Human rights groups condemn Nauru's criminalisation of political protest**

International human rights groups have condemned the Nauruan government's recent attempts to criminalise political protest and censor web access, and urged it to lift restrictions. (The Guardian, 28 May)

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/28/human-rights-groups-condemn-naurus-criminalisation-of-political-protest>

### **Australia accused of being nationalistic, xenophobic ahead of regional people smuggling talks**

Australia has been accused of being xenophobic, parochial and nationalistic in its response to asylum seekers, on the eve of a regional people smuggling summit. (ABC News, 29 May)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-05-28/australia-accused-of-being-xenophobic-in-migrant-crisis-response/6503844>

### **NSW offers regional visas to refugees**

Asylum seekers who bypass the city for the country will be settled in NSW regional towns as the state becomes the first to sign up to Australia's new Safe Haven Enterprise Visa scheme. (News.com.au, 31 May)

<http://www.news.com.au/national/breaking-news/nsw-offers-regional-visas-to-refugees/story-e6frfku9-1227376585378>

**Doctors say Nauru refugee boy could be disabled without urgent surgery on arm**

Australian doctors fear an 11-year-old refugee boy living in the community on Nauru could be permanently disabled if he does not receive urgent surgery on his arm. Doctors for Refugees co-founder Dr Barri Phatarfod is concerned those resettled on the island are not getting access to appropriate medical care. (The Guardian, 31 May)

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/may/31/doctors-say-nauru-refugee-boy-could-be-disabled-without-urgent-surgery-on-arm>