

Immigration	Page		Page
High Court challenge to Manus	1	Stopping boats will take years	8
High Court rejection	2	Info for citizenship applicants	8
Asylum cases put in doubt	2	New SOL	9
Amalgamation of Tribunals	2	Moves to amend requirements 457	10
Australian Border Force	3	Pilbara wants Nod for 457	10
Customs and DIBP	3		10
ASIO's new powers	3		
Moves to stymie challenges	4	Offshore Detention Centres	11
Appeals process tightened	5	Christmas Island to become hub	11
RCOA funding	5	Children in detention	11
RCOA needs your help	6		
Fast-track study visas extended	6	DFAT	
English language tests	7	Australia funds PNG case	12
Europe's boat people numbers		PNG's lack of progress	12
		A.P.B. Education	13

Department of Immigration and Border Protection

High Court hears Manus Island detention centre constitutionally invalid

A High Court challenge to the Manus Island detention centre has heard laws establishing the facility are constitutionally invalid. The challenge has been launched by an Iranian man who is fighting the legality of his removal from Christmas Island to Papua New Guinea (PNG) after he claimed asylum. The Court heard in this case there is a semblance of compliance with the international law but no legal guarantee and that risks Australia breaching its Refugee Convention obligations. The lawyers have also targeted a law allowing the declaration of PNG as a regional processing country. The Court heard the process of declaration is at odds with several sections of the Constitutions, with regards to aliens, immigration and external powers. Lawyers have told the Court the law only required the Minister to weigh the national interest in making a declaration. The case is ongoing and the Government will argue its laws are constitutionally sound.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-05-09/manus-island-high-court-challenge-constitutionally-invalid/5443508>

High Court rejects challenge to constitutionality of Manus Island detention centre.

Asylum cases put in doubt

Dozens of criminal convictions against asylum seekers may be in doubt following revelations in a Sydney court that Australian Federal Police officers have systematically failed to undertake identification parades when investigating people in immigration detention.

The Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions has been forced to withdraw the charges against accused people smuggler Mohammad Hadi Parivash after a judge ruled that crucial identification evidence in the case was inadmissible because AFP officers failed to offer the accused an identification parade as demanded under the Commonwealth Crimes Act.

The officer in charge of the case told the court that it was standard practise not to undertake identification parades when the accused was a detainee because they were spread throughout the country and Department of Immigration records about their location were often out of date or simply wrong. The revelation brought a stern response from the judge hearing the case, Robyn Tupman, who described it as “institutional recklessness” and anger from refugee advocates and lawyers, who said other similar cases were now in question.

“It would be a profound concern were a person, purely by reason of seeking refugee protection, was denied the ordinary protections of Australian law,” the executive director of the Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre, David Manne, said. “Every person is entitled to be on equal footing before the law and to be entitled to due process.”

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/asylum-cases-put-in-doubt-20140603-39h1o.html>

Amalgamation of Tribunals

On 13 May 2014 as part of the Federal Budget 2014-15 the Government announced that the Migration Review Tribunal and the Refugee Tribunal would be amalgamated with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, the Social Security Appeals Tribunal and the Classification Review Board. The amalgamation is planned to take effect on 1 July 2015 and the Tribunals will fall under the portfolio of the Attorney General’s Department.

The amalgamation is part of the Government’s overall aim to attain greater efficiencies in the Australian Public Service and to provide a single body for external merits review. The overall objective of providing the merits review that is fair, just, economical, information and quick will remain. The reforms are expected to generate efficiencies and savings through shared financial, human resources, information technology and governance arrangements.

During this time of change, the tribunals will operate business as usual and will continue to provide services.

MRT-RRT Community Liaison Announcement – 13 May 2014

Australian Border Force

The Australian Border Force (ABF) will begin operating in July next year and will act as the nation's single frontline enforcement agency. ABF will be led by a commissioner who will be the nation's "most senior border law enforcement office" and will focus on border operations.

The Commissioner will have the same standing as other security heads including the AFP Commissioner, Chief of the Defence Force and Director General of the spy agency ASIO. They will report directly to the Immigration Minister and their position will be enshrined in law. Minister Morrison says the combined agency is a "reform measure" not a "savings measure" and the money will be reinvested back into the ABF.

The ABF will be "intelligence-led, mobile" and "technology enabled", and will operate strategically to ensure officers are deployed "to greatest effect. Disciplined, uniformed Border Force officers, some armed, will carry out these tasks and will be supported by mobile and other portable technology which will enhance their ability to clear cargo, remotely access data and information, and wirelessly report back to Strategic Border Command."

The Federal Government is also planning to buy six new patrol boats so it can patrol inaccessible territories including rivers, estuaries and reefs. Three of them will be deployed in the Torres Strait. A new intelligence agency and training college will also come under the auspices of the ABF, whose headquarters will be established in Canberra.

Customs and Immigration working together

Customs and Immigration officers work together 24 hours a day, seven days a week, protecting and managing Australia's borders. Officers work alongside each other at airports and seaports across Australia in intelligence and the remote Torres Strait region, making checks and facilitating the movement of genuine travellers to Australia.

For more information about managing Australia's border, see: <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/70border.htm>

Customs and Immigration working together, See:

<http://www.newsroom.immi.gov.au/channels/NEWS/releases/customs-and-immigration-working-together>

ASIO's new power over asylum seekers

Recently government and opposition members voted together in Federal Parliament to confirm that refugees subjected to an adverse security assessment by the Australia Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) could be detained indefinitely. No reason need be given for their detention, and no challenge can be made to the merits of the decision. This leaves some people and their families stuck in immigration detention indefinitely without any prospect of release.

ASIO has long been able to deny someone recognised as a refugee, the right to settle in Australia. This occurs when the Organisation finds the person is directly or indirectly a risk to national security. This outcome reflects an important public policy accepted by both political parties. Non-citizens should be denied the right to come to Australia or to live here if they pose a danger to the community. ASIO's power has a reasonable basis, but it must be subject to appropriate checks and balances. "The problem here is that the power, as now enacted by Parliament, can be applied in a

way that breaches fundamental principles of justice given the absence of any meaningful power to review a negative decision,” said David Bitel, Managing Partner of Parish Patience.

The Australian government decided these people should be detained. This has now occurred for more than four years, and has been applied not only to adults, but also to their children. They have been held in legal limbo on the basis of an adverse security assessment they have never seen. No opportunity has been given to respond to the information put against them.

The result is an injustice, and an affront to the rule of law. The UN Human Rights Committee held that the scheme constituted cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and was unlawful under international law.

In response, the former government refused to make significant changes. Instead, it appointed former Federal Court judge Margaret Stone to review periodically ASIO’s adverse security assessments. Her findings have shown that these assessments are far from foolproof. Some have been set aside, including one involving a mother and her child. Despite this, the federal government has said it will terminate her reviews.

<http://www.smh.com.au/comment/asios-new-power-over-asylum-seekers-needs-proper-checks-and-balances-20140519-zrgur.html>

Moves to stymie asylum seeker challenges

The Federal government will introduce legislation giving it the power to oppose asylum seekers’ appeals to unsuccessful refugee claims and fast-tracking the processing of nearly 24,000 asylum seekers in Australia. A range of measures, which the government hopes will signal a shift in the focus of immigration policy from stopping the boats to clearing the backlog of refugee claims, will be introduced after the new Senate is sworn in on 1 July, according to *The Australian* newspaper.

The Immigration Minister, Scott Morrison, flagged changes to the Refugee Review Tribunal, which hears asylum seekers’ appeals when their refugee claims are rejected. Currently the government cannot challenge new information presented by asylum seekers to the tribunal, making it “a one-sided process. There needs to be the opportunity for the government to, equally, address that information in any review,” he said.

In the past year the Tribunal has overturned the Immigration Department’s decisions in 72% of cases involving Afghan asylum seekers, 61% of appeals lodged by Iranian and nearly a third of cases involving Sri Lankan citizens.

The claims of around 23,979 asylum seekers currently in legal limbo on bridging visas would also be “triaged” for faster processing. The Greens senator, Sarah Hanson-Young, said she welcomed any efforts to process asylum seekers more quickly, but said changes to the refugee tribunal were aimed at “pushing people out of Australia back into harm’s way. The minister is very clear about this: he wants Australia to give less refugee protection than previously, fewer successful challenges, fewer people being given the protection they deserve,” she said.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/23/government-moves-to-stymie-asylum-seeker-challenges>

Appeal process rules tightened

The ABCNews has learned the Federal Government is tightening the asylum seeker appeal process to force would-be refugees to make concrete steps to return home, even if they have not exhausted their rights to appeal.

The changes will affect asylum seekers living in the community who have had their claims rejected by both the Department of Immigration and an independent review panel. Pamela Curr from the Asylum Seeker Resources Centre believes the Government is trying to pressure people to leave Australia. "What they're going to try to do is frighten and threaten people to go back. It's nonsensical to insist that people go through a charade of preparing to go home when they haven't even got a final decision."

The asylum seekers will have to prove they are taking steps to leave Australia, such as producing travel documents and engaging with the International Organisation for Migration, or risk being put back in detention.

Immigration Minister Scott Morrison has previously said he wanted to remove failed asylum seekers who wished to stay indefinitely. In a statement a spokeswoman for the minister said the department had flexibility in the way it managed cases. "We expect every person to comply with the lawful and reasonable requests of the department in managing their case," she said.

Chris Berg from the Institute of Public Affairs said the Government should be able to deport people who have failed the process. "The problem we have is that it's not clear that we are deciding who is legitimate and an illegitimate refugee correctly."

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-06-09/refugee-appeal-process-rules-tightened/5510430>

Refugee Council of Australia funding

Immigration Minister Scott Morrison says he didn't know the country's peak refugee body was receiving taxpayer money from his immigration portfolio until after his own government's budget was published, at which point he moved immediately to axe the funding. He personally intervened to cut more than half a million dollars of funding allocated to the Refugee Council of Australia, despite it being allocated in this month's budget. "It's not my view, or the government's view that taxpayer funding should be there for what is effectively an advocacy group. There is freedom of speech but the taxpayer shouldn't have to fund the microphone." When asked why the funding had been removed ten days after the May 13 budget: "I took the decision to return the funding arrangements to those that were in place under the previous government".

The Refugee Council of Australia was told by the Department of Immigration that its core funding of \$140,000 a year, for four years, would be cut, with no explanation. Chief executive of the council Paul Power said he was shocked by the phone call. "This decision is petty and vindictive and is symbolic of the minister's very poor relationship with the non-government sector," he said.

"It seems extraordinary that our organisation – which has been doing this work through thick and thin for 33 years – has been singled out for this treatment," he told ABCNews.

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/scott-morrison-says-he-was-unaware-of-refugee-council-funding-until-after-budget-night-20140530-399bq.html>

Refugee Council of Australia needs your help

Below is an excerpt of the Refugee Council of Australia's response to the funding cuts:

"I am writing to you because we at the Refugee Council of Australia, the national peak body for refugees, urgently need your help. We have learned that the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, Scott Morrison, has decided to cut our organisation's core funding entirely, despite the fact that his Government's 2014 Budget earmarked funds for this for the next four years.

Mr Morrison has decided, we are told, that we should be involved in "sharing the pain" of cuts to Federal spending. The amount taken away is \$140,000 per annum, a tiny saving for the Government but a massive amount for a small charity like ours.

We will not allow this petty decision of the Minister to silence us. Please support us as we continue to work as hard as we can to be a strong and credible community voice for humane treatment for people seeking asylum.

For 33 years, we have been focused on combining the wisdom and experience of people who have been refugees themselves with the passion and energy of tens of thousands of Australian who share a vision of Australia as a welcoming nations. We know many Australians, like you, share our deep concern that highly vulnerable people are increasingly under political attack. We are encouraged that, every week, prominent Australians express their alarm at the treatment of asylum seekers. This month, they have included Dr John Yu, the 1996 Australian of the Year, who recalled his boat journey from China as a child asylum seeker in 1937, and Australia's 38 Catholic bishops who declared that Australia's "current policy has about it a cruelty that does no honour to our nation". We must amplify these voices and let the world know that we will not turn away from high vulnerable people in need.

The president of the Refugee council of Australia, Phil Glendenning, spoke recently at the Sydney Palm Sunday rally, giving an inspiring call to action to Australians concerned about the nation's treatment of people seeking asylum. As Phil observed, it is our collective responsibility as concerned Australians to send a message to all people seeking asylum that we are not dead to their cries."

"Join me... the national voice for justice and compassion for refugees must not be silenced" – The Hon Malcolm Fraser AC, CH Former Prime Minister of Australia.

"It is essential that the voice of the RCOA not be silenced," said David Bitel, Managing Partner of Parish Patience Immigration and former Present of the RCOA. "Those who share our concerns are encouraged to give a tax deductible donation now to the Council."

Refugee Council of Australia Newsletter – 30 May 2014

Fast-track study visas extended

The federal government will ease the way for more international students to come to Australia expanding its streamlined visa processing scheme. Immigration Minister Scott Morrison and education Minister Christopher Pyne will extend the scheme, which cuts the cost and length of the student visa application process, to advanced diploma courses.

Mr Pyne said the change would particularly benefit the vocational education sector and support its sustainable growth. “Extending streamlined visa processing arrangements will help to attract further students from overseas,” Mr Pyne said. The latest move is the second time the Coalition government has extended streamlined visa processing to more students since it was elected last September.

Last year, the Coalition invited 22 non-university education providers to join the scheme, but limited it to international students studying university level courses. The vocational education industry has chafed against these restrictions and now, for the first time, streamlined visa processing will be available to students solely for a qualification at a level below a bachelor degree.

“This will enable eligible education providers in the vocational education and training sector to directly access streamlined visa processing and will make study in Australia even more attractive to overseas students, while at the same time ensuring immigration risk is appropriately managed,” Mr Morrison said.

Streamlined visa processing is regarded by the international education industry as playing a critical role in attracting students to Australia, particularly as the large student markets of India and China are classified as having high immigration risk. Without the streamlines scheme, students from these countries face a costly and lengthy process to obtain an Australian student visa.

Minister Pyne said that these changes will substantially benefit Australia’s high-quality VET and high education sectors, supporting the sustainable growth of Australia’s international education industry. “The number of international students seeking to study in Australia continues to rebound positively, with an increase of over 27 percent in the number of visas granted to offshore applicants in the 2013-14 programme year,” Minister Pyne said.

“Extending SVP arrangements will help to capitalise on these trends, reducing red tape and helping to attract further students from overseas.” Invitations to participate will be sent to eligible providers in the second half of 2014. The government proposes to implement this extension by early 2015.

http://www.afr.com/p/national/education/fast_track_student_visa_scheme_to_ttj5Jfv0TX1REC0LaD7vhP

<http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/sm/2014/sm214887.htm>

Alternative English Language tests for visa applicants

From November 2014, the department will accept English language test scores from the Test of English as a Foreign Language internet-based test (TOEFL iBT) and the Pearson Test of English Academic (PTE Academic) across visa programmes. These tests are alternatives to the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and Occupational English Test (OET), and have been accepted in the Student visa programme since November 2011.

From November 2014, the following visa subclasses from the Temporary Graduate, Skilled and Work and Holiday visa programmes will also accept a TOEFL iBT or PTE Academic test score as evidence of English ability.

- Distinguished Talent (Australian support) (subclass 124)
- Business Talent (subclass 132)
- Former Resident (subclass 151)
- Business Owner (provisional) (subclass 160)
- Senior Executive (provisional) (subclass 161)

- Investor (provisional) (subclass 162)
- State/Territory Sponsored Business Owner (provisional) (subclass 163)
- State/Territory Sponsored Senior Executive (provisional) (subclass 164)
- State/Territory Sponsored Investor (provisional) (subclass 165)
- Employer Nomination Scheme (subclass 186)
- Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (187)
- Business Innovation & Investment (provisional) (subclass 188)
- Skilled – Independent (subclass 189)
- Skilled – Nominated (subclass 190)
- Work and Holiday temporary) (subclass 462)
- Skilled – Recognised Graduate (subclass 476)
- Temporary Graduate (subclass 485)
- Skilled – Regional (provisional) (subclass 489)
- Distinguished Talent (subclass 858)
- Skilled – Regional (subclass 887)
- Business Innovation and Investment (permanent) (subclass 888)
- Business Owner (Residence) (subclass 890)
- Investor (Residence) (subclass 891)
- State/Territory Sponsored Business owner (Residence) (subclass 892)
- State/Territory Sponsored Investor (Residence) (subclass 893)

From November 2014, intending migrations submitting an Expression of Interest through SkillSelect will be able to provide test scores from the TOEFL iBT or PTE Academic tests. The Department will accept test scores from the Cambridge English: Advanced (CAE) test for all visa programmes from early 2015. The Cambridge English: Advanced (CAE) test has also been accepted for the Student visa programme since 2011. Changes to the Regulation will be required to enable the new options to be available. For more information on English Language requirements contact David Bitel.

<http://www.immi.gov.au/News/Pages/aelt.aspx>

Europe's boat people numbers make ours look miniscule

So far this year about 42,000 people have tried to cross the Mediterranean to get to Italy. They're from Egypt, Libya, Sudan, Eritrea, Syria – anywhere in Africa and the Middle East beset by bloodletting. Men, women and children.

About this time last year the comparable number was 3362 arrivals in Italy. The humanitarian problems are escalating at an alarming rate and the European Union (EU) and United Nations (UN) are thrashing about for solutions. Sicily bears the brunt of the Italian influx, since the closure of the reception centre on Lampedusa, close to where 366 drowned last October. Greece too is under siege, with the government saying 15,000 undocumented migrants last year attempted to enter Europe.

Italian authorities estimate that there are 800,000 people sitting on the coast of Africa, waiting for the chance to cross. The mayor of the Sicilian town of Catania was quoted in the press as saying that Europe faced “a looming, colossal humanitarian catastrophe”. That should put our little old “illegal maritime arrivals” problems into perspective, with 51,637 arriving by boat on our shores over five years between 2009 and 2013 (parliamentary research figures).

The “looming catastrophe” is so serious that the UN refugee agency, the UNHCR, is rethinking its approach. It is looking at ways to create safe refugee holding centres in North Africa and the Middle East. In other words, for the first time, the UN is thinking about offshore processing for refugees heading to Europe. The UNHC’s European director, Vincent Cochetel, was quoted saying: “We would not be totally against external processing if certain safeguards were in place: the right to appeal, the right to remain while appeals take place.”

There are all sorts of ways to measure our kindness to refugees. The one favoured by the government is to pick our intake under the official UNHCR humanitarian program and measure it on a national per capita basis. That puts Australia at No 3 in the world after the US and Canada.

However, if you look at what we call our onshore intake, people who have been found to have refugee status after arriving by plane or boat, our ranking drops to No 32 on 2012 global figures. We fall below Sudan, Afghanistan, Gambia, Chad and Burundi.

<http://www.smh.com.au/comment/europes-boat-people-numbers-make-ours-look-minuscule-20140605-zryze.html>

Stopping asylum seeker boats will take years

Border protection chief Angus Campbell has warned that stopping asylum seeker boats entirely will take “years, not months, of collective regional effort”.

While there has been no successful boat arrival to Australia for five months, Lieutenant-General Campbell, the head of the government’s Operation Sovereign Borders regime, said that his job was far from done. In Canberra for the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, General Campbell said that turning back boats, offshore processing and working with transit countries had meant “a very significant decline in the willingness of potential illegal immigrants to travel”.

But many asylum seekers were watching for relaxed policies. “At present, the great majority have decided to wait and see,” he said. “While the boats are stopping, with the flow very significantly diminished, the job isn’t done. There will be surprises, disappointments and challenges ahead but we have come a long way. That said, the benefits to date, while real, are modest. Substantially changing the irregular flow toward Australia and drawing down the pool of potential illegal immigrants in transit countries will require many years.”

General Campbell said that “irregular migration” was a fact of modern life, as “the ability of people to travel...has never been greater. Much of that dynamic is of great benefit to our world and its people.” He said the conflict in Syria was a “push factor” that would drive refugees abroad. He said the number of people crossing international borders had grown from about 77 million in 1960 to about 232 million in 2013, or just over 3 percent of the world’s population.

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/stopping-asylum-seeker-boats-will-take-years-angus-campbell-says-20140515-zreb1.html>

Information for visa and citizenship applicants

These changes do not have any immediate effect on visa or citizenship applications or processes. Your existing application or any new application will continue to be processed in the same way. The

Department will continue to assess application according to our service standards. You should continue to use the contact details and application numbers provided to you by the department or your case officer. The contact details for the department have not changed. There are no immediate changes to service centre locations. More information will be available on the Department website soon.

<http://www.immi.gov.au/About/Pages/australian-border-force.aspx>

New Skilled Occupations List

From 1 July 2014 foreign chefs, bricklayers and tilers will now be able to apply for a permanent visa without State Nomination, in what the government says will address alleged labour shortages as these and a few other occupations will be added to the SOL.

The Australian Newspaper reports, the new rules could see up to 2283 overseas chefs apply for a place in the program, with another 1401 places for bricklayers and 948 for floor and wall tilers.

See the link.

<http://www.businessinsider.com.au/foreignchefs-bricklayers-and-tilers-can-now-gain-permanent-visas-without-employer-sponsorship-2014-6>

Moves to amend 457 requirements for resources workers

Moves to amend legislation requiring all foreign resources workers to obtain a 457 visa will deny Australian jobs in the expanding offshore gas and oil sector.

The Federal Government is planning to repeal laws made by the previous Government which are due to come into effect at the end of June.

The Federal Labor Member for Perth, Alannah McTiernan, said without the laws mandating 457 visas, Australian workers will simply be sidelined on future projects. "The decision to change the legislation so that not even a 457 visa would be required to employ overseas workers on our oil and gas industry is very short sighted," she said.

The laws were passed last year to close inconsistencies exposed by a Federal Court case. In *Allseas Constructions SA v Minister for Immigration*, the Federal Court found that two ships working in Australia's resources sector did not meet the definition of a resources installation. As a result, the foreign workers on board were not considered to be in the migration zone, as defined by the Migration Act, and were not required to have a visa.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-05-27/australian-jobs-at-risk-if-457-legislation-repealed-mp/5481246>

Pilbara Council wants nod for small traders to hire foreign workers on 457 visas

The Pilbara Regional Council has formally applied to the Department of Immigration to allow small businesses in the North West to employ foreign workers on 457 visas.

It is hoped a regional migration agreement will help fill shortfall of jobs in the community sector. Council chief executive Tony Friday said during the height of the mining boom, small businesses in the Pilbara were struggling to secure local staff. "It represents a really good option for small business

when we find ourselves in the middle of a boom cycle and are unable to staff important community positions," he said. "As a government our job is to look beyond an immediate horizon so we need to put a permanent solution in place."

Mr Friday says the importing of foreign workers is a last resort for small businesses and would not encroach on Australian jobs.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-05-26/council-seeks-nod-for-small-traders-to-hire/5477934>

Offshore Detention Centres

Christmas Island to become 48-hour transfer hub

The Christmas Island detention centre is set to become a "rapid transfer" base where asylum seekers are held for just 48 hours before being sent for processing on Nauru or PNG's Manus Island. Under the \$218 million upgrade, medical services will be bolstered to reduce the need for asylum seekers to be transferred to the Australian mainland for assessment and treatment.

Responding to criticism of the lack of education for children living in the centre, the government will fund full-time school education for children in detention, through a \$2.6 million arrangement from the West Australian Education Department. Nine onshore detention centres will also be closed within four years, cementing the Abbott government's hard-line immigration policies that no asylum seekers who arrived by boat will be resettled in Australia.

By stopping the boats, the government says it will save \$2.5 billion in the next four years. The policy has also enabled it to offer 20,000 extra places in its Special Humanitarian Program as none of the 30,000 asylum seekers in Australia who arrived by boat will be offered permanent residency. But asylum seekers who arrived by boat will suffer under the budget cuts, as major support services were swiftly axed. An independent advice service will have to reduce its support for "non-illegal" asylum seekers, while the Displaced Persons Program, worth \$38.4 million, and the Officer Outreach Program, worth \$11.2 million, were also axed.

<http://www.smh.com.au/business/federal-budget/christmas-island-to-become-48hour-transfer-hub-20140513-388dj.html>

I want out! Children in detention centres

Recently, Professor Gillian Triggs – President of the Australian Human Rights Commission, visited the detention centre on Christmas Island. She was appalled by the conditions. "These children are actually identifying themselves by their numbers, which is shocking in itself," she says.

To be put in such a place would be traumatising for anyone, especially young children. Most of the 315 children who are there have been detained there for between six to eight months. They aren't getting an education, or only very poor education once a fortnight. When the children are asked to draw pictures, it is usually of sad people and crying children behind bars.

Many of the things these children have experienced and are experiencing are beyond comprehension to us who have the life that we do. Something must happen, and soon, before anyone else is put in these kinds of traumatic situations and before more people take their own lives. It is horrifying, inhumane and brutal to treat any animals like this, let alone human beings. These people have had a far more difficult life than most of us, we should be treating them with respect and giving back their dignity.

<http://www.northernstar.com.au/news/i-want-out-children-detention-centres/2277875/>

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Australia funds PNG case on asylum seekers

Australian taxpayers are funding the Papua New Guinean governments' legal battles against opponents of the controversial offshore detention centres. The revelation in a Senate hearing came as a team of doctors described the severe development and physical problems of children on Christmas Island, including rotting teeth and severe skin infections.

In the Senate hearing, the Secretary of the Immigration Department Martin Bowles, PSM, confirmed the funding for legal costs to thwart opposition to the detention centres came under the memorandum of understanding that has been signed by PNG. Between \$350,000 and \$370,000 had been spent, the estimates hearing was told. PNG is fighting a constitutional challenge initiated by the country's Opposition Leader, Belden Namah, against the agreement to process and resettle asylum seekers. The Nauruan government has also tried to shut down two human rights inquiries that were initiated by human rights lawyer, Justice David Cannings.

The director of legal advocacy at the Human Rights Law Centre, Daniel Webb said "the fact our government pays another country's legal bills, while at the same time refusing to fund legal assistance for asylum seekers in Australia, shows how determined this government is to deny asylum seekers a fair go,".

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/australia-funds-png-case-on-asylum-seekers-20140527-392gq.html>

Papua New Guinea's lack of progress despite aid

Foreign Minister Julie Bishop has delivered a stinging assessment of Papua New Guinea's progress on key development foals such as maternal health and infant mortality despite decades of Australia aid. In a speech to an audience that included PNG Prime Minister Peter O'Neill and several of his ministers, Ms Bishop foreshadowed radical changes to the way Australian aid would be delivered to countries such as PNG.

Under changes to be unveiled in coming weeks, aid will focus strongly on boosting the private sector, trad and innovation, with tough performance benchmarks. As a case in point, Ms Bishop said that on the cusp of its 40th anniversary of independence from Australia, PNG had gone backwards on many measures, despite receiving billions in aid money over the decades.

Despite \$7.6 billion of cuts to foreign aid delivered in last week's budget, PNG is set to enjoy an increase in aid, largely because of Port Moresby's agreement to process and resettle asylum-seekers who were headed to Australia. Ms Bishop said PNG was "on the cusp of transforming its economy"

and could double its gross domestic product in coming year, particularly through large energy projects.

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/bishop-troubled-by-pngs-lack-of-progress-despite-aid-20140519-38k8g.html>

A.P.B. Education
Specialist IELTS Test Training and Coaching

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- Listening

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Contact: Adrian Bitel on (02) 9286 8700 or Mobile: 0412 656 026

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