

DASSAN update 16/2/12

In todays update

- Next DASSAN meeting
- Visiting people in detention - more visitors needed!
- Easter actions in support of asylum seekers - how to get involved
- Children in detention
- Amnesty tour of detention centres
- Changes to Ministerial Advisory Council - appointment of an NT member
- Latest detention centre statistics
- Help needed!
- What can I do
- News update

Next DASSAN meeting

DASSAN meetings are a chance to meet other people in the network, and to share ideas and information. DASSAN meets fortnightly on Monday nights - our next meeting is this coming **MONDAY 20th February from 530 to 7 pm**, at Melaleuca Refugee Centre (in Rapid Creek Business Village).

All welcome - for more information contact dassan2011@gmail.com

Visiting people in detention

DASSAN runs regular training sessions for new visitors and we have the names of many people in detention who would like a visitor from the community. For the dates of the next session and for more information contact the [DASSAN visitor coordinator](#).

Visits to [Wickham Point Immigration Detention Centre](#) will be starting in the next couple of weeks. We will be arranging transport for these visits - if you would like to know more please contact dassanvisits@gmail.com.

St Vincent de Paul also coordinates a visitor and support program to groups of people in the Detention Centres, as well as an excursion program. Contact volunteer.nt@svdpnt.org.au

Easter actions in support of asylum seekers - help needed !

Over the last few years, Easter has been a time when asylum seekers supporters and activists have gathered at detention centres to draw attention to the inhumanity of the government's mandatory detention policy. Shamefully, Darwin is now the detention capital of Australia, and - this year - people plan to come to Darwin from around the country to demand an end to the policy and show their support for asylum seekers.

Are you interested in being involved in this weekend of activities? There are many ways you can help:

*DASSAN plans to organise a rally or vigil in Darwin City on Good Friday, to draw in broader community involvement and start the weekend with a peaceful, political event. Together with Darwin Aboriginal Rights Coalition, we are also organising a Rock Against Racism on Easter Saturday evening. We need organising help with both these events!

*Given there is no public transport on Good Friday, and the various detention centres (which will be visited over the weekend) are quite spread out, our interstate friends are also looking at different transport options such as hiring minibuses etc. If you have ideas, access to buses, or are happy to give people lifts, please get in touch.

*Donations are also welcome, to cover the cost of catering for the weekend, accommodation for people from interstate, perhaps airfares for people keen to come but unable to afford it, etc. If you want to find out more, or have other ideas of how you can help, please contact Emma: emmaisnow@gmail.com "

Children in detention

In October 2010 the Minister announced that all children would be moved out of detention. At the end of January there were 528 children in detention in Australia, about 170 here in Darwin.

The damaging effects of detention on children are well documented. If you have concerns about the safety of these children please consider contacting the Dept of Children and Families on 1800700250. Their role is to investigate when children are not safe.

More information here: http://www.childrenandfamilies.nt.gov.au/Child_Protection/

You may also want to contact the NT Children's commissioner, on 1800259256 or at

Email: childrenscommissioner@nt.gov.au

More information here : <http://www.childrenscommissioner.nt.gov.au/aboutus.html>

Changes to Ministerial advisory body

DASSAN welcomes the announcement that **Bishop Hurley is now a member of the Minister's Council on Asylum Seekers and Detention (MCASD)**. (this council advises the Minister on these issues.) Bishop Hurley is a great advocate for people in detention and has been a great supporter of the work that DASSAN does - we congratulate him on his appointment

DIAC press release [here](#).

Amnesty tour of detention centres:

Amnesty is currently on a fact finding tour of Australia of Detention centres and is in Darwin this week. Follow their blog [here](#).

Latest DIAC statistics

First statistics in a long time [here](#)

International Women's Day - Nominations for Awards Night and Guest Speaker: Samah Hadid

Do you know a woman who has contributed to human rights here in the NT? NT Council for Human Rights Education together with other community organisations will be organising an **Awards Nights on 9 March 2012** to recognise women in the Northern Territory who have contributed to the development of human rights. [Go here](#) for the information and nomination form for public participation in the nomination process. Nominations extended to close February 27th.

Samah Hadid, 2010 Australian Youth Representative to United Nations, will be the guest speaker for the night. More information to follow

HELP NEEDED!

Support for people on Bridging Visas

Are you interested in supporting people living in the community on [bridging visas](#)? This could include having a room to rent, offering employment, visiting and social support, donations of old bikes, mobile phones, clothing etc. For more information contact Red Cross: Sarah Kavanagh on 8924 3989 skavanagh@redcross.org.au or Kerry Barber on 8924 3990 kbarber2@redcross.org.au . For volunteer enquiries please contact Kimberly Jonsson on 8924 3988 or kjonsson@redcross.org.au

Taking Action - what can I do?

[Visiting people in detention](#)

[Writing letters to people in detention](#)

[Writing to politicians](#)

Gifts for people in detention - contact Fernanda at dassan2011@gmail.com

contribute to our [website](#) - contact David at dassan2011@gmail.com

[Get involved with DASSAN](#) - all people who support asylum seekers are welcome to join us

Help with organising a **national refugee advocate convergence** on Darwin this Easter - contact Emma for more information at dassan2011@gmail.com

[learn more](#) about the issues

Links and News Update

[United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees - address to the Lowy Institute](#)

[Amnesty International will assess how asylum seekers are being detained in Darwin during a tour of centres today](#)

Amnesty has grave concerns about how long refugee children are being held in Darwin

[Refugee kids didn't get to say goodbye](#)

14 Vietnamese **asylum seekers**, aged from six to 17, as well as 14 adults, were transferred from the Port Augusta residential centre to a facility in Darwin on February 5. The detainees were only told about the shock move less than 24 hours earlier

[UN chief calls for calm on refugees](#)

THE United Nations refugee chief has called Australia's collective obsession with **asylum seekers** arriving by boat "out of proportion" and urged that the "very politicised" debate be conducted in a less polarising manner.

[Tasmania **asylum** centre to close](#)

At the shutdown supporters instead mourned the loss of a more humane setting for **asylum seekers** than some other facilities, and economic benefits to job-starved locals

[Soldiers may get 15 years for boat tragedy](#)

Five Indonesian soldiers accused of involvement in organising an **asylum-seeker** boat that sank on its way to Australia, leading to the deaths of as many as 200 people, could be jailed for up to 15 years

[Detention centre health spending questioned](#)

The Tasmanian Liberal Senator, Eric Abetz, has questioned the money spent on health services for **asylum seekers** at the Pontville Detention Centre.

[Tour reveals detention policy harmful and costly](#)

By Graham Thom | View Archive February 15th, 2012, 12:14 pm Indefinite mandatory detention for **asylum seekers** is a flawed policy in urgent need of reform

[Asylum seeker stitches lips together](#)

AN Iranian **asylum seeker** stitched his lips together at a Melbourne detention centre, refugee advocates claim

[Liberals pledge on boats slammed](#)

The Coalition's pledge to turn back **asylum seekers'** boats is illegal, costly and would expose Australian naval personnel to harm, formerly secret Customs advice says

[A third of asylum seekers to live outside detention](#)

A THIRD of **asylum seekers** arriving by boat will be living in the community on bridging visas next year under a policy shift, the Immigration Department has revealed to a Senate hearing

[Deported Afghan refugees have nowhere to go](#)

The Australian government is pushing to deport the first Afghan **asylum seeker** since it signed a deal with the Afghanistan government in January last year to allow Afghan **asylum seekers** to be returned against their will.

[Senators clash over asylum processing costs](#) Federal Government and Opposition senators have clashed over the costs associated with processing all **asylum seekers** on Australia soil

[Tamil dinner says oppression continues in Sri Lanka](#)

Professor Patrick McGorry, a psychiatrist who treated Tamil **asylum seekers** in detention centres and Australian of the Year in 2010, also spoke. He said the people in the detention centres were nearly all genuine refugees

Cheers

Justine

dassan.org

The Dassdigest comes out once a week. If you would like more frequent updates please subscribe to dassalert by emailing dassan2011@gmail.com with 'join dassalert' in the subject line

Justine Davis