

DASSAN UPDATE 3/2/12

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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 on **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

It was great to meet so many of you at our visitor training session last Monday. For those of you who were not able to make it, DASSAN will be holding **another visitor training session very soon** - please contact dassanvisits@gmail.com. We have many requests for visitors from people in detention. We receive overwhelmingly grateful and positive feedback from asylum seekers and providers about how important it is that people get visits from the community.

We will also be starting visiting at [Wickham Point Immigration Detention Centre](#) in the near future. (see below) . 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

Children in detention

There are currently approximately 170 children detained in Darwin including many unaccompanied minors, some **as young as 7 years old**. Some of these children have been locked up in immigration detention since May 2011 and are now in their 3rd detention centre.

If you are in contact with children in detention and are concerned that they are at risk of harm because of being detained please consider reporting your concerns to Child Protection. Northern Territory law obliges people to alert the child protection services if they believe that a child has or is likely to suffer harm or exploitation. Harm is defined in the relevant legislation to include psychological or emotional harm.

In a DASSAN media release today, spokesperson Rohan Thwaites stated, *“The Government has been told by countless mental health professionals about the harmful affects of locking up children in immigration detention, yet they continue to do it. These children are at risk of psychological or emotional harm as a result of being detained and they should be removed from the source of the harm, detention centres....In October 2011 the Government said it would remove most children from detention, acknowledging that incarceration harms their mental health and development, and yet here we are in February 2012 and there are approximately 170 children detained in Darwin alone. The Government must pledge to remove all children from detention and then stick to that pledge.”*

To make a report call Dept of Children and Families on 1800700250. 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>

Full media release [here](#).

Excursions for asylum seekers

If you are upset about the way our government treats asylum seekers in detention, there is now an opportunity to take a refugee or a family in detention out for a meal, listen to some music, take in a show, do some shopping, or show them the sights of Darwin. It's called the **Directed Persons Program (DPP)** and it's on trial for 13 weeks in Darwin.

DIAC will conduct the required training for the **Directed Persons Program (DPP)** at CatholicCare in Berrimah on 13th February at 4;30 till 6;00PM.
Call **Erin** for details and to register; at 08 8944 2000

Amnesty tour of detention centres:

Amnesty is currently on a fact finding tour of Australian Detention centres and will be in Darwin soon.

More here :

http://www.amnesty.org.au/refugees/comments/27622/?utm_campaign=RCTA-PPEAL11&utm_medium=email-sf&utm_source=rctappl-4&utm_content=PSlink1

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

Do you know a woman who has contribute 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. We would like to invite you and your network/s to participate by nominating women who meet the nomination criteria. Nominations close February 15th.

We are also pleased to announce that **Samah Hadid, 2010 Australian Youth Representative to United Nations**, will be our guest speaker for the night. More information to follow

Asylum seeker art exhibition: donations welcome

Many of you would have seen footprints of my heart in Darwin last year , a beautiful and moving exhibition of art curated by Vikki Riley

<http://footprintsofmyheart.wordpress.com/>

The exhibition will be exhibited in Hobart (with contributions from Pontville artists too) from February 20th.

Vikki is seeking donations to cover costs of the art's freight, and assisting the pro bono legal team (lead by Madeleine Ogilvie QC) process Judicial Reviews

by advising on country of origin matters. Many ex NIDC people are in Pontville in limbo. Twelve so far have been given new court dates vis this method.

If you can help please contact riley.vikki@gmail.com

The SIEV X Tragedy

You will all remember the tragic events of 19th October 2001 when 65 men, 142 women and 146 children tragically lost their lives on a dilapidated Indonesian fishing boat that was en-route from Sumatra to Christmas Island. There is an urgent request for help with regards to the memorial for those lives lost.

ACT Senator, Gary Humphries, is protesting the placement of the memorial. The details of his complaint can be found in this Canberra Times

article: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/news/local/news/general/past-political-foes-clash-over-future-of-poles/2442628.aspx>

In response, the Canberra Times have placed a survey on their page, allowing people to voice their support for the memorial. It is vitally important that we do not forget the tragedy, and taking two minutes to complete the survey is an excellent (and very easy) way to do this. The survey may be found

here: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/news/local/news/general/govt-backs-the-siev-x-memorial/2442627.aspx>

HELP NEEDED!

Easter Convergence

Over the last few years, Easter has become a focus point for the refugee rights movement, with refugee advocates converging on selected detention centres to highlight the inhumanity of the policy. This year, Darwin will be the national focus. We are expecting supporters to come from around the country. At this stage there are plans for a Rock Against Racism gig, and a central rally in the city. To find out more, or help organize, contact emma on 0488 208 235, or emmaisnow@gmail.com

Rock Against Racism

DASSAN and Darwin Aboriginal Rights Collective will be organising a Rock Against Racism on **April 7th**. If you are interested in helping out or getting involved contact us [here](#)

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

[Refugees risk all for better life](#)

I AM happy to help answer some of Des Houghton's questions about **asylum seekers** - "Truth adrift in stormy seas" (CM, February 4). First, who are the boat people? For starters, they are not criminals.

[Amnesty calls for more bridging visas as boats keep coming](#)

THE government has released 257 boat arrivals on bridging visas since its policy shift on detention, but in that time 1078 more **asylum seekers** have come ashore at Christmas Isla

[Pressure to keep Pontville open](#)

Tasmanian **Asylum Seeker** Support spokeswoman, Emily Conolan, says she has written to the Immigration Minister over concerns for the welfare of detainees

[\\$1bn to keep asylum-seekers in detention](#)

THE Federal Government has been handed a \$1 billion bill for the running of Australia's detention centres

[Coalition defends asylum centre costing](#)

THE opposition immigration spokesman, Scott Morrison, has defended his use of an international catering and logistics company to provide costings for an **asylum seeker** centre on Nauru.

[Date an asylum seeker](#)

As a result of the way Australia processes **asylum seekers** who arrive by boat; those who arrive without the correct papers are placed into detention sometimes for long periods of time

[Asylum seekers battle](#)

Mr Bowen guaranteed the detention centre would be open for only six months when he announced in April last year Tasmania was to play a small part in Australia's **asylum seekers'** processing system

[Small fish in rough seas](#)

Budi, not his real name, is an accidental people smuggler, if you accept that cooking noodles and keeping the engine going on an unseaworthy fishing boat for a group of desperate **asylum seekers** constitutes people smuggling.

[Detention centre 'should be shut immediately'](#)

Amnesty refugee co-ordinator Graeme Thom says there remains an "air of hopelessness" among **asylum seekers**. He says the group was impressed by improvements made to accommodation and the centre's interaction with the nearby town of Derby.

[Police rejecting detainee duties](#)

Under the draft, police would have been given the cultural-awareness training to improve their dealings with **asylum-seekers**detained at Villawood.

[Afghan utopia becomes a much grimmer reality](#)

It was envisaged as an Afghan utopia for returned **asylum seekers** - a purposebuilt housing estate with running water, jobs, schools and small businesses on the outskirts of the capital, Kabul

[Asylum seeker stalemate continues despite Malaysia tragedy](#)

The latest boat disaster has done nothing to change the stalemate between the government and opposition on **asylum seekers**.

[Malaysia wants cooperation to halt boats](#)

THE Malaysian government says the deaths of at least nine **asylum seekers** who drowned while trying to make it to Australia highlights the need for international cooperation in combating people smuggling

Link to [February Refugee Council Newsletter](#) (updates, events, resources)

Cheers

Justine

dassan.org

The Dassedigest 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

In todays update

- Next DASSAN meeting
- Visitor training session and Visiting people in detention
- Wickham Point Update
- Referring to people in detention by boat number
- Help needed!
- What can I do
- News update

Next DASSAN meeting

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

Visiting people in detention

DASSAN will be holding another visitor training session **this coming Monday** following the DASSAN meeting., **6.30 - 8.30pm**

We have many requests for visitors from people in detention, and visiting is a way for show support. We receive overwhelmingly grateful and positive feedback from asylum seekers and providers about how important it is that people get visits from the community. We will also be starting visiting at [Wickham Point Immigration Detention Centre](#) in the near future. (see below) . If you are interested in visiting people in detention or would like to know more please contact dassanvisits@gmail.com.

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Wickham Point Detention Centre Update

A group of us went on a tour of Wickham Point detention Centre (signposted as an ' accommodation facility') on Wednesday night. There are now almost 500 people in the first compound with the next two due to open over the next few months. All the men have been transferred from Christmas Island (or arrived direct to Darwin) and are at initial stages of processing. The facilities at WPIDC are far superior to the NIDC , however the fences remain.

We are working with Serco and DIAC to set up visitor processes, both for visiting individuals and for group visits. These will start over the next couple of weeks. We are planning to have regular ' friendship' visits on the weekend, and will car pool to WPIDC. If you would like to know more , or join us, please contact dassanvisits@gmail.com

Referring to people in detention by boat number

All of you who visit or have contact with people in detention will have observed people being referred to and addressed by boat number not by name. This issue has been raised with Serco by advocates and supporters over a long period of time. Serco in Darwin assures us that " *Serco are committed to eradicating the practice of clients being referred to by boat ID. Such a practice is intolerable all clients must be referred to by their name in the first instance this is common decency and respect.*". The Manager of WPIDC informed us that there is a zero tolerance policy for using boat numbers rather than names, and Managing Director of Serco Australia has also told us : "*It is explicit in our policy to always address clients by their names – it's part of practising Serco's values to treat those in our care with decency and respect for their human dignity.*"

Please let us know if you witness Serco staff using boat numbers. There is no place for dehumanising people in this way - lets make sure that zero tolerance means zero tolerance.

HELP NEEDED!

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T-Shirt printing

DASSAN will be doing another print run of the winning tshirt from the childrens tshirt competition ' For those who come accross the sea we've boundless plains to share". Some helping hands for printing would be very welcome ! (no experience neccesary) - contact [Anna](#)

Support for people on Bridging Visas

The Bridging Visa policy was announced on 25th November: <http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/cb/2011/cb180599.htm> with the aim of releasing 100 people per month from long term detention- those most vulnerable and over two years in detention as a priority. Status so far (at 10 weeks in) = 185 People have been released.

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

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Links and News Update

[Fears raised for teen **asylum seekers**](#)

THE Immigration Department has almost doubled the number of teenage **asylum seekers** detained in the West Australian desert town of Leonora recently and the local council is concerned they are not being sent to school

[Visa places slashed for persecuted families](#)

He said Australia was the only country in the world that limited its humanitarian intake by creating a numerical link with **asylum seekers** arriving at its border.

[Back to the primitive past: Pashtuns stoning, trampling with horses and ...](#)

The Hazara **asylum seekers** in detention in Australia constantly have to prove to their interrogators this long and bloody history which has caused them to flee in the first instance

[Bail but not freedom for Villawood riot accused](#)

Two **asylum seekers** charged over last year's riots at Sydney's Villawood Immigration Detention Centre are being returned to the complex, despite being granted bail in court today

[Writers win reprieve for **asylum duo**](#)

Mr Morpurgo said: "How this country treats **asylum seekers** is the measure of what kind of people we are. Lydia was oppressed in Cameroon. That there is a risk she will be imprisoned and abused again seems undeniable.

[Breaking the 'boat people' deadlock](#)

Eureka Street

If you are tired of hearing about **asylum seekers** imagine how weary they must be

[Court suppresses detention centre documents](#)

Three **asylum seekers** detained in Darwin are facing court, accused of assaulting security guards employed by the company Serco. Lawyers for the men have been given access to documents which reveal how security officers are trained to deal with detainees

[Eight dead as **asylum-seeker** boat sinks](#)

Kota Tinggi on Malaysia's east coast ANOTHER **asylum-seeker** boat with passengers bound for Australia has sunk, with reports eight people are dead and 18 have been rescued

[Special visas dry up as boat arrivals given priority](#)

The Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre, in a submission to a government review, has said linking the two programs is "exacerbating racism", as people unable to sponsor family members blame **asylum seekers** arriving at Christmas Island

[So Who the Bloody Hell Are You?: Scott Morrison](#)

The man who attests that his faith has imbued him with "the values of loving kindness, justice and righteousness" also tried to make political hay when relatives of **asylum seekers** killed in the boat tragedy .

Hope to see some of you at the meeting and visitor training on Monday

Cheers

Justine

dassan.org

Justine Davis

justinedavis@westnet.com.au

until we are all free, none of us are free