Refugee Health e-News
April 2011

Refugee health news

- **The NSW Refugee Health Plan (2011-2016) was launched** on Tuesday 1st March by the then NSW Minister for Health, the Hon. Carmel Tebbutt. The Minister announced that a re-elected Keneally Government would invest $6.85 million over four years to, among other strategies, employ 15 refugee health nurses across NSW to undertake health assessments for refugees. It is not known if the new coalition government will make a similar commitment. Ms Tebbutt also announced a one-off grant of $40,000 for the Asylum Seekers Centre to support their health services. The announcements reflected the recommendations of the new statewide, five-year NSW Refugee Health Plan. Each Local Health Network across NSW will be asked to develop an implementation plan for refugee health improvement appropriate to their individual refugee populations and profiles and consistent with the State Plan. Read the former Minister’s announcement and see video of the two guest speakers talking at the launch about their experiences arriving as refugees.

- **Upcoming RHS health information sessions for communities from Burma include:**
  - Have a healthy heart: An information session for the Karen Community which will be held this Saturday, 2 April 2011, 1.00 – 3.00pm at Fairfield Community Hall, Sydney. The guest presenter is Dr Aye Aye Bartlett (GP). Child care and refreshments provided. Further information contact RHS’ Refugee Women’s Health Project Officer, Bann.Echevarria@sswhs.nsw.gov.au, 8778 0779.
  - A cancer prevention information session for Rohingya men is being held on Sunday 10 April, 3.00 – 5.00pm at Lakemba Senior Citizen’s Centre, Sydney. This is part of the Rohingya Cancer Project funded by Cancer Council. Contact Kyaw Maung Samsul Islam for more details: 0433-231-202.

- **The Refugee Council of Australia recommends a review of Australia’s policies on the resettlement of refugees with disabilities.** Their 2011-12 intake submission suggests: (a) the introduction of exemptions from the health requirement for all applications under the offshore component of the Refugee and Humanitarian Program and all applications for family reunion made by refugee and humanitarian entrants; and (b) the implementation of key recommendations of the Joint Standing Committee on Migration report “Migration treatment of disability: Enabling Australia”. The Council’s submission is available online.

- **Commonwealth Ombudsman identifies difficulties in health care on Christmas Island:** His latest report on immigration processes expressed concern that the very limited availability of accommodation on Christmas Island has meant that only a handful of survivors of torture and trauma are being considered for community detention, despite being a priority group. Medical and dental services have come under increasing pressure as the detainee population has grown and the Ombudsman was uncertain whether the specialist medical needs of patients were being provided at a standard commensurate with mainland detention centres. Concerns were also raised about the adequacy of the accommodation available to
treat detainees for mental health, with some consultations being held outside and in corridors. A copy of the report is available online.

- **An inquiry into multiculturalism in Australia** by the Joint Standing Committee on Migration has commenced. The Committee wants to hear from Individuals and organisations with an interest in multiculturalism and the delivery of services to migrant and refugee communities. The terms of reference include an examination of innovative ideas for settlement programs for new migrants, including refugees, that support their full participation and integration into the broader Australian society. This does not preclude a health focus. Submissions to be lodged by Friday 8 April 2011.

- **New Medicine Scheme in Tasmanian Public Hospitals applies to Medicare-ineligible asylum seekers.** The scheme allows public hospital patients to access up to a month’s supply of medicine (where needed) when they leave a public hospital in order to give them more time to visit their local doctor for prescriptions. Patients attending Refugee and Humanitarian Arrival Clinics remain exempt from charges. For more information: www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/pharmreform.

### New resources

- **Free online courses for health professionals in violence prevention and peace building** are available at www.medicalpeacework.org. The aim of the interactive courses is to educate health professionals about the impact of war and other forms of violence on the health of individuals and populations, and to show how they can make a positive and particular contribution to peace building, violence prevention and conflict transformation.

- **RHS has published two new factsheets:**
  - Working with Refugee Mothers around Infant Feeding Practices in the First Year of Life
  - Visa Medical Examination and Pre-departure Medical Screening.

  Recently updated factsheets include: Refugee Young People and Refugee Women.

- **Calling an Ambulance** is a free teaching resource to give people from non-English speaking backgrounds with the skills and confidence to call Triple Zero (000) in a medical emergency. Developed by Ambulance Service of New South Wales and the NSW Adult Migrant English Service (AMES), it includes written, video and audio resources. It is available on the NSW AMES website.

- **Understanding Good Health** is another free language and literacy teaching resource designed to integrate awareness of health issues into English as a second language programs. It is designed for use with young people and women with low literacy levels and developed by NSW AMES and Sydney and South Western Sydney Local Health Networks. Contact AMES for more details: http://www.ames.edu.au/.

- **Oral Health Resource Kit for Culturally and Linguistically Diversity (CALD) Communities** is a 39 page booklet to assist health professionals to provide high quality dental services to CALD communities. It brings together a directory of useful resource links and contact details. Developed by Dental Health Services Victoria and available on their website.

- **Three new radio plays about domestic violence** have been developed in refugee-relevant languages including Arabic, Dari, Dinka, Krio, Mandarin, Somali, and Sudanese Arabic. The plays are available as a pack of 9 languages or in single language packs. For more information see http://speakoutradio.wordpress.com/.

- **The latest edition of DIAC’s Beginning Life in Australia** booklet is now available in 38 community languages. Health-related contents include: registering with
Medicare, contacting the Health Undertaking Service, getting an ambulance, torture and trauma counselling, and a background to the health system detailing Health Care Cards, private health insurance, medical assistance, state and territory health services, immunisation, dental services, aged care, and complaints about health care services.

**Publications & research**

Links to abstracts are provided where full texts are not available for free.


**Training & professional development**

- **4-5 April 2011**: *Violence against Women in Refugee Communities*, Sydney. 2-day workshop presented by the NSW Refugee Health Service and ECAV. [For more details](http://www.startts.org.au) or to register, contact ECAV 9840-3737.

- **7-8 April 2011**: *Clinical Practice and New Developments in the Treatment of Refugee Survivors of Torture and Trauma*, STARTTS 2-day workshop. $249/149. For more details see [www.startts.org.au](http://www.startts.org.au) or call (02) 9794 1900.

- **6 May 2011**: *Accidental counsellor: Skills for Working with Refugee Survivors or Torture and Trauma*, 1-day workshop, STARTTS. $149/99. For more details see [www.startts.org.au](http://www.startts.org.au) or call (02) 9794 1900.

- **11 May 2011**: *Grief and Loss: Issues and Treatment* by Julie Dunsmore, Clinical Master Class, 6-8pm. 2 hour evening seminar, STARTTS Carramar Office, Free in person, $5.99 to watch by live broadcast. For more details see [www.startts.org.au](http://www.startts.org.au) or call (02) 9794 1900.

- **20 May 2011**: *Jungle Tracks: A Therapeutic Storytelling Program for Children and Adolescents* 1-day workshop, STARTTS Carramar Office. $199/149 (Cost includes a Jungle Tracks Kit). For more details see [www.startts.org.au](http://www.startts.org.au) or call (02) 9794 1900.


- **14–17 June 2011**: *Refugee Conference: Looking to the future, learning from the past*, UNSW Kensington campus, Sydney. Convened by the UNSW Centre for
Refugee Research, together with key refugee advocates and practitioners. Preliminary program information and early bird registration is now available on the conference website.

- **1-2 Aug 2011:** *Violence against Women in Refugee Communities*, Parramatta. 2-day workshop presented by the NSW Refugee Health Service and ECAV. [For more details](#) or to register, contact ECAV 9840-3737.


Refugee Health e-News is produced bi-monthly. If you have a refugee health-related item for the next Refugee Health E-news please contact: [refugeehealth@sswhhs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:refugeehealth@sswhhs.nsw.gov.au)