Concerns about the Border Force Act: the Act makes it a criminal offence, punishable by imprisonment of up to two years, for any person working directly or indirectly for the Department of Immigration to disclose information about the conditions in Detention Centres. Health bodies have broadly condemned this law as restricting health professionals from fulfilling their duty of care.

See comments from the World Medical Association; opinion in The Australian Doctor and Medical Journal of Australia; the joint statement from the Australian College of Nursing, Australian College of Midwives, and the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses; and another joint statement by 12 professional health bodies including the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP), Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Royal Australian and NZ College of Psychiatrists, Australasian Society of Infectious Diseases, Public Health Association of Australia, and Australian Association of Social Workers.

Health professionals have joined other ex-detention staff to sign an open letter challenging this legislation.

RACP’s excellent position statement on refugee and asylum seeker health addresses four key areas: health assessments; access to healthcare; promoting long-term health in the community; and asylum seekers in held detention. It includes issues of concern, the evidence base, and recommendations for government and other service providers.

NSW Government makes it easier for asylum seeker patients to get to their appointments: the NSW Government will be extending transport concessions to asylum seekers living in the community. The cost of travel was a significant barrier to accessing health services, especially as GP options are limited for some asylum seekers, requiring patients to travel across Sydney to appointments. Asylum seekers will now be able to travel on NSW public transport at a flat fare of $2.50 per day. The concessions will apply from 1 January 2016.

Legal risks of not using an interpreter when obtaining informed consent: As flagged in the last Refugee Health eNews, the recent NSW District Court decision in George v Biggs sets out the risks for medical practitioners obtaining informed consent without an interpreter. Medical defense organizations are taking this risk seriously: see the latest MDA update.

Participants needed for research into the effectiveness of acupuncture in the treatment of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and associated symptoms of chronic pain, depression and anxiety. This study is being undertaken by UTS and STARTTS. For details contact Thuy Tran, Shakeh Momartin, or Lucrecia Cardona on 9794 1900.

More support and training for detention centre interpreters was recommended by an Australian National Audit office report. Interpreters at centres are used by health and other services in detention.

Health experts report on visit to Nauru: Colleagues Prof David Isaacs and Nurse Alanna Maycock from Westmead’s Health Assessments for Refugee Kids clinic have spoken publically about health conditions at the processing centre in Nauru.

NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service has changed telephone numbers. See their website for details or call 8753 5047.
Congratulations to Dr Mitchell Smith: Refugee Health Service’s (RHS) Director was awarded a Humanitarian Overseas Service Medal from the Australian Government for his outstanding work in response to the cyclone in Samoa in 2009.

**New Resources**

**Free access to STARTTS’ recorded clinical evening lectures:** For a short-time, Psychevisual have made [STARTTS' recorded lectures](#) available to celebrate Refugee Week 2015.

**New parenting resources for CALD communities:** [Caring for Children Tips on Raising Children in Australia](#) has been produced by SSI in Arabic, Dari, Dinka, Farsi, Swahili, and Tamil; [A parenting guide for families from culturally diverse communities in Australia](#) is available from Spectrum MRC (VIC).

**FGM/C and asylum in Europe:** Forced Migration Review has produced a [mini-feature](#) addressing the practice of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) in the context of asylum in Europe.

**5-minute info-graphic guide to chronic hepatitis B in NSW:** Produced by the Multicultural HIV and Hepatitis Service, it takes you through what you need to know about chronic hepatitis B in NSW including key statistics, challenges and action areas.

**New Refugee and Asylum Seeker Health Online Modules** on the [Victorian Refugee Health Network’s website](#) cover a range of topics including mental health, physical health, emergency presentations, trauma, communication and cultural competence. Modules are targeted towards a range of practitioners including nurses, GPs, psychologists and psychiatrists, social workers and other health professionals.

**Resources on family relationships and domestic violence:** Prof Colleen Fisher’s (Uni of WA) [Evaluation of Healthy Relationships for African Families](#), evaluates an education project training for community leaders who provide in-community support for domestic violence within 8 African communities; Foundation House’s [Submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence](#) summarises issues for families from a refugee background and details the STAMP model.

**Pharmaceuticals for asylum seekers in the Australian community:** This [new page on the VRHN website](#) outlines the variable costs for pharmaceuticals for asylum seekers as well as hints and tips for prescribers to ensure continuity of healthcare.

**Global overview:** [UNHCR’s Global Trends](#) 2014 includes useful statistics on refugee source and host countries.

**Review of Australian research on older people from CALD backgrounds:** [FECCA’s review](#) highlights the diversity of the ageing experience for older CALD Australians, service barriers and knowledge gaps.

**Humanitarian Youth Arrivals Info Sheets:** MYAN’s [new Info Sheets](#) provide national data on humanitarian youth arrivals between 2008 and 2014, and a snapshot of settlement trends, including an overview of some of the issues impacting on young people in the settlement context.

**Research with young people from refugee backgrounds on accessing mental health services:** [Project TYRES (Talking with Refugees about Experiences of Services)](#) research suggests how practitioners can engage and assist young people from refugee backgrounds, based on the comments and recommendations that young people made in research interviews about their experiences of using Australian mental health services.

**Publications & research**

A sample of published articles is below. Links to abstracts are provided where full texts are not available for free.


3 Aug 2015: Growing Refugee Communities: Social Development and Community Gardens (evening presentation), 6-8pm, STARTTS Carramar. Free to attend in person.


14 Aug 2015: Core Concepts in Working with Children and Adolescents from Refugee Backgrounds (one-day workshop), STARTTS Carramar.

14, 20-21 August 2015: Clinical Approaches in the Treatment of Refugee Trauma in Children and Adolescents (one-day workshop), STARTTS Carramar.


25-28 Aug 2015: Mental Health Service Conference 2015 - Translating Best Practice into Reality, includes a Primary Mental Health Care Symposium, Consumers Forum and Carers/Families forum. Canberra ACT.


23-24 Sept 2015: Violence Against Women in Refugee Communities (two-day workshop) for health workers, interagency workers, bilingual and ethno-specific workers who provide services to women and children who experience domestic violence. Delivered by ECAV and RHS. Parramatta. To enrol go to ECAV website.

6 Oct 2015: NSW Refugee Health Improvement Network. Special topic: Health Literacy in refugee communities. Guest speaker Prof Mark Harris. To be held at RHS, Liverpool. Contact the Convenor for details or to request an additional videoconferencing site.


If you have a health-related refugee item for the next Refugee Health E-news please contact: NSW Refugee Health Service (02) 8778 0770 or Cathy.Preston-Thomas@sswahs.nsw.gov.au.