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ASHRA Newsletter

Agencies Supporting Housing for Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Volume 1 Issue 3

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Special points of interest:

- Logo competition
- Free English Classes
- How you can help
- Lutheran Community Care Information Session
- Health update

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Housing Need and Provision for recently arrived refugees in Australia

One of the more recent pieces of research concerning housing need and provision for refugees was conducted by AHURI and released in August of 2005. 434 refugees (Permanent Protection Visa and Temporary Protection Visa) were interviewed by Professor Andrew Beer and Paul Foley regarding how they navigated the housing system and the barriers they encountered. The research raises some important concerns including: the mobility of new arrivals, particularly in their first year, that at least one third of the respondents in the AHURI study had been homeless at some stage, that around 22% of participants experienced harassment by real estate agents, neighbours or landlords and that 60% of respondents received assistance in securing their current accommodation'. Variations of the themes raised in the

AHURI report are representative of issues raised in ASHRA meetings. The mobility of new arrivals, moving three to four times in the first year, is a common feature of the refugee experience. Settling and resettling impacts upon a range of other integration issues, such as the added expense, lack of continuity of access to services and continually re-orienting to new and unfamiliar surroundings. For individuals and organisations supporting new arrivals, the strongest theme expressed at ASHRA is the need for supports in subsequent tenancies. Given the mobility of new arrivals and the support that is in place in the initial stages, it is the subsequent tenancies that require further attention. Discrimination, access to appropriate accommodation and support in maintaining private rental accommodation are of equal importance in the second and third year as

they are in the initial stages of arrival. This then suggests a renewed response and slightly altered approach to policy in the provision of support services required to adequately address the integration process for new arrivals. Education needs to be developed to incorporate the housing needs of new arrivals such as Anglicare's 'How to find a house' (see page 3) and would ideally address tenant expectations of housing availability and costs. Community education also needs to occur at the grass roots level in order to respond to local concerns and avoid potential ruptures in the community. 'As the private rental market will continue to be where a large proportion of immigrants are housed', the above recommendations in tandem with steps to reduce discrimination in the housing market are critical to the successful integration of our newest Australians.

New Arrivals Community Linking Program

Lutheran Community Care invites you all to attend an information session for people interested in providing volunteer support to new arrivals from a refugee background. To be held on Wednesday the 19th of April at 309 Prospect Road Blair Athol between 10-3pm topics will include: The Refugee

Experience by Bol Ring Machar (ARA), the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs Community Settlement Services by Glenda Lodge, Cultural Competency and Building Relationships with New Arrivals from a Refugee Background by Joe Tunganaraza and Cathy Lawson and The Impact of Post Traumatic

Stress on New Arrivals from a Refugee Background. Bookings are essential and you can register by email: clawson@lccsa.org.au or telephone 8269 9300. This information session will be followed up with a series of workshops on community profiles in May 2006.



Update from Refugee Health Planning Day

PEACE (Personal Education and Community Empowerment – a service of Relationships Australia) recently held a Refugee Health Planning Day at the Italian Centre. Dr Cameron Moffatt (Communicable Disease Control Branch), Dr Chris Lemoh (Infectious Disease Specialist at Melbourne University), Associate Professor Nicholas Proctor (University of SA) and Ms Eugenia Tsoulis (Executive Director of the Multicultural Resource Centre) were the principle speakers of the day and highlighted health concerns for new and emerging communities. There is an over representation of refugees among patients presenting with acute illness from inadequately treated

communicable diseases – many are asymptomatic – neither exhibiting or producing symptoms – so may not be aware of the need or urgency of treatment. Given the amount of issues that new arrivals must contend with, from trying to find affordable accommodation, enrolling children in school, looking for work and/or getting overseas qualifications recognised, finding family members and negotiating a whole new system and culture and all the time trying to work through the traumas they have left behind, treating a condition that is not causing any immediate distress is the least of their concerns. To address these health issues requires some reflection upon our own medical (and cultural)

responses; such as cultural awareness training for GP's, for example treatment may include vaccinating the entire family and may also involve the use of interpreters. As Doctors appointments have tighter and tighter time restrictions on them, how realistic is it to fit in a family of 6 or 7 or 10? And how does the doctor go about organising an interpreter for the visit? In smaller language communities, there are also privacy and confidentiality issues with interpreters. For those supporting new arrivals it is especially important to be mindful of the array of assistance that may be required.

Free English Classes

The Uniting Care Wesley Bowden at 77 Gibson Street is offering free English classes. They are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 10am and 12noon. Free childcare is available
Contact: 8245 7100 for further information.

African Youth Drop In Centre

A great example of collaborative partnerships is the African Youth Drop-In Centre currently being organised by Australian Refugee Association, Multicultural Youth SA and the Sudanese Community Association of Australia. This project will involve planning and implementing culturally

appropriate, 'drop-in' sessions and recreational activities at MYSA, located in Millers Arcade, just off Hindley Street in the city. The project aims to create a safe space in the city where African youth can spend time together and participate in youth-friendly activities, develop social networks, life skills and access

other programs and services. They are currently advertising for an African Youth Drop-In Centre Coordinator for 8 hours per week for 20 weeks. If you are interested or know of someone who may be interested in this position please direct your enquiries to christine.loveday@ausref.net

Mental Health and Refugees

Mental health issues are a major concern for refugees, asylum seekers and their supporters and is regularly raised at ASHRA meetings. Currently there are three separate projects aimed at highlighting, informing and educating issues around mental health. Lucy Ralton and the Circle of Friends have organised a mental health forum at the Stirling Organic Markets on the 28th of March. Circle of Friends are groups of volunteers that pool resources, energies and skills to support new arrivals that would otherwise be without support. This often translates

into frustration as volunteers are confronted with bureaucratic procedures and policies that can undermine the mental health of those being supported. Another Mental Health Training session aimed at supporting volunteers working with refugees and displaced persons is offered by Relationships Australia on the 1st of April. This will be a hands-on workshop to share your knowledge and experiences with others that are doing the same work. Call 8221 6633 to register your interest. And finally, the Social Inclusion Board has been

asked to provide advice to the Premier on policy review and program redesign to improve the delivery of mental health services to South Australia. From the 27th to the 30th of March there is a phone in on Mental Health freecall: 1800 232 532 between 8am—6pm. Alternately, there is an online survey located at www.socialinclusion.sa.gov.au You are invited share your experiences of the system and your views on how mental health services could work better for you.

How to Find a House

Anglicare are holding monthly education sessions on how to find a house. The next workshop is on the 20th of April at the Magdalene Centre, 26 Moore Street in the city from 12.30—4pm. Learn about where to look for rental accommodation,

what to look for, how to apply, moving, your rights and responsibilities as a tenant, costs, what assistance is available, ways to live cheaply, paying the rent and much more. This workshop is suitable for everyone, including new

arrivals/refugees and asylum seekers and young people planning to leave home. To register your interest in attending this session or an upcoming session contact Dominic at Anglicare on 8209 5415.

Directory Update

The Multicultural Directory is well underway with input from a variety of organisations. To make this directory a really useful tool for the variety of housing workers, refugee supporters, advocates and others, it is important to include as many organisations AND their activities and services as possible. At the moment the sections are divided into; Emergency Services, Ageing, Cultural Groups (active in SA) and another section on cultural groups operating in other states or nationally, Education and Training (including cultural awareness training), Emergency Accommodation, Employment, Everyday needs (where to buy halal foods, where to get your hair braided, where can you buy specific food stuffs specific to

some countries), Festivals and events, Financial (assistance and culturally appropriate banking), Funding and Grants, Housing organisations, Language (where to learn English and where to maintain mother tongue—also useful for those working with specific language groups), Legal (Police, migration lawyers), Media (from the Vietnamese newspaper to community radio), Museums, Recreation and Sport, Regional and Rural, Religion, Wellbeing (Physical—general health issues in culturally appropriate manner), Wellbeing (Mental health with multicultural understanding), and a Youth Section. The consultation we have undertaken so far suggests that it will be more useful to work under themed topics than the agencies themselves

and services that they provide. Some organisations offer assistance or services under a number of these headings which means they will appear more than once. This is because with every new family or individual supporters come into contact with, come differing needs and requirements. We believe the directory will fill a real need for those who work with new arrivals, and stream line some of the work that is required. If your organisation offers services that would fit any of these categories and would like to be included in the directory, please email margo.johnson@sheltersa.asn.au with your details. For those already on our mailing list (you would know if you are!) you will be receiving an email over the next couple of weeks.

Special thanks

Alex Owrang

Juliet Parkes

Kerry Gray

Gary Wilson

Bill Peterson

Mabok Marial

Michael Dummin

Christine Loveday

Bol Machar

Ruth Prince

Margo Johnson

Blackwood Circle of Friends

Circle's of Friends are groups of people who pool their resources, skills and expertise to support new arrivals. As discussed in the previous edition of this Newsletter, the Blackwood Circle of Friends has a learn to drive program. They have received seven cars during the past twelve months to support this program, most of them free! Nine learners out of thirty people in the program have passed their driving test and are either on

full licenses or 'P' plates. On attaining their license, the provision of a car is the next priority. Of the nine successful drivers, seven are now working and one is a full-time university student. The Blackwood Circle of Friends requires more vehicles to support this program, so if you have or know of someone with a car that is no longer of use (think older person no longer able to drive their car, neighbours who were unhappy

with a small trade-in price when they bought a new car, or a car that just hasn't seen the light of day in an old shed somewhere) then contact Christina at ARA christina.gamble@ausref.net or telephone: 8354 2951 The learn to drive program is an enormously useful program and an important component to the successful integration of new arrivals.

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Important contacts

Australian Refugee Association
8354 2951

Migrant Resource Centre
8217 9500

UnitingCare Wesley Ethnic Link
Services
8241 0201

Multicultural Communities
Council
8410 0300

Western Area Multicultural
Youth Service
8408 1313

'The
purpose of
Anthropology
is to make
the world safe
for human
differences'

Ruth Benedict

Housing: a basic human right

How you can help

Australian Refugee Association - Always looking for beds, clean mattresses, sofas, wardrobes, tables, and desks. These items can be delivered to 304 Henley Beach Road Underdale. In some instances, pick up can be arranged. ARA CANNOT accept electrical items.

ASHRA's Vision Statement

ASHRA is committed to developing our network of interested groups and individuals working with refugees and asylum seekers. We wish to provide greater opportunity for leadership and skill development, create strong, informal networks between organisations, provide greater transparency in information sharing, potentially reduce the duplication of services and more readily identify the gaps in services.

ASHRA Logo Design Competition

ASHRA needs a logo!

First Prize \$200

Do you have computer design skills ? Feeling creative? ASHRA needs a logo to help establish our identity through an easily recognisable symbol. The winner will receive \$200 ! All ages welcome and enter as many times as you like.

Entries will only be accepted in jpeg, gif or bmp format.

❖ Entries close April 28th ❖

2006 Meeting dates

19th January	25th May	21 September
22nd February	21st June	18th October
23rd March	20th July	23rd November
19th April	23rd August	

Meetings are held in the Torrens Building between 3-5pm, 220 Victoria Square Adelaide. If you are interested in attending, please contact Cheryl or Margo on 8221 6488 or email margo.johnson@sheltersa.asn.au