

Project SafeCom News and Updates

Friday, 31 August 2018

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1. The Saturday Paper: High court challenge to Walker inquiry threatens federation

A Commonwealth challenge to South Australia's Murray–Darling royal commission has become a state rights battleground with implications for the Constitution. By Karen Middleton.

The Saturday Paper
Edition No. 216 August 4 – 10, 2018
By Karen Middleton

As he opened the first hearing of South Australia's inquiry into the management of the Murray–Darling river system, royal commissioner Bret Walker, SC, was not hiding his annoyance with the federal government.

Trying to establish whether laws have been broken, Walker issued a series of summonses for current and former Commonwealth officials to appear, and for documents to be presented.

The Turnbull government has not only refused to comply, it has started proceedings in the High Court to challenge Walker's legal authority to do so, naming the South Australian government as second defendant and Bret Walker first.

"We live in a federation," Walker declared from the commissioner's chair on June 18, five days after the Commonwealth launched its action.

"... We are not foreign country – the states to each other, let alone to the Commonwealth – and we are certainly not mutually hostile."

But with the federal government's court action, which advanced this week, hostility is creeping in, setting states against each other and against the Commonwealth with potentially wide-ranging implications for cooperative agreements in future.

Walker's Murray–Darling Basin Royal Commission is established under SA legislation that includes the power to compel witnesses and punish recalcitrants, laying out penalty options including a \$1000 fine and three months' jail.

These are the particular powers the federal government is challenging.

On his first hearing day, the royal commissioner arranged his words to avoid accusations that he was telling the High Court what to do.

A highly regarded constitutional lawyer who served the Gillard and Abbott governments for three years as the country's independent national security legislation monitor, Walker guided those at his hearing through the relevant sections of Australia's founding document, pondering what the court might find.

The case represents "actually a very significant question that does go to the heart of our federation and the way in which our governments interact".

FULL STORY AT <https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/news/politics/2018/08/04/high-court-challenge-walker-inquiry-threatens-federation/1533304800662>

2. Behrouz Boochani: Australia needs a moral revolution

How can a nation look to the future when its leaders cage little children for years, in a remote and forlorn prison?

The Guardian
Behrouz Boochani
Fri 31 Aug 2018 08.43 AEST

Five years ago, on a boiling hot day, Australian immigration minister Scott Morrison entered Manus Prison. A number of refugees who represented various groups were invited to meet with him. In that meeting, the refugee representatives found themselves being threatened – Morrison pointed his finger at them and yelled: "You have no chance of coming to Australia and you must return to your countries." I depict this exact scene and its aftermath in my book *No Friend but the Mountains: Writing From Manus Prison*.

It was a time when few people had heard of the prisons on Manus Island and Nauru. The refugees felt isolated and forgotten, the refugees felt extreme pressure. It was in this context that the refugees were confronted with that single threatening line by Morrison. That sentence conjured up a wave of hopelessness, so much so that a few people attempted suicide.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/aug/31/australia-needs-a-moral-revolution>

3. LA Times: One hard-line anti-refugee populist loses out in his bid to lead Australia - and another wins

LA Times
By ROBYN DIXON
AUG 24, 2018 | 6:00 PM

In the stunning culmination of an intraparty rivalry, Australia toppled its prime minister, Malcolm Turnbull, on Friday and selected a more conservative leader from the same party known for his tough stance on immigration and social issues.

The upheaval came after a hard-line populist, Peter Dutton, marshaled the votes to topple the more moderate Turnbull, then failed in his bid to succeed him as prime minister.

After a “spill” — or leadership vote — in the governing Liberal Party, Treasurer Scott Morrison, another figure who made his name blocking refugees from reaching Australia, was voted in as prime minister.

FULL STORY AT <http://www.latimes.com/world/la-fg-australia-leadership-20180824-story.html>

4. First known Australian refugee sues Canadian officials over asylum process

Stevan Utah, an Australian police informant who infiltrated the Bandidos bikie gang, alleges he was left in legal limbo for years

The Guardian
Ashifa Kassam in Toronto
Sat 25 Aug 2018 02:55 AEST

An Australian police informant who infiltrated an outlaw motorcycle gang and later became a refugee in Canada – believed to be the first Australian granted asylum by a foreign country – has launched a lawsuit against Canadian officials, alleging that the drawn-out process of seeking asylum left him in legal limbo for years.

The \$2.55m lawsuit, filed in Canada’s federal court in June, is directed at the country’s immigration department, the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) and two officers involved in the file.

Stevan Utah said Canadian officials took nearly a decade to decide on his asylum claim, a process that was initially hindered by their failure to consider his case seriously. “When I first came here, the CBSA not only could not believe that a white Australian could be a refugee, they wouldn’t entertain it,” Utah told the National Post.

He fled Australia in 2006, after facing attempts on his life by the Bandidos bikie gang.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/aug/24/stevan-utah-bandidos-australian-refugee-sues-canada>

5. The Boston Globe: Australia subjects refugees to a cruel fate. US shouldn’t follow

The Boston Globe
Editorial
AUGUST 12, 2018

THE AUSTRALIAN DETENTION CAMPS on the tiny Micronesian islands of Nauru and Manus are, by all accounts, hell on earth.

Adult detainees have set themselves on fire, and children as young as 10 have repeatedly attempted suicide. Allegations of sexual assault and child abuse are rampant. Camp conditions are toxic, but health care has been denied to detainees. The government has banned journalists and human rights advocates. Thousands of citizens on the mainland have staged protests, to no avail.

As the Trump administration — rooted from the start in xenophobia and ethnonationalism — continues to bend toward authoritarianism, many concerned US citizens have looked to history for a blueprint. The ubiquity of the Holocaust in American culture makes it a go-to model of how a society turns to evil, and so many conversations about the excesses of the administration have invoked that horror as a measure for how bad things have, or have not yet, become.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/editorials/2018/08/11/australia-subjects-refugees-cruel-fate-shouldn-follow/RJTKCBzCRuGoCIsUbOxsUL/story.html>

6. Paul Syvret's Final Column: Cry, my beloved and sadly divided country

Courier-Mail
Paul Syvret
August 8, 2018 10:00pm

SOMEWHERE this week in Australia a baby was born. Or maybe a plane landed carrying someone from another part of the world ready to make a new start here.

It doesn't really matter. For according to our statisticians, we have now welcomed the 25 millionth Australian into the fold.

In roughly half a century, or close to how long I've been around, we have doubled our population. In recent years, though, we have also shrunk.

Our physical numbers may not have waned, but the Australian soul has shrivelled and wizened as we increasingly exclude rather than accept, seek to blame rather than to solve, and to divide where once there was common ground.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/opinion/opinion-cry-my-beloved-and-sadly-divided-country/news-story/07c280991a4ec2659f4f6179d99ffc97>

7. Jack Latimore: Australia is deplorably racist, as people of colour are reminded when they speak up

There can be no reconciliation until politicians acknowledge the harmful impacts of race baiting

The Guardian
Jack Latimore
Fri 10 Aug 2018 04.00 AEST

There's no question that Australia is a far more racist country than its political class like to admit. No amount of spin should be capable of disorientating hard facts sufficiently to obfuscate that reality. Yet – incredibly – I still receive abusive "mail" ridiculing me for jumping at shadows, protesting it just ain't so.

I understand how a certain amount of privilege in life provides a buffer to the kinds of racialised discrimination, prejudice and hate speech that daily infects the lives of people of colour in Australia. But surely by now, in the heavily media saturated environment we inhabit, claiming colour-blindness, whether in an Australian context or global society, isn't possible. Yet, such selective awareness persists.

Undoubtedly, this is partly due to the "filter bubbles" created by the algorithms that shape the most pervasive media in each of our lives. In these safely curated backwaters, our social media newsfeeds – now always ready at hand – reinforce our preferred constructions of the world. Consuming content is self-medication: a drip of personally homogenised feels to fix the anxiety of each participant-user.

For politicians, there is also the element of political expediency. Our prime minister, for example, can put a cameo in up north in a vulnerable Aboriginal community, while one or two of his ministers eagerly race-bait against other marginalised, at-risk peoples in the south. Apparently this provides some weird kind of "balance" for government apologists. You can see it for yourself in their condescending rationalisations on Facebook and Twitter should you choose to surf beyond the reef of your own social media echo chamber.

Australia is deplorably racist. It was founded on a racist document and hasn't improved.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/aug/10/australia-is-deplorably-racist-as-people-of-colour-are-reminded-when-they-speak-up>

8. 'Race politics is back': race commissioner exits with parting shots at conservatives

Tim Soutphommasane says he never expected the biggest threats to racial harmony to come from within Australia's own parliaments

The Guardian
Paul Karp
Mon 6 Aug 2018 04.00 AEST

Tim Soutphommasane will warn that "race politics is back" and criticise Turnbull government ministers for their rhetoric on African gangs and ethnic separatism in a fiery final speech as race discrimination commissioner.

The speech, to be delivered at the University of Western Sydney's Whitlam Institute on Monday, is a blunt assessment of the "resurgence of far-right politics" in Australia which lays the blame on politicians and sections of the media for promoting division for personal gain.

In a copy of the speech, seen by Guardian Australia, Soutphommasane acknowledges that Australia has "good reason to boast that it is one of the most successful multicultural societies in the world".

But – borrowing another favourite phrase of Malcolm Turnbull's – he warns there has "never been a more exciting time to be a dog-whistling politician or race-baiting commentator in Australia".

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/aug/06/race-politics-is-back-race-commissioner-exits-with-parting-shots-at-conservatives>

9. The Saturday Paper: The politics of racism

The government's rhetoric on race takes it into territory that is uglier and more targeted than even John Howard's campaigns. By Mike Secombe.

The Saturday Paper
Edition No. 216 August 4 – 10, 2018
By Mike Secombe

The year was 2007 and, just as now, a conservative federal government was staring down the barrel of electoral defeat.

Then, as now, the tabloid press and the shock jocks fulminated about the problem of "African crime gangs". Then, as now, a Liberal immigration minister pointed to the apparent failure of some people to successfully integrate into Australian society and by his commentary added fuel to a racist fire.

In October that year Kevin Andrews, a pillar of the party's right wing, pointed specifically to Sudanese refugees, lamenting that they "don't seem to be settling and adjusting into the Australian way of life as quickly as we would hope".

Andrews at least had the decency to acknowledge the difficulties faced by the refugees. Speaking to reporters in Melbourne, where the largest number of Sudanese had resettled, he said: "We know that there is a large number of people who are young. We know that they have on average low levels of education, lower levels of education than almost any other group of refugees that have come to Australia. We know that many of them, if not most of them, have spent up to a decade in refugee camps and they've spent much of their lives in very much a war-torn, conflicted situation.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/news/politics/2018/08/04/the-politics-racism/15333048006664>

10. Behrouz Boochani, Manus Island and the book written one text at a time

The Kurdish Iranian writer's book was sent largely via messaging services such as Whatsapp over almost five years

The Guardian
Helen Davidson
Fri 3 Aug 2018 04.00 AEST

A Kurdish Iranian writer sought refuge in Australia but was instead sent to the country's notorious offshore detention centre. For the next five years he wrote a book, one text message at a time.

Behrouz Boochani became a well known and award-winning voice from Papua New Guinea's remote Manus Island, acting as a source for journalists in Australia and internationally, writing his own articles and creating a movie, Chauka, Please Tell Us The Time.

Boochani is one of thousands of asylum seekers to be sent to offshore processing camps in Papua New Guinea, or the tiny Pacific Island nation of Nauru, under Australia's policy, which was developed to stop the growing number of people seeking asylum by boat.

Boochani could not physically attend his book launch on Thursday night because the Australian government has refused to let him or the thousands of others in the same situation over the past five years settle in the country.

Instead he Skyped in from the refugee accommodation centre where he lives in East Lorengau.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/aug/02/behrouz-boochani-manus-island-and-the-book-written-one-text-at-a-time>

11. Australia's barbaric policy confronted by Boochani's prison memoir

Sydney Morning Herald
By Arnold Zable
25 August 2018 — 12:15am

Kurdish-Iranian journalist and writer Behrouz Boochani has been exiled on Manus Island since August 2013. He fled Iran in fear of his safety, as a result of his advocacy on behalf of Kurdish people. I was introduced to Boochani in late 2014. His acclaimed book *No Friend but the Mountains* was published on July 31.

Arnold Zable: Behrouz, for years you have been defined as a refugee, and for a time, as a number - MEG 45 - reduced, as you write in your book to 'one of the many wild bees in the beehive'. All you had in those early years, imprisoned on Manus Island, were the keys of your clandestine mobile phone. Can you take us back to that moment when you embarked on your book? Behrouz Boochani: First, I would like to say that I understand this book as a victory against a system that is designed to take our humanity.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.smh.com.au/national/australia-s-barbaric-policy-confronted-by-boochani-s-prison-memoir-20180821-p4zyt7.html>

12. Behrouz Boochani: Manus prison theory

The Saturday Paper
Edition No. 217 August 11 – 17, 2018
Behrouz Boochani

"In *No Friend But the Mountains*, I frame events in Manus prison through the concept of the kyriarchal system – a web of intersecting oppressions (racism, sexism, colonialism et cetera) that maintains society's dominant hierarchies. This system has total control over the prison and was designed specifically with the purpose of torturing the incarcerated refugees. The twisted and extremely complex system of rules and regulations entangles the refugees – an absurd labyrinth that functions as its own cruel form of incarceration. Imprisoned refugees are absorbed into a highly mechanised system – the all-powerful kyriarchal system – and they begin to experience the deterioration of their human identities."

FULL STORY AT <https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/opinion/topic/2018/08/11/manus-prison-theory/15339096006690>

13. No Friend But The Mountains review: Behrouz Boochani's poetic and vital memoir

Sydney Morning Herald
By Robert Manne
Updated 10 August 2018 — 9:45am

MEMOIR: *No Friend But The Mountains: Writing From Manus Prison*. Behrouz Boochani; trans., Omid Tofighian. Picador, \$32.99

During my lifetime no act of the Australian state has been as terrible as the abandonment, the virtual indefinite imprisonment, of 2000 innocent and desperate refugees and asylum seekers on Nauru and Manus Island. Most have already been marooned for five years or even longer.

Extraordinarily enough, as it has turned out, one of these refugees, a member of the Kurdish intelligentsia, is a magnificent writer. To understand the true nature of what it is that we have done, every Australian, beginning with the Prime Minister, should read Behrouz Boochani's intense, lyrical and psychologically perceptive prose-poetry masterpiece, *No Friend But The Mountains*.

Boochani's narrative begins with the journey that was meant to take him from Indonesia to Australia. The boat took on water and began to capsize. A British cargo ship rescued most of those still on board or, like Boochani, adrift in the ocean. The terror of death by drowning will never leave him. Those rescued were picked up by an Australian naval vessel. "Life has shed its love on us."

Not so. The refugees had arrived four days after the government decided to transfer all "boat people" to Manus Island or Nauru. The single men were flown to Manus. Boochani watches as an innocent refugee, a Rohingya lad, having escaped persecution and having survived the perilous ocean journey, buckles at the knees while being escorted by two officers onto the plane, looking "more like someone being taken to the gallows, to be hanged. I witnessed something similar in Iran."

FULL STORY AT <https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/books/no-friend-but-the-mountains-review-behrouz-boochanis-poetic-and-vital-memoir-20180801-h13fuu.html>

14. Asher Hirsch: Refugees in Indonesia don't want to get on boats. They want basic rights

If they get access to a fair resettlement process, refugees won't be interested in anything people smugglers are trying to sell

The Guardian
Asher Hirsch
Thu 30 Aug 2018 13.24 AEST

This week, home affairs minister Peter Dutton again reiterated the false claim that "there are 14,000 people in Indonesia waiting to get on to boats now".

I've just returned from a research trip in Indonesia, where I spoke to many refugees. Such a claim is not only disingenuous, it also highlights the double standards of Australia's approach to refugee protection in the region.

Refugees in Indonesia don't want to get on boats – they will wait patiently for a fair resettlement process. However, the Australian government is continuously undermining any such process and making life much harder for refugees who are waiting for a solution.

As refugees in Indonesia told Fairfax on Sunday: "If there was a proper humanitarian program, no one would be willing to go by boat." The problem is that resettlement from Indonesia is only a tiny number, and getting smaller.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/aug/30/refugees-in-indonesia-dont-want-to-get-on-boats-they-want-basic-rights>

15. Manus and Nauru do not stop the boats, say asylum seekers in Indonesia

Sydney Morning Herald
By Kieren Kresevic Salazar
25 August 2018 — 11:55pm

Former home affairs minister Peter Dutton argued in June that the "single act of compassion" of bringing 20 seriously ill asylum seekers to Australia from Manus Island and Nauru for medical treatment would be seen by people smugglers as an open invitation to re-start their trade.

But asylum seekers say the Nauru-Manus deterrent plays no part.

"Making [Nauru and Manus] like a zoo that everyone is seeing around the world, [saying] 'Don't come to Australia or else this happens to you' – this is not the thing that is impacting people not to come," said Mozghan Moarefizadeh, an Iranian refugee and advocate.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/manus-and-nauru-do-not-stop-the-boats-say-asylum-seekers-in-indonesia-20180823-p4zzde.html>

16. Refugee processing will stop boats: Greens

Greens MP Adam Bandt has told parliament speeding up the processing of refugees and asylum seekers to Australia will stop illegal boat arrivals.

Karen Sweeney
Australian Associated Press
August 16, 2018 10:32am

Bringing refugees and asylum seekers to Australia quicker will stop boat arrivals by restoring hope for people that their claims will be processed, a Greens MP has told parliament.

Adam Bandt says people languishing in camps and fleeing persecution overseas take up offers from people smugglers because they can't see any other way into Australia right now. "Once the message gets through in these camps that Australia is taking people again ... once we start seeing claims in the thousands being processed in Indonesia and Malaysia elsewhere, then people will understand there's no point getting on a boat and risking their life to come to Australia," he said.

Mr Bandt said the government had not stopped deaths at sea by turning back boat arrivals, it had just resulted in the deaths occurring elsewhere. "Deaths are still happening, we just don't see them," he said.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.news.com.au/national/breaking-news/refugee-processing-will-stop-boats-greens/news-story/51fdb09df79a41849de386352fca2ea8>

17. Leaked emails reveal Peter Dutton overruled advice and granted au pair visa

Messages between AFL boss Gillon McLachlan's family and immigration minister's office show border security concerns

The Guardian
Lisa Martin
Thu 30 Aug 2018 12.06 AEST

Immigration officials appear to have scrambled on a Sunday to save a French au pair from deportation after the AFL boss had Peter Dutton's office alerted to her case.

Leaked emails show the paperwork to grant her a new visa was signed just over an hour before the immigration minister was due to fly out to the Middle East and with two hours to spare before the young woman was to be deported from Australia.

The race against time for department officials is outlined in the 14-page email chain and has raised questions about the transparency of the ministerial intervention process before a Senate inquiry into the matter over the next fortnight.

Guardian Australia revealed this week that the au pair in question, Alexandra Deuwel, had her tourist visa cancelled when she attempted to enter the country on 31 October 2015.

Border security staff raised suspicions that she intended to work; she had previously been counselled about visa conditions during an earlier stay in the country.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/aug/30/leaked-emails-confirm-peter-dutton-afl-boss-gillon-mclachlan-visa-au-pair>

18. Revealed: Peter Dutton intervened in Italian au pair visa case for former police colleague

Exclusive: Minister saved from deportation a woman who was intending to work for a Brisbane family

The Guardian
Lisa Martin
Thu 30 Aug 2018 17.53 AEST

One of the foreign au pairs Peter Dutton saved from deportation came to Australia to work for the family of a former police force colleague, Guardian Australia understands.

Dutton used his ministerial powers under the Migration Act in June 2015 to grant a visa to an Italian au pair who was intending to work for a Brisbane family.

The couple have worked for the Queensland police service and have two young children. The Guardian has decided not to name them.

The matter is one of at least two au pair visa cases which are now the subject of a Senate inquiry.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/aug/30/dutton-intervened-au-pair-visa-case-former-police-colleague>

19. Peter Dutton intervened in third au pair visa case for AFL boss's relatives

Exclusive: Home affairs minister issued visa after his department heard of concerns through Gillon McLachlan

The Guardian
Lisa Martin
Tue 28 Aug 2018 12.10 AEST

The home affairs minister Peter Dutton saved a third au pair from deportation, intervening after the AFL chief executive officer Gillon McLachlan raised the young woman's case.

Guardian Australia understands a French woman named Alexandra Deuwel was detained at Adelaide's international airport late on 31 October 2015.

Her tourist visa was cancelled at the border because there were suspicions she intended to work and she had previously been counselled over visa conditions during an earlier stay in Australia.

Deuwel had previously worked for McLachlan's relatives Callum and Skye MacLachlan in South Australia and was returning to visit them. Callum MacLachlan is joint managing director of the cattle and sheep company Jumbuck Pastoral.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/aug/28/peter-dutton-intervened-in-third-au-pair-visa-case-for-afl-bosss-relatives>

20. Dutton's department spent \$10,000 to keep au pair case documents secret

Home affairs minister used his powers of discretion to grant visas to the two women

The Guardian
Lisa Martin
Fri 3 Aug 2018 08.13 AEST

The Australian government spent more than \$10,000 in taxpayer cash fighting a legal battle to keep documents secret about the home affairs minister Peter Dutton's decision to save two foreign au pairs from deportation.

The visa status of the two unknown young women has been in the spotlight since March, when it was revealed that Dutton used his powers of ministerial discretion to grant them visas on public interest grounds.

In the first case, an au pair whose visa was cancelled at Brisbane's international airport in June 2015 was able to make a phone call and within a couple of hours the minister approved a new visa.

In November the same year, Dutton defied written warnings from his own department that granting a visa to a second au pair was of "high risk" because she had been previously counselled about work restrictions.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/aug/03/duttons-department-spent-10000-to-keep-au-pair-case-documents-secret>

21. Waleed Aly: Dutton's au pair drama shows hypocrisy of immigration policy

Sydney Morning Herald
By Waleed Aly
30 August 2018 — 9:00pm

"As a discretionary and humanitarian act to an individual with ongoing needs, it is in the interests of Australia as a humane and generous society to grant this person a tourist visa."

That's Peter Dutton, then immigration minister, in the official document by which he intervened to allow an au pair to enter the country.

And what an incredible sentence it is! A humanitarian act. An individual with ongoing needs. A humane and generous society. So ... a tourist visa? What humanitarian situation serious enough to require intervention from the immigration minister himself can be relieved by a spot of tourism?

The whole thing is absurd. Not truly scandalous, given Dutton acted within his legal power and that politicians doing favours for people is hardly unprecedented. But absurd and important for precisely that reason. This episode reveals just how hypocritical and disingenuous our approach on immigration in this country really is.

The story here isn't that Dutton did a favour for a mate (or a mate's mate, or a Liberal Party donor). It's that in this tiny episode, Dutton revealed himself to be happy to violate the very principles on which he has based his entire position on immigration. Dutton's political trade is based squarely on being a tough, uncompromising applier of rules; a kind of maniacal preserver of order. He will not be bowed or be swayed except in the most extreme cases, and even then, probably not.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/dutton-s-au-pair-drama-shows-hypocrisy-of-immigration-policy-20180830-p500np.html>

22. Lawyers question validity of Peter Dutton's decisions in immigration cases

Advocates to examine whether rulings in clients' cases will stand amid questions about the minister's eligibility

The Guardian
Paul Karp and Christopher Knaus
Mon 27 Aug 2018 17.59 AEST

The question of eligibility has continued to dog Peter Dutton as he hit out at suggestions he should change his investment portfolio and asylum seeker advocates said they were investigating ramifications for their clients of his past decisions in office.

Days after Malcolm Turnbull elevated the issue of whether the home affairs minister's business interests in childcare centres could disqualify him from parliament, Labor warned on Monday that Dutton was "kidding himself" if he thought the question over his eligibility for parliament had been resolved.

Labor has questioned Morrison's decision to reappoint Dutton to the home affairs portfolio, which will retain responsibility for asylum seekers and the Australian Border Force, despite immigration being granted to Liberal MP David Coleman.

As home affairs minister Dutton has made thousands of decisions, including whether to grant protection visas to asylum seekers and visa cancellations of migrants on character grounds.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/aug/27/peter-dutton-refugee-advocates-question-validity-of-ministers-decisions>

23. Refugee advocates weigh potential legal challenge to Dutton decisions

Canberra Times
By Dana McCauley
27 August 2018 — 12:01am

Human rights lawyer David Manne, executive director of Melbourne's Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre, confirmed to Fairfax Media that his organisation was "looking into" the issue on behalf of clients.

"We've assisted many thousands of people seeking asylum whose rights have been adversely affected in serious and profoundly harmful ways, by decisions made when Peter Dutton was minister," he said.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.canberratimes.com.au/politics/federal/refugee-advocates-weigh-potential-legal-challenge-to-dutton-decisions-20180826-p4zzv0.html>

24. Susanne Legena: Nauru's children are self-harming, but ordinary Australians can stop the horror

ABC News
By Susanne Legena
Updated Wed August 29, 2018 at 12:41pm

Right now, very young children our Government has imprisoned on Nauru want to end their lives. Let's just pause and allow that to really sink in.

On ABC's 7.30 program last night, health professionals outlined an appalling and escalating situation of the Australian Government's making: tiny children, who want to die, after a short and hopeless life in detention.

FULL STORY AT <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-28/nauru-imprisoning-traumatised-kids-is-child-abuse/10174688>

25. 'Darkness surrounds me': Nauru child refugee paints pictures of despair

Medicated, terrified and traumatised, seven-year-old Ahoora has been held for five years on the island. Experts say his drawings reflect a broader, familial deterioration

The Guardian
Saba Vasefi and Ben Doherty
Mon 27 Aug 2018 04.00 AEST

Given pens, Ahoora draws.

They are not the conventional drawings of a seven-year-old child: he draws pictures of children on fire, of sharks circling small terrified boys, of crying faces behind bars.

Seven-year-old Ahoora, a refugee, has spent most of his life on Nauru. He arrived on the island as a three-year-old and has only traumatic memories of his life before, and of his journey to Australia.

His time on the tiny island has been a further trauma. He is unwell often, succumbing to regular fevers and breaking out in rashes. He cannot go to school on Nauru where he says he was bullied on the one day he went. He wets himself as a reaction to the threat of violence from older children and, because of his disrupted education has not learned to read and write.

He has spent years being heavily medicated with antidepressants.

Ahoora lives with his family in a tent inside the Australian-run regional processing centre.

Over more than five years, he has watched his father deteriorate into listless depression.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/aug/27/darkness-surrounds-me-nauru-child-refugee-paints-pictures-of-despair>

26. Nauru's asylum seeker tents demolished ahead of Pacific Islands Forum

Sources say move intended to spare visiting leaders the sight of people living in notorious camp

The Guardian
Helen Davidson, Saba Vasefi and Ben Doherty
Wed 29 Aug 2018 11.18 AEST

Nauru's government has moved asylum seekers out of the detention centre and demolished the tents ahead of the Pacific Islands Forum next week.

The tents at regional processing centre 3 (RPC-3) were erected five years ago, and at least 100 people have continued to live in them since the facility was deemed "open" in 2015.

Photos and videos taken on the island this week purport to show workers dismantling the tents.

Island sources and advocates say the move is to ensure there are no children living in tents behind the camp fences when foreign leaders and visitors arrive, given previous requests from families to move have repeatedly and recently been rejected by centre authorities.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/aug/29/naurus-asylum-seeker-tents-demolished-ahead-of-pacific-islands-forum>

27. Media rights group lashes 'Pacific Gulag' news blackout

Dailymail.co.uk
By AFP
PUBLISHED: 15:22 AEST, 15 August 2018
UPDATED: 15:22 AEST, 15 August 2018

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) also accused Canberra of failing to defend journalistic freedoms in relation to the camp, which it described as a "Pacific Gulag" and "Australia's Guantanamo".

RSF's Asia-Pacific head Daniel Bastard said Nauru had banned the Australian Broadcasting Corporation from covering an international summit next month on "completely specious" grounds.

He said the ban on the public broadcaster was the latest obstacle to be thrown in front of media wanting to cover Nauru and the controversial camp that Australia bankrolls.

"This island has become a news and information black hole because of the refugee processing centre it hosts for the Australian government," he said, calling for the ABC to be given accreditation.

"We also condemn the hypocritical silence from the Australian authorities, who have not lifted a finger to defend their public broadcaster."

FULL STORY AT <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-6061975/Media-rights-group-lashes-Pacific-Gulag-news-blackout.html>

28. Human rights groups set deadline to get all refugee children off Nauru

Coalition of NGOs and charities calls for children to be brought to Australia by 20 November

The Guardian
Helen Davidson
Mon 20 Aug 2018 08.00 AEST

A coalition of some of Australia's biggest humanitarian and human rights organisations have given the federal government a deadline to get all asylum seeker and refugee children off Nauru, as the health and safety crisis on the island worsens.

World Vision, alongside more than 30 other organisations and advocacy groups, has called for parliament to bring the more than 120 children and their families to Australia or settled in a safe third country by Universal Children's Day on 20 November.

It follows a unanimous motion passed by the Australian Medical Association's federal council on Saturday, calling for the government to "act urgently to guarantee the health and wellbeing" of the children and their families.

The coalition includes World Vision New Zealand, the Australian Council for International Development, the Refugee Council of Australia, St Paul's Anglican Cathedral, the Anglican Diocese of Sydney, Australian Lawyers Alliance, and the Australian arms of Save the Children, Oxfam, Amnesty International and Plan International.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/aug/20/human-rights-groups-set-deadline-to-get-all-refugee-children-off-nauru>

29. Australia's Child Refugees Are Suffering A Rare Psychological Illness Where They Withdraw From The World

At least six children sent to Nauru by the Australian government have resignation syndrome. Doctors say the rare psychological illness is like "going into hibernation".

Buzzfeed

Posted on August 13, 2018, at 4:01 a.m.

Lane Sainty

Late last month, a young girl was urgently brought to Australia from Nauru, the tiny Pacific island where she was sent to live in offshore immigration detention by the Australian government in 2013.

We don't know a great deal about this girl, due to a court order and her right to privacy. We don't know her name, and we don't know her exact age, other than she is an adolescent; we don't know from which country her family fled before she was granted refugee status.

What we do know is her health started to deteriorate sharply at the beginning of July. On July 9 she cut her thighs with a razor. The next day, she cut her arms and legs, and was taken to the emergency room at Nauru Hospital. She started refusing food and water.

Notes taken by a psychiatrist on July 25 recorded the girl as not having eaten or drunk anything for six days. Her blood pressure was difficult to measure, her muscle tone abnormally low, and she didn't respond to a sharp tap just under her knee bone – a test that should, in most people, cause a reflex jerk of the leg.

The girl was diagnosed with major depressive disorder and with resignation syndrome. The latter is a rare and serious psychiatric condition that is perhaps most widely known as the mysterious illness that sent hundreds of refugee children in Sweden into a seemingly unconscious state.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.buzzfeed.com/lanesainty/australias-child-refugees-are-being-diagnosed-with-swedens>

30. 'Begging to die': succession of critically ill children moved off Nauru

Girl refusing food and water the latest out of dozens of children referred for transfer by medical staff

The Guardian

Ben Doherty

Sat 25 Aug 2018 08.03 AEST

A girl suffering "resignation syndrome" and who is refusing all food and water has been ordered off Nauru by an Australian court, as a succession of critically ill children are brought from the island.

At least three children have left the island since Thursday, and reports from island sources say at least three more children, as young as 12, are "on FFR" – food and fluid refusal.

The current crisis on the island is overwhelming medical staff, who are referring dozens of children for transfer off the island, only to have their decisions rebuffed by Australian Border Force officials on the island or department of home affairs bureaucrats in Canberra.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/aug/25/begging-to-die-succession-of-critically-ill-children-moved-off-nauru>

31. 12-year-old on Nauru who tried to set herself alight not getting medical treatment, father says

Doctors earlier warned the refugee girl needed to be moved off Nauru urgently, but those recommendations were overruled

The Guardian
Ben Doherty
Sat 1 Sep 2018 08.08 AEST

The father of a 12-year-old refugee girl who attempted to set herself on fire on Nauru says she is not receiving medical treatment and is refusing to eat and drink.

“Her desire to die is very high,” her father said from Nauru through an interpreter. The girl’s father is also trying to care for her 13-year-old brother, and their mother, both of whom are seriously mentally ill.

“Currently R is losing a lot of weight, she is not speaking, and refusing all food and water. She does not sleep at night,” her father said.

“R has stopped going to the toilet by herself ... when she does sleep she wakes up with nightmares, screaming and sweating.”

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/sep/01/12-year-old-on-nauru-who-tried-to-set-herself-alight-not-getting-medical-treatment-father-says>

32. Nauru self-harm 'contagion' as 12-year-old refugee tries to set herself alight

Another girl, 17, on hunger strike and in critical condition as self-harm and suicide attempts grow more common

The Guardian
Ben Doherty
Thu 23 Aug 2018 04.00 AEST

Another young refugee on Nauru is critically ill after refusing to eat and drink, and rejecting medical care for weeks, while a 12-year-old girl has been taken to Nauru hospital after reportedly attempting to set herself on fire.

The situation on Nauru has grown “dangerously chaotic” a government source told Guardian Australia.

A 17-year-old girl is being treated inside the regional processing centre after refusing all food, fluid and medical treatment. The girl, S (Guardian Australia has chosen not to publish her name), is one of several children doctors say are critically ill on the island.

Three separate doctors on the island have written overseas medical referrals for S stating she should be urgently moved to a hospital off the island. They have diagnosed S with major depressive disorder and ‘resignation syndrome’, and recommended admission to an inpatient unit.

S has been inside the supported accommodation area of the regional processing centre for three weeks, and has been refusing food and water for much of that time.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/aug/23/nauru-self-harm-contagion-as-12-year-old-refugee-tries-to-set-herself-alight>

33. Critically ill refugee child flown from Nauru to Australia with family

Exclusive: Experts denounce Australian Border Force’s ‘inhumane and unnecessary’ delays in transfer of 12-year-old boy, who has refused food for more than 20 days

The Guardian
Ben Doherty
Tue 21 Aug 2018 15.09 AEST

A 12-year-old refugee on Nauru who has refused all food and medical treatment for more than 20 days is being moved to Australia with his whole family.

M (Guardian Australia has chosen not to publish his name) was medivaced from Nauru by air ambulance with his mother, stepfather and sister early Tuesday afternoon.

The Australian Border Force initially refused to move M with his family, insisting they be separated, with his stepfather to stay on the island.

However, after M refused to leave without his family, and after several failed attempts to move him, first on commercial flights, and then by air ambulance, the ABF acquiesced and allowed the whole family to travel.

On-island sources told Guardian Australia that M was gravely ill and would have died within days without medical intervention. A medical assessment conducted on Sunday said M was “reaching a critical time”.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/aug/21/critically-ill-refugee-child-flown-from-nauru-to-australia-with-family>

34. Jacinda Ardern: NZ can't save kids detained on Nauru

Stuff.co.nz

LAURA WALTERS

Last updated 17:35, August 20 2018

World Vision is calling on Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern to resettle all refugee children detained on Nauru, but she says her hands are tied.

During the first week of September, Jacinda Ardern, along with Australian and other Pacific Island leaders, will descend on Nauru - an island about the size of Auckland's Rangitoto - for the Pacific Islands Forum leaders meeting.

The lead-up to the summit has been marred with controversy, with the Nauru Government banning some media, and tension mounting over the asylum seekers and refugees being detained on Nauru, on behalf of the Australian Government.

There are about 119 children detained on Nauru - this number fluctuates, as children are often taken from the island for emergency medical treatment.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/106403247/jacinda-ardern-nz-cant-save-kids-detained-on-nauru/>

35. Nauru hunger strike: Border Force abandons multiple attempts to move child to Australia

Australian Border Force refuses to allow boy, who has refused food for 19 days, to travel with stepfather

The Guardian

Ben Doherty

Mon 20 Aug 2018 11.34 AEST

Efforts to move a 12-year-old refugee boy on hunger strike on Nauru to a hospital in Australia failed at the weekend, after the Australian Border Force refused to allow his stepfather to travel with him.

The 12-year-old boy weighs just 36kg and cannot stand up, after more than two weeks refusing food. He is at risk of death within days, doctors on the island said.

Doctors have demanded he be flown by air ambulance off the island, after plans to take him on commercial flights from Nauru to Australia were twice abandoned by Border Force at the weekend.

The latest medical assessment of M – whose identity cannot be disclosed – warns “we are reaching a critical time”.

M is an Iranian refugee who has been held on Nauru with his family since he was eight. The assessment was conducted by doctors on Nauru on Sunday and has been sent to senior staff within the medical services provider IHMS, Border Force and the Department of Home Affairs.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/aug/20/nauru-hunger-strike-border-force-abandons-attempts-to-move-child-to-australia>

36. 12yo refugee on hunger strike on Nauru suffering from resignation syndrome, doctors say

ABC Radio CAF - PM

By Angus Randall

Updated August 16, 2018 20:24:40

Medical staff on Nauru say a 12-year-old refugee boy has been on a hunger strike for nearly two weeks.

They say he has been sedated and given fluids to keep him alive.

The Iranian-born refugee has been held on the island, along with his family, for five years.

Refugee advocacy organisation Doctors for Refugees has been monitoring the boy's health.

"Doctors have had concerns about this young child for a very long time," Doctors for Refugees president Dr Barri Phatarfod told PM.

"He's got quite a difficult family situation, and it's been almost two weeks now that he's refused food and fluid.

FULL STORY AT <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-16/12-year-old-refugee-with-resignation-syndrome-on-nauru/10129408>

37. Nauru hunger strike: 12-year-old boy at imminent risk of dying

Island staff report a looming children's health crisis ahead of Pacific Islands Forum

The Guardian
Ben Doherty
Thu 16 Aug 2018 11.30 AEST

A 12-year-old refugee boy on hunger strike on Nauru for more than a fortnight is at imminent risk of dying, medical staff on the island say, but efforts to move him to hospital care in Australia have foundered.

He is one of several critical child cases on the island – including a 14-year-old boy with muscle wastage so severe he may never walk normally again, and a two-year-old girl whose parents are too unwell to care for her.

Staff on the island report a looming crisis in children's health, ahead of the Pacific Islands Forum next month, and the attendant international attention that will bring.

"Everyone on the island knows how serious this is. We have been saying for months a child is going to die in these circumstances," an on-island official with knowledge of the medical situation told the Guardian. "A child is going to die. Every day we get closer. It's never been so critical."

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/aug/16/nauru-hunger-strike-12-year-old-boy-at-imminent-risk-of-dying>

38. Peter Dutton again forced by court to transfer sick child from Nauru to Australia

Case joins more than a dozen failed attempts by immigration minister to block transfer of a child

The Guardian
Helen Davidson
Wed 1 Aug 2018 17.12 AEST

The federal court has again forced Peter Dutton to transfer a dangerously sick child from Nauru to Australia for treatment, dismissing arguments from the immigration minister's representatives that the girl wasn't seriously ill.

On Thursday the federal court's Justice Robertson ordered an adolescent girl be transferred to Sydney for urgent medical care, accompanied by a family member.

"The applicant is at serious risk of permanent complications from her current medical situation and [I] find that the applicant appears to be at imminent risk to her health, both in the short term and in the long term," wrote Robertson in his judgement.

"It follows that I do not accept the submission on behalf of the minister that the applicant has not shown sufficient evidence of the seriousness of her medical condition or sufficient urgency in terms of the treatment for her medical condition."

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/aug/01/peter-dutton-again-forced-by-court-to-transfer-sick-child-from-nauru-to-australia>

39. Tamil asylum seeker dies in Queensland hospital after suicide attempt

Nine News
2:18pm Aug 28, 2018

A Tamil asylum seeker from Sri Lanka has died at Logan Hospital south of Brisbane after his life support was switched off.

The 45-year-old was admitted to hospital last week after attempting to take his own life.

He reportedly fell into a deep depression several weeks ago after his asylum application was initially rejected.

A subsequent suicide attempt left him brain dead, with his life support switched off on Sunday.

Refugee advocate Ian Rintoul said the man arrived in Australia in 2014 after being on Nauru since 2012, and leaves behind a wife and four children in Sri Lanka.

"This Tamil asylum seeker is another casualty of deliberately harsh policies to break people who make asylum claims," Mr Rintoul said.

"They are denied natural justice and have been subjected to unacceptable delays, and denied legal help."

FULL STORY AT <https://www.9news.com.au/2018/08/28/13/59/tamil-asylum-seeker-dies-in-hospital>

40. 'His life is in danger': Afghan interpreter launches legal fight for Australian visa

ABC Radio National - Exclusive
by Fiona Pepper for Earshot
Updated August 03, 2018 10:30:31

An Afghan interpreter who fears for his life after working with Australian soldiers has launched a legal fight against the decision to deny him a resettlement visa.

When troops pulled out of Afghanistan, interpreters were allowed to apply for refuge in Australia — an acknowledgement of their vital role, and also of the heightened danger they face from insurgent groups.

Since 2012 more than 900 Afghan nationals who supported the Australian Defence Force have been granted resettlement visas.

Hussan* is not one of them.

For the past five years, he has been living in a precarious situation.

"This is really, really dangerous and [a] really, really hard life for me and my whole family," he said.

"I'm living in my house just like a prisoner."

FULL STORY AT <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-03/afghan-interpreter-hussan-launches-legal-fight-for-visa/9929002>

41. Asylum seekers on the run in the Daintree

Cairns Post
Chris Clarke, The Courier-Mail
August 26, 2018 2:43pm

MORE than two dozen illegal immigrants are believed to be on the run from authorities, after a suspected asylum seeker vessel made it into Australian waters. It's understood a fishing boat carrying 27 people ran aground in a river mouth in the Daintree Rainforest on Sunday afternoon.

It appears to be the first asylum seeker boat to make it to Australia in four years. It is understood that one of the men identified himself to authorities as a taxi driver. Two men made their way to a local boat ramp and have since been detained, police told The Courier-Mail.

The rest of the crew are understood to be on the run from authorities, with some believed to be hiding in mangroves. Australian Border Force has been contacted for comment.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.cairnspost.com.au/news/queensland/asylum-seekers-on-the-run-in-the-daintree/news-story/44a88f241a17c9959c2c6b9c188782a9>

42. Search in croc-infested Daintree continues after 15 from fishing boat detained

Border force and police scour mangroves for foreign nationals after their vessel ran aground

The Guardian
Australian Associated Press
Mon 27 Aug 2018 12.42 AEST

Fifteen foreign nationals have been detained and authorities are searching for others who abandoned a boat that ran aground in crocodile country north of Cairns.

Locals raised the alarm when they spotted the boat and saw those aboard fleeing on foot after making it to a remote beach near the mouth of the Daintree river in Queensland on Sunday.

It's not known how many people were on the boat, which authorities have described as an illegal fishing vessel.

Border force officers are scouring the crocodile-infested mangroves with the help of Queensland police.

"I understand that 15 people are now detained on behalf of the Australian Border Force," Queensland police minister, Mark Ryan, told reporters on Monday.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/aug/27/search-in-croc-infested-daintree-continues-after-15-from-fishing-boat-detained>

43. Why the PM will be paying close attention to a scuttled boat in Qld

Sydney Morning Herald
By Roman Quaedvlieg
29 August 2018 — 12:05am

Scott Morrison was much relieved as Christmas 2014 loomed when, with the gift of an Abbott cabinet reshuffle, he was able to bequeath Operation Sovereign Borders to Peter Dutton. Morrison had delivered on the Coalition's key election promise of "stopping the boats", however he was also aware the operation had not put an end to the threat of globally displaced people looking for haven or a better life, both of which Australia offers in spades.

Peter Dutton's apprehension coming into the portfolio was palpable - for the same reason. A single asylum-seeker venture bumping into Australia's remote coastline or, as happened before, steaming undetected into a West Australian regional port after he took over the reins would be seen politically and electorally as a massive fail. Dutton's neurosis translated into Napoleonic decrees to the operation team as he moved to satisfy himself that the OSB shield was as watertight as possible.

To Dutton's immense relief, the shield held over the next few years. As treasurer, Morrison kept his hand in border security through his membership of the powerful National Security Committee of Cabinet, but after last week's Bradbury-esque performance he finds the issue firmly back under his stewardship as the newly minted Prime Minister.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.smh.com.au/national/why-the-pm-will-be-paying-close-attention-to-a-scuttled-boat-in-qld-20180827-p5004h.html>

44. Suspected asylum seekers who fled boat in Daintree taken to Christmas Island

Search for missing migrants, believed to be from Vietnam, understood to be over after captain and first mate arrested

The Guardian
Australian Associated Press
Wed 29 Aug 2018 07.54 AEST

Most of the boatload of suspected asylum seekers who fled their sinking vessel in Queensland's crocodile country have been taken to Christmas Island.

A refugee advocate said 15 people detained by officials had arrived at the Indian Ocean island at 1.30pm on Tuesday.

"I hope they're able to receive advice that they can make their claim while in detention," Refugee Action Coalition spokesman Ian Rintoul said.

The search for the missing foreign nationals, believed to be from Vietnam, is understood to be over after two more men were arrested on Tuesday.

The men, understood to be the captain and first mate of the rickety boat which ran aground near the mouth of the Daintree River, were taken into custody on Tuesday morning after being held by the operator of the river's ferry, the ABC has reported.

There are reports the captain had made contact with people in Sydney before his arrest in an attempt to arrange transport from the area.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/aug/29/suspected-asylum-seekers-who-fled-boat-in-daintree-taken-to-christmas-island>

45. Australian GPs will accredit offshore detention centres if given full access

Doctors' body says findings of audits must be available to public with 'no caveats' in order to give their blessing

The Guardian
Ben Doherty
Wed 1 Aug 2018 08.00 AEST

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners has said it is willing to work to accredit the medical services in offshore immigration to Australian standards, but only if the government gives it full and free access to the centres offshore, and makes its audit public.

In handing down findings into the 2014 death of Iranian asylum seeker Hamid Kehzaei on Monday, Queensland coroner Terry Ryan recommended that the RACGP accredit offshore medical services in the same way they do those onshore.

Australia – which runs the offshore regime on Manus and Nauru – was responsible for his “preventable” death, the coroner found.

The president of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Bastian Seidel, said the college would be willing to accredit the offshore medical services, but that they must be given full access free from any interference, and their findings made public.

“The RACGP has been very vocal about the circumstances of offshore detention. We have said repeatedly our members are willing to go to detention centres to look after patients and to see the circumstances.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/aug/01/australian-gps-will-accredit-offshore-detention-centres-if-given-full-access>

46. Victorian councillors condemn federal cuts to asylum seeker payments

Members of 17 councils call on Turnbull government to reverse cuts affecting asylum seekers on bridging visas

The Guardian
Helen Davidson
Tue 31 Jul 2018 19.11 AEST

Mayors and councillors from 17 Victorian councils have called on the federal government to reverse its cuts to support payments for asylum seekers here on bridging visas.

At a meeting in Dandenong on Tuesday councillors drafted a joint resolution condemning the cuts, which charity groups say will potentially force thousands into destitution.

Last year the federal government announced an end to status resolution support services (SRSS) for several thousand asylum seekers on bridging visas, which began taking effect last month.

The SRSS provides payment roughly equivalent to 89% of Newstart – about \$35 a day – as well as case management support and access to trauma and torture counselling services.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/jul/31/victorian-councillors-condemn-federal-cuts-to-asylum-seeker-payments>

47. No minor matter: Indonesian children jailed in Australia seek justice

Sydney Morning Herald
By Jewel Topsfield & Amilia Rosa
2 August 2018 — 5:34pm

The date April 27, 2010 is seared into Colin Singer's mind.

Singer, an independent prison visitor, had reported for duty at Hakea, a maximum-security adult prison in Western Australia.

He was met at the prison door by the superintendent, the deputy superintendent, the chaplain and a senior officer.

“Sir,” they said. “We think we have a problem. We would like you to speak with the medical director.”

The doctor showed Singer a printout of names of prisoners who had undergone medicals. Several names were highlighted and the doctor had scrawled: “These are juveniles.”

Singer, whose wife is Indonesian, recognised the names as Indonesian.

“I remember saying to the doctor: ‘They are Asians sir, how do you know they are young?’ He [the doctor] said: ‘Some of these are prepubescent. How could they possibly be 20 years old? This is ridiculous’.”

FULL STORY AT <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/no-minor-matter-indonesian-children-jailed-in-australia-seek-justice-20180727-p4zu0w.html>

48. Going blind, begging for painkillers: Manus medical neglect continues

After ‘systemic failures’ were found to have caused Hamid Kehazaei’s death, more critical cases are being left untreated

The Guardian
Ben Doherty
Thu 2 Aug 2018 08.00 AEST

Days after a coroner found “systemic failures” caused the death of Hamid Kehazaei on Manus Island, doctors say healthcare on the island is the worst it has been. Guardian Australia has learned of at least two critical cases being left untreated: one man faces permanent blindness and another has been five days with a suspected fractured femur, given only Panadol and a bandage.

Doctors say more refugees under Australia’s care will die if healthcare is not reformed.

Iraqi refugee Mohammed Hamza Hussein, who lost sight in one eye when he was beaten with a post during the 2014 attack on the Manus detention centre is now going blind in his other eye.

Ophthalmologists have said he requires urgent intervention – including treatments not available on Manus Island – in order to save his sight.

“I’m the father of four girls,” 46-year-old Hussein, a former Iraqi policeman, told Guardian Australia through an interpreter, “but I’ve been locked up here for five years ... I want to be able to see my family again.”

Last week, Hussein attempted suicide, and survived only after friends intervened. Serious concerns remain for his deteriorating mental health.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/aug/02/manus-medical-neglect-scandalous-australian-doctors-say>

49. Manus Island refugees rushed to medical help as advocates fear ‘more deaths’

Mohammed Hamza Hussein is going blind while Abdikaldeawe Abdisalam severely injured his leg

The Guardian
Ben Doherty
Fri 3 Aug 2018 14.37 AEST

Two refugees facing critical illnesses have been belatedly rushed to medical attention, after a campaign of public and private pressure on the Australian and Papua New Guinea governments, and some unconventional back-channel diplomacy.

Guardian Australia reported on Thursday on the cases of Mohammed Hamza Hussein – who lost one eye in an assault four years ago and is going blind in his other eye – and Abdikaldeawe Abdisalam, who severely injured his leg in an accident and had been denied an x-ray or any treatment for nearly a week.

By Thursday afternoon, Hussein had been flown to Port Moresby’s Pacific international hospital for an assessment of his failing “good” eye. Doctors say his condition – and ongoing treatment of his eye – will not be able to be treated in Port Moresby, and he will need to be flown to Australia.

Abdisalam is set to be medevaced to Port Moresby sometime on Friday or Saturday after an x-ray – finally performed six days after his accident – revealed a complete patella rupture. His kneecap has been torn loose from his lower leg, causing massive swelling and risking permanent deformity in his leg. He will require urgent surgery.

The two men's cases were the subject of lobbying from federal parliamentarians and doctors' groups, as well as an intervention from the former Australian Border Force commissioner Roman Quaedvlieg.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/aug/03/manus-island-refugees-rushed-to-medical-help-as-advocates-fear-more-deaths>

50. Tell Qantas: Don't deport Priya and Nades to danger

Refugee Action Coalition
August 1, 2018
Ian Rintoul 0417 275 713

On Thursday next week, 9 August, there will be actions happening outside Qantas and Jetstar offices in Melbourne and Sydney urging the airline to publicly commit not to participate in the deportation of Priya and Nades, the Tamil asylum seekers from Biloela, or in any other asylum seeker deportation.

If you can't make the actions you can also help to put pressure on the airline by bombarding Qantas on social media.

FULL STORY AT <http://www.refugeeaction.org.au/?p=7003>

51. Qantas and Virgin pressured to refuse to take part in removal of asylum seekers

Advocates argue airlines should join those around the world who are boycotting deportations

The Guardian
Ben Doherty
Thu 9 Aug 2018 04.00 AEST

Qantas and Virgin are facing increasing pressure from unions, advocacy groups and the public to refuse to participate in the forced removal of asylum seekers from Australia, as airlines around the world boycott deportations.

But both of Australia's major carriers have refused to rule out taking part in future deportations.

The issue of corporate co-operation in forced removals came to renewed international attention last month when Swedish student Elin Ersson refused to sit down on a plane at Gothenburg airport, protesting that an Afghan man was being deported "to hell". She succeeded, and the man was removed from the plane.

Similar protests have been staged in Australia, resulting, in some cases, in criminal charges laid against protesters.

In June in the UK, Virgin Atlantic said it would no longer assist the home office in deporting people classed as illegal immigrants, after growing unease over the wrongful removal of members of the Windrush generation to Caribbean countries, despite their status as British citizens.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/aug/09/qantas-and-virgin-pressured-to-refuse-to-take-part-in-removal-of-asylum-seekers>

52. Dutton's Ashmore Reef bill passed as Coalition and Labor accused of asylum seeker 'cruelty'

Only Adam Bandt, Andrew Wilkie and Cathy McGowan voted against bill aimed at ensuring detention of up to 1,600 people was lawful

The Guardian
Ben Doherty
Thu 16 Aug 2018 14.07 AEST

The Coalition and Labor have voted together to retrospectively amend a flawed piece of asylum legislation in a bid to ensure the detention of up to 1,600 asylum seekers was lawful.

In the House of Representatives, only the Greens MP Adam Bandt and independents Andrew Wilkie and Cathy McGowan voted against the migration (validation of port appointment) bill 2018, which seeks to retrospectively authorise an unlawful declaration of Ashmore Reef as a “port”, with the intention of excluding asylum seekers from making protection claims.

Introducing the bill, the home affairs minister, Peter Dutton, said its effect would simply be maintaining “the status quo for unauthorised maritime arrivals”.

“The government will not hesitate to legislate to protect the integrity of Australia’s migration framework,” he said.

In 2002, the then immigration minister, Philip Ruddock, attempted to declare Ashmore Reef, off the north-west coast of Western Australia, a “port” so it could be excised from Australia’s migration zone. The government then intercepted asylum boats and sailed asylum seekers through the reef to enter Australia so that they could be detained indefinitely as having arrived “offshore”.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/aug/16/duttons-ashmore-reef-bill-passed-as-coalition-and-labor-accused-of-asylum-seeker-cruelty>

53. 'Damoclean sword': Michaela Banerji is still fighting after five years

The former Immigration Department official said her sacking after a tweet "drove a stake" through her.

Canberra Times

By Doug Dingwall

6 August 2018 — 12:00am

A series of tweets railing against Australia's treatment of asylum seekers took seconds to write, but the prolonged battle that followed between their author and the federal government has stretched for years.

As Michaela Banerji learned she would be at the centre of a High Court case testing freedom of speech, the former Immigration Department official entered another uncertain chapter since her sacking in 2013.

On a Sunday evening she meets at her home in Canberra's suburbs and is weighing up what could happen after Attorney-General Christian Porter intervened in her stoush with the federal government over her dismissal for the social media posts.

More than a week on from Mr Porter's decision in July to send the case to the nation's highest court interpreting constitutional matters, Ms Banerji is glad it will avoid the routine of appeals and legal argument that would have made its route there tortuous.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.canberratimes.com.au/politics/federal/damoclean-sword-michaela-banerji-is-still-fighting-after-five-years-20180723-p4zt2c.html>