

Lucy Morgan

Refugee Council of Australia

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Lucy Morgan is the Information and Policy Coordinator at the Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA). She joined RCOA as a volunteer in 2007 and became a member of staff in 2009. As a member of RCOA's policy team, Lucy's role involves conducting research and consultations on a wide range of issues relating to refugee and asylum seeker policy in Australia; analysing and evaluating Australian policies and developing constructive policy alternatives to address identified gaps and challenges; advocating with government representatives to promote policy reform; and engaging in community education initiatives to address misinformation and build awareness of issues affecting refugee and humanitarian entrants.

Lucy is also the Secretary of the Refugee Advice and Casework Service, a community legal centre providing assistance to people seeking asylum in Australia; and is the Chair of the Asylum Seeker Interagency, a network of organisations involved in supporting asylum seekers in New South Wales.

A Place to Call Home? The Impact of Australia's Refugee and Asylum Seeker Policies on Community Cohesion

Since Federation, Australia has provided protection to over 800,000 refugee and humanitarian entrants. Australians from refugee backgrounds have made important social, economic and civic contributions to Australia, finding success in every field of endeavour and numbering amongst our best and brightest. The success of refugee settlement in Australia is in large part due to policies which have encouraged the inclusion and participation of people from refugee backgrounds in Australian society.

In recent years, however numerous concerns have been raised with the Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) about policies and practices which undermine the successful settlement of people from refugee backgrounds, in turn posing significant obstacles to community cohesion. This paper will focus on three such issues: the treatment of asylum seekers and refugees who arrived in Australia by boat; the limited opportunities for family reunion available to refugee and humanitarian entrants; and the negative public and political debate on refugee and asylum seeker policy. It will present feedback gathered through RCOA's community consultations about the impacts of these issues on settlement outcomes for refugee and humanitarian entrants and put forward ideas for positive reforms to promote the inclusion and participation of people from refugee backgrounds in Australian society.