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FEATURE STORY

NEW REPORT SUPPORTS ACTU CALL TO BAN INDIVIDUAL CONTRACTS FOR YOUNG WORKERS

The ACTU renewed its call for the Federal Government to stop employers from putting workers under the age of 20 onto individual contracts, following the results of a new report which shows young workers are being bullied, pressured & exploited - often being paid less than the Award.

The SA Unions report, which took two years to compile and surveyed 800 young workers from South Australia, showed that:

- * 36% of young workers were pressured to work overtime without pay
- * 43% were pressured to work while sick
- * 42% were forced to work through meal breaks
- * 22% were fired for reasons they felt unfair and 17% were fired or lost shifts after a birthday
- * 25% were bullied at work

Secretary of the ACTU, Greg Combet said that the report showed a high level of exploitation of young workers.

"This report is further evidence that individual contracts are being used to exploit Australian workers, especially young people.

"This will become much worse under the Federal Government's proposed system where more workers will be pushed into a situation where they have to negotiate with their employer alone.

"Young Australian workers in particular need to be protected," Mr. Combet said.

"The Federal Government must ban the use of individual contracts for workers under 20.

"We also want an immediate public audit of all existing individual contracts approved by the Office of Employment Advocate," Mr. Combet said.

"We know that the Federal Government's Office of Employment Advocate have already approved individual contracts that have been used to take advantage of young workers," Mr. Combet said.

Recently US doughnut chain Krispy Kreme was caught out, bullying their young workers to sign individual contracts (AWA's), which removed their right to penalty rates, overtime and allowances and cut their take-home pay. Most of these workers were aged between 15 and 18 years old.

"The contracts, which had been approved by the Federal Government's agency, meant that one young worker had to work for 16 1/2 hours straight without any penalty payments or overtime loading being paid.

"A South Australian Court also found that young workers, as young as 15 years old, from Bakers Delight, had been pushed onto a Federal Government approved individual contract that abolished annual leave and sick leave and cut their pay by 25%.

"The Federal Government needs to rethink the use of individual contracts for young workers under the age of 20 and start taking steps to protect Australia's young workers," said Mr Combet.

Source: ACTU

world

Key Facts About Avian Influenza (Bird Flu) and Avian Influenza A (H5N1) Virus

This **fact sheet** (at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/gen-info/facts.htm>) provides general information about bird flu and information about one type of bird flu, called avian influenza A (H5N1) that is infecting birds in Asia and has infected some humans. Also see the **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs at http://www.who.int/influenza/human_animal_interface/avian_faqs/en/index.html)** on the World Health Organization (WHO) website.

Source: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Atlanta, USA

2005 WORLD SUMMIT OUTCOME

The world's leaders, meeting at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 14 to 16 September, agreed to take action on a range of global challenges:

DEVELOPMENT

- » Strong and unambiguous commitment by all governments, in donor and developing nations alike, to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.
- » Additional \$50 billion a year by 2010 for fighting poverty.
- » Commitment by all developing countries to adopt national plans for achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2006.

» Agreement to provide immediate support for quick impact initiatives to support anti-malaria efforts, education, and healthcare.

» Commitment to innovative sources of financing for development, including efforts by groups of countries to implement an International Finance Facility and other initiatives to finance development projects, in particular in the health sector.

» Agreement to consider additional measures to ensure long-term debt sustainability through increased grantbased financing, cancellation of 100 per cent of the official multilateral and bilateral debt of heavily indebted poor countries (HIPCs). Where appropriate, to consider significant debt relief or restructuring for low and middle income developing countries with unsustainable debt burdens that are not part of the HIPC initiative.

» Commitment to trade liberalization and expeditious work towards implementing the development dimensions of the Doha work programme.

TERRORISM

» Clear and unqualified condemnation—by all governments, for the first time—of terrorism “in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes.”

» Strong political push for a comprehensive convention against terrorism within a year. Support for early entry into force of the Nuclear Terrorism Convention. All states are encouraged to join and implement it as well as the 12 other antiterrorism conventions.

» Agreement to fashion a strategy to fight terrorism in a way that makes the international community stronger and terrorists weaker.

PEACEBUILDING, PEACEKEEPING, AND PEACEMAKING

» Decision to create a Peacebuilding Commission to help countries transition from war to peace, backed by a support office and a standing fund.

» New standing police capacity for UN peacekeeping operations.

» Agreement to strengthen the Secretary-General’s capacity for mediation and good offices.

RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT

» Clear and unambiguous acceptance by all governments of the collective international responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Willingness to take timely and decisive collective action for this purpose, through the Security Council, when peaceful means prove inadequate and national authorities are manifestly failing to do it.

HUMAN RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY AND RULE OF LAW

- » Decisive steps to strengthen the UN human rights machinery, backing the action plan and doubling the budget of the High Commissioner.
- » Agreement to establish a UN Human Rights Council during the coming year.
- » Reaffirmation of democracy as a universal value, and welcome for new Democracy Fund which has already received pledges of \$32 million from 13 countries.
- » Commitment to eliminate pervasive gender discrimination, such as inequalities in education and ownership of property, violence against women and girls and to end impunity for such violence.
- » Ratification action taken during the Summit triggered the entry into force of the Convention Against Corruption.

MANAGEMENT REFORM

- » Broad strengthening of the UN's oversight capacity, including the Office of Internal Oversight Services, expanding oversight services to additional agencies, calling for developing an independent oversight advisory committee, and further developing a new ethics office.
- » Update the UN by reviewing all mandates older than five years, so that obsolete ones can be dropped to make room for new priorities.
- » Commitment to overhauling rules and policies on budget, finance and human resources so the Organization can better respond to current needs; and a one-time staff buy-out to ensure that the UN has the appropriate staff for today's challenges.

ENVIRONMENT

- » Recognition of the serious challenge posed by climate change and a commitment to take action through the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Assistance will be provided to those most vulnerable, like small island developing states.
- » Agreement to create a worldwide early warning system for all natural hazards.

INTERNATIONAL HEALTH

- » A scaling up of responses to HIV/AIDS, TB, and malaria, through prevention, care, treatment and support, and the mobilization of additional resources from national, bilateral, multilateral and private sources.
- » Commitment to fight infectious diseases, including a commitment to ensure full implementation of the new International Health Regulations, and support for the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network of the World Health Organization.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

» Improved Central Emergency Revolving Fund to ensure that relief arrives reliably and immediately when disasters happen.

» Recognition of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement as an important international framework for the protection of internally displaced persons.

UPDATING THE UN CHARTER

» A decision to revise and update the Charter by:

- Winding up the Trusteeship Council, marking completion of UN's historic decolonisation role;
- Deleting anachronistic references to "enemy states" in the Charter.

The full text of the document is available on the Summit website:

www.un.org/summit2005

Final Outcome Document of the World Summit

2005 Overview of Estimated Food Needs and Shortfalls for WFP Operational Activities

The World Food Programme (WFP) requires sustained and increased support of the international community to provide 6 million metric tonnes of food aid, valued at US\$4 billion, to an estimated 79 million people during 2005. Taking into account carry-over resources as well as US\$1.1 billion in generous donor contributions confirmed up to 13 May 2005, the level of funding still falls short by US\$ 2.1 billion i.e. two thirds of the resources still need to be raised to fully meet 2005 beneficiary needs: 80 percent for emergency operations (EMOPs), excluding the tsunami regional operation, the only fully funded EMOP, 70 percent for development programmes, 62 percent for protracted relief and recovery operations (PRROs) and 53percent for special operations (SOs).

Following is a summary of the major controversies surrounding food aid by Reuters. For key facts about global food aid see **FACTSHEET: How does food aid work?**
<http://www.trust.org/alertnet/>

SECRETARY-GENERAL CONGRATULATES G-8 FOR STEPS ON AFRICA CLIMATE CHANGE

"I want to congratulate Prime Minister Tony Blair and his fellow G-8 leaders on what they have done today for Africa . This G-8 was being closely watched by people everywhere. The leaders carried the hopes of people around the world who wanted progress towards reducing poverty in Africa , and today they got it: a promise to

double aid to Africa by \$25 billion a year by 2010. And indeed official development assistance as a whole is to increase by \$50 billion by that year.

This is very good news. Similarly, there has been welcome progress on debt, with 100 per cent cancellation now for 18 of the most indebted countries and an innovative Paris Club debt solution for Nigeria . There is also agreement to provide the extra resources that Africa 's peacekeeping forces so badly need, so that they can better deter, prevent and resolve African conflicts."

Source: UN

Natural Disasters Expose Gender Divides

By Joni Seager, Chicago Tribune

Joni Seager, Special to the Tribune. Joni Seager is dean of environmental studies, York University in Toronto and co-director of the Center for New Words in Cambridge, Mass

September 14, 2005

As the media coverage of the disaster in New Orleans swung into high gear, reporters started to notice the racial dynamics of Hurricane Katrina's aftermath.

In the tone of this discovery there was something of the quality of Captain Renault in "Casablanca" who was "shocked, shocked" to find gambling in his fine establishment; in point of fact, it would have been extremely difficult not to notice that the dead, the dying, and the desperate on the streets of New Orleans were African-American.

Nonetheless this enlightened "noticing" by the media produced a moment of genuine inquiry as reporters and analysts started asking tough, targeted questions about why this disaster fell so hard on one side of the race line. African-Americans make up about 68 percent of the population of New Orleans, and it appears from the media coverage that they represent a considerably higher proportion than that of the survivors who were trapped inside the city, perhaps as high as 80 percent.

And yet there is another equally important and starkly apparent social dimension to the hurricane disaster that media coverage has put in front of our eyes but that has yet to be "noticed": This disaster fell hard on one side of the gender line too. Most of the survivors are women. Women with children, women on their own, elderly women in wheelchairs, women everywhere--by a proportion of what looks to be again somewhere around 75 or 80 percent.

Women make up 54 percent of the population of New Orleans, so the gender gap is even more dramatic than the race gap. The two gaps need not compete for our attention; they are linked. The majority of victims trapped in New Orleans appeared to be African-American women with their children, and no doubt the ranks of the dead also will be.

The gender gap is no surprise, or shouldn't be. Disaster is seldom gender neutral. In the 1995 Kobe, Japan, earthquake, 1.5 times more women died than men; in the 2004 Southeast Asia tsunami, death rates for women across the region averaged three to four times that of men.

The gender, class and race dimension of each disaster needs particular explanation. Feminists working in relief agencies and the UN, for example, identified several factors that explain the gender skew in the 2004 tsunami deaths.

In some instances, sex differences in physical strength clearly made a difference in the ability of survivors to climb, cling or run to safety. Prevailing ideologies of femininity played a role in this:

strength differences reflect the extent to which women are encouraged or allowed to develop physical strength.

Roles make a difference

Notions about appropriate roles and jobs for men and women determined where men and women were located, literally, in relation to the waters; in many places, women were in homes in harm's way while men were at jobs in places away from the coast. This division of labor seemed particularly important in explaining survival rates: In a fast-moving storm surge, mothers who stop to gather children lose valuable time, and with children in their arms they can't swim, climb or hang on.

Experience from these and other crisis zones allows us to start to explain the gendered nature of the New Orleans disaster. The biology and ideology of physical strength may turn out to play as much a role in the gender-skewed survival rates in this hurricane as they did in the tsunami.

More women in poverty

Additionally, we know that the poverty that leaves people more vulnerable to disaster amplifies gender as surely as it does race.

Indeed, everywhere in the world women are the poorest of the poor. In New Orleans, a city with a poverty rate higher than the national

average--15 percent of all families live below the official poverty

line--41 percent of female-headed households with children fall below this line.

People living in poverty are the least likely to have access to good information ahead of disaster, the least likely to have a place they can go to and stay for days or weeks, and the least likely to have the means to leave.

In the days ahead of the storm, a lot of people did get out of New Orleans, almost all of them by car. Poverty combines with ideologies about gender to produce a measure of deep disadvantage in terms of

mobility: Even in a country as awash in cars as the United States, women are less likely to have a car or driver's license than their male counterparts. Of all Americans, it is poor women who are the least likely of all to have a car or access to one.

International disaster and refugee agencies have been profoundly influenced by feminist insights into the importance of the gender dynamics of disaster. From Oxfam to the UN High Commission on Refugees, experts now routinely incorporate the understanding that disasters magnify gender disadvantage, that women and their children have specific postdisaster recovery needs, and that preparations for gender-specific emergency intervention and recovery are integral to disaster planning.

Knowledge is lacking

This knowledge appears to have entirely bypassed American commentators, planners and media.

The "not noticing" of the gendered dimensions of this disaster by the American media and by the experts who interpreted the disaster to the public through the media is alarming and warrants attention.

Feminist theorists have long pointed to the public invisibility of women, especially women of racial minorities, and the New Orleans case study provides a dramatic example of the "unremarkability" of racialized minority women in the gaze of a predominantly male and white media. In the real world of an unfolding disaster, this comes at a price.

The lack of curiosity about the rapes in the midst of the New Orleans disaster is just one aspect of this willful ignorance that is particularly disturbing.

Rapes have been mentioned in several news stories, but always in passing and with no follow-through: no interviews with police officials about the magnitude of rape, no curiosity about the nature of masculinity that contemplates rape even in conditions of extreme human suffering, no disaster experts assuring us that rape-support teams are included in the rescue teams, no discussion about the medical and psychological resources that women who have survived unimaginable tragedy and stress and have also been raped will need.

Beyond nature

Media commentators and politicians insist on referring to this as a natural disaster. There's a certain comfort and perhaps political cover in that designation, but experts eschew this term. The hurricane came ashore, but from then on it has been a human disaster.

The gendered character of this disaster, and the silence about it, also is more artifice than nature.

A 2005 Oxfam report on the Asian tsunami reminds us that "disasters, however 'natural,' are profoundly discriminatory. Wherever they hit, pre-existing structures and social conditions determine that some members of the community will be less affected while others will pay a higher price. Among the differences that determine how people are affected by such disasters is that of gender."

At some point in the New Orleans disaster, this will be officially "noticed," but the costs of not paying attention to the gendered divide earlier in the disaster will be high for the women whose needs have gone unnoticed and unaddressed.

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Sex Discrimination Suit Against Morgan Stanley results in \$40million settlement

A sex discrimination lawsuit filed by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunities Commission against brokerage giant Morgan Stanley was resolved even before the actual trial began. **The company agreed to a \$40 million claim fund to be distributed to 67 discrimination victims who came forward to participate in the class action suit.** Allison Schieffelin, who initiated EEOC's investigation was given a separate \$12 million award for damages. The settlement also included \$2 million to be spent by Morgan Stanley in new diversity initiatives and anti-discrimination training for its associates and managers.

The initial EEOC lawsuit alleged that Morgan Stanley had engaged in a pattern of sex discrimination since 1995 in its Institutional Equity Division. The company had excluded women workers from work-related outings, paid women less than male peers, and denied them promotions. EEOC's New York district acting regional attorney Elizabeth Grossman said: "We are hopeful that this suit has changed discriminatory practices common to Wall Street. It should signal the industry that no matter how well-regarded a financial institution may be, there is no safe harbor for employment discrimination. (Source: diversityonline.com, 8/18/05)

national

New Workplace Laws

The Government's extensive new workplace laws have now been tabled. The new legislation is over 700 pages long. The Community Public Sector Union (CPSU) has produced a series of bulletins that explain key elements of the package and the implications for Australian employees.

CPSU Bulletins at http://www.cpsu.org.au/news/1130981604_16614.html

Tell the Senate your concerns - A letter from Sharon Burrows, ACTU President

4 November 2005

Dear Friend,

Five days. Just five days of hearings. That is all the time that the Coalition has given for a Senate Inquiry to examine the biggest industrial relations changes in a hundred years. After \$40m of taxpayer funded political advertising, the Government hopes the deadline for Senate submissions will slip by unnoticed. But - if we act now - we can throw a spanner in the works.

We need to draw national attention to the Senate Inquiry and force a major debate. Our goal is to help Australians make a record number of submissions to a Senate Inquiry over the next five days. To send your message go to the Senate Inquiry now:

Rights At Work at <http://www.rightsatwork.com.au/campaigns/tellsenate>

The Senate Committee's job is to read every single submission from any Australian who takes the time to make one. You don't have to be an academic or a lawyer to have an opinion about how the industrial changes will affect you. You simply need to talk about your experiences in the workplace in your own words. This is your chance to communicate directly with your elected representatives, and by law, your opinion must be taken into account. That's what a Senate Inquiry is there for.

You can talk about your experience with AWA individual contracts, how you would feel negotiating directly with your boss about your pay, or how your work/family balance will be affected. Everybody's experience is valid. Even a simple paragraph relating your concerns is important to show the Committee that the Government's plans are a recipe for workplace injustice. With only five days of hearings, every submission - however short - is vital.

Please take a few minutes to visit the Rights at Work website, and use the simple form provided to tell your story. Remember to include your full name, address and phone number so your submission is valid. Click this [link](#) to send your message now.

Thanks for choosing to use your voice. Together we can protect our rights at work.

Many thanks,

Sharan Burrow, Greg Combet & the
ACTU Rights at Work campaign



Tsunami Disaster in Asia - Teaching Tools: A ToolKit for Primary and Secondary Schools in Australia

Save the Children Australia has developed this teaching kit to assist teachers to discuss the Asian earthquake and tsunami with students.

Together with their sister organisations in Canada, the UK and USA, Save the Children Australia has produced this kit for teachers in each of those countries. The activities suggested are suitable for primary and secondary children of different ages and levels.

Download the Kit from

<http://www.savethechildren.org.au/australia/publications/index.html>

Australia's Farmers: past, present & future - Report June 2005

This report examines trends in the demographic structure of Australia's farmer population for the period 1976 to 2001 and addresses a number of questions commonly asked about the future of the Australian farm sector. Go to the [html contents](#) page to download the report.

Second Report on Indigenous Disadvantage

The second in the series of reports *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators*, was released on July 05. Commissioned by the Council of Australian Governments, the report's function is to provide indicators of Indigenous disadvantage "that are of relevance to all governments and Indigenous stakeholders, and that can demonstrate the impact of program and policy interventions".

The vision behind the Report is that Indigenous people will one day enjoy the same overall standard of living as other Australians. The Report's strategic framework will help track over time where government policies or actions have had an impact on Indigenous disadvantage — and where work still needs to be done.

The Chairman of the inter-governmental Steering Committee responsible for the Report, Gary Banks, said "the Report works on the fundamental premise that prevention is a better strategy for reducing disadvantage than 'fixing up'".

Commenting on this second edition, Mr Banks said, "while it is heartening to see improvements in some of the economic and social indicators, many show little or no movement. In all areas, the gap between the experience of Indigenous peoples and other Australians is still wide. This was of deep concern to the many people in government and within Indigenous communities who were consulted during the preparation of this Report".

Gary Banks observed, however, that the aggregate data can hide some significant developments. "Our consultations across the country have also revealed that there are initiatives occurring at the community level where positive outcomes are being achieved. These are often at the instigation of Indigenous people themselves. Many involve constructive new relationships with government and non-government bodies, as well as with the private sector."

Mr Banks praised the cooperation behind the Report, noting that "it has benefited greatly from the feedback of many people within government and the wider community, and particularly from Indigenous people".

The Report is a product of the Review of Government Service Provision. It is overseen by a Steering Committee comprising senior officials from the Australian, State and Territory governments and supported by a secretariat drawn from the

Productivity Commission. The report is available at: **Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2005**

Blueprint for the Bush

In February 2005 the Queensland Government and AgForce made a commitment to work in partnership to deliver a joint Blueprint for the Bush.

The blueprint will be a 10-year plan to help rural and remote communities and industries manage change and grow the strength and sustainability of rural Queensland. The blueprint will be shaped by the views and input of Queenslanders living and working in rural communities.

To this end, a series of meetings and events will be held over the next few months to give rural producers, people in rural and regional towns and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples a chance to have their say.

The final Blueprint for the Bush developed from this consultative process will look at a range of opportunities and innovative practices to ensure the viability of rural industries and quality of life in the bush.

There are a number of ways to get involved with Blueprint for the Bush.

Review the **The Discussion Document** and submit your comments online at **ConsultQld** or submit your views by **post, facsimile, email or telephone**.

A Snapshot of Women's Representation on Selected Regional Bodies

Executive Summary

This report which was launched in June 2005 by the then Deputy PM, John Anderson, presents a snapshot of the current level of women's representation on a sample of rural industry boards, and other organisations and committees which have an impact or influence on rural and regional communities, including local government. In rural and regional Australia, women continue to be considerably under-represented in roles that involve management and decision making.

Seven hundred and twenty different organisations from rural and regional Australia were studied for this report -

The key findings of the report include:

- Around 55% of women in rural Australia work, yet the level of women's representation in rural and regional bodies has not mirrored this growth. There remains a considerable variation in the degree of women's representation in rural and regional bodies, however, from the sample surveyed it is seldom above 25% and commonly considerably below this figure.

- There is significantly lower representation of women in rural industry compared to regional bodies. Representation of women on rural industry boards (research and development corporations, rural representative bodies and companies) ranges from 21% - 0% while women make up 41%- 12% of positions on regional organisations (area consultative committees, development boards and catchment management authorities).
- The level of women's representation in the 10 publicly listed agricultural companies sampled (0% female chairs and chief executive officers and 7% for board members) was below the average for the ASX 200 companies that were surveyed by the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency 2004 census of women in leadership (1.1% female chairs, 2.3% chief executive officers and 8.6% board directors).
- Currently 17% of mayors and only 6% of chief executive officers in non-metropolitan local governments are women.
- Area consultative committees have the highest levels of women's representation with 28% (160 out of 581) represented on committees and 41% (20 out of 49) executive officers.

Representation of chairs was highest in the research and development corporations at 21% (3 out of 14).

- While this study did not seek to compare regional and metropolitan data, anecdotal evidence suggests that the ratio of women's representation declines with the movement from metropolitan to regional to rural. While validating this assessment would involve more study, if it is true, then it would suggest powerful cultural and socio-economic factors at work in determining gender roles.

The entire report is at: [A Snapshot of women's representation in selected regional bodies](#) **Research**

Alcohol Awareness Survey 2005 by the Salvation Army

Summary of Research Findings:

The purpose of the August 2005 Roy Morgan Survey, which interviewed 1296 people throughout Australia, was to examine trends in regular drinking patterns, drinking to excess and for the first time this year we examine drinking during pregnancy.

The proportion of the population who usually do not drink any alcohol is now 37% of all those over 14. For males non-drinkers have risen to 30%, which is the highest figure since our surveys began in 1992. For women as non-drinking for women is 44% which is not as high as it used to be.

For those who drink between 6 and 30 standard drinks a week, the surveys show that 23% women are regularly drinking at this level, compared to 13% in 1992. This compares to 38% of all men who drink at this level, which is a reduction on recent years.

It is frightening that 4.8 million people, 29% of all people over the age of 14, regularly drink more than double the responsible drinking level in one session (up to 10 drinks). This includes more than 750,000 women (9%) who regularly 'binge drink', 9-30 drinks in one evening and more than 1.2 million men (15%) who regularly 'binge drink', 11-30 drinks in one evening.

The worst age group are young people aged 14-24. Each week end 24% of all young women will 'binge drink' between 9 and 30 drinks in a session and 25% of all young men will 'binge drink' between 11 and 30 drinks. This is a total of 750,000 young people aged 14-24 drinking up to 30 drinks in a session.

The level for young men binge drinking has dropped from 38% to 25% but drinking by young women has now increased to virtually match them, a dubious level of equality!

Foetal alcohol syndrome

Of women aged 25-49 who are mothers 1,262,000 (23%) continued to drink during pregnancy. The younger mothers aged 25-34 are more likely to have drunk alcohol during pregnancy with 33% saying they drank. 19% of mothers in the over 50 aged group remember drinking during pregnancy.

Those on a lower income were less likely to drink during pregnancy. For those where the income of the main earner in the household was less than \$50,000 21% drank during pregnancy whereas for those in the over \$70,000 bracket 41% drank.

Women said that in 17% of cases men reduced their drinking to accompany them during pregnancy. The rest 83% did not change their drinking habits.

Finally people were asked 'On a scale of 1 to 10 what they thought of 'drinking during pregnancy'. More than 3 million women (37%) are not convinced that it is necessary to totally abstain from drinking during pregnancy. One million strongly disagree with the statement that drinking during pregnancy is dangerous to a baby's health.

The complete Report

(Source: Salvation Army)

DEPORTED TO DANGER

A Study of Australia's Treatment of 40 Rejected Asylum Seekers

A project of Edmund Rice Centre for Justice & Community Education In cooperation with the School of Education Australian Catholic University (September 2004)

Research Team: Phil Glendenning, Director, Edmund Rice Centre; Carmel Leavey, Principal Researcher; Margaret Hetheron,; Mary Britt; Tony Morris

Executive Summary

What happens to Australia's rejected asylum seekers? The need for such important research was highlighted by the Report of the Senate Enquiry in 2000, *A Sanctuary Under Review*. The Committee accepted a submission by the HREOC Human Rights Commissioner that 'a system of informal monitoring' of the results of deportation should be set up. To date the Government has not acted on that recommendation. This research is a first attempt to take up the challenge.

We interviewed 40 rejected asylum seekers. Some had been returned to the high-risk countries from which they originally fled. Others were originally from such countries, but now living elsewhere. Our title, *Deported to Danger*, reflects the concerns raised by the research. Five specific questions emerged from the individual human stories told in the interviews.

1. Has the Australian Government or its agencies sent asylum seekers to unsafe places?
2. Has the Australian Government or its agencies actually increased the dangers for rejected people by sending reports about them to overseas authorities?
3. In managing removals, has the Australian Government or its agencies encouraged asylum seekers to obtain false papers, or become associated with bribery and corruption?
4. Is the manner of conducting asylum seeker removals consistent with Australia's legal obligations?
5. Is the manner of conducting asylum seeker removals consistent with Australia's traditional values?

Findings

1. 35 out of the 40 people interviewed were living in dangerous circumstances immediately on arrival at the point of deportation and only five are clearly safe in the longer term. Some are back in their country of

origin or in another country to which they fled or were sent. All had tried to convince Australian authorities that they would not be safe if rejected. Two escaped from dangerous situations on arrival to find permanent sanctuary in other First World countries, while another two escaped threatened deportation to danger and applied for asylum in a First World country.

2. It is clear that the danger was exacerbated by documents issued under Australian authority. Some of this paperwork was confiscated on arrival or had a short expiry date. Some was declared to be false and of no use. Many of those who relied on the paperwork provided by the Australian Government or its agents were left without identification. Instances where Australia actually provided money for payment to officials in other countries belies the Government's claim that the destinations were safe and invites the accusation of corruption.

3. The stories show that people applying for Australian protection frequently face disrespect for their dignity, for ordinary standards of civilised behaviour and disregard for human rights obligations imposed on Australia as a signatory to various International Treaties and Declarations. These reports are not only inconsistent with the values we claim to espouse as a nation; they call for examination of Australian compliance with our obligations under international laws and conventions.

Conclusion

We conclude that Australia has not adequately respected and safeguarded some fundamental human rights of the people we interviewed. It appears that the Government's present policy regarding refugees and asylum seekers is dictated not by the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Refugee Convention but by other political agenda. There is no doubt that our current refugee protection system is in urgent need of reform. The Senate Committee made this adequately clear four years ago. Urgent action and truth are now required.

What's the deal?

A kit to educate young people about legal issues
Victoria Legal Aid has developed a kit that includes fact sheets, engaging activities, directories and a glossary of legal words. The kit is a teaching resource for people working with 14-16 year olds. The kit can be ordered by emailing whatsthedeal@vla.vic.gov.au or by phoning 9269 0435.

Source: The Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYI) is a statewide community-based organisation.

Australian Community Sector Survey 2005 Report

This Report presents the results of the Australian Community Sector Survey 2005 (ACSS), conducted by the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS). The Report provides information on income and expenditure, service use and workforce issues for the non-profit community sector. The ACSS is the only annual survey which covers the non-profit community services sector. The data from NSW also appears in a separate report.

[Australian Community Sector Survey \(ACSS\) 2005 Report at http://www.ncoss.org.au/hot/acoss/ACSS_2005.pdf](http://www.ncoss.org.au/hot/acoss/ACSS_2005.pdf)

[895kb pdf download]

Source: NCOSS

Want to be a Mentor or Mentee in the Young Women's Leadership Project?

The Young Women's Leadership project is an opportunity for young women living in Western Sydney to be involved in a program that will further develop their skills and confidence as leaders.

The pilot project is auspiced by the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) and funded by the NSW Premier's Department, Office for Women (OFW) and is supported by TAFE NSW - South Western Sydney Institute and Western Sydney Institute.

The project will identify 60 young women aged between 16 and 24 years who are leaders or show leadership potential. They may be active in school, community organisations, paid and/or unpaid work, environmental groups, political groups, sports, or arts etc. The young women may be from the Local Government Areas of Auburn, Bankstown, Baulkham Hills, Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Fairfield, Hawkesbury, Holroyd, Liverpool, Parramatta and Penrith.

Participants will be involved in the leadership program for 6-8 months and selection will take account of diversity. Program components include: an accredited TAFE course, mentoring by existing women leaders, attendance at networking meetings/forums where guest speakers will share their experience, as well as the chance to speak at forums, conferences, project launches and with the media.

For more information see the fact sheet:

[The Young Women's Leadership project](#)