

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, 10 February 2016

(for immediate release)

Volunteer Vietnamese Interpreters Urgently Needed

A local not-for-profit community legal centre needs volunteer interpreters to assist Vietnamese asylum seekers to apply for protection visas.

The Humanitarian Group expects more than 90 Vietnamese asylum seekers living in Western Australia to attend its free information sessions by June this year. They are among the approximately 2,000 asylum seekers currently living in Western Australia who arrived by boat between August 2012 and December 2013. They are now subject to a new fast track assessment process to determine their eligibility to seek protection in Australia by way of a temporary visa.

Only very limited, affordable legal assistance is available to this group of asylum seekers. They are often forced to go through the complex legal process for apply for protection unrepresented. This can compromise the integrity of the process and mean that people who are in need of protection are not recognised as such and are wrongfully returned to the persecution and harm from which they originally fled.

In response to this unmet need and with the vital support of volunteers, including volunteer interpreters, The Humanitarian Group established the Temporary Protection Visa Project (**TPV Project**) to provide free specialised legal assistance to this highly vulnerable group of people.

Currently, The Humanitarian Group has very few volunteer Vietnamese interpreters and urgently needs people who speak both Vietnamese and English at an advanced level to deliver this essential service. Assistance is required at different times throughout the week, including after hours. Both accredited and non-accredited interpreters are welcome.

To cover the ongoing costs of running the TPV Project, the **A Fair Go for Asylum Seekers Appeal** was created in collaboration with a number of concerned organisations in Western Australia. Helen Pearce, CEO of The Humanitarian Group, said they were delighted to have the support of VOICE Australia.

“We are only able to run the TPV Project thanks to the fundraising and donations from generous supporters like VOICE Australia, as well as the time and commitment given by volunteers. This support is integral to providing access to legal assistance to vulnerable people and ensuring they are treated with equality and dignity,” said Ms Pearce.

To register your interest or to find out more about The Humanitarian Group and how you can help:

- visit <http://thehumanitariangroup.org.au/page/get-involved> or
- call 9227 7311 between 9am and 3pm on weekdays.

Community focused legal services for people new to Australia

T 08 9227 7311 F 08 9227 7188 W thehumanitariangroup.org.au E admin@thehumanitariangroup.org.au

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If you are an asylum seeker who arrived by boat between 13 August 2012 and 31 December 2013 and you receive a letter from the Department of Immigration inviting you to apply for a protection visa, go to The Humanitarian Group office at 16b Sunbury Road, Victoria Park on a Thursday between 9am and 3pm for assistance.

The Humanitarian Group is a not-for-profit organisation focused on empowering vulnerable people by providing free professional and accessible migration assistance, legal advice and education. It strives to do this in a way that embraces diversity and strengthens communities. END

For more information, please contact The Humanitarian Group on **9227 7311** or by email to admin@thehumanitariangroup.org.au