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Patron: His Excellency Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce AC CSC RANR, Governor of South Australia

MEDIA RELEASE

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Refugee Program Increase Welcomed

The increase of 500 places in the Refugee Program for 2008-09 has been welcomed by Australian Refugee Association (ARA), Director, Kevin Liston.

“This is recognition of the importance of the Program in providing effective long term resolution to the appalling and life-threatening situations so many refugees find themselves in”, Mr Liston said.

In 2008-09 the increased numbers will be used to resettle Iraqis who have been working with Australian forces there, and these families.

From 2009-10, with the addition of a further 250 places, the program will have greater capacity to resettle the most vulnerable refugees wherever they are.

The generals in power in Burma have shown over the last week, that they will go to any lengths to maintain the persecution, oppression and subjugation of ordinary people. This is being done in the full glare of international diplomatic and media attention. It is just a hint of what they do when they think nobody is paying attention. However, Burma is not unique; there are ten million refugees outside their own countries desperately in need of help.

“This expansion of Australia’s commitment to refugees reflects our awareness, as a nation, of the needs of others and our willingness to lend a hand where we can to show the true spirit of mateship on the international level”, Mr Liston added.

“Being a citizen of the world”, he said, “Carries responsibilities but it also has its rewards. In this case it is people restored to a decent human lifestyle and the bonus of having these courageous, inspiring people in our country”.

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