

## Getting ready for Fast Track processing of protection visa applications

### What the Refugee Advice and Casework Service (RACS) can do

The Department of Immigration and Border Protection expects to recommence processing protection visa applications of unauthorised maritime arrivals in 2015. The Department of Immigration is unlikely to provide any free legal assistance to most people going through this process.

RACS is a free legal service that may be able to provide some limited advice and assistance in this process. Due to limited resources, RACS cannot promise to assist everybody who needs help. If you would like to find out whether RACS can provide you with any assistance, call the RACS Telephone Advice line below.

### What you can do

#### 1. Complete a Freedom of Information request

You can submit a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to the Department of Immigration to provide you with copies of documents about you held by the Department of Immigration, including a copy of your first interview with the Department of Immigration.

To do this, you need to complete Form 424A and send it to the Department of Immigration together with a photocopy of your ImmiCard, Drivers Licence, passport or other photo ID.

In the section called "Document(s) or information", we suggest that you write in English:

- The Protection File Note relating to me, or any decisions made in relation to screening-in or screening-out
- The written and audio records of all interviews including my screening interview(s), entry interview(s) and bio-data interview(s).

Send the form to the Department of Immigration using the details listed on the form.

When you receive your documents, you can call RACS and ask for assistance with preparing for the time when you can make a protection visa application.

#### 2. Keep your contact details up-to-date

It is important to inform the Department of Immigration about any changes to your address or telephone number by calling 1300 728 662 or emailing [bvreporting@border.gov.au](mailto:bvreporting@border.gov.au).

#### 3. Call RACS for advice

If you have any questions about your situation, call the **RACS telephone advice line - (02) 8355 7227 on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 10-11.30am.**

If you get a letter from the Department of Immigration telling you that you have permission to make an application, there may be time limits so please make contact with RACS as early as possible.

#### 4. Other things to prepare

For other things you can do to prepare, please see our factsheet "Your rights if you came by boat" at <http://www.racs.org.au/factsheets/>.

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## What caseworkers can do

You can refer clients to RACS by asking that they call us on a Tuesday or Thursday from 10-11.30am.

Please let your clients know:

- They don't have to speak to a lawyer if they don't want to.
- RACS is not part of the government or the Department of Immigration.
- They might not be able to see a lawyer straight away – there might be delays.
- When they see a lawyer at RACS, they will need to tell us everything about their fears of what harm they might suffer if they return to their country of origin and about their history prior to coming to Australia. It is important that clients do not leave anything out. It may be helpful for them to make some notes at home.
- It is important to contact RACS if they are invited by the Department of Immigration to lodge an application.

If clients show you the FOI request form (Form 424A), you can help them complete these forms by:

- Checking the client's full name, DOB and boat ID, postal address, telephone number and language
- Making sure the client has completed the section called "Documents(s) or Information" correctly (according to the instructions above)
- Making sure the clients sign in 3 places – Question 6, Question 15 and Question 23
- Photocopying a photo ID card of the client.

**Please note:** This factsheet contains general information only. It does not constitute legal or migration advice. If you would like more detailed information on any aspect, please refer to RACS fact sheets available at [www.racs.org.au](http://www.racs.org.au). RACS is entirely independent of the Department of Immigration. All assistance is free. This factsheet was prepared in February 2015.