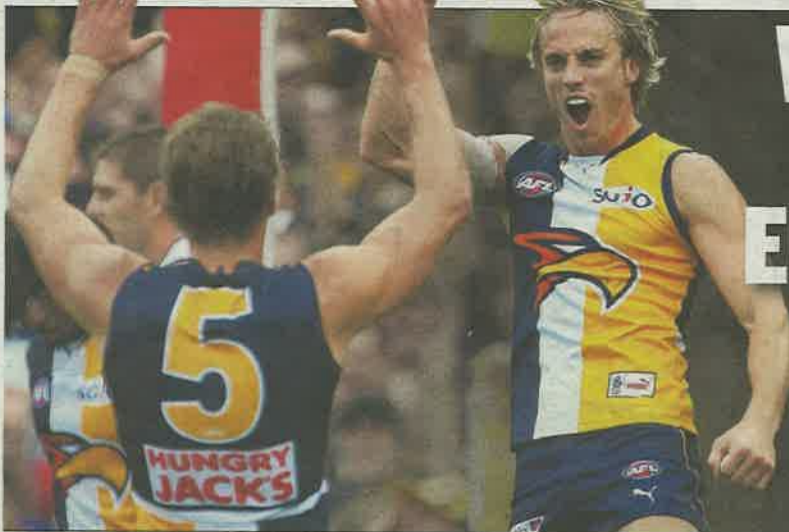


# The West Australian



## WOUNDED EAGLES END DERBY DROUGHT

The Game LIFTOUT

Sport BACK PAGE

JESSICA BRATICH AND MITCHELL JOHNSON



## The truth about our beautiful wedding

Exclusive PAGE 3

## We find the first refugee coming to WA after new Malaysian deal



# I am going to be free in Perth

Grateful and excited: Burmese refugee Sui Neih Maui will arrive in WA from Malaysia within weeks. She has been living in a slum in Kuala Lumpur since her husband was murdered.

Picture: Steve Pennells



**EXCLUSIVE**  
STEVE PENNELLS  
KUALA LUMPUR

This is the face of Australia's controversial new refugee deal with Malaysia.

Widow Sui Neih Maui, 35, who has lived in poverty in Kuala Lumpur since fleeing persecution in Burma three years ago, will be resettled in Perth within weeks. She will become the first refugee

to call WA home in the wake of an agreement between the Malaysian and Australian governments.

Under it, Australia will send 800 asylum seekers to Malaysia in return for accepting 4000 refugees.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees will not say how many people are being prepared for resettlement in Australia.

But it is understood that 26 cases involving 13 families and 13 individuals are waiting in Kuala Lumpur after having been accepted by Australia.

Two of those — Ms Maui and a family of five — will come to Perth.

When *The West Australian* tracked her down to a Kuala Lum-

## PART ONE

OUR SPECIAL INVESTIGATION PAGES 6-7

pur slum last week, Ms Maui was sharing a small room with a group of other Burmese refugees.

She has been living there since her husband was murdered just 12 months after they arrived.

"I am very grateful, very excited," she said. "I want to learn English. I will work hard.

"I am going to be free to practise my religion there. I cannot do that here. I am going to be happy."

While both Ms Maui and the other Perth-bound family are not part of a family reunification program, Perth was chosen in both cases because they each have a relative here who could provide a support network and help them settle in.

"We feel we now have hope," said Ngun Hnin, who will be resettled in Perth with his wife and three children shortly after Ms Maui.

There are more than 94,000 refugees and asylum seekers registered with the UNHCR in Malaysia.

Of those, 87,000 are from Burma with the biggest proportion being the Christian Chin ethnic minority, who are the most likely to benefit.

"We don't see it in terms of a swap

or a bargain," UNHCR spokesperson Yante Ismail said. "We see this as a commitment by the Australian Government to resettle 4000 people in need of an opportunity to rebuild their lives safely.

"To us, it's a real commitment by Australia in burden-sharing with a country like Malaysia that is now coping with a large number of refugees and asylum seekers.

"The agreement has the potential to enhance the protection for refugees in Malaysia, as well as the region as a whole. If it realises more resettlement opportunities, this would be a positive outcome."

Yesterday, Thailand said it would be open to a similar refugee deal.

**PERTH 13-24** Details, P33

Cloudy. Tomorrow: Showers, 14-22. Yesterday 16.3-21.8

## IMF BOSS SEX SCANDAL HITS BAILOUTS AND FRENCH PRESIDENTIAL RACE P5

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