

NEWS

'Tis the season for asylum seekers in detention to be jolly and festive

**Alana Buckley-Carr
and Andrew Probyn**

Asylum seekers in immigration detention in WA will be given gifts, a traditional Christmas lunch and a visit from Santa this Christmas.

In a range of activities planned at the detention centres by services provider Serco, detainees in Perth will be taken on a tour of some of Perth's best Christmas lights at houses around the suburbs.

At the Curtin detention centre in the Kimberley, detainees have painted a nativity scene which has been put on display. The detainees will also take part in a music concert in a Curtin's Got Talent format, the department said.

Roast turkey, seafood, stuffing and plum pudding are on the menu for the day while at the Leonora centre, which houses unaccompa-

nied minors, a barbecue lunch will also be provided on New Year's Day.

Also at Leonora, detainees will arrive at breakfast to find the stockings they have made in art and craft classes filled with small novelty gifts.

The unaccompanied minors will take part in English classes and Life in Australia lessons, with a Christmas theme.

A sport competition and relay games will also be organised, a Department of Immigration spokeswoman said.

And on Christmas Island, clients can decorate one of the many trees at the centres located in each of the compounds.

Christian services will be held.

It comes as new Home Affairs Minister Jason Clare has clocked up his first boat of asylum seekers.

A vessel carrying 76 passengers and three crew was intercepted west of Ashmore Reef by HMAS Childers, just 48 hours after Mr Clare was sworn in.

Under Mr Clare's predecessor, Brendan O'Connor, 270 boats carrying 14,457 people reached Australia between August 2007 and Wednesday, when the ministerial watch changed.

Yesterday's arrival was the 68th of the year.

The passengers will be taken to Darwin.

The Federal Government insists this is not because Christmas Island is full.