



CENTRE ASYLUM
SEEKERS

Asylum Seekers Centre Annual Report 2012-2013

ABN: 47 164 509 475

“I want to thank the Asylum Seekers Centre for helping me build a new life. All that I am now is because of them. They were the first people who helped me in Australia. They helped me get my Protection Visa, they found me somewhere to sleep, they helped me with my health needs and they helped me improve my English. I owe them so much.”

Former Client

Our Vision

Asylum seekers are welcomed to Australia and afforded a dignified, meaningful and safe existence pending the fair, transparent and expeditious resolution of their claims.

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About Us

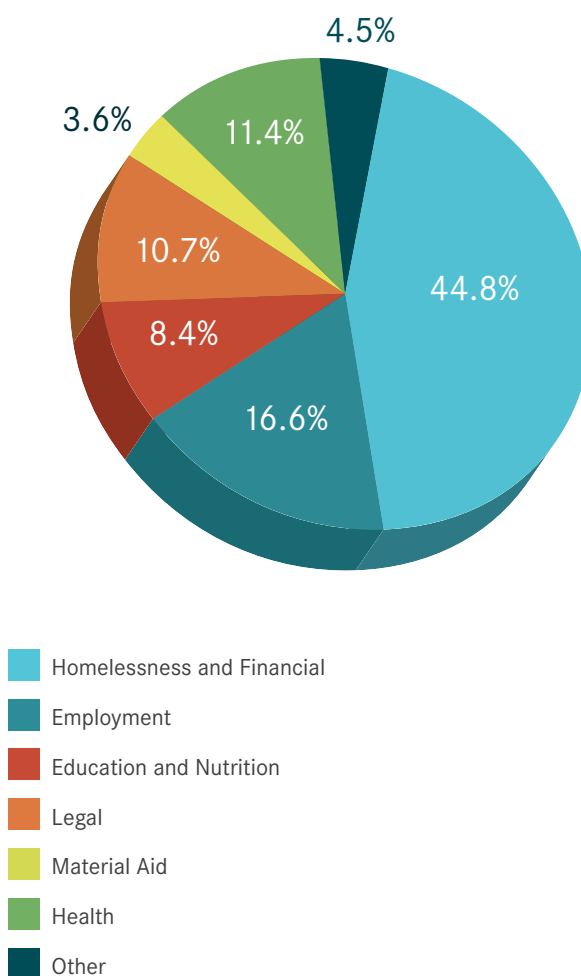
The Asylum Seekers Centre is a place of hospitality and welcome. It is an oasis for many people, a safe place for those who have fled situations of great danger.

The Asylum Seekers Centre provides practical and personal support for asylum seekers living in the community. Our services include casework, accommodation, financial relief, health care and counselling, employment assistance, education, advocacy, food, material and social support.

We are a not-for-profit organisation and rely on grants, donations and volunteers to undertake our work. Our clients come from over 52 countries in search of safety, protection and freedom. During 2012-13, we cared for almost 1,000 asylum seekers with the majority of new clients coming from Iran, followed by Egypt, Bangladesh, China and Pakistan.

Of those clients, 45% were homeless when they arrived, 50% had no work rights and 70% received absolutely no government support.

Primary needs of asylum seekers on arrival



During 2012-2013 we provided:

+6,000 casework consultations	+5,500 hot meals
+9,914 accommodation nights	+6,000 food parcels
+3,000 health consultations	+3,000 classroom hours
+2,400 one-on-one job consultations	+300 pharmaceutical prescriptions

Our Patrons



**Her Excellency
Professor Marie
Bashir AC CVO**

**Governor of
New South Wales**



John Menadue AO

John Menadue has had a distinguished career in the public sector, including as Head of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet under two Prime Ministers, Gough Whitlam and Malcolm Fraser. He was Ambassador to Japan as well as Secretary of the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, and the Department of Trade. Private sector appointments included General Manager, News Limited, Sydney. He was also CEO of Qantas, a Director of Telstra and Chair of the Australia-Japan Foundation. John was Founding Chair of the Centre for Policy Development. He is presently a Fellow of the CPD.



Hugh Mackay

Australia's pre-eminent social researcher, Hugh Mackay is internationally recognised for his pioneering work in this area.

He is the author of nine books in the field of social psychology and ethics as well as six novels. Hugh has been a newspaper columnist and media commentator for over 25 years and is currently an Honorary Professor of Social Science at the University of Wollongong. He was previously Deputy Chairman of the Australia Council, Chairman of Trustees of Sydney Grammar School and the inaugural Chairman of the ACT Government's Community Inclusion Board.

Our Board



Steve Bradley: Chair

Steve has over 25 years' senior executive experience in some of Australia's largest corporations. He concluded his full time working career at Woolworths where he was the Chief Logistics and Information Officer responsible for the supply chain and information technology. Passionate about innovation and change in organisations, he has led some of the largest change programs in Australia. Since finishing full time work he has been the Chairman of Outback Stores, director of a large superannuation fund and has consulted to a significant range of Australian and NZ businesses.



Frances Rush: Deputy Chair

Assistant Director, Office of the Public Guardian. Frances has extensive experience in complex case management and crisis intervention and has been associated with the ASC since its inception.



Lachlan Murdoch: Treasurer

Deputy Director, NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS). Lachlan was a founding member of the ASC and brings extensive expertise in refugee trauma and mental health matters.



Christopher Fogarty: Secretary

Christopher is a retired lawyer and consultant with extensive experience in governance, management and international development. Before his retirement, Christopher worked for 35 years in a range of positions in the Commonwealth Parliament and the public sector. His last position was as General Counsel in a Commonwealth regulatory agency. In the 1970's he worked as a volunteer in PNG with Australian Volunteers International (AVI). He subsequently served on the board of AVI, including nine years as Chair, and is currently an external appointment to the Governance Committee of AVI.



Steven Glass

Partner in the law firm Gilbert + Tobin. Steven has practised for 26 years, specialising in commercial litigation. For 11 years he has led the firm's pro bono refugee practice. Steven has been a regular visitor to Christmas Island and other detention centres to represent asylum seekers.



Tom Gregory

Tom has more than 35 years of international finance and management experience, including 28 years as chief executive of a company of which he is currently non executive chairman. For over a decade, he was non executive director of a not-for-profit publisher, and is head of a Private Ancillary Fund he established in 2002. Tom and his parents arrived in Australia as refugees.



Betty Hounslow

Betty has over 30 years experience in the community sector, most recently as Deputy CEO of The Fred Hollows Foundation. She has worked in community legal centres and women's refuges, been the Executive Director of ACOSS (the national advocacy body for low income and disadvantaged people), and Vice-President of ACFID (the peak body for international aid agencies). Her activism around the rights of refugees and migrants started in the early 1980's.



Graham Thom

Refugee Coordinator, Amnesty International Australia. Graham has visited detention centres and refugee camps both in Australia and throughout the region. He has chaired the NSW Asylum Seeker Interagency since 2000.



Jack Thomas

Jack has a broad background in marketing and international operations management. Immediately before retirement, he was President, Asia Pacific for Cognos, a leading supplier of business intelligence. Jack brings with him a passion for human rights.

Chair's Report

This year we moved from our much loved home of 20 years in Surry Hills to wonderful new premises in Newtown. Becher House provides us with over three times the floor space and has allowed us to create a warm and welcoming home for our clients as well as much improved working space for staff and volunteers. Becher House was only possible through the very generous contribution of many people but in particular the Becher Foundation which provided the majority of the funds for the purchase. Becher House will be a fitting legacy to their generosity and commitment.

The year has seen both major parties taking a highly political approach to asylum seekers and the debate has been loud and rancorous. Each side claims that their solution is the better approach when in fact there's little difference between them. We see the impact these policies have on asylum seekers living in the community and would welcome as much focus being placed on reducing the harm this causes as is devoted to border protection issues.

We strongly advocate that all asylum seekers living in the community be granted work rights and the uncertainty provided by temporary protection visas be removed.

The Houston Report was delivered in August 2012 and contained much useful information about the global phenomenon of asylum seekers and the factors affecting their arrival into our region. It made 22 recommendations, which it clearly stated needed to be implemented as a whole. Unfortunately the government either could not, or would not implement many of the proposals, which seriously undermined the effectiveness of its recommendations.

We ended this year with our finances in the strongest position they have ever been. In particular our balance sheet grew from \$171,000 to \$2,300,000 after the purchase of Becher House. We remain determined to manage our financial affairs prudently while expanding our services where possible to meet the needs of our clients.

Our services had been limited by the physical space available for some years, a constraint removed by the move to Becher House. We have progressively expanded our services in the last year and intend to continue this as funding permits. Our priorities are increasing the range of legal services available to our clients and increasing the amount of emergency accommodation we have available. We are also keen to increase advocacy on behalf of our clients and be widely recognized as a calm and authoritative voice for asylum seekers.

Wendy Watson resigned from the Board in 2012. She has represented the interests of the



Good Shepherd Sisters and made a major contribution to the Centre over the years. Betty Hounslow joined the Board and brings a wealth of experience in the not-for-profit sector, most recently as Deputy CEO of the Fred Hollows Foundation. We are honoured that Hugh Mackay has chosen to join John Menadue as a Patron of the Centre.

Melanie Noden has been the CEO for over a year now and has displayed wonderful leadership through a period of significant growth. She has guided the Centre through much change while continually improving client services.

I would like to thank all the staff, volunteers and supporters for their great commitment and dedication throughout the year. They really are the heart and the soul of the Centre and make a very real difference to the lives of many people. I would also like to thank my Board colleagues for their enthusiasm, commitment and wise counsel through the year.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "S Bradley".

Steve Bradley
Chair
Asylum Seekers Centre

CEO's Report

2012–13 was a landmark year for the Asylum Seekers Centre on all levels. We've celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Centre, purchased a new home and served the greatest number of asylum seekers in our history.

In over 20 years, thousands of asylum seekers have seen our Centre as an oasis, a place of welcome and a second home. During that time we've never turned anyone away hungry or in need of a bed. We've been inspired by their stories of extraordinary resilience and courage.

We are particularly grateful to the Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand, whose vision to create a place of hope and welcome to asylum seekers made the Centre a reality. For two decades they supported us financially and provided us with a home rent-free. They've also made a substantial donation to our new home.

We moved into Becher House near Newtown Station in April 2013. We are incredibly grateful to all those who made our new home a reality. In particular I would like to thank our major funder, the Becher Foundation, from whom Becher House takes its name.

Our greatest achievement this year is that we served the highest number of asylum seekers since our inception.

We assisted more than 1,000 asylum seekers from 52 countries. We could not have served the increased numbers without the extra space Becher House provides.

Details of the incredible work undertaken by the Centre during 2012–2013 are set out elsewhere in this report. Particular highlights include:

- The leasing of houses with 20 beds to supplement our hostel style emergency short-term accommodation
- Introducing additional pro bono GP, dental, osteopathic and counselling clinics
- Introducing Australian work culture workshops provided by potential employers
- Increasing our classroom hours to 3,000
- Creating new recreation programs to assist with mental health and fitness
- Increasing the number of volunteers by 30%.



All our successes have been achieved without a single dollar of Federal Government funding and with 92% of our funding coming from the community and philanthropy. We are so incredibly grateful to all of our supporters for their generosity and for the commitment and passion of our Board, staff and volunteers. We are also thankful for the privilege to work with so many inspirational asylum seekers whose courage, resilience and dignity continue to inspire us daily in our efforts.

We look forward to the new era in Becher House. We're very proud of what we've achieved in the last 20 years and are well positioned to face the challenges ahead.

Melanie Noden

Melanie Noden
Chief Executive Officer
Asylum Seekers Centre





What we do

Casework

The Casework Service is the first point of contact for all new clients who arrive at the Centre. It allows their needs to be assessed and prioritised so that we can link them to the services and support they need. The Casework team provides practical support and referrals in relation to applications for protection, accommodation, financial and material support, advocacy and liaison with government and other sector agencies.

Major Achievements 2012–2013

- Grew our Emergency Financial Relief Fund to \$213,426 enabling us to support up to 60 clients per week who would otherwise be homeless.
- Leased houses with 20 beds to supplement our hostel style emergency short-term accommodation.

- Secured funding to employ a fulltime Casework Service Manager, increasing staffing to 3.1 FTE.
- Caseworked 443 new clients, a 34% increase over the previous year, and cared for almost 1,000 clients.
- Provided over 6,000 casework consultations and 9,914 nights of accommodation.

Goals 2013–2014

- Expand our emergency accommodation program.
- Increase staffing and volunteer numbers to support the increasing number of clients.
- Decrease the waiting period between receiving referrals and conducting assessments.
- Introduce a membership card scheme to ensure resources support those most in need.

Health

The Centre provides health care for clients who are not eligible for Medicare and do not have any financial income. We run regular clinics in general medicine, oral health, physiotherapy, osteopathy and mental health. All of these services are supplied by our broad network of pro bono providers. We also assist with referrals to external health care specialists and advocate for fee-waivers for specialist consultations and emergency treatment at public hospitals.

Major Achievements 2012–2013

- Expanded our counselling service to four days a week.
- Commencement of pharmaceutical provisions by RPA pharmacy.
- Commencement of an osteopathy clinic.
- Introduction of a dental clinic.
- Recruitment of a female GP.
- Setting up a medical suite at Becher House made possible by the purchase of \$10,000 worth of equipment for medical clinic (AMA grant).

Goals 2013–2014

- Increase funding for pharmaceutical provisions.
- Increase GP clinics.
- Establish group therapy sessions.
- Recruit administration volunteer.
- Introduce nursing case management for complex presentations.



Employment Assistance

We provide a structured employment assistance service for asylum seekers. They have much to offer Australian workplaces, often bringing many years of experience, professional expertise and maturity to a workplace. In our experience, asylum seekers become dedicated team members because they are seeking stability and a chance to contribute to the Australian community through work.

Working in partnership with employers, we provide a free employment service and offer ongoing workplace support once a position has been filled. All our job seekers have been granted work visas by the government which means they have full work rights. Employers who have recruited our candidates report very positive benefits in their workplaces.

Our microloans program offers asylum seekers interest free loans up to \$1,200 to help meet the costs of equipment, vocational training or to start their own business.

We also offer our service to partner organisations supporting asylum seekers in NSW, ensuring we remain accessible to all asylum seekers.

Major Achievements 2012–2013

- Delivered 2,400 one-on-one job consultations.
- Joined the Migrant Skills Recognition Service Steering Committee to ensure our clients have access to a federal government skills assessment service.
- Provided microloans totalling \$10,200 to 15 clients.
- Expanded our network of employers, recruitment agencies and training organisations willing to assist.
- Held three training forums where asylum seekers heard from potential employers about Australian workplace culture.

Goals 2013–2014

- Grow our employer network.
- Provide cultural diversity training to businesses to build their capacity to employ asylum seekers.
- Continue to raise awareness of the under-utilised pool of skills and experience in the asylum seeker population.
- Maintain the high retention rates our service achieves when placing candidates in work.

Education

We run regular English classes which are taught by professionally trained and experienced volunteer ESL teachers. These are tailored for clients with different levels of English and held in a group environment or one-on-one for those with specific needs. Our weekly computer classes help clients set up email accounts, navigate the internet, format their resumes and address any general computer questions they have.

Major Achievements 2012–2013

- Expanded English Language Program to include weekly one-on-one Accent Modification Classes and other individually tailored classes.
- Piloted Advanced English class.
- Recruited additional teachers for program expansion and retained a strong group of experienced ESL teachers.
- Increased student participation to an average of 50 students per week.
- Increased classroom hours to 3,000.

Goals 2013–2014

- Conduct evaluation of English and computer programs to better address clients' needs.
- Develop a system for identifying and referring clients to free English programs in Sydney.
- Expand English Language Program within the Centre.
- Recruit part-time staff member and volunteer team coordinator to foster expansion.

What we do continued

Social Support

Our Social Support Program aims to reduce the social isolation experienced by asylum seekers and create a connection for them with the local community. Not only have they had to leave their home country, but also their community and often their family. Apart from the stress of seeking asylum, they often suffer from extreme loneliness. We provide a range of regular physical activities and fitness classes as well as creative outlets that include gardening, art, music and excursions to local Sydney attractions.

Major Achievements 2012–2013

- Developed new fitness and creative programs including art, music and exercise.

- Created new partnerships to increase recreational activities with Newtown Neighbourhood Centre, Annette Kellerman Aquatic Centre and the Australian Children's Music Foundation.
- Introduced recreational activities specifically for families and children.

Goals 2013–2014

- Conduct client focused evaluation of recreation activities.
- Improve system for internal referrals to recreation program.
- Continue to expand recreational activities.
- Increase the number of regular excursions.
- Develop new community partnerships for free recreational activities.

Nutrition and Material Support

A team of generous volunteers provides daily nutritious lunches for clients. These lunches set the tone for our welcoming environment and present a much needed opportunity for clients to engage socially.

We also provide a Food Bank service to clients to help them maintain a healthy diet at home.

During the year we provided over 5,500 hot meals and more than 6,000 food parcels.



Volunteers

We have over 200 wonderful volunteers who are the heart and soul of the Centre. Not only are they the first people asylum seekers meet when they arrive, but they enable us to provide a warm welcome and the supporting services our clients need as they start to build a new life in Australia.

Major Achievements 2012–2013

- Increased the number of volunteers by 30%.
- Retained a strong cadre of skilled, professional and dedicated volunteers.
- Strengthened relationships with volunteer groups and organizations to increase volunteer engagement.

Goals 2013–2014

- Enhance volunteer recruitment process by streamlining channels of communication.
- Increase efficiency of volunteer intake and management using eTapestry.
- Reconstruct training practices for new and existing volunteers.
- Reinforce and strengthen reward systems and feedback channels.



Fundraising

Given we have no federal government funding, we rely on the generosity of individuals, as well as charitable foundations and trusts to help us perform our work.

2012–13 was a successful year for the Asylum Seekers Centre. With the support of the Becher Foundation, the trusts and foundations listed and a number of major gifts from individuals, we were able to acquire our new premises. We raised more from fundraising events than in the past and we exceeded our expectations for funding from foundations and trusts.

Overall we ended the financial year with a surplus of \$247,535 (excluding Becher House funds), a significant improvement from the previous financial year.

This has put us in a secure position to ensure the sustainability of the Centre and our capacity to continue to support the growing number of asylum seekers who arrive at our door.

We thank all of our financial supporters for their incredible contributions, and hope that we can continue to count on them into the future.

Becher House

We raised \$1,941,889 to purchase our new home at Becher House. With the support of the Becher Foundation and other individuals and trusts, we now have premises that enable us to effectively serve our clients needs.

The funds covered the property's purchase, renovations and fit out to meet our expanding requirements, as well as establish a sinking fund.

In the last year we have doubled the number of women, men and children asylum seekers to over 1,000 and this is a result of the new premises in combination with recent changes in government policy.

Fundraising Events

In May, we held our 11th Annual Quiz Night which was attended by over 450 people. Hosted by HG Nelson the night raised over \$60,000 in profit from individuals and a number of corporate tables.

The quiz night is run by a wonderful volunteer committee and we thank them all for their incredibly hard work on such a successful event.

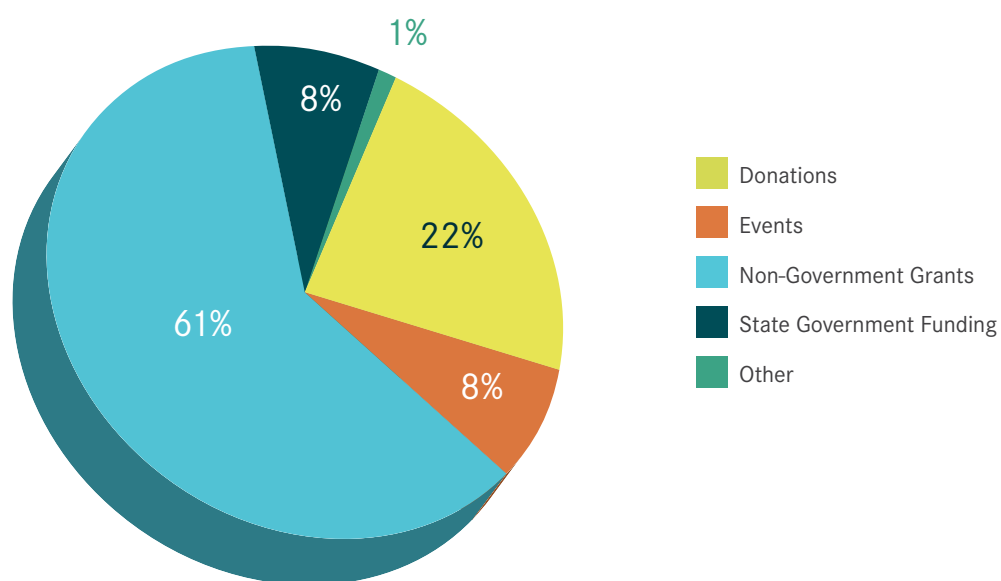
General Fundraising

The Winter and Christmas appeals, in addition to general fundraising, regular giving and unsolicited donations, raised \$174,453 to support our work.

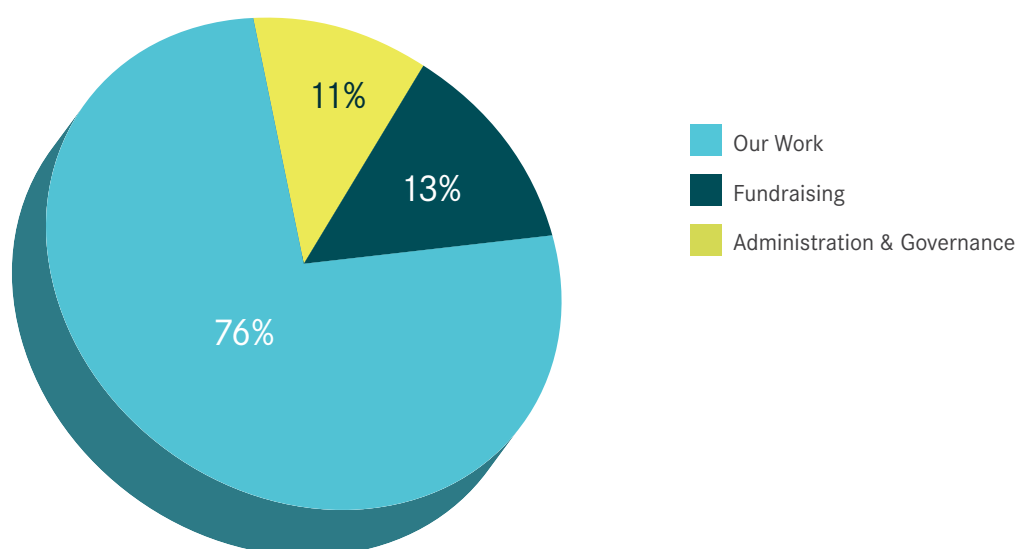
Support from foundations and trusts raised a record of almost \$700,000 to fund the different services that we provide to our clients. We particularly thank the Becher Foundation, Good Shepherd Sisters Australia New Zealand, Bridge for Asylum Seekers, Gandel Philanthropy, the Sydney Myer Fund and Vincent Fairfax Family Trust for their ongoing support.



How we were funded



How we used our funds



Financial Statements

Profit and Loss Statement

Asylum Seekers Centre Incorporated ABN 47 164 509 475
For the Year Ended 30 June 2013

	2013	2012
	\$	\$
INCOME		
Interest income	8,601	11,147
Grants	766,892	512,037
Donations and bequests	464,255	216,901
Donations in kind	20,600	-
Donations – Becher House	1,750,000	-
Donations – Becher House sinking fund	100,000	-
Fundraising revenue	92,959	69,328
Total Income	3,203,307	809,413
LESS EXPENSES	\$	\$
Accounting fees	2,000	-
Advertising	12,447	-
Bank charges	1,883	1,206
Board expenses	123	3,408
Cleaning	7,136	3,338
Client assistance expenses	227,797	159,691
Computer expenses	10,858	11,790
Depreciation	36,732	1,510
Electricity and water	7,262	4,929
Equipment <\$300	566	1,575
Fundraising expenses	16,030	14,998
Insurance	7,919	4,690
Lease rentals on operating lease	1,888	1,070
Leave pay	19,086	2,490
Other employee costs	975	1,496
Postage	2,644	1,750
Printing and stationery	5,344	6,529
Rates and taxes	25,596	-
Repairs and maintenance	2,647	3,950
Salaries	589,942	511,513
Staff amenities	1,401	685
Staff training	11,246	367
Subscriptions	241	650
Sundry expenses	571	960
Superannuation contributions	51,062	41,044
Telephone and fax	12,994	24,793
Travel – domestic	984	1,843
Workers compensation insurance	17,022	15,095
Total Expenses	1,074,396	821,370
Profit/(loss) before income tax	2,128,911	(11,957)

Statement of Financial Position

Asylum Seekers Centre Incorporated ABN 47 164 509 475
For the Year Ended 30 June 2013

	2013	2012
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	685,223	360,891
Trade and other receivables	156,231	12,693
Current tax receivable	6,119	-
Other assets	-	4,384
Total Current Assets	847,573	377,968
Non-Current Assets		
Property, plant and equipment	1,949,907	2,269
Total Non-Current Assets	1,949,907	2,269
Total Assets	2,797,480	380,237
LIABILITIES	\$	\$
Current Liabilities		
Trade and other payables	164,692	33,999
Borrowings	-	13,703
Current tax liabilities	-	999
Employee benefits	49,584	30,498
Other liabilities	282,969	129,714
Total Current Liabilities	497,245	208,913
Total Liabilities	497,245	208,913
NET ASSETS	2,300,235	171,324
EQUITY	\$	\$
Reserves	100,000	-
Retained Earnings	2,200,235	171,324
Total Equity	2,300,235	171,324



Our Supporters

We thank our major supporters who make all of our services and support of asylum seekers possible.



Collier Charitable Fund



SIDNEY MYER FUND



AMA Foundation

Key Foundation

Scully Foundation

Becher House Funders

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| • Becher Foundation | • Key Foundation |
| • Steve and Ros Bradley | • Karen Loblay |
| • Catholic Community of Mary Magdalene, Rose Bay | • Peter and Pam Mattick |
| • Ferris Family Foundation | • David Murray |
| • Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand | • Dick and Pip Smith Foundation |
| | • Jack Thomas |



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