

ASYLUM
SEEKERS
CENTRE

Asylum Seekers Centre Annual Report 2016-2017

ABN: 47 164 509 475

“The positive impression I first got was that here I could do anything I wanted to make a livelihood. You can do everything you believe you can do. You can start at any age you want. But you have to be active and work hard to succeed.”

Rosemary Kariuki-Fyfe is a force of nature. She grew up in Kenya, in what seemed to have been a fairly traditional home. She fled to Australia in 1999, aged 39, to escape family abuse and tribal clashes in her country.

With the support of the Centre, Rosemary got her first job – with the Department of Navy. But she soon realised that she would need to earn more in order to build a new life and bring her two kids and nephew to be with her in Australia.

As Rosemary rebuilt her life, she quickly regained her confidence and amongst other things, formed the Baulkham Hills African Ladies Troupe, which resulted in a stage show about their personal stories of survival. She currently works for the NSW Police as a Community Liaison Officer. She doesn't hold a rank, which she says makes it easier for her to work with her community.

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Our Vision

Australia opens its heart to people seeking asylum. Recognising our shared humanity with those seeking safety in Australia, we extend our welcome, respect and support. We are a stronger and more vibrant country as a result.

About Us

The Asylum Seekers Centre provides practical and personal support for people living in the community who are seeking asylum. Our services include accommodation, legal advice, financial relief, health care, employment assistance, education, advocacy, food, material aid and recreational activities. We are a not-for-profit organisation and rely on grants, donations and volunteers to undertake our work.

Our Purpose

- *Provide support and services for people seeking asylum to enable them to become independent and valued members of the community.*
- *Advocate for a supportive policy and service framework that recognizes the rights and needs of people seeking asylum in Australia – regardless of how they arrive.*
- *Create a welcoming and supportive community – involving people from all walks of life in our work while building understanding of asylum issues and support for people seeking asylum.*

Our Values

- A people centred service.
- An organisation operating within a strong human rights framework.
- A collaborative partnership.
- An accountable and transparent agency.

Strategic Goals

- Provide support and services for people seeking asylum to become independent and valued community members.
- Advocate to ensure a supportive policy and service framework for people seeking asylum in Australia.
- Greater community understanding of asylum issues and support for people seeking asylum.
- A strong and sustainable organisation able to achieve our Purpose and Goals.

People We Support

During 2016-2017, we supported over 2,650 people seeking asylum. Of those, 1,170 were new to the Centre and included 330 children. They came from 80 countries including Iran, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Our services promote self sufficiency and independence to help people build the foundations for a new life in Australia. During the year we provided:

- 74 people with medium term accommodation
- 643 legal consultations
- 330 people with financial relief
- 2,000 health assessments
- 1,300 pharmaceutical prescriptions
- 218 people placed in jobs
- 174 people attended English classes
- 12,000 hot meals and 25,585 food parcels

Our Patrons



Bruce Baird AM

As a member of the NSW Parliament, Bruce Baird was Minister for Transport from 1988 to 1995, Minister for Sydney's Olympic Bid from 1990 to 1993, Minister for Tourism and Roads from 1993 to 1995 and Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party in State Parliament from 1992 to 1995.

In Federal Parliament, he was the Member for Cook, NSW, from 1998 to 2007, Chairman of the Economics Committee and a member of the Human Rights Committee.

Bruce has had a distinguished career in both the public and private sectors. In 2008 he was appointed Chair of the Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council which advises the government on refugee and humanitarian settlement in Australia. He is also Chairman of the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator.



Hugh Mackay AO

Australia's pre-eminent social researcher, Hugh Mackay is internationally recognised for his pioneering work in this area. He is the author of eighteen books – 11 in the field of social psychology and ethics, and seven novels. His latest novel, *Selling the Dream*, was published in May 2017. He delivered the 2017 Gandhi Oration at the University of NSW: *The State of the Nation Starts in Your Street*.

Hugh is a Fellow of the Australian Psychological Society and has been awarded honorary doctorates by five Australian universities. He was a newspaper columnist for over 25 years and is a frequent media commentator. He is a former deputy chairman of the Australia Council and Chairman of Trustees of Sydney Grammar School. He was the inaugural chairman of the ACT Government's Community Inclusion Board.



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 and is a Fellow of the Centre for Policy Development. John publishes a blog 'Pearls and Irritations' at www.johnmenadue.com.

Our Ambassadors



Thomas Keneally AO

An Australian Living Treasure and one of our most successful authors, Tom is best known for his Booker Prize winning novel *Schindler's Ark*, later adapted to Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* which won an Academy Award for Best Picture. He has also been shortlisted three more times for the Booker, won the Miles Franklin Award, the Prime Minister's Literary Award, the New South Wales Premier's Literary Award and the Helmerich Award. Tom co-authored *A Country Too Far*, a landmark anthology by 27 of Australia's finest writers which confirms that the experience of seeking asylum – the journeys of escape from death, starvation, poverty or terror to an imagined paradise – is part of the Australian mindset and deeply embedded in our culture. Tom has a passionate commitment and deep understanding of why people come to our country seeking safety and protection.



Wendy Sharpe

Wendy Sharpe is one of Australia's most awarded artists. She has won many major national awards, scholarships and prizes including The Archibald Prize, The Sulman Prize and The Portia Geach Memorial Award (twice). Major commissions include the olympic pool size mural for Cook and Phillip Park Aquatic Centre, Sydney; Australian Official Artist to East Timor 1999 and many others. Wendy has also been a member of the Council of the Australian War Memorial for eight years. She has been awarded many international artist residencies including two in Paris, one in Egypt and two in Antarctica. Wendy has held over 40 solo exhibitions around Australia and internationally. Her exhibition, 'Seeking Humanity', which comprised 39 portraits of people seeking asylum and refugees, made an enormous contribution to the perception of people seeking asylum at all levels of society.



Saba Vasefi

Saba Vasefi is an Iranian-Australian academic, feminist filmmaker, poet and human rights activist.

In Iran, she was a Member of the Committee of Human Rights Reporters and worked as a journalist for the International Campaign for Human Rights. Saba's master's thesis in Feminist Literary Criticism received the highest grade possible in Iran. At twenty-four she became a lecturer at the prestigious Shahid Beheshti University in Iran, but after four years was banned from teaching due to her activism against capital punishment. Saba has made a number of acclaimed documentaries and spoken about women's and children's issues at the UN, Amnesty International and numerous universities around the world. Since her arrival in Australia, her passion and commitment to human rights has continued.

Our Board



Clare Petre: Chair

Clare joined the Board of the Asylum Seekers Centre in December 2015 and in July 2016 assumed the position of Chair. Clare has had a long term career in the government, community and media sectors.

She previously held the position of Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW for over 16 years and prior to that was a Senior Assistant Commonwealth Ombudsman. Clare is a Board member of Energy Consumers Australia, Chair of the ASIC Consumer Advisory Panel, Chair of Credit & Investments Ombudsman Consumer Liaison Committee and Chair of the Code of Conduct Committee of the Australian Council for International Development.

Clare has served on a range of NSW and Commonwealth government advisory bodies as well as the boards of community groups, including ACOSS and Performance Space.



Betty Hounslow: Deputy Chair

Betty brings to the Board four decades of experience in the community sector, with her last job in the paid workforce being 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 1980s.



Jack Thomas: Secretary

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.



Mary Reemst

Mary Reemst is the Managing Director and CEO of Macquarie Bank Limited. Before being appointed to this position in 2014, Mary was the Head of Credit in the Risk Management Group for 11 years. Prior to this she worked in the infrastructure groups of Macquarie Group and before that Bankers Trust Australia. She has spent over 30 years in the finance industry. Mary is a Director of the Australian Bankers Association, the Australian Financial Markets Association and the Financial Markets Foundation for Children.



Steve Bradley

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.

He is passionate about innovation and change in organisations and has led some of the largest change programs in Australia. Since finishing full time work he has been the Chairman of Outback Stores, a director of a large superannuation fund and consulted to a significant range of Australian and NZ businesses. Steve served as Chair of the Asylum Seekers Centre Board from 2011 to 2016.



Steven Glass

A partner in the law firm Gilbert+Tobin, Steven has practised for 30 years, specialising in commercial litigation. For 14 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 people seeking asylum.



Tom Gregory

Tom has more than 36 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.



Graham Thom

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

In 2013, Graham undertook research on policies relating to the resettlement of vulnerable children, including unaccompanied minors. His research, which involved travelling to Indonesia, Kenya and Jordan, was published in 2015. That year he also undertook further research in Indonesia. In 2016 and 2017 Graham attended the UNHCR NGO Consultations and Resettlement Consultations in Geneva.

Chair's Report



It is fortunate that ASC continued to grow in strength during the past year, as the position for refugees and people seeking asylum worsened as the result of harsh Federal Government policies, with the result that our services have been needed more than ever.

The continued offshore detention of refugees in appalling conditions is a national shame. The physical, emotional and psychological harm caused to these people who are seeking safety from persecution is incalculable and scandalous.

People onshore in Australia have faced significant obstacles to have their claims for asylum determined – in terms of complexity of application, limited assistance through the application process, reduced and strict time limits, and review on paper instead of in person.

During 2016-17 the number of people assisted by ASC increased substantially, with greater demand on our wide range of services – health, accommodation,

employment, legal, casework, food, education, social and material support.

Fortunately our generous donors and supporters have put us in a position where we have been able to respond to the increased demand, despite great pressure on everyone involved in delivering our services. Becher House seemed so large only a few years ago, but we are already looking at renovations within the building as well as additional space elsewhere.

Our dynamic CEO Frances Rush has led ASC with distinction, and has worked with other sector agencies to provide strong coordinated services and to reduce duplication. ASC has thrived under Frances' leadership at a time when a welcoming and supportive environment for people seeking asylum is needed more than ever.

ASC could not succeed without the contribution of so many – our staff, volunteers, Patrons and Ambassadors, supporters and donors, through our Employment

Service and our Board. Thank you to everyone who has been part of ASC for your strong commitment and support.

In the end it is the inspiration of people seeking asylum in Australia – that is the centrepiece of ASC's work. Their stories have common themes of persecution and struggle, resilience and determination. They want to work, to become independent, to support their families, and to make a new life in Australia. They contribute to the rich diversity of our community. ASC is proud to work with people for these ends.

Clare Petre
Chair
Asylum Seekers Centre

CEO's Report



ASC aims to create a welcoming and supportive community for people seeking asylum, provide practical and personal support and advocate to ensure that people's human rights are respected. This report highlights just how we do this and hopefully conveys the atmosphere of the Centre and the role that our donors and volunteers, our staff and our Board members, play in being part of the ASC community.

In contrast to the harsh, often inhumane policies set by our Federal Government, ASC experiences the genuine goodwill and generosity of the people in our community who demonstrate another way of supporting people who have fled persecution.

This year we have again seen an increase in the number of people we supported and we have worked together with people to create more targeted services to meet their needs. There is an emerging need for us to support our families, especially those with young children, to gain access to education and community support. The Thomas Foundation has provided funding for us to establish a new Child and Family Service (in recognition of the

support provided by Barbara Thomas to families seeking asylum). We have also, with the support of the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation, been able to employ a full time Volunteer Manager.

All of us welcomed the initiative by the NSW State Government to provide fee free access to TAFE and other colleges for people seeking asylum to attain qualifications up to and including Certificate 4 level. This initiative has meant so much as people have been able to study, to gain qualifications with pathways to employment such as working in aged care or as a care worker for people with disabilities.

Last year we were part of establishing NAPSA (NSW Alliance for People Seeking Asylum) which is comprised of the Asylum Seekers Centre, Refugee Advice & Casework Service (RACS), Jesuit Refugee Service Australia (JRS), House of Welcome (HOW), Red Cross and St Vincent de Paul. One of NAPSA's first initiatives has been the creation of the NSW Humanitarian Hub, linking people who want to volunteer with people seeking asylum and refugees with opportunities in a

range of agencies. The Hub will go live in 2017 and for now our Hub Coordinator is working to create the website and produce an online training course for volunteers. It's always about collaboration and the Hub is just that. It is funded by the Sidney Myer Foundation, Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation and the Caledonia Foundation.

All of this has been achieved through a myriad of relationships and networks formed with our donors and partners – individuals, community and religious organisations, businesses and philanthropic foundations. Their combined generosity, and the enthusiasm and hard work of our Board, staff and volunteers, have enabled ASC to continue to provide a wide and diverse range of services. I would like to acknowledge and thank all of you for this support.

Frances Rush
Chief Executive Officer
Asylum Seekers Centre

What we do

Casework

Our Casework Service is the first point of contact for new people arriving at the Centre, often the first organisation they come across in Australia. The team is comprised of paid and volunteer social workers who welcome and sensitively assess people's legal, health, welfare and social needs. They coordinate a suite of specialist services including financial relief and accommodation with the aim of ensuring people have dignified access to basic needs, are informed about their rights and can achieve their goals whilst settling into a new country.

Major Achievements 2016-2017

- Approximately 1,170 people, including over 330 children, were welcomed and their needs comprehensively assessed.
- The Barbara Thomas Child and Family Service was launched in collaboration with our Nutrition, Education and Social Support (NESS) team. Recognising the impact school has on the entire family unit, in its first phase the project has focused on children on visas that make them ineligible for affordable schooling. The cross-program team has successfully developed new partnerships with local councils and primary and tertiary education institutions to increase access to early childhood through to secondary education.

- 330 people experiencing destitution were provided with financial relief and intensive case management. After an average of two months, people gained either employment through the Centre's Employment Service or secured other sources of income such as Centrelink entitlements.
- 67 people experiencing homelessness were provided emergency support including the coverage of emergency accommodation.
- 74 people, including 33 children under 18, were moved into our medium-term accommodation for an average of 4.5 months.

Legal

Our Legal Service, a partnership with the Refugee Advice and Casework Service (RACS), provides people seeking asylum with legal advice and assistance. This work ranges from protection visa applications, appeals, work rights applications, bridging visa issues and other related matters.

In previous years, the Legal Service was run by a series of RACS lawyers on three or six month secondments at the ASC. However, as of October 2016, this model changed to a full time Legal Manager based at the Centre to provide greater stability and continuity. In addition, the Service is assisted by practical legal training students and pro-bono work undertaken by lawyers from Gilbert+Tobin, Westpac, Hicksons

Lawyers as well as an independent volunteer lawyer.

Major Achievements 2016-2017

- Making 1,326 individual contacts with people, including 643 separate legal advice sessions, that covered a range of issues including applying for protection, compiling evidence, advising on legal processes and visa options, and assisting people to navigate issues like work rights and employment. These advice sessions included 114 people who had arrived in Australia by boat.
- Planning and coordination of an ASC-wide effort to identify and engage with over 900 people seeking asylum who had arrived in Australia by boat. This was to ensure that all people who were affected by the Government's 1 October 2017 deadline to lodge applications for a Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) or Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV) were able to apply for protection with legal assistance and advice.
- Conducting 213 assessments for people referred by the Casework Service as seeking financial and/or accommodation support, in order to confirm that their cases met the ASC's legal eligibility criteria.
- Referral, coordination and supervision of regular, weekly legal clinics with Gilbert+Tobin, Westpac and Hicksons Lawyers and facilitation of ongoing pro-bono assistance or representation for 80 people.

- Provision of up-to-date information and processes for all ASC staff and volunteers who were supporting people with their protection visa applications, relevant migration and refugee law matters affecting programs and the people supported by ASC.

Health

Our Health Service continued to provide a range of services including nurse led clinics/ assessments, GP clinics, physiotherapy clinics, optometry clinics and referral pathways for specialised counselling and oral health services. The Centre received funding from NSW Ministry of Health for our Health Manager and we employed two part time nurses who were funded by St Vincent's Private Hospital. All other services were provided by pro-bono health staff. The service could not operate without the support of the following organisations:

- Sydney Local Health District (SLHD) including Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (RPAH) and Sydney Dental Hospital.
- St Vincent's Private Hospital.
- St Vincent's Public Hospital.
- University of NSW.
- University of Sydney.
- Refugee Health Service.
- NSW Ministry of Health.

In line with our strategic plan, a review of the Health Service, as well as the needs of people seeking

asylum, resulted in changes to some of the services we provide at the Centre. Firstly, ASC commenced a partnership with Sydney Dental Hospital to provide a pathway for people to receive oral health assessments and treatment. Many people seeking asylum do not have access to Medicare resulting in very limited or no access to such services. For the past 5 years, the Centre has been operating a bi monthly oral health clinic and we would like to thank Dr Hitoshi Sataka and Dr Joseph Stretton for their support and care over that time.

Secondly, we reviewed the counselling service and implemented changes in response to the increasing number of people requiring acute mental health services and ongoing support, and more specialised counselling including sexual assault services. As a result, we no longer provide a pro bono counselling service at the Centre. We would like to acknowledge counsellors Dr Elizabeth Conroy, Sherry Gregory, John Hill and Claudia Graham for their hard work, commitment and professionalism during the time they worked at the Centre and to thank them for their role in improving the lives of people seeking asylum. STARTTS (Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors) continued to provide a weekly outreach clinic at the Centre and we also refer people to specialist services closer to where they

reside for psychological and mental health support. These specialist services include RPAH Sexual Health Service, Marie Bashir Centre, acute mental health services both inpatient and community based as well as STARTTS.

We continued to advocate for people to access emergency treatment across NSW public hospitals.

Major Achievements 2016-2017

- Provided over 2,000 ongoing health assessments.
- Provided 1,300 prescriptions to 300 clients.
- Provided over 200 initial health assessments by RN's.
- Provided over 450 consultations with allied health professionals.
- Commenced an optometry clinic in partnership with University of NSW Optometry School.
- Developed referral pathways for people for specialist services in SLHD.
- Participated in research with UNSW Medical School.
- Provided an additional physiotherapy clinic.
- Developed referral pathways with Refugee Health Service to expedite referrals and provide people with health services closer to where they live.

What we do continued

Employment

Our Employment Service is one of the most established of its kind in NSW, supporting people seeking asylum to gain meaningful jobs and financial independence. The service reconnects people with their professions, restores self-worth and supports social inclusion through participation in the Australian workforce.

We recognise that every person has a unique pathway to sustainable employment and work with employers and training providers to offer tailored employment opportunities. Getting people ready for the workforce is a key focus and this is ensured by the wrap around support of all other ASC services.

Each person attends a Job Seeking Workshop to help them prepare for jobs in the Australian workplace.

'What Employers Expect' workshops are conducted regularly, presented by Employment Service staff and volunteers as well as representatives of some of our employment partners.

The Employment Service partners with 80 employers to identify suitable candidates for their job vacancies. We also work with our employment partners to support them with their recruitment drives for peak periods. Support is also provided to both the employer and the employee when they commence a new position.

'Fee-free' vocational training with TAFE and private training providers for people seeking asylum was introduced in January 2017 by the NSW Department of Industry. This provides people with great opportunities to formalise their skills to provide a pathway to employment. Tailored courses have been delivered by Macquarie Community College and Bankstown TAFE. The Macquarie Community College courses focus on Foundation Skills including communication, reading, writing and basic computer skills, as well as some hospitality vocational subjects. The Bankstown TAFE course focuses on English, communication and basic computer use.

The Service operates with 3 staff and 40 skilled volunteer job advisors who work one-on-one with people to help them achieve their goals.

Major Achievements 2016-2017

- 218 people were work ready and placed into paid employment.
- Our job advisors provided 90 hours of one-on-one mentoring and coaching each week.
- Over 40 people enrolled in vocational training programs to gain local qualifications.
- Three tailored vocational training courses were held.
- Over 300 people attended workshops to help prepare them for the Australian workplace.
- Partnered with over 80 employers to support their ongoing recruitment needs.

A highly qualified engineer from Iran, Amin's experience is reflective of many underemployed people seeking asylum who come to us seeking assistance in finding skilled work.

Amin was matched with one of our volunteer job advisors, Jude Stoddart, to map out a pathway back into his profession. Jude worked with him to prepare a professional resume and look for work in his field. We also introduced him to Engineers Australia to begin the onerous process of qualification recognition.

Then we were approached by Climate Risk, a software company that forecasts the impact of climate change, who were looking for skilled engineers, mathematicians, and computer coders. Amin was a perfect fit. It was a great opportunity for him to build Australian experience in his profession. He started as a graduate level engineer and after 6 months was moved on to a permanent contract. Amin has recently received a Safe Haven Enterprise Visa.

"Despite having a Masters degree and years of experience, I was unable to find the job I desired until I went to ASC and met one of their amazing job advisors, Jude Stoddart. She made a huge effort helping me through the process – from writing a resume to attending interviews and so on. Soon, she found me the job I have always wanted. It changed my life, my future and brought to me a happiness that words can't describe. Today, I work as an engineer within a professional team with my other lovely colleagues thanks to Jude and others at the Centre. ASC is a network of beautiful inspiring people working for the good of others."

Amin.

"We were really impressed with the ASC Employment Service. The calibre and appropriateness of the candidates they found for us was great. All candidates had thorough CVs and were well prepared when it came to interviews. By working with ASC we've been able to get a more qualified and experienced person and they have given us considerably better value for money than using a conventional on-line or commercial employment service. Our ASC hire has already passed through probation with flying colours and had his first promotion."

Karl Mallon, Climate Risk.



"It is such a privilege to work with people like Amin – talented and keen to use his professional skills and expertise. The challenge for Amin, like many well qualified people seeking asylum, was having a chance to demonstrate those skills and to get his qualifications and experience acknowledged. Employers are missing out on a huge talent pool of highly motivated and skilled potential employees by not recruiting people seeking asylum."

Jude Stoddart,
ASC Employment Adviser.

What we do continued

Education

Learning English is a priority for many people to able them to successfully rebuild their lives. English classes are taught daily for beginner and intermediate levels while referrals are made to other free courses or specialist tutors. A speech therapist offers individual tutorials to work on improving pronunciation tutorials. Computer tutors are also available for people who need help to improve their general computing skills.

Major Achievements 2016-2017

- 174 individuals attended our English classes with an average of 71% continuing for least two consecutive terms.
- Weekly workshops in conjunction with the Sydney Theatre Company were introduced to help with body language, voice and confidence in speaking English. These have been met with enthusiasm and are very popular. Unlikely friendships with people from different language backgrounds have been forged through this group and many have commented that this is a class that helps them to switch off and relax.

Social Support

The activities we offer cover a wide range of interests, including arts and craft, fitness, sport, gardening, music and swimming. These activities help people to

switch off from their worries, connect with others who have similar interests and feel less isolated. There are also activities specifically for preschool children, which help integrate their families who so often feel isolated and overwhelmed. Regular excursions are held which include walks, trips to the theatre, music concerts and beach picnics. These are extremely popular and a welcome relief for many while they go through unsettling times. Regular meetings are held to gain feedback to ensure we are satisfying the needs of people using the Centre and to establish what changes or improvements can be made.

Major Achievements 2016-2017

- Over 500 people engaged regularly with the Education and Recreation Service.
- 649 people were assisted with applications for travel concession Opal cards.
- In partnership with our Casework Team, the Barbara Thomas Child and Family Service commenced with a part time worker appointed to liaise with families to ensure they are accessing the services they need.
- An additional swimming program was set up at Cook and Phillip Pool, enabled through RecLink.
- Regular feedback forums were held every 7 weeks.
- Rough Threads held a 'Wellness Day' and treated approx 140

people with beauty products, haircuts, makeup and massages.

- The Jewish Board of Deputies funded Jews For Social Action to lead two excursions to Taronga Zoo and one to Sea Life Aquarium. Over 106 people participated.
- Runaway Tours facilitated an excursion to Featherdale Wildlife Park for 20 people.
- 'Welcome to Sydney' tours commenced for new arrivals at the Centre.
- A Story Factory Pen Pal project with St Brigid's Primary School, Marrickville, culminated with a lovely barbeque where the pen pals met and played together.

Nutrition and Material Support

Major Achievements 2016-2017

Our lunch program continued to provide a daily hot meal for all. A variety of community groups with approx 150 volunteers were involved in preparing, cooking and serving their dishes. A Thank You Dinner for the lunch volunteers, with dishes from all around the world cooked by people from our Centre, inspired a new dimension to the lunch program.

The demand for groceries and toiletries has grown considerably. The stock has been further supplemented by generous contributions from St Vincent de Paul, OzHarvest, community groups, schools and organisations



such as Share the Dignity, The Nappy Collective, Mummies Paying It Forward and St Vincent's Private Hospital.

Major Achievements 2016-2017

- Approx 12,000 hot meals were served – reaching the full capacity of our current kitchen!
- Launched 'Breaking Bread and Boundaries' - a new project enabling people to purchase ingredients and participate in the cooking of the lunches.
- 25,585 food parcels given out – a 55% increase from 16,543 last year.
- 293 warm jumpers from Thread Together distributed.
- 46 children supplied with school backpacks and equipment needed to start school.
- 23 primary and secondary school fees paid to ensure access to education. Uniforms were also supplied so that the children could settle into the school environment easily and not feel different.

Our Volunteers



Our volunteers support people through every step of seeking asylum.

ASC's community network is invaluable and our team of dedicated volunteers is the heart and soul of what we do. They are the backbone of the Centre, assisting and enabling our service teams to provide a full range of personal and practical support. From a warm welcome on arrival, they take time to listen to people's needs, give them a hot meal and help them with their English. We truly could not respond to the needs of the people we support without their amazing contribution.

We now have 400 volunteers from all sectors of the community actively involved with the Centre, an increase of 8% from the previous year.

In recognition of Volunteer Week, our annual thank you celebration was a highlight this year, with guest speaker Rosemary Kariuki-Fyfe sharing her inspiring story of perseverance, strength

and positivity during her journey to build a new life in Australia.

Our volunteers supported a wide range of ASC community events and activities, enabling us to continue to spread the word about the challenges faced by the people we support and how the community can help them through the process of seeking asylum.

This year also saw the creation of the NSW Humanitarian Hub, an initiative of The NSW Alliance for People Seeking Asylum, which provides a central online resource for volunteers who wish to support people seeking asylum. It was made possible through the generous support of the Caledonia Foundation, Sidney Myer Fund and Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation.

We value our volunteer teams and their ongoing training and development is important to us. This year, we delivered training sessions for volunteers in key

areas such as legal processes and working with people seeking asylum. We also dedicated time to ensure all our volunteers are working within a safe environment.

As a result of the feedback we received from them during our strategic review, we increased our safety measures and protocols to ensure all active volunteers were trained and informed of these safety frameworks.

The Centre implemented a new database system which has enabled us to streamline our volunteer processes and communications. We've also introduced training content delivered through online modules and continued to increase our social media presence to recognise the contribution of our volunteers.



The Gift of Emil Bolis

Ten years ago Emil left Egypt, where he worked as a general practitioner. Arriving in Australia at the age of 57, he was the last member of his family to immigrate, before being diagnosed with cancer. Inspired by the support and care he received from two hospital caseworkers, Emil recovered and began studying a Certificate 4 in Community Service.

His first placement, over 5 years ago, was at the Asylum Seekers Centre, where he has volunteered ever since. Speaking English, Arabic and two Sudanese languages, Emil volunteers as a

case manager and is often the first person someone speaks to when they come to the Centre. Assessing the needs of people, he listens and documents, pulling together the threads of a person's story, before translating the details to the relevant staff member.

Over the last 5 years Emil has assessed the needs of over 2,500 people at the Centre. Some of the things he has heard, he says, have stuck in his mind. There are stories and faces that he cannot forget.

"Everyone has a story. The people who come here tell me everything. They are frank with me. It can be very emotional," Emil says. "I try my best to help them, to give emotional support. It is empowering for a person to be able to communicate. Speaking the same language makes people feel happy."

Community Engagement

Our Community Speakers Program continued to grow rapidly with requests received from community groups, schools and other organisations wanting to learn more about the challenges and needs of people seeking asylum.

With approx half of the requests coming from the education sector, and the support of the City of Sydney, we developed a series of presentation packs specifically tailored for school students. We also provide suggestions for classroom activities and how students can welcome and support people seeking asylum, particularly other children.

None of this would have been possible without our wonderful team of volunteer community speakers who travel all over Sydney to make presentations. Our staff also continued to represent the Centre and advocate on behalf of people seeking asylum at many professional, sector and public events.

Our most high profile event of the year, Welcome! Respect! Unity!, was held to celebrate Refugee Week 2017 in partnership with the City of Sydney. Approx 700 guests filled the Lower Town Hall to support the positive contributions made by people seeking asylum and refugees to Australian society. Hosted by ABC journalist Julia Baird, guest speakers included Professor Munjed Al Muderis, orthopaedic surgeon, author and human rights activist; Dorothy Hoddinott, Principal, Holroyd High School; Rosemary Kariuki-Fyfe, refugee and community leader; and Councillor Jess Scully, City of Sydney. A highlight of the evening was a moving performance by

students of the Treehouse Theatre who shared their personal stories and the circumstances that brought them to Australia.

The Governor of NSW, His Excellency General The Hon. David Hurley, and Mrs Linda Hurley, hosted a reception at Government House to thank the Centre's partners, funders, employers and long term volunteers. It was refreshing to hear him speak so passionately about people seeking asylum and to recognise and thank all those who provide a welcoming and supporting environment.

We hosted two screenings of *Constance on the Edge*, a film produced by Documentary Australia Foundation, which follows the unique journey of Constance from war-torn Sudan and captures her struggles, challenges and experiences as she builds a new life in Wagga Wagga.

The Centre also supported 'Opening Hearts' with our sector partners RACS, Jesuit Refugee Service Australia, House of Welcome and Amnesty. This special Human Rights Day event by artist Penny Ryan saw the installation of 1,468 ceramic human hearts in a huge spiral on the lawn at Circular Quay – one for every man, woman and child held in detention on Nauru and Manus Island.



Refugee Week 2017: Rosemary Kariuki-Fyfe, Dr Munjed Al Muderis, Dorothy Hoddinott

Fundraising

The Centre has been able to assist an increasing number of people seeking asylum due to the commitment and generosity of so many supporters – through volunteering, and in-kind support, regular giving, individual donations, grants, community fundraising and bequests.

Gross fundraising income for the year was \$2,780,842 (2016 \$2,719,307) with corresponding fundraising expenditure of \$164,256 (2016 \$167,314). The total expenditure for the financial year was \$2,853,050 (2016 \$2,416,578) resulting in an 18% increase over 2016. The increase in the Centre's total expenditure is attributable to an increase in the number of people who have been supported.

Relationships with trusts and foundations, corporate organisations and local councils continued to develop throughout the year. Grants were successfully secured to support existing services and to extend others. Our two major appeals, 2016 Christmas Appeal and 2017 Tax Appeal, were both highly successful.

During the year we hosted our first information evening for regular giving donors. People had the opportunity to meet staff members, tour the Centre and gain a greater insight into the services that support people seeking asylum. The success of the evening resulted in a high level of engagement and a positive response towards the role of the Centre.

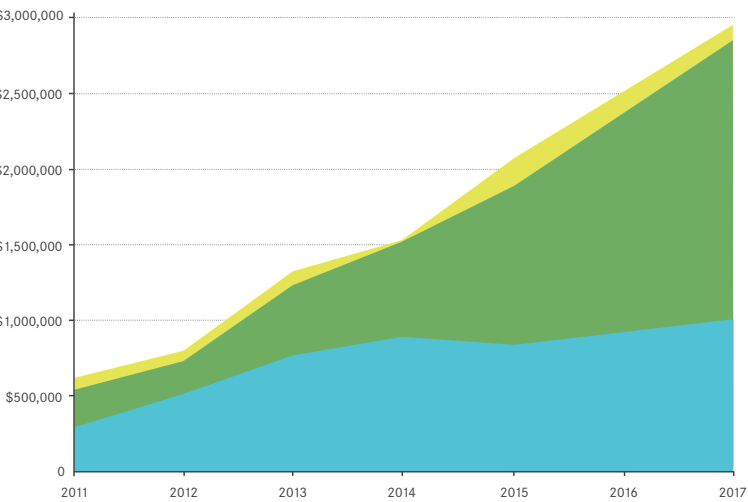
We were also grateful for everyone's patience and cooperation as we upgraded our database systems to the Civi CRM platform with a new credit card payment gateway.

Throughout the year, individuals and community groups from across NSW engaged their own networks to raise awareness about ASC's work, provide groceries and material aid and raise funds to support people seeking asylum. Thank you.

“We are fortunate to live in a community of like-minded people who feel as we do about the plight of people seeking asylum. We chose to support the Asylum Seekers Centre because we were saddened by our government's lack of compassion on this issue and were so happy to be able to contribute by running a community fundraising event.”

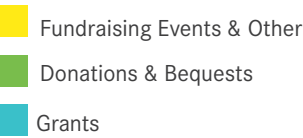
Sarah Jacobs & Betsy Baker

Total Income 2011-2017



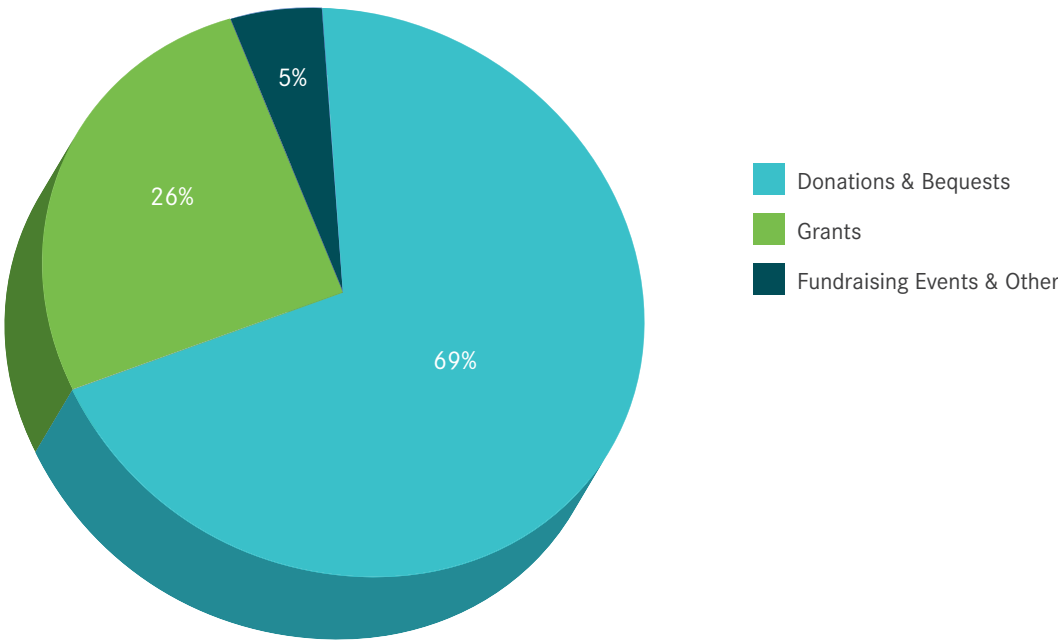
2016-2017:

Fundraising Events & Other	\$144,552
Donations & Bequests	\$1,918,658
Grants	\$717,632
Total	\$2,780,842

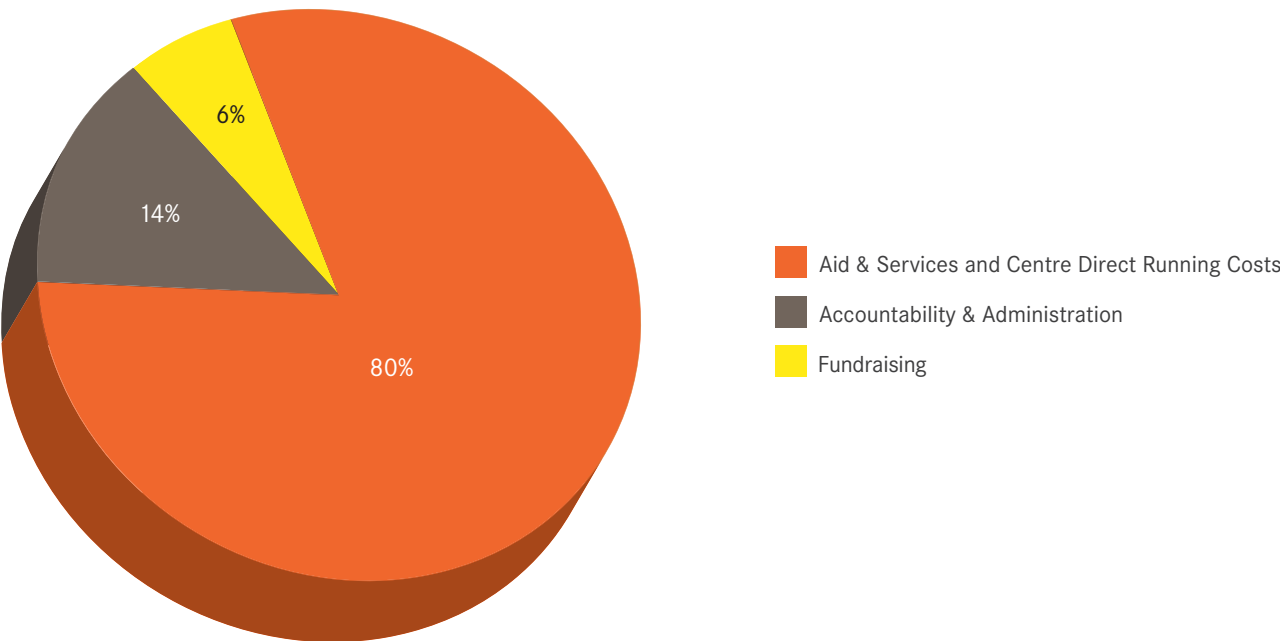


Excludes in-kind contributions

How we were funded 2016-2017



How we used our funds 2016-2017



Financial Statements

Profit and Loss Statement and Other Comprehensive Income

Asylum Seekers Centre Incorporated
ABN 47 164 509 475
For the Year Ended 30 June 2017

	2017	2016
INCOME	\$	\$
Grant income	717,632	801,256
Donations and bequests	1,918,658	1,727,857
Fundraising event revenue	112,366	182,181
Other income	32,186	8,013
Total Income	2,780,842	2,719,307

ASYLUM SEEKER AID & SERVICES

Services		
Casework	(343,615)	(297,825)
Legal	(100,665)	(56,247)
Advocacy & community education	(88,162)	(71,052)
Employment assistance	(211,967)	(165,781)
Healthcare	(153,278)	(118,565)
Education & social support	(198,095)	(131,673)
Volunteer Management	(24,842)	(18,832)
Direct services management	(333,378)	(311,816)
Superannuation & leave costs	(154,825)	(103,372)
Total Services	(1,608,827)	(1,275,163)

Financial Aid

Direct emergency financial support	(258,281)	(328,937)
Accommodation	(59,884)	(50,404)
Donations in kind	(353,110)	(227,500)
Total Financial Aid	(671,275)	(606,841)
Total Asylum Seeker Aid & Services	(2,280,102)	(1,882,004)

ACCOUNTABILITY, FUNDRAISING & RUNNING COSTS

Accountability & administration	(89,830)	(95,137)
Fundraising costs – events	(1,225)	(8,927)
Fundraising costs – other	(164,256)	(167,314)
Superannuation & leave costs	(29,376)	(21,840)
Running costs	(107,142)	(66,795)
Insurance	(24,171)	(18,241)
IT costs	(90,971)	(64,713)
Building maintenance, rates & utilities	(65,977)	(91,607)
Total Accountability, Fundraising & Running Costs	(572,984)	(534,574)
Total Expenditure	(2,853,050)	(2,416,578)

(Deficit)/Surplus before income tax	(72,208)	302,729
Income tax expense	-	-
(Deficit)/Surplus for the year	(72,208)	302,729
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax	-	-
Total Comprehensive (Deficit)/Surplus for the Year	(72,208)	302,729

Statement of Financial Position

Asylum Seekers Centre Incorporated
ABN 47 164 509 475
For the Year Ended 30 June 2017

	2017	2016
ASSETS	\$	\$
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	3,454,273	861,743
Trade and other receivables	24,245	7,843
Current tax receivable	8,753	3,219
Total Current Assets	3,487,271	872,805

Non Current Assets

Property, plant and equipment	1,998,629	2,003,655
Total Non Current Assets	1,998,629	2,003,655
Total Assets	5,485,900	2,867,460

LIABILITIES

Current Liabilities

Trade and other payables	42,958	18,441
Employee benefits	96,495	60,174
Other financial liabilities	2,036,039	115,829
Total Current Liabilities	2,175,492	194,444

Non Current Liabilities

Employee benefits	7,838	-
Total Non Current Liabilities	7,838	-
Total Liabilities	2,183,330	194,444

NET ASSETS	3,302,570	2,682,016
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EQUITY

Reserves	759,512	66,750
Retained earnings	2,543,058	2,615,266
Total Equity	3,302,570	2,682,016

Our Supporters

We thank our major supporters who make possible all of our services and support for people seeking asylum.

Acmena Group Pty Ltd	Johnston, Helen	Simpson, Emily
AMP Foundation	Konica Minolta	Sisters of Charity Foundation
Ballard, Tom	Lacey, David & Shapiro, Marian	Social Outfit
Bangel, Kim	Lambert, Michael	STARTTS
Bradley, Steve & Ros	Loblay, Karen	St Brigid's Parish, Marrickville
Braithwaite, Peter	Lush Fresh Handmade	St James' Church, Sydney
Bridge for Asylum Seekers	Cosmetics	St Joseph's Parish, Newtown
Foundation	Macquarie Community College	St Vincent de Paul
Carrick, Paul	Macquarie Group Foundation	St Vincent's Private Hospital
Catholic Education Office	Manning, Maria	St Vincent's Public Hospital
Campion, Father Edmund	Mattick, Peter & Pam	Sisters of Saint Joseph
Christ Church St Laurence	Morrell, Richard	Sydney Dental Hospital
City Light Church, Balmain	Mummies Paying It Forward	Sydney Local Health District
City of Sydney	Mums for Refugees	TAFE NSW
Collier Charitable Fund	Nadia, Cynthia & Burge, Roslyn	The Bike Shed
Commonwealth Bank of	Newington College	The Bower
Australia	Newman's Own Foundation	The Estate of the Late
Denton, Gwyn & Graham	NSW Ministry of Health	Donald Plimer
Dress for Success	NSW Refugee Health Service	The Estate of the Late Mary
Dress for Work	NSW Teachers Federation	Dalmas
Elmgreen, John	Our Lady's Nurses for the Poor	The Garrett Riggelman Trust
Emmett, Brent & Vicki	OzHarvest	The Key Foundation
Employgroup/Aussiepay	Page, Michael	Thomas Foundation
Flett, Hamish	Parliament on King	Thread Together
Garb Weiss, Judy & Weiss, Sam	Phillips, Jethro & Thurgood-	Thrive Refugee Enterprise
Gelato Messina	Phillips Family	Tsuno Sanitary Products
Gift of Bread	Porcino, Ann	University of NSW
Gilbert & Tobin	Presentation Sisters Wagga	UNSW School of Optometry
Glass, Steven & Michelle	Wagga	University of Sydney
Gumnuts & Eucalypts Groups	RecLink	Upper Room
Harvey, Philippa & Miles	Reemst, Mary	UTS Faculty of Design
Herbert Smith Freehills	Refugee Advice & Casework	Varga, Susan & Coombs, Anne
Horridge, Professor Adrian	Service	Vincent Fairfax Family
FAA FRS	Roseville Asylum Seeker &	Foundation
Hyatt Regency Sydney	Refugee Support Group	Waters, Peter
Inner West Council	Royal Prince Alfred Hospital	Wenona School
Jacobs, Sarah & Baker, Betsy	Scalabrini Village	Wood, Paul & Pamela
James N Kirby Foundation Ltd	Scully Fund	Woodruff, Christine & John
Jewish Board of Deputies	Share the Dignity	
Jews for Social Action	Sharp, Deborah	



Thank you to the students at Newtown Public School for creating a Welcome Book especially for the children who arrive at our Centre.

Acknowledgements

Images: Michael Amendolia
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Tom Keneally in the Tom Keneally Centre at the
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