



ASYLUM
CENTRE SEEKERS

Asylum Seekers Centre Annual Report 2017-2018

ABN: 47 164 509 475



“I want to tell people who
come to the Centre, ‘here it’s
OK, there is love and care for
you between these walls.’”
Babra Mutanda

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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 so people seeking asylum can 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.
- Advocate to ensure a supportive policy and service framework for people seeking asylum in Australia.
- Foster greater community understanding of asylum issues and support for people seeking asylum.
- Be a strong and sustainable organisation able to achieve our Purpose and Goals.

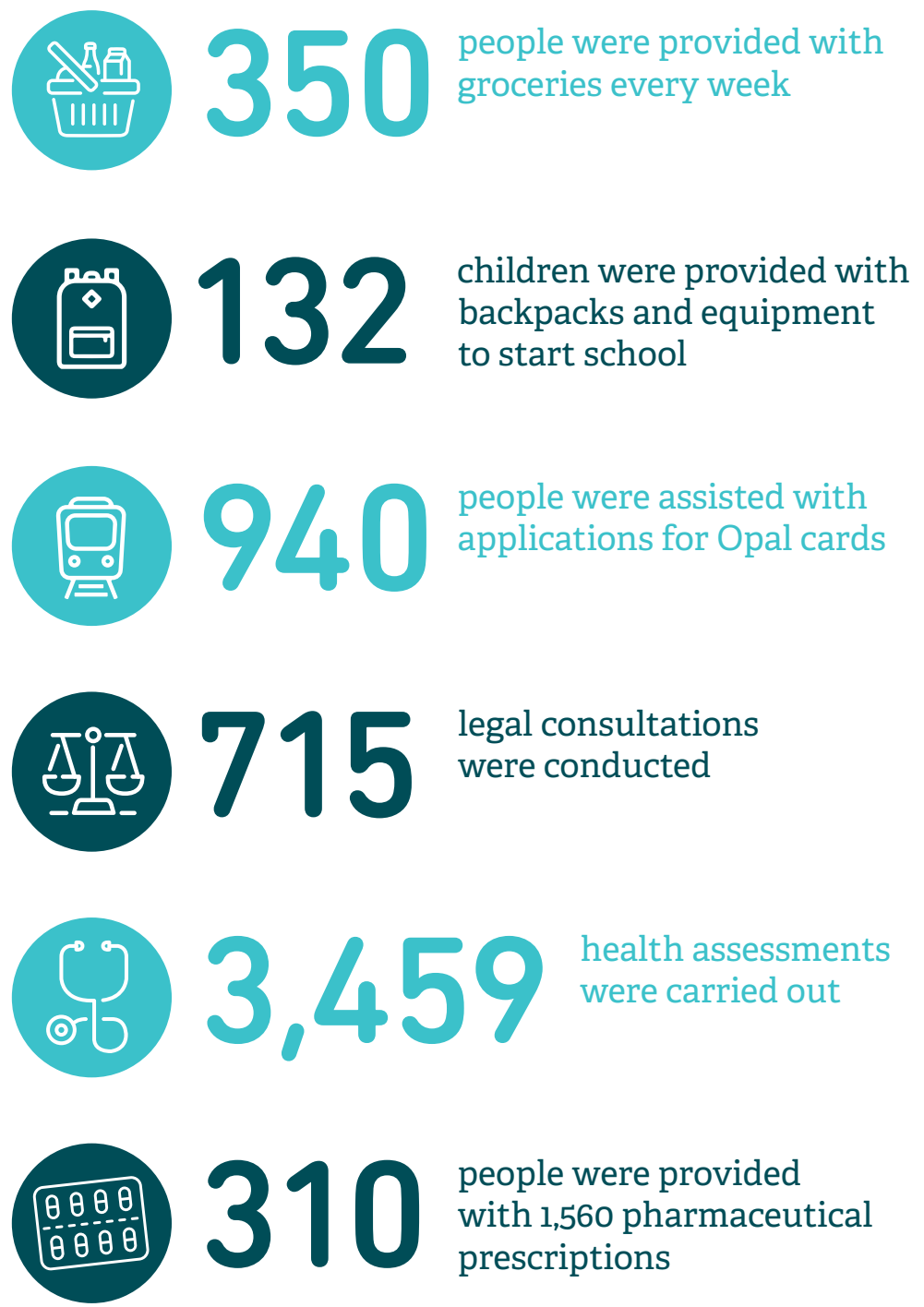
People We Support

During 2017-2018, we supported over 3,210 people seeking asylum, including 814 children. More than 1,000 people were new to the Centre. People came from 91 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.

About Us CONTINUED

Through out the year:



Chair and CEO's Report



It is with great pleasure that we share with you the Asylum Seekers Centre (ASC)'s 2017/18 annual report.

Established in 1993, the Centre is a place of welcome and safety for people who have fled great danger. We deliver a range of services to meet the immediate needs of individuals and families while they wait on the outcome of their application for protection in Australia. Beyond direct material support, we provide a network, a community of support.

With no Federal Government funding, we work hard to make sure every dollar raised contributes to providing people seeking asylum the services they need to become independent and thrive in our community. The great successes you'll read about in this report were achieved thanks to the amazing support, dedication, hard work and commitment of our supporters, staff, volunteers and partners, and collaboration with people seeking asylum.

This year, the number of people we supported reached a record number of 3,212, a direct result of Federal Government cuts to income support for people seeking asylum. All our services have stepped up their effort to meet the scale and complexity of needs. With employment now the only viable option for

people to avoid destitution and homelessness, our Employment team responded to the urgency with professionalism and agility. We furthered our relationship with more than 90 partner employers and supported 256 people into paid work.

The contrast couldn't be starker between the Federal policies and the caring and supportive environment staff, volunteers, members of the community and people seeking asylum have created at the Centre. It is truly an honour to see the community come together to give the Centre its unique atmosphere. There is a sense of urgency around people's needs, but there is also laughter, joy and warmth. It is a direct tribute to the efforts of our supporters, Board members and Patrons, our staff and vibrant community of volunteers.

We continue to be amazed and humbled by the strength and resilience of people seeking asylum, who in the midst of unsettling times, keep focussing on moving forward.

Steve Bradley, Jack Thomas and Tom Gregory, three long-standing Board Members, retired from the Board during the year.

We wish to thank them for their professional and personal commitment and contribution to the Centre during their time as board members. In line with our strategic review of the Board, we have expanded the sets of skills across the Board and are pleased to welcome Marina Brizar, Om Dhungel, Rebecca Lowde and Celia Reynolds to the Board. Former Chair Clare Petre stood down as a Chair as she took on new professional responsibilities and remains Vice-Chair of the Board.

As ASC enters its 25th year of existence, the story of this exceptional place continues to be written by the people we support and the people who support us.

Betty Hounslow AM
Chair
Asylum Seekers Centre

Frances Rush
Chief Executive Officer
Asylum Seekers Centre

What We Do



Personal Case Management

ASC's Personal Case Management 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 caseworkers who welcome and sensitively assess people's health, welfare and social needs. Team members coordinate a suite of specialist services including financial relief and accommodation to ensure people's basic needs are met, people are informed about their rights and can achieve their goals whilst settling into a new country.

2017-2018 highlights:

- ASC provided 260 people with \$359,000 in emergency financial assistance, a 39% increase on 2016/2017. With our Federal

government withdrawing financial support for people seeking asylum, this assistance provided by ASC has been crucial to support people in finding or keeping their accommodation and avoiding destitution.

- ASC supported people who had been medically evacuated from Nauru and Manus Island and were living in NSW when the Federal Government withdrew all financial and accommodation support.
- Launched last year, the Barbara Thomas Child and Family program has more than doubled the number of families who have received intensive support at the Centre, from 60 to 159 families in 2017/18.
- Team members worked alongside ASC's Legal Service (run in partnership with the

Refugee Advice and Casework Service – RACS) to support people who arrived by boat and were affected by an arbitrary visa application deadline of 1st October 2017. The team ensured that over 900 people were informed of the deadline and were either receiving support from ASC/RACS' Legal service or referred to other agencies for legal support.

- ASC, in partnership with STARTTS (NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors), coordinated a peer-led support group for people seeking asylum with diverse gender and sexuality. This is one of the first groups of its kind, and participants with lived experience have themselves provided expertise to other organisations wanting to run similar projects.

What we do continued



Health

The Asylum Seekers Centre is the only not-for-profit that runs a primary health clinic for people seeking asylum as part of a dedicated suite of services. The clinic's services include nurse-led and GP clinics, physiotherapy clinics and optometry clinics.

In 2017/2018, NSW Ministry of Health funded the Centre's Health Manager position and ASC fundraised to employ two part-time nurses.

ASC's clinics could not have operated without the crucial support of pro-bono health staff who provided a wide range of services. Professor Mark Harris AO from UNSW and Professor Lyndal Trevena, from University of Sydney, operated pro-bono GP clinics twice a week. Caroline Harley and Elizabeth Thompson provided weekly pro-bono physiotherapy consultations, and fortnightly optometry clinics were

run pro-bono by UNSW School of Optometry.

2017-2018 highlights:

- Thanks to the unwavering support of ASC's partners, the Centre was able to develop vital referral pathways so people seeking asylum could access specialised services and care:
 - ASC's partnership with Sydney Local Health District (SLHD), including Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (RPAH), provided people with access to services such as pharmaceuticals, outpatient services, clinics and inpatient services. People seeking asylum accessed affordable dental care at Sydney Dental Hospital.
 - ASC continued to benefit from invaluable health services from both St Vincent's Public and Private Hospitals.

Thanks to St Vincent's Private Hospital, people seeking asylum accessed essential services such as:

1. Imaging including ultrasounds, x-rays and CT scans
 2. Medical supplies and equipment
 3. Biomedical engineering maintenance of equipment and tagging
 4. Professional development for registered nurses
- STARTTS (Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors) provided weekly counselling at the Centre.



Education

Learning English is a priority for many people. 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 individuals tutorials to work on improving pronunciation. Computer tutors are also available for people who need help to improve their general computing skills. Computer tutorials are pivotal in supporting people to enroll in education courses or apply for jobs. They also help people connect with services and other networks of support.

2017-2018 highlights:

- 271 people attended English classes, a 56% increase from last year.
- Every week more than 65 people attended the Centre's free English classes for beginner and intermediate levels.

- Tutors from the University of Central Queensland's Sydney campus offered personalised literacy one-on-one support for students who had difficulties accessing the general English classes.
- This year ASC continued to build on the partnership with the Sydney Theatre Company. Workshops run by the Company have had an incredibly positive response. Beyond acting, they have helped people with important aspects of learning a new language such as body language, voice and confidence in speaking.
- The Australian Youth Theatre was approached by a common donor to sponsor three scholarships for children seeking asylum to their holiday workshops in January. The Theatre was inspired to create even more places for

children seeking asylum and in the next holiday four young children were able to take part in the workshops.



Philippa and Miles preparing lunch in ASC's kitchen.

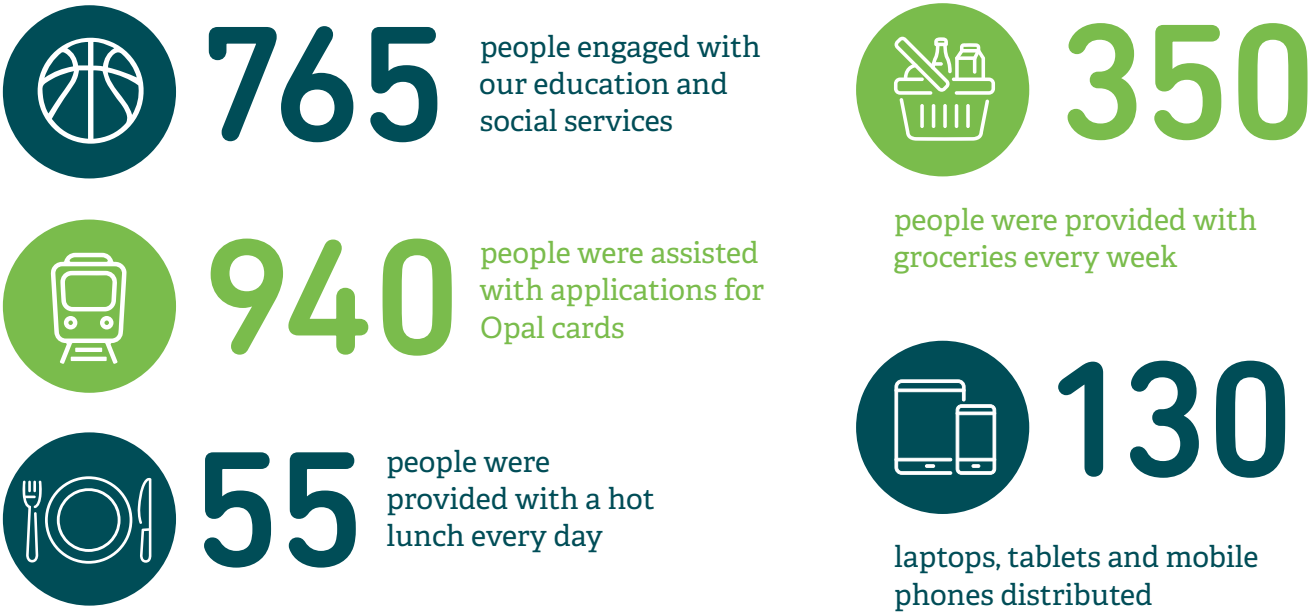
Profile: Miles and Philippa

Every other Thursday, around 12pm, the hallways of the Asylum Seekers Centre would fill with an irresistible and delicious aroma. Rain, hail or shine, Miles' mouthwatering home-made pakoras would draw crowds to the Centre's lunch area.

Twice a month, for more than twelve years, Miles and his wife Philippa got up before 5am to start preparing lunch for people at ASC in their home kitchen. The two of them then packed up their car to serve lunch for over 50 people and cleaned ASC's kitchen before packing up the car again and heading back home.

There was something special about Miles and Philippa's lunch, a buzz in the room, smiles on all faces and the excitement of discovering what was for dessert.

After twelve years of delicious lunches at the Centre, Philippa and Miles retired from the kitchen this year. Their smile is missed around the Centre, and so is the smell of Miles' pakoras.



Social Support

The activities offered by the Centre cover a wide range of interests, including arts and craft, fitness, sport, music and swimming. Not only do these activities help relieve stress, but they also allow people to connect with others and help reduce feelings of isolation. ASC also offers specific activities for preschool children to support families who feel particularly isolated and overwhelmed. Excursions such as walks, trips to the theatre, music concerts and beach picnics were again extremely popular this year and provided a welcome relief for many people going through unsettling times.

2017-2018 highlights:

- 765 people were engaged with ASC's education and social services, a 53% increase compared to last year.
- The number of people assisted with applications for travel concession Opal cards increased by 45% compared to 2016/2017.

Nutrition and Material Support

This year ASC provided a daily hot lunch for over 50 people each day. This was made possible by the generous support of 170 volunteers and community groups who came to the Centre to prepare, cook and serve their dishes.

2017-2018 highlights:

- More than 13,700 hot meals were provided for lunch, a 14% increase compared to last year.
- Through a City of Sydney grant, the Centre piloted the "Breaking Bread and Barriers" program, which encouraged people seeking asylum to cook and share dishes from their home countries. The program involved a wide mix of cultures, with people from Iran, Fiji, Burundi, India, Mongolia and the Philippines participating. It increased the sense of community around the lunch table and provided the opportunity for many people to connect with others for the first time.

- During Ramadan, the Galaxy Foundation kindly provided two Iftar meals in the Centre after the fast ended at 5pm. Iftar gave the Centre a unique feeling of peace and conviviality after hours, and created an incredible space of relief, sharing and joy.
- Recent Government cutbacks to support for people seeking asylum meant that many more people solely relied on ASC's foodbank for their weekly groceries. Food grocery deliveries through foodbank have increased by 17% compared to last year. Generous contributions from OzHarvest, community groups, schools and organisations such as Share the Dignity, The Nappy Collective, Mummies Paying It Forward and St Vincent's Private Hospital supplemented our stock, ensuring that there was no disruption in the support to families in need.



Profile: Babra Mutanda

Nine years ago, Babra fled her home country and came to Australia. Determined to build a life so her four children that she had to leave behind could join her, she says she found a place of hope at the Asylum Seekers Centre.

It all began with meeting people over lunch. Progressively, socialising during recreational activities, and even chatting briefly while waiting for a medical appointment at the Centre's clinic, made her realise that she was not alone in this difficult journey. There was a community of support within the Centre's walls.

ASC supported her throughout her visa application, and thanks to the Centre's computer tutorials, she was able

to enroll online in a Certificate 3 in Aged Care. ASC's Employment service later supported her to find a job in Aged Care.

The Centre's computer classes really did start something as, through online learning, Babra studied her way through 3 certificates, 2 diplomas and 2 Bachelor degrees, studying by night and working by day.

"For me, everything started with the computer classes. Without these classes, I would not have been able to write my resume or apply for my degree online."

Today, juggling four children and a full time job, Babra still finds time for ASC. Once a week, she swaps her day shift for a night one and spends the day volunteering in Foodbank.

"I can't bring groceries to the Centre but I can give my time. It's my way of giving back."

"I've been there, I know how hard it is when you don't have a place to call home, when you don't have your family around. People experience things they don't know how to describe. I just want people to know that here, it's OK. There's love and care and support between these walls"

"I just want people to know that here, it's OK. There's love and care and support between these walls."
Babra

What we do continued



Legal

ASC's Legal Service, in partnership with RACS (Refugee Advice and Casework Service), provides people seeking asylum with legal advice and assistance on a variety of issues, from protection visa applications to appeals, to work rights applications and in some instances, full representation. ASC's Legal Service Manager was assisted by practical legal training students and pro-bono work undertaken by lawyers from Gilbert+Tobin, Westpac and Hicksons, as well as an independent volunteer lawyer.

2017-2018 highlights:

- The service carried out 715 legal advice sessions, a 11% increase compared to last year.

- In May 2017 the Federal Government gave 30,000 people, including 7,500 people seeking asylum residing in NSW who had arrived by boat between 2012 and 2014, until 1 October 2017 to lodge their applications for protection or face deportation. After years of being denied the ability to lodge applications, people were suddenly asked to fill out the complicated document in English within a limited time frame. ASC's Legal Service assists people seeking asylum with issues they may encounter filling their applications form. ASC worked with partners and RACS to initiate an immediate response to ensure people

- had access to urgent legal assistance to complete the extensive application process. ASC made contact and worked directly with 900 people in that position to ensure that they had lodged their claim for protection on time.
- 90 people from the Commonwealth Games were seen through the clinics.
- The ASC/RACS Legal Service also provided extensive advice and information on the applicable broader legal frameworks, issues, and the migration law context to other ASC services.

What we do continued

 **256** people secured paid jobs with the support of our employment service

 **40+** people enrolled in vocational training programs to gain local qualifications

Employment

ASC's Employment Service supports people seeking asylum to gain meaningful jobs and financial independence.

The service assists people seeking asylum become independent and supports social inclusion through participation in the Australian workforce. Recognising that every person has a unique pathway to sustainable employment, the Employment Service works with employers and training providers to offer tailored employment opportunities. Getting people ready for the workforce is a key focus and this is assisted by the wrap-around support of all other ASC services.

In 2017/2018, the Federal Government introduced policy changes which withdrew or reduced access to income support for people seeking asylum. These changes mean that, for many people, employment now is the only viable option to avoid financial destitution. Finding a job is urgent and crucial in order to be able to pay rent or put food on the table.

ASC Employment Service operates with four staff and 48 skilled volunteer job advisors who work one-on-one with people to help them achieve their goals.

2017-2018 highlights:

- 256 people placed in paid employment among more than 410 people referred to

the Employment Service (62% success rate and a 17% increase on last year).

- More than 300 people attended a Job Seeking Workshop to prepare for jobs in the Australian workplace, an increase of more than 37% compared to 2016/17.
- 'What Employers Expect' workshops were conducted regularly, presented by Employment Service staff and volunteers as well as representatives of some of our valued employer partners.
- The Employment Service worked closely with ASC's partner employers. The team also provided continued support to both the employer

 **300+** people attended workshops to help understand the Australian workplace requirements

 **90+** employer partners worked with ASC

and the employee to ensure the transition into a position is as smooth as possible for all.

- In January 2017, the NSW Department of Industry introduced the NSW Government Smart and Skilled vocational training program. More than 800 'fee-free' vocational training courses (from Certificate I to Certificate IV) with TAFE and private training providers are available for people seeking asylum. In 2017/18 more than 40 people successfully enrolled in vocational training programs. These programs are a unique opportunity to formalise people's skills and provide a pathway to employment.
- The Refugee Employment Support Program (RESP) is a four-year \$22 million initiative managed by the NSW Department of Industry and delivered by Settlement Services International (SSI). RESP addresses the challenges that are experienced by refugees and people seeking asylum in finding long term skilled employment opportunities. The Asylum Seekers Centre is one of the partners delivering the program to create sustainable pathways to employment for up to 60 people seeking asylum.



Profile: Bernice Kamikazi

Employment Assistance Service Volunteer Coordinator

In March 2018, ASC's Employment Volunteer Coordinator, Bernice Kamikazi, was awarded Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA)'s John Gibson Refugee Community Leadership Grant for 2018. She travelled to Geneva in June as part of the Australian NGO team at the annual UNHCR NGO consultations.

"The first thing I noticed was this incredible buzz in the air, it was exhilarating to be part of this event. And at the same time, I was very conscious that I was to be a voice for the voiceless, for all the people in refugee camps who had accepted to share their story with me to help me document my questions to the High Commissioner. People who couldn't travel to Geneva to tell their story themselves and trusted me to do it. I was incredibly humbled by the fact that people accepted to share their personal stories with me: I had a responsibility to convey their concerns."

With more than 500 participants, simply raising a question could be challenging. Through an online voting system, Bernice's question, on refugee issues in the African Great Lakes region was voted for by most participants. She was able to ask it directly to the Assistant to the High Commissioner for Protection.

While in Geneva, Bernice also attended a historical event, the first ever Global Summit of Refugees.

"What's very unique about this Summit is that its Steering Committee is almost exclusively composed of people with refugee/asylum seeker background.

I feel so privileged that I got to be there for it. With 'nothing about us without us' as the main theme, the philosophy of the Summit was that people from refugee and asylum seeker background need to be involved in decision-making. People with lived experience know what they need. The objective is to set up a global network of people who have been forced to migrate from their country of origin to exchange ideas and discuss issues of importance for the network.

"I have a responsibility. I am accountable to the people who agreed to talk to me and share their stories to present to UNHCR."

"Throughout the consultation I was proud to talk about my role with the Employment Service here at ASC. The Delegations from Hong Kong and Sweden were very interested in our work. Who knows? ASC might inspire the creation of similar employment services all over the world!

"Going there was fabulous, such a privilege, but there is a lot of work ahead and I'm proud to be part of the journey."

Our Volunteers

ASC’s community of volunteers is the heart and soul of what we do. Volunteers are the backbone of the Centre, enabling all teams to provide a full range of personal and practical support services.

Volunteers offer a range of supports to people coming to the Centre including:

- Welcoming people on arrival at reception,
- Assessing people’s needs through our Intake process when they first come to the Centre
- Providing people with groceries through the Centre’s foodbank
- Assisting people in their search for employment, from writing resumes and preparing for interviews, through to facilitating introductory workshops on the Australian workplace
- Providing people with support in applying for Opal cards concessions, computer tutoring
- Cooking and serving people a daily hot lunch
- Accompanying people to social and recreational activities and excursions
- Providing people with English and music classes
- Providing ASC staff with critical technical and administrative support

ASC truly could not respond to people’s needs without our volunteers’ amazing contribution. More than 400 people from all sectors of the community were actively involved as volunteers with the Centre in the last year.

This year ASC volunteers responded to the dramatic increase

in the number of people reaching out to the Centre for support with positivity, warmth and efficiency. Our volunteers have consistently gone above and beyond to ensure ASC can provide the best service possible. Successful events and programs such as Refugee Week and ASC’s community speakers program could not exist without the unwavering support of volunteers.

Volunteer Week celebration

In May 2018 ASC celebrated NSW Volunteer week , recognising the fantastic and effort and energy that the people who volunteer bring to our Centre on a daily basis. Guest speakers included volunteers, staff and people seeking asylum. ASC’s Board Member Dr. Graham Thom shared his expertise and knowledge on refugee issues in Australia.

A Volunteer Wall displayed pictures of ASC volunteers in the Centre’s entrance foyer, where people seeking asylum and staff members wrote Thank You messages.

Volunteer manager position

Thanks to the support of the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation, who have provided a three-year funding support for this position,

ASC has been able to hire a full-time Volunteer Manager.

This enabled ASC to develop tailored training and education material for our volunteers, collect their feedback and create ways that we can learn from each other.

The Humanitarian Hub

ASC played a pivotal role in the establishment of the NSW Humanitarian Hub, which went live at the end of 2017.

The Hub is the first collaborative project of NAPSA (New South Wales Alliance for People Seeking Asylum) and brings together the volunteer programs of ASC, the House of Welcome (HOW) in Granville, the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) in Parramatta and Kings Cross, and the Refugee Advice and Casework Service (RACS) in Randwick. Three philanthropic agencies who recognised the benefits of this collaboration, Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation, The Caledonia Foundation and The Sidney Myer Fund, have come together to fund this innovative project.

The Hub provides a central, online resource for the recruitment and training of volunteers across the four organisations. It provides information on volunteer opportunities, training resources and incorporates a centralised database to match the



Thank you wall during Volunteer Week at ASC

skills and experiences of people interested in volunteering with the needs of the four organisations. In early 2018 the Hub started rolling out core training for volunteers to help build capacity and ensure volunteers feel supported in the work they do.

ASC’s Community Speakers Program

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 80% of the requests coming from the education sector, we developed new formats for our school presentations to better engage wide audiences and school assemblies. Workshop formats, with ASC community speakers interacting with students and asking them to share their thoughts on the experience of people seeking asylum, have received tremendous feedback and started many passionate conversations. We were also delighted to see more and more

schools organise food drives in anticipation of a presentation from one of our speakers.

None of this would have been possible without our wonderful team of volunteer community speakers who travel all over Sydney to make presentations and go above and beyond to make sure their presentation will meet their audience’s expectations.



Profile: Oscar Mussons

ASC Volunteer Manager

Oscar's interest in other cultures led him to travel and work overseas for a decade before moving to Australia, away from his native Spain. You'll often spot him in the Centre's main hall at lunchtime, striking a casual conversation in Turkish, Russian or French with people over a hot meal.

Oscar arrived in Australia last year after living for two years in Vietnam, where he was working as a commercial lawyer, helping companies develop in South-East Asia. He had previously worked in a similar capacity in Turkey and Bulgaria.

"I've always been passionate about human rights. I set up a charity focusing on education and human rights in South America a few years ago. Not surprisingly, I instantly fell in love with the Asylum Seekers Centre and how the place works. I volunteered two days a week for four months before I applied for and got the Volunteer Manager role. I have loved every minute of it since day one," he says.

From questions about volunteering or about interactions with people seeking asylum, to training and induction requests, Oscar is the go-to person for ASC volunteers. He also makes sure that our 400 volunteers have gone through compliance, the right training and induction processes so that they are better informed and recognised.

"What I enjoy the most about my job is the friendliness of volunteers and how they're always willing to make things happen for the Centre. I love seeing how much people care about the place."

"Some volunteers used to be CEOs or Directors in the private sector, some are students who are only just starting their careers. Some people who previously came to the Centre while seeking asylum and who have protection now volunteer as a way to give back for the support they received here. Volunteers make a very diverse and vibrant community, with people from all walks of life united here in their support of people seeking asylum."



Events

Top left: Bolly Golightly Dance company performing at ASC's Refugee Week event.

Above: Refugee Week 2018: ASC Ambassador Wendy Sharpe, Prosper Gateretse and Muslim Women's Association CEO Maha Abdo.

Refugee Week – The Need to Belong

The Asylum Seekers Centre was proud to host its highest profile event of the year, The Need to Belong, to celebrate Refugee Week 2018 in partnership with the City of Sydney. More than 500 guests filled the Lower Town Hall to support the positive contributions made by people seeking asylum and refugees to Australian society. Hosted by City of Sydney with Councillor Jess Scully in the role of MC. Guest speakers included Maha Abdo OAM, CEO, Muslim Women

Association; Prosper Gateretse, who has lived experience as someone who sought asylum in Australia with his family and now has Refugee status; Mahir Momand, CEO, Thrive Refugee Enterprise; and Edward Santow, Human Rights Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission. The evening began with a wonderful performance by the Bolly Golightly Dance Company, who set the tone for a fabulous evening of celebration and unity.

Major donor event

In March 2018 ASC held its first ever Major Donor Executive Briefing, sponsored by Macquarie group. More than 50 guests attended the event. With presentations from Dr Graham Thom, Refugee Coordinator, Amnesty International Australia and ASC Board Member, and Frances Rush, CEO, ASC, the event highlighted the complex challenges brought by punitive policy changes towards people seeking asylum. The following questions and answers started discussions and debates which extended well into the evening.

Government House reception

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 The Governor speak so passionately about people seeking asylum and to recognise and thank all those who provide a welcoming and supporting environment.

Human Rights Day celebration

Staff, volunteers and people seeking asylum celebrated Human Rights Day together on 10 December. The afternoon was filled with the beautiful voice of Cyprien Kagorora who flew in from Melbourne to sing traditional Rwandan songs at ASC's party. He was joined by party guests dancing and drumming. Food was provided by volunteers and generous contributions from Mary's, Clem's Chicken and Gelato Messina.

For the first time, the Centre has employed a full-time Communications Manager. This will allow us to build and strengthen our digital presence and reach out to new audiences to raise awareness on issues faced by people seeking asylum and the work of the Centre.



Fundraising

“It is something in my heart. Everyone wants a better life, people have left their homeland in quest of safety and freedom. I thought I could just run to show my support to ASC so they are well resourced to help people seeking asylum”

Sewa, Blackmores Sydney Running Festival participant

Private live music performance by singer and songwriter Gallie held by Christina Holder and John Bowe in support of the Asylum Seekers Centre.

Fundraising

As ASC extended services for increasing numbers of people, community members, volunteers and donors stood by the Centre to ensure more than 3,200 people seeking asylum continued to receive vital support.

Throughout the year supporters contributed in a variety of ways, including cash donations, regular giving, community fundraising, grants and bequests. Schools, community groups, organisations, families and individuals donated items for ASC's foodbank service, prepared meals for the daily lunch service, and gave second-hand phones, tablets and laptops for people seeking asylum.

Generous grants from numerous Trusts and Foundations supported the Centre's extensive delivery of targeted support for people across programs.

Relationships with corporate partners, state government agencies, local councils and community-based organisations continued to grow during the year to expand varied services for people seeking asylum.

Donations received for ASC's Christmas and Tax appeals well

exceeded previous years, and were instrumental in providing support to an increasing number of people coming to the Centre. In March 2018 ASC held its first ever Major Donor Executive Briefing, attended by 50 guests. The event highlighted the impact of Federal Government policy changes towards people seeking asylum.

The number of people joining ASC's regular giving community continued to grow steadily, providing the Centre with a stable revenue to rely on. It's an important program the Centre aims to grow each year to build a reliable donation base.

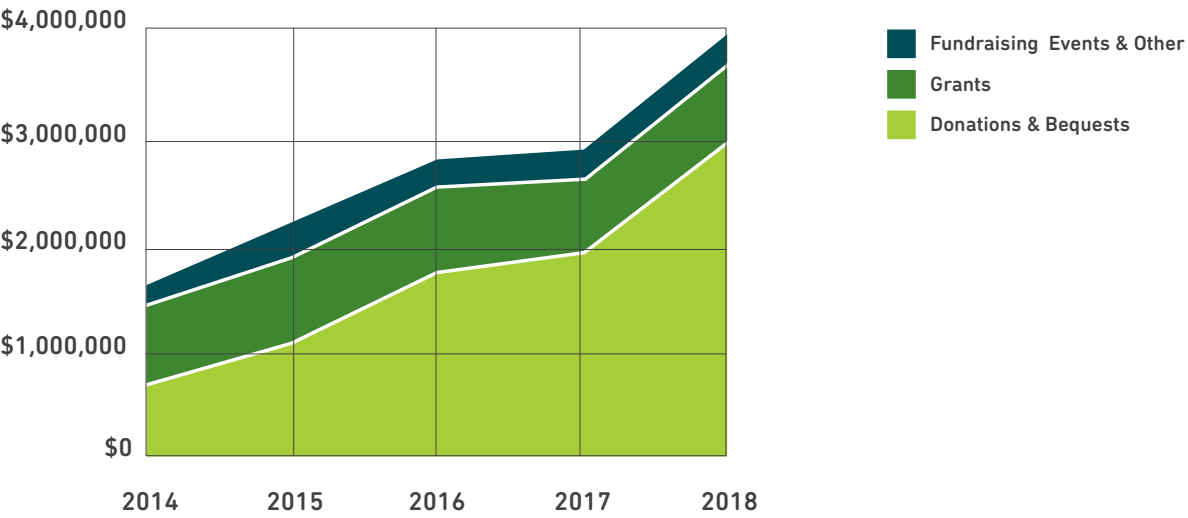
Community Fundraising

People in the wider Australian community reached out to their networks to advocate for support for people seeking asylum and

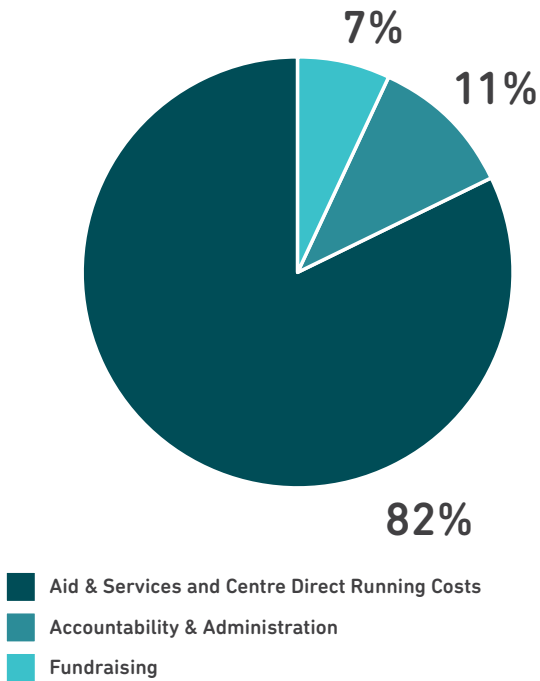
raised money through a range of great innovative activities - from children's lemonade and cake stalls, through to shows and performances, film screenings, collections from community groups, market stalls, book launches, school fundraisers, gifts in lieu of birthday or wedding presents, art sales, morning teas, dinners and trivia nights. It's truly wonderful to witness the community come together to support ASC.

Many people participated in public running events, like the City2Surf, to raise money for ASC. For the first time in its history, this year, ASC became a charity partner with the Blackmore's Sydney Running Festival, which attracted many more people to collectively raise funds for the Centre.

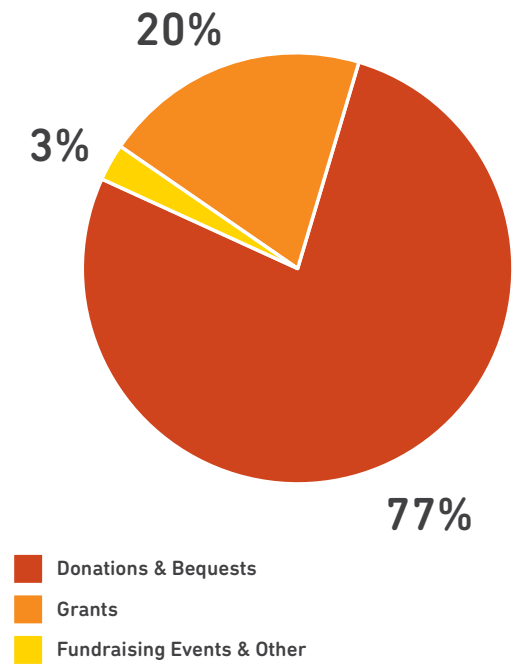
TOTAL INCOME 2014 – 2018



HOW WE USED OUR FUNDS 2017 – 2018



HOW WE WERE FUNDED 2017 – 2018



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 nineteen books – twelve in the field of social psychology and ethics, and seven novels. His latest book, *Australia Reimagined: Towards a more compassionate, less anxious society*, was published in 2018. 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 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.



Munjed Al Muderis
Associate Professor

Born in Baghdad, Munjed Al Muderis fled Iraq at the age of 27 when, as a young doctor, he refused the orders of Saddam Hussein to mutilate the ears of army deserters. He hid, knowing that if they found him he would almost certainly be taken away and shot.

After enduring a life-threatening journey to Australia, he arrived by boat on Christmas Island and then spent 10 months in Curtin Detention Centre. Munjed is a pioneer in developing bionic and robotic technology, restoring mobility for amputees around the world – giving them the opportunity to walk again. One of his goals is to "leave something behind the world can benefit from".

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 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 (the 1st woman since WW2) by the Australian War Memorial, 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.

She has held over 50 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 asylum seekers at all levels of society. Wendy is a figurative painter. Her work has always been about people.



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



Betty Hounslow AM: Chair

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 1980s.



Clare Petre: Deputy Chair

Clare has had a long career in the government, community and media sectors. She was the 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 and City West Housing. She is Customer Advocate Wealth for NAB, a Commissioner for the NSW Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission, 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.



Marina Brizar

Marina arrived in Australia as a refugee from the Former Yugoslavia. Her personal experience compelled her to study a Bachelor of Laws/Bachelor of International Studies at the University of Technology, Sydney, from where she graduated in 2012.

She currently holds the position of Head of Corporate and Private Clients at Playfair Visa & Migration Services, where she practices as a Solicitor and Registered Migration Agent. Together with her corporate experience, Marina has acted on cases in human trafficking with Anti-Slavery Australia, and on behalf of people seeking asylum in Australia and offshore. Quite separately from her professional work, Marina co-founded the Aspire Motivate Believe Foundation which assists students from an asylum seeker/ refugee background meet the practical costs associated with pursuing their education. Marina was named the 2015 Young Migration Lawyer of the Year; the 2015 Woman Lawyer of the Year – Upcoming; and a "Woman of Influence" 2016.

Our Board continued



Om Dhungel,
FAICD, MBA, B.Sc. Engg, JP

Om Dhungel, formerly a refugee from Bhutan, brings to the Centre a diverse range of board management, community development and volunteering experience. He is a consultant and practitioner of a strength-based approach to refugee settlement and community development. Om has served as a director on the boards of Settlement Services International (SSI), SydWest Multicultural Services and MTC Australia.

He is the founding president and currently a senior advisor of the Association of Bhutanese in Australia, a recipient of the 2017 University of Technology Sydney (UTS) International Alumni Award, 2016 Community Service Lifetime Achievement Award and 2012 National Volunteer Award, amongst many other accomplishments.

Having experienced the life of a refugee and seen stars rising from those refugee camps, Om strongly believes that “no matter where you grew up or what your past circumstances were, you can choose and work towards where you want to be in the future.”



Steven Glass

A lawyer, and formerly a partner in the firm Gilbert + Tobin, Steven has practised for 30 years, specialising in commercial litigation. Steven has represented asylum seekers on a pro bono basis for more than 15 years, including on Christmas Island and at other detention centres.



Rebecca Lowde

Rebecca Lowde is currently the CEO of Salmat Limited. She was appointed in June 2017 following three years as the CFO. Rebecca has an extensive background in managing finance, contracts, strategy, mergers and acquisitions, budgeting and sales, and has a proven track record managing large, multi-cultural teams from around the world including the European and Asia Pacific regions.

Rebecca has more than 25 years of experience in finance and international operations and has held senior executive positions in Australia, Europe and Asia for businesses including Bravura Solutions, Business Objects, Lexmark and Oracle. Rebecca holds a Bachelor of Business in Accounting and Computer Science and is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and CPA Australia.



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, the Financial Markets Foundation for Children and Sisters of Charity Foundation.



Celia Reynolds

Celia Reynolds has been with the Lend Lease Group for 18 years in various Finance roles across a number of businesses, including extended secondments in both London and New York.

In her current role as Group Head of Internal Audit she leads an international team across Lend Lease's four main offices globally. From leading investigations to assisting in the implementation of anti-bribery and corruption processes to general operational project reviews, this role has allowed Celia to develop both operational and commercial skills across the property and infrastructure spectrum. Celia commenced her career within the Lend Lease Building business on the Lend Lease Finance Development Program. She completed a double degree Bachelor of Economics/Bachelor of Commerce at the ANU and later completed her CPA. Celia currently holds a non-executive director position on the Global Compact Network Australia Ltd of which Lend Lease is a member.



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, 2017 and 2018 Graham attended the UNHCR NGO Consultations and Resettlement Consultations in Geneva.

As part of our Board renewal process, Steve Bradley, Jack Thomas and Tom Gregory retired from the Board during the year. The Asylum Seekers Centre wishes to thank them for their significant professional and personal commitment and contribution to the Centre during their time as board members.

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 2018

	2018	2017
INCOME	\$	\$
Grant income	765,441	717,632
Donations and bequests	2,935,762	1,918,658
Fundraising event revenue	3,687	112,366
Other income	103,906	32,186
Total Income	3,808,796	2,780,842
ASYLUM SEEKER AID & SERVICES		
Services		
Casework	(351,318)	(343,615)
Legal	(103,861)	(100,665)
Advocacy & community education	(87,961)	(88,162)
Employment assistance	(215,810)	(211,967)
Healthcare	(167,018)	(153,278)
Education & social support	(258,668)	(198,095)
Volunteer Management	(55,612)	(24,842)
Direct services management	(468,789)	(333,378)
Superannuation & leave costs	(153,108)	(154,825)
Total Services	(1,862,145)	(1,608,827)
Financial Aid		
Direct emergency financial support	(358,770)	(258,281)
Accommodation	(49,117)	(59,884)
Donations in kind	(368,562)	(353,110)
Total Financial Aid	(776,449)	(671,275)
Total Asylum Seeker Aid & Services	(2,638,594)	(2,280,102)
ACCOUNTABILITY, FUNDRAISING & RUNNING COSTS		
Accountability & administration	(111,632)	(119,206)
Fundraising costs – events	(2,946)	(1,225)
Fundraising costs – other	(234,534)	(164,256)
Running costs	(99,250)	(107,142)
Insurance	(13,555)	(24,171)
IT costs	(85,303)	(90,971)
Building maintenance, rates & utilities	(44,854)	(65,977)
Total Accountability, Fundraising & Running Costs	(592,074)	(572,948)
Total Expenditure	(3,230,668)	(2,853,050)
(Deficit)/Surplus before income tax		
	578,128	(72,208)
Income tax expense	-	-
(Deficit)/Surplus for the year	(578,128)	(72,208)
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax	-	-
Tied donations	-	693,000
Total Comprehensive (Deficit)/Surplus for the Year	(578,128)	620,792

Statement of Financial Position

Asylum Seekers Centre Incorporated
ABN 47 164 509 475
For the Year Ended 30 June 2018

	2018	2017
ASSETS	\$	\$
Current Assets		
Cash & cash equivalents	2,225,332	3,454,273
Trade & other receivables	41,064	24,245
Other financial assets	1,859,850	-
Current tax receivable	31,262	8,753
Other assets	6,715	-
Total Current Assets	4,164,223	3,487,271
Non Current Assets		
Property, plant and equipment	1,994,619	1,998,629
Total Non Current Assets	1,994,619	1,998,629
Total Assets	6,158,842	5,485,900
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities		
Trade and other payables	73,287	42,958
Employee benefits	141,502	96,495
Other financial liabilities	2,117,454	2,036,039
Total Current Liabilities	2,332,243	2,175,492
Non Current Liabilities		
Employee benefits	12,413	7,838
Total Non Current Liabilities	12,413	7,838
Total Liabilities	2,344,656	2,183,330
NET ASSETS	3,814,186	3,302,570
EQUITY		
Reserves	693,000	759,512
Retained earnings	3,121,186	2,543,058
Total Equity	3,814,186	3,302,570

Our Supporters

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

Art Gallery of New South Wales
Association of Engaged Buddhist
Australian Theatre for Young People
Baumann, Ron
Bellingen and Nambucca Districts RAR
Boncardo, Debra and Gaetano
Bradley, Steve and Ros
Bridge for Asylum Seekers Foundation
Campion, Father Edmund
Carrick, Paul
Catholic Education Office
Christ Church St Laurence
Circus Oz – on behalf of their generous audience
City Light Church, Balmain
City of Sydney
Clan Duncan Fund
Collier Charitable Fund
CQ University
Danks Trust
Denton, Gwyn & Graham
Department of Family and Community Services, Programs and Service Design, Community Building Partnership Program
Dress for Success
Dress for Work
Emmett, Brent & Vicki
Employgroup (formerly Aussiepay)
Garrett Riggleman Trust
Galaxy Foundation
Gallagher, Patrick and Lynden
Gelato Messina
Gift of Bread
Gilbert & Tobin
Give2Asia
Glass, Steven & Michelle

Harris Farm
Harvey, Philippa & Miles
Herbert Smith Freehills
James N Kirby Foundation Ltd
Jewish Board of Deputies
Jews for Social Action
Key Foundation
Kids Giving Back
Konica Minolta
Lacey, David & Shapiro, Marian
Lambert, Michael
Learning Sphere
Loblay, Karen
Lush Fresh Handmade Cosmetics
Macquarie Community College
Macquarie Group Foundation
Manning, Maria
Mattick, Peter & Pam
Michael Page
Mummies Paying It Forward
Mums for Refugees
Nadai, Cynthia & Burge, Roslyn
Newington College
Northern Beaches Refugee Initiative
NSW Ministry of Health
NSW Refugee Health
NSW Teachers Federation
Parliament on King
Presentation Sisters
Wagga Wagga
RecLink
Reemst, Mary
Refugee Advice & Casework Service
Roseville Asylum Seeker & Refugee Support Group
Royal Prince Alfred Hospital
Rural Australians for Refugees
Southern Highlands

Scalabrini Aged Care and Residential Villages
Scully Fund
Sidney Myer Fund
Sisters of Charity Foundation
Sisters of Saint Joseph
STARTTS
St Brigid’s Parish, Marrickville
St George Careers Development Centre
St James’ Church, Sydney
St Joseph’s Parish, Newtown
St Vincent’s Private Hospital
St Vincent’s Public Hospital
Sydney Airport
Sydney Dental Hospital
Sydney Local Health District
Sydney Theatre Company
Sydney Symphony Education Office
TAFE NSW
The Aledal Foundation
The Bike Shed
The Thomas Foundation
Thread Together
Todd Family Foundation
Transdev (Light Rail)
University of NSW
UNSW School of Optometry
University of Sydney
Upper Room
Varga, Susan & Coombs, Anne
Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation
Waters, Peter
Wesley Mission
Willoughby Uniting Church
Wise Foundation
Wood, Paul & Pamela
Woodruff, Christine & John



Cover of a storybook written by children from the Centre at a workshop facilitated by the Sydney Story Factory.

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Asylum Seekers Centre

43 Bedford Street, Newtown,
NSW 2042 Australia

T : (02) 9078 1900 F : (02) 9078 1999

E : admin@asylumseekerscentre.org.au

www.asylumseekerscentre.org.au