

Asylum Seekers Centre Annual Report 2021-2022

ABN: 47 164 509 475



“Since the beginning of lockdown we have been getting more than 100 calls a day. People are worried about their futures, worried about their kids being able to study remotely without a device, worried about how they are going to get food for next week. A lot of people who have lost employment are scared that they won’t be able to get it back.”

Calum

ASC Information and referral coordinator, July 2021

For the full story of the Asylum Seekers Centre’s Covid-19 response read more and watch our behind-the-scenes video on page 12.

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In the spirit of reconciliation, Asylum Seekers Centre acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which ASC operates and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respect to their knowledge, their survival and elders both past and present.

Asylum Seekers Centre at-a-glance

Our Vision

Australia opens its heart to people seeking asylum, affirming their basic human rights to freedom from persecution, violence and fear. Recognising our shared humanity, we extend our welcome, respect and support. We are a stronger and more vibrant country as a result.

Our Values

The Asylum Seekers Centre's work is underpinned by a set of values built on our commitment to a human rights approach.

The ASC is:



Compassionate and connected



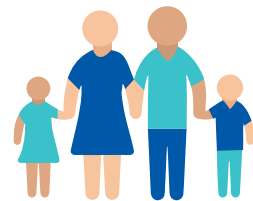
People centred



Collaborative



Innovative



Almost 4,000 people seeking asylum assisted in the 2021-2022 year. Including 1000+ children.



People from 92 countries

Services and support including:



Primary health clinic



Employment assistance



Training and job readiness



Food support



Individualised support



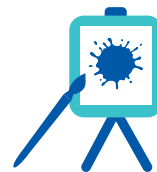
Community lunches



Emergency financial relief



English classes



Recreation and art activities



Immunisation



Short and medium term housing



Family and school support



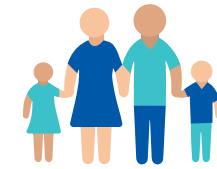
Transport support



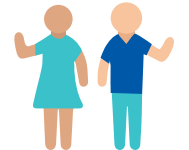
Digital connectivity



Medications



Childcare connections



Community connections



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[in @asylum-seekers-centre](https://www.linkedin.com/company/asylum-seekers-centre)
[@ASCSyd](https://www.instagram.com/ASCSyd)
[@asylumseekerscentre](https://www.instagram.com/asylumseekerscentre)

Chair and CEO's Report

It is with great pleasure that we share with you the Asylum Seekers Centre 2021-2022 Annual Report.

As we began this year the Sydney lockdown indicated that Covid-19 was not finished with us yet. However, we could not have known in those early weeks how long and how hard the first six months of this year would be for everyone in our community.

People seeking asylum were disproportionately affected by the lockdowns. Many lived in the areas designated as local government areas of concern where their movements were most severely restricted. Most had not yet recovered from the 2020 lockdowns and uncertainty. Unemployment and financial insecurity were still affecting people seeking asylum in deeper ways than the wider community.

The Federal Government continued to refuse to include people seeking asylum in relief initiatives such as JobSeeker and JobKeeper that were designed to alleviate some of the pain and distress of these uncertain times.

At the Asylum Seekers Centre our approach was guided by the lessons of the previous year and our enduring commitment to supporting as many people seeking asylum to survive these challenges so they can thrive in their future in Australia.

Our community of donors and organisational partners were

characteristically generous in a way that allowed us to deepen and extend our support for people seeking asylum. The impact metrics provided in this report show that the ASC almost tripled the number of people we were able to support with ongoing housing and living assistance. We were greatly assisted by Multicultural NSW's Emergency Relief Support grants program and other generous major donors and grants.

The Board considered the unique situation faced by our community, and committed to making available part of our reserves to meet this significant need. This was only possible through judicious financial oversight from previous boards that provided confidence the reserve could be replenished and the organisation was still able to continue sustainably. The challenge for our next financial year is to continue high levels of support for our people while rebuilding these reserves to prepare for the future.

We extend our gratitude to the Asylum Seekers Centre Board which is made up of committed volunteers, especially to Betty Hounslow who stepped down at the October 2021 AGM after three years as Chair. Betty

brought humanity and insightful leadership to the Chair's role, and she will continue to serve as a member of the Board.

Adaptation and agility are key attributes that we all needed throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, and the ASC staff and volunteers have been exemplars. As CEO and Board members we have been inspired by the creative solutions and deep compassion that the ASC professional team members have brought to their work every day. They have embodied the value of being people-centred even when they were physically separated as a community.

Each of the 477 volunteers who contributed to our work in the 2021-2022 year were asked to significantly change the way they support people as services adapted to the new realities. They could not have done that without the coordination, training and support of our volunteer manager and their team managers. We thank each of these generous volunteers for their service, talents, and tenacity through this most unusual year.

Despite the challenges of the year there was the opportunity for innovation and development. In the 2020-2021 financial year we finalised our Future Directions



plan as a response to the lessons we had learned during Covid. This year we focused on exploring ways to deliver these Future Directions. One focus was to consider our work through a social impact lens, orienting ourselves to measure the long-term outcomes of the supports and services ASC provides.

You can read more about this work and the theory of change developed through consultations on page 8 of this report.

Throughout this year we began, paused, then re-started services, activities, and a centre of welcome at the Auburn Centre for Community. The community lunch program transitioned from a hot cooked lunch to outdoor picnics and back again. Family Days at Auburn were developed as a special way to connect, create community, and distribute essential family supplies. We

continue to explore ways to provide services in more than one location, and to connect people seeking asylum to their local communities.

During this year we refreshed and re-launched our ASC website to allow for greater communication and collaboration. Improvements include translations in our main eight community languages, a news blog, increased impact and video content, and a simplified donation pathway.

Everything we achieved at the Asylum Seekers Centre this year was enabled first and foremost by people seeking asylum themselves. Their resilience and hope for a better future for themselves and their families motivates a whole community to welcome and walk together.

This community of donors, supporters, advocates, staff

and volunteers is powerful and impactful when we work together towards our vision of an Australia that opens its heart to people seeking asylum, affirming their basic human rights to freedom from persecution, violence and fear.

Peter Waters
Chair
Asylum Seekers Centre

Frances Rush OAM
Chief Executive Officer
Asylum Seekers Centre

Social Impact

Measuring our work

As part of our 2021 Future Directions we challenged ourselves to develop our reporting to demonstrate the social impact of our services and support on the lives of people seeking asylum.

In partnership with a social impact specialist, Ben Gales, we developed a Theory of Change (shown here) through workshops with staff and board members to consider the context, inputs, outputs and change process that contribute to the longer-term outcomes and broad impacts of our work.

The next stage of our work has begun to map ASC's activities and use of resources against these outcomes and metrics. This will enable us to put in place a measurement framework for ongoing impact reporting, differentiation and improvement.

The Asylum Seekers Centre already collects rich data and

information about the needs of the people we support, the activities conducted as part of our work and the impact these activities and inputs have on people seeking asylum.

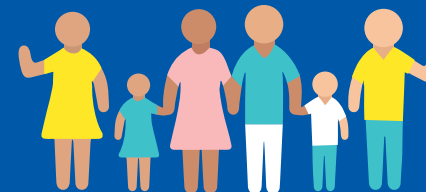
By measuring our social impact we will extend our knowledge to understand how our work has contributed to the outcomes desired by the people we support. We will also have a feedback loop to allow us to make continual improvements and reflect on our overall vision and strategy.

In the following pages you will find the many stories and statistics that show how we have implemented our strategy and

assisted people seeking asylum to thrive in their communities.

In years to come we will also be able to provide data further aligned to the elements of our social impact framework.

Theory of change



Context

People seeking asylum contribute to and enrich their communities.
Many people seeking asylum have limited financial resources and experiences of trauma and discrimination.
Government support is inadequate for people seeking asylum.



Inputs

What resources ensure activities happen

People seeking asylum bring their own strengths and goals.
ASC invests in staff, is powered by volunteers and has a history of experience.
Relationships with partner organisations.
A community of supporters.



Outputs

The result of our activities

ASC activities and services, supported by organisational enablers.
Advocacy to improve outcomes and system change.
Services delivered in collaboration with partners.



Change process

Independence supported by employment and financial security.
Connection to communities established.
Focus on physical and mental health.
Celebration of voice and culture.
Building social connections.
Stable and secure housing.



Outcomes

The intended changes.

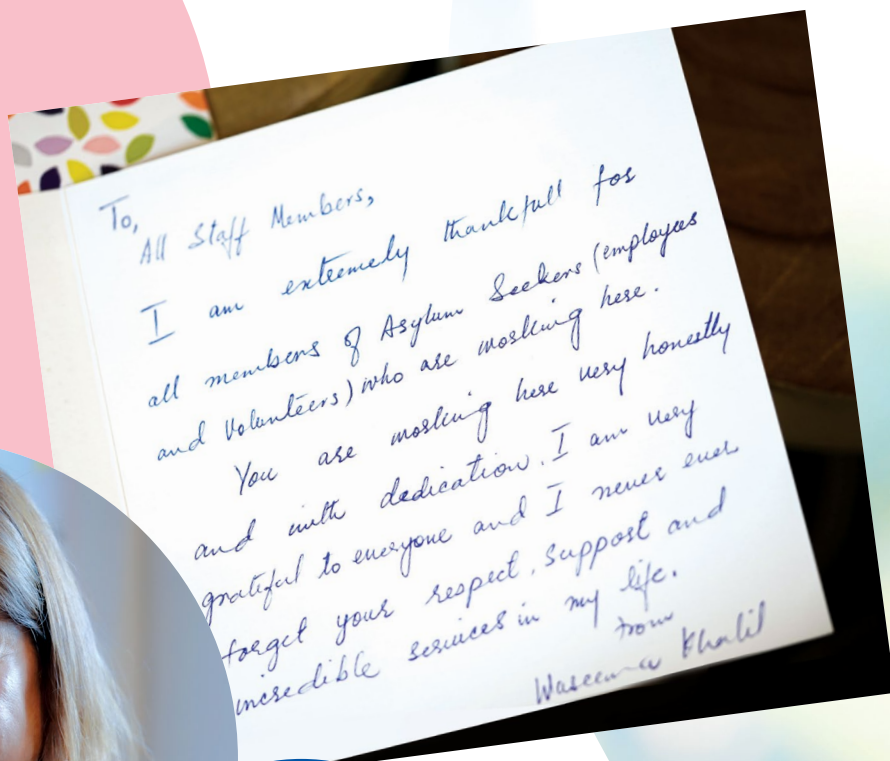
People seeking asylum are healthy in mind and body, have access to employment, safe housing and education.
Positive advocacy outcomes.
People seeking asylum feel welcome.



Impacts

The long-term systemic change.

People seeking asylum *thrive*.
The process of seeking protection is less stressful and more fair and compassionate.
Government policies and systems that give people seeking asylum fair opportunities.



Waseema's Story

Waseema escaped religious persecution in her home country, but the challenges didn't end once she arrived in Australia.

In Pakistan, Waseema was a speech therapist and a member of the persecuted Ahmadiyya community. She lost two jobs after her employers discovered her faith, and was even forced to hide her religion from friends.

She fled to Sydney alone in 2019 and managed to find casual work, but lost it months later when Covid-19 hit. She quickly fell into crisis, with no family or government income support.

"I had not enough money to pay rent and nobody to support

me at that time. In those days, I applied for many jobs but nobody gave me work because of my (temporary visa) status," she says.

Waseema turned to the Asylum Seekers Centre for help. She says she accessed every service on offer, including financial support, food, subsidised Opal travel cards, mobile phone recharges, and recreational activities such as sewing classes and swimming lessons.

She also received support from the ASC's employment service.

Last year, she obtained a casual job as a light rail customer service officer through the ASC's partner organisation Transdev.

In February 2022, Waseema's refugee status was recognised and she received a permanent visa. She then had her speech therapy qualifications formally recognised in Australia, bringing her closer to her dream of returning to the profession.

"I feel my actual life is starting now," she says.

"I'm still in the surviving position. I still don't have enough income, I need more work. But I'm happy."

Waseema did not feel safe as a woman in Pakistan, and appreciates the security of life in Australia.

"I am very safe, very relaxed, I put on weight, I'm secure. As a lady, I can travel home from work at 12 o'clock and feel safe. Nobody abuses me or grabs my bag," she says.

Waseema says support from the Asylum Seekers Centre and other organisations, including House of Welcome, helped her to establish a new life in Australia.

"When you come here, you have nothing," she says.

"Now, I feel stronger. These organisations made me strong and gave me a lot of confidence. Otherwise, I was very weak at that time. I didn't understand where I was going at that time."

"The team at ASC respects me, they talk to me, they give me good suggestions, they appreciate me."



How the ASC faced the challenge of a pandemic

A common motivational saying during the Covid-19 pandemic, lockdown and restrictions was, 'we're all in this together'. However, while we all lived through a global pandemic, the experience was not the same for everyone.

People who lived in 'local government areas of concern' in West and South West Sydney during the 2021 Sydney lockdown faced greater restrictions to their movements and everyday lives than others. People seeking asylum did not have access to the supportive government safety net of JobSeeker and JobKeeper that allowed the community to 'stay home and stay safe'. Most of the people in our community were affected by both these inequities.

The Asylum Seekers Centre rallied its partners, staff, volunteers and supporters and transitioned all its advocacy and services to provide support to people who were affected.

As soon as the doors closed to drop-ins and activities at the ASC's Newtown centre, the need for phone support increased dramatically. One staff member and a team of volunteer receptionists took hundreds of tough calls a day from people who had lost their jobs, were

frightened, behind in rent and whose children couldn't study from home.

Health, food and digital connectivity were the immediate services required in July 2021. Hundreds of donated laptops, tablets and phones were refurbished and posted so people could stay connected and children could try and attend school.

Before lockdown, the ASC food program was supporting more than 1700 people with foodbank and deliveries. The program transitioned to providing supermarket vouchers and financial relief payments in July 2021. Our community lunches also paused until late in 2021 when we began with safe outdoor picnics, before returning to sharing meals in Auburn and Newtown locations.

The ASC Health Clinic faced the massive challenge of adding Covid-19 education, welfare checks and vaccination support to the existing management of

long-term health issues for people without Medicare. Telehealth was utilised by the clinic nurses and pro-bono doctors where possible and in-person appointments remained when it was not possible to help online.

Many people required assistance with their regular medications which had previously been provided in Newtown. Innovative solutions for local dispensing of prescriptions had to be found so that people could stay safely within 5km of their home.

During the times when Covid-19 levels were high in the community, nurse and volunteer health navigators were making regular welfare checks by phone for people with Covid-19, ensuring they had medication, food and knew what to do if their symptoms got worse. As vaccinations became available in the community, the health team contacted people to make sure they knew that they were eligible regardless of their Medicare



status, and how to access a vaccination.

When rapid antigen tests (RATs) were scarce in the community at the end of 2022, people seeking asylum were not given the same access to these tests as concession card holders. The ASC advocated for people seeking asylum on low incomes to have access to free RATs and we were provided with RATs for distribution and our own use to ensure people visiting and working in the clinic were doing daily tests.

Perhaps the biggest challenge for people seeking asylum during this time was continuing to pay rent when employment became scarce. The ASC took a multi-layered approach to supporting people to be able to stay home safely.

We advocated for people on temporary visas to be able to access homelessness services that aren't regularly available during this time. A joint-letter from nine organisations across Sydney was effective in making some extra services available to people seeking asylum who are experiencing homelessness.

The NSW Government provided grants to many organisations who support multicultural and refugee communities during this time through the Multicultural NSW Emergency Relief Support Grant program. This contributed to the Asylum Seekers Centre being able to give people seeking asylum \$1.7 million in pandemic relief for ongoing housing and living assistance, food support, medication, digital connectivity and transport costs.

The distribution of these funds required a significant service reorientation and the Asylum Seekers Centre team had to design and implement an eligibility criteria, fair distribution, manage communication with recipients, data collection and evaluation. This was done guided by the values of the ASC and with the goal of having a maximum impact for people suffering through the pandemic.

While Covid-19 created many challenges for people seeking asylum and the ASC as we supported them, we also learned and developed our capacity as we delivered.

As we end the 2021-2022 year most people are still transitioning out of the hardest elements of the pandemic. We will work with people seeking asylum to assist them to find opportunities for employment and social connection that has been limited for the past year.

There are challenges ahead for the ASC as an organisation too. During the pandemic the ASC Board made a portion of organisational reserves available to meet the significant need faced by people seeking asylum. Due to the responsible management of the board in previous years this commitment was possible without risking the sustainability of the organisation. In the next years the ASC will work towards replenishing that reserve in order to be prepared for challenges to come.

Watch more here:



We connect people to supports and services

2021-2022 highlights and achievements



The Asylum Seekers Centre works with people seeking asylum so they have the supports and services they need to make their own life in Australia while waiting for their claim for protection to be processed and recognised.

Welcome and registration

During this year a new team was created to coordinate people's first contact with the ASC. This team helps people identify the services available, finds out more about their needs and refers them to all the help they can receive.

Coordinated by one full-time staff member and two part-time staff during this year, the work of this team is truly powered by volunteers. Many volunteers worked during Covid-19 shutdowns in their own homes to answer calls from stressed and confused people and listened (via interpreters

where needed) to what people needed most. During the first six months of this year, calls in one day averaged from 100 to 200.

This year there was an increase in new people seeking support who had been living in the community independently and who were affected by the pandemic. Many found themselves unable to access mainstream services despite living in the community, working and paying taxes for years. Some returned to the ASC after many years of independence.



16,298
calls answered.



518
new people
(294 families)
arrived at
the ASC

Assistance with housing and living

People seeking asylum in Sydney were again hit hard in this year as the Covid-19 lockdowns and strict movement and transmission rules meant that people lost work and ways of supporting themselves.

People on temporary visas were left out of JobSeeker and JobKeeper payment schemes and housing and destitution became common.

Largely through grants provided by the NSW Government, the Asylum Seekers Centre was able to support 581 people with pandemic relief payments during that time to allow them to stay in their homes and pay for essentials.

People who were at risk of homelessness or experiencing homelessness were prioritised for this ongoing support and were also given support to stabilise their situations and work towards independence where possible.

The amount of pandemic relief the Asylum Seekers Centre was able to provide remained constant from last year, through the Covid-19 pandemic relief package from the NSW Government, support from the NSW Department of Education, the Inner West Council and our partnership with Bridge for Asylum Seekers.



\$1.7 million
in pandemic relief.



Supported
581
people with
ongoing housing
& living assistance

Crisis and medium-term housing

The ASC is able to provide a small amount of short-to-medium-term housing for people needing immediate assistance to avoid homelessness. The need for short-term housing has increased significantly in this year, and the ASC supported 334 people with crisis housing and 27 with medium-term housing options to ensure stability and safety.

These housing solutions in 2021-2022 included:

- A small unit block provided by the Sisters of Charity Foundation which this year housed nineteen people including eight children spread over six family groups.
- A newly-available property in Berala which has the unique ability to accommodate a larger



- family, also provided by the Sisters of Charity Foundation.
- A two bedroom unit in the inner city provided via a subsidised housing initiative.
- Emergency housing, mostly in hostels, to respond to crisis situations of homelessness.
- 10 units, mostly made available for single people, as part of a partnership with private owners, state government support and community assistance.

The ASC is grateful for our partnership with the Sisters of Charity Foundation which allows the team at the Asylum Seekers Centre to continue to work with people in short-to-medium-term housing to help them access training opportunities, prepare for work and stabilise their mental and physical health. Residents of the housing access hot community

lunches and recreation activities such as sewing, music, outings and school holiday programs.

The commitment of the Foundation to supporting people seeking asylum is continuing to improve the lives of many families and children.



334
people provided with
crisis housing .



27
people provided
with medium-term
housing

We connect people to supports and services continued

2021-2022 highlights and achievements

Intensive support

The ASC Intensive Support team expanded in this year to provide support for much larger relief and housing programs in addition to the extra demands of providing casework to more people affected by Covid-19.

In Q1, referrals to Intensive Support doubled as people lost work, stable housing and their mental health was affected by the lockdowns in Western Sydney.

While responding to increasing levels of crisis, the Intensive Support team also innovated to ensure that every person receiving one-on-one casework support had a plan based on their goals and pathway for themselves.

This best practice approach also contributed to people being supported to move from crisis and medium-term housing to independent living, many with regular employment.



537
people provided
with intensive
support

Strengthening our food and nutrition program

Prior to the 2021 lockdowns and restrictions on travel, ASC volunteers and staff were packing and delivering food support to hundreds of homes across the city. The lockdowns made this operation



not possible and so we pivoted to a voucher program where people were provided with supermarket vouchers for them to choose their own groceries at local shops.

Collaborations with the Cumberland Council and the Canterbury-Bankstown Council allowed us to work with their food programs to support people who lived locally in these areas.

The provision of vouchers allowed us to further explore the results of an earlier consultation with people supported by the food program and we found that people were enjoying the dignity of choice that vouchers gave them. During the rest of the 2021-2022 year we transitioned the bulk of our groceries program to a cash relief program to allow even further choice and dignity.

Not only could recipients choose their own groceries, but also

the shops and culturally specific items they wanted for their family.

Many volunteers were involved in the food program and so a consultation was held with volunteers to ensure that they could maintain their support for people seeking asylum in other areas of the organisation.

Our community lunch program was also paused during pandemic lockdowns and resumed gradually from November 2021, building up with outdoor picnics in Auburn and lunch in person once a week in Newtown. As confidence built in the community, this program has grown again to support many people with regular hot nutritious lunches.



1367
people got ongoing
food support
(437 children)



Community Engagement

Many of the ASC's popular community activities were impacted by pandemic lockdowns. Some could switch to an online program such as English classes, but many of the important physical fitness and activity programs were impacted. As isolation increased through Covid lockdown, an online women's morning tea group developed which now meets regularly in person.

In early 2022 a survey and focus group consultation was conducted with hundreds of people in our community to set the direction for a renewed recreation and education program.

People indicated the desire to safely reconnect and outdoor activities began such as walks, excursions, swimming and picnics. English classes began to meet again in person and now classes continue to be offered online as well as in person. Regular partners such as Reclink, Sydney Theatre Company and the Art Gallery of NSW adapted their support to provide

opportunities for connection and recreation in a variety of formats.

Family support

Access to education is essential for children and young people to thrive and feel stable in a new environment. In order to access free public school education, families must complete a 16 page waiver form for each child. The ASC's family support team provides advice and assistance understanding these forms, which must be completed yearly.

Access to school materials is provided through partner organisations and distributed to help children succeed. During Covid it became essential to ensure that children had access to devices and digital access so that they could continue their schooling online. While some community activities continued online, isolation affected many families, especially single parents who were supported with phone calls and digital programs.

Pathways to subsidised childcare are essential to ensure

that parents are able to access training, work and privacy in healthcare. The ASC links families with a variety of programs as well as subsidising childcare for some families.

In addition, Family Days were launched in 2022 at which asylum-seeking families can pick up baby essentials, have fun together and get advice on school enrolment, health and transport.

Just as important as the material goods is the opportunity for kids to play together and social connections between parents and children.



134
children supported
with public school
fee waivers



33
school & preschool
enrolments



58
children linked
with childcare

We connect people to supports and services continued

2021-2022 highlights and achievements

Health and wellbeing

In the 21-22 year the ASC Health Clinic continued to face extreme challenges supporting people with complex physical and mental health challenges during lockdown and throughout the pandemic environment. The support of NSW Health allowed the ASC to increase nurse staffing by two days each week.

Nurse appointments, GP appointments and the provision of pharmaceuticals all increased significantly and the clinic team pivoted again to complex telehealth appointments. Health appointments often involved digital access challenges, phone interpreters and health conditions made worse by isolation and lack of referral options due to Covid-19.

Covid-19 challenges

The team of nurses, pro bono GPs and health navigator volunteers monitored hundreds of people who were Covid-positive, close contacts in isolation, in hotel quarantine and in hospital to check on their safety and health.

Covid vaccinations continued to be important and advice was provided for people on when they were able to access boosters and appointments were made with interpreters where necessary.

As Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) became a rare and essential item in late 2021, the ASC advocated for access for people seeking asylum who could not afford the high prices being charged. RATs were in

regular use in the Health Clinic by staff and patients and successfully reduced known transmission within the clinic to zero.

Medication access

Access to pharmaceuticals was challenged by the lockdown and the ASC Health Team had to find alternate methods of dispensing because people could not travel to collect medications. The ASC provided more than 80 prescriptions each week throughout the entire year to ensure that complex and chronic health conditions were managed throughout lockdown and beyond.

Increase in poor mental health

The need for mental health support increased markedly during the year in response to job losses, health fears, increased domestic violence, substance abuse issues and increasingly long wait times for progress on visas.

Access to mental health support was challenging with long waiting periods and high demand for free services, especially for those without Medicare. The Health Clinic team negotiated many new partnerships, advocating for free or reduced-fee access to meet the need where possible.



461
GP appointments



5402
Nurse appointments



4293
Pharmaceuticals provided

Employment

The employment team innovated through the 21-22 year to respond to job losses and digital service during lockdown, followed by labour shortages and high demand in the second half of the year.

A team of staff supported by more than 60 volunteers provided 679 people with job-seeking activities that include job-readiness, CV preparation, searching, applications, interviewing and post-placement support.

A two-tiered system was developed which allowed for intensive one-to-one support for those in the most need, supported by light-touch quick-response support in Employment Hubs in both Newtown and Auburn.

Work-readiness is a challenge faced by many potential employees and the team focused on referrals to English support and providing



opportunities for digital literacy skill development.

In collaboration with the ASC community engagement team, specialist support was provided for people with a need for academic English tuition, to successfully enter training or higher-education.

In the second half of this year employer partners were surveyed and 85% rated their engagement with the ASC as good or excellent. 100% said they would partner with the ASC again.



119
Job placements



679
people supported with job-seeking activities

University support

For young people seeking asylum to access university education they must pay high international student fees or be successful in getting one of the very few asylum seeker scholarships available. The ASC university support team assists students with transitioning to higher education.

For some this includes helping students find the right course and making a uni application when they may not be familiar with Australian systems. The team also reviews the students' applications for scholarships including advice on personal statements and helping them prepare for interviews. When students have not been able to achieve a university scholarship the team also provides advice on other pathways to training and employment.



4
people achieved university scholarships

Everyday support

Many challenges of everyday life including navigating government services require help from the ASC's Centre Support Volunteers. We also ensure people can access the state government's asylum seeker concession rate on public transport and provide transport top-ups for travel. Read more about the work of Centre Support Volunteers on page 28.



4,334
new Opal cards, renewals or replacements

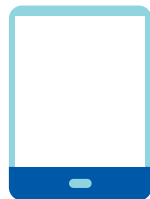
We connect people to supports and services continued

2021-2022 highlights and achievements



Digital connectivity

The need for devices to stay connected, especially through the lockdown period, was high again in the 21-22 year. Through generous donations and the labour of volunteers, hundreds of phones, laptops and tablets were refurbished and made available for use by people looking for work, studying and keeping connected with family. In addition, phone service top-ups were provided to 556 people to ensure they had the connection they required to stay in touch.



491
devices distributed;
phones, laptops
and tablets



\$27,081
of phone service
top-ups provided to
556 people to keep
them connected

*more than double last year

We engage community

2021-2022 highlights and achievements



The Asylum Seekers Centre is building a powerful network of Australian organisations, groups and individuals who welcome people seeking asylum to this country, volunteer to assist, participate in advocacy and provide resources to support our work.

Scattered People film screening

In February 2022 the ASC hosted a screening of the documentary *Scattered People*, produced by John Swatland and Lizzie Swatland. The

film explores the power of music to bring people together and tells the story of a group of musicians connecting across immigration barriers.

We share our gratitude for a successful screening with everyone who attended and the producers who allowed us to screen the film without cost as a fundraiser for the ASC. John and Lizzie participated in a Q&A after the screening with CEO Frances Rush, ASC's Antoinette Uwera, musicians Brian Procopis and Robbie James.

(L to R) Antoinette Uwera, Frances Rush and John Swatland

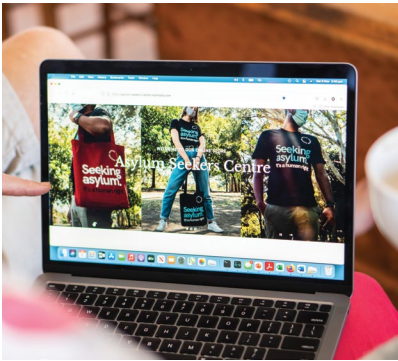
We engage community continued

Launched Shop with Impact

In November 2021 the Asylum Seekers Centre launched our Shop with Impact to share a range of products that carry a message of welcome and support.

The online shop was popular for Christmas purchases which included t-shirts and totes with

the message: “Seeking Asylum: It’s a Human Right”. Popular items included a beautiful cookbook created by the children, teachers and families of the Camdeville Public School and tea towels featuring a beautiful portrait created by patron Wendy Sharp.



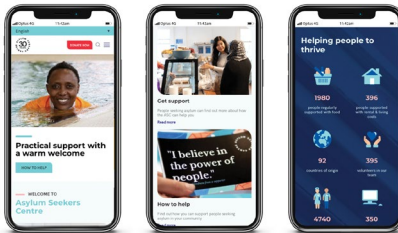
Website refreshed

The Asylum Seekers Centre website got a refresh this year. The homepage now features a video edited for purpose, impact numbers and easy navigation to our featured content.

The entire site can be translated into seven languages; the most

popular spoken amongst the people we support.

An improved donor experience is a feature as well as simpler newsletter sign-up on every page, more content for the people we support and a jam-packed What’s On content section updated weekly on activities and updates for people seeking asylum.



Palm Sunday Rally

During the Federal Election campaign the community came together to publicly raise our voices to send a message to all candidates that we want fairer policies for refugees and people seeking asylum. The Palm Sunday Refugee Rally is a regular event on the calendar and in 2022 was held on 10 April.

“We’ve seen some movement from the Australian government, but we want a lot more and we know the community wants a lot more,” said CEO Frances Rush, who was interviewed at the rally on SBS News.



Food for Friends – Sangee’s recipe

Sangee, a member of the ASC community and talented cook, shared her recipe with donors who supported the ASC food program during the 2021 lockdown.

Sangee’s father loved to cook, and he taught her to make his signature dishes, including this recipe for Vegetable Kurma.

“I started cooking at 13 years old, I tried to cook for my family when I was going to high school. Everything I learnt from my dad,” she said.

Sangee came to the Asylum Seekers Centre a few years ago to access food and other support. She has since found work, but when lockdown hit in June she was left with no income and three children to support.



Vegetable Kurma (Serves 5 people)

Ingredients A	Ingredients B	Method
5 cloves garlic	1 cinnamon stick	1. Heat ghee and saute the cinnamon stick, cardamom pods, star anise, onion and curry leaves until fragrant. 2. Blend Ingredients A, add to the spices and keep stirring 3. Add potatoes, water, coconut milk and coriander leaves. Allow to boil until the potatoes are cooked. 4. Add salt and remaining vegetables. Bring to boil a few times. Stir gently 5. Check for salt and sprinkle some coriander leaves over the kurma before serving.
5 eschalots	3 cardamom pods	
1 inch ginger	1 star anise	
2 tbsp cashew nuts	1 onion, chopped	
4 green chillies	1 sprig curry leaves	
3 tbsp kurma powder	2 handfuls coriander leaves + extra for garnishing	
Water	10 green beans, cut slantwise	
	1 carrot, sliced 2 inches long	
	1/2 cauliflower	
	2 potatoes, each cut into 6 pieces	
	1 large tomato	
	2 red chillies	
	50ml coconut milk	
	sufficient water	
	salt	
	5 tbsp ghee	

We engage community continued

Return & Earn

By selecting the ASC as their charity of choice, can and bottle recyclers in our community donated more than \$12,000 of their Return & Earn rewards. That's 121,000+ recycled items dropped into Return & Earn machines to benefit the planet and people seeking asylum.



Human Rights Day

Though many restrictions were still in place, we were able to bring the community together at Auburn Centre for the Community to celebrate Human Rights Day on 10 December 2021. Generous organisations including lunch volunteers, Sage Cosmetics, performers and staff joined together to create a beautiful celebration to treat people supported by the centre.

Community fundraisers

Family groups, individuals, faith communities and advocates joined together to raise funds to support people seeking asylum this year.

Though the Blackmores Sydney Running Festival was run virtually during lockdown, two ASC staff members and 43 supporters trained

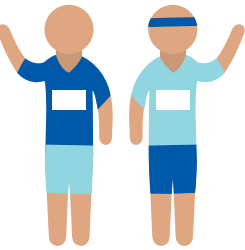
and brought their communities together to donate to their challenge. Our top fundraiser was Oscar Mussons, ASC volunteer manager.

The McKinnon Family organised a fabulous event to run/row/walk in four postcodes through lockdown and raised more than \$5000 to support the work of the ASC.

Inner West for Refugees, Bellingen and Nambucca Rural Australians for Refugees (RAR) group, City Light Church Balmain and other inspiring advocates for refugees brought attention to the issues affecting people seeking asylum while financial supporting people with their daily needs.



A market stall by Bellingen and Nambucca Rural Australians for Refugees (RAR)



Runners in the Blackmores Sydney Running Festival raised more than \$21k.

Volunteers

2021-2022 highlights and achievements



“Our volunteers quickly adapted to the ever-evolving global pandemic, showing resilience and compassion. Face-to-face or remotely, our volunteers understood what was required from them and rose to the challenge. The ASC continued to provide ongoing training opportunities and support and, as a result, volunteers felt more prepared to empathetically engage with the people we support during the difficult times.”

Oscar Mussons, ASC Volunteer Manager

Volunteers continued



477 Volunteers in 2021-2022

32,704 Hours of volunteering

\$1,520,736 Volunteer contribution in \$

162 New volunteers this year

Active volunteers who have ten or more years of service

Mark Harris, Jan Macindoe, Vittoria Pasquini, Teresa Petrzalka, Elizabeth Thompson, Mariella Totaro-Genevois, John Scahill, Linh Scotter.

Active volunteers who have between five and ten years of service

John Balint, Susan Balint, Dina Burnstock, Dina Cavazzini, Fazila Chetty, John Cook, Michelle Cook, Alice Crawford, Belinda Dahan, Lisa Darke, Frances de Jong, Denise Fahey, Andrew Grouse, Caroline Harley, Zoe Hogan, Helen Jenkins, Glynis Johns, Hadi Kazemi, Karen Keall, Helen Lewin, Elio Loccisano, Ann Lockie, Judy Powell Thomas, Jude Stoddart, Patricia Thorne, Shane Tiernan, Neil Tonkin, Lyndal Trevena, Margaret Tung, Kelly Wallwork, Ros and Geoff Williamson, Robyn Worland, Karen Wyatt, Pauline Zerbo.

Regular volunteer lunch groups

- Denise Fahey & friends
- Glynis Johns and Neil Tonkin
- Jews for Social Action (JSA) – North Shore Temple Emanuel
- Mitzvah – Emanuel Synagogue
- Valerio Daniel De Simoni Association

Corporate volunteer groups

- Aesop
- Boundary Lane Children's Centre
- Teachers Mutual Bank Limited
- Telstra Health

Languages spoken by our volunteers

Arabic, Cantonese, Chinese, Dari, Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Persian, Sinhalese, Spanish, Tamil, Tagalog, Turkish and Vietnamese.

What work do volunteers at the ASC do?

- Academic English Tutoring
- Centre Support
- Communications Support
- Community Engagement
- Community Speakers
- Computer Tutoring
- Employment
- English Teaching
- Fundraising Support
- Health Navigation
- Housing
- Intake
- Intensive Support
- IT Support
- Lunch Service
- Opal Administration
- Reception
- University Support
- Volunteer Support

The ASC hosted students from the following universities & colleges

- Australian College of Applied Professionals
- Boston University
- IES Abroad
- Lead College
- TAFE
- University of Newcastle
- University of Sydney
- University of Wollongong

Returning dignity, with a smile.



For more than four years, Jacqui has helped people seeking asylum with a welcoming smile at the Asylum Seekers Centre reception.

Jacqui first learnt about the ASC's work when she attended a Refugee Week event in 2017, and heard from ASC patrons and former refugees Rosemary Kariuki and Professor Munjed al Muderis.

"I was just so inspired, I went to the table to sign up and later became a reception volunteer," she said.

At the time, Jacqui was angered by cruel government policies that punished people for seeking asylum in Australia. She

felt the experience for refugees and migrants had become harder than it was in previous decades, when her family members settled in Australia.

"My parents were economic migrants, they came on a boat from France in the late 1950s. They came with three small children, they came with no English language apart from a six-week course they did on the boat," she said.

"My husband's parents came as displaced people from Eastern Europe in the late 1940s."

"My father was one of the first in the family to get naturalised Australian because he was so

proud that the country had given him a chance, and a better life – it was the same with my father-in-law and my mother-in-law," she said.

"When I compare that to what we do now, we've gone backwards – morally and compassionately and humanely, we've gone backwards."

In her role at the Asylum Seekers Centre, Jacqui loves the opportunity to meet people from a diversity of backgrounds – and to help alleviate their stress.

"During Covid we've done a lot of remote working. I love that you can sense and hear people's relief at just that first contact point," she said.

"I love that the Asylum Seekers Centre returns dignity to people in great need. I love that it is humane, that it is everything that the majority of our policies in this area are not."

It's a like-minded, incredible community who step up, speak out and give of their time, their skills, their compassion and their humanity to fellow human beings."

Jacqui, ASC Volunteer

Volunteers continued

Centre Support Volunteers (CSVs) were pivotal in ensuring clients remained supported and received assistance with day-to-day questions during the pandemic. This team played a key role in providing general advice and guidance to clients who had questions about ASC services or processes in Australia.

The role involves actively contacting clients by telephone, email or SMS to provide this advice, as well as making in-house referrals to ASC programs. CSVs focus on ensuring clients are kept up-to-date, informed and remain supported with their enquiries whether the centre delivers services face-to-face or remotely. Examples of the enquiries that the team responded to included Medicare, Immicards, energy bills, phone connections, Opal cards, transport concession applications, driving lessons, updating details with the Department of Immigration and legal referrals.

“As a centre support volunteer, it was rewarding to be able to assist and troubleshoot, give advice or just provide moral support to different clients who were going through particular hardships. I’d definitely recommend volunteering to anybody who’s looking to create an impact and difference.

I think that intangible feeling of contributing to make a difference to someone’s life by helping understand and manage their situation better, is one of the great things about it.

It is quite a supportive network, and you feel a sense of community through volunteering. You are welcome from the first day and there are always people you can turn to if you’ve ever got questions.

It was great to be able to contribute to the greater picture and impact that the ASC is creating, in some way or form as a centre support volunteer, to help make a difference in people’s lives.”

Preethi Chockalingam, Centre Support Volunteer

Centre Support at-a-glance



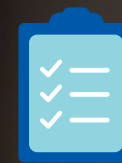
4000+
Centre Support
requests received



1102
phone credit top-ups
requested



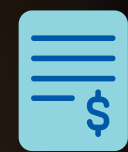
990
Opal card top-ups
requested



Helped **100** clients
with Immicard applications and
arranged for one quarter to get
financial support
for applications



Referred **120** people
for legal assistance



Supported **110**
people to receive
assistance with their
energy bills

“I came to Asylum Seekers in April 2021 as a volunteer, I instantly fell in love with the environment. The team welcomed me with open arms. I felt warm and at home. ASC made me feel empowered, encouraged and the appreciation that I received from supporting clients is phenomenal.”

We influence policy and legal change

2021-2022 highlights and achievements



(L to R) Member for Newtown, Jenny Leong, Asylum Seekers Centre CEO, Frances Rush, Minister for Multiculturalism, Mark Coure.

The then Minister for Multiculturalism Natalie Ward said in a statement: "The NSW Government recognises urgent support is needed and this funding represents an emergency safety net for members of our community who may be on the brink of homelessness and financial destitution."

At the announcement of the second tranche of grants, Minister Ward said, "We know that asylum seekers, who are already among our most vulnerable, have been greatly impacted during the current COVID outbreak. This support will help pay the bills, keep food on the table and access critical medical support and care in their native language."

The Asylum Seekers Centre received a grant of part of these funds to distribute directly to people in our community mostly for emergency relief, rental and food support. Four hundred people seeking asylum were supported over many months to avoid homelessness, hunger and destitution.

In December 2021 Mark Coure became the Minister for Multiculturalism and in March and June 2022 Minister Coure visited the ASC to meet people seeking asylum, staff and volunteers. Local NSW MP Jenny Leong also visited the centre in March 2021.

The Asylum Seekers Centre works to influence policy and legislation that improve the circumstances of people seeking asylum.

NSW State Government

The Asylum Seekers Centre continues to be a proud member of the NSW Joint Partnership Working Group for Refugee Resettlement. Through the advocacy of this group alongside NSW Coordinator General for Settlement, Peter Shergold and Multicultural NSW, the NSW Government was advised about the

extreme hardship experienced by people seeking asylum during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In July 2021, as Sydney began its longest period of lockdown, the NSW Government committed \$6 million of funding to help people seeking asylum and temporary visa holders cope with the effect of the pandemic. This was followed by a further \$5.5 million funding in September 2021, as the lockdowns continued and many people seeking asylum were hardest hit in local government areas of concern and no Federal Government support.



Rapid Antigen Tests advocacy

As the Omicron variant of Covid-19 spread rapidly throughout Australia in December 2021, access to Covid-19 testing including rapid antigen tests became a challenge. The Federal Government announced a policy to provide free tests to people with concession cards, which did not extend to people seeking asylum who without access to welfare

payments, are not eligible for concession cards.

We surveyed the people we support and less than 4% said they bought a rapid antigen test when they wanted one. 48% said they either couldn't afford one, couldn't find one to buy or both. Worryingly, almost 30% of people said they were unwell when they tried to buy a test.

In response to advocacy from the community, Multicultural NSW announced in February 2022 that

rapid antigen tests (RATs) would be provided for the ASC to distribute to people seeking asylum in Sydney.

We influence policy and legal change continued

2021-2022 highlights and achievements

Fair policies for refugees

The 2022 Federal Election was an opportunity to raise awareness of the important policies that affect people seeking asylum and refugees and the ASC mobilised our community to raise the conversation about these issues, specifically:

- An expansion of the annual humanitarian intake program
- An end to arbitrary onshore and offshore detention
- Fair and just processes and assistance for people to live safely in the community while they wait for the outcome of their refugee claim.

Free information packs including flyers and stickers for community groups and individuals were distributed to encourage people to raise awareness of the issues in their local electorates.

The ASC collaborated with the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, Jesuit Refugee Service and Refugee Advice and Casework Service to host a forum in the electorate of Wentworth. All candidates were invited and ALP, Greens and independent Allegra Spender spoke at the event alongside people with lived experience who talked about the issues that could have the most impact on their lives.

After the election and during Refugee Week, Andrew Giles became the first Minister of Immigration to visit the Asylum Seekers Centre in more than a decade. Minister Giles, who had also visited the ASC as Opposition



Minister for immigration, Andrew Giles, meets with people at the Asylum Seekers Centre.



Spokesperson in January 2022, met with people supported by the centre to listen to their experiences and met with ASC staff who shared their observations on the impact of particular policies.

Homelessness

The limitations of access to homelessness services for people on temporary visas during the Covid-19 lockdown of mid-2021 put people seeking asylum at risk. The ASC coordinated a joint letter from nine organisations with an interest in supporting temporary visa holders who had become vulnerable due to the pandemic. The letter called for an extension to the support programs to include temporary visa holders.

Refugee sector campaigns

As a member of the Refugee Council of Australia and other sector networks, the Asylum Seekers Centre supported various actions and campaigns including:

- Action for Afghanistan, direct advocacy and encouragement of our supporters to contact their MPs calling on an increase in places and support after the takeover by the Taliban.
- Time for a Home and Game Over campaigns calling for the release of refugees from alternative places of detention and permanent settlement for people subject to offshore detention.
- Home to Bilo campaign calling on the Federal Government to treat the Nadesalingham family

with fairness and compassion and release them from immigration detention so they could return to Biloela.

- Support for Ukrainian refugees as they arrived in Australia with a lack of certainty on visas, including finding their way in the local community and connecting children with school.

People seeking asylum tell their own stories

We want to acknowledge and pay respect to the people seeking asylum who have raised their voices and shared their stories this year. The people who contributed to ASC advocacy and communications activities were compensated financially for their time and provided with support and debriefing. People have editorial control and approval when their stories are part of our communications.

People we support have participated in video, TV, print, radio and online stories and on many occasions met with politicians and sector leaders to talk about the issues that matter to them. People seeking asylum often remain anonymous when they share their stories to protect themselves and their families.

Rebirth in the land of freedom

Life can only be truly lived when one is free, and I was truly born and started living in this free land Australia, regardless of the years that passed before my arrival.

Far away, in the lands where the sun does not shine, the shadows of oppression and dictatorships devoid of humanity, the only thing that matters is to plunder the nations' resources and to hold onto power. It is normal there to muzzle opinion and repress freedoms. Humiliation, torture and killings are a routine and essential manifestation of the regime's sovereignty and stabilisation of the country. In such an infested environment, freedom becomes a criminal charge, thinking and reform a crime, and expressing an opinion, terrorism.

I landed in Australia, the land of freedom and democracy. After years of separation, I managed to reunite my family in this free land. I will not forget the help I received while waiting for my refugee status to be decided by the Australian authorities.

The years of suffering

My family and I lived under these circumstances for many years. I got a taste of injustice and oppression in political prisons and detention centres, my only crime was that I was a writer and a freelance journalist. Even when ensconced among my books in my room I was not safe from their intelligence claws, and my life was spent between being dragged away to spend months in detention, my books and papers being confiscated, being banned from travel and writing.

“...my only crime was that I was a writer and a freelance journalist.”

Between spring and fall

The dawn of the Arab Spring soon turned into the fall of hell, blood and scattered bodies, courtesy of the military coup d'état. The military tanks squashed the bodies of the free

people and committed one of the greatest massacres in history, according to human rights reports.

Time has come for the birds to migrate, and the waves crashed around us.

I walked into the Asylum Seekers Centre in Newtown when I first arrived and was welcomed with smiles that made me feel at home. The staff spared no efforts to support me psychologically and emotionally. In this dedicated and understanding family-like environment, we would gather for dinners, to look for work, to get the weekly food baskets, and to be helped in all possible ways.

The Asylum Seekers Centre stood out among similar establishments. When my wife passed away, they sent me condolences. This act played a great role in helping me overcome the ordeal. When I obtained my permanent residence, which for me was the act of rebirth on this free land, the Centre also promptly sent me a message of congratulations.

I did not stop visiting the Centre, and I don't think I ever will. It has a lot of good memories that I relive there when I visit my humane family. When my family finally arrived in Australia, the first steps they took towards communicating and getting to

know my spiritual kin was a visit to the Centre.

I hope that the Asylum Seekers Centre in Newtown – what I call my family home – will be able to start programs for their former asylum seeker clients after they obtain their permanent residence. It would be great if former clients of the Centre's were able to keep the services and the social networks it provides once they get their residence.

Hope in the Labor government

I hope that the Labor government will speed up processing humanitarian entrants, and provide more specific programs of integration into the Australian society. I would not wish on anyone the bitter suffering I experienced in the three years during which I was working on reuniting with my family.

“I would not wish on anyone the bitter suffering I experienced in the three years during which I was working on reuniting with my family.”

Another set of programs that I am hoping to see is preparation for work. It is unreasonable to make Centrelink payments more beneficial than working



لِلْعَمَلِ فَلَيْسَ مِنَ الْمَعْقُولِ أَنْ يُصْبِحَ السَّنْتَرْلِينْكَ فِي مَذْفُوعَاتِهِ أَكْثَرُ فَائِدَةٍ مِنَ الْإِنْتِظَامِ فِي عَمَلٍ، وَلَا مِنَ الْمُحْتَمَلِ أَنْ تَكْذَحَ أُسْرَةٌ لِأَجْلِ فِي ظِلِّ بَيْتَةٍ عَمَلٌ لَا تَكْفِيهِمْ وَلَا تَشُدُّ حَاجَتَهُمْ مِنْ سَكْنٍ وَحْيَاةٍ، لِهَذَا لَا بُدَّ مِنْ عَمَلِ بَرَامِجٍ خَاصَّةٍ لِلدَّمْجِ وَالتَّاهِيلِ وَخَاصَّةً بَرَامِجِ الْلُغَةِ الْإِنْجِلِيزِيَّةِ وَالْبَرَامِجِ الْمُهْنِيَّةِ.

التَّوْقِيعُ : كُوَيْتْزَال

full time, nor is it sensible for a refugee family to struggle in a work environment that does not meet their basic needs of food and shelter. Therefore, it is of paramount importance that programs specifically aiming at integration, rehabilitation, learning English and preparation for entry into professional life be given a priority.

Quitzal

Quitzal is a member of our community who has chosen this name to protect his identity. He donated the artwork above to the Centre. Quitzal wrote his story in Arabic and it has been translated to English.

الميلاد الجديد في أرض الحرية

إِنَّ الْحَيَاةَ الْحَقِيقِيَّةَ، تَحْتَ ظِلِّ الْحُرِّيَةِ، وَمَهْمَا طَالَ بِي الزَّمَانُ يُحْيِي مَا مَضَى مِنْ سِنِينَ، فَعُمَرِي الْحَقِيقِيَّ وَمِيلَادِي الْجَدِيدَ بَدَأُ فِي أَرْضِ الْحُرِّيَةِ .

فَإَدْتَنِي قَدَمِي إِلَى : مَرَكُزِ رِعَايَةِ الْأَجْنِثِينَ فِي النَّيَوْنِ .
ومع إيتسامة أَوَّلِ اسْتِقْبَالٍ أَحْسَسْتُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْمَرْكَزَ هُوَ بَيْتُ الْعَائِلَةِ، لَمْ يَدْخِرِ الْقَاهُونَ عَلَى الْمَرْكَزِ جُهْدًا فِي دَعْمِي نَفْسِيًّا وَمَعْنَوِيًّا .
وَفِي ظِلِّ أُسْرَةٍ مُتَفَهِّمَةٍ وَإِنْسَانِيَّةٍ مُتَفَانِيَّةٍ، تَتَجَمَّعُ: لِتَنَاوُلِ الْغَدَاءِ ، وَلِلْبَحْثِ عَنْ عَمَلٍ عَنْ طَرِيقِ الْمَرْكَزِ ، وَلِلدَّعْمِ الْغِذَائِيِّ بِسِلَالِ غِذَائِيَّةٍ أُسْبُوعِيًّا ، وَلِلْمُسَاعَدَةِ بِكُلِّ السُّبُلِ الْمُمْكِنَةِ مَادِيًّا وَمَعْنَوِيًّا .

فَكَانَ لِمَرْكَزِ رِعَايَةِ الْأَجْنِثِينَ عِبِيرٌ خَاصٌّ يُمَيِّزُهُ عَنْ بَاقِي نَظَرَاتِهِ، وَلَمْ أَنْسَ بَرَقِيَّةَ الْمَوَاسَاةِ عِنْدَمَا تُؤْفِتُ زَوْجَتِي، وَالتِّي كَانَ لَهَا أَثَرٌ نَفْسِيٌّ كَبِيرٌ فِي مُسَاعَدَتِي لِتَجَاوُزِ الْمُحْنَةِ .
وَمَا إِنْ حَصَلَتْ عَلَى الْإِقَامَةِ الدَّائِمَةِ الَّتِي كَانَتْ مِمَّنَابَةِ الْمِيلَادِ الْجَدِيدِ فِي أَرْضِ الْحُرِّيَةِ، إِلَّا وَوَصَلْتُنِي بَرَقِيَّةُ تَهْنِئَةٍ مِنَ الْمَرْكَزِ.
وَلَمْ وَلَنْ تَنْقُطِ خُطُوَاتِي عَنْ زِيَارَةِ الْمَرْكَزِ، حَيْثُ اسْتُعِيدَ ذِكْرِيَاتِي الْجَمِيلَةِ، وَأَزُورُ إِخْوَتِي فِي الْإِنْسَانِيَّةِ .

وَمَا إِنْ حَضَرَتْ أُسْرَتِي إِلَى أَسْتْرَالِيَا إِلَّا وَكَانَتْ زِيَارَتُهُمْ لِلْمَرْكَزِ أَوَّلَى خُطُوطِ التَّوَاصُلِ وَالتَّعَارُفِ بَيْنَ عَائِلَتِي الرُّوحِيَّةِ وَأُسْرَتِي .
وَأَمْنِي أَنْ يَسْمَحَ لِبَيْتِ الْعَائِلَةِ - مَرَكُزِ رِعَايَةِ الْأَجْنِثِينَ بِنْيُو تَاوَن - أَنْ تَكُونَ لَهُمْ بَرَامِجٌ مَا بَعْدَ الْخُصُولِ عَلَى الْإِقَامَةِ الدَّائِمَةِ لِمِرْتَادِي الْمَرْكَزِ مِنَ الْأَجْنِثِينَ الْجُدُدِ، فَخُذْمَاتِ الْمَرْكَزِ وَعِلَاقَاتِهِ الْاجْتِمَاعِيَّةِ لَا بُدَّ مِنْ أَنَّ لَا تَنْقُطِ رُوحِيًّا عَنْ أُنْبَاءِهِ حَتَّى بَعْدَ الْإِقَامَةِ .

أَمَلٌ فِي حُكُومَةِ الْعَمَلِ
وَيُخْذُونِي الْأَمَلُ فِي حُكُومَةِ الْعَمَلِ أَنْ تَنْظُرَ بَوْتِيرَةً أَسْرَعَ فِي الْمِلْفَاتِ الْإِنْسَانِيَّةِ لِلْأَجْنِثِينَ، وَأَنْ تَكُونَ لَهُمْ بَرَامِجٌ أَكْثَرُ خُصُوصِيَّةٍ وَجَدِيَّةٍ فِي دَمَجِهِمْ وَأَسْرِهِمْ دَاخِلَ أَسْتْرَالِيَا، فَمِعَانَاتِي الَّتِي دُقْتُهَا خِلَالَ ثَلَاثِ سَنَوَاتٍ حَتَّى تَمَّ لَمْ شَمَلُ أُسْرَتِي، لَا أُرِيدُ بِأَيِّ حَالٍ أَنْ يَتَذَوَّقَ مَرَارَتَهَا غَيْرِي .
وَكَذَلِكَ التَّوَسُّعُ فِي الْبَرَامِجِ الْخَاصَّةِ بِالتَّاهِيلِ

فَهَنَّاكَ فِي بِلَادِ مَا وَرَاءَ الشَّمْسِ، تَحْتَ ظِلِّ قَهْرٍ وَقَمْعٍ لِإِنْظِمَةِ دِكْنَاتُورِيَّةٍ لَا تَعْرِفُ مِنَ الْإِنْسَانِيَّةِ شَيْئًا، وَلَا هَمَّ لَهَا إِلَّا السَّيْطَرَةُ عَلَى السُّلْطَةِ وَنَهْبِ مَوَارِدِ الشَّعْبِ، بَاتَ تَكْمِيمِ الْأَقْوَاءِ وَقَمْعِ الْحَرِّيَّاتِ أَمْرًا إِعْتِيَادِيًّا، وَذُلُّ الْأَحْرَارِ وَتَغْذِيهِمْ وَقَتْلُهُمْ أَمْرًا رُوتِينِيًّا، وَمُظْهَرًا أَسَاسِيًّا عَلَى السَّيَادَةِ وَاسْتِقْرَارِ الْبِلَادِ .
تِلْكَ الْمَظَاهِيرُ فِي بَيْتَةِ مَوْبُوءَةٍ، تُصْبِحُ الْخُرْيَةُ ثَهْمَةً، وَيَبِيتُ الْفَكْرُ وَالتَّفَكُّرُ وَالْإِصْلَاحُ جَرِيمَةً، وَالتَّعْبِيرُ عَنِ الرَّأْيِ إِرْهَابٌ .

سَنَوَاتِ الْعَذَابِ
عِشْتُ فِي ظِلِّ هَذِهِ الْأَجْوَاءِ سِنِينَ مَعْدُودَةٍ مِنْ عُمُرِي أَنَا وَأُسْرَتِي، دُقْتُ طَعْمَ الظُّلْمِ وَالْقَهْرِ فِي جَنْبَاتِ مَرَائِزِ الْإِحْتِجَازِ وَالسُّجُونِ السِّيَاسِيَّةِ، وَكُلُّ تَهْمَتِي أَنِّي كَاتِبٌ وَصَحْفِي حُرٌّ .
وَلَوْ تَوَارَيْتُ بَيْنَ جُذُرَانِ خُجْرَتِي فِي أَحْضَانِ مَكْتَبَتِي، إِمْتَدَّتْ إِلَى أَيَادِي أَجْهَزَتِهِمُ الْأَمْنِيَّةِ، لِأَقْضِي شَهُورًا وَأَيَّامًا فِي الْإِحْتِجَازِ، وَتَصَادِرُ كُتُبِي وَأَوْرَاقِي، وَبَيْنَ الْمُنْعِ مِنَ السَّفَرِ وَالْإِحْتِجَازِ الْقَضْرِيِّ وَمَصَادِرَةِ الْقَلَمِ مَرَّ السَّنِينَ

بَيْنَ رَبِيعٍ وَخَرِيفٍ
سُرْعَانِ مَا بَدَأَ فِي الْأَفْقِ شُعَاعُ نُورِ ثَوَرَاتِ الرَّبِيعِ الْعَرَبِيِّ، الَّتِي مَا بَاتَتْ لِتَنْتَحِلَ بِفَعْلِ الْإِنْقِلَابِ الْعَسْكَرِيِّ لِخَرِيفِ الْجَحِيمِ وَالذَّمَاءِ وَالْأَشْلَاءِ .
وَدَاسَتْ دِبَابَاتُ عَسَاكِرِ الْإِنْقِلَابِ عَلَى جُثَّتِ الْأَحْرَارِ لِتَرْتَكِبَ - بِحَسَبِ وَصْفِ مُنْظِمَاتِ حُقُوقِ الْإِنْسَانِ - أَكْبَرَ مَذْبَحَةٍ فِي التَّارِيخِ الْمَعَاوِرِ .

قَانَ الْأَوَانُ لِلطَّيْرِ أَنْ يُغَادِرَ ، وَتَلَاطَمَتْ بَنَاتُ الْأَمْوَاجِ .
أَرْضُ الْحُرِّيَةِ وَمَرْكَزُ اللُّجُوءِ
حَطَّتْ بِي الرِّحَالُ فِي أَسْتْرَالِيَا أَرْضِ الْحُرِّيَةِ وَالدِّيمُوقْرَاطِيَّةِ، بَعْدَ جُهْدِ سَنَوَاتِ الشَّتَاتِ لِيَلْتَنِمَ شَمَلُ أُسْرَتِي فِي ظِلِّ الْحُرِّيَةِ .
لَكِنْ لَمْ أَنْسَ الْإِيَادِي الْبَيْضَاءَ الَّتِي إِمْتَدَّتْ لِتُسَاعِدَنِي خِلَالَ فَتْرَةٍ نَظَرِ قَضِيَّةِ اللُّجُوءِ أَمَامَ السُّلْطَاتِ الْأَسْتْرَالِيَّةِ، فَمُنْذُ الْوَهْلَةِ الْأُولَى

Financial Statements

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

Asylum Seekers Centre Incorporated
ABN 47 164 509 475
For the Year Ended 30 June 2022

	FY 2022	FY 2021
	\$	\$
INCOME		
Grant income	2,324,859	2,622,102
Donations	2,830,800	3,081,158
Donations in kind revenue	1,521,921	1,395,141
Other Income	290,081	337,230
Bequests	218,066	10,000
Fundraising event revenue	123,457	93,102
Total Income	7,309,184	7,538,733
ASYLUM SEEKER AID & SERVICES		
Services		
Employment assistance	(393,674)	(372,722)
Healthcare	(337,269)	(257,477)
Intensive support	(466,181)	(478,061)
Community engagement	(405,320)	(305,851)
Volunteer management	(163,849)	(110,504)
Direct service management	(917,847)	(693,205)
Accommodation	(29,480)	(15,022)
Donations in kind	(1,521,921)	(1,395,141)
Total Services	(4,235,541)	(3,627,983)
Pandemic Relief		
Pandemic Relief	(1,694,431)	(2,024,881)
Total Services and Pandemic Relief	(5,929,972)	(5,652,864)
MANAGEMENT & SUPPORT		
Management & Administration	(126,781)	(112,137)
Fundraising costs - other	(398,015)	(339,913)
Communication	(275,823)	(185,139)
Running costs	(343,009)	(208,735)
Insurance	(27,276)	(26,436)
IT costs	(128,376)	(123,516)
Building maintenance, rates & utilities	(53,230)	(21,116)
Building repairs	(15,572)	(149,090)
FX losses	(360)	-
Total Management & Support	(1,368,442)	(1,166,082)
Total Expenditure	(7,298,414)	(6,818,946)
Surplus before income tax	10,770	719,787
Income tax expense	-	-
Surplus for the year	10,770	719,787
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax	-	-
Total Comprehensive Surplus for the Year	10,770	719,787

Statement of Financial Position

Asylum Seekers Centre Incorporated
ABN 47 164 509 475
For the Year Ended 30 June 2022

	FY 2022	FY 2021
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash & cash equivalents	4,740,148	4,048,458
Trade & other receivables	87,818	218,443
Current tax receivable	-	11,376
Other assets	8,109	4,805
Total Current Assets	4,836,075	4,283,082
Non Current Assets		
Property, plant and equipment	2,172,587	2,192,549
Total Non Current Assets	2,172,587	2,192,549
Total Assets	7,008,662	6,475,631
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities		
Trade and other payables	292,227	96,973
Employee benefits	332,689	236,055
Other financial liabilities	1,778,933	1,565,237
Total Current Liabilities	2,403,849	1,898,265
Non Current Liabilities		
Employee benefits	67,937	51,260
Total Non Current Liabilities	67,937	51,260
Total Liabilities	2,471,786	1,949,525
NET ASSETS	4,536,876	4,526,106
EQUITY		
Reserves	438,710	438,710
Retained earnings	4,098,166	4,087,396
Total Equity	4,536,876	4,526,106

Financial highlights

Our Supporters

We were proud to have the support of 2966 donors in the 2021-2022 financial year. All of our donors - large and small, old and new, regular and occasional – are vital to our ability to support people seeking asylum in our community. Thank you.

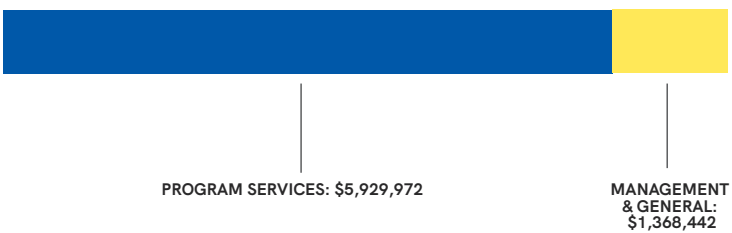
We delivered

\$5.9M of the Asylum Seekers Centre's total expenditure in 2021-22 was directed to essential pandemic relief and services for people seeking asylum in our community. The total income of the Asylum Seekers Centre this year including in-kind support was \$7.3M.

2021-2022 Source of income



2021-2022 Allocation of expenses



Our Board



Peter Waters
Appointed Chair,
October 2021

Peters Waters has worked with law firm Gilbert+Tobin for more than 25 years, formally as a partner and currently as a part-time consultant. Peter has been an active supporter and participant in Gilbert+Tobin's pro bono practice and Director of the Pride Foundation.



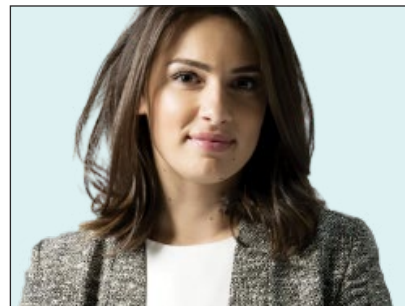
Clare Petre
Deputy Chair

Clare Petre has had a long career in community and government sectors and was the Energy and Water Ombudsman NSW for more than 16 years. She is currently a board member of the ACT Suburban Land Agency, Chair of the New Energy Tech Consumer Code Council, and Customer Advocate for NAB's Wealth Advice Remediation.



Betty Hounslow AM
Chair until October 2021

Betty Hounslow has more than 40 years' experience in the community sector including as Executive Director of ACOSS and Deputy CEO of The Fred Hollows Foundation. She has been an active campaigner for the rights of refugees and migrants since the early 1980s.



Marina Brizar

Marina Brizar arrived in Australia as a refugee from the former Yugoslavia. Marina was named the 2015 Young Migration Lawyer of the Year, the 2015 Woman Lawyer of the Year – Up Coming and a 'Woman of Influence' 2016. She is a Churchill Fellow and currently the UK and Europe Director of Talent Beyond Boundaries.



Michelle Champ
Appointed 2 August, 2021

Michelle Champ has a 25-year career in senior financial management and strategy. She is currently CFO of Hireup, which is Australia's largest NDIS registered online platform which gives people with disability the power to find, hire and manage their very own support workers. Michelle also sits on the Board of Netball NSW, is a graduate member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (GAICD), holds a Bachelor Degree in Commerce and is a Fellow of the Certified Practising Accountants.



Om Dhungel

Om Dhungel is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and serves on different committees and boards. He works as a consultant, trainer and mentor. Formerly a refugee from Bhutan, Om is a recipient of a number of awards for his work in the community including the ZEST 2021 Outstanding Volunteer Leader Award, 2017 UTS Sydney International Alumni Award and 2016 Community Service Lifetime Achievement Award.

Our Board continued



Jonathan Ladd

Jonathan Ladd is the Chair of Humanetix and Assistive Technology Australia, the latter a not-for-profit providing information and guidance on technologies that assist people with disabilities. He retired from Datacom Group in 2019 where he was the CEO and International Executive Chair.



Heather Payne
Appointed 2 August, 2021

Heather Payne has an international career in marketing and has held senior positions with leading data & insights company Kantar, including as Managing Director Australia, CEO Asia Pacific, CMO Asia Pacific, and Global Chief Client Officer, and was a member of the Global Board for 15 years. Upon returning to Australia Heather worked for CareerSeekers which is a social enterprise helping refugees and asylum seekers re-start their careers in Australia. Heather holds a Bachelor of Commerce (Marketing) and is a graduate of the AICD.



Mary Reemst

Mary Reemst has worked in finance for more than 30 years and was formerly the CEO of Macquarie Bank Limited from where she retired in 2021. She is a Director of the Sisters of Charity Foundation and Chair of The Hunger Project Australia.



Graham Thom

Graham Thom is Refugee Adviser at Amnesty International Australia and has previously chaired the NSW Asylum Seeker Interagency. From 2007 he attended the UNHCR NGO Consultations and Annual Tripartite Resettlement Consultations in Geneva.

Our Patrons



Bruce Baird AM

As a member of the NSW Parliament, Bruce Baird was at various times Minister for Transport, Minister for Sydney's Olympic Bid, Minister for Tourism and Roads and Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party in State Parliament. He is Chair of Business Events Sydney.



Rosemary Kariuki

Rosemary Kariuki is a passionate advocate for migrant refugee women. She is a multicultural liaison officer for the NSW Police and was the 2021 Local Hero in the Australian of the Year Awards. In partnership with the African Women's Group, Rosemary founded the African Women's Dinner Dance. She also started the African Village Market – a program to help migrants and refugees start their own businesses – which ran for four years.



Thomas Keneally AO

Thomas Keneally is an Australian author most famous for his Booker Prize-winning novel *Schindler's Ark*. He has been shortlisted for three more times for the Booker, won the Miles Franklin Award, the New South Wales Premier's Literary Award, Los Angeles Book Prize, the Gold Medal of the University of California, and the Helmerich Award.



Wendy Sharpe

Wendy Sharpe is one of Australia's most acclaimed artists, she lives and works in Sydney and Paris. She has been awarded The Sulman Prize, two Travelling Scholarships, The Portia Geach Memorial Award (twice), The Archibald Prize, and many others. She has been a finalist in The Sulman Prize twelve times, and The Archibald Prize eight times. She has held over 60 solo exhibitions around Australia and internationally.



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 has also worked as a General Manager of News Limited, CEO of Qantas, a Director of Telstra and Chair of the Australia-Japan Foundation. He is the publisher and founder of *Pearls and Irritations*.



Munjed Al Muderis Associate Professor

Munjed Al Muderis, formerly a refugee from Iraq, is a pioneer in developing bionic and robotic technology, restoring mobility for amputees around the world. In 2020 Munjed was NSW State Recipient of the Australia of the Year Award. He is an Australian Adjunct Clinical Professor in orthopaedic surgery and the author of two books; *Walking Free* and *Going Back*.



Hugh Mackay AO

Hugh Mackay is internationally recognised for his pioneering work in social research. He is the author of 22 books including his latest, *The Kindness Revolution*. Hugh is a Fellow of the Australian Psychological Society and has been awarded honorary doctorates from five Australian universities.



Rosemary Kariuki honored with OAM

We congratulate ASC Patron, Rosemary Kariuki, on being recognised in the Queen's Birthday 2022 Honours List. Rosemary was awarded an OAM for service to the multicultural community.

"On behalf of the ASC, I congratulate Rosemary for this recognition of her decades of work promoting connection and community. She has had an enormous impact on the multicultural community and has been a long-time friend of the Asylum Seekers Centre."

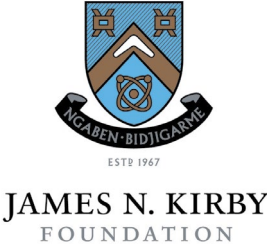
Frances Rush OAM, CEO.

Our Major Supporters

We thank our major supporters, organisational partners and community fundraisers who enable us to provide all of our services and support for people seeking asylum.

Major supporters, grantors and foundations

















Adrian Horridge

Australian Philanthropic Services Foundation

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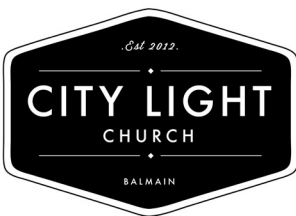
Paul and Pamela Wood

Our Major Supporters continued

Organisational partnerships



Major Community Fundraisers



Oscar Mussons

The McKinnon Family



We wish to thank the generous donors, philanthropists and organisations who have chosen to remain anonymous rather than be acknowledged publicly. All our donors and supporters are highly valued.

Acknowledgements

Photography by Erin Black and Michael Amendolia

Design : Modeve Design (modeve.com.au)

This Annual Report has been kindly printed free of charge by Konica Minolta for the Asylum Seekers Centre.



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