

Asylum Seekers Centre Annual Report 2020-2021

ABN: 47 164 509 475



“There are rights here and you can fight for your rights. And you will get it because I have a voice to talk.”

Watch this story of Nadira* who arrived in Australia as the pandemic hit and had nowhere to sleep. From that frightening beginning, she has found a way to live.

**Nadira is not her real name. She has chosen this name to protect her identity.*



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The Asylum Seekers Centre acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which the ASC stands, the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, and their continuing connection to land, waters and community.

We pay our respects to their knowledge, their survival, and elders, past and present.

Chair and CEO's Report

It is with great pleasure that we share with you the Asylum Seekers Centre 2020-2021 Annual Report.

The shock of Covid-19's arrival has passed and this year has brought reflection and growth as we have all learned to live through a pandemic.

Throughout the 2020-2021 year we are proud to have continued providing high quality services and support to people seeking asylum. This was only possible due to the dedication and skills of our staff, hundreds of volunteers and the generosity of our supporters and donors. We are very grateful to everyone in our community.

The Federal Government turned its back on people seeking asylum and other temporary visa holders during the first year of the pandemic. They were left out of the Covid-19 safety net which provided JobSeeker and JobKeeper for the rest of the Australian community. Paying rent and putting food on the table became an impossible challenge and community organisations and charities became the only place for people to turn for assistance.

The NSW Government provided a package of assistance to support people seeking asylum in July 2020 and the Asylum Seekers Centre was granted

some of this package to provide emergency relief. This relief enabled 582 people to stay in safe and stable housing throughout the hardest times of 2020. It also contributed to providing essential food and groceries to more than 2000 people, more support than has ever been needed in ASC history.

Many of our valued partners have increased their support of people seeking asylum this year, including the Red Cross who provided funds for our food program. The Sisters of Charity Foundation continued to provide families and single women with safe and stable housing and continued to explore ways to expand its support.

Our team provided creative solutions to the challenges people faced with accessing health services and we are very proud of the work done with NSW Health to connect people with Covid-19 vaccinations. We listened to the people we support and developed pathways that recognised their unique challenges of language, underlying health conditions and unstable access to Medicare. Our team of staff and volunteers provided advice and information

for people to make informed decisions for their own health.

Digital connection became a top priority and our IT team stepped up services to provide hundreds of households with good quality refurbished devices. These devices were all donated by generous individuals and organisations and made sure people stayed connected with work, school and further education, and their families.

While the day-to-day challenges were many, we also took the time to look deeply at what we had learned during the pandemic, to improve our approach for the ASC's future.

With input from our whole community we reflected on the way we work and committed ourselves to develop in five key ways; to be an active participant in more communities; to be volunteer-powered; to celebrate voice and culture; to be connectors within communities and to measure our impact.

We have always valued our all-in-one-place offer of support, though Covid-19 challenged us to see that we can also provide services remotely and in many other locations in the



Betty Hounslow AM



Frances Rush OAM

communities where the people we support live. This has already begun with a pilot project in the Auburn Centre for the Community which explored the provision of food and other goods, employment services and social connections.

In 2021, a major project to map our social impact has begun involving our whole community and will continue into 2022. For 28 years we have been witness to thousands of stories of people seeking asylum moving from despair to thriving in their communities. We have seen the value that we can provide to people on this journey and we have counted the rising numbers of people who need that support. This year we are going further to explore and measure deeply how the work we do has the impact we can see that it does.

In 2021, just as we were cautiously returning to face-

to-face services and enjoying returning to work as a collaborative team, the Delta strain of Covid-19 has hit Sydney with a lockdown. Our community had just begun to come together over the much-loved hot lunches, with laughter and music once more returning to our main hall. But this lockdown will be different.

While the wider Australian community saw some recovery and optimism by the beginning of 2021, many people seeking asylum have not bounced back from the first lockdown and the subsequent job losses.

With the experience and learning of the past year we have approached this lockdown wiser and more able to respond efficiently.

We will continue to be passionate advocates and creative thinkers as we provide practical support and a warm welcome in

new ways. This is only possible because of the strength of our Board, staff, hundreds of volunteers and organisational and individual supporters.

Together, as an Australian community we open our hearts and minds to people seeking asylum and will continue supporting their human right to seek freedom from persecution, violence and fear.

Betty Hounslow AM
Chair
Asylum Seekers Centre

Frances Rush OAM
Chief Executive Officer
Asylum Seekers Centre

Asylum Seekers Centre snapshot

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



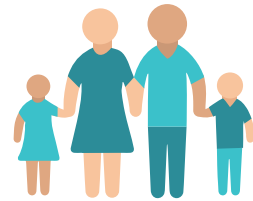
People centred



Collaborative



Innovative



More than 4,000 people seeking asylum assisted in the 2020-2021 year
1000+ children



People assisted from **92 countries**

Services and support including:



Primary health clinic



Transport support



Food and groceries support



Community lunches



Individualised support



English classes



Recreational activities



Art activities



Employment assistance



Family and school support



Training and job readiness



Immunisation



Short and medium term housing



Medications







Emergency financial relief



Digital connectivity



Childcare connections

 @asylumseekerscentre
 @asylum-seekers-centre
 @ASCSyd
 @asylumseekerscentre



Mithat's story:

"If you give an opportunity to refugees, they can succeed."

Turkish refugee Mithat came to Australia with his family 'with nothing' in 2017. He started a successful telecommunications company and is now determined to contribute positively to the asylum seeker community.

Mithat Unlu was living a comfortable expat life in China with his wife and young daughters in 2017. He was running his own business – an education consulting company that employed seven staff.

One day, on a visit to the Turkish consulate office in Shanghai to extend his visa, he received alarming news.

"They told me, 'We can't give you anything', they told me, 'Your passport is cancelled'," he said.

"I was shocked, I didn't know what to do."

Mithat would later find out that he was one of 300,000 Turkish people branded "anti-

government" whose passports had been cancelled.

He had two options. He could return to Turkey – where he would at best be unemployable, and at worst imprisoned – or he could seek safety in a new country.

Mithat, his wife and two daughters flew to Australia in December 2017 and applied for asylum.

After arriving, the family came to the Asylum Seekers Centre for support. They accessed English classes, children's recreational activities and food support.

"At first it was hard because I had nothing in my pocket. I came here with nothing, the first six to

eight months, it was hard," he said.

Mithat completed several local courses and qualifications, and worked in construction before getting a job with an NBN telecommunications company.

Mithat and his family were granted permanent protection visas in December 2018, and they welcomed a new baby girl in 2020.

Then in 2019, with the help of a loan from a friend, he established his own NBN telecommunications business. It quickly became a stable company, employing Mithat's wife in administration as well as three contractors.

Mithat has made a point of offering work opportunities to

refugees and people seeking asylum.

"I know how difficult it is to be a refugee. They don't have a network, they have language barriers, they don't have enough money," he said.

"Many times, if you give an opportunity to refugees, they can succeed in lots of things, and they can give back to the community."

One of Mithat's contractors, Adam*, has lived in Australia for seven years and has applied for protection. He said his temporary visa status had been a barrier to finding work, and in his experience: "If you don't have friends, you can't find any jobs."

"This is a multicultural country, you can live your religion here, you can live your own culture here."

Adam has worked with Mithat's business since 2019.

"He's been through difficult times but he wants to help everyone," Adam said. "He tries to give us more than what we deserve, he's like a big brother to us."

Mithat's generosity has been demonstrated through his charitable donations to the

Asylum Seekers Centre and other organisations. He has chosen philanthropy over buying a house for his family to live in.

"This is a multicultural country, you can live your religion here, you can live your own culture here. No one disturbs you," he said.

"Sometimes I tell my wife I feel like I've lived in Australia for 20 or 30 years."

Our Future Directions

Responding to the Covid-19 pandemic has given us the opportunity to reflect on our work and to consider how the Asylum Seekers Centre can improve the way in which we deliver on our strategy.

In November 2020, the ASC released a document which reflects the collective reflection and aspiration of our leadership, staff, Board and community. The Future Directions does not alter our vision or our values, but builds upon them to imagine a new way in which this vision can be achieved.

People seeking asylum are at the heart of our purpose. We recognise that the path to protection can be long and

difficult and that the ASC can provide support, services and welcome on that path.

In the Future Directions we reflect on what we have learnt, where we are headed and how we will be steering a course through these difficult times. Much work has already been done to reorient ourselves to these new directions and we look forward to being able to report on our progress.

From

One location

Volunteer assisted

People-focused

Service provider

Measuring activity

To



Active participant within communities



Volunteer powered



Celebrating voice and cultures



Providers and connectors to community



Measuring impact



Active participant within communities

Since the ASC began in 1993 we have always sought to be a place of welcome. We have been proud to be a centre with 'all services under one roof'. Now we want to be active in more of the local communities where the people we support live.

We want to take that sense of 'home' and ensure the heart and soul of ASC is an active participant within more communities and locations.

Having services in more communities and locations will mean that people do not have to travel as much to get what they need. They will find more links and connections local to where they live. We will also look for opportunities for people with shared lived experience to mix and build new communities.

While face-to-face services are essential, we may also find opportunities to deliver and connect with people virtually so that they can access more digitally, where it is appropriate.



Volunteer powered

The work of the ASC could not be achieved without the skills, expertise and dedication of a large group of volunteers who choose to give their time and expertise to support and welcome people seeking asylum.

We want to maximise the power of our volunteers' networks and their capacity to welcome and assist people seeking asylum. And to enable greater opportunities for volunteers to create meaningful and long-lasting connections with people who are new to our community.

We will encourage and skill volunteers to have long-term engagement in a multi-faceted way. We will provide new opportunities and collaborate fully as one ASC team.



Celebrating voice and culture

Our approach will begin with the strengths and goals of the people we support. We will ensure that the people we support have greater voice and choice when interacting with us.

We will work together to identify and maximise connections in the community.



We will facilitate ways for people to contribute to the organisation and community.

People, programs and activities will be more culturally and linguistically rich and diverse. We will move towards a greater celebration and deeper understanding of the diversity of cultures of the people we support.

Our systems will support the people we work with to have inputs to decision making. We will seek and record feedback and involvement.



Providers and connectors to the community

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We will encourage and skill volunteers to have long-term engagement in a multi-faceted way. We will provide new opportunities and collaborate fully as one ASC team.



Measuring impact

We will build on our current reporting to demonstrate the impact of our services and support on people's lives.

We will listen to the people we support and the objectives that people have for their own lives. Using this information we will use qualified people to develop a framework, show how our work leads to long-term goals and evaluate our impact. We will work to drive improvements in organisational practice.

By measuring our impact we will have a strong basis for advocacy at all levels of government, to achieve long-lasting changes to policy and greater inclusion.

2019-2020 Highlights & achievements

We connect people to supports and services



The ASC 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.

Preventing homelessness and destitution

During the Covid-19 pandemic people seeking asylum were especially hard-hit by job losses and the economic downturn. This had a severe impact on people's ability to pay their rent and maintain a stable home.

Housing became a top priority and funding predominantly from the NSW Government, with other supporters, enabled the ASC to increase the amount of people provided with financial support during the pandemic. The funds were targeted especially for

families where they were at risk of losing their homes or becoming homeless.

The need for ongoing support to survive throughout the pandemic increased substantially while the opportunities for employment were scarce.

The amount of relief funds we were able to distribute quadrupled in this year, through the generosity of private funders, philanthropic organisations, our partnership with Bridge for Asylum Seekers and the NSW Government.

People seeking asylum have no social welfare safety net from the Federal Government and very limited access to emergency housing services. These relief funds provided a basic safety net to keep people from destitution. The Asylum Seekers Centre will continue our advocacy with our colleagues in the sector and the Refugee Council of Australia to seek support for people with no access to Centrelink payments.



4x increase in relief funding
More than **\$894k** worth of rental relief



582 People supported with financial relief for ongoing rent and living costs



More than **\$892k** worth of financial support

Intensive support

The ASC's skilled team of workers provided support for people in situations where they needed intensive support. This included coordination between different services, advocacy and crisis support. Often this work includes advocating for the person or family with other organisations, and working with people to help them reach their goals.

During the pandemic the need increased for intensive support and the ASC responded by increasing the amount of staff and volunteers available to provide this one-to-one assistance.

Due to the immediate effect on unemployment lockdowns have, in the first week of the 2021 Greater Sydney lockdown people needing crisis support from this team increased by 60%.



440 households provided with intensive support.

Safe and stable housing

The ASC provides a small amount of short and medium-term housing to assist some individuals and families.

In 2020-2021 these housing options included:

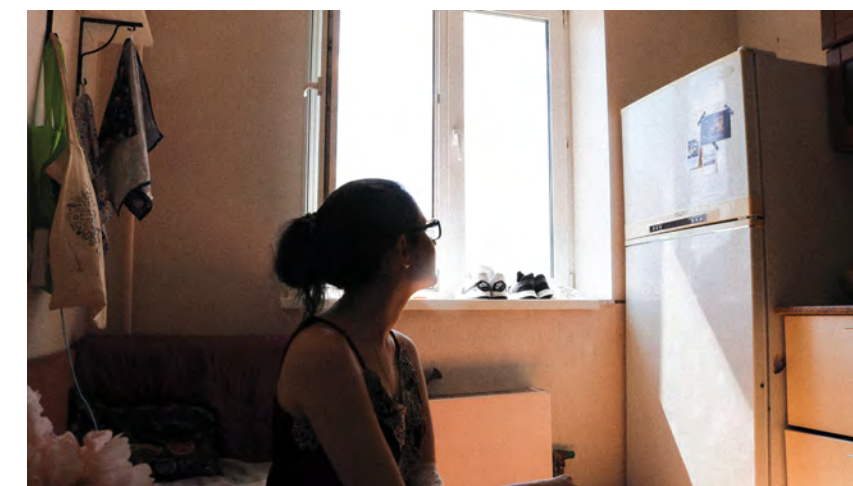
- Four units in a Providence House, provided by the Sisters of Charity Foundation, which provided a home for 14 people this year, single women and families
- A two bedroom unit through a subsidised housing initiative
- A home newly provided by the Sisters of Charity Foundation which can accommodate a large family group in Sydney's west.
- 10 units made available by a unique partnership involving government, private and community supports (see below)
- Emergency housing in hostels and rooms to prevent short-term homelessness.



205

People were provided with short to medium-term housing*

*Double the 2019-2020 year



Sisters of Charity Foundation

Since 2015 the Sisters of Charity Foundation and the Asylum Seekers Centre have been valuable partners in the provision of stable medium-term housing for people seeking asylum. This year the Sisters of Charity Foundation added a new home for a large family to the long-term commitment to Providence House.

Our partnership has allowed people at an extremely vulnerable time, the chance to

start anew, to focus on creating a happy and secure future in Australia. The services and support of the Asylum Seekers Centre are always available to people who are living in ASC housing. The period of stability they experience sets people up to thrive while they are waiting for their claim for protection to be assessed.

This year has been challenging for people in medium-term housing because the opportunities to transition to independence have been severely limited by the pandemic.

Effects of safe and stable housing

Results of evaluation into a targeted housing project in 2020/21



Increased feelings of safety



Physical health



Mental health



Ability to look for work & study

2019-2020 Highlights & achievements continued

We connect people to supports and services



Spotlight: 13 new homes offer safety and stability

Thirteen people moved into stable homes in Sydney in November 2020 as part of a short-term project supported by a unique partnership.

A generous consortium of donors offered the one-bedroom and studio apartments at reduced rent to allow people to have the safety and security of a home for a short time.

The ASC was able to pay the rent and utilities costs due to emergency relief funds provided by the NSW Government along with the Macquarie Foundation and other generous donors. Community organisation The Run for Good

Project has furnished the units complete with a fridge, beds and bedding, a sofa, tables and chairs, bedding, kids' books and toys and kitchen appliances.

A six-month lease in a small studio provided some respite for 40-year-old Silas as he searched for work during a recession.

Silas had been working casual shifts at a factory in Sydney while waiting on an outcome to his asylum application.

When the COVID-19 lockdowns struck Australia in March, his co-workers were placed on the JobKeeper package. As a temporary visa holder, Silas was excluded from the government wage subsidy program and his work dried up.

While out of work, Silas stayed in a backpacker's hostel for three months.

"It was not really good... There were parties all night, people don't respect you, they bang the door... it was hard to sleep, that's the hostel lifestyle," he said.

With the security of a studio apartment and refurbished laptop provided by the Asylum Seekers Centre, Silas looked for work in his areas of expertise: digital marketing and web design.

"It's good to be here. I don't have to stress about everything. Thank you for providing me this place."

Danny, who moved into a one-bedroom apartment, had also been previously living in a shared room at another backpacker hostel.

His unstable housing situation meant his young children had been living at his sister's house for a month.

Danny was excited to move into his new apartment and be able to offer his family a safe home.

"It means that I have a place where I can see my kids, be with my kids, spend time with my kids," he said. "It's been difficult to live without them... I'm so happy about this."

Danny's 5-year-old son and 3-year-old daughter were thrilled to see their new bunk beds.

"I'm thankful for everything that the Asylum Seekers Centre has done. I'm grateful for their services and to everyone involved who made this possible."

Health and wellbeing

Having already adapted to a hybrid model of telehealth and in-person appointments in the previous year, the health clinic continued providing services right throughout this year. The Health Clinic is staffed by two part-time nurses plus a health manager, with thanks to NSW Health. Two pro-bono GPs ran weekly clinics throughout the year in person and via telehealth. Referral pathways to optometry, dental and mental health services were utilised to get pro-bono support.

Covid-19 vaccinations

Opening up access to Covid-19 vaccination to the people we support was a major focus of the year and the health team connected hundreds of people with vaccine

appointments, information and advice. ASC staff were also able to be priority vaccinated thanks to NSW Health, Sydney Local Health District.

Through a partnership with NSW Health, Sydney Local Health District, pathways were created to tackle the challenges people seeking asylum face in getting Covid-19 vaccinations. Intermittent or no Medicare access, language and technology challenges and a need for specialised information in many languages were all potential barriers that required specialised support to overcome.

The ASC Health Clinic worked with NSW Health to ensure that every person could access a Covid-19 vaccine.

Access to medication

The ASC provided 3,814 medications to people supported by the health clinic. Most of these were to assist in managing chronic health conditions such as diabetes and heart conditions. Some medications were over-the-counter treatments such as dermatitis creams and painkillers. All these basic health needs would have remained untreated without this service. Where the person was unable to attend the ASC to collect medicine, deliveries were made by our food home delivery service and the postal service.

Health Navigator volunteers

New volunteers were recruited to work in health as Health Navigators. These volunteers provided essential continuity of care and advocacy for people as they attended partner health facilities outside of the ASC. Health

Navigators also played a vital role during the pandemic assisting people find, book and often accompany people to vaccination appointments.



393 GP appointments



4,715 Nurse appointments



3,814 Pharmaceuticals provided*

* more than double the 2019-20 year

2019-2020 Highlights & achievements continued

We connect people to supports and services



Food and nutrition

During this year food support was provided to 2020 people, most of whom received food every fortnight throughout the pandemic. In response to the changing needs and situation in the community a responsive hybrid system of supporting people with food and groceries was developed.

Home deliveries of groceries were provided by hundreds of volunteers who drove hampers of food to locations across Greater Sydney as well as delivering medication, devices to keep people connected and a friendly face. As a new service location was established at Auburn we partnered with OzHarvest to provide hamper pick-ups with other services at the Auburn Centre for the Community. Both

these services were supplemented, thanks to our partnership with the Red Cross, with some periods of providing cash and supermarket vouchers to allow people to choose their own groceries safely close to their homes.

Feedback on our food program

In February 2021 we spoke to 230 people who we supported with food and groceries to get their feedback on a short trial of providing cash instead of hampers.

We asked people if they would buy different things with money than they got in their foodbank packs and eighty percent of people said they would. The most popular items people said they would buy included fresh fruit and vegetables, meat and fish and a range of

culturally specific items. Eighty percent of people also said that they preferred receiving cash over hampers because it allows them flexibility to choose what they and their family needs.

This supports our thinking that we need to find a range of options to support people's nutritional needs and our pantry basics are only part of the solution.

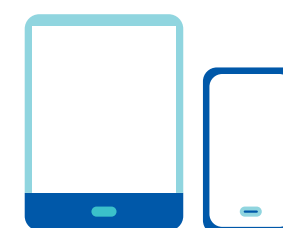


2,020 People were regularly supported with food, more than **600** of whom were children.



Digital connectivity

Remaining digitally connected continued to be essential in the 2020-2021 year and the IT team, supported by volunteers and the generous donations of hundreds of donated devices, provided 350 devices to households. The devices were used for job-searching, education, school and homework and remaining connected to services and legal teams.



350 devices distributed: approximately **80%** laptops, **20%** phones and tablets.

\$10k+

Of phone service top-ups provided to keep people connected

Employment

Employment opportunities have been significantly affected by the pandemic and the employment service has responded by being innovative and adapting services to support as many people as possible.

New volunteer job advisors were recruited to provide one-to-one mentoring, letter and CV writing and interview coaching to people during their job search. Volunteer skills were developed through Community of Practice events.



Recreation and arts

Swimming and other recreational activities were interrupted throughout this year because of the pandemic, however drama and English classes continued online.

Drama classes with the Sydney Theatre Company's Connected program continued online and also at the Auburn Centre for the Community. These classes use a storytelling methodology allowing people to practise English and develop their presentation skills. Children were supported by the Art Gallery of NSW's art kits which delivered high-quality art materials to people's homes so they could continue creating.



To ensure people are supported before they are matched with a job advisor, a drop-in Employment Clinic was established so that light-touch assistance could be provided at Newtown twice a week. Workshops on English at Work were hosted at the Auburn Centre for Community to assist job-seekers. Post-placement support supported people through their first challenging months in a new job.



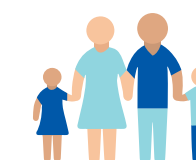
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Job placements

Family support

The transition to school in a new environment can be challenging and the ASC supported 160 families with starting at a new school, enrolments, uniforms and applying for waivers of the international student fees. Starting school packs of stationary, backpacks and lunch boxes were provided so that children had all the materials they needed.

Pathways to childcare were provided for families so that children could be learning and socialising while parents were engaged in education or work.



160 families supported with enrolments and fee waivers
54 childcare/preschool placements

Daily life support

Centre Support Volunteers have worked throughout the pandemic, providing remote and in-person support for people's daily needs. They ensure people can access public transport by topping up concession Opal cards. They also provide advice on form-filling and documentation for a wide variety of legal, employment and service needs.



2,380 new Opal cards, renewals or replacements
\$11k+ spent on access to public transport

Stuck in transit

Aami is a 19-year-old university student and poet who sought asylum in Australia with her family six years ago. Aami's journals and camera were illustrated by Mina, an artist in her 20s who came to Australia seeking asylum in 2020.



people say how brave
and courageous
and strong we were
to flee a place of persecution
and racism
but seeking asylum is not a journey
of thrill and adventure you want
a front row ticket for

and when you are thirteen
and your family are asylum seekers
a label sticks to who you are
somehow it defines you in some ways

I never saw what my parents saw
the same things the world sees
how children should not
adapt to being treated different and
normalise ill treatment
just because they were born into
corruption

for safety we fled to a place
where we had nothing
except for love kindness hope

for love
I watched my parents drop everything
they knew
and leave everyone they know
for the slightest chance
the kids would have a better life
and all we had was each other
and each other was all we needed

for kindness
found even in the smallest of corners
from caseworkers to volunteers
to teachers to strangers and the
kindest of smiles
make the loneliness sting a little less
when you share kindness
you start to believe
the world can be a better place

for hope
the worst kind of homesickness is
not knowing
when you will see home again
I watched my parents make promises
to their parents
and I write thinking if reunions
will help keep promises
or if old age will break
the same promises they made
with hope

seeking asylum is a journey
somedays
it is like you've reached your
destination
other days
it is like you are stuck in transit
missing home
most days
you are exactly where you should be

Aami

2019-2020 Highlights & achievements

We engage community



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

Sydney Theatre Company

The Sydney Theatre Company's Connected program continued through another year of ups and downs with enthusiastic tutors switching to an online program and face-to-face in our new community pilot program at Auburn Centre for the Community. Connected classes use drama and storytelling techniques to build on people's English skills. They are group classes which also build a sense of community and collaborative fun.

Art Gallery of NSW

The Art Gallery of NSW's partnership with the Asylum Seekers Centre continued throughout this year. During the lockdown, the workshops were paused but the gallery instead provided art packs which were delivered to families along with food parcels. Year 7 student Naveed, a member of the ASC community, was delighted to see a portrait he created featured on a banner displayed at the Art Gallery of NSW (above). Naveed used the art pack to create his portrait.

Government House reception

The ASC was very fortunate to be hosted by Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC, Governor of New South

Wales and Mr Dennis Wilson at Government House, Sydney in March 2021. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, a small number of ASC staff, volunteers, supporters and people we support were able to attend. The Governor spoke generously about the contribution of the Asylum Seekers Centre. People from our community who contributed to our advocacy and media in the year met the Vice Regal couple and were supported to attend the evening reception.

Inner West Community Energy

Inner West Community Energy, a not-for-profit community group passionate about renewable energy, donated a 5.1 kilowatt solar system to the Asylum Seekers Centre this year. The 17-panel recycled system will cut the centre's power bill

by around 20%. Tempe residents Mel Marshan and Aaron Powell donated the panels and Inner West Community Energy funded the installation.

Volunteer of the year awards

Shen Goh and Belinda Dahan were NSW state finalists in the Volunteer of the Year Awards after winning their regional awards. Stephen Harman, Stephen Christian, Marina Camarao and Ann Lockie were Inner West Volunteer of the Year recipients. All volunteers are winners in our eyes. These awards help bring the story and value of volunteering with the ASC to an even broader audience.

Community fundraisers

Many communities came together in the last year to fundraise to support people seeking asylum.

Saving Face and Chuffed Skates both gave a portion of their profits this year to the Asylum Seekers Centre and we thank them and thank their customers for supporting these great social impact businesses.

Many Rural Australians for Refugees (RAR) groups continued their involvement in the issues and challenges facing people seeking asylum as well as creating unique fundraising opportunities. See our spotlight story on page 22.

Though the Blackmores Sydney Running Festival was, by necessity, a virtual event this year, ASC fundraisers still encouraged their supporters to get involved. They raised more than \$18k.

One incredible community fundraiser, Chona Navarro, raised more than \$20k on her own by challenging herself to do 20,000 squats. This was Chona's third year fundraising for the ASC and she smashed her target by encouraging her friends to get behind her powerhouse effort.



Runners in the Blackmores Sydney Running Festival raised more than \$18k.

2019-2020 Highlights & achievements continued

We engage community



Bellingin-Nambucca Rural Australians for Refugees

The Bellingin-Nambucca group of Rural Australians for Refugees is a powerhouse of awareness-raising and fundraising in the region. Their volunteer group of passionate locals holds regular market stalls, do roadside demonstrations every fortnight and have fundraised \$14,000 for the Asylum Seekers Centre in the 2020-2021 year.

Mike Griffin is the editor of the group's fortnightly newsletter which is distributed to 650 people within the group. He says that a commitment to human rights



keeps him motivated. "It's a fundamental issue of justice, fairness and equality. If you turn your back and look the other way, then you're signing up to the inhumanity of the government's policies."

The group are regular writers to politicians and collect signatures for open letters at markets and through their network of

members. But their approach to fundraising is fundamentally social and fun. During lockdown the group raised \$2000 through a 'lockdown lunch' to which people paid for imaginary meals that they didn't receive. Mike's advice? "Just pick up ideas wherever you can and run with it. We try to do lots of different things and make them interesting and a bit of fun."

Community speakers

This year the Community Speakers Program underwent a refresh of our presentations with the help of volunteers our speakers are now able to deliver online presentations. Despite the ups and downs of lockdown, we were able to provide 7 talks to schools and community groups. Our audience were mostly primary and secondary school students, however our volunteers also delivered presentations to one pre-school and a Rotary Club. Our CSP volunteer team grew to 8 members.



Band Together: Refugee Week

Days before Sydney went into lockdown in June 2021, we were able to celebrate Refugee Week with Band Together. The ASC, Amnesty International and the City of Sydney presented a night of music and conversation at the Sydney Town Hall. Although we were unable to have a live audience, we were able to host a livestream event and can share a recording of the event (see QR code).

"Thank you for this event and to all that participated and generously shared their stories... It has reinvigorated me to take action again."
An audience member

Local Government support

The City of Sydney supported the ASC with Covid-19 recovery grants and co-presented our Refugee Week event in 2021. The Inner West Council continued to offer great support with grants and by hosting sector-wide meetings and collaborations.

Support for centre refurbishment

The ASC received a Community Building Partnership Grant from the NSW Government, thanks to the support of the local member, Jenny Leong MP. The grant provided much needed support to the ASC to improve social distancing and cleanliness in the welcome area of the centre to allow for the safe return to face-to-face visitors after the Covid-19 lockdown in 2020. The grant also allowed us to improve ventilation and the suitability of the Health Clinic for in-person consultations.

The program of music and interviews featured:

- Craig Foster - refugee advocate and soccer legend
- Rosemary Kariuki - 2021 Australian Local Hero of the Year
- Farhad Bandesh - refugee advocate, musician, former detainee
- Mostafa (Moz) Azimitabar - refugee advocate, musician, former detainee
- Mithat Unlu - business owner and refugee
- Roaa Ahmed, student and refugee
- Yvonne Weldon - Chairperson, Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council
- Cr Jess Scully - City of Sydney Deputy Lord Mayor
- Frances Rush - Asylum Seekers Centre CEO
- Graham Thom - Amnesty International Australia Refugee Coordinator
- And music by Farhad Bandesh and Moz Azimitabar supported by Jim Moginie, Kent Steedman, Paul Larsen, Tim Kevin, Conrad Hamill.



"My music is protest songs and they are about human rights. It is about who has the power... When I hear or see what is happening I feel really heartbroken and I thought I had to write songs about this. All we ask for is humanity, for human rights, for decency and kindness. Thank you so much for engaging with my art and for supporting the rights of people who seek safety and freedom." Farhad Bandesh

Watch the whole Band Together: Refugee Week event here:





Interview: Starting young

Roaa, a young woman and refugee advocate interviews Yawar, who has been seeking asylum for five years. Yawar* came to Australia as a teenager and lived with his family at Asylum Seekers Centre short-term housing.

Yawar is now starting to feel a sense of belonging – although he and his family are still waiting for the security of permanent protection visas.

Roaa: Hello! I'm Roaa, I'm 19 years old. I'm doing my HSC this year, and I'm going to university next year. I came to Australia at the end of 2018. I was first on the bridging visa and then I got my protection last year. Can you tell me a bit about yourself? When did you come to Australia?

Yawar: I'm 22, I came to Australia in May 2016. I came here more than five years ago now with my family. I went to the Asylum Seekers Centre, met the people there. It was very difficult. I had no idea what I was getting into. I had no idea how to navigate the whole place.

Roaa: How was your life before, did you learn English? I didn't learn English before I came to Australia, but then when I came, I had to deal with the language.

Yawar: I'm from Nigeria and English is the official language

in Nigeria. So I've been learning English forever. When I came here, I had just finished my high school exams, my finals, it's equivalent to the HSC. I couldn't go into uni, I couldn't go into high school. So there was a lot of uncertainty about what to do with me. So I went to Marrickville Intensive English Centre.

Roaa: I went there too...

I was doing my year 11 exams for semester one, and then we had to leave. So it was a shock to go to Australia. How did you come to Australia? And who did you come with?

Yawar: I came with my mom and two brothers. The flight was a very weird one because I'd never been on a plane before. I think my mum actually did pretty good, trying to keep everyone calm.

Roaa: Did you feel welcome when you came to Australia? For me, I needed to feel like I belong, because I know that I'm going to live in Australia for the rest of my life. At the beginning of my school life, in Australia, it was very confronting because I had

my own culture, my own aspects, my own thinking. And then I'm confronted by another way of thinking of the girls there. And I was like, wait a minute, I need to figure out how I'm going to work through that.

So it was really hard in the beginning... sometimes I'll go back to the Arabic community to like, feel that connection between me and my culture and my language. I feel like Australia is a multicultural country. It gives you that sense that you can keep your culture.

Yawar: It took me a very long time to adjust. I went to TAFE for seven months. I thought perhaps it will help me make some friends, feel comfortable. To be fair, I can't blame TAFE for not doing the job, because I didn't open up... And then I got a job after TAFE and it was the same story. It took me getting to uni to get some sense of belonging. I registered myself for on-campus therapy sessions, it was a six-month program. I was talking to someone to fully transition to being on campus and

being a student. I think that really helped me, and since then, I haven't been flying, but I've been flying in some senses.

Going to campus, being a uni student makes me feel welcomed. I don't have to worry about anything, I just go to campus and study, increase my knowledge, every now and then hang out with my friend. I go to Macquarie, it's a very big campus.

Roaa: I've been accepted into Macquarie, in the Leaders and Achievers early entry scheme. I'm planning to study media and psychology.

Yawar: I think you'll enjoy Macquarie, it's a very big university and it's very multicultural and there's so much stuff to do.

Roaa: What do you wish people in Sydney knew about refugees and people seeking asylum?

Yawar: I think you have to see everyone as human, and understand they're refugees for a reason, they wouldn't leave their country if they don't have to, and

they're just looking for some place to feel secure and safe. If you try to understand that, I think the best thing you can do is just to accept them and make them feel some sort of welcome.

Sometimes the best thing you can do is just to be there for them. And don't ask too many questions (about being a refugee). If they feel like talking about it, they will come to you. You can just be there for them and support them and provide them some sense of belonging. They will appreciate it, as I appreciated it, and I still appreciate it.

Roaa: We all do. As refugees we appreciate everyone who helped us, who gave us support, who welcomed us. We want to give it back to the refugees who are coming in and help them as we got help too.

What are you doing now? And what are your plans for the future?

Yawar: I will be starting my final four exams in November, and I should be able to graduate by January. I'm currently on a

scholarship at Macquarie.

I would like to do my Masters in chemistry. I can't afford it at the moment, so the best thing for me to do is to look for a job and work in the chemistry environment. My plan is to finish uni and do the things I've always wanted to do, feel part of a team, make some chemicals.

Roaa: I wish you the best of luck for everything you want to do in the future.

Yawar: Thank you so much Roaa.

"I think you have to see everyone as human, and understand they're refugees for a reason."

* Yawar is not his real name. He has chosen to be anonymous.



2019-2020 Highlights & achievements

We influence policy and legal change



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

The Asylum Seekers Centre continued to advocate this year to ensure that people seeking asylum were not forgotten through the challenges of Covid-19.

NSW State Government

In August 2020 CEO Frances Rush was invited to present to the Upper House inquiry into NSW Government's management of the COVID-19 pandemic. Frances spoke about the challenges for people

seeking asylum and the increase in poverty and homelessness amongst people in the ASC's community during the pandemic.

The Asylum Seekers Centre is proud to be a member of the NSW Joint Partnership Working Group for Refugee Resettlement whose continued advocacy has been able to inform and provide support to the NSW Government.

At the start of the 2020-2021 financial year the NSW Government provided a package of support for multicultural communities, including \$2.2million for people seeking asylum.

The ASC was granted a portion of these funds to pass on as relief payments to assist people to stay in their homes when job losses and disruption were at their highest. This funding made a significant difference to preventing almost 600 people seeking asylum including many children becoming destitute during this time.



Nobody Left Behind & No Child Left Behind

The ASC worked with sector partners and the Refugee Council of Australia on a campaign throughout 2020 called Nobody Left Behind. In September 2020 a National Week of Solidarity was held in Child Protection Week which highlighted the concern we have for 16,000 children living in families seeking asylum in Australia.

The campaign focused on the children who have the most to benefit from the safety net of an ongoing Federal Government support payment. Regular meals, a safe home without overcrowding, being able to stay in school and parents who aren't stressed and worried.

A family supported by the ASC told their story anonymously in a video launched in the Week of Solidarity. Many ASC supporters signed petitions to the Federal Government.

The ASC also contributed to lobbying efforts to a targeted group of Federal MPs to gain their support for a proposal to increase support for people seeking asylum in the October 2020 Federal Budget.

People seeking asylum tell their own stories

In our communications activities in this year we have increased the number of people seeking asylum who were supported to tell their stories and be strong advocates. People were compensated for their time when asked to contribute to media and communications activities, provided full briefing and skills as well as debriefing.

People we support were interviewed safely in TV, radio and online media and participated in art projects and filmed stories. For their safety, their names cannot be shared here.

People released from community detention

In October 2020 more than 500 people were released from community detention (also known as 'residence determination') with minimal support and very little notice. The ASC worked alongside other charities to provide ongoing support for people. While the ASC applauded the release of people from detention, we issued a joint statement calling out the lack of transition for people who were expected to support themselves after years in detention. Many of these people are still reliant upon charities.



2019-2020 Highlights & achievements

continued

We influence policy and legal change

Human Rights Day

To celebrate Human Rights Day the ASC coordinated a campaign called #ForArticle14 in which people made statements in support of the Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

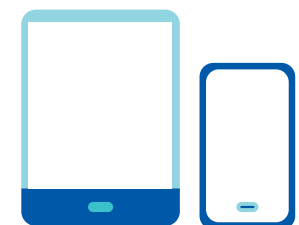
Craig Foster, Wendy Sharpe, L-Fresh the Lion, Graham Thom, Parissa Tosif, Tom Ballard and others posted videos to their social media audiences and supporters shared the message "I'm for Article 14" on their social media.

Time for a Home, Game Over

The ASC was a partner in the Time for a Home and Game Over campaigns and CEO Frances Rush became an ambassador for the Time for a Home campaign. These campaigns are both ongoing and call on the Federal Government to create pathways for a permanent home for people seeking asylum in detention onshore and held in detention offshore on Nauru and on PNG.

Social media connections

In 2020-2021 the ASC launched an Instagram account to reach an audience of young activists online. Reach and engagement also improved on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.



18,000+

People followed the ASC on social media.

3,355,000+

Times content from the ASC was seen on social media.

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 2021

	FY 2021	FY 2020
INCOME	\$	\$
Grant income	2,662,102	866,529
Donations	3,172,846	2,118,810
Bequests	10,000	410,243
Fundraising event revenue	1,414	560
Donations in kind revenue	1,395,141	1,479,098
Other Income	337,230	250,136
Total Income	7,538,733	5,125,376
ASYLUM SEEKER AID & SERVICES		
Services		
Intensive support	(478,061)	(406,349)
Legal	0	(69,291)
Employment assistance	(372,722)	(310,443)
Healthcare	(257,477)	(197,280)
Community engagement	(305,851)	(260,286)
Volunteer management	(110,504)	(108,487)
Direct service management	(693,205)	(511,101)
Accommodation	(15,022)	(20,771)
Donations in kind	(1,395,141)	(1,479,098)
Superannuation & leave costs		(168,141)
Total Services	(3,627,983)	(3,563,269)
Pandemic Relief		
Food	(2,636,940)	(72,769)
Direct Financial Support	(892,604)	(410,065)
Rental Assistance	(894,166)	(21,890)
Total Pandemic Relief	(2,023,710)	(504,724)
Total Services and Pandemic Relief	(5,651,693)	(4,067,993)
MANAGEMENT & SUPPORT		
Management & Administration	(112,137)	(103,802)
Fundraising costs - other	(339,913)	(294,696)
Communications	(185,139)	(136,119)
Running costs	(209,906)	(165,229)
Insurance	(26,436)	(18,489)
IT costs	(123,516)	(130,490)
Building maintenance, rates & utilities	(21,116)	(29,780)
Building repairs	(149,090)	(32,684)
Total Management & Support	1,167,253)	(914,888)
Total Expenditure	(6,818,946)	(4,982,881)
Surplus before income tax	719,787	142,495
Income tax expense	-	-
Surplus for the year	719,787	142,495
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax	-	-
Tied donations	-	-
Total Comprehensive Surplus for the Year	719,787	142,495

Statement of Financial Position

Asylum Seekers Centre Incorporated
ABN 47 164 509 475
For the Year Ended 30 June 2021

	FY 2021	FY 2020
ASSETS	\$	\$
Current Assets		
Cash & cash equivalents	4,048,458	5,137,628
Trade & other receivables	218,443	114,948
Current tax receivable	11,376	-
Other assets	4,804	3,517
Total Current Assets	4,283,081	5,256,093
Non Current Assets		
Property, plant and equipment	2,192,549	2,213,625
Total Non Current Assets	2,192,549	2,213,625
Total Assets	6,475,530	7,469,718
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities		
Trade and other payables	96,972	182,466
Employee benefits	236,055	200,740
Other financial liabilities	1,565,237	3,194,236
Total Current Liabilities	1,898,264	3,577,442
Non Current Liabilities		
Employee benefits	51,260	12,731
Total Non Current Liabilities	51,260	12,731
Total Liabilities	1,949,524	3,590,173
NET ASSETS	4,526,106	3,879,545
EQUITY		
Reserves	438,710	511,936
Retained earnings	4,087,396	3,367,609
Total Equity	4,526,106	3,879,545

Financial highlights

Our Supporters

We welcomed 1,030 new donors in the 2020-2021 year. We want to extend our appreciation to the 460 regular monthly donors who help sustain the work of the Asylum Seekers Centre with their recurring donations.

We delivered

\$5,651,693 of our income directly funded the services and relief programs that assisted people in vulnerable situations hard hit by the economic consequences of the pandemic.

Increase in funding in the 2020-2021 year

Total income increased by 47% in 2020/2021 to \$7.538M, which reflects increased revenue from regular donations of 37%, and from Covid-19 emergency response grants from trusts and foundations.

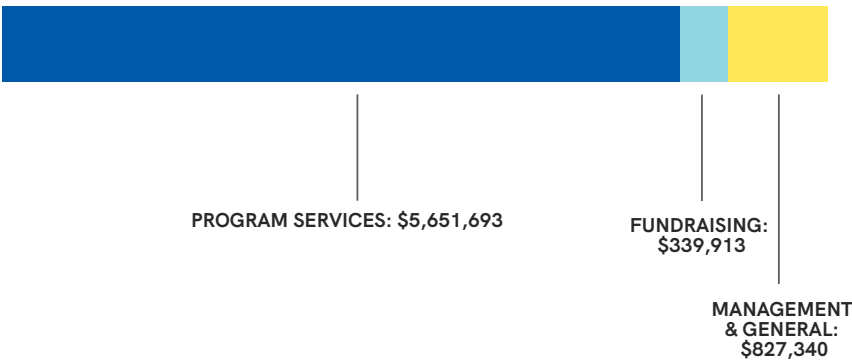
Expenditure in the 2020-2021 year

Total expenditures increased by 37% to \$6.819M to support the delivery of programs during the pandemic. Fundraising costs remained constant year-on-year at a 7.4% fundraising ratio.

2020-2021 Source of income



2020-2021 Allocation of expenses



Our regular giving community

Our community of more than 400 regular monthly donors provides reliable and committed support for people seeking asylum all year round.

"I think often people seeking asylum are so vilified by the media...and to have the Asylum Seekers Centre... they are the antidote of that. They provide love and more for the people that come through their doors, everybody feels welcome. And that is a really important thing.

Regular donors are people that provide that regular income. It's the foundation of support that allows people to actually do the amazing work that the Asylum Seekers Centre does.

We all spend money on things that disappear quite quickly, a beer, a coffee, a bottle of wine, or a takeaway meal. Whereas if you're spending the equivalent of that by donating to the Asylum Seekers Centre, you're changing lives.

I would say to people who have given a one-off donation, why did you give that donation? Was it because you're really impressed with the work the Asylum Seekers Centre does, and if you were, why don't you make that donation regular? Because you will have a long lasting impact."

"You become a member of a community that cares."

Tanya Jackson-Vaughan,
Regular donor since March 2020



Our Board



Betty Hounslow AM
Chair

Betty Hounslow has more than 30 years' experience in the community sector including as Executive Director of the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS), Vice-President of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), 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.



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 including ZEST 2021 Outstanding Volunteer Community Leader Award, the 2016 Community Service Lifetime Achievement Award and 2017 UTS Sydney International Alumni Award.



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, NAB's Customer Advocate (Wealth Remediation), and Chair of The Energy Charter Independent Accountability Panel, the New Energy Tech Consumer Code Council, and ACFID's Code of Conduct Committee.



Jonathan Ladd

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



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 an immigration lawyer and advocate, Churchill Fellow and currently the UK Director of Talent Beyond Boundaries.



Rebecca Lowde
Until 26 April 2021

Rebecca Lowde is currently the Group CFO at Afterpay Limited and has extensive experience in managing finance, contracts, strategy, mergers and acquisitions, budgeting and sales. Previously Rebecca was the CEO of Salmat Limited following 3 years as the CFO. She has held senior executive positions in Australia, Europe and Asia and is a graduate member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and CPA Australia.

Our Board continued



Celia Reynolds
Until 26 July 2021

Celia Reynolds has been with the Lendlease Group for 21 years. In her current role as Group Head of Practices, she leads an international team across Lendlease's four main offices globally.



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.



Mary Reemst

Mary Reemst was the Managing Director and CEO of Macquarie Bank Limited from July 2014 to July 2021. Mary has worked in finance for more than 30 years covering a number of areas including corporate and infrastructure finance and risk management.



Michelle Champ
Appointed 2 August, 2021

Michelle Champ brings over 25 years of experience as a business executive holding various senior finance and leadership roles across multiple industries, including aged care and retirement living, media, digital operations and building products. Michelle brings a track record of expertise in financial management, regulatory compliance, risk and change management. Michelle also sits on the Board of Netball NSW. She is a graduate member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (GAICD) and holds a Bachelor Degree in Commerce and is a Fellow of the Certified Practising Accountants.



Heather Payne
Appointed 2 August, 2021

Heather Payne has a career in marketing insights and has held senior positions across the globe with leading data & insights company Kantar, including Managing Director Australia, CEO Asia Pacific, CMO Asia Pacific, and Global Chief Client Officer. Heather has also worked for CareerSeekers which is a social enterprise helping refugees and asylum seekers re-start their professional careers in Australia. Heather holds a Bachelor of Commerce (Marketing) and is a graduate of the AICD.



Peter Waters

Peter Waters has worked with law firm Gilbert+Tobin for more than 25 years, formerly 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 Chair of the Roberta Sykes Indigenous Education Foundation for over a decade.

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.



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 more than 20 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

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. Her work is the subject of a documentary called *Rosemary's Way*.



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 Prime Minister's Literary Award, the New South Wales Premier's Literary Award 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 seven times. She has held over 60 solo exhibitions around Australia and internationally.



Welcoming Rosemary Kariuki

In 2021 the Asylum Seekers Centre Board welcomed Rosemary Kariuki as a new Patron of the ASC.

"Rosemary has been a part of the Asylum Seekers Centre community for many years and we celebrate her latest achievement as Australia's Local Hero of 2021. As a Patron we know she will represent our community by inspiring people and building connections," says Betty Hounslow, ASC Chair, ASC Board.

Rosemary has been a member of the ASC community for more than twenty years, as a client, a volunteer and now in her role as multicultural community liaison officer with the NSW Police.

"I have benefited from the Asylum Seekers Centre's help and now I am ready to give everything I have to support people," says Rosemary. "The Centre was my family when I first came to Australia. I went everyday, had food, taught the Australian accent and it was my home."

To celebrate Rosemary's appointment, a screening of the documentary *Rosemary's Way* was held in May 2021 for supporters of the ASC. The joyful and inspiring film was followed by a Q&A session with Frances Rush, CEO, Rosemary and director Ros Horin.

The people who power our work



Volunteers

Flexibility and resilience were added to our volunteers' job descriptions this year. Many switched their roles from in-person to online and back again many times over. And yet their generosity, enthusiasm and skills stayed strong. The pandemic demanded new kinds of volunteer roles, such as the expansion of health navigators. And many volunteers who were unable to do their regular face-to-face roles switched to new roles. As always, the commitment of our volunteers was an inspiration to supporters, staff, Board and the people we support.

We were so fortunate to be able to celebrate Volunteer Week this year with open days and a beautiful in-person event at which people we support cooked a meal to share with volunteers. Watch this moving video of one person's story about the impact of a volunteer:



Centre support volunteers

Our Centre Support Volunteers responded to 1,234 requests in the 2020/21 year, much of the year working remotely from their homes. These requests included but were not limited to:

- **Opal card applications, top-ups, advice and troubleshooting**
- **Advice about Medicare applications**
- **Phone credit top-ups**
- **Help to apply for an Immicard**
- **ASC support letters**
- **Tax File Number applications**
- **Advice on how to check visa status**
- **Advice about paying bills**
- **Organise referral for legal advice**
- **Organise a visa health check**

Active volunteers who have five or more years service to the ASC

Elizabeth Abrahams, John Balint, Susan Balint, Anne Bennet, Brenda Billingsley, Liz Blyth, Marion Browne, Dina Cavazzini, Fazila Chetty, John Cook, Michelle Cook, Alice Crawford, Belinda Dahan, Lisa Darke, Carolyn De Boos, Frances De Jong, Clare Docker, Pam Drury, Cate Evans, Andrew Grouse, Caroline Harley, Mark Harris, Helen Jenkins, Hadi Kazemi, Karen Keall, Helen Lewin, Elio Loccisano, Jan Macindoe, Pam Mattick, Mark McInerney, Lee Nussbaum, Teresa Petrzalka, Nick Plummer, John Scahill, Linh Scotter, Elizabeth Thompson, Patricia Thorne, Shane Tiernan, Mariella Totaro Genevois, Susan Trevallion, Lyndal Trevena, Margaret Tung, Kelly Wallwork, Robyn Worland, Karen Wyatt.

Regular volunteer groups cooking and serving hot lunches

The regular hot lunch service was heavily affected by Covid-19 and many of our fabulous lunch teams were not able to attend. We are looking forward to seeing them again in 2021-2022

- **Healthy Bloggers**
- **Jews for Social Action**
- **Mitzvah (Emanuel Synagogue)**
- **Valerio Daniel De Simoni Association**

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



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Peter Bowmar

Byora Foundation

Katrina and Geordie Clark

Department of Family and Community Services, Community Building Partnership Program

Maria Evans

Jack & Carol Flanagan

Hamis & Judith Flett

Vivienne Fries

Glow Worm Foundation

Martha Hills

Adrian Horridge

Betty Hounslow & Kate Harrison

Robin & Tom King

Maria Manning

Peter & Pam Mattick

Simone McCauley

Alexander Menzies

Colin Menzies

Neutral Bay Uniting Church

Patricia Novikoff

NSW Refugee Health Service

Ann Porcino

Mary Reemst

Roslyn Burge & Cynthia Nadai

Catherine Stuart

The Garrett Riggelman Trust

The Knights Family Jabula Foundation

The Lambert Bridge Foundation (Michael Lambert)

The Scully Fund

The Skelley Family

The Skrzynski Family Sky Foundation

The Todd Family Foundation

The Trounson Family Foundation

David Lacey & Marian Shapiro

Susan Varga & Anne Coombs

William Vickers

Tony Weir

Elaine & Nic Witton

Paul & Pamela Wood

Our Major Supporters continued

Organisational partnerships



Major Community Fundraisers



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





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