

STRENGTH AND KINDNESS

Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project (BASP)



54 Beaconsfield Pde, Albert Park 3206
Ph: 96962107; barthur@basp.org.au
Website: www.BASP.org.au

*I was a stranger and you made
me welcome ...*

Newsletter 106 June 2022

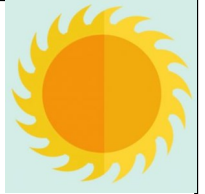
The Project aims to:

- * provide hospitality and practical support for people seeking asylum
- * actively network with like-minded individuals and groups who are working for justice for asylum seekers
- * promote advocacy for the rights of asylum seekers
- * raise awareness of asylum seeker issues and concerns through a range of activities

How hopeful do we feel after the election?

Possibly cautiously optimistic is the answer!

We certainly hope for an inclusive and compassionate society with a new Federal Government. We have argued for many years that the cruel policies governing the lives of people seeking asylum in Australia must change.



This week we wrote to the incoming Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, the new Minister for Home affairs, Clare O'Neill and the new Minister for Immigration, Andrew Giles, wishing them well and reminding them of their promises. This does not mean that we agree with all policies the new Government espouses and we will continue to advocate for more changes.

We are confident that the 19,000 who have temporary Protection Visas (TPVs) and Safe Haven Enterprise Visas (SHEVs) will be granted Permanent Visas. This is cause for celebration—mainly because this means possible family reunion. It will certainly give a feeling of acceptance to all those on these visas. We are not clear about what other measures will take place.

And then wait and see: From our point of view at BASP, the reinstatement of an income safety net for the 30,000 people who are affected by years of delay while they wait in our community for their claims for protection to be considered is vital. We are not sure where the Labor Party stands on this.

Establishing a fairer process, including a specific timeline and the reinstating of an independent Refugee Review Tribunal, so that people's applications for protection can be heard and assessed with compassion and justice is good news.

Labor has reiterated support for boat turnbacks and off-shore detention. Pragmatically this seems an argument to those who want to be sure 'people smugglers' don't have an incentive to put asylum seekers on boats to attempt a perilous journey. However, we believe we should try all other avenues before turning people back to the danger they are fleeing from. How would we react if we saw, for example, Poland pushing people back over the border to Ukraine?

There are over 100 million people in our world displaced from their homes because of war, violence or persecution. All refugees, be they from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East or Eastern Europe deserve safety. We want Australia to be at the forefront of offering this to as many as we can.

[Some salient points from the Labor Party platform are on the next page.]

Donations to the Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project are tax deductible

We want the ALP to change their current policy positions on maintaining:

- mandatory detention, including children
- turning back boats
- off-shore detention

The following are some of the points in the ALP Platform—we need to hold them to implementing these.

- Abolish TPVs and SHEVs and transition eligible refugees onto permanent visa arrangements.
- Give people seeking asylum access to funded migration assistance, and to appropriate social services, including income, crisis housing, healthcare, mental health, education and English as a Second Language support during the assessment of their claim for protection.
- Reintroduce the appropriate references to the Refugee Convention into the Migration Act 1958.
- Reinstate the Refugee Review Tribunal and abolish the Fast-Track Process and Immigration Assessment Authority.
- Streamline the processing of protection claims to enhance the quality of decision making, to provide more efficient pathways for prompt resolution of visa status and to alleviate the courts' immigration case-load burden.
- Ensure asylum seekers have access to appropriate, independent, government funded legal advice.
- Strive to ensure that mandatory detention of unauthorised arrivals is for no longer than 90 days
- Detention that is indefinite or otherwise arbitrary is not acceptable and the length and conditions of detention, including the appropriateness of both the accommodation and the services provided, will be subject to regular review.
- Increase Australia's annual humanitarian intake to 27,000 per year

Dear Prime Minister,

Congratulations again on your very successful election victory. We look forward to the type of government that you have outlined in your recent speeches. Along with the majority of the Australian population we are particularly heartened by your promise of a government that will be respectful of all, that will look to find consensus on policies and not adopt a “winners” and “losers” approach to parliamentary debate and public announcements. The Australian public has shown its disdain when politicians weaponize people, occurrences or situations for their Party's political advantage. We had an obvious example of this with the Coalition's release of news of a boatload of Sri Lankan asylum seekers entering Australian waters on the eve of the Federal Election. The backlash from the public and journalists showed a definite disdain for using people in just such a way.

Asylum seekers and Refugees have been suffering from this type of treatment in Parliament, sections of the Press and by widespread misunderstanding by Australians of the suffering and vulnerability of this special group of people.

Your heartening comments indicate the hope that your Government will not discriminate against asylum seekers on specious grounds of their method of travel to Australia, their ethnic background or their religion. We also hope that the Government may promote an education campaign to remind Australians of the value to our country of accepting refugees; of our International Treaty obligations and of the reputation we have had, until recently, of being a hospitable, generous and warmhearted democracy. BASP

We believe there should be major changes in the government structures affecting asylum seekers.

One of these changes is the need to break up the Office of Home Affairs. From our point of view the combining of national security and immigration has been disastrous. Immigration has no logical or policy connection with law enforcement and national security and they should never have been combined

Refugee status is a legal issue and should be part of the Attorney General's department.



“The idea that people, for example many of whom are Hazaras, are on temporary protection visas... we want them to fully participate in Australian society, and they should have the capacity to become full Australian citizens.

- Anthony Albanese



I was a stranger and you made me welcome...

BASP Discussion Session 2 – 13th July 2022

2pm –3.30 pm

Wednesday,

At 54 Beaconsfield Pde Albert Park

How hopeful can people seeking asylum be?

Speaker: Josh Burns,

Josh is Labor's Federal Member for Macnamara

We will also have a catch up on BASP news and activities.

Another calendar item: a fundraiser for BASP.

Second Trivia Night for 2022 will be held on Friday, 7 October

\$30 per person.

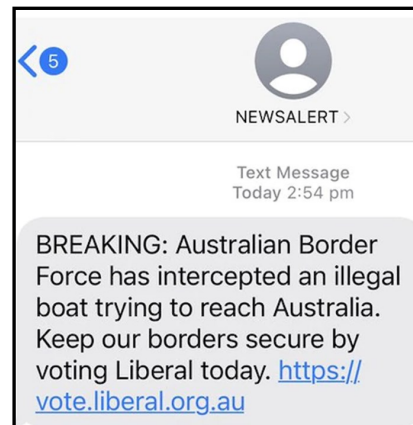
Contact: Colette 9598 7329 or colfoxw@gmail.com

Our last trivia night raised over \$5000 and we had a lot of fun!

Peter Dutton and the previous government's legacy

We believe there are many areas where the previous government will be judged by history as cruel and punitive towards people seeking asylum in this country: their refusal to be open, citing “off-water matters”, and national security as reasons not to be open with the Australian community. Using the spurious argument that it was only kind to stop people drowning at sea – when what these poor people need (even now) is to be rescued on land! They escaped persecution in whatever country and then got persecuted here. Our navy is more than capable of intercepting small unseaworthy boats.

It is now becoming clear (mainly through the writing of Abul Rivzki) that a very big failure on the part of the previous government has been a large scam where people have come by plane from countries like Malaysia, China, India, Thailand, Vietnam and Fiji on visitor visas and then applied for protection. Many come with the promise of work on farms – organised by labour hire firms and agents who arranged to bring them here. The refusal rate for these people is well over 95% - but they are here for 2 or 3 years with full work rights. They are open to exploitation by unscrupulous agents and employers. While they are here they add to the backlog of cases at both the primary and review stages. The Department of Home Affairs either doesn't have the resources to follow up these workers or employers, or have instructed the Agricultural Department to turn a blind eye. Tax payers pay tens of millions of dollars for the application processing of this group.



The Previous government had 2 planks to win the election – the economy and national security – the economy was heading for disaster – and so China and the Pacific became their trump card.

The boat that was conveniently intercepted on the day of the federal election?

Over the past 20 years, successive Australian governments have pursued a range of policy measures to prevent or limit the number of asylum seekers arriving in Australia by boat. Among the most controversial has been boat “turnbacks”: boats carrying irregular arrivals are prevented from entering Australian waters and towed back to their place of departure by Australian officials. This approach has been credited with significantly reducing the number of boat arrivals. It has also been widely criticised on humanitarian grounds. It is hard to find data about how many people have been returned to their home country after having been picked up at sea by Australian forces but it is certainly hundreds—to places such as Sri Lanka and India.

What did most people think when the news that a boatload of asylum seekers had been intercepted by Australian Border Force near Christmas Island on election day? And that voters were sent this message urging a vote for the Coalition to keep borders safe? Or indeed, a little later, that all those on board had been returned to Sri Lanka by the new government.

We recognize the huge complexities that surround the issue of people arriving by boat and seeking protection. However, we hope for a change of rhetoric from the political leaders and were very disappointed that Richard Marles (the acting Prime Minister at the time) still talked about “this government remains committed to Operation Sovereign Borders and to the protection of lives at sea.” We do not believe this has anything to do with saving lives at sea. It is all about the political consequences of allowing people to come to Australia by boat. The problem is there is no other way for people from many countries to seek protection here.

It has been alleged that Australian government officials paid the crew of one vessel \$32,000 to turn back to Indonesia.

We weep for the persecuted minorities in Afghanistan

BASP has met many Afghan people over the years and we have been so impressed by their forbearance and goodness. The Hasaras in particular have suffered so much for so long. And the suffering goes on and on. We question what can Australia do to bring some justice and compassion to the situation.

On a very cold night on 24th April in Harmony Square in Dandenong Hasara Afghan people gathered to grieve and plead for change in the wake of the murder of 100 school girls in Kabul. As the candles flickered in the dark, the suffering of the people present was palpable. Brigid had been asked to say a few words and she acknowledged it was hard to know how to offer any comfort. It seemed ironic that many of the organisers and speakers were young Hasara women.



A few weeks earlier, an Hasara man had sobbed over the phone, desperate to get his wife and three children to Australia. They were trapped in Kabul with little food and nowhere safe to hide. They had been told the Taliban was looking for them because their husband/ father was in Australia. The father has been twelve years working in hard conditions, his only hope being to get his family to safety.

The withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan on 30 August 2021 brought the 20-year war in Afghanistan to an end. However, the nature of the exit and the sudden return to power of the Taliban raises huge concerns for the fate of Afghan civilians, particularly women and girls, and those who have worked alongside the Western presence during the war.

What has Australia done to help those caught in Afghanistan?

With the return of the Taliban, the Australian military assisted in airlifting more than 4,000 people from Kabul airport before ceasing its evacuation mission. This number included over 3,200 Australians and Afghan nationals with Australian visas, as well as people airlifted on behalf of coalition partners.

The Australian government then committed to permanently resettle 3,000 Afghan nationals. However, this number is reserved within, and not in addition to, the 13,750 annual cap in places for Australia's humanitarian program. At the same time, the Australian government warned Afghan nationals not to come to Australia by boat as they will not be resettled.

What have other countries done?

The UK committed to resettle 20,000 Afghan refugees and Canada 40,000. After a significant number of calls from the Australian public, including a petition signed by over 100,000 academics, leaders and lawyers, the Government announced that 16,500 Afghan refugees would be accepted over the next four years.

There were 51 Afghan men still in immigration detention in Australia in February of this year (one of these is Naser Moradi and we know him well); approximately 8000 in Indonesia waiting for resettlement and 4000 Afghans with TPVs and SHEVs (most of these arrived between 2011 and 2012). We could at least give all of these permanent residence in Australia NOW.



Naser Moradi is one of the Afghan men detained in the Melbourne Immigration detention centre. He painted and donated this painting to the Royal Melbourne Hospital. His explanation is: on the left of the canvas, COVID-19 is destroying the world's habitat - the buildings are a symbol of the world - while a doctor, like an angel, emerges from the sea, blocking the virus with an empty hand and a syringe from above and beyond.

Housing marathon.

3 groups of men were released from hotel detention in late March and early April over 3-4 weeks. This was a long sought and welcome action for these men, who had spent 7 years detained in Manus or Nauru, then a further 2 years in hotel detention in Melbourne and Brisbane. Initially they were provided with transition accommodation in a hotel or motel for 3-6 weeks while longer term housing was found. BASP became the organisation to find housing for 36 men over this short space of time. It was a huge undertaking but was achieved thanks to the support of many.

While detained, many individuals called community advocates befriended the men and gave support. Some of these were helpful when the men were released, finding a couple of units, which BASP pays for until the men are able to cover their expenses.

BASP leased 14 new places as well as utilising spare rooms in 8 of its existing houses.



Just as they were released, BASP received a call from a young woman offering a 2 bedroom unit in Hawthorn for no rent for 6 months. She had just renovated it and decided she would rather help those in need to get on their feet than put it on the private rental market. This was followed by one of her friends making her place available for a much reduced rent.

A developer made a unit available as he had acquired the block of apartments but was not planning to redevelop for a year. Bapcare had a 3 bedroom house in Noble Park which was offered to them but they had no takers for that area. We had 3 who were keen to be there. Such good fortune.

In seeking private rentals, we have wonderful support from Biggin and Scott Sunshine as well as Stockdale and Leggo Glenroy, so we were able to lease some from each. However, they did not have the available stock to meet all the varied needs of the men- especially the number seeking to live alone. We were rejected by some agents, but approved by others until all were housed. Many thanks to Karin and Dana for helping with Open for Inspections.

The furnishing of so many houses at once also presented a challenge. Donations of goods, collection of these items and delivering these to each location was a big undertaking. John Meyer was, as usual, a great help but needed additional assistance from Noelle, Marg Fyfe, Hana, Rocky (a commercial removalist who demonstrated the BASP “We can do it attitude” every time) and others along the way.

This process was demanding on those of us involved but it was a huge step for the men involved. While so many said they wanted to be alone or with only one other, the change from 9 years of communal living, to being on their own in a strange city cannot be overstated. Facing the reality of no income, other than emergency relief, and having to familiarise themselves with their new location and customs was daunting and did not always match their anticipated emancipation.

Once housed, BASP- and others will continue to support these men in adjusting back into community life. We have already assisted with gym membership for one who saw he needed a reason to get up and go out each day. Some have already done their White Card Certificate in anticipation of work in the construction industry; others are trying for forklift training. Some will look for work soon, for others it will be a longer term option after they heal physically and mentally.

We linked one of the men with a couple who are BASP volunteers. After the initial meeting, they arranged a trip around the city. The feedback from the volunteer was heart warming -“After lunch we caught the bus to the city, walked along Southbank, had a coffee. He was blown away by the city, the river etc and couldn't get

PTO

the smile off his face. He has a good sense of humour. We talked about his migraine pain (MP) and he said his MP number for that day was "0" but most days it is 4-5. He is worse when he doesn't get out of the unit, so we are working on a program of getting him walking in the parks, or travelling by tram/bus around the city."

The future of this group is still uncertain. They have 6 month bridging visas which are likely to be renewed but what next? Some are hoping to be part of the US or NZ resettlement options. Others would like to remain in Australia. We wait, with them, to see what the future holds for them.

In the meantime, we thank all who have assisted in getting the men housed as well as those who will be an ongoing support over coming months. This includes our supporters who donated the money used so far for this assistance given to a very vulnerable group.



Hana Hussein was appointed in April as a Housing Project Officer at BASP. This position is funded by the Sisters of St John of God. Hana arrived at a perfect time to help with the huge housing demand BASP was facing. Hana comes from a finance background but she had also volunteered at Young Vinnies. Even though she faced a baptism of fire she has settled in remarkably well and we can't believe she hasn't been here forever! She knows a lot more of Melbourne than she used to.

In Hana's words:

I've recently started working at BASP and I'm really enjoying my time here.

I was excited to get this role as I wanted to know and learn more about the asylum seekers here along with their journey and assist in any way that I could.

It was a busy first few weeks on the job as there were groups of men released that all needed to be housed. I was able to take a few of them to see their new places and help them move in. This was great as I started to get to know them and began building a good rapport with them.

It has been rewarding seeing how happy they are to be out and settling into the community. I have loved meeting and spending time with them and listening to their stories; although most have endured difficult circumstances; it is great to hear their optimism about the future and their dreams and goals they aspire to achieve.

I'm looking forward to learning and growing in this role and further assisting these asylum seekers to have the best possible start to a new life here.

The significance of the return of the Muragappan family to Biloele

Australians rejoiced in the return of the family to Biloele and marveled at the tenacity of the women who kept the pressure on authorities to make it happen. The significance over and beyond this is that the Albanese government has showed that amnesty is possible for all Bridging visa holders. The Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese said there was no barrier to the family living permanently in Biloele. Presumably this means with permanent visas. There are thousands of others (about 10000) in the same predicament as this family.

The question remains: Why did Peter Dutton pick this family to pick up from home, send them to Christmas Island and not the thousands of others? They are all indeed victims of a flawed and biased system. Many have suicided in despair, people have been deported and had to flee again ...

May this high profile case continue to bring a humane response for others.





This from a generous person who holds stalls around Victoria.

Hello there wonderful people, today I deposited \$1000 into your BASP fund. We attended a festival in NE Vic and sold home made goods and wares all weekend. We also shared your newsletters.



After Brigid spoke to a gathering in Colac on **Palm Sunday, 10th April**, we have decided to have a gathering as a part of the **“2022 Gathering for Justice for Refugees”** - 2pm, at Colac Memorial Square Rotunda. We are planning to have some of our local people come and share their stories of being refugees in our country and together raise awareness of the issues in our nation regarding refugees, by gathering publicly on this day.

This **Thursday night** (March 31st) 7pm at the Colac Lake Bowling Club, the candidates for the upcoming election will be answering questions from our community and we encourage you to consider coming along and raising a question regarding the treatment of refugees in our nation. You can find some ideas for questions at the end of this email.

It has been very touching to see so many people in our community, really stirred to take action, to see refugees treated with dignity and respect in our nation. We hope that the message comes through loud and clear to those who are still in the midst of their own personal struggles - of temporary visas, not being able to have their family be with them, etc – that **‘Colac cares’!**

The difficulty of getting any information or anything done in the Department of Home Affairs (from Michael, one of our volunteers)

The Ali immicard fiasco continues. I'm typing this email as an aide-memoire for me, but also to bring you up to date and to ask if any other volunteers have had this run-around nonsense from the Dpt of Home Affairs, and if so, did they find a solution ?

Ali needs his ImmiCard renewed to enrol in a TAFE / University course. His application for a new ImmiCard was lodged on 11/02/2022 and acknowledged (given a reference number AB-62488f5). When it didn't arrive, he telephoned the dpt on 30/03/2022 and was told it took 6 weeks which expired on 8/04/2022 and, if it had not been received by then, to ring again.

It still hasn't arrived, so he rang again today (Tues 10/05/2022). This time he was told that the dpt does not regard its response as overdue until 3 months has passed. The 3 months is up tomorrow. The departmental woman, who is blessed with a first name (presumably) Jade, but not a second, explained that she could not make enquiries about the state of play of the application until the 3 months had expired and said Ali is required to ring again tomorrow, which he will do.

I've asked Ali's parents whether they had read Kafka's The Trial, but, unfortunately, he was not an author heavily promoted in Afghan, Iranian, or Hazari circles apparently.



This account came from a Valerie and Davina, Grandmothers for Refugees who joined Kooyong's protest outside Treasurer Josh Frydenberg's electoral office prior to the election.

When Valerie retold us of the incident we decided to donate the money to BASP. On the Thursday (at our weekly meeting time) after the election we will meet to share cake in honour of this generous man.

It was nearing the end of our protest time. Mostly people were positive in their response to our leaflets and brief remarks. I had only one hostile comment when a woman said to me: 'You know you are burning your own race, don't you?' I admit I was shocked by this. I have not previously encountered such an antagonistic view directly expressed to me.



As motorists passed, many 'tooted for humanity'. It was a lively, vibrant atmosphere with Grandmothers on both sides of the road, in our purple, holding up our signs and waving and encouraging as people passed us, outside federal treasurer, Josh Frydenberg's electoral office.

I was about to hand a leaflet to a man, in his orange and black working clothes, and asked him if he would like a leaflet so he could read about how we treat people who are refugees. 'I was a refugee', he replied. 'Where were you?' I asked. 'Christmas Island' he said, quietly. 'Not for a long time, but they will not let my wife and son to join me. They are still in Pakistan'.



Then he handed me some money, folded. Some \$50.00 notes. 'I would like to shout everybody here protesting out to lunch. To say 'thank you'. I was overwhelmed by his words and his action. I felt so humble. 'Thank you' I said. He moved away. Back to work. I did not have time to collect myself to ask him his name or anything else.

I looked around for Davina so that I could tell her what had happened. We saw that he had given us four fifty dollar notes. Two hundred dollars. To shout us all out to lunch. To say, 'thank you'.

As I reflect on the experience of this event, I cannot help noticing again, the contrast in the comment of the woman whose words shocked me, to this man, still suffering and his wish to say 'thank you' to us. If ever there was a reason for Grandmothers and Friends of Refugees, to keep the pressure up, it is highlighted to me here, on that Thursday outside our Treasurer's campaign office.



At a recent Xavier Social Justice Network Dinner (supporting Jesuit Refugee Services), several tickets were made available to BASP for asylum seekers.

One of the women who came told us that this was the first time she had been invited to an event in this country—she has been here for nearly ten years.



To enable two of the women to come the husband of one had waited outside in the car with the children for several hours!



Will is an 11 year old who had come to the end of his lego phase. So – he made up multiple packs of completed objects- cars, planes, robots etc and packaged them to give to children in asylum seeker families. His mum brought them to us and was justifiably proud of her son’s efforts and generosity.



From another volunteer who has been a constant for several years in the lives of a single father and his 2 children and also a single mother and her 2 daughters. He had arranged for another volunteer to be a female mentor/friend to the 14 year old daughter of the dad. When that volunteer moved away, he arranged for another woman to get involved. This new volunteer had the family over for dinner and took the young 16 year old bra shopping amongst other things. With the other family he is using his contacts to get the 16 year old some school holiday work experience at a local medical practice as well as arranging some tutoring in maths. Such practical and thoughtful help.

A young woman who has been in limbo for some time with no work rights and a confusing visa sent word a few weeks ago that she had been granted work rights. This coincided with her moving into a host housing situation – where a couple welcomed her into their home, having a spare bedroom with bathroom for her to use.

This week, she sent an email: “I have a good news. I got job in pharmacy two weeks ago where I was doing volunteer work before. Thank you so much for your support - you have been so helpful to me I’m great full to God and you. House is going very well.” After supporting her for 2 and a half years, it is a joy to see her becoming independent.

Sometimes it is necessary to just wait for stages of recovery—particularly for people who have been in long term detention.

One man who has been very agitated and anxious wrote after getting accommodation:
I am fine thanks. I really appreciate it for your support and kindness. I finally settled down with your support. Thanks.

Another who had been through the same long term detention and has gone into housing provided by BASP has a job. He sent a message saying he had passed the training and that he now has hope.

The path to a reasonable life will be hard—but possible for most.

It is amazing how much food and household goods come and go from our pantry.

Quite a number of parishes and local groups bring in these items—sometime by the van full.

- Lately deliveries have been made by
- Saint Martins, Hawksburn
- Santa Maria College, Northcote
- Sienna College, Camberwell
- St Dominics, Camberwell
- All Hallows, Balwyn
- Our Lady of Victories, Camberwell
- Surrey Hills Parish
- Our Lady of Good Counsel Deepdene
- St Cecilia’s Glen Iris
- St Georges Malvern
- Saint Marys Hampton
- Sacred Heart Primary School, Kew

A very generous person gave BASP three tickets for Hamilton. We gave them to a young man who works extremely hard to support his sister who is ill. We really appreciate the tickets last night and a massive thankyou for creating such a wonderful night for us.





Amazing supporters

One of our supporters sent a donation that represented the proceeds of picking and selling raspberries from their farm in north east Victoria. How much energy did that donation signify?



Getaways are always so welcome.

Presentation Family Centre, now known as Saltbush Balnarring is a great support to BASP and the families we know. Again in the school holidays they had 2 families come and enjoy all the place has to offer- great cottage accommodation, a beautiful rustic setting close to the beach, activities for the children and a warm welcome for all. Many thanks to the staff there for this ongoing opportunity.

The Mariana community is also a generous group which offers a weekend away twice a year at their house in Millgrove. A family went with Mary and Cheryl in May and loved it, hoping they can return another time. This family, like so many others, are waiting for a determination about their visa and in the meantime have no income or ability to work. The husband is also undergoing serious medical treatment so what a treat for them to have such a care free weekend.

On a Thursday afternoon, a leader from one of the ethnic communities was desperate about the well-being of a young woman from his country. The woman had suffered domestic violence and had nowhere to go that night.

We rang a couple who have been an amazing support to other individuals in the past and they said "She can come to our home." She is still being looked after by our BASP supporters.

The man who brought her to the office was staggered by this response. He had contacted a lot of possible places and had not had anyone able to help.

The agencies looking after people in this situation are overwhelmed with the need for accommodation.

Marisa Ceritelli a BASP supporter arranged a weekend away at the DOXA camp in Malmsbury. This has units for families to stay in and wonderful activities for children and adults in a beautiful bush setting.



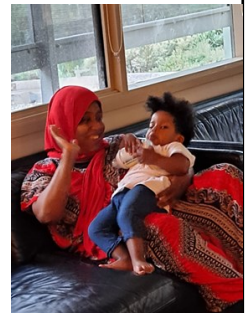
57 people went for the weekend in March and Marisa has passed on the comments of some, showing what a difference a weekend like this can make.

One mother "I've been at home for so long...feeling depressed. No good for me and family...my children really felt free. They loved it ... they asked for a 7 day camp."

Another:- "It was good for me because my mind is very free now...before I had clouds in my mind. It's ok to go home...but can I come back again?"

A third:- "Food was good...my children ate everything and they don't at home"!

Several women said they would like to cook when/if they come again as a way of contributing "so that Doxa doesn't have to pay for the cook".



Bill and Marg Armstrong have been long-time supporters of BASP and thought of us- again- when they were downsizing. They took a bundle of BASP pamphlets, held a garage sale and donated the proceeds of \$1200 to BASP. They got rid of their unwanted goods and we benefited. We also had some subsequent donations from people who took the pamphlets.

One day recently a woman rang asking for a food voucher to be sent in the mail. We offered to send some food if she needed it and she hesitantly explained that she didn't really need the food—she didn't have enough money to buy her medication and if we gave her a food voucher she could get someone to pay for the voucher and she would then buy her medication. BASP was of course able to put the money in her bank account.

St Augustines Kyabram wrote:
We raised \$301.75 for the Brigidine Asylum Seeker Project this Refugee Week. The BBQ was enjoyed by all!



We are grateful for any of the following food (or vouchers to buy food and household necessities).



We currently have enough tinned food except for cans of fruit and tomatoes. Tinned soup does not seem to be taken.

The following are still very much appreciated:

1 kg Sugar, cooking oil, salt, pepper, tea, coffee

Herbs and spices

Blocks or individual wrapped cheese. Eggs.

1 litre Long life milk, **honey is a most appreciated food**, noodles, tuna, 1 kg basmati rice, dates, jam (especially any red jam)



Gladwrap, tinfoil, pegs for hanging out washing,

Sweet and Savoury Biscuits, Snacks for school lunches (even when home!), Salt and pepper,

Spices: coriander, cinnamon, ginger, Shampoo and Conditioner, Shaving Cream and shavers,

Toothpaste and toothbrushes. Soap, deodorants

Garbage bags (small and large)

We seemingly never have enough washing powder, dish washing detergents and household cleaning products.

For anyone wishing to make a donation, the Project Bank details are: Brigidine Asylum Seekers Trust
Account: bsb: 083-004; a/c: 56-924-6603; NAB.

Please put your name on the entry and please email us at contact@basp.org.au after making a donation so we can send you a tax deductible receipt. We will send a newsletter but feel free to tell us that you don't want one.



Again thanks for all the support—from groups and individuals. We are often thanked for the things that you all do or contribute to. In particular, thanks for the messages received after Brigid was given an award in the Queens Birthday list. The well wishes were an indication of the value of BASP in the community—and for that we are very grateful.



Schools, parishes, community groups and many individuals have brought food, household goods and other really useful items in to us and these have helped many asylum seekers over the past weeks.

Recently, talking to some students, one said about the process of applying for asylum 'This sounds like a lottery'. This has been true for so many years—there are anomalies, injustices and arbitrary aspects of this currently complicated, unpredictable and drawn-out process. We are hoping that the steps that could be taken will in fact happen.

In the meantime, thanks to all who support BASP in so many different ways. You are all amazing!

Brigid Arthur

Libby Saunders

(BASP Coordinators)