

## ***STRENGTH AND KINDNESS***

### ***Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project (BASP)***



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

***Newsletter 114 February 2024***

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

Every government is required to comply with a court ruling. Every government has to ensure that contracts where public monies are used are transparent and legal. To suggest otherwise is suggesting we live in a corrupt country that is not subject to the rule of law.

Asylum seekers in the news in this country is rarely a positive thing. We are finishing a week of question time in Parliament where the Coalition relentlessly targeted the Minister for Immigration, Andrew Giles. Documents tabled to the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee on Monday (12/2) provided a breakdown of the serious crimes committed by the individuals who were freed last year as a result of the landmark NZYQ High Court ruling which found indefinite detention was unlawful, overturning a 20-year precedent. Minister Giles was hammered about the composition of the group, why they were released, what had happened to them since.

There is no doubt that the majority of those 149 released have serious criminal records or that many had been in prison and then re-detained in immigration detention. Some have re-offended since release. Virtually nothing seems to have been put in place to stop this happening. Ex prison people in the general community have a lot of support. The problem was that it took a court decision before anything was done about this cohort of people.

Why did so many of this group of detainees have a criminal background? 501 of the Migration Act says that a person's visa can be refused or cancelled because of what is broadly known as the 'character' test. All visa holders and visa applicants can be affected. Because of this clause many of those indefinitely detained over the past decades in Australia are there because of this 501 clause. The NZYQ decision by the High Court stipulated that if these people could not be deported, they could not be detained indefinitely. This was not a Government decision – indeed the Minister for Home Affairs was very vocal in criticising the decision. All governments since 2001 should have prevented this happening by making a decision about these '501s'.

At the same time a damning internal Home Affairs audit has shown Paladin, the contractor paid \$532 million to run the Manus Island detention centre, was never properly assessed for its ability to run the centre, and the department failed to consider the corruption and fraud risks of working in Papua New Guinea. Peter Dutton was the Minister for Immigration over most of the time covered by the report and Michael Pezzullo was Home Affairs Secretary. Pezzullo resigned recently over questions about his breaching the Governments code of conduct. The report found offshore detention contracts had gone to companies linked to suspected arms and drug smuggling, busting sanctions on Iran, corruption and bribery.



The department has never outlined the reasons for selecting Paladin – a small company with no previous experience in providing what are known as “garrison” services – to run the sensitive, multimillion-dollar PNG offshore-processing system.

All of this goes to show the 'system' needs a huge overhaul – and members of parliament seeking to use the signs of mishandling or worse is not going to solve anything.

***Donations to the Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project are tax deductible***

## Changes to the 'System'

He/she was let down by the system. How many times we heard that being said? The Robodebt scheme, Aboriginal deaths in custody, addressing climate change ...

The 'system' has determined the fate of so many people seeking asylum. We need systemic change. Is this happening? The Australian Government has introduced legislation that would abolish the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) and establish a new federal administrative review body to be named the Administrative Review Tribunal (the Tribunal). They say this Tribunal would be user-focused, efficient, accessible, independent and fair. The ART Bill was referred to the Senate Committee for a report back on the 24th July.

As one part of this overall structure, the Independent Assessment Authority (IAA) was established in 2015 to conduct fast track reviews of decisions about fast track applicants made by the Minister for Immigration. And Fast track applicants are those who came by boat between 13 August 2012 and 31 December 2013 who did not get sent to Nauru or Manus Island offshore processing countries. This body has not been independent or fast. Presumably this will be abolished too when (and if) the ART comes into existence.

We have had many changes to these structures in the past and all have claimed things will be fairer, more independent and more streamlined. We have yet to see this happen. Maybe this time ...!



The focus of successive governments in recent years has been on blocking and punishing asylum seekers who attempt to reach Australia by boat. This has distracted both the public – and the government – from the serious systemic issues slowing down access to protection here in Australia. We are now witnessing the hysteria when one boatload of no doubt desperate people from Bangladesh arrive. It is as though a tsunami of boats are bearing down on us. We actually have a national navy to protect us. We are tempted to say: How dare people in Canberra make political football out of these poor desperate men who risked a boat trip to try to reach safety?

The sad thing is that Nauru will be opened again and presumably have a new group of people subjected to all we know happens there.

### Time taken

On average, it now takes around 2.4 years for an initial decision on a protection claim to be made by the Department of Home Affairs. If the application is denied, it takes another 3.6 years to seek a merits review of the claim at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. And if it's denied again, there's an additional 5.1 years for judicial review by the courts.

However, there are maybe up to 10,000 people who are still languishing in uncertainty and of these a reasonable number are destitute. Most of the folk we see at BASP think (usually correctly) that their situation is not being addressed at all.

### Home Affairs should not include refugees and asylum seekers

We believe that we need reform of the unwieldy system that has led to such unjust outcomes for people seeking asylum. In December 2017 the Immigration Department was incorporated into the Home Affairs Department. The sheer size of this bureaucracy means a more rules based approach will be taken than an approach that addresses the unique needs of an individual.

## Discussion afternoon

2pm – 3.30pm Wednesday 13th March

Zoe Daniels will speak

At 54 Beaconsfield Pde Albert Park

**ZOE DANIEL MP**  
Independent Federal Member for Goldstein

Zoe Daniels, Federal Member for Goldstein will speak to us about effective advocacy for asylum seekers in the present Government.

We probably take our right to speak freely for granted but recently Opposition Leader Peter Dutton called for the cancellation of the temporary visas of people who attended rallies in support of Palestinians.

We will have opportunities for discussion around this issue.

There will be an update from BASP and a chance to chat informally over a cup of tea.

### BASP Online Trivia Night

St. Mary's Hampton online trivia event in support of the **Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project** is back on Friday 3 May.



We aim to provide a fun night for you and your friends and raise money for a good cause, and we'd love your support. To take part, sign up as a team host, and get your team together for a light-hearted night of trivia and conviviality. Suggested minimum donation of \$30 per team member.

#### When

*Friday 3 May 7.30pm to 9.40pm*

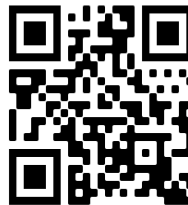
#### Where

Your place! Invite a group of friends to your home, up to 10 people - small groups are welcome. If you prefer you can form a distributed team in several locations and use our online breakout rooms to talk over your answers.

#### How

You don't need to be a tech wizard. You need a smartphone, tablet (iPad, Android) or a computer with sound (a webcam would be nice but not essential). You'll get a link for the Zoom online chat service and use your web browser to answer the trivia questions.

Booking and more information: [cohdig.au/trivia](http://cohdig.au/trivia)



### Harp Concert

Katia Mestrovic, a harpist, is holding a harp concert on Sunday, 3 March from 2.00 p.m. - 3.30 p.m at St Columba church in Glenhuntly Rd Elwood. Katia will be with special guest, Paul Healy, pianist, from the local Sacred Heart choir will be a special guest at the concert.



Entry will be by donation and Katia, who has volunteered with BASP, wishes this fee to be donated in total to BASP.

Earlier this year, Katia entered a World Harpist Concert and has now reached the final six. She will travel to Europe in a couple of months' time to compete in person. So come along and bring your family and friends to appreciate and support this wonderful music, and the work of BASP.

## The situation in Papua New Guinea is dire

### 50 or so of 'Australia's' refugees and people seeking asylum (including 22 partners and over 30 children) still in Port Moresby are in a dire situation:

- It's more than 10 years since these men were first held in detention on Manus Island under Australia's offshore processing program. They were released from detention in 2017 only after PNG's High Court deemed their detention unlawful.
- It is understood that around 10 of the men have serious mental health issues and three of them are so paranoid they are refusing all offers of assistance.
- The still-secret 2021 Morrison Government deal for the support of these people from 2022 onwards has broken down. The PNG Government is no longer able to support them. Local service providers claim they have not been paid in over 12 months. This has resulted in services being cut, and the men unable to pay for food, medications and medical care, utilities, telephones etc. They are at risk of eviction, homelessness and destitution. It is now only the donations of concerned Australians raised by Jane Keogh, a Brigidine sister in Canberra, which are keeping these men alive.
- While many of the men have applications to resettle in NZ, Canada or the US, it may be many months or years before they are actually resettled. A number have no options for resettlement – anywhere.

### These 50 men have been abandoned by Australia - An urgent response by the Albanese Government is needed.

- The Coalition Government ended Australia's regional processing association with PNG on 31 December 2021. Having spent \$billions on detaining and holding refugees and people seeking asylum in PNG since 2013, the Australian government cannot 'decide' we are no longer responsible – this position cannot be justified. We have essentially off loaded our moral responsibility and left the PNG government to resolve the situation for these men. This is unconscionable.
- In opposition, Labor supported the Medevac legislation to bring those who needed medical treatment to be brought here. Labor has now been in government for nearly two years but these men are still languishing in Port Moresby, some of them very ill indeed.
- Australia IS still responsible for the welfare of these people.
- The PNG government has every reason to prioritise the care of hundreds of refugees from West Papua.

Please consider walking in solidarity with asylum seekers and those in the community urging change. The route and the time has changed this year—in response to the Free Palestine protest which is at the State Library at midday also on Palm Sunday.

The Palm Sunday walk for asylum seekers and refugees is at 10.00 in the morning beginning and ending in Parliament Gardens (corner of Spring and Albert Streets). There will be a symbolic ritual to begin (everyone can join) followed by some talks and music and a walk around nearby streets, finishing back at the gardens.

Anyone willing to help by leaving posters in places you frequent or acting as marshals or money collectors on the day please contact Brigid ([barthur@basp.org.au](mailto:barthur@basp.org.au))

**Palm Sunday Walk for Justice and Peace**

Rights for all, including people seeking asylum.  
Permanent visas for all refugees

**Sunday 24 March 2024**

10.30am Parliament Gardens Cnr Spring and Albert Streets  
#justice4refugees #PermanentVisas  
Organised by the Refugee Advocacy Network.  
Enquiries: [info@refugeeadvocacynetwork.org.au](mailto:info@refugeeadvocacynetwork.org.au)

## Leila's story

Leila\*, her husband and five children (two daughters and three sons) arrived in Australia from Iran in 2013. They fled Iran, looking for safety, following the persecution of several of her family members, including the death/murder of her father. She remembers many incidents of harassment and intimidation by the Iranian authorities in her childhood home. "My kids are all that matter to me, keeping them safe with a normal life like everyone else here." She still has a deep seated fear when she sees police or soldiers. She finds interview settings particularly intimidating.

Currently, Leila, her husband and four of her children are on a Bridging Visa E (sub class WE). The Federal Circuit and Family Court recently rejected her application to consider if there was a flaw in the legal process. Since then, they have only been granted a 6-month visa which they have to reapply for each 6 months. This means two weeks without work waiting for the new visa. As well, each time they re-apply, they have to wait, sometimes up to four months, for a new Medicare card. This is putting extreme pressure on Leila's family who need medications (her son's asthma), a psychiatrist (her husband's mental health needs) and regular medical procedures (her iron infusions). Leila spends a lot of time on the phone trying to speed up the process as she does not have the money to pay and wait for a refund.

Her first daughter has a permanent visa. This daughter initially made a separate application from her family as she turned 18 not long after their arrival. The reasons she gave for seeking asylum were the same as her family's but the outcomes were very different. As Leila does not know why, this adds extra stress. Leila said that, in her initial interviews, she was very nervous and couldn't think clearly. Her anxiety and memory lapses meant she felt she couldn't tell her story fully and clearly. She said she feels very guilty that her lack of clear memory may have contributed to the negative result.

Leila has sole financial responsibility for her family as her husband, previously "a strong man", suffered a work injury and is not allowed to drive. Now, he is suffering from mental health issues, rarely leaving his room. Leila said he sits with his head in his hands most of the time. She works multiple casual jobs in aged care, day and night, driving to different parts of Melbourne, with little rest between her day and night shifts. As she said of her contribution to Australian society: "Since 2013 till now, we do everything right here. I have been working hard and paying taxes". This is on top of caring for her family and running the household. She tries not to show the pressures on her. There are always huge financial pressures, including tens of thousands of dollars in legal fees. She hides her suffering inside from her children. She tries to keep them optimistic, saying "Everything is going to change, maybe next year".

With their current visa, her children have no tertiary study rights nor can they apply for scholarships. This has been devastating for her eldest son who finished secondary school last year, hoping to go on to university to study be a construction manager. Leila said that, for the past four years and all through COVID, he studied 6-7 hours a day, highly motivated and very disciplined. He had "a big imagination". Now, deprived of study rights, he is depressed, thinking it was all futile, with no hope of gaining the future he had worked so hard to achieve. He could not join his school friends who went to Bali to celebrate completing VCE and who are now starting out on a new pathway. This is having a ripple effect on the younger children who say it is pointless making the effort to study. Leila thinks it is unfair that her children are punished, their futures stolen, for the decisions their parents made to find a safe place for them. Leila explains that nobody would choose such a dangerous journey, nobody would do it if there was another way.

This story shows so many flaws in our asylum seeker system, its policies and processes. It shows the daily psychological and financial costs on individuals and families. It shows the slow deterioration of health and hope. It shows how 'the system' creates serious mental health issues for young and old, killing aspirations and motivation. It shows the huge price and losses of accumulated, multiple injustices.

\*Leila is not her real name. Her name has been changed for reasons of privacy.

## Housing

While housing in the private market is elusive for those now able to pay their way, we have had considerable movement within BASP housing in recent months. 3 of the men in the Medevac cohort have been transferred to Canada, USA or New Zealand. A few have found somewhere to live with family, friends or interstate options. Some moved within the BASP housing properties as leases ended, requiring relocation.



The Brigidine Community made a 2-bedroom unit available to BASP earlier in the year and 2 men who were now working, but unable to secure private rental have moved in, able to contribute to costs. An email from one showed his relief at securing a place. “Thank you in the name of the God for helping me to ease my problem by being by my side during this difficult time.”

We have supported one man for over 4 years, after losing his work rights, becoming depressed and sleeping rough. Initially, he would only consider a one-bedroom place by himself, which we were able to provide for a few months. We then only had shared accommodation, which he accepted despite there being some genuine challenges with the others in the house. 2 years ago, we moved him into another house with 2 strangers, not from his homeland. This coincided with serious illness, surgery and chemo over many months. His condition is still precarious, but he says the 2 others in the house could not have been kinder or more helpful. Gratifying to hear of this generosity, despite the trauma each has experienced.

We try to give some help to each person who comes to us but we can’t give accommodation to everyone. We can give some money, food and/or food vouchers and some things that are needed like a Myki card or clothes.

## The cost

**In order to maintain the level of support we are giving we need to raise about \$122,000 a month. Current donations and interest average \$100,000 a month.** We are using our reserve funds and that has implications for the future. This is money going directly to people seeking asylum—we are so fortunate in being given the money for two salaries from the Brigidine Sisters and one from the St John of God Sisters. **We are very grateful to our current donors and would welcome a few more!**

## Volunteers

The variety of ways that BASP volunteers assist asylum seekers is always a delight.

The people who deliver food to individuals and families are alert to changes and provide feedback for the coordinators to follow up. They all did extra loads with hampers over Christmas.

Barb and John took over the management of the pantry in 2023 from longtime volunteer Noelle and were met with a huge task when they returned from the Christmas break. Noelle also assisted and they had it well organised in no time.

We so appreciate those who take people to and from medical appointments, recognising this can be a long wait but is so essential to the individual’s wellbeing.

We linked 2 volunteers with a family and some wonderful synergies have evolved. One assisted the parents in understanding the allied health support for their younger child and will assist them convey this to the prep teacher. They have accessed a pro bono physio for the father, sought clarification of the mother’s study rights and identified the need for the older son to attend the local soccer club.

Another volunteer was visiting a woman who fled Ethiopia after traumatic treatment, leaving her husband and school aged children. On one visit the volunteer took her granddaughter who spoke to the asylum seeker’s daughter in Ethiopia. A wonderful exchange for all with the asylum seeker beaming that a connection had been made with her daughter.

## So what do we do every day?

### A Coordinator's (Libby's) Day in January.

A call from a recently arrived woman TM after assault, imprisonment and escape - needs housing, has no money, no work rights until mid-March. Agreed for her to come in to discuss possibilities.

A call from a single man, who works casually but he received no income over Christmas and couldn't pay rent this month - BASP paid.

Phone request for information about help for people in Gaza seeking tourist visas to Australia- Any supports in getting here and also reality on arrival?

Volunteers arrived to help sort and store the generous grocery donations given over Christmas

Volunteers arrived to take food delivery to regular recipients in western suburbs.

Single woman called in for food and Emergency Relief money - Gloria- and wanting help with finding work

Call from man requesting help with 3 months car registration as he has no casual work over this time -\$222 paid- one off.

Visit from a young woman BASP provided housing for pre Covid when she faced homelessness. She came to say she has completed her nursing qualifications, is about to start work and lives in a shared house with friends. She wanted to say thank you and was so cheerful and confident – so different from the young woman we first met.

One of the women in a shared house advised that another in the house was unwell. Rang ASRC health where she usually sees a GP, her usual GP was too busy so advised us to take her to a nearby GP. She was very unwell and eventually was admitted to hospital.

Contacted this woman's lawyer about the increasing urgency to get medicare, a prerequisite to accessing more appropriate care which she now needs.

Call from the owner of a house we have the use of to advise action to be taken for leaking roof.

TM in office – discussed her situation, advised a short term option and made arrangements to action this in 2 days.  
(It ultimately did not proceed and other arrangements were made)

Worked with another volunteer, arranging collection and delivery of furniture to enable a man whose housing had ended to move into a BASP shared house asap.

Paid several bills for utilities in houses leased by BASP and sought reimbursement from tenants who are in a position to pay.

### Policy areas relating to people seeking asylum that need change

- Work rights and Medicare for all people seeking asylum while they are in Australia
- An income stream (such as pensions and Jobseeker allowances through Centrelink) for the time asylum seekers are in the Australian community—no matter what stage of visa processing they are up to
- Australia's policies are counter to the United Nations Conventions—which Australia signed. Our domestic laws need to ensure we are acting according to the law and the spirit of these Conventions
- Bringing refugees from PNG (where they are unsafe and destitute) to Australia
- Closing immigration detention centres—onshore and offshore and establishing a small number of reception centres that can be used for temporary stays
- Ending the privatisation of the provision of services which results in a lack of transparency in terms of the costs, the welfare of people, issues of justice and so on.
- We believe detention centres should be in public administration rather than run as businesses to make money.





### Christmas and Food Donations

**BASP** received wonderful donations of food and hampers again before Christmas.

St Finbar’s delivered 70+ generous hampers as they do each year, and these and other hampers were delivered to individuals and families across Melbourne by a band of volunteers, eliciting some heartfelt thanks.

“We received the gift from you. Thank you so much for all the beautiful gift, girls are so happy.”

“Thank you, mum. Our gifts are so amazing. My brother and myself thank you all. We wish to you and all your staff the best and Mary Christmas to you all. Love you mum”

“Hello dear Liby how are you I hope you are well I received your present and I thank you from bottom of my heart and I wish all the best for you and sister Brigid thank you. thank you so much for your kindness ☐ God bless you Merry Christmas.”

“Thank you so much for the thoughtful Christmas hamper! Wishing you and your colleagues to warmth this festive time! Happy Christmas & Happy New Year ☐”

**The 2 coordinators get praise for the gifts which have come from so many others. To everyone who helped, please see what joy these offerings give.**

### The value of working with other groups in the community—from a community health professional

Thank you for seeing M yesterday. Following her appointment with you, she had to attend Cohealth for a medical appointment and contacted me as she wanted to have a quick chat. She was very happy and tearful when sharing the news that she noticed that she had received your assistance and stated that she was soo thankful for your support. M wanted me to pass on to you her thanks and sincere message of appreciation for taking the time to meet with her and for your prompt response to assist her with her request for support with her current difficult situation. She said that your support will assist to relieve the current level of stress that she is going through due to her financial limitations accessing services due to her visa restrictions.

Once again thank you for your support and great collaboration in assisting our common clients.

Another note of appreciation of BASP’s help came from a young mother with 2 children who had no income and could not cover her rent, just prior to Christmas.

“I would like to say huge thank you for your support, warmth, food, gifts for my boys and a hope that one day things will get better.

I won’t stay with my children outside just on Christmas Eve, that’s the biggest achievement for now.

Thank you so much for that! You literally saved us from homelessness.

Thank you for directing me to Caroline (employment volunteer) as well. She is so empowering, knowledgeable and has many great ideas. I hope we will make it work and I will be able to get a job. Thank you again. “



Recently a 58 year old man, fleeing persecution in Ethiopia arrived at the office- seeking somewhere to live. He had been couch surfing at the homes of acquaintances and had come to an end. He was a well-known sportsman in his day and most recently was working in an anti-corruption role. Clearly, those he was exposing now posed a threat to his life. He said at this stage of life he didn’t think he’d be starting again “but at least I’m breathing”.

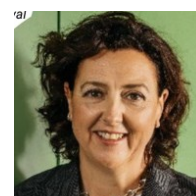
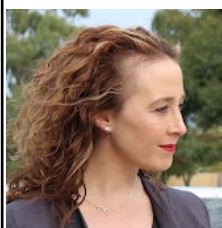
He has 4 grown children in Ethiopia who he thinks are safe as they live far from the city.

Fortunately, we had a room free in a transition house and were able to take him there the following day. When we checked in the day after that, he reported having the best night’s sleep in a very long time.

### Brigidfest.

Each year around St Brigid’s feast day the Brigidfest Committee hold a lunch.

And each year they have a raffle and give the proceeds to BASP. We are really grateful for their ongoing help.



This year the guest speaker was Monique Ryan, Federal Member for Kooyong and she was introduced by Gabrielle Williams State MP for Dandenong. Both women spoke very appreciatively of the work of BASP.





### Vouchers and food

So many individuals and groups contributed to the food bank over Christmas and the New Year. One was Kerry from The Macedon Ranges Rural Australians for Refugees who arrived with a carload of groceries. Prior to Christmas, she had asked people in her community to drop off any items on her doorstep. Some left one or 2 packets of something, others left more-and she- and BASP- were delighted by this generosity, given the cost-of-living pressures as well as those for other needy causes in the community.

Some of the groups also brought supermarket vouchers which are always popular. Many parishes were among these: Holy Spirit Thornbury, St Marys Thornbury, St Anthonys Alphington, St Josephs Northcote, Our Lady of Good Counsel Deepdene and others..

In December, Libby again entered the Eureka raffle in the hope of securing some more vouchers for BASP. This year she was lucky winning 2<sup>nd</sup> prize, being \$1500 worth of Coles vouchers.

For many years now BASP has supported a young Chinese woman . She had no trust in anyone when we first met her. In fact she would not tell us her name or where she lived. Bit by bit we have managed to convince her we are friends. She had very little English but has worked really hard (online) learning English in an attempt to be able to work as an interpreter. We are not sure this will ever happen but she has managed to get some casual jobs delivering pamphlets or other material to letter boxes. She does this on a bicycle. We have been urging her to keep looking for work so that she can pay her own rent. Recently, on two successive months, she said ‘Give me \$100 less—I will put that towards my rent’. Last time she said ‘I am working hard to become independent’. This is a miracle, granted the years she has been too frightened to speak to us.



Anna and Ellen on the first day of school. Anna has been named the school captain for the year. Their family live in a BASP house.

The Brigidine Relief Fund (contributions from Kildare Ministries schools and others) has enabled us to help many families with books and uniforms.

It is not unusual for a single child to have to pay nearly \$2000 (for a laptop and other books and uniform).



Two of the last men to be brought off Nauru came to Melbourne from Brisbane in November and needed accommodation before seeking work.

Fortunately a 2 bedroom house in Melton was available

and they moved in. They were discouraged by their lack of success in securing work but did not stay idle. Both had farming backgrounds and made wonderful garden beds around their unit as well as the neighbour's. Roses, vegetables and herbs. The neighbour loves their work and their company. Work is still an issue.



Recently we had a great call from Mortezar. He and his wife, Nasrin, were released from Adelaide detention in 2015. They decided to come to Melbourne for work. They had difficulty finding accommodation and approached BASP for help. At the time the Catholic Parish in Kilmore offered to house a family in the parish house. They moved there on 11/3/15. Over the next months Mortezar went up and down to Melbourne doing a hair dressing course and Nazrin worked locally. In December 2015 they moved to Melbourne to their own rental house. During this time they were greatly helped by volunteers Mary and Frank. After some time they got a SHEV. They now have Permanent Residence.

Mortezar now has a barber shop in Southland. Nasrin did a Diploma in Child Care and works in Croydon. They have two daughters. Frank died and Mary is still their good friend.

Mortezar wanted to know how much they appreciate what BASP and the Kilmore folk did to help them. We hope some time to meet up again.

**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. Tinned soup does not seem to be taken.**

The following are still very much appreciated:

1 kg Sugar, oil (olive and vegetable) , salt, pepper, tea, coffee

Herbs and spices

Blocks or individual wrapped cheese.

Eggs are really appreciated (and some egg cartons to put eggs that come in larger quantities.) .

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,

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

Spices: coriander, cinnamon, ginger,

Shampoo, Shaving Cream and shavers, Toothpaste and toothbrushes. Soap, deodorants

Garbage bags and bin liners (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](mailto: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.

In a poem The Unsent Condolences, poet Abdul Samad Haidari writes

*We did not leave home by choice*

*We escaped from carnage*

*The searing bullets*

*Loud like gods applauding sound.*



To migrate voluntarily to another country can also be hard but usually it is exciting and a new beginning. Refugees, on the other hand, by definition leave their homes to escape and it is always painful. Many who come to BASP are loath to keep in contact with their families because any contact is monitored and can lead to serious problems for their loved ones. The pain and bewilderment in the eyes of people newly arrived in Australia is palpable. Those of us who are blessed in many ways do what we can.

And we trust that the year to date has been kind to all our people seeking protection, our volunteers and donors and all families and friends.

Brigid Arthur

Libby Saunders

(BASP Coordinators)