

STRENGTH AND KINDNESS

Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project (BASP)



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

Newsletter 117 October 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

Currently in all the capital cities there are small ‘encampments’ of asylum seekers asking for Permanent Visas. They are trying to bring attention to their plight of being in Australia for twelve years or so and still have no security. They are keeping a 24 hour a day vigil, taking turns sleeping on small make shift mattresses while others ensure safety for those getting a short rest. The group outside the Home Affairs office in Docklands in Melbourne have been there for over 90 days. Some of those there were among the women who walked to Canberra a few months ago. Some have no visas, others have a bridging visas but no work rights or Medicare. Some have been on a merry-go-round of appealing a rejection of their case, going to the Federal Court and appealing the legality of the appeal decision, being accepted by the Court and sent back to the first appeal only to be rejected again—this circle happening several times! If we are dizzy thinking about this we can imagine the confusion and heartache of those who have been driven to desperation by the time they have been in this country with only rejections and uncertainty.

At our last discussion afternoon Linda Cusworth from the Combined Refugee Action Group (CRAG) outlined the history of the Tamils—especially since the civil war (1893-2009). Some of those present spoke of having some understanding of the Tamils’ story in Sri Lanka from Shankari Chandran’s novels that span generations of a Tamil family, especially the *Song of the Sun God*.



Rathy is one of the organizers of the encampment outside the Home Affairs office.



On a Sunday morning the group at Docklands find a space between buildings to support each other and get a chance for supporters to give them hope.

Donations to the Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project are tax deductible

Date: October 27, 2024

Time: 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

Venue: Stonnington
Community Uniting Church
57-59 Burke Road,
Malvern East

Tickets via

[www.trybooking.com/](http://www.trybooking.com/CTZYA)

[CTZYA](http://www.trybooking.com/CTZYA)

Adults \$50

Pensioner/Concession \$40

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IN SUPPORT OF REFUGEES
CONCERT



ELIZABETH FINKEL ALAN KOGOSOWSKI LILY TAMIR-REGEV

Rural Australians for Refugees hold a national conference every two years. This year it was held in Kyneton from Friday 11th October through till Sunday 13th October. It brought together refugee activists and supporters and canvassed wide ranging issues.

Professor Philomena Murray and Brigid led a session: *How could Australia fix up asylum seekers' visa status. A discussion of the benefits of regularisation here and overseas.*

Regularisation happens when the government authorises an undocumented migrant's stay in the country in which they are already residing.

Brigid gave current examples of how Australia's system is incomprehensible, inconsistent, unpredictable, with built in years of delay, extraordinarily costly with virtually none of the money spent going to helping the people seeking safety. This was followed by an outline of a possible new approach based on people's welfare, a hope based approach designed to improve people's lives, one that would strengthen social cohesion and bring economic benefits to all.

Philomena described regularisation policies in Ireland, Spain, Scotland and the call from the United Nations "for states to broaden pathways to regularisation for migrants".

While regularisation has often been seen in reference to temporary workers or people without documents, it also applies to refugees and asylum seekers who have no permanent visa or residence. Spain may provide the best example of this overarching approach in practice. Spain has had several regularisation schemes over more than two decades. The most recent scheme is currently before the Spanish Parliament. This initiative aims to regularise the status of approximately half a million undocumented immigrants residing in Spain by granting them legal residency and work authorisation. It is the result of a Citizens' Initiative taken by a Coalition of groups called *Regularisation Now*. To proceed they needed to show public support and they mobilized 14,000 volunteers from over 900 social organisations and gathered over 700,000 signatures.

What is required here in Australia is a pragmatic political solution that could and would make many people's lives regular—and normal. It is being done elsewhere.



Philomena and Brigid with Jean Ker Walsh, one of the organizers of the conference

Discussion Session
2pm – 3.30pm
Wednesday, October 30th
At 54 Beaconsfield Pde Albert Park



Professor Patrick McGorry AO

In 2010 Patrick was named Australian of the year. He is a psychiatrist known world-wide for his development and scaling up of early intervention and youth mental health services and for mental health innovation, advocacy and reform.

Patrick has brought the attention of Australia to the plight of asylum seekers, particularly the practice of mandatory detention.

He said detention centres were "factories for producing mental illness and mental disorder".

We are honoured to have one of Australia's leading mental health experts to speak to us.



BASP Trivia night

When and Where

Online

Friday 8th November 7.30 to 9.45pm.

Bookings

If you are willing to be a host invite a group of friends to join your team.

Use this link to sign in: cohdig.au/trivia

The team can be in several places and there is an online breakout room to talk over your answers.

Donation

Suggested \$30 per person

Enquiries

basptrivia@gmail.com

SOIREE
ST JOSEPH'S MALVERN MUSIC MINISTRY
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CABRINI CHOIR
'Music in the Chapel'

20 SUNDAY
OCT 2PM - 3PM
Cabrini Malvern Chapel
183 Wattletree Rd Malvern

Entry by donation at the door

All funds support the
Brigidine Asylum seekers Project

Housing

The Epping house, which we recently vacated, had been made available by the FCJ Sisters for 7 years. It was a large property allowing for shared accommodation, with living quarters in front and back and sharing a kitchen in the centre. It housed one mother with 2 daughters for most of this time and 31 others who came and went as they became established with income and work. We thank the FCJs wholeheartedly for this amazing assistance.

Likewise, we thank the owner of a house in Yarraville made available for 6 months. This was perfect timing to assist a family who was facing homelessness. BASP had tried to secure a private rental to no avail, so this offer was SO welcome.

Another generous owner made his unit available for 2 and a half years at lower than market rent. This again was wonderful timing, coinciding with the release of the men from hotel detention. The owner now needs it for family, but it has given a number of these men the chance to settle into Melbourne, secure some work and move on to other housing.

We are seeing a few properties we rent on the private market being sold, requiring BASP to vacate them. One man, who has had to move, arrived in Australia from Uganda last year and was housed by BASP while he did training and secured work. On moving to his own share house, he sent the following message: "I am humbled and honored to express my appreciation for the unwavering support. Thank you so much for taking good care of me during the dark days. I will always approach you whenever I need guidance. God Bless you."

Another man whom BASP has housed since his arrival in 2021 has recently received his permanent visa. He was excited and sent the following message: "Hi liby got it mi vi(s)a new thanks liby I'm happy now thanks Australia thanks katolic churches thanks oll"

BASP has not had many people fleeing Gaza seeking its assistance. One family came in for rental support after the 3 months' sponsorship by an Australian ended. With limited English he was keen to start work mowing lawns. After a couple of weeks he was injured by the mower, requiring surgery. We assisted with rent and food over this period. 'I appreciate it very much. Thank you for your beautiful efforts in helping us.'

BASP houses 3 men in Brunswick, one who arrived four months ago, leaving his homeland and role as a university lecturer in mathematics. He is undertaking a course here to improve his English, is registered with ASRC employment for cleaning and is also volunteering to help kids with maths at the Flemington Bridge Homework Club. His aim is to retrain to be a teacher or teacher aid in schools. What a positive approach to life in a new country.

Additional to the help we can give in the houses BASP owns or have been given for a time, we get many requests to pay rent. Any extra help as we approach Christmas will be gratefully received.

We are farewelling Hana soon

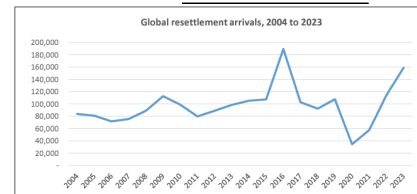
Hana Hussein has been our Housing Support Officer for the past two and a half years. This role was made available due to funding provided by the St John of God Sisters. We are very sad to announce that Hana is leaving us on the 29th November. We wish Hana all the best as she takes some time off before deciding what her next employment will be.



Hana has been a great member of our small team. She has been responsible for making sure the BASP houses are maintained and has travelled from one side of Melbourne to the other to see to the houses. She is an expert now on hard rubbish collections, utilities being connected and such practical issues as well as following up all the numerous 'The tap needs fixing' 'We need a frig' and minor crises that happen.

Hana will be missed not only by the BASP team but also by the many people seeking asylum she has helped in many and varied ways.

Statistics—most of these are printed by the Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA)



Putting things in perspective

There were 117.3 million displaced people in the world at the end of 2023.

This number is increasing by about 3 million people a year. Over 68 million of these are still in their own country. Nearly 7 million have actually moved to other countries as asylum seekers. The countries accepting most of these are: Iran, Turkiye, Colombia, Germany, Pakistan. Australia receives about 30,000 applications per year—all come now from people who arrive by plane.

How many people arrive in Australia by boat now?

Virtually none. About 100 have been intercepted and sent to Nauru over the past year.

How many people are there in Australia waiting for an answer to their application for protection?

There is a massive backlog of applications waiting for processing. Most of these cases (90,000) were inherited by the Labor government. They were the result of the previous government allowing labour hire schemes to get out of control and student applications to outstrip the Department's capacity to process them. Some people who arrive by plane apply for protection after they arrive here on a visa such as a tourist, student, business or other visa. These applications are processed while the people concerned live and work in the community. Most come from China, Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, India. This is different to those who arrived by boat from places like Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Somalia, Chad and places where visa entry to Australia is not possible.

How many of those who arrived here by boat are still waiting for an answer?

Most of the 19000 (on a TPV or SHEV) promised a permanent visa by the current government have been granted. There are another about 800 of this group still waiting for an answer.

How many people have a current Bridging visa (BVE) and can't apply for protection?

There are 7392 asylum seekers on a current BVE living in the community. They cannot apply for protection because they came by boat on or after 19 July 2013. 2,189 living in the community have expired BVEs that have not yet been renewed. When a person's visa expires their work and Medicare rights are suspended.

Are there people currently in immigration detention?

There are 985 people detained onshore. Most of these have had their visas cancelled—often for minor offences. The average duration of their detention is 1172 days. There are about 10 stateless people in detention. The nationality of the largest numbers detained is: New Zealand, Vietnam, Iran, In February there were 6 children in locked detention.

How many people have resettled in America after having sought protection in Australia?

1106 have actually been resettled in the USA - 1900 people applied.

How many have been resettled in New Zealand?

Two years into the three-year agreement, the UN Refugee Agency has referred 385 refugees for consideration, with 210 approved and 172 actually settled in New Zealand. New Zealand agreed to take 450 people and this agreement ends in June 2025.

How much money has been spent on detaining people in PNG and Nauru?

More than \$12 billion has been spent on off-shore processing since 2012.

How many people who were sent offshore by Australia are now in Australia?

1106 people who were transferred offshore are currently in Australia. They only have temporary visas—most have to be renewed every six months.

Ali's story*

My parents fled to Malaysia from Myanmar over twenty years ago. The government there does not like our people, and my parents had no option but to leave or else they would be killed. My younger sister and I were born in Malaysia.

I had a very tough childhood. We lived in extreme poverty with my dad doing his best as our income-earner. Every night, we were aware that the cops might come. As we were considered "stateless" people, they could do whatever they like.

They would take my father far away and ask for lots of money, which we didn't have. They tortured him and then, late at night, he had to make his way back to us to start work at 3am. He worked from 3am to 6pm and was paid the Australian equivalent of \$8 per hour. My Dad saw a lot of torture, both in Myanmar and in Malaysia. He saw people injured from torture, even witnessing his best friend being killed.

I am 20 now but came to Australia when I was 10. I speak three languages – Malay, Rohingya and English.

My parents had no option but to leave. It was a risk they took. They sacrificed everything, giving money to smugglers, so the four of us could be safe and my sister and I could study. I am now studying social work as I want to give back to the community. Over the years, lots of caseworkers have helped me.

In Malaysia, my parents sent me to a private Arabic boarding school in the hope I would learn to read the Koran. We are very close to our religion, and it is VERY important to us. It teaches us to respect everyone as we are all human beings, and we all have feelings. I was the only asylum seeker and was badly bullied. I learnt nothing. Now, I can read the Koran and have read all of it six times.

After Malaysia, we went to Darwin and stayed in the detention centre there for six months where we were treated very well. My life started there. I did not get much schooling at the time as I was often withdrawn to tell our story. I was the one who knew the timeline and time frame of our journey.

Let me now tell you about how we got to Darwin. The boat experience was, many times, a near-death experience.

We left Malaysia at night on a small boat. We were then transferred to another boat. We had a couple of hours of coasting and fell asleep. We were suddenly awakened and saw a whirlpool in the water charging in our direction. Suddenly, miraculously, it changed direction, and this saved our lives. We were safe but my sister got very sick. Some nice kind people helped us in Indonesia and then we had a long drive to Jakarta. We felt very unsafe there as if there was a lot of black magic all around us. We stayed a week there and random people gave us food. Then we took a long drive through the jungle at night. There were four cars, all full.

We arrived at the boat site. I remember I lost my sandal in the muddy ground. When the tide started coming in, we were all very frightened. It went from my ankles to over my head. I had to sit on my father's shoulders. The boat was an 80-people capacity boat but there were 120 on board. There were so many dangers at sea – storms, huge waves, rain, flooding of the boat, no shade in the heat, fear of the police catching us, sharks circling, a malfunctioning boat. We were on the boat for a month with barely any food.

When my sister got sick, the main driver wanted to throw her into the ocean. My uncle and others on board all came to protect her. The main driver then jumped off the boat. I don't know what happened to him.

The boat was just floating when, after a couple of days, a Navy plane flew over. We were all screaming hoping it would see us. The Navy rescued us and confiscated the boat. Because my mum and sister were so sick, they were put inside the Navy boat and not on the deck with all the others. Mum was taken to hospital as soon as we reached Darwin.

In Darwin, we started getting used to this country. We were given a choice of Sydney, Adelaide or Melbourne. We chose Melbourne, I don't know why, and I am very glad. I started learning English. Unfortunately, the first case worker we met was very late for the appointment which was confusing for us. Mostly, after that, they were very helpful.

There is so much to learn in a new country. We felt lost a lot of the time. We didn't have any food, but kind Muslim neighbours helped. We discovered there was a cousin living nearby and that really helped. Getting Centrelink also really helped. Then, a caseworker from "Life Without Barriers" referred us to BASP where we met Brigid and Libby.

I am now taking every opportunity I can. Three things have really helped me move forward – my religion, soccer and study.

For me, soccer is like a medicine. It has made a big, good impact on my life. I train three to four days a week for three hours. When I am training and playing a game, in those hours I do not need to worry about anything else. It's peaceful and I feel like I am in paradise. I play in a high-level league. The coach respects me and that is also good for me.

With my study, it gives my life a direction and purpose. I can focus on goals I want to reach. I can picture what I want to achieve, perhaps working in a hospital or a school. I believe in respecting whoever the person is and their culture.

Without a country and being persecuted, we had no choice. We had to leave.

Mohamad Karsani arrived in Australia from Sudan in 2007. After a short time in detention he was released and lived in the BASP house in Albert Park. After a while he got a job in the meat works in Warrnambool. He suffered a workplace injury and returned to Melbourne and lived for some time in the BASP house in Ardeer. He was able to sponsor his wife Npars to join him in Australia. They have four children, two in high school and two in primary school and live in South Melbourne.

On Sunday 22nd September he came to visit us in Albert Park to say thank you for the help he was given. He had also met up with Jen, a BASP volunteer, who had taught him English when he first arrived.



BASP has helped a young man from Pakistan for quite some time. He tended to come in to the office and then we might not see him again for some time. Recently, unknown to us, he became homeless.

He had been asleep on a tram and the tram driver reported him to the police—presumably at the end of the day's run. He has not had a visa for a long time and so when the police picked him up he was detained in the Melbourne Immigration Detention Centre. He had no belongings and had lost his phone in the encounter. It was some days before he managed to get someone to lend him a phone to contact us.

Although we had been helping this young man, he did not just rely on us. He did car washing but he had to take the shifts no one else wanted so he started work when most were finishing and worked until the last customers came in. Life without work rights is desperate!



A family seeking peace and the preciousness of volunteers.

Farrida and her husband, Mohammad, fled Myanmar by boat but arrived after July 19, 2013, so were sent to Nauru. The Australian Government stated that anyone arriving by boat after this date “would never be allowed to settle in Australia” and subsequent governments have maintained this position.

They were moved to Australia for the birth of their first child and were able to remain in the country on an ongoing temporary basis. This was initially in community detention, then into private rental in the community with the expectation they would self-manage, despite no access to benefits or government support.

They were referred to BASP in 2021 for assistance with rental payments to enable the family of 4 to remain housed. Mohammad has multiple health issues preventing him from working. Farrida worked first on her English, then did training in Aged Care and eventually was employed on a casual basis in this field.

Some months she worked enough days to pay the bills, daily living expenses and rent. Other months, it did not extend to the rent and she would call BASP for rental assistance again- apologetic but desperate for her family's welfare.

In November 2022, 2 friends became volunteers with BASP and wanted to visit and support a family. Anna and Jenny were matched with Farrida's family and what a mutually positive this experience has been for all.



They have provided social support as well as practical assistance, arranging probono physio for Mohammad and accompanying Farrida to child specialists to address some issues with one of the boys. Both have also donated generously to BASP which has helped Farrida and others.

Farrida is a quiet, respectful, determined and wise woman. She could see that there was no change in government policies in the 11 years since arriving. So, despite her apprehension of starting again, she applied for her family to take up an offer to move to Canada, where they would be permanent residents on arrival

with access to benefits and support.

They were accepted and finally received a departure date for Vancouver for October 1, 2024. The house and contents were all packed up and they spent the last 2 nights at Anna's home. The day before departure, they visited BASP with Jenny and Anna to thank us and say farewell.

Anna arranged for a 3am taxi to get the family to the airport for their flight to Sydney.

They arrived tired but secure at last.



The nonsense of taking away people's work rights

Two couples contacted BASP on the same day. Unknown to each other their stories had a lot in common. Both couples had been working for years and lost their work rights. In one of these families, the husband ran a restaurant and the wife worked in Bunnings. They had (and still have) a Bridging Visa but were told they no longer had work rights. Their previous lawyer had missed the date in 2018 to lodge for a visa renewal so unknown to them they were without a visa for four months. This lawyer told them that is the reason they have lost their work rights now. Could this be true? We will find out.

Siva's story

Me and my cousin (who I call my brother) came on the boat together. I was fifteen and a half and he, two and a half years older, was eighteen. I didn't know he was coming till I saw him on the boat. My father organised it all because I was so young and ill. My illness was caused by a big incident that happened in Sr Lanka that scared me then and still does. Thirteen years later, I am getting help from Cabrini Health Hub.

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I came to Melbourne straight from Darwin Detention Centre. Wesley Mission ran the group house where I stayed with other young asylum seekers under 18. They looked after us.

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After 18, I was on my own. I went to Dandenong Plaza where I met a Tamil family. I knew of them from one of the boys who had lived with them. I stayed with them for a little while and then kept moving from family to family. I was moving for many years.

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I started losing my mind. A friend took me to Cabrini. Recently, Cabrini has given me so much counselling. I can put my troubles in different rooms, and I can lock the doors. I am listening to music, reading books and going to the gym. Until Cabrini, I didn't know who to believe or who to trust. It's all about community. If you live with good people, you have a good life.

Then, thanks to Cabrini, Libby from BASP found me a place to live. Since then, I have met so many beautiful people. They are like angels from the sky. If you want to see God, look at the good souls around you. My prayers came true. I believe in prayers. Prayers come true. Eventually. I believe in good spirits. "Why me?", I used to ask. I lost everything – my mother, my education. I was without a mother, without the love of a mother, father and sisters. I was just a kid. I just want to lead a normal life.

Now, I have a family. Now, I know I am in safe hands. I have big support behind me. I have wings. My wings are back.

Opposite is a photo from Palm Sunday in Ballarat – Susan and her two boys are here. Susan and her husband Raj had to leave their two children in India with their grandmother when they fled from Nepal in 2012. In Australia they had two more children. They now have permanent residency – and they put in an application to bring those children to join them 12 months ago. It seems this application has gone to the bottom of the applications for family reunion.

A current campaign (BASP has been involved) is Permanency and Family Reunion. Permanency means little to those (mainly men) who have family stuck overseas waiting for a chance to apply for family reunion—which usually still takes a long time.



Christmas hampers

It is hard to believe that we are beginning to prepare for Christmas. We have very generous people who prepare hampers for us to deliver—we are assuming this will happen again!! One group of people who seem to miss out a lot are teenagers and young adults. We would welcome vouchers in particular to movies, some interesting places to visit or have some fun. There are young people who have none of the outings others in our community take for granted.



Volunteer Inspiration.



As grim as the political situation is for many of the people we see, the actions of volunteers often give us inspiration and brighten our days.

One couple have “adopted” a single mother with 2 children and a new baby. They visit each week or fortnight, have helped sort out an issue for one child at school and kindergarten for the other. They have also recruited the help of another asylum seeker from the same country to help with interpreting when discussions become complex. This involvement has made a world of difference to this family.

Sheila is a new volunteer and has worked extensively in health care. We called her about meeting and supporting a woman who has completed her Aged Care course but was not even getting an interview. She agreed instantly, met the woman 2 hours later and teed her up to meet a contact in the field. Sometimes it is these sorts of connections which help the asylum seeker get their foot in the door. Sheila's feedback- ‘What a beautiful person.’

Who says things don't happen in a hurry?

Suresh is a very enterprising and resourceful man. And we will outline here the reasons for his very big smile.



He arrived from Sri Lanka in 2009 by boat. He spent six months on Christmas Island, two years in Villawood detention centre in Sydney, three years in community detention in Perth. He had a Bridging visa that expired in 2015. He was homeless for some time and came to BASP in 2019. He has tried all sorts of things—working on a flower farm, cleaning, selling items from hard rubbish, gardening and helping as a volunteer at the Colostomy Association.

Last Wednesday 9th October he was given a Bridging visa and told he may get PR soon. On Friday 11th October **(2 days later)** he was given a ROS (Permanent) Visa! After fourteen years it all happened in two days.



Scherger – Pamela Curr and Brigid sat outside under these trees to talk to Hasara and Tamil men

As in Suresh's case, there are small indications that the Immigration Department is revisiting a number of individual cases. We are being hopeful and concluding that this attention is going to result in news of Permanency.

We keep being reminded of how long many of the folk, particularly from Afghanistan and Sri Lanka have waited for a resolution of their cases. In 2011 Pamela Curr and Brigid went to the Scherger detention centre (Cape York Peninsula in the far north of Queensland) and spent six days meeting the men there—they arranged themselves so that the Hasara men came in the morning and the Tamil men in the afternoon. Under the shade of the trees (it was extraordinarily hot) the men told their stories and Pamela and Brigid recorded what they said and, on return, tried to advocate on their behalf. It would be great to know where all those men are now. Our memory is how gentle, sad and desperate they were.

We tell stories to highlight the humanity of the refugee issue. These are the ‘human face’ of what otherwise becomes a political debate. We urge those who read these stories to use whatever opportunities you have to tell them to others. Governments over the past decades have ‘othered’ people seeking protection. What we have named earlier in this newsletter about regularisation is doing the opposite. It is treating those who arrive here asylum seekers like others living in the community. It is ensuring people from day 1 in Australia are welcomed and given every chance to live with dignity and hope.



Advocacy

The coordinators joined with Pamela Curr, an advocate, to speak on zoom with David Shoebridge, Green senator spokesman for refugees, about the ongoing plight of individuals and families still waiting for a substantive visa after 12 years. Some have work rights, others don't. He was aware of the work done by BASP and appalled at the punitive practices still impacting so many after all these years. He agreed to speak with Tony Burke about making work rights and Medicare available to all, regardless of where they are in the visa process.

Josh Burns, MP for the seat of Macnamara, came to the BASP office to speak to six people from the encampment at the Docklands. It is such a shot in the arm for our asylum seekers when "authority" figures like Josh show they have a heart for their situation. We always welcome the opportunity to introduce people from the Parliament to asylum seekers at any stage of their processing.



All hands on deck

There is a lot of work to be done when there is a change of occupancy or when we give a house back to those who gave it to us for a particular time.

As part of a school's Community Service Day, 4 volunteer teachers from Sacred Heart Oakleigh arrived at a house in Epping which was to return to its owners that day. The departing occupants were overwhelmed with moving out, and there was much to do! The volunteers rolled up their sleeves, tackled the garden, cupboards, bathroom and the large volumes of unwanted goods. It looked insurmountable but after a mammoth effort of these volunteers and BASP personnel, it was done. Thanks to all.

St Martin's Parish in Hawksburn have been amazing in their donation of eggs. These are very popular as they are expensive to buy and are nutritious. Christchurch South Yarra and St Martins continue to be very helpful—as do many parishes around Melbourne. Thank you to everyone.

Bitter sweet

A young woman who came to Australia as a fifteen year old ten years ago was married last Friday. She has her father here—she had left by herself from Quetta to join him. Her mother and two brothers are still overseas. In spite of pleading they were not given permission to come to join as a family for the wedding.



Lily Ashby is a student at Galen College in Wangaratta. She received the Bishop Joseph Grech Youth Scholarship which allowed her to spend two days as part of a justice program. She chose BASP and spent some time at the encampment in Docklands, writing a letter to the Prime Minister and Minister Burke as a result.

She then visited a BASP house with Hana. Lily is pictured here with Hana who took her on a tour of the house which included showing Lily his vegetable garden in the backyard. The two got along instantly and bonded over their love for chillies.

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, peas, carrots, corn.

The following are still very much appreciated:

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

Herbs and spices especially coriander, cinnamon,

Blocks or individual wrapped cheese.

Eggs are really appreciated

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

Gladwrap, tinfoil,

We would like to try Flat bread in sealed wrapping as people often ask for bread.

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

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 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.



The ups and downs for asylum seekers seem to be mirrored in the weather. Some days there is sun and some warmth and some individuals get good news. Then the very next day it can be bleak and cold. As it is with asylum seekers—we have a few more people getting at least some movement on their cases but then we meet more people who are struggling to survive and there doesn't seem much to cheer them up.



One ray of sunshine is always knowing that we have the support of so many good people. When we get asked how we manage to survive and we say it is only because we have people who regularly help us we see some amazement. So thanks for the donations including the food and grocery items. And thanks for continuing to offer friendship and practical help to those you have offered to help—in many cases quite a long time ago.

Brigid Arthur

Libby Saunders

(BASP Coordinators)