

STRENGTH AND KINDNESS

Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project (BASP)



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

Newsletter 125 July 2026

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

There is a mythology that life in Australia began with white occupation. Or that before white occupation there was one race occupying the land. This is disrespectful of the incredibly diverse network of indigenous peoples. We are told there were more than 250 different language groups with different customs and intricate connection with the land.

Australia has so many varied and cultural landscapes, languages, food differences and community customs. We celebrate this diversity and it is wonderful to be able to do so.

For decades the identity of our country was characterized by the White Australia policy and policies dominated by the rhetoric of assimilation. Any non-European was legally required to leave the country or pass strict dictation tests. This was gradually dismantled over the second part of the twentieth century. The Whitlam Government formally abolished all remaining racial criteria in migration and citizenship laws. In 1975, The Racial Discrimination Act was passed, making discrimination on the grounds of race or ethnic origin unlawful.

Pope Francis continually stresses that unity in diversity is a core element of the Church. In his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, he warned against nationalistic and exclusionary ideologies, calling for a culture of encounter. He explicitly stated that diversity is a richness that must never become a reason for exclusion and discrimination.

The current pope, Leo XIV, is also following his namesake who engaged with the concrete realities of society, laying the groundwork for modern Catholic social teachings. He emphasized that the proclamation of the Gospel must support human dignity and justice across all cultural contexts.

At BASP we are constantly enlivened by the richness of the cultural groups we get to understand—at least a little. We are saddened by the lack of understanding from leaders who do not have any words of welcome or kindness towards people who are in any way different and who ask for protection. Not only do asylum seekers suffer the immense hardships and policy challenges facing them in Australia (lack of visa security, destitution, lack of work rights, prolonged processing delays and so on) but are then told to try to hide their identifying cultures.

Pauline Hanson has reaffirmed her commitment to the old policy of assimilation, demanding an end to multiculturalism. Hugh de Kretser (Australian Human Rights Commission President) responded that Hanson was calling for a return to the era of the White Australia policy, which would mean some people belong here less than others, and some people are worth less than others, and that's a concept that human rights absolutely rejects.

Hanson canvassed a myriad of grievances but homed-in on migration as the greatest threat to the nation. This makes us at BASP very nervous about the influence this may have, as well as the hurt and fear that it engenders for those newly arrived asylum seekers.

Donations to the Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project are tax deductible

Debates about visas muddy the waters and immigration debates bring out the worst in us as Australians

Inevitably refugees and asylum seekers become a part of any debate about immigration—often based on devastatingly wrong information. While Australia accepts a high volume of overall immigrants, the number of refugees and asylum seekers admitted is extremely low. However, when discussing general immigration, the debate tends to be hijacked by the issue of asylum seekers and refugees. This is highly polarizing due to political manipulation, economic anxiety, and the fear of lack of security of borders. Politicians often use refugees as scapegoats to divert attention from things like inadequate infrastructure and economic inequality. Hardline policies, like offshore processing and temporary visas, entrench the prejudice that asylum seekers are illegal threats rather than people seeking legally mandated protection. The following is an attempt to clarify the truth.

Every year, tens of millions of people cross Australia's borders. For long-term migration and permanent settlement, Australia has around 568,000 arrivals and 263,000 departures annually, **resulting in a net overseas gain of roughly 300,000+ people**. Most people who come and go are short-term tourists, business travelers, and returning residents.

Compared with these numbers Australia typically maintains a Refugee and Humanitarian Program capped at 20,000 places per year. This quota is split into offshore resettlement and onshore protection visas. The offshore resettlement program is for people located outside Australia. About 16-17,000 come to Australia under this program. There are several components in this number (e.g. individuals outside their home country who are subject to persecution and are typically identified and referred by the UNHCR. women at risk, some sponsored by Australians and others) —and they come to Australia with permanent visas. The onshore protection program is for those already in Australia on a valid visa who seek asylum and the number accepted is typically 3-4,000 each year.

The most contentious part of these numbers is that they do not include those who arrived without a valid visa (typically by boat) and these are not included in this onshore component. This is because they are not deemed to ever be eligible to settle in Australia. This has been seen as a deterrent to seeking asylum in Australia under the government's Operation Sovereign Borders policy.

While the asylum claims of this last group are being assessed, they are given Bridging visas when they lodge an application for protection in Australia. These are temporary legal mechanisms used to maintain an individual's lawful status in the community, and they do not count as visa grants under Australia's capped onshore refugee number. Often the asylum seekers themselves and their supporters do not understand that these do not carry any right to long term permanent visas. However being here without a Bridging visa means the person can at any time be detained and deported.

Refugees frequently become targets of xenophobia and misinformation during election periods. Common misconceptions—such as claims that they take jobs, exploit Centrelink, or threaten security—persist despite evidence to the contrary. Australians' fears regarding refugees are heavily driven by political rhetoric, anxieties over economic stability (such as cost-of-living and housing pressures), and perceived threats to cultural cohesion. These concerns are often amplified by disinformation that conflates asylum seekers with broader immigration trends.

The current government has enabled a large dent in the number who were waiting interminably for a permanent visa. However, over a decade after strict border policies were enacted, thousands of asylum seekers are still caught in Australia's visa processing system. This cohort includes roughly 3,000 boat arrivals from over ten years ago, and another 700 individuals who were evacuated from offshore detention for medical treatment.

We need the government to resolve two urgent humanitarian crises: securing permanent safety for the remaining refugees marooned in Papua New Guinea, and ending the visa limbo for those people living in the Australian community who are denied permanent protection simply because they were subjected to offshore processing.

Discussion Session
Wednesday, 12th August
2pm – 3.30pm
Brigidine Ministry Centre,
54 Beaconsfield Pde, Albert Park

Topic: Statelessness

Speaker: Katie Robertson



Katie Robertson is the Associate Director of the Peter McMullin Centre on Statelessness and Assistant Director of the Melbourne Law School Clinics at the Melbourne Law School.

She is also the Director of the Stateless Legal Clinic.

Katie will address the implications of being stateless.

To be stateless means no country in the world recognises you as legally belonging.

Lack of nationality can negatively shape every aspect of a person's life. Stateless people can struggle to access the most basic human rights, such as education, health care, and the ability to work and move freely.

The impacts on children can be especially debilitating, robbing them of their childhood and the chance to build a future.

These eggs could tell a story—of care and humanity and collaboration.

Re Millbrook Free Range Eggs

When I collected the eggs from Louise Jeffrey a few weeks ago she was working with her father cleaning and sorting the eggs. I thought it might be a nice photo for your archives.

While Peter Cook from Hamilton initiated the egg deliveries a year or so ago, and RAR Ballarat took it over, about one third of our deliveries have donations that Louise has thrown in, "Can you fit another box in?" I usually can, and sometimes two. [thanks Louise]

Regards
David



A wonderful letter from Belinda, an amazing advocate and volunteer



With wonderful news from a family with a new RoS visa

On Friday, April 24, 2026 at 3.01pm I received this message:

I just wanted to share some good news with you ... our permanent visa has finally been approved!

I'm so happy and relieved after everything we've been through. Thank you for always being kind and supportive.

I was absolutely delighted, relieved and overjoyed that the Iranian family BASP had put us in touch with 12 years ago finally had a secure future ahead, but I was also deeply ashamed that my country, Australia, had put this family through over 12 years of cruel and unusual punishment for daring to seek asylum from a country with a brutal regime – especially for an educated woman.

The couple fled Iran, hid in the forests in Indonesia and made their way to Australia by boat, arriving at Christmas Island, then were moved to Nauru. Sister Brigid secured their release from Nauru to Broadmeadows Detention Centre (their first daughter was born under police guard at the RWH while they were in Broadmeadows) and finally into the community to housing funded by BASP which is where we first met them.

We were meant to teach them English and on our first visit discovered that was not in our skill set and I rang on Monday and explained that this lovely young couple deserved better than us and we couldn't continue. "Could you be a friend?" – **of course we could** and what a time that has been since. The whole gamut of human emotions. They had no Centrelink, Medicare or work rights - quite the contrast to Ukrainian friends who also fled a dire situation, but were fortunate they could arrive by plane and were immediately given a three year Humanitarian Visa with Centrelink, Medicare and work rights and within four years had their permanent visa – that is the correct way to treat people seeking asylum. There is no reason or logic involved – the family members who they fled with from Iran secured their Visas years ago and their elder child received her permanent visa a year ago.

Together we have navigated play group with Berry Street, kindergarten, school(s), piano lessons, girl guides, swimming lessons for mother and girls, yoga, house moves, a second daughter (no guard this time!), a failed application for a visa, a failed High Court Appeal, COVID and sadly a suicide attempt by the mother who felt the world had no place for her. Friends and family have helped in many and various ways, but the heavy lifting has been done by BASP.

At every step of the process, Sister Brigid, Libby Saunders and the team at BASP have been amazing not only in supporting the family emotionally, financially and advocating for them, but lifting us up when we hit the depths of despair (Centrelink – I'm looking at you! BASP contacted Marist brother Mark who saved the day!)

This is just one story of the many families that BASP have given a second chance to and I wanted to share this good news story. I don't know how they keep going, but I am so glad they do. I am also grateful for advocacy from the office of Dr Monique Ryan, Federal Member for Kooyong.

Thank you BASP for always being kind and supportive.

From two Australian couples!

We get so excited by news such as above and then we hear sad news from another person. Isa's case was rejected initially even though there appears to be no good reason. Since then each review just reiterates the same decision. He has a partner and a child, a steady job (his employers have high regard for him) and he is an amazing young man. Right now he is facing leaving the country for a considerable time and applying to return on a partner visa. All requiring a lot of heartache and money!

Why is our Prime Minister so dismissive of the rights of the ISIS brides?

Most of the world abhors ISIS and everything it stands for. ISIS (The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) is an extremist militant group whose aim is to take over territory by force and establish a fundamentalist state. Its members claim they are Islamic but most ordinary Muslims totally reject the conservative interpretation of Islamic law (Sharia) that is espoused by the group. They also abhor the violence and oppression that ISIS perpetrates in the name of religion. The idea of a ‘Caliphate’, a theocracy that would rule the world, is rejected by the vast majority of people. The group no longer holds any substantial territory in its historical heartland, operating instead as a clandestine guerrilla force that has spread into parts of Africa.

It is good to remember something of the history leading up to ISIS especially since Australia played a part in it! ISIS began in 2003 after the war with Iraq that was waged by the "Coalition of the Willing" . This was an international alliance led by the United States to invade Iraq and overthrow Saddam Hussein, a barbaric leader in Iraq, a country that was supposed to be in possession of ‘weapons of mass destruction’. This accusation was found not to be true but the mythology perpetrated by the USA and accepted by countries like Australia was enough to sustain invading Iraq. The United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Poland provided combat troops for the initial invasion, while many other countries joined as part of the conflict in some form or other.

So while ISIS is harsh, cruel and totally inhumane, it came from a reaction to a Coalition-led war that led to hundreds of thousands of deaths and widespread displacement of people and the destabilisation of large areas of the country.

So who are the ISIS ‘brides’? Some women traveled to conflict zones in Iraq and Syria to marry, support, or live under the Islamic State (ISIS) caliphate. Their motivation is a vexed question to which there is almost certainly no simple answer. It seems there were about 700 women involved. Maybe about 30 were Australian and many of these ended up in squalid camps in northeastern Syria.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese frequently speaks disparagingly and with "contempt" toward these women, primarily because they deliberately chose to travel to support a terrorist organization that actively sought to attack democracies. Mr. Albanese has stated that these women made "evil choices" and placed their children in danger. We believe this is harsh and preemptively judges the women and often, by implication, their families. They are Australian citizens and deserve to be able to put their case for judgment here in Australia. While the women themselves may have made conscious decisions about going to an ISIS controlled place (this is questionable) but their children certainly didn't. Indeed many of the women were not much more than children themselves when they left for Syria.

The Prime Minister on behalf of the Government is providing no support for the repatriation of these people or any support whatsoever. He has repeatedly said “I have nothing but contempt for these people”.

Why is Mr. Albanese so against giving these women and their children a safe passage back to Australia?

Maybe there is a clue in the following quote from researcher, Hugh Mackay. Mackay said, “**Politicians know that they are in a more secure position if the population is scared of something**—for example, when you talk about border protection as though we are under threat from hordes of boat people, asylum seekers, illegal immigrants [and as though] all this talk would have an effect on our jobs or our housing.” We are not averse to legal scrutiny upon return, but we believe all citizens deserve government support and a safe pathway to rebuild their lives, as much as this is possible.

We want to pay **tribute to Charles Tegner** from St Georges parish in Malvern. For many years Charles has been the go-between for BASP and St Georges. Charles has brought donations—financial and material—on a regular basis. He has been a beacon of hope with his smile and his generosity. He has had to step back from this role but he has arranged a successor! Charles you have been an absolute stalwart.



St Mary's College, St Kilda



During Refugee Week, Renee Mazloum was invited to speak with the Year 12 students at St Mary's College in St Kilda, where students have been learning about refugees, people seeking asylum, and the many ways young people can stand in solidarity with vulnerable communities. The students engaged deeply, asked thoughtful questions, and demonstrated a genuine commitment to understanding the realities faced by people seeking safety.



In addition to hosting the session, St Mary's organised an extraordinary food drive, filling an entire bus with food items for BASP's Foodbank. These donations will go directly to people seeking asylum who are struggling to put food on the table, many of whom have no income, no access to government support, and rely on community generosity to meet their most basic needs.



BASP staff were overwhelmed by the generosity and deeply moved when the delivery arrived. It was a privilege to meet the dedicated staff from St Mary's who helped make this possible, and to witness the compassion and solidarity that sits at the heart of their school community.



A special shout-out to Abbey from Year 10 and her wonderful mother, who were the driving force behind the food drive. Their leadership, kindness, and determination made a real and immediate difference to families who are doing it tough.



This support means more than just food on shelves, it represents dignity, welcome, and the reassurance that people seeking asylum are not forgotten. BASP is profoundly grateful to the St Mary's community for standing with us and with the people we support.

St Phillips Church in Collingwood and Christ Church South Yarra both welcomed Brigid and gave an invitation to speak at their Sunday Eucharist during Refugee Week.

The imperative to welcome the stranger is a deeply rooted theme across both the Old and New Testaments. We believe there is a special Christian imperative to extend hospitality to refugees. **Siena College** and **Killester College** invited Brigid to speak to their staffs about Catholic social teaching that forms the basis of the project's core mission to provide hospitality, practical support, and advocacy for refugees and those seeking asylum.



Year 9 students at **Kildare College** in Adelaide sent generous donations of personal items for our BASP people. It is so heartening to see young people taking such care and giving effort to contribute to the dignity of others.

A group of **FCJ Companions in Mission** who are committed to living the spirituality of the fcj Sisters met with Brigid to learn more about BASP. The fcj Sisters themselves have been great supporters of BASP.

The above represent examples of groups who are open to know more about what is happening to those seeking asylum in Australia and ready to extend compassion in whatever ways they can.

A Wonderful Day of Friendship, Community and Welcome in Woodend

On a beautiful day in Woodend, BASP staff members Julie Catalano and Natarla Reid travelled with 20 people seeking asylum to attend a special Picnic and BBQ Day hosted by the Macedon Ranges Rural Australians for Refugees (MRRAR).



The day began with an early train journey from Southern Cross Station to Woodend, filled with anticipation and excitement. Upon arrival, the BASP group was warmly welcomed by members of the MRRAR team, who met everyone at Woodend Station and accompanied us on a short walk to St Ambrose Parish Hall, where the event was being held.

From the moment we arrived, it was clear that a great deal of thought, planning and care had gone into creating a welcoming and enjoyable day for everyone. The event commenced with introductions, giving people the opportunity to share their names and get to know one another. These simple conversations helped to break down barriers and create connections between people from different backgrounds and experiences.



While lunch was being prepared, everyone headed outside for a game of soccer. The soccer match quickly became one of the highlights of the day, with plenty of laughter, teamwork and friendly competition. It was wonderful to see people of all ages participating together, building friendships and enjoying the opportunity to relax and simply have fun.

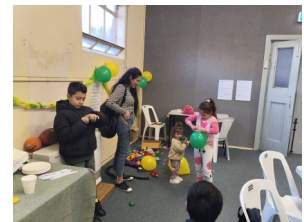
Following the soccer game, everyone gathered to enjoy a traditional Australian BBQ lunch. The meal was generously prepared by MRRAR volunteers and provided an opportunity for people to sit together, share stories and enjoy each other's company. Food has a unique way of bringing people together, and the lunch created a warm and welcoming atmosphere where meaningful connections could be made.



As if the BBQ was not enough, MRRAR had also prepared an impressive Australian-themed dessert table. Guests were treated to a range of iconic Australian favourites, including lamingtons, ANZAC biscuits, fairy bread and many other delicious treats. For some of the people attending, this was their first opportunity to experience some of Australia's most well-known desserts, making it both a fun and memorable cultural experience.

One particularly thoughtful feature of the day was a display of posters showcasing Australian slang and their meanings. The posters generated plenty of discussion, laughter and learning as participants discovered the meanings behind many uniquely Australian expressions. This creative and educational activity reflected the care MRRAR had taken to help people seeking asylum better understand Australian culture while feeling welcomed and included.

At the conclusion of the day, Margaret from MRRAR thanked everyone from BASP for attending and expressed her delight at being able to host the gathering. Julie Catalano responded on behalf of BASP, thanking the MRRAR team for their extraordinary hospitality, generosity and ongoing friendship.



Marian College, West Sunshine Embodies Justice Through the Great Marian Shave

On 25 June, the Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project (BASP) was honoured to be invited to Marian College's assembly as the school reflected on the Kildare Ministries value for 2026: **Justice**.

BASP CEO, Renee Mazloum, addressed students, staff and families, speaking about what justice looks like in practice through the work of BASP and the importance of responding when we see people experiencing disadvantage, exclusion and injustice.



Drawing on BASP's daily work with people seeking asylum, Renee challenged students to think of justice not as a slogan or abstract concept, but as something lived through action, compassion and solidarity. She spoke about the power of community, dignity and belonging, and the responsibility we all share to stand alongside those facing difficult circumstances.

The assembly also featured several powerful videos prepared by both Marian College and BASP, highlighting the realities faced by people seeking asylum and the impact that communities can have when they choose to act with compassion and courage.

The highlight of the event came when four brave teachers took to the stage and shaved their heads as part of the Great Marian Shave. Having spent months growing their hair and beards in preparation, they demonstrated that justice and compassion require us to give something of ourselves for the benefit of others. Their willingness to step forward in such a public and generous way inspired the entire school community.



This is not the first time Renee has spoken at Marian College, and she reflected afterwards on the experience:

This is not my first visit to Marian College, and it is a pleasure to return. Every time I visit, I am struck by the warmth, kindness and sense of community that exists among the students and staff. As someone who speaks at many schools throughout the year, I am always encouraged when I encounter young people who are genuinely engaged with issues of justice and who want to make a positive difference in the lives of others. It was inspiring to see the Marian College community embrace this year's Kildare value of Justice, not just through reflection and discussion, but through action. I am deeply grateful to the students, teachers and families for their generosity, their support of BASP, and their commitment to ensuring that people seeking asylum are seen, valued and welcomed.



BASP extends its sincere gratitude to the students, teachers and families of Marian College for their generosity, enthusiasm and commitment to justice. Through their fundraising efforts, awareness-raising and ongoing support of people seeking asylum, the Marian College community continues to demonstrate what it means to put values into action.

Citizenship

A happy Iman. After 10 yrs, BASP and volunteers Phil & Louise have helped all the way !!





Connections are important

Scarf is an award-winning Melbourne-based not-for-profit social enterprise that transforms the lives of young people (aged 18-30) from refugee and migrant backgrounds who are facing barriers to employment.

On the 1st of June, eight young people graduated and these included Jesse, one of the men in a BASP house in St Albans. Jesse did a placement with a restaurant in the city and this resulted in a job as a front of house host.

Some while ago Samy, from the BASP house in Beaconsfield Pde also graduated from Scarf. Last Friday evening at an event attended by some BASP personnel at Newman College, a perfectly presented young woman managed to get our attention and it was Samy serving at our table. Talking to her later, Samy told us how getting one job at Newman had led to meeting the lady who is in charge of catering at the College and that led to the job that evening. It was wonderful to see the confidence this is giving to someone who was so timid, now looking so self assured.

Dorothy, also from our BASP house in Albert Park, found cleaning work that enabled her to move to a place that was offering accommodation in Blackburn. This has freed up a room in the Beaconsfield Pde house. And at the same time two women asylum seekers are looking for a place to live!

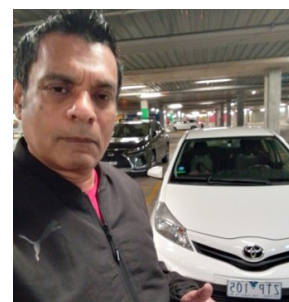
A Ugandan family in a BASP house in Bonbeach have settled their children into school. The eldest is doing VCE at St Bede's. We thank St Bede's for making this possible.

A very ill asylum seeker who has been in a BASP house in Sunshine for a long time has been accepted into rehab in the Royal Melbourne hospital. It is great that he can get the care he needs.

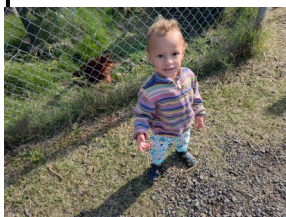
In an arrangement with the Baptist Church in Ashburton a family who had two children were housed. They now have a new baby. A lot of joy!

One piece of good news is that we think the occupants of the various houses are better at gardening and cleaning. Hoping that's not wishful thinking. We have a lot of experience with broken mowers and all such tools (Margaret has been an amazing 'fixer'). For more than a year now we have been using one of the asylum seekers to help mend, paint, extend the life span ... and generally be a general maintenance person. This has been mutually beneficial.

We recently supported one of our asylum seekers by providing him with a car to help him secure employment. The Brigidines generously donated the vehicle, and St Dominic's Parish kindly covered the cost of the Roadworthy Certificate and the VicRoads transfer fees. There is a photo of the grateful recipient with the car. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Brigidines and St Dominic's Parish for their generosity and support. This has been a significant step towards independence for our friend, and we are very grateful to everyone who helped make it possible.



A BASP supporter knits many beautiful jumpers for children. We have been able to give these to very grateful families—pictured here is one of the recipients.



Help needed

BASP has a great need of a volunteer(s) with a van, truck, ute or a vehicle that can transport items of furniture and other items at times. We often get donations of things needed to set up a house and then to move things belonging to a person or family being accommodated. Our problem is getting the items from A to B. Any offers would be gratefully received.



BASP Trivia Night – A Fantastic Result!

It was a brilliant night of fun, laughter and friendly competition, and we're delighted to share that BASP was one of the winners in a very close tie at the Trivia Night!

A huge thank you to St Mary's Parish in Hampton, who organise this event twice a year with such generosity and heart. Their commitment to bringing the community together in support of people seeking asylum is something we deeply value.

Thanks to the incredible turnout and the spirit of giving in the room, over \$8,000 was raised for BASP. This contribution will go directly to supporting the people who need it most, providing safety, stability, and practical help to families and individuals rebuilding their lives.



We extend our deep appreciation to everyone who attended, donated, volunteered, or helped spread the word. Nights like these remind us how powerful community can be. And we felt the spirit of Ken still in the room!

SOIREE

CABRINI CHOIR
IN COLLABORATION WITH
ST JOSEPH'S MUSIC MINISTRY
'Music in the Chapel'

Thanks also to the Cabrini choir (in conjunction with the St Joseph's Music Ministry)

Thanks especially to Leesa Horrigan for another beautiful afternoon of song and the subsequent donation for BASP.

BASP Discussion Session with Adama Kamara – Policy, People, and the Path Ahead

BASP was delighted to welcome Adama Kamara, Co-CEO of the Refugee Council of Australia, to our recent Discussion Session. Adama brought both her professional expertise and lived experience to a conversation that helped our community better understand the current policy environment affecting people seeking asylum. She offered a clear and grounded overview of the issues shaping people's lives right now, from the slow resolution of long-standing asylum cases, to the gaps in the SRSS safety net, to the ongoing impacts of detention and offshore processing. She also highlighted the opportunities emerging through more efficient pathways for people waiting over a decade for decisions, the need for fairer access to Medicare and work rights, and the importance of strengthening refugee protection across the Asia-Pacific region. Her insights helped connect complex policy shifts with the everyday realities faced by the people BASP supports.



Adama also shared the Refugee Council's broader vision for reform, a future where Australia expands its humanitarian program, strengthens complementary pathways, and ensures that people already living in our communities can finally access stability and permanency. She emphasised the urgent need for practical solutions for those left in limbo, the importance of safeguarding human rights in new legislation, and the critical role of communities in advocating for justice. For BASP, her message resonated deeply with our commitment to hospitality, dignity, and fairness, and with our belief that policy change must always be grounded in the lived experiences of the people affected. We are deeply grateful to Adama for her generosity, wisdom, and unwavering commitment to refugee rights, and to everyone who attended and contributed to such a thoughtful and engaged discussion. This session strengthened our shared resolve to continue advocating, supporting, and standing alongside people seeking asylum.

The wonderful **Macedon Ranges Rural Australians for Refugees (MRRAR)** held their annual Trivia Night on 13 June and raised over \$2,000 in support of BASP, an incredible effort from a truly dedicated community group. MRRAR is a remarkable network of volunteers who work tirelessly to stand with refugees and people seeking asylum, and their commitment continues to make a real difference.

We are deeply grateful for MRRAR's generosity, for organising such a fun and engaging evening, and for everything they do to champion dignity, welcome and justice. Thank you, MRRAR, for your ongoing partnership and for the warmth you bring to this shared work.



BASP recently welcomed Malia O'Brien, who leads the housing portfolio at the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, for a valuable catch-up focused on strengthening our ongoing collaboration. It was a great opportunity for both teams to share insights, discuss the increasing housing pressures facing people seeking asylum, and explore practical ways to continue working closely so that as many individuals and families as possible can access safe, stable accommodation during times of crisis.

We are grateful to Malia for taking the time to visit BASP and for the generosity, clarity and partnership she brings to this shared work. We look forward to continuing this strong connection between our two housing teams as we respond together to the urgent needs in our community.



An advertisement for Faro Group. It features a man in a blue polo shirt with 'FARO' on it, standing with arms crossed. The background shows a city skyline. Text includes: 'WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? And I Recommend It To You.', 'WHY CHOOSE FARO GROUP IN MELBOURNE?', 'TRUSTED & EXPERIENCED', 'TAILORED SOLUTIONS', 'LOCAL & RELIABLE', 'FULLY INSURED', 'ATTENTION TO DETAIL', 'COMPETITIVE PRICING', 'DON'T WAIT FOR A CLEANER TOMORROW. Let FARO GROUP make the difference today!', 'CALL US TODAY! 0466 905 600', 'EMAIL US: Farogroup10@gmail.com', 'FOLLOW US: @Farogroup', and a list of services: OFFICE CLEANING, CLINIC CLEANING, GYM CLEANING, END OF LEASE CLEANING, WINDOW CLEANING.

Jobs are one of our most challenging needs. Having employment solves so many things for our people.

Any tips, connections or help to get a job are wonderful to get.

Farhoud hopes this card may secure him some phone calls for cleaning jobs!

Thank You to Our Incredible Second Bite Volunteers

We want to take a moment to express our deep gratitude to our wonderful volunteers who have adjusted so quickly and compassionately to the recent changes in the **Coles SecondBite** collection process.

Transitions like this can be challenging, but our volunteers didn't hesitate.

They adapted, reorganised, and made sure that, despite the changes, **people seeking asylum would not go without food**. Their commitment ensures that families who rely on BASP continue to have access to fresh, nutritious food during times of real hardship.



A huge shout-out to **Tom, Liz, Pat, John and Viv**. Your reliability, kindness, and willingness to step up mean more than you know. You embody the spirit of BASP: community, dignity, and solidarity.

We had a very special visit from one of our people, Esther, who brought in her beautiful newborn baby boy. She shared how calming it felt to be here, watching little Gershon being passed gently from arm to arm, completely at ease in our space. Moments like this remind us of the warmth, connection and sense of welcome that sit at the heart of BASP. We were delighted to share in such a joyful time with Esta and her little one, and we look forward to many more visits as they continue to settle into this new chapter of their lives.



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

Most food items are appreciated. In particular:

- Cans of fruit, peas, carrots, corn
- 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**



At present we need full cream long-life milk, noodles, tuna, basmati rice, dates, Gladwrap, tinfoil, shopping bags



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, deodorant
Garbage bags and bin liners (small and large)

We seemingly never have enough washing powder, dish washing detergents or 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 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 if you don't want one.



A note from Renee:

As time passes, I feel increasingly connected to the BASP community and to the purpose that drives us. I feel blessed to work in a place that is so person driven, so values inspired and so deeply human.

Even on difficult days—and there are plenty of these in this line of work—I know that goodness surrounds me. And because of that, everything will be alright.

To everyone who has welcomed me and had faith in me: thank you. I am honoured to walk alongside you. BASP is a rare place—a place where justice is lived, not spoken; where community is built, not assumed, and where every person is treated as though their dignity matters because it does.

I look forward to continuing this journey with all of you.

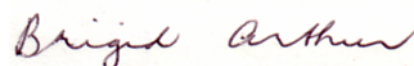


And from Brigid

Thanks for all the generous donations in June in particular. We can help so many people because of your wonderful generosity. Feel free to drop in and have a cup of tea if you are going past.



Renee Mazloum
CEO



Brigid Arthur