



Investing in People

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre
Social Prospectus

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Our history, our future, and you

The early 1990s saw a series of political and historical turns that drew Australia into a narrative of ‘illegals’ and ‘floods’, of ‘boat people’ and ‘queues’, of border ‘crises’ and offshore ‘solutions’. Amidst this noise of politics and polemics, our national conversation lost hold of a better story. We somehow lost the connection to our role as a bastion of human rights, as a society of tolerance, as a land of plenty, and as a provider of refuge.

In 2001, the doors of a tiny shopfront in Footscray, Victoria, opened with only a few hundred dollars and some boxes of food at hand. This grassroots movement sought to redress the broader injustices of refugee affairs with simple acts of community charity toward community-based asylum seekers. And it created a groundswell. Over the next ten years, the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre grew 100-fold, continually evolving and expanding to address the inequities caused not only by displacement and flight from persecution around the world, but also by the injustices and inhumanities of our own country’s determination process, our practices of

detention and our failure to understand associated issues like legal justice, mental health, homelessness and basic community access to work, learning and health. In 2011, the ASRC delivered 23 programs to over 1000 asylum seeker members with the help of 716 volunteers and 34 paid staff.

Over the last decade, we have learnt the importance of empowerment beyond charity, and of sustainability beyond crisis. We are now Australia’s leading asylum seeker human rights organisation and an award-winning, independent national institution whose eminent patrons and ambassadors attest to the importance and industry-leading quality of our programs.

In order to continue our work, to maintain our independence and to build our vision, the ASRC must now look to secure its long term sustainability. By supporting the ASRC, you will be partnering with Australia’s largest and most recognised provider of aid, advocacy and health services for asylum seekers. I invite you to peruse this prospectus and learn more about what a difference your support



“We are now Australia’s leading asylum seeker human rights organisation and an award-winning, independent national institution...”

can make, and how this support can in turn benefit your organisation.

You have the capacity to make an enormous contribution to the lives of asylum seekers.

Matthew Tutty
ASRC Chairperson



Our Vision and Values

Our vision

Our vision is that all those seeking asylum in Australia have their human rights upheld and that those seeking asylum in our community receive the support and opportunities they need to live independently.

Our Values

We turn no asylum in need away because we believe in the inherent worth of all people.

We value and invest in our people and their potential because sustainable success is built on culture and community.

We nurture self - determination in the people we assist for their independence is our greatest success.

We are not afraid to lead, innovate and dream for the challenge is always to strive for excellence in all that we do.

We are independent because we believe that justice requires a freedom to do what is right at all times.

We are holistic because we see the whole person, their strengths, resilience and possibilities.

We stand for human rights and a fair go for asylum seekers at all times.

We are passionate, idealistic and visionary because nothing less will change the world.



Investing in people

Our Prospectus is for those who hunger for a new conversation, a way forward that breaks the cycle of poverty and the politicisation of asylum seekers. We have a new vision for Australia, one that proudly embraces our history since 1788 as a nation built by boat people. A vision that appeals to the best in us as Australians and asks of each of us to seize the opportunity we have right now.

At the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre we see the potential in our new Australians, that with early intervention and investment they will

do us proud. We know that education and employment are the tools that transform a community from one that survives on the margins to one that thrives and enriches our economic, cultural and social fabric.

The entrepreneurial spirit that makes our country so great lives in the hearts and minds of people who seek asylum in Australia. Refugees are survivors, resilient, courageous and resourceful. All they need is a fair go so they can contribute to our country as over 700,000 refugees before them have done since time of Federation.

We ask you to invest in our vision, one that is fair for asylum seekers, better for Australians and best for our country. You can help us create jobs for our economy, helps employers fill critical skill gaps, save lives, strengthens our international reputation, save tax payers a billion dollars a year and help nurture a resilient and successful next generation of Australian citizens.

**Kon Karapanagiotidis OAM
CEO ASRC**

About us

ASRC is an independent not-for-profit human rights organisation that protects and upholds the human rights, wellbeing and dignity of asylum seekers.

Our approach

We work with partners, staff, volunteers and our supporters to provide people with the skills, knowledge and resources to be independent, engaged, proud and resilient future Australian citizens.

We believe that

Our work is guided by people having the right to:

- Basic food and material goods.
- Primary health care, legal aid and social services.
- Education, employment and social opportunities.
- Informed social and government policy.

Our work

At the ASRC, we work in a holistic, interdisciplinary way with asylum seekers.

We provide essential, life-saving aid to asylum seekers living without income support.

Asylum seekers in Australia have no access to the safety net that we take for granted. They face destitution and adversity as they struggle to make it from day to day.

We provide food and material aid to asylum seekers who often have nowhere else to turn.

We supply weekly groceries for 300 people every week over 50% of who have no income.

We secure justice for asylum seekers through legal, welfare and advocacy services.

Asylum seekers in Australia have no guaranteed right to legal, healthcare, or settlement services.

We protect the human rights of asylum seekers. We do this through legal representation and the delivery of primary health, mental health and welfare services.

Via a team of over 100 volunteers and an only handful of paid solicitors we provide annually more than 19,000 hours of free legal help.

We foster independence and self-determination of asylum seekers through community development and access to employment and education pathways.

Asylum seekers in Australia have no guaranteed income, access to English language classes (ESL) or access to government training and employment services.

We use an early intervention model providing orientation and mentoring programs, sport and recreation activities. We provide ESL classes, a catering social enterprise and access to TAFE and employment opportunities.

Last year we secured over 250 employment and education placements through our Employment Service and Catering social enterprise.

We create partnerships with the community, raise awareness of asylum seeker experiences and promote social inclusion and cultural diversity.

Asylum seekers are one of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in Australia.

We work in partnership with the community, government and business to create humane policy and informed attitudes.

We provide opportunities for volunteers, we speak to the community, we advocate for change and we create partnerships.

In 2011 we engaged over 10,000 people from over 100 organisations through our speaking engagements.



Our performance at a glance

Assisted over 7000 people seeking asylum since 2001.

Helped end the policy of children in detention.

Lobbied State Government to allow asylum seekers in Victoria access to free medical emergency care in our public health system.

Turned no one in need away.

Last year we

Helped over 1,000 asylum seekers.

Provided 23 direct service programs.

Enabled over 150 asylum seekers to go to TAFE.

We cooked 25 000 hot lunches every week through our Community Meals Program.

We legally assisted over 350 people through 1900 hours of service - successfully representing 83% at the primary stage of the refugee process.

Bottom line 2010-11

We grew our volunteer staff to over 740 active volunteers who provided 3000 hours of assistance per week - the equivalent of 58 full-time staff.

ASRC Catering has gone from strength to strength now employing 18 asylum seekers, and catering for over 300 events.

Fundraising activity cost is only 2% of total expenditure.

Grant income \$885,729 with support from 30 philanthropic partners.

Total community support income \$1,827,871.

The voice of the ASRC

I think it is undoubtedly one of the great strengths of Australia that since the mid-twentieth century it has become a nation where people from throughout the globe can make a home here. The refugees and migrants from first Western Europe, then Eastern and Southern Europe, from the Jewish diaspora, from the Middle East and Asia, from the South Pacific and now increasingly from Africa, have been central in redefining our sense of ourselves as a multicultural, tolerant and dynamic culture.

Maybe we who believe that multiculturalism is better than monoculturalism, who are grateful for the energy and possibilities of the “new world” nation-state, have been on the defensive for too long – we’ve allowed those mired in an impossible nostalgia or in a backward looking negativity to determine the debate around migration, population and asylum.

The evidence is clear: our arts, our businesses, our cuisine, our science, our education, our films, our sports are all better for the succession of immigrants and refugees who have made Australia home. Migrants and refugees don’t take “our” jobs, they create jobs. Migrants and refugees don’t live in ghettos, here in Australia they have revitalised our cities and towns. The children and grandchildren of those migrants and refugees are amongst our best journalists, writers, entrepreneurs, scientists and researchers, sportsmen and women, artist and filmmakers.



“Migrants and refugees don’t take “our” jobs, they create jobs.”

If we don’t acknowledge and celebrate the strength of our continually evolving and dynamic cultural mix, if we let a parochial nostalgia define our idea of what being Australian is, then we refute what is the best of ourselves. That is why I think we should get off the back foot and start acknowledging proudly why we support the migrant and refugee heritage of our country. I’m not interested in going backwards, I want us to go forward.

Christos Tsiolkas
ASRC Ambassador

Our Patrons

The Right Honourable Malcolm Fraser, AC, CH
22nd Prime Minister of Australia

The Honourable Michael Kirby AC CMG
Justice of the High Court of Australia (1996–2009)

Eva Cox
Writer, Academic

Mr Julian Burnside AO QC
‘Australian Living National Treasure’

Our Ambassadors

Professor Patrick McGorry
2010 Australian of the Year

Arnold ZableWriter
Storyteller, educator, and human rights advocate

Corinne Grant
Writer, comedian and TV presenter

Christos Tsiolkas
Award winning Australian author

Michael Short
Writer, interviewer, producer

The Cat Empire
Nationally acclaimed musical outfit



Empowering people

The ASRC has the only education and training service of its kind, including the only employment service that caters for asylum seekers in Victoria.

ASSET (Asylum Seeker Service for Employment & Training) is a pioneer of asylum seeker employment and education services in Australia. Since it began in 2004, it has assisted asylum seekers in all areas of employment and training. It's a crucial service, as without work most of our clients have no access to income support and would be left destitute if not for our efforts.

We work in partnership with organisations to build life skills, pathways and connections that empower people to take control of their own lives. We believe in empowering people stand on their own two feet and in having self-determination.

The ASRC Employment Program is not about charity, but about supporting asylum seekers to contribute to their local community by utilizing their particular skills and knowledge, their resilience and ingenuity. It's also about assisting local employers to access a largely untapped pool of skilled and in demand workers with ease and efficiency.

A skilled, flexible, adaptive and resilient community of asylum seekers and refugees can contribute to filling key skill shortage areas in Australia.

Working with partners – Department of Transport

In 2011, the ASRC Employment Program partnered with the Department of Transport (DOT) to implement 'pathways to career opportunities' - a mentoring program to assist asylum seekers in gaining vital experience in the Australian work place. Training for both managers and participants was provided by the ASRC prior to the work placement as well as ongoing supervision to ensure all involved were ably supported. The work placements were so successful that 6 out of the 7 participants who completed the program were offered ongoing contracts by the DOT.

"First off I think it is important to recognise the actual contribution our participant was able to make to our day to day business. Viewing these positions purely as a charitable act doesn't do the program justice; our participant was able to complete a wide range of tasks that needed to be done in a thoroughly professional manner, thus making a real contribution to the Local Ports and Marine team in the delivery of its 2011-12 work plan".

Manager DOT

Volunteer profile

I started volunteering at the ASRC as an Employment Advisor in March 2011. I chose to work with the employment team as I have a background in HR and have previously worked in a similar area so felt that I had some skills to offer.

On a typical Monday night I meet with one client and work through a range of things. I introduce them to the ASRC Employment Program process and gain an understanding of their skills, education and what type of work they are looking for. We work together to write and strengthen their resume, identify job opportunities and practice interview techniques.

"I love meeting new clients and witnessing the diversity of skills and knowledge that they each hold. It's such a great feeling to hear when one of our clients finds employment, as it really is a team effort."

Alongside our individual contact with clients, the employment team also stays connected with each other to share networks, job opportunities and celebrate employment placements of clients.

I feel that gaining employment has a strong relationship with an individual's sense of self worth and plays a really important role in the resettlement process for asylum seekers.

My experience has definitely been a positive one and strengthened my commitment to fight injustices in the world.

Lucy
Employment volunteer



Supporting people

“

I am a South African citizen and I was born in Cameroon. I am very proud to be an ASRC member because I receive lunch every day and food to take home. What makes me really happy about this program is it is for free and I couldn't afford food if it wasn't. I'd like to thank all the donors for their support with food, Met ticket and phone cards. They are very helpful to us!

”

Access to adequate nutrition is the most basic human right.

Asylum seekers visit the ASRC Foodbank each week to select the food that they need. Instead of simply handing people a food parcel, we ensure fairness and dignity by presenting food in 'the supermarket model'. Through an innovative and highly effective program design, the ASRC Foodbank focuses its limited resources on good nutrition. Shoppers can see all the food that is available, organized into food groups, which allows them to make their own choices.

The ASRC Foodbank budget allows expenditure averaging \$5 per person per week.

Asylum seekers face destitution and adversity in Australia as they struggle to make it from day to day.

We provide asylum seekers with the basic necessities of every-day living. We give metcards, phonecards and mobile phones, bedding, clothing

and nappies, as well as the provision of numerous essential household items.

The ASRC Material Aid Program also advocates to the mainstream emergency relief sector, improving the community's capacity to include and respond to asylum seekers.

Providing a mobile phone to an asylum seeker ensures they do not become isolated in the community.

Working with partners - we can not do this alone.

We work with hundreds of individuals, workplaces, schools, community groups, food charities (SecondBite, FareShare, VicRelief and Foodbank) and places of worship who donate food and material goods on a regular basis to the value of over \$150,000 a year.

We work with partners to lobby local, state and federal governments for effective policies and infrastructure to maximise health outcomes for disempowered people all over the country.

Educating people

“

There was such a great spirit throughout the building. Motivated people are always inspiring. It felt amazing being a part of something that really made a difference.

”

Corporate volunteer



The ASRC has always been about people and nothing else.

Volunteers are the life-blood of the ASRC. They are passionate, dedicated and committed professionals with diverse background and skills.

Volunteers comprise the vast majority of the workforce at the ASRC adding the equivalent of 58 full-time positions. We operate in a culture in which both paid staff and volunteers work collectively to improve the quality of life of asylum seekers in Australia.

They are our nurses, lawyers, doctors, board members, social workers, counsellors, employment advisors, mentors, soccer coaches, teachers, designers and researchers.

They drive buses to get food to feed our clients. They go to peoples homes to teach them English. They speak to school students to educate and inform. They cook hot meals every day for over 100 people.

Our volunteers take responsibility. Our volunteers take initiative. Our volunteers know how to have fun.

Our volunteers educate the community. They create a better civil society for all Australians.

We have over 750 volunteers working across 23 programs.

Working with partners – corporate volunteering

We offer our partners a comprehensive corporate volunteering program. Volunteers work in our Foodbank and Community Meals Programs, providing tangible and direct support to our clients.

Skilled corporate volunteering has been growing in popularity at the ASRC, with people volunteering in employment case-work, finance and strategic planning.

Some corporate partners have reported that flow-on benefits include better teamwork, leadership development and increased staff loyalty and morale. Having staff volunteer at the ASRC has helped build a more committed, engaged, creative and energetic workplace.



The ASRC – A powerful partnership

We recognise that you work hard for your money, and we work hard to ensure every dollar has the maximum impact on the lives of asylum seekers.

How we ensure your contribution has the maximum impact and social return:

- 1250 asylum seeker members (the most of any asylum seeker NGO in Victoria).
- Over 750 volunteers.
- 32 staff (20 of which are in direct client services).

- 1 EFT is \$60,000 including on costs.
- \$2.8 million dollar budget on which we deliver over \$20 million worth of actual services per annum to asylum seekers.
- 1 staff member (direct services) coordinates on average 35 volunteers per week.
- 1 staff member creates on average 1020 hours of free assistance per month through working with and managing volunteers.
- 1 staff member (direct services) generates approximately 1 million dollars worth of direct services assistance to clients based on the market value of our services.

Staff, clients and society look favorably upon socially responsible organisations. A partnership with us will deliver benefits to the community and also your business.

Your contribution and level of involvement may vary, but every effort helps us to transform the lives of some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

You might like to consider:

Financial sponsorship - You can choose to sponsor any or all of the 23 programs at the ASRC that address areas of Aid, Empowerment, Justice or Community.

Be an employer of choice

Workplace giving - Regular, tax-deductible donations have a powerful impact on the lives of asylum seekers. A donation of as little as \$20 can help us provide a week's worth of groceries to feed a family of four.

Employment and work experience opportunities - You can contribute to the ASRC Employment Program via financial support, work experience placements or employment opportunities.

Corporate volunteering - We provide a structured volunteering program for your staff that provides a range of activities so they can get either hands-on experience or provide skilled support.

Events - Have some fun and make use of one the wide range of fundraising events on the corporate calendar, or come up with an idea of your own! Your project will demonstrate initiative and leadership skills, and help raise valuable funds plus your staff will enjoy being creative and active at the same time.

Pro-Bono work - Support through pro-bono work is critical for both operational and efficient service provision to our clients. If you have any skills and expertise that you would like to share, we are more than happy to speak to you.

Use our catering service - Organising a work function or a big social event? Look no further than our ASRC Catering social enterprise service, which creates inspired international dishes at competitive prices.

In-kind support - Run a mobile phone or consumables drive. In-kind support is the lifeblood of the centre, providing much needed material aid to asylum seekers.

What next:

At the ASRC we form partnerships with businesses and organisations to help support our work and change the lives of people in need. We will find innovative ways to capitalise on your investment.

- Call us to arrange a tour of the ASRC. See first hand our 23 programs in action.
- We have a team of professional speakers who are happy to come and speak to your boards, trustees, leadership group or staff about partnerships. They can also provide training on cultural awareness, social inclusion and diversity issues.
- We will consider your current activities and available resources and work with you to provide the best way to develop a suitable and mutually beneficial partnership.

You have the capacity to make an enormous contribution to the lives of asylum seekers. Through a partnership with the ASRC you can:

- Become an employer of choice.
- Align your brand to effective, socially responsible solutions.
- Become active in specific program areas.
- Improve your corporate image and create strong relationships.
- Demonstrate your commitment to corporate social responsibility and human rights.

Contact us at investment@asrc.org.au to arrange a meeting.

The ASRC would like to thank and acknowledge the following supporters and partners for their key role in helping us help asylum seekers.

AESOP | Andyinc Foundation | Australian Ethical Investment | Australian Nursing Federation | Becher Foundation | Bell Charitable Fund | Bennelong Charitable Trust | Brotherhood of St Laurence | Circus Oz | City of Melbourne | Collier Charitable Fund | Community Foundation Network | Danks Trust | Department of Premier and Cabinet | Dinos Toumazos | Encompass Community Services | FareShare | Felton Bequest | Foodbank Victoria | Fouress Foundation | Helen Macpherson Smith Trust | Hoffman Foundation | Igniting Change | John T. Reid Charitable Trust | Kelly Services | Kinfolk | Kimberley Foundation | Legal Services Board of Victoria | Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation | Mallesons Stephens Jaques | The Marian and F.H. Flack Trust | Mary MacKillop Foundation | Medirest | Mim Bartlett | The Morris Family | National Australia Bank | Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE | NMFC | Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship | Oranges and Lemons | Perpetual Trustees | Planet Wheeler Foundation | Precision Plating Charitable Trust | R E Ross Trust | R. M. Ansett Trust | RACV Community Foundation | Ray & Margaret Wilson Foundation | Reclink | Scanlon Foundation | SCARF Community | SecondBite | Sister of St Joseph | State Trustees Victoria | StreetSmart | STM Duraduct | The Department of Transport | The Chocolate Box | The Staff Factory | Uniting Aged Care Victoria | Victorian Council of Social Service | Victorian Women's Trust | Victorian Skills Commission | Victoria University | VICSEG New Futures Training | Women's Health Information Centre | YMCA



Australia. Built by boat people.

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