



*just a*

# FAIR GO

*Why asylum seekers don't get a fair go in Australia*

## **Contrary to what you read in the papers asylum seekers are poor**

Of the thousands of asylum seekers that we see each year at the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC), over 75% are living in the community on a Bridging Visa E. Asylum Seekers on a Bridging Visa E have no right to any income, work or health care due to the Howard government's immigration policies.

**It's a myth that asylum seekers receive support from the Government.**

All asylum seekers have NO ACCESS TO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Centrelink
- Settlement Services provided by Migrant Resource Centres
- A Health Card Card
- Job Network
- English as a Second Language (ESL) Programs
- TAFE or University (unless they can pay overseas student fees which none can)
- Public Housing

## **What an asylum seeker lives on in a week in Australia:**

The average person<sup>1</sup> seeking asylum in Australia each week lives on:

- \$0 a week
- Approximately 10% of asylum seekers are 'lucky enough' to live on \$25 per week that they receive from non – government funded charities, income that is 90% less than the minimum amount the government says a single person needs to live on<sup>2</sup>
- A food parcel and 1 Met – Ticket (again provided by charities)

A single asylum seeker is expected to live on nothing and if not for the work of numerous charities such as the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, Hotham Mission, Brigidine Sisters Asylum Seeker Project and the Red Cross, they would simply be left to starve to death, in one of the world's richest countries.

<sup>1</sup> The majority of people seeking asylum in the community are on Bridging Visa E's, which denies people the right to work or Medicare.

<sup>2</sup> The rate for Newstart allowance as of February 20th 2007 is \$524.10 per fortnight for a single person with no dependents (includes rent assistance).



The majority of asylum seekers are not allowed to work and over 95% of asylum seekers are forced to live without any government support.

Imagine what life is like for an asylum seeker, imagine being hungry because you have no money food, living on the streets tonight because you have no money for shelter and no money for the day to day things such as nappies for your baby, a met ticket to get to where you need to go or some medicine when you are sick.

Tonight, hundreds of asylum seekers will be sleeping on the streets, on the floors of friends places or in unsafe, overcrowded rooming houses. To survive they will have to live like beggars relying on handouts and food parcels just to stay alive.

**It's a policy that causes serious harm to asylum seekers.**

**The Howard government's poor treatment of asylum seekers actually meets their own definition of 'persecution' under their own Migration Act of 1958.**

Section 91 R (2) of the Migration Act states that the following are some of the '*instances of serious harm*' that would form the basis for a claim that they are being persecuted in their country of origin:

*(d) significant economic hardship that threatens the person's capacity to subsist;*

*(e) denial of access to basic services, where the denial threatens the person's capacity to subsist;*

*(f) denial of capacity to earn a livelihood of any kind, where the denial threatens the person's capacity to subsist*

**The Howard government's policy towards asylum seekers does each of these here in Australia, meaning we are persecuting people who have fled to Australia seeking safety.**