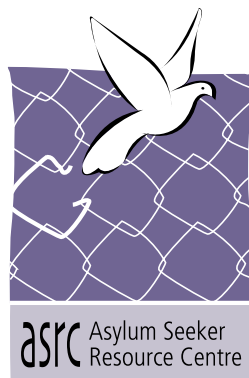


# Asylum Seeker Resource Centre



Annual report 2007 - 2008



[www.asrc.org.au](http://www.asrc.org.au)

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## CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

On behalf of the board of the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, I present this year's annual report to our members. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the staff and volunteers of the ASRC for their commitment to the cause of asylum seekers, and the dynamic way that everybody associated with the organisation goes about their work. The board also wishes to extend its gratitude to all of our donors, from the general public who give what they can and provide such strong support for the cause, through to the philanthropic trusts whose contributions assist the ASRC to plan for the future. Without your support the ASRC would not exist, and we are truly thankful to everyone who has contributed to the organisation over the past twelve months.

Although there have been many positive signs with the election of the Rudd Labor government, asylum seekers still face many challenges. Most are still denied the right to work and health care and our previous government's policy of mandatory detention continues. In the face of this, the ASRC remains committed to protecting and upholding the human rights of asylum seekers, both in the community and in detention, through the provision of essential services, the raising of public awareness of the plight of asylum seekers, and, importantly, maintaining our freedom to advocate on their behalf.

As you will note from this and previous Annual Reports, the ASRC has grown significantly over the past few years. With this rapid growth, comes a requirement that we also need to concentrate on long-term strategic planning, development of policy, and management of a growing service-focused workforce, both paid and unpaid.

With this in mind, over the past year the Board of the ASRC has begun to focus more on governance matters, including strategic planning, refining policy, and instigating programs

for staff growth and development. This will ensure that we remain a viable and effective organisation. The development of a leadership group, the creation of clear strategic priorities, and the management of risk have become critical elements of the role of the highly skilled and experienced Board, which I have the privilege to chair.

During the year the Board farewelled Sadou Dialou, who has moved to Western Australia to take up an employment opportunity. Sadou has been a valuable member of the Board since joining in 2007, and we were sad to say goodbye to him.

At the AGM, we will also sadly say goodbye to Tiffany Overall, who has been on the Board since 2004. Tiffany's contribution, as Secretary, and in general, has been significant, and it is a sad loss to the Board, and to the wider ASRC community. We will miss her ability to frame decision making at the Board level in a way that is sympathetic to the organisation, and the people it serves. On behalf of the Board, I would like to extend my thanks to Tiffany, and wish her well for the future.

In 2008, we welcomed Sarah Purnell and Joseph Corponi to the board. Both Sarah and Joe bring a wealth

of experience to the Board, and their contribution so far has been significant. We are lucky to have them.

From July 2007 to June 2008, the ASRC welcomed over 3000 people through our doors, with over a quarter being new clients to the centre. This shows that the need for our centre continues to exist, despite a general sense that things are improving for asylum seekers. Over the next year, we hope that you continue to support the work of the ASRC.

**Dr Paul Harrison, Chairperson,**  
*Asylum Seekers Resource Centre*

**July 2008**

*If you would like to know more about the work of the Board, please go to [www.asrc.org.au/about\\_us/governance.html](http://www.asrc.org.au/about_us/governance.html)*

## CEO REPORT

The past year has been another year of the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre proudly fighting for a fair go for asylum seekers. We have continued to lead the way in working for a real change for asylum seekers through our grassroots work, community education, law reform and lobbying. We remained the largest asylum seeker organisation in Australia and never turn any away asylum seeker in need.

Seven years in operation, and the ASRC has passed one million hours, and \$100 million worth of assistance rendered free to asylum seekers. More than 6000 asylum seekers have been assisted by the ASRC during this time. This has been done without Federal Government funding. This extraordinary achievement has come with support from the community. People in schools, churches, workplaces, universities as well as dedicated groups such as Rural Australians for Refugees and local Melbourne refugee support groups have provided food and raised money for the ASRC to provide services to asylum seekers. The State Government donated two years rent to enable the ASRC to remain in West Melbourne. We continue to be a place for the people, by the people and accountable to the people; namely our brilliant 560-strong team of volunteers and the people seeking asylum courageously fighting for their freedom and their little patch of hope and peace in this beautiful country of ours.

In the last year we have had some great successes in areas where the ASRC has fought tirelessly, along with many other asylum seeker organisations nationally, including an end to Temporary Protection Visas and the closing of the Nauru detention centre by the Rudd Government. These were two of the most immoral policies and practices of the Howard Government and they caused much suffering and grief for some 10,000 people who sought asylum in Australia.

We took a stand against injustice wherever we encountered it, launching a campaign against the vilification of Sudanese refugees, stopping the deportation of asylum seekers to countries where they faced torture or death and continuing to speak out against the policy of mandatory detention. We also won back work rights for hundreds of asylum seekers and made sure asylum seekers remained on the national agenda by attending the 2020 Summit.

The flame of hope that shone so brightly at the change of government has however dimmed, with no progress yet for asylum seekers who are living in the community on Bridging Visas under the Rudd Government. At the ASRC, 75 per cent of the people we see continue to be forced into destitution and homelessness by being needlessly denied the right to work, Medicare or an income of any kind. They are the living ghosts of our community. They are shamefully left to be beggars in the dreams of the

free. The money spent to continue the immoral policy of mandatory detention for this coming financial year (\$121 million) would fund the ASRC for 106 years! For every dollar this government gives the Red Cross to care for asylum seekers, \$10 are spent detaining them. Added to this is the untenable human and community cost that results from the operation of this unnecessary, unworkable and unjustifiable policy.

In the coming year we will remain vigilant and demand a complete end to Mandatory Detention. We will fight for an end to Bridging Visa Es that deny work and Medicare rights, and an end to the practice of deporting back into danger unsuccessful asylum seekers who are clearly too mentally or physically unwell to be removed. More than anything else we will make sure that we remain a place of hope and justice for all.

**Kon Karapanagiotidis, CEO,**  
*Asylum Seekers Resource Centre*

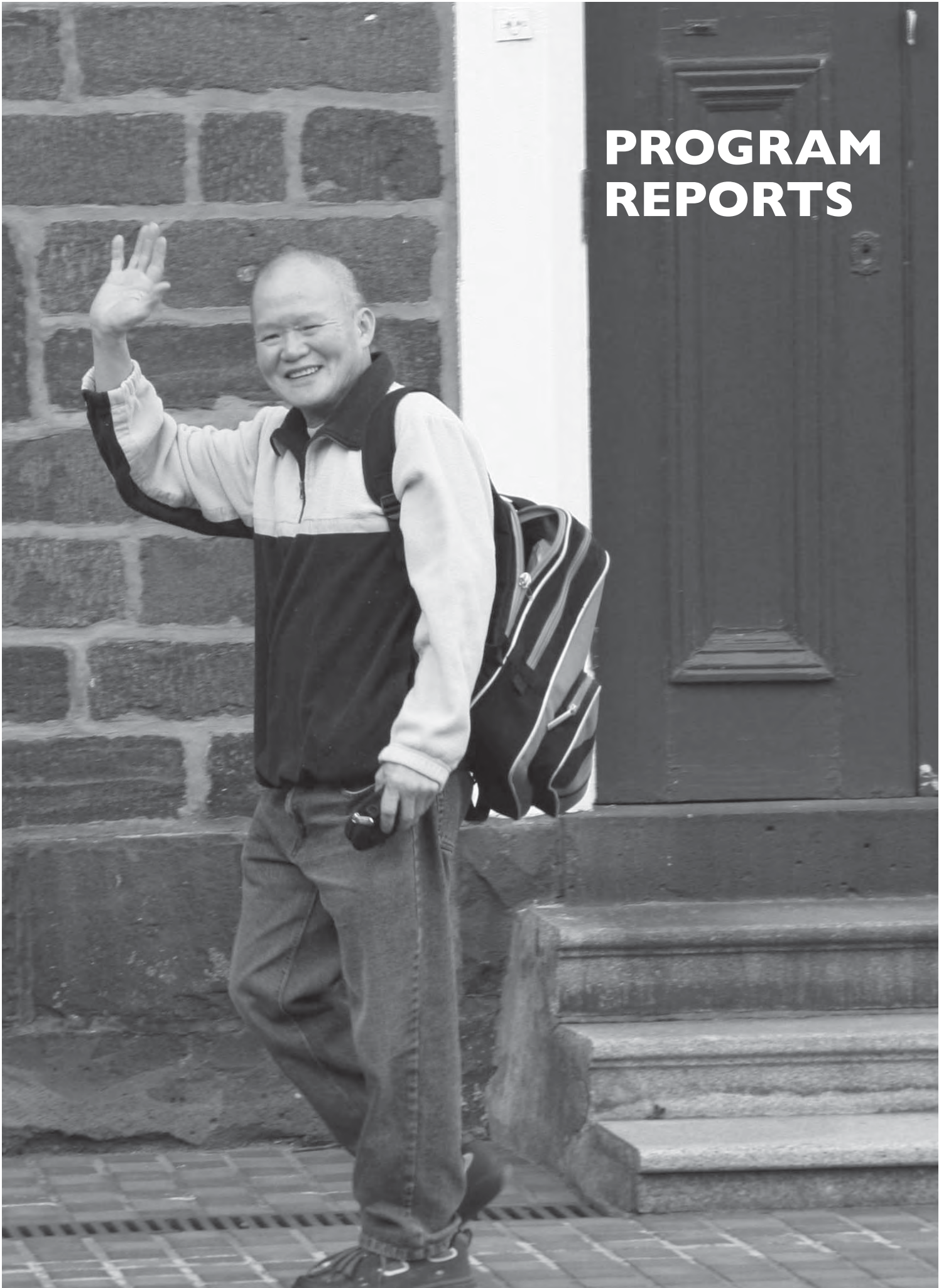
### Board Meeting Attendance July 2007–June 2008

Board Member	Meetings	Attended
Kon Karapanagiotidis (CEO)	9	5
Dr Paul Harrison (Chair)	9	9
Pam Caven (Deputy Chair)	9	6
Tiffany Overall (Secretary)	9	7
Jema Stellato-Pledger (Treasurer)	9	7
Brigid Arthur	9	9
Sadou Diallo	9	4
Julie Francis	9	7
Sarah Purnell *	5	4
Joseph Corponi *	4	4

\* Sarah Purnell and Joseph Corponi joined the Board during this cycle.



# PROGRAM REPORTS



## ADVOCACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS LAW

### Campaigns

The ASRC Campaign Project has had a big year. The change of government has given us possibilities for change after years of stagnation. We have pursued these possibilities both before the election, by setting up a national agency dialogue to identify key issues, and after the election, meeting with key department staff and newly elected MPs on a lobbying trip to Canberra.

The ASRC works with local and national groups and agencies including the Network of Asylum Seeker Agencies Victoria (NASAVic). NASAVic is an unincorporated alliance of 12 agencies including the Red Cross, Hotham Mission, Asylum Seeker Project, The Refugee and Asylum Seeker Health Network Victoria and the Brigidine Asylum Seeker Project. Monthly meetings plan, coordinate and devise strategies to improve conditions for asylum seekers.

One of the great benefits of the Campaign Project in the ASRC is the credibility that we can bring to the refugee debate. Our campaigns are located within the heart of the concerns of refugees and asylum seekers. We are contacted directly by refugees and asylum seekers on a range of issues where advocacy is required.

We were thrilled to see, after years of work, the abolition of the Temporary Protection Visa (TPV). TPVs entrenched discrimination against refugees.

While relieved to see the end of the Pacific Solution, we are concerned at the decision to continue with the 'Indian Ocean Solution'—the Christmas Island Detention Centre. The ASRC was represented in the delegation to the new detention facility on the island. This \$400 million dollar prison is horrific, embodying the worst aspects of the Baxter camp with high-tech surveillance and security equipment. We have continued to campaign and promote community awareness of this policy.

We are still working to end mandatory detention and have put in a written submission to the Joint Committee Inquiry into Detention and followed this with an oral submission at their invitation.

We continue to campaign for the *Right to Work* for asylum seekers on Bridging Visa E, which is proving very frustrating. While the Minister has called the policy that denies the right to work 'reprehensible', we are yet to see it changed.

This year refugees have approached us seeking support in challenging detention debts, which are levied on people who were incarcerated for years in detention centres. Some have been ordered to repay up to \$360 000 and told that their permanent visas and citizenship applications will not be processed until this is done. As a result we have lobbied politicians, run stories in the media and involved church and community groups in petitions and writing to politicians to raise this issue.

Another area of concern is that of status-less children, born after a family's visa application has been lodged and therefore not included in the application. We believe a department that can spend billions on detention can find a way to allow babies to be included with

their families when they are granted visas. We are working on this little-recognised anomaly of the refugee legislation as well as advocating to get hospital care for sick babies who have no rights to Medicare. The ASRC Health Service provides free care to these children but when hospital care or surgery is required their lack of Medicare becomes an issue.

The ASRC welcomes the changes to post-release conditions. Our work, along with others' as described in the *Dumped at the Gate* report, has brought about a change in the way most people are treated upon release from detention. Now they are given support to find accommodation and to get linked to services.

Because the ASRC provides such a broad range of services, the Campaigns team is able to work with the legal, medical, counselling and casework teams to achieve the best outcomes for our clients, and to develop strategic campaigns firmly underpinned by expert advice. We have successfully advocated to get debts written off, permanent visas expedited, Medicare for babies and for individual clients, and we continue to fight to change the policies that entrench these injustices.

We have not yet achieved a fair system for refugees and asylum seekers; however the past year, with the change of government, has seen some movement towards justice. As long as mandatory detention underpins our refugee processing, our refugee legislation cannot reflect the promises that Australia made when we signed the International Human Rights conventions.

**Pamela Curr** Co-ordinator

## Community Awareness Team (CAT)

We are a small team of volunteers and off-duty paid staff who give their time to speak about the ASRC at venues around Melbourne. The requests mainly come from schools, Lions clubs, Rotary, community groups, women's collectives, family service groups, TAFE colleges, social justice groups, and universities. Some groups elect to visit the ASRC and Janna, myself or members of the paid staff escort them around, explaining the services the centre offers.

There is no charge when we speak to groups or take tours, but we always take the opportunity to let listeners know how much we need donations of goods for the food bank, and money for Metcard or phone cards.

We have visited over 40 venues this year, although we do not have a tally of the people we spoke to. As well as these visits, Pamela Curr has made other presentations primarily to larger groups and to the media.

The number of requests for speakers is down from previous years, probably due to less publicity in the general press. It may be time to look at ways to actively promote the program, to increase the visibility and public awareness of the ASRC.

Where the team has visited the response has been positive and rewarding and audiences have shown an ongoing willingness to help and give when they learn of the hardships our clients face.

We look forward to another year!

**Carolyn Berger** Co-ordinator

## Human Rights Law

*One chapter ends and another begins...*

November 2007 saw defeat of the Howard Government after 11 years in office, and for many refugee lawyers the hope for an end to a shameful chapter in the treatment of asylum seekers. Senator Chris Evans was sworn in as the new Minister for Immigration and Citizenship and reform, as outlined by the Rudd Labor Government during the campaign, to Australia's immigration and asylum policies was finally a possibility.

During 2007-2008 the Human Rights Law Program continued to assist hundreds of asylum seekers and their families throughout all stages of the refugee determination process. The Law Program comprised 2 full-time Solicitors, 1 part-time Solicitor, a Women's Caseworker and a team of over 50 committed legal volunteers comprising barristers, solicitors and law students. For the first time, the Law Program offered Articles of Clerkship, providing a law graduate the opportunity to be involved in rewarding and challenging human rights work.

The Program continued to build on its memberships of the Federation of Community Legal Centres, the Law Institute of Victoria and developed initiatives with the Public Interest Law Clearing House (PILCH). In April 2008, the Law Program in partnership with PILCH providing training for Barristers in Migration Law and pro bono Litigation.

**The ASRC Human Rights Law Program focused on three main areas during 2007- 08:**

(1) assisting asylum seekers with the timely and proper representation of their refugee claims at the Department of Immigration and the Refugee Review Tribunal and working in a multidisciplinary and integrated manner with ASRC doctors,

psychiatrists and other experts to ensure successful outcomes.

(2) building on our judicial review expertise for all cases with merit and assisting with court applications in partnership with the Victorian Bar Legal Assistance Scheme (VBLAS).

(3) continuing to assist clients with the most complex and often intractable cases and advocating for clients through domestic and international forums including the Department of Immigration, HREOC, the UN Human Rights Committee and the Ombudsman as was required.

**Significant outcomes for 2007- 08 included the following:**

- Obtaining injunctions to prevent the imminent deportation of two asylum seekers. In the first case the client was on board the airplane and his departure scheduled prior to notice being given to the ASRC. In the second case the client's Communication to the UN Human Rights Committee was under consideration when the former Government was prepared to remove him. A High Court injunction prevented his deportation.
- The return of an asylum seeker to Australia by the current Government after being deported by the former Government on the first day of the caretaker period during last year's election. This followed intervention by the ASRC and other key agencies and individuals.
- Advocating for permanent outcomes for many of the "legacy" cases that remain unresolved. This included for clients seeking Ministerial Intervention, for clients on Removal Pending Bridging Visas and for clients who are offshore affected by former Howard Government policies.

**Maria Psihogios-Billington**  
Co-ordinator



## **EMPLOYMENT**

### **Employment and Training**

The year 2007–2008 was a positive one for the ASRC Asylum Seeker Service for Employment and Training (ASSET). The Victorian state government-funded Workplace Participation Program was implemented, and the overall political environment in which the employment program is operating changed.

Thanks to the continued hard work of ASRC staff and volunteers and ongoing support from WISE Employment, ASSET has experienced continued success in assisting one of Australia's most disadvantaged groups.

#### **Human Resources**

ASSET is a volunteer-based service, employing five to eight volunteers for an average of one day per week. The program tries to recruit volunteers of different ages, and vocational experience in trades, management, justice and human resources, among others.

#### **Client Data**

In the 2007–2008 financial year 167 clients were referred to ASSET. The program currently has 145 clients on its active clients list, a 38 per cent increase on the previous year. Since it began four years ago, the program has assisted well over 400 asylum seeker clients.

An important development in the ASSET client base is that women now make up 33 per cent of clients, a 10 per cent increase on the previous year. In the last three months the number of females being referred to the program has increased markedly. This will almost certainly be a greater challenge to ASSET, as, in our experience, female clients are less likely to have previous work experience than men.

#### **Ongoing Challenges**

While clients usually find employment in the three months after they contact us, this employment is rarely sustainable, and usually not at their skill level. Refugees and asylum seekers working in their area of expertise are extremely rare and they often take positions in cleaning, hospitality or factory work to earn an income.

This is particularly so if they are on Bridging Visas, as the uncertainty surrounding their visa and their length of stay in Australia makes finding sustainable employment almost impossible. Asylum seekers can be moved from a Bridging Visa A (BVA) to a Bridging Visa E (BVE) at anytime, which means they lose the right to work. Some people on BVEs have been granted work rights 'on departure grounds', that is, for only two or three months before they have to leave the country. This makes it very hard for them to find work.

Over recent years, the increase in the number of Bridging Visa holders in our client base has been an ongoing challenge.

#### **Workplace Participation Program**

Since November 2007, a Workplace Participation Program (WPP) has been operating alongside ASSET and this will run until December 2008. The state government-funded program aims to provide ongoing full-time employment to a minimum of 20 asylum seekers who do not receive support from the Job Network. Participants came from varying professional and unskilled backgrounds and are between 19 and 70 years old.

The program has had many successes thanks to an effective relationship between WISE Employment and the ASRC, as well as the ongoing commitment of the program's participants. These achievements include meeting the target of 20 WPP clients in employment by June.

Five clients were placed in hospitality positions; one of the employers is a five star city hotel.

#### **Training**

As well as the courses offered through the WPP, ASSET has offered its clients training opportunities in the following areas:

- group interview-skills training workshops
- Certificate I in Workplace Hygiene (Food Handling)
- First Aid Level II

Encompass Community Services, a Geelong-based RTO, ran these courses free of charge several times over the year.

RMIT University has continued its relationship with the ASSET through the RMIT Refugee and Asylum Seeker Access Scheme. RMIT offers scholarships to asylum seekers on Bridging Visas and Temporary Protection Visas who have the right to study but would have to pay international student fees.

#### **ASSET Employer Links**

ASSET has continued to develop its links with the local business community. One of the major achievements this year has been the development of employment pathways through a number of employment agencies.

The profile of ASSET has steadily increased through the use of the internet and ASRC email networks. The ASRC Job Seeker web page, which came into operation in early June, displays ASSET clients seeking work, their experience, skills and qualifications and the type of work sought. ASSET is also showcasing clients through its Job Seeker of the Week feature in the ASRC Volunteer e-Bulletin, which reaches more than 700 people each week.



As a result, there have been continued expressions of interest made by employers looking to employ asylum seekers. This outcome is a positive result of the campaigning undertaken by the ASRC, and others, to inform the public about the plight of asylum seekers in their communities.

#### Campaigns and New Government

With the advent of a new Labor government, hopes were raised that work rights would be granted to BVE holders as the rule and not the exception. However, so far this has not occurred.

A positive development has been the abolition of the Temporary Protection Visa. This will mean greater access to Commonwealth-funded employment services for a number of our clients.

#### *The coming year*

The priority for ASSET in 2008–2009 is to actively market our clients to employers and employment agencies. Finding employment for asylum seekers through conventional means such as the internet and newspaper classifieds is hard work and generally unproductive. To counter this, a Reverse Marketing Unit made up of volunteer business professionals has been formed within ASSET. The unit will focus on generating employment avenues through marketing strategies and developing relationships with large employers and employment agencies.

**Sophie Dutertre and Gavin Ackerly, ASSET Co-ordinators**

## **Social Enterprise and Small Business (SESBU)**

The SESBU program in the last year focused on empowering and supporting as many asylum seekers as possible to take the step into the world of social enterprise and small business. The ASRC is committed to working from a strength based resilience model of practice and social enterprise is at the heart of this.

In the last year we assisted asylum seekers interested in small business with all of the following: advice and support on how to establish a small business; training and assistance on how to develop a small business plan, from financing to operational issues; and both group and one-to-one mentoring. We also worked to encourage the existing micro-credit networks in the community to be inclusive of asylum seekers.

The jewel in the crown of our social enterprise work is our Catering Service. Now in its third year of operation, our catering service is turning a profit and, more importantly, giving asylum seekers independence and the opportunity to put their wonderful cooking skills to use. People seeking asylum have blossomed in our Catering Program, as they have shared part of their beautiful cultures and been employed and given independence. The service has catered for many events, from weddings and conferences to food festivals. In the coming year we will be branching out into the world of spices, take-home meals and a whole range of other goodies so look out!

**Kon Karapanagiotidis, CEO**

## **Catering**

ASRC Catering is a social enterprise established in May 2005 by the ASRC to employ asylum seekers who have the right and the capacity to work. All surplus funds generated from the catering business go towards supporting asylum seekers who do not have the right to work, and who are unable to access Federal Government services.

The program aims to:

- provide pathways to further employment opportunities for asylum seekers through education, training and hands-on work experience
- raise community awareness about asylum seeker and refugee issues
- show how asylum seekers make a positive contribution to our society.

#### *Achievements this year*

ASRC Catering has gone from strength to strength during the 2007–2008 financial year. The turnover of \$130 000 is a 62 per cent increase on the previous year. From its kitchen in North Fitzroy, the program has catered for over 183 events including conferences, cocktail parties, annual general meetings, art gallery openings and weddings. It has remained the preferred caterer for a number of organisations including Australian Catholic University, Vic Health and The Federation of Community Legal Centers.

#### *Staff Changes*

ASRC Catering employs a part-time catering coordinator for 23 hours per week and a mentoring/training chef for 32 hours per week. At the beginning of June the mentoring/training chef, Matthew Smith, left the program and Cathy Maguire has taken over this role.

Cathy is from Dublin, Ireland, where she honed her craft in prestigious restaurants such as Cornucopia. She was the head chef at St Kilda's Soul mama Restaurant for six years and also a regular guest chef on Channel Ten's Good Morning Australia. Cathy specialises in high-quality vegetarian cooking, which works perfectly with the ASRC Catering's vegetarian menu.

### ***The future:***

Catering continues to offer short, but regular, periods of employment to asylum seekers. With repeat custom, and a steadily growing client base, we hope to increase those employment opportunities in the coming year.

We are also looking into creating a range of spices to sell through the ASRC and other outlets throughout Melbourne. Cathy and I are planning a range of take away meals to be sold at the ASRC.

We have run a number of cooking classes, which have been a great success both financially and in the enjoyment experienced by all the participants.

Finally, we anticipate that turnover will increase this coming year because of more uniform branding and marketing. The Catering Program has been a true success story for the ASRC.

**Caroline Sturzaker** *Co-ordinator*

## **HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

### **Health Service**

Community-based asylum seekers experience significant inequality in health status and access to the public health care system. Their health needs are greater and more complicated than those of the general Australian population.

The ASRC operates a Health Program because the health of asylum seekers is at risk and their right to health care is often not met during the asylum process in Australia. Of the clients accessing the ASRC Health Program, 75 per cent have been granted a Bridging Visa E by the Australia government, which means they can't work, or access Medicare and other benefits including Health Care Cards and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). Without the ASRC Health Program many community-based asylum seekers in Victoria would experience avoidable deterioration of their mental and physical health.

The program is structured to meet the specific health needs of asylum seekers. The ASRC Health Program's clinic operates like a busy Community Health Centre (CHC). After six years the ASRC health clinic remains the only five day per week primary health care provider to Victorian asylum seekers and the only specialised health centre of its kind in Australia.

A new full-time salaried Health Coordinator commenced in January 2008 as her predecessor went on maternity leave in November 2007. The current Health Coordinator is experienced in working for international NGOs in developing countries.

Since 2006, the Health Coordinator's role has been supported by a two days per week salaried Community Health Worker (CHW) who has specialised in midwifery.

The ASRC Health Program's clinical operations are only possible with the services of 35 qualified health professionals who volunteer for between two and seven hours every week or fortnight. Specific consultation times are rostered for General Practice (GP), Diabetes Education, physiotherapy, Feldenkrais and massage therapy including Shiatsu. Among their other roles the salaried staff assist the nursing volunteers to oversee client presentation, assessment, interventions, and referrals.

The ASRC Health Program is the only program offering a 'drop in' option for clients. Because these clients aren't booked in, the nurses are sometimes inundated with clients who have complex physical or psychological needs, often in social crisis and distress. The ASRC Health Program coordinates closely with the Counselling Program and psychiatrists to ensure clients with mental health issues have access to comprehensive treatment and support.

The ability of the health practitioners to make clinical diagnoses and treatment decisions would be very difficult without access to diagnostic services. The ASRC Health Program is reliant on a limited pro bono network of agencies for services including pathology, radiology and optometry; however a number of agencies have told us they are finding it difficult to absorb these costs. The coordinator makes every effort to keep these relationships working, as the service would find it difficult to continue providing high quality care without them.

A labour intensive part of the ASRC Health Program is preparing the meticulous medical reports to support a client's protection claims, which are required at most stages of the asylum seeker and humanitarian determination process. Most distressing for ASRC practitioners



and clients is producing the 'fitness to travel' report which needs to show compelling evidence that the client is at risk if removed from Australia.

### ***Statistics of the ASRC Health Program service provision***

From 2003 to mid-2007 there was a 50 per cent increase in active clients for each year of operations. The number of asylum seekers who are active ASRC Health Program clients—receiving the service within the past 12 months—has now stabilised at 595 (599 in 2006–2007). Of these, 203 clients have been new presentations. Approximately one-third of clients ceased using the program and their files have been archived.

To respond to the new number of clients requiring the services, the program has had to expand. More volunteer health practitioners have been recruited and the number of consultations has been increased.

In the past 12 months the ASRC Health Program increased the availability of formal individual consultations to 2745 (an increase of 915 since the last annual report). These sessions are between 30 minutes and one hour and included:

- 2000 GP
- 400 physiotherapy
- 100 massage
- 100 Shiatsu
- 100 Feldenkrais
- 20 podiatry
- 25 diabetes education.

We have not been able to meet the demand for podiatry and diabetic education consultations and are trying to find more volunteers to provide in-house services. The many informal consultations for 'drop-in' clients, conducted by volunteer nurses and the paid staff, are estimated to be 200 per month. At the time of this report the ASRC Health Program has 20 clients presenting each day.



### ***ASRC Health Program funding and expenditures***

The Colonial Foundation continues to support the vital work of the ASRC Health Program by funding the Health Coordinator's position and donating \$40 000 per year for service provision.

Without the ASRC Health Program, clients would struggle to obtain prescriptions and to pay for medicine. A number of suburban medical practices generously collect and deliver surplus pharmaceutical companies 'sample pack' medications; however the ASRC Health Program still needed to spend \$35 000 on prescription medication this financial year. This expense is particularly high as many of our clients are denied access to the PBS, which subsidises prescription medication to Australian residents with higher subsidies to Health Care Card holders. Supplying one diabetic BVE holder client with non-subsidised insulin costs over a thousand dollars annually.

After vision checks from a pro bono service provider, the ASRC Health Program paid for 30 asylum seekers to receive glasses. The remaining health budget purchased medical supplies and equipment and paid for service provision for individual clients when a fee waiver could not be obtained.

### ***Working with Department of Human Services (DHS) and other providers***

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) determines the policies, guidelines and eligibility (on a case-by-case basis) for two welfare programs known as Asylum Seeker Assistance Scheme (ASAS) and Community Care Pilot (CCP). These programs service the needs of a minority of asylum seekers. DIAC subcontracts the Australia Red Cross (ARC) to deliver these two programs, which include providing health care equivalent to Medicare.

Only about five per cent of the ASRC Health Program's clients are in ASAS and CCP; however hours are taken up with the administration tasks related to these two programs and in liaising with their 12 caseworkers. Not only does ASRC refer clients to these programs but also ARC ASAS caseworkers will send asylum seekers to the ASRC Health Program for initial medical care, and cover all costs while the clients are waiting to be accepted into the program. This can take between three and eight weeks.

Once an ASRC Health Program client is accepted into these programs they can be transferred to a community general practitioner. When clients have a compelling need for continuity of care, for example trust or behavioural issues, the decision can be made for them to remain with the ASRC Health Program. In this case the ASRC Health Program has the option to invoice for consultations as per Medicare equivalent; however the time and care provided to support these complex clients can be outside Medicare criteria. Some referrals and requests to supply medical equipment have had to go to DIAC before consent to proceed is confirmed or denied.

### ***Public health care system***

As well as bypassing many barriers by providing direct primary health care, the ASRC Health Program is involved in complex negotiations for clients to access the public health care system. In 2005, the Victorian Health Minister put out a circular directing public hospitals, CHCs, the public dental program and ambulance services to provide health care free of charge to asylum seekers. However in practice, service provision is often dysfunctional and inaccessible without community-based health professionals to refer and advocate. The exception is the Melbourne Ambulance Service (MAS); ambulances have never been denied

nor retrospective fee waivers rejected.

In the ASRC Health Program's experience many public hospital staff are not aware of the rights of asylum seekers and are not taught how to process asylum seekers in their system. Public hospital and facility staff have been known to refuse referrals and make incorrect verbal statements that the directive does not apply to their service. On occasion the referral or procedure has been denied until the Health Coordinator has signed a statutory declaration stating the client's asylum seeker status.

Advocacy is also undertaken retrospectively when new clients and existing clients bring in invoices showing they have been incorrectly charged as 'overseas visitors'. Many hours are spent in efforts to have referrals and retrospective waivers accepted.

If a CHC is accepting clients the ASRC Health Program has been successful in referring and gaining the service of allied health professionals, podiatrists, dieticians, diabetes educators and antenatal clinics. However referrals to CHCs can fail if the client requires diagnostic procedures, medical equipment or medication which they do not have the resources to provide free of charge. There has been gradual improvement in advocating for clients to access the Community Dental Program (CDP) when the CHC staff members are aware of the circular.

### ***Lobbying and advocacy***

Staff members are on various committees and working groups.

Linda O'Brien, ASRC Health Program Coordinator, is a Reference Group Member of the Refugee Health Network. Her work has involved:

- direct input into the revision of the DHS pamphlet which details information on Medicare ineligible asylum seekers right to access

medical treatment through the Hospital Circular. The pamphlet will be distributed to asylum seeker and refugee advocacy and support agencies, hospitals, community health, dental and disability services to ensure awareness and adherence to the Hospital Circular [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/multicultural/html/refugee\\_action.htm](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/multicultural/html/refugee_action.htm)

- helping prepare the *Asylum Seeker Health Issues Background* paper, pending for over 6 months as DIAC has not produced the figures on the number of BVE holder asylum seekers in Victoria
- high-level advocacy in the ongoing problem of Medicare not being given to asylum seekers who have DIAC-issued documents showing eligibility.

Linda is also an invited participant in the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission's workshop in Melbourne to represent asylum seekers health issues and needs. The Commission's final report to the Commonwealth Government is due by mid 2009.

Jacqueline Byrne, ASRC Community Health Nurse, is a founding member and treasurer of Nurses for Refugees and Asylum Seekers Special Interest Group (NRAS).

Dr Gillian Singleton, ASRC Health Program volunteer, is a Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) representative on the Detention Health Advisory Group. The RACGP Council endorses position statement on the provision of health care to refugees and asylum seekers in Australia.

Presentations have been made this year to:

- 2008 National Diabetes Symposium
- Australian Nurses Federation (Nurses Special Interest Group)

- Victoria University, Community Development Students

The ASRC Health Program has been involved in the following published articles:

- Correa-Velez I, Johnston V, Kirk J, Ferdinand A. 'Community based asylum seekers' use of primary health care services in Melbourne'. *The Medical Journal of Australia*. MJA 2008; 188 (6): 344-348
- 'Asylum Seeker Resource Centre needs you' *Inmotion: Physiotherapy Journal*. July 2007
- 'Experiences of working with clients whom have suffered trauma and torture'. *Pointers: Shiatsu Therapy Associate of Australia Journal*

### **Other Events**

- The ASRC Health Program Open Day
- *High Tea for the Girls* – The ASRC Health Program's major fundraising event

### **Future program directions**

#### **Lobbying and advocacy**

The aim is to intensify and expand the current level of lobbying and advocacy undertaken by the ASRC Health Program. This will involve raising awareness of the plight of asylum seekers and advocating change in government policies to create well-resourced, accessible, health care provision that is specific to the needs of asylum seekers.

#### **Human resources**

The CHW role will be extended by three days a week in the next financial year. This is needed to ensure continuity of care for the large client group and to support the many volunteers. The role will include upgrading the health education and promotion activities of the program

### **Immunisation**

An infectious diseases physician has generously donated a purpose-built vaccine refrigerator to the ASRC Health Program. Stocks of free vaccines have been arranged through the DHS Refugee Program. Two volunteer nurses are currently completing courses to become Accredited Nurse Immuniser. A nurse-initiated immunisation program will commence, in collaboration with the GPs, to increase the immunisation coverage of clients.

### **Vitamin D**

The ASRC Health Program will join selected CHCs to become authorised prescribers of a High Dose Vitamin D supplement (Western and Royal Melbourne Hospitals are partners in the initiative). The trial will prevent and treat Vitamin D deficiencies and will commence in late 2008.

### **Overcoming Challenges**

The ASRC Health Program is reaching a critical point regarding the numbers of clients it can manage. This means that eligibility for the program will need to be limited to asylum seekers 'at risk' and/or without Medicare. The plan is to revise client eligibility for service by initiating 'means testing' and by regular reassessments of client status. Asylum seekers and temporary and permanent residents with financial support and/or Medicare will leave the health program through a transition policy.

**Linda O'Brien** Co-ordinator

## Counselling

The ASRC provides free counselling to people seeking asylum who are experiencing high levels of psychological distress. This distress may be the result of terrible experiences of persecution and torture in their country of origin; it may be the outcome of the process of having to seek refuge in another country and its concomitant social isolation and marginalisation from the broader community because of cultural, language and religious barriers; or it may be the outcome of a long and convoluted refugee determination process.

A significant number of asylum seekers are denied the right to work or study, and denied access to welfare benefits and Medicare. They are left feeling disempowered and experience a loss of face, unable to meet their most basic living needs and having to rely on the generosity of people and agencies in the community. This in turn, places enormous pressure on families and individuals who are already disadvantaged by the refugee determination process.

In attempting to alleviate some of this distress, the Counselling Program offers individual, one-on-one, long-term counselling; psychiatric assessments and reports; counselling support at the Wednesday Night legal clinic; a Saturday morning psychiatric and counselling clinic; and a monthly children and teenager activities program called KidsZone/TeenZone.

Besides the paid staff of Coordinator, and two counsellors (one 0.8 EFT and the other 0.2 EFT), there are approximately 39 volunteers working in the counselling program. They work as follows:

- eight administration volunteers—four during the week, one to assist KidsZone, and three for Saturday morning clinics

- 12 counsellors in the general counselling program
- six volunteers in the Child and Adolescent programs (KidsZone and TeenZone)
- five counsellors in the Wednesday night legal support program
- five psychiatrists and one psychiatry registrar
- two external supervisors who provide group supervision to the counselling volunteers
- one external supervisor for support of paid staff
- two psychology students undertaking their Masters degrees under supervision of one of our psychologists
- one research student undertaking PhD studies.

A conservative estimate values the pro bono and voluntary services delivered through the program at over \$850 000 per annum, on an actual spending in the past year of approximately \$101 000.

The program receives referrals mostly from the legal, casework and health programs of the ASRC. Referrals also come from outside agencies such as the Red Cross, Hotham Mission, Foundation House, Victorian Legal Aid and the Refugee Immigration Legal Centre. Over the past year the Counselling Program has experienced continuing growth and demand for its services. There were 174 referrals in 2007 and 117 to date this year. This has required substantial planning and development.

The main tasks of the Coordinator have been:

- to recruit, train, support and debrief volunteer counsellors and psychiatrists
- to coordinate and manage the counselling program on a day-to-day basis

- to develop networks and referral relationships with external agencies
- to assist in developing and providing training and support for staff and volunteers in other programs within the ASRC.

The Counselling Program has also, over the past year, been working collaboratively with the ASRC Legal Program in the hard task of supporting asylum seekers who have had their applications for asylum in Australia rejected. A member of the legal team usually gives the bad news, with a counsellor and caseworker present. The aim is to give the person optimum support at the time, with follow up support and liaison where required.

Future plans for the Counselling Program include preparing in-house training, for volunteers at the Centre, in risk assessment for asylum seekers who present with a high level of psychological distress and the risk of self-harm or suicide.

Also, volunteer counsellors, and the wider community, would benefit from a better understanding of the experiences of being an asylum seeker, and how this impacts on their health and well being; this is the subject of a PhD project the data for which will be collected over the next year. We look forward to seeing the results of this important study.

In June 2008, Mary Harvey, the Coordinator of the Counselling Program for a number of years, left the ASRC to pursue other paths. She still remains involved in the ASRC on a voluntary basis. Over the four years that she was involved in the ASRC, Mary established a flourishing Counselling Program. Many asylum seekers would have had a more difficult refugee determination journey if not for her efforts in establishing and engaging the pro bono services of committed professionals, in the areas of psychiatry, psychology



and social work, to assist them in alleviation of their distress. While the search for a replacement continues, the Counselling Program is being ably managed by three ASRC counsellors, with the support of Liz Boland, a paid counsellor employed at the end of 2007, and the able and dedicated volunteers in administration, counselling and psychiatry without whom we would not be able to offer the services that we do.

### **Counselling Team**

## **Casework**

2007–2008 has been another extraordinary year for the Casework program.

### **Achievements**

It seemed there was no better time to introduce a new ASRC Casework model than Christmas Eve 2007! In this new program each volunteer caseworker has their own caseload of asylum seeker clients to manage, and the clients with the greatest needs are given the highest priority. This means that the ASRC is providing a better quality service to clients, who can now develop a relationship with their own worker.

The Casework team is made up of an amazing crew of three paid staff and over 50 committed, compassionate and talented volunteers from diverse backgrounds. This team has been very stable and tight-knit, and continues to flourish.

The Casework program has better defined teams within the program, including the Material Aid program and the Casework administration team, which work very effectively to support the asylum seekers.

The ASRC employed the exceptional Rui Santos as the Duty Caseworker. His work has largely been with vulnerable asylum seekers at the end stages of the asylum process. This has

involved developing the ASRC role with the Department of Immigration and this complex task suits no one better than our resident guru Rui!

The ASRC was able to increase the hours of Johanna Burns, our Senior Caseworker, to three days a week. Johanna continues to work magnificently with some of our most at risk and complex needs asylum seekers, including trafficked women and unaccompanied minors.

Our talented Volunteer Material Aid Coordinator Andrea Fitzgerald has worked tirelessly with various aid projects to support asylum seekers (please see Material Aid report). The ASRC recently self funded the Material Aid Coordinator position for three days a week and has employed Andrea to help hand the program over to the new Material Aid Coordinator, Barney Frankland. The ASRC is very sad to see Andrea go, and also excited to have Barney on board.

The Casework program appointed Amy Frew as Volunteer Casework Administration Coordinator. Amy has led a dedicated team of Casework administration volunteers and has coordinated projects including the upgrade of the Casework Access database. This database has the capacity to produce research reports, collecting data that will be used for community education, awareness raising and advocacy purposes.

The Wednesday evening Casework crew are a talented bunch who have continued the crucial job of supporting the intake of the newest and sometimes most vulnerable clients. Over the years the Wednesday evening crew has tried various models of providing Casework services to vulnerable asylum seekers, while working alongside the Wednesday evening Legal team. They now undertake mini assessments of all clients before they are seen by the Legal team. This is working well.

The Network of Asylum Seeker Agencies Victoria (NASAVic) and Casework lobbied the State Minister for Housing and successfully obtained Housing Establishment Fund monies (HEF). ASRC Casework worked with the Red Cross and Hotham Mission to form a relationship with the outstanding Transitional Housing Manager (THM), Homeground Housing, which administers the funds, using them on referral from an asylum seeker service.

Casework worked with the Asylum Seeker Financial Counselling network to start the first Asylum Seeker Financial Counselling clinic. This operates fortnightly at the ASRC and assists clients with information and support regarding financial affairs and debts.

The type of asylum seeker who comes to Australia and the ASRC continues to be influenced by world events. World Youth Day (WYD), for example, resulted in the ASRC seeing a large number of asylum seekers from Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, India and Burma. Casework has worked with the Catholic Church to try and ensure these clients are well supported.

Kon, Casework and dedicated volunteer Dorothy Kingston worked with the Department of Infrastructure and lobbied successfully to obtain \$60 000 for Metcard Tickets for NASAVic, of which ASRC received approximately \$26 000.

Casework worked with volunteer hairdresser Mel to start up the first free Asylum Seeker Hairdressing salon in the sophisticated environment of one of our intake rooms. This program is proving to be very successful with our asylum seekers who are sporting funky new haircuts!

Casework has continued to work closely with the Brigidine Sisters who provide crucial support to homeless asylum seeker men. Without their work we would be at a loss.

## Challenges

The ASRC is seeing an increasing number of asylum seekers, with more complex needs, but our resources have not increased. It is getting harder to support the demand. To date, the ASRC has seen 350 new clients in the last year, as well as a large number of existing clients.

Changes to the Australian housing market have meant that private rental is unaffordable and in short supply and our experience is that asylum seekers don't get a look in. With more need and competing groups, it is also increasingly difficult to access crisis accommodation, refuge, transitional housing and church accommodation. In addition, asylum seekers have sadly been reporting more than ever before that housing services have been discriminating against and denying access to them.

As the Rudd government has moved to abolish the Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) scheme, Casework is preparing to assist this group to make the transition to their lives as permanent visa holders, including lobbying to ensure the provision of settlement services.

The ASRC requested funding for a Caseworker from Minister for Families, Housing, Communities and Indigenous Affairs. Despite a promising meeting and a strong application funding was refused. This is disappointing as it highlights the new state government's lack of support for asylum seekers.

## Future

Casework is:

- planning Professional Development and Support forums to support its volunteers and better equip them to do this challenging work
- planning more Community Development projects, including a Theatre project for asylum seekers
- looking at restructuring its work and having each staff member

responsible for particular portfolios—new arrivals, unaccompanied minors, housing, end stage clients, and women at risk, among others

- preparing an advocacy strategy for housing agencies
- seeking a new Casework Coordinator who will be able to build upon the work Heidi has done.

**Heidi Abdel-Raouf** *Co-ordinator*

## Material Aid

The fair and equitable distribution of goods and resources is still the highest priority of the Material Aid program. While focusing on this, and consulting with clients on their basic needs, we have been able to assist more clients and provide a better-targeted service this year.

### Achievements

Material Aid received and managed its own budget, separate from the casework program.

A more streamlined accountability process was instigated, allowing the delivery of a more equitable service to clients.

The 'Back to School' program, established in 2006, supplied more and better school equipment to students. Careful planning and shopping meant we were able to do this at a reduced cost. New 1 GB USB memory sticks, in addition to stationery, were supplied to members who were attending university.

All families with school age children were given a voucher to purchase a recycled computer for use in their home, thanks to a grant and with the much appreciated assistance of Computer Bank. This was also offered to the university student clients.

The 'Welcome to the World' baby pack scheme was implemented. New

mothers are supplied with all the essentials (and some of the niceties), for themselves and their babies, in a comprehensive baby pack. They have proved to be extremely popular and clients remarked on how special it has made them feel. Many thanks to all involved with the provision of goods for these packs.

End of year gifts for children and adults were provided in the most equitable, comprehensive and accessible service and distribution ever. All clients/families received a gift from the centre.

- **Toy shop** – Parents 'shopped' on a 1–2–3 system, receiving one higher value toy, two medium value toys and three lower value toys. This system ensured that everyone had access to an equal share of the toys that had been generously donated. Aid is pleased to report that no family missed out this year.
- **Teens** – Older children received a gift voucher and two movie tickets.
- **Single adults** – Each received a gift voucher and an international phone card.
- **Families and Couples** – Each received an international phone card.

I would like to thank all of the volunteers who have helped make this year in Material Aid the most successful ever. I would also like to thank the many kind people who have shared our vision of equality and empowerment for our clients, and who have been so generous with their donations. I will be stepping down as Material Aid coordinator at the end of 2008 after two years of running and building this incredible program. It has been an honour to work with a truly inspirational group of staff, volunteers and clients.

**Andrea Fitzgerald** *Co-ordinator*





## Social and Recreation

The Social and Recreation program at the ASRC has provided opportunities for members of the centre to meet new people, form friendships, learn new skills, and reduce social isolation. During the past year, the social and recreation program has focused on creating long-term sustainable projects that encourage leadership skills in members.

The Light on the Path Ahead (LOPA) project was one of these. This program aimed to provide to people seeking asylum, their families, and the wider community the opportunity to work together to produce creative expressions of personal experiences, interests and motivations. An exciting feature of this project was when asylum seekers and non-asylum seekers co-facilitated workshops held across six weeks in June and July. Members and local artists shared their skills with each other in a number of creative media including printing, mosaics, photography, film making, weaving, dance, drama and music. A team of members prepared lunch for everyone. Attendance at these workshops was better than expected with more than 50 members per session, and numbers increased every week.

Following the success of the project, Social and Recreation decided to continue workshops in a more sustainable manner on two afternoons per week at the ASRC. This long-term project promotes member facilitation and participation over a prolonged period. The program also encourages all members of the centre to engage with each other and develop a sense of ownership and identity within the space.

The Gardening Project has expanded on this. The previously unused outdoor space is now a lovely garden and recreational area in which herbs and vegetables have been cultivated



for use in the kitchen at the ASRC. As well, members have learnt skills in permaculture and shared traditional cultural gardening methods. An aim for the future of the garden is to hold storytelling sessions in the space in which members can share life stories and cultural folklore from their own countries. Social and Recreation aims to integrate the LOPA and Gardening Projects through a mosaic installation in the garden area.

Due to increased demand for physical activities, Social and Recreation has continued to organise soccer and cricket teams weekly. These have been effective in relieving feelings of social isolation, providing opportunities to build new friendships and be part of a team, which also builds personal development. Swimming lessons and gym memberships have been found for members in their local area. The opportunity to be active and maintain a healthy lifestyle has been extremely positive and there is constant demand for more of these services.

Social and Recreation has continued to run a number of weekend social activities including excursions to the countryside, cultural events, performances, dancing lessons and sporting events. There are many requests for tickets to cultural events and Social and Recreation have responded by accessing more than 30 free tickets per week.

For the year ahead, Social and Recreation will be working with Casework to establish a Friendship Program that aims to connect recently arrived asylum seekers with volunteers from the centre. This program will give members a level of knowledge and cultural understanding that will assist with their effective integration into their local community. It is also a way for members to form and maintain long-term and meaningful relationships with volunteers.

Continuing mentorship of members as leaders within long-term programs is the most important aim of Social and Recreation for the year to come.

**Michelle Newton** *Co-ordinator*

## KidsZone/TeenZone

The KidsZone program continued to meet on the first Sunday of each month throughout the year.

### *A new initiative: the family camp*

One of the program's primary aims for this year was to engage some older kids and get TeenZone going alongside KidsZone. To launch TeenZone a rock-climbing camp was organised in February 2008 at the Lutheran Camp in the Grampians. This was an enormous success and the team made a commitment to organise one family camp a year. In July a reunion was held for the families who had been involved. We asked everyone, among other things, what they had discovered about themselves. We heard some awe-inspiring and moving comments about the rock-climbing in particular.

What has become apparent to us is that KidsZone/TeenZone is essentially a family program: the parents enjoy it as much as the kids, and one of the most heart warming aspects of the program is watching parents take delight and pride in their children.

### *Other activities during this year included:*

- a trip to see the Western Bulldogs play at the MCG
- learning circus skills at Westside Circus
- a beach day
- 'Curious Legends' story-telling session
- a writing workshop
- making pinata
- a ukulele lesson
- a Fathers' Day BBQ
- a tribute to mothers.

The numbers of families attending activities varies, but we now have some very regular attendees. There are now approximately 30 families on our list, and the children are between 3 and 19 years old.

### *Mixed feelings: good news and bad news*

A number of our families have received permanent residence, which is wonderful for them, but a little sad for us when it means that their time with KidsZone ends.

Others of our regular families have had to return to their country of origin. It has been very hard to say goodbye, but they stay in our memories (and in our newsletters) forever.

### *Recruitment*

Alister and Alison have recently joined the team, which includes Pam, Danni, Aaron, Natalie, Margie, Deb, and Susan. This has been especially welcome as families with older kids are attending, and the need to find creative ways to cater for all ages increases.

### *Plans for the coming year*

Our families are clear about what they enjoy: the camp is high on the list, as are excursions. Work has begun on another camp to be held in February, and the team will be putting together a program for 2009 at a planning day in November. We will be including a mix of activities, as well as some more therapeutically-based sessions, as these have also had good responses from the families. Musical events are always enjoyed, and there is a plan to purchase a medium-sized keyboard for use with KidsZone and for the centre in general.

**Pam Rycroft** *Co-ordinator*



## EDUCATION

### English Classes

The ESL program continues to be run entirely by volunteers offering ASRC members teaching and guidance in English language. We aim to provide sessions that are friendly and enjoyable while assisting students to improve a range of language skills—listening and understanding, speaking, reading and writing.

The highlight of the year was the commencement of Everyday English in September 2007. There is now an ESL class at the centre each day, four in the mornings and one in the evening. Students are able to attend classes more often, or have a class on the days they are able to come to the centre. Although Tuesday and Thursday (the original days) remain the busiest, attendance on Monday is often close to Tuesday's numbers, and attendance on Friday is growing. Wednesday evening remains a small group, but is the only opportunity for some people to attend a class and is thus an important service. The cost of travel and the constraints on Metcard distribution by the Centre prevent some students from attending as often as they would wish.

By June there were typically 20–25 students attending at least one class each week, up from 15–18 last year. More than 70 ASRC members accessed ESL classes, compared with 50 in the previous year. Sixty of these were new enrolments indicating the fairly rapid turnover. Most members attend two or three classes a week, but quite a number attend only one. While many attend regularly and consistently for their time of association with the Centre, there are still those who don't show up at all after referral, or who attend erratically or for a short period only.

Reflecting the ASRC membership, ESL students have a broad range of linguistic backgrounds and initial

English knowledge. This year we have had a number of students starting with no English at all, some with no experience of the Roman alphabet (for example several members from China), and some without literacy in their own language (such as a woman whose father did not consider education necessary for girls). This requires quite intensive teaching and it is difficult to assist these students in mixed ability groups. We also encounter students who stand out because their English is much more advanced than the majority. Pressure to create additional groups stretches both teaching and space resources.

Attendance remained variable at all sessions, reflecting the uncertainties and competing priorities in asylum seekers' lives. Planning lessons that will work with unpredictable numbers and diverse learning levels remains the most challenging part of the teacher's role. The ESL volunteers continue to rise to this challenge and during the year you might have heard singing, an explanation of the history of Australia Day, a discussion of ingredients in national cuisine, talk about the climate of Australian capital cities, Aussie slang, how to describe work experience, and much more.

ESL continued to cooperate closely with Home English teaching, including in the development of a set of teaching resources to support both programs. The allocated budget was spent largely on new materials for the collection, and small dictionaries or language guides for new students.

In line with the decision taken in 2007 to rotate coordinators annually, Jan Maslen took on the role for 2008, strongly assisted by former coordinator Val Campbell. Others in the group continue to assist with administrative tasks.

In June 2008 there were fifteen regular teachers. A positive change was that this number included three

men. The teaching team has remained relatively stable during the year, but as student numbers grow we are seeking additional volunteers for the day sessions. Ideally our volunteers are qualified and experienced teachers with ESL specialisation, but people with significant experience teaching or tutoring ESL may also be suitable.

**Jan Maslen and Val Campbell**  
*Co-ordinators*

## Home English Teaching

The Home English Teaching program provides visiting tutors for asylum seekers who cannot travel to English classes. All levels of English are catered for, some learners starting with only a few words of English while others are studying at university level. As well as the vital English lessons, tutors provide friendship, practical help and assistance with accessing services at the ASRC and elsewhere.

The majority of our learners are adults. However, there are a few school children who are matched with suitably qualified tutors, and this year we have several teenagers who are in Australia without any family.

Over 50 households are visited each week, with some households having more than one learner and/or tutor.

We have about 70 active tutors. Not all of tutors have a learner at any one time, as tutors and learners are matched according to locality and other factors. We often need more tutors in the Broadmeadows area.

As well as providing tutors, the Home English Teaching program helps some asylum seekers to access local English classes at venues such as neighbourhood houses and community centres. (These English lessons are not part of the 510 hours provided by the Federal Government through AMEP for people with a permanent visa.) In past years, these classes were very helpful for

people who could attend. As well as improving their English, learners who attended local classes got to know local people, organisations and events. The Home English Teaching program produced booklets about local classes to help caseworkers at ASRC and other organisations find suitable classes.

However, this year, ACFE, the body that funds most of these classes, has made people on bridging visas ineligible. This has been a severe blow to us. Learners who cannot travel to the ASRC for English lessons now have very limited opportunities for ESL. I hope that asylum seekers will be eligible for ACFE funded classes again in the future.

Thanks to Janet, who helps with the co-ordinating, and all the other tutors, who do a splendid job—often much more than what's in the job description. Our tutors' skill, initiative and dedication make the role of co-ordinating this program very rewarding.

**Sue Nash** *Co-ordinator*





## FOOD

### Foodbank

The Foodbank has continued its work of previous years in 2007–2008 and had its first full year in the new premises. The systems created to take advantage of the new space are working well and are ensuring fairness and dignity in the food distribution process. An average of 110 families are served weekly. Around 75 per cent of these families have no work rights and no form of welfare.

The Foodbank budget is around \$5 per person per week. Fortunately, donations of food in 2007–2008 effectively doubled the amount the Foodbank was able to distribute. The Food Action Network, an affiliation of individual, group and institutional donors, has continued to expand and encompasses people from all walks of life. Many donors have no religious affiliations, but it is delightful to know that major donors this year included the Sisters of Mercy, on a weekly basis; the Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Charity Foundation in the United Arab Emirates; and the Leo Beck Centre for Progressive Jewry. The Food Action Network has also had very significant donations from primary schools, secondary schools, universities, workplaces and other food-related charities such as Fare Share and SecondBite.

By the end of the year a very reliable team of more than 45 trained volunteers was operating the Foodbank with a high level of efficiency, providing maximum dignity to ASRC clients and members. A very positive article in *The Age* in June, 'Foodbank desperate for depositors', resulted in over \$10 000 worth of support—a great way to finish the year!

**Patrick Lawrence** Co-ordinator

## Kitchen

The Kitchen Program has continued to provide a daily community meal for all members, volunteers, workers and supporters at the ASRC. It is run entirely by volunteers and members.

It has been successful in achieving the goal of offering a nutritious meal in a welcoming social environment.

This year there has been a marked increase in the numbers sharing the meals. We now serve about 400 meals a week, which is a rise of 20%. There have been days when our numbers have reached 110.

Despite this increase and rising food prices we have managed on the budget provided, together with generous donations.

However the greater workload has meant we require at least minimum of three volunteers every day. This has been difficult to achieve.

We have not been successful in encouraging more asylum seekers to assist. This has been primarily the result of the ASRC being successful in gaining more work rights and educational positions for the members and so reducing their available time.

The kitchen volunteers feel very positive about their role at the ASRC and report a high level of satisfaction with what they achieve.

While continuing with the successful program our further goals for 2009 are to increase the numbers of volunteers and to develop menu suggestions to assist the cooks in catering for the larger numbers while maintaining nutrition and choice.

We look forward to another successful year.

**Kate Kennedy** Co-ordinator

## SUPPORT SERVICES

### Fundraising

The past 12 months have seen tremendous successes and developments within the ASRC Fundraising Program.

Our small but dedicated team has faced financial challenges, arising from increased demand for services and support, with energy and enthusiasm. Our volunteers have worked determinedly and creatively, with few resources, to help implement an extensive calendar of fundraising events, activities and initiatives, achieving an end result of greater financial security and flexibility for the ASRC than ever before.

Fundraising doesn't offer the opportunity to directly assist, or have daily contact with, the asylum seekers who come to the ASRC for help, but it does offer a unique chance to contribute to the ongoing viability and financial security of the ASRC. There is something inherently rewarding in knowing your efforts are contributing to the success of all programs. Volunteers in the fundraising program will attest to this!

### *Highlights for Fundraising 2007–*

#### **2008 included:**

- the development of a Fundraising Strategic Plan
- the establishment of a direct mail calendar to include regular appeals
- the development of the Justice Seeker monthly pledge program
- recruitment of new donors and supporters
- an extended fundraising event calendar, to include events such as High Tea with the Girls, Stand Up for Asylum Seekers

- the establishment of the Workplace Giving program to enhance corporate giving
- the creation and maintenance of a digital database of supporters, incorporating segmentation and reporting functions
- improved communication with existing supporters, including more efficient acknowledgement and receipting
- success in funding applications to philanthropic trusts, with more than half of all applications resulting in a grant
- sourcing and/or producing a range of Australian made, ethically-produced merchandise, which has been successfully, marketed in annual Christmas catalogues.

Of course the endeavours of a Fundraising Department in any organisation are only as successful as its supporters are generous. The real credit goes to all of the wonderful individuals, businesses, religious organisations and community groups that continue to give—and then give some more—to support the ASRC.

It never ceases to amaze me how you respond to our frequent calls for help and financial support with patience and understanding, and a level of generosity that is truly humbling.

Your gifts are not to the organisation but to the people we have the privilege of assisting and on their behalf I take this opportunity to thank you for your boundless generosity.

2008–2009 brings with it new goals, targets and initiatives. Unfortunately, there is still much to be done to ensure asylum seekers receive the justice they deserve in this country. With your help we will continue to strive to ensure this becomes a reality.

**Kristine Robertson** Co-ordinator

## IT

The IT team has grown significantly this year, acquiring additional volunteers and a broader skills base. Team processes and communications have been enhanced and IT support has been more responsive than ever.

This year considerable effort has been put into building a better, more reliable, IT infrastructure. We replaced the server with a new one running MS Windows SBS 2003; this offers greater stability and much more file storage space. Backup and Disaster Recovery processes have been completely overhauled. A complete PC replacement cycle has been completed; more than 80 onsite PCs used by staff and volunteers are now Pentium 4 class or better, running Windows XP.

ASRC email has been migrated to Google Apps. All ASRC staff and coordinators are now using a single, centralised email system. This makes communication and collaboration easier, as well as offering rich text formatting, remote access and quick keyword searching.

We now also use Google Calendar, a very flexible system for managing appointments and booking facilities such as meeting rooms.

Many thanks to all of the staff and volunteers who have supported our work and helped us implement these improvements.

**Leigh Wardle** *Co-ordinator*

## VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

With the recent increase in asylum seekers presenting at the ASRC, demands for the centre's services have grown and so has the need for workers to meet the asylum seekers' complex needs. As the majority of our workers are unpaid, we continue to have five volunteer intakes per year to meet demand. With four induction sessions per intake, we run a total of twenty sessions.

The result of this recruitment and training policy is an addition of about 300 new volunteers by the end of each year. At this time we have about 500 active volunteers and hope to have added another 60 new volunteers by November.

The role of the Volunteer Coordinator is to recruit and support the unpaid workforce without which the ASRC could not continue to function, and to provide support to the program coordinators, a number of whom are volunteers themselves. An integral part of the role is responsibility for the placement and supervision of secondary and tertiary students within the centre. The educational and social significance of this is far-reaching. Not only do we introduce potential welfare workers to asylum seeker issues but also, through offering secondary students work experience and community service opportunities, we often find the increased awareness of the centre results in donations from the students' schools.

Achievements this year included:

- five volunteer intakes, ensuring that programs and services continue to be provided with the workforce they need to function
- the introduction of a back-up scheme in which volunteers, who are waiting for a vacancy to arise in the program of their choice, undertake to be trained in other

vital areas (for example reception and kitchen) thus providing a pool of workers that can be drawn on when needed

- consultation with program coordinators about their workforce needs and how we can improve our induction and training
- using feedback from volunteers about their induction and their experiences as volunteers to improve our service
- placing 11 tertiary and four secondary work experience students, which has been of particular benefit to the Social & Recreation Program
- developing a program with the Edmund Rice Retreat Centre, which has resulted in our having the services of three or four enthusiastic Year 12 students from schools in Melbourne and beyond, one day a week throughout the school year. These students have been great as helpers in the kitchen, food bank and other programs
- continuing the Information Evenings (an integral part of the volunteer induction with an average attendance of about 100), and the guided tours of the ASRC run by the Volunteer Coordinator for community and school groups, to increase community awareness of the centre's role
- the updating of ASRC policies and procedures, by Johanna Burns and Kath Stephenson, which were then used to complete the Volunteer Induction and Policy Kit in January 2008. This is sent to volunteers upon completion of their training
- regular communication with volunteers, many of whom work off-campus, through the continued production of a weekly email newsletter
- an update, in July, of volunteer numbers and volunteer distribution across programs and services, giving

us a more reliable indication of how many active volunteers we had at that time (more than 450)

- installing a new and refined Volunteer Support database, with the assistance of Terry Johnson, one of our off-site, invaluable I.T. Team and two of the Volunteer Support Program's volunteers, Melanie Marshall and Beattie Iezzi.

Future directions include:

- continued (and enhanced) volunteer recruitment, induction and support, including continued development of a pool of emergency volunteers in essential areas
- further updating and refining of the database to increase its usefulness and relevance to the Volunteer Support program, program coordinators and the ASRC as a whole. It forms the basis for the centre's workforce statistics and is therefore an invaluable planning tool
- reviewing the induction program (in response to feedback) from November 2008 onwards, in consultation with volunteers and program coordinators. Possible changes include condensing the present four sessions into three and having the orientation visits in the last week of the month so that induction is completed within a month
- improving the presentation of the newsletter.

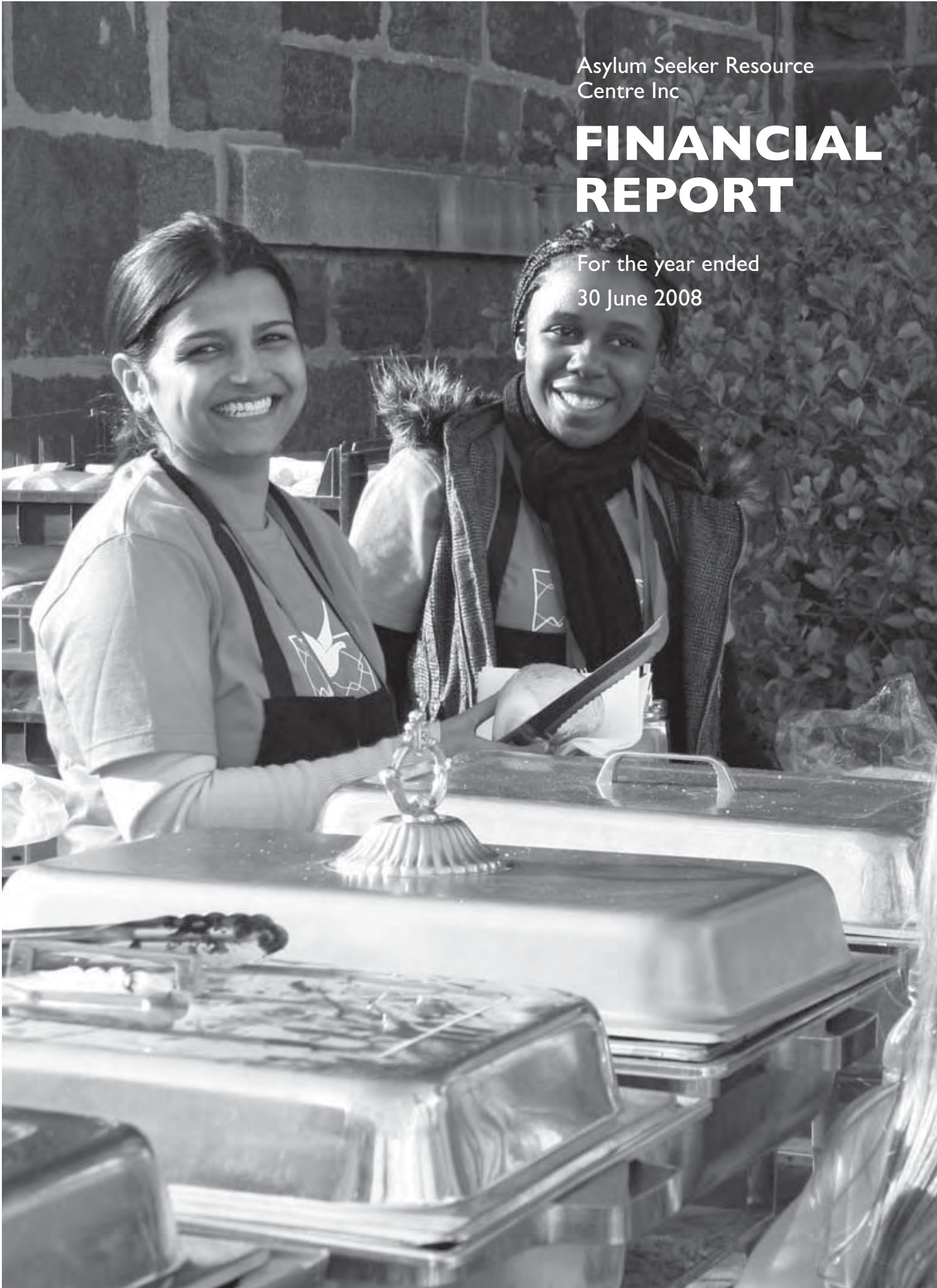
**Janna Hilbrink** *Co-ordinator*

## **PUBLICATIONS**

The ASRC continued to produce a range of informative, high quality and visually appealing publications in 2007–2008. Whether it be the Journeys newsletters, catalogues, information brochures, appeals, flyers, stickers, or the gorgeous Christmas Merchandise catalogue and fundraising Calendar, each publication helped inform supporters and raise the profile of the work of the ASRC—many thanks to the tremendously talented Bec Yule of Red Chilli Design who designed all of these amazing publications without charge in her own time.

**Kristine Robertson** *Co-ordinator*





Asylum Seeker Resource  
Centre Inc

# FINANCIAL REPORT

For the year ended  
30 June 2008

**ASYLUM SEEKER RESOURCE CENTRE INC.**

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
30 JUNE 2008**

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**ASYLUM SEEKER RESOURCE CENTRE INC.**

**INCOME STATEMENT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
30 JUNE 2008**

	<b>Note</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>
		<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>INCOME</b>			
Fundraising Events Income		230,162	206,074
Donations		544,474	528,806
Sponsorship & Grants		750,489	559,153
Miscellaneous Income		4,100	3,186
		<u>1,529,225</u>	<u>1,297,219</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Program Expenses		254,070	208,442
Administration		228,431	155,520
Employment Expenses		982,199	636,585
Fundraising Activity Costs		106,875	60,082
		<u>1,571,575</u>	<u>1,060,629</u>
Operating Profit		(42,350)	236,590
Interest Income		<u>90,347</u>	<u>64,142</u>
Profit before income tax		47,997	300,732
Income tax expense	2	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Profit after income tax		47,997	300,732
Retained Profits at the beginning of the financial year		<u>602,615</u>	<u>301,883</u>
Retained Profits at the end of the financial year		<u><u>650,612</u></u>	<u><u>602,615</u></u>



**ASYLUM SEEKER RESOURCE CENTRE INC.**

**BALANCE SHEET  
30 JUNE 2008**

	<b>Note</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>
		<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash	3	1,630,469	1,507,213
Trade and other receivables	4	43,517	19,107
Inventories	5	40,395	-
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<u>1,714,381</u>	<u>1,526,320</u>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	6	32,869	13,168
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<u>32,869</u>	<u>13,168</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<u>1,747,250</u>	<u>1,539,488</u>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Amounts received in advance	7	863,810	769,382
Trade and other creditors	8	120,219	84,369
Provisions	9	106,810	83,122
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<u>1,090,839</u>	<u>936,873</u>
<b>NON CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Provisions	9	5,799	-
<b>TOTAL NON CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<u>5,799</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<u>1,096,638</u>	<u>936,873</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<u>650,612</u>	<u>602,615</u>
<b>MEMBERS' FUNDS</b>			
Retained profits		650,612	602,615
<b>TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS</b>		<u>650,612</u>	<u>602,615</u>

**ASYLUM SEEKER RESOURCE CENTRE INC.**

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
30 JUNE 2008**

	Note	2008 \$	2007 \$
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Receipts from Fundraising		211,335	207,375
Receipts from Sponsorship, Grants & Donations		1,404,391	1,443,864
Other receipts		4,100	-
Payments to suppliers		(604,383)	(364,021)
Payments to employees		(958,511)	(594,932)
Interest received		90,347	64,142
Net Cash provided by operating activities	10	<u>147,279</u>	<u>756,428</u>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Payments for purchase of property and equipment		<u>(24,023)</u>	<u>(13,965)</u>
Net Cash provided by (used in) investing activities		<u>(24,023)</u>	<u>(13,965)</u>
Net increase (decrease) in cash held		123,256	742,463
Cash at the beginning of the year		1,507,213	764,750
Cash at the end of the year		<u><u>1,630,469</u></u>	<u><u>1,507,213</u></u>

**ASYLUM SEEKER RESOURCE CENTRE INC.**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
30 JUNE 2008**

**Note 1: Statement of Significant Accounting Policies**

This financial report is special purpose financial report prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporations Act (Vic.). The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity.

The financial report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act (Vic.) and the following Australian Accounting Standards:

AASB 101	Presentation of Financial Statements
AASB 107	Cash Flow Statements
AASB 108	Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors
AASB 110	Events after the Balance Sheet Date
AASB 112	Income Taxes
AASB 116	Property, Plant and Equipment
AASB 118	Revenue
AASB 1031	Materiality
AASB 137	Provisions

No other applicable Accounting Standards, Australian Accounting Interpretations or other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board have been applied.

The financial report has been prepared on an accrual basis and is based on historical costs and does not take into account changing money values or, except where specifically stated, current valuations of non-current assets.

The following material accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless otherwise stated, have been adopted in the preparation of this financial report.

**a. Income Tax**

The charge for current income tax expenses is based on profit for the year adjusted for non-assessable or disallowed items. It is calculated using tax rates that have been enacted by the balance sheet date.

The Association is exempt from paying income tax by virtue of Division 50 of the Income Tax Assessment Act, 1997. Accordingly, tax effect accounting has not been adopted.

**b. Fixed Assets**

Leasehold improvements and office equipment are carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation.

The depreciable amount of all fixed assets are depreciated over the useful lives of the association commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use.



**ASYLUM SEEKER RESOURCE CENTRE INC.**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
30 JUNE 2008**

**c. Employee Entitlements**

Provision is made for the Association's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to balance date. Employee benefits that are expected to be settled within one year have been measured at the amount expected to be paid when the liability is settled. Employee benefits payable later than one year have been measured at the present value of estimated future cash outflows to be made for those benefits.

Sick Leave is provided for on the balance sheet at the rate of 100% of the actual liability of the Association.

**d. Provisions**

Provisions are recognised when the Association has a legal or constructive obligation, as a result of past events, for which it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will result and that outflow can be reliably measured.

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>Note 2: Income Tax Expense</b>		
Prima facie tax payable on operating profit at 30% (2007: 30%)	14,399	90,220
Less tax effect of:		
- non-taxable member income arising from principle of mutuality	(14,399)	(90,220)
Income tax expense	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Note 3: Cash and cash equivalents</b>		
Cash on Hand	1,378	950
Cash at Bank	<u>1,629,091</u>	<u>1,506,263</u>
	<u>1,630,469</u>	<u>1,507,213</u>
<b>Note 4: Trade and other receivables</b>		
Deposits Paid	500	8,383
Sundry Debtors	28,222	9,395
Prepayments	<u>14,795</u>	<u>1,329</u>
	<u>43,517</u>	<u>19,107</u>
<b>Note 5: Inventories</b>		
Inventory - at cost	<u>40,395</u>	<u>-</u>

**ASYLUM SEEKER RESOURCE CENTRE INC.**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
30 JUNE 2008**

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>Note 6: Property, plant and equipment</b>		
Motor Vehicles - at cost	24,447	13,965
Less: accumulated depreciation	<u>(4,483)</u>	<u>(797)</u>
	<u>19,964</u>	<u>13,168</u>
<b>Furniture and Fixtures</b>		
Furniture and Fixtures - at cost	2,724	-
Less: accumulated depreciation	<u>(65)</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>2,659</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Office Equipment</b>		
Office Equipment - at cost	10,817	-
Less: accumulated depreciation	<u>(571)</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>10,246</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u><u>32,869</u></u>	<u><u>13,168</u></u>
<b>Note 7: Amounts Received in Advance</b>		
Grants, Sponsorship & Donations in advance	601,393	364,017
Distribution Funds in advance	257,417	385,365
Other Liabilities	<u>5,000</u>	<u>20,000</u>
	<u><u>863,810</u></u>	<u><u>769,382</u></u>
<b>Note 8: Trade and other payables</b>		
Trade Creditors	64,304	36,778
Accrued Expenses	5,044	-
GST payable	(2,918)	(3,762)
Payroll Liabilities	42,545	51,353
Sundry Clearing Account	<u>11,244</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u><u>120,219</u></u>	<u><u>84,369</u></u>
<b>Note 9: Provisions</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
Provision for annual leave	60,062	36,374
Provision for sick leave	<u>46,748</u>	<u>46,748</u>
	<u><u>106,810</u></u>	<u><u>83,122</u></u>
<b>Provisions - non current</b>		
Provision for long service leave	<u><u>5,799</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>

**ASYLUM SEEKER RESOURCE CENTRE INC.**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
30 JUNE 2008**

	Note	2008 \$	2007 \$
<b>Note 10: Reconciliation of Cash Flow from Operations with Profit from Ordinary Activities after Income Tax</b>			
Profit after income tax		47,997	144,177
Cash flows excluded from operating profit attributable to operating activities			
Non-cash flows in profit			
- Depreciation		4,323	797
Changes in assets and liabilities;			
- (Increase)/decrease in trade and other debtors		(24,411)	(11,551)
- (Increase)/decrease in inventories		(40,395)	-
- Increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables		35,850	23,383
- Increase/(decrease) in amounts received in advance		94,428	401,415
- Increase/(decrease) in provisions		29,487	41,652
Net cash provided by Operating Activities		<u>147,279</u>	<u>599,873</u>



**ASYLUM SEEKER RESOURCE CENTRE INC.**

**STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
30 JUNE 2008**

The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In the opinion of the committee the financial report as set out on pages 1 to 7:

1. Presents a true and fair view of the financial position of Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc. and its performance for the year ended on that date.
2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc. will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Committee and is signed for and on behalf of the Committee by:



---

Paul Harrison - Chairperson

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

13/11/08

---

Jemma Stelatto Pledger - Treasurer

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_



**INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF  
ASYLUM SEEKER RESOURCE CENTRE INC.**

**Report on the Financial Report**

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc. which comprises the balance sheet, statement of cash flows as at 30 June 2008, and the income statement, a summary of significant accounting policies, other explanatory notes and the statement by members of the committee.

*Committee's Responsibility for the Financial Report*

The committee of the association is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report and have determined that the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statement, which form part of the financial report, are consistent with the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act (Vic 1981) and are appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The committee's responsibilities also include establishing and maintaining internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

*Auditor's Responsibility*

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. No opinion is expressed as to whether the accounting policies used, as described in Note 1, are appropriate to meet the needs of the members. We conduct our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. These Auditing Standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the committee, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

The financial report has been prepared for distribution to members for the purpose of fulfilling the committee's financial reporting under the Associations Incorporation Act (VIC 1981). We disclaim any assumption of responsibility for any reliance on this report or on the financial report to which it relates to any person other than the members, or for any purpose other than that for which it was prepared.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

In our opinion:

The financial report of Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc. is in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Act (Victoria 1981) including:

- i. giving a true and fair view of the Association's financial position as at 30 June 2008 and of their performance for the year ended on that date; and
- ii. complying with Australian Accounting Standards (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations) and the Associations Incorporation Act (Victoria 1981).

Sean Denham

Dated: 21 September 2008  
Suite 12, 13-25 Church Street  
Hawthorn VIC 3122

**ASYLUM SEEKER RESOURCE CENTRE INC.**

**CERTIFICATE BY MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE**

I Paul Harrison, and I Jemma Stelatto Pledger, certify that:

This annual statement was/will be submitted to the members of the association at its annual general meeting.



\_\_\_\_\_  
Paul Harrison - Chairperson

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

13/11/08

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jemma Stelatto Pledger - Treasurer

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_





# Asylum Seeker Resource Centre

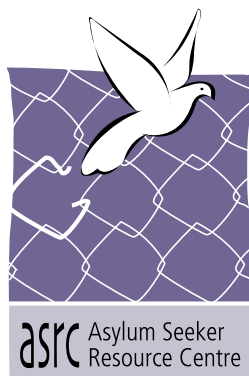


## Asylum Seeker Resource Centre

12 Batman St, West Melbourne, 3003

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**[www.asrc.org.au](http://www.asrc.org.au)**

ABN 64 114 965 815 Incorporation No. A0042918H