

**NO ONE
CHOOSES TO
BE AN ASYLUM
SEEKER.**

ASYLUM SEEKER RESOURCE CENTRE
ANNUAL REPORT 2010-2011

celebrating 10 years

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

In 2011, we celebrate 10 years.

Chairperson's welcome

This was truly a year of anniversaries.

In 2011, the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees turned sixty and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness turned fifty. Together these conventions establish the fundamental rights of individuals seeking asylum and statehood. They are also fundamental to the purpose and activity of our centre. In contrast, 2011 also marks the tenth anniversary of the Tampa incident, the attacks on the World Trade Center and the passing of the Migration Amendment Act, which together saw an escalation of intolerance and mandatory detention. It is a mottled collection of milestones, each giving cause for reflection about the experience of asylum seekers in Australia and globally.

But perhaps the most festive of anniversaries was our own. **On 10 June, we celebrated the tenth birthday of the ASRC.** It was an important opportunity to reflect on the many achievements of the ASRC, to reconnect with friends, and to remember that in ten years we have etched out a better vision for Australia proven by the size of our community and the strength of our voice. It was especially uplifting to bring together the many asylum seekers who, through their struggle and bravery, have become permanent members of our community and some of our dearest friends. It is a success story, and we hope for their continued success and wellbeing.

As part of the celebrations, we were privileged to introduce the support of a number of prominent and highly regarded Australians who have agreed to shine a light on our cause as honorary Patrons and Ambassadors of the ASRC. We welcome as patrons: **Eva Cox** AO; the Honourable **Michael Kirby** AC CMG; **Julian Burnside** AO QC; and the Right Honourable **Malcolm Fraser**, AC, CH, the 22nd Prime Minister of Australia. We were also very pleased to announce Ambassadors Professor **Patrick McGorry**, **Arnold Zable**, **Christos Tsiolkos**, **The Cat Empire** and **Corinne Grant**. Already, the contributions of these luminary Patrons and Ambassadors have been considerable, and the board thanks them for their ongoing support.

The many successes of our CEO, **Kon Karapanagiotidis**, have been a reason for further celebration. Kon received Australia's highest honour on Australia Day this year, conferred with an Order of Australia Medal for his service to asylum seekers and human rights. The award vindicated Kon's work as an ideal of Australian society, and he has truly continued to warrant such accolades through his leadership and passion for the ASRC. The Board thanks Kon for his unerring commitment to his cause and to our community.

But all of this would be for nothing if not for the staff and volunteers of the organisation. Caring for more than **1000 people from 98 countries**, the ASRC staff have amassed a wealth of successes in the 23 programs spread across our organisational pillars of Aid, Empowerment, Justice, Community and Sustainability. The centre has continued to develop the depth and breadth of its services, breathing life into the Strategic Plan and continually improving outcomes for asylum seekers. This year's annual report presents a series of achievements for which the Board extends its deepest thanks to all staff, volunteers and supporters. I, in turn, thank the Board for their efforts this year. I would especially like to acknowledge Julie Francis for her years of service as Chair, including the better part of 2011.

In 2012, we will continue to seek solutions, to strive for better outcomes, to extend compassion, to change policy and perceptions, to lead education, to provide aid and health services, to defend and uphold justice, and to advance social inclusion. Our strategy, and our people, will deliver this vision.

We are pleased to present our Annual Report for 2010-2011, to join in celebration, and to remember the invisible heroes that inspire our cause.

Matthew Tutty
ASRC Chairperson

Patrons and Ambassadors

OUR PATRONS

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

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

Eva Cox
Writer, Academic

Mr **Julian Burnside AO QC**
'Australian Living National Treasure'

OUR AMBASSADORS

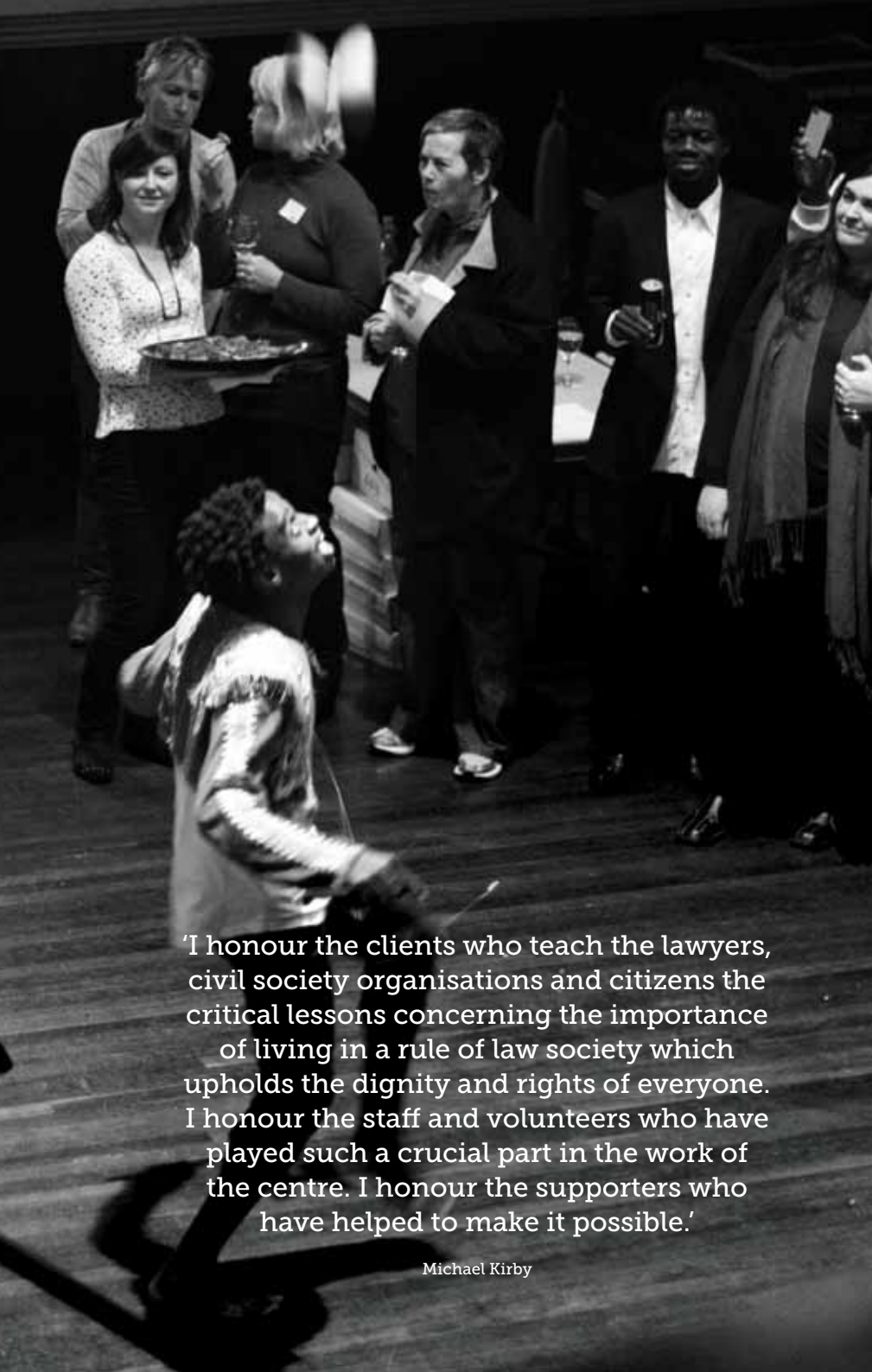
Professor **Patrick McGorry**
2010 Australian of the Year

Arnold Zable
Writer, storyteller, educator,
and human rights advocate

Corinne Grant
Writer, comedian and TV presenter

Christos Tsiolkas
Award winning Australian author

The Cat Empire
Nationally acclaimed musical outfit



'I honour the clients who teach the lawyers, civil society organisations and citizens the critical lessons concerning the importance of living in a rule of law society which upholds the dignity and rights of everyone. I honour the staff and volunteers who have played such a crucial part in the work of the centre. I honour the supporters who have helped to make it possible.'

Michael Kirby

CEO's welcome

This year we have made it to 10 years, a momentous yet bittersweet birthday. Celebrations were overshadowed as we are still burdened with the policies of mandatory detention, the blight of offshore processing, the demonisation of asylum seekers, and the denial of a fair go for asylum seekers in the community continues.

However, this year we also celebrate the best in us, as Australians. We celebrate the profound difference we have made in the last 10 years to the lives of over 7000 people who have sought sanctuary. The ASRC has been a beacon of hope and humanity for the last decade to asylum seekers from all across our extraordinary world. This year has been no different.

This year has seen the development of the ASRC's key messages as part of our Strategic Plan. The messages convey our focus, summarise our vision and values and outline our key campaign and advocacy areas. The messages highlight the plight, right and contribution of asylum seekers—themes which are at the very heart of the ASRC's work. After consultation with donors, volunteers, members, the general public and staff we proudly launched our three key messages this year:

No one chooses to be an asylum seeker

I believe in a fair go. I welcome asylum seekers.

Australia. Built by boat people.

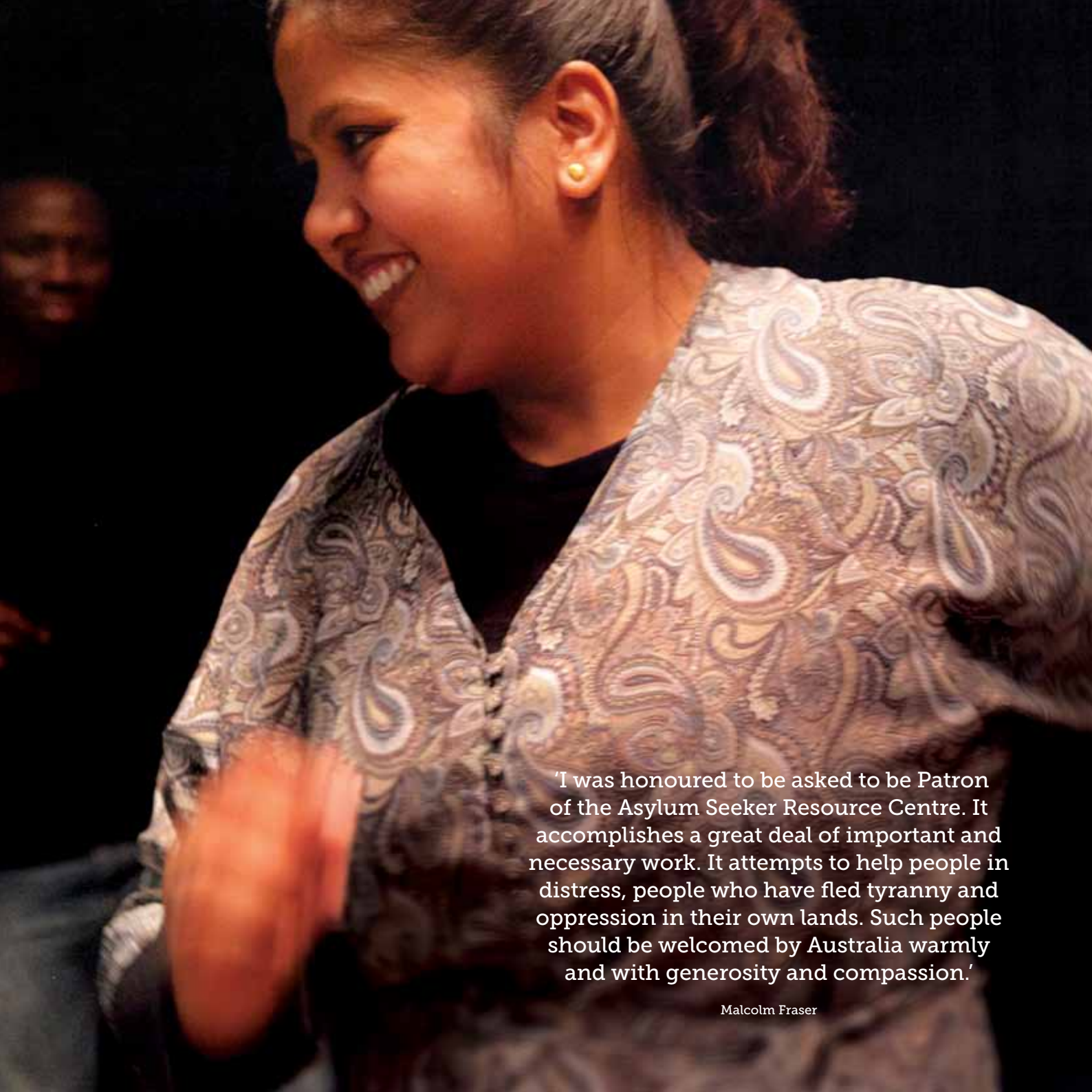
We invite all to share and spread these messages so that we can achieve our vision that all those seeking asylum in Australia have their human rights upheld and that those seeking asylum in our community receive the support and opportunities they need to live independently.

Other successes this year are plentiful: over 1000 asylum seekers assisted, successfully gaining Skills Victoria funding for the Vocational Education Training (VET) Access Program for asylum seekers, engaging over 10 000 people from over 100 organisations through community engagements, increasing the impact of our social enterprises, playing an integral part in the campaign to get children and families released from detention and into community detention, to no name but a few. The numbers tell only a small part of our success story.

As always, it has been the thousands of acts of kindness that have enabled us to provide compassion, advocate for the rights of asylum seekers and provide vital services. Be they the hundreds of inspiring volunteers who have given so fully their hearts and time or our wonderful donors, supporters and staff.

In the coming year we will focus on providing essential services, implementing the second year of our strategic plan, continuing to lobby for an end to mandatory detention and spreading our key messages while strengthening our financial and organisational sustainability. We will continue to be the powerful voice advocating for asylum seekers by ensuring they are welcomed, given a fair go and treated with dignity and respect.

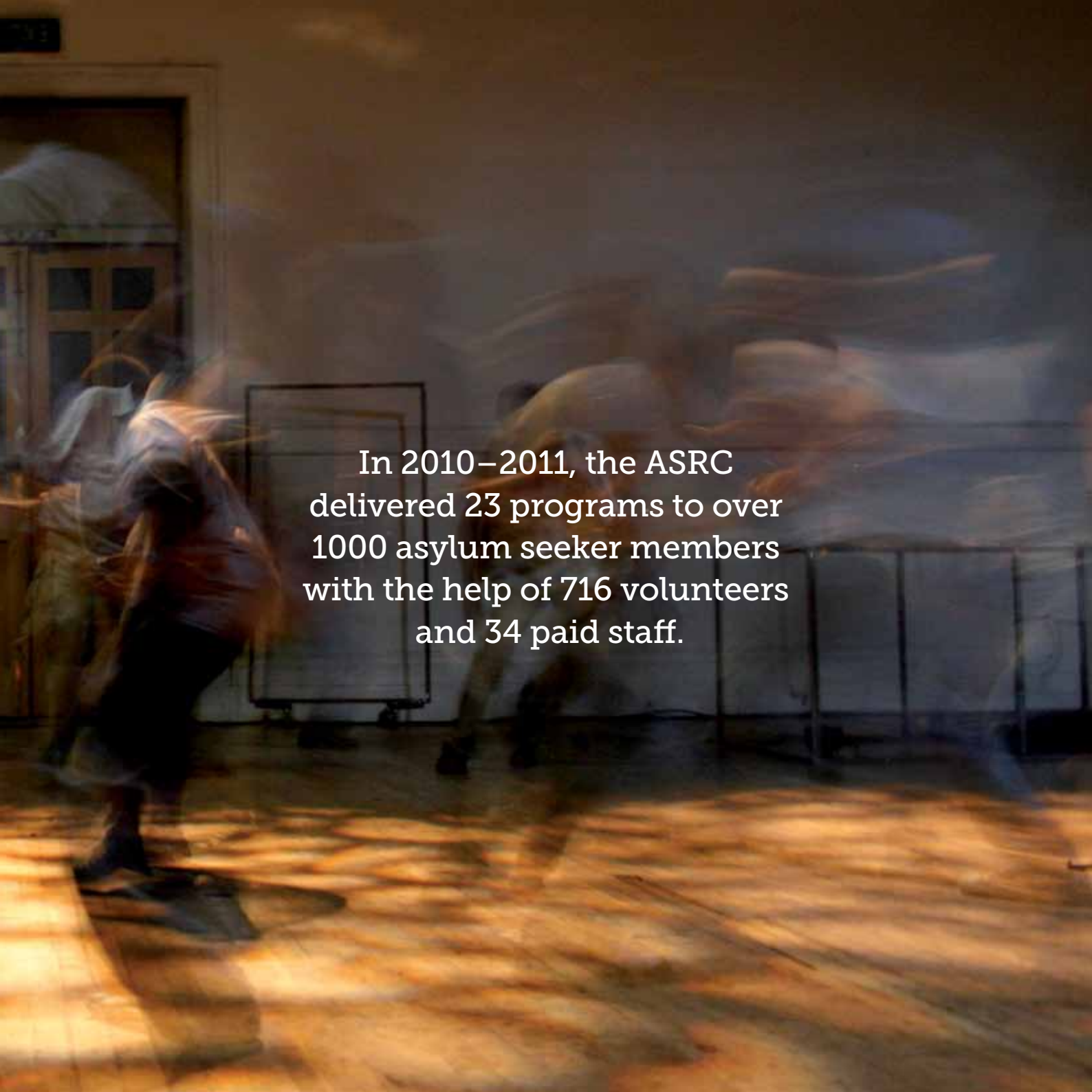
Kon Karapanagiotidis OAM
CEO



'I was honoured to be asked to be Patron of the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre. It accomplishes a great deal of important and necessary work. It attempts to help people in distress, people who have fled tyranny and oppression in their own lands. Such people should be welcomed by Australia warmly and with generosity and compassion.'

Malcolm Fraser





In 2010–2011, the ASRC
delivered 23 programs to over
1000 asylum seeker members
with the help of 716 volunteers
and 34 paid staff.

Aid
PILLAR

Aid and Advocacy

'It is a great place to work, always busy but it is great to see the smiles we put on people's faces when we can provide a few of the basics to make their life a bit easier for them.'

Heather, volunteer

The Aid and Advocacy Program has a strong focus on enhancing asylum seeker access to mainstream material aid and emergency relief providers. This aim was furthered across the course of the year through the development of relationships with key agencies and the facilitation of advocacy efforts through a working group comprised of asylum seeker agencies.

A year ago, the Foodbank and the Aid and Advocacy donor networks were integrated into the Survival Action Network. The monthly Survival Newsletter has seen a significant increase in subscribers during this time, having recently passed 500, some of whom represent a whole school or church. The newsletter has had a significant direct impact on donations, enabling the ASRC to target specific donation requirements.

FOR THE PAST YEAR, WE CELEBRATE:

- > 7240 individual episodes of service provision.
- > Providing 10 420 nappies.
- > Handing out almost 7000 Metcards.
- > Providing 159 mobile phones.
- > Giving toys for over 110 kids during the Christmas season.
- > Supplying back-to-school packs for 80 families, including for primary, secondary and tertiary students.
- > Providing warm winter coats, gloves, scarves and beanies for over 200 asylum seekers.

IN THE YEAR AHEAD THE AID AND ADVOCACY PROGRAM WILL FOCUS ON:

- > Meeting the material aid needs of a very vulnerable population which experiences a severity of destitution otherwise nonexistent in Australian.
- > Improving access pathways to aid by developing networks and professional relationships, as well as empowering asylum seekers to navigate complex service systems.
- > Gaining support and commitment from mainstream material-aid and emergency-relief services to ensure asylum seekers are provided access.
- > Working in conjunction with broader efforts of the ASRC to advocate for a welfare safety net for asylum seekers.

Aid and Advocacy Staff

1 part-time staff (.08EFT)

10 volunteers

Foodbank

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

ASRC Member

The Foodbank exists to provide every asylum seeker visitor and their family with all the groceries they need week by week. For the past year, we celebrate the provision of weekly groceries to 125 families, or 300 people.

Of the members who visit the Foodbank every week, 75% have no work rights in Australia and receive no form of welfare. For those with no income or right to an income, the Foodbank is the only thing that stands between them and malnutrition. Our ability to provide sufficient fresh fruit and vegetables was greatly enhanced by a grant from StreetSmart, which enabled the purchase of a cool room. This has resulted in a 60 to 80% increase in the amount of delicious and nutritious fruit and vegetables that we can provide to members.

While safeguarding the food security of asylum seekers living in the community in Victoria, the Foodbank aims for good nutrition, fairness and dignity. These are delivered by what we call the 'supermarket model,' where asylum seekers can see everything on the shelves, and may choose what they like, within a system that mandates a well-rounded diet and proportionality—ensuring more food for larger families and for families with no income.

The Foodbank purchases approximately one third of the food distributed. Another third is donated through the vibrant not-for-profit food rescue sector—SecondBite, FareShare, Foodbank Victoria. The final third comes from the ASRC Survival Network—schools, places of worship, individuals, workplaces, families.

Thanks to the teamwork of the ASRC, the 52 volunteers from the Foodbank, the food rescue charities and the Survival Network, a basic standard of food security and human dignity has been assured for asylum seekers.

Foodbank Staff

1 part-time staff (.06EFT)

52 volunteers

Community Meals

'The kitchen is much easier with our new stove and there is a lot more foods to choose from when we are cooking, so we are happier when we make lunch.'

Member volunteer from the Community Meals Program

The Community Meals Program aims to provide nutritious, tasty and culturally appropriate foods to asylum-seeker members, as well as to staff and volunteers of the ASRC. The act of sharing a healthy meal in a communal dining area increases the opportunities to build relationships, learn from one another, socialise, and experience a sense of community. The program provided approximately 25 000 nutritious and tasty, hot lunches for asylum seekers, staff and volunteers of the ASRC throughout the year.

This year saw greater nutritional quality and quantity through improved food storage and volunteer retention. Member volunteer participation also increased and several members have gone on to work in ASRC Catering, having gained skills and experience with the Community Meals Program.

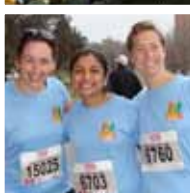
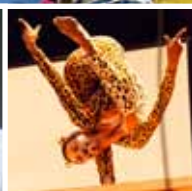
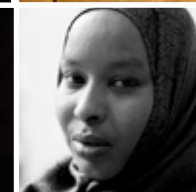
The program continued to promote wellness and reduce social isolation by providing a welcoming space where connections and a sense of community are developed.

The Community Meals Program received generous grants from the RACV Community Foundation and Andy Inc, allowing a major kitchen renovation. New cabinets, new oven, and new everything else, have enabled us to use our time, space and resources more effectively to produce an even more nutritious and plentiful lunch. The kitchen has also benefitted from the new cool room (see Foodbank), as the increased quality and quantity of food translates to more full bellies and smiling faces.

Community Meals Staff

1 part-time staff (.02EFT)

30 volunteers



Community
PILLAR

Volunteer Support and Member Participation

'Volunteering here helps me with my school, and I know it will help me find work too when I complete my course. I want to come in as much as I can!'

Marcel, placed through Member Participation program

Volunteers are the heart and soul of the ASRC. With 34 paid staff spread across 23 programs, the 716 volunteers are vital in keeping the doors of the ASRC open. Over the past 10 years the ASRC has been developed, supported and run by volunteers. From greeting members as they arrive to supporting the ASRC's IT needs, to providing GP services, each and every program at the ASRC relies on volunteers to operate. In 2010-2011, a newly created Member Participation Program providing opportunities for asylum-seeker members to volunteer with the ASRC was developed.

FOR THE PAST YEAR, WE CELEBRATE THAT:

- > 538 prospective volunteers attended information evenings and learned about the work of the ASRC.
- > 302 attendees went on to complete our full induction program and commence as volunteers.
- > 57 members were referred to the Member Participation Program for potential volunteer roles.
- > 17 members were matched with programs through the Member Participation Program, while a further 28 were referred on as potential Community Speakers.

In the year ahead, the Volunteer Support Program will focus on refining our induction and training program and developing a robust ongoing development plan for all volunteers. This will help improve retention of the general volunteer base, and will also assist volunteers and former volunteers to act as ambassadors for the ASRC and its members. This will enable a confident engagement with discussions about asylum seeker issues. The program will also focus on further expanding the Member Participation Program.

Volunteer Support and Member Participation Staff

1 full-time staff

12 volunteers

Community Speakers

During 2010–2011 the Speakers Program was in a construction phase. A coordinator was recruited with the view to strengthen the program in order to achieve goal four of the ASRC's strategic plan, to promote positive community attitudes towards asylum seekers. In 2010–2011 the program engaged with over 10 000 people from over 100 organisations.

FOR THE PAST YEAR, WE CELEBRATE:

- > Building the team. A key area of focus has been on recruiting and developing a strong team of speakers. The program now has a core team of around 10 volunteers, and four asylum seeker and refugee members. A number of staff members also regularly deliver presentations.
- > Developing presentation themes and materials. Standard presentations aligned with the organisations three key messages have been developed and are being delivered.
- > Responding to requests for speakers. A process for ensuring all requests for speaking engagements are responded to and speakers are provided wherever possible has been put into place.

Community Speakers Staff

1 volunteer coordinator (unpaid)
2 volunteers

Youth and Students

The Youth and Students Program was developed into its current form in late 2010 with the major ongoing focus on educating primary and secondary school students, as well as their teachers.

A key element of education is to provide accurate information as to whom asylum seekers are, the legality of seeking asylum and the numbers involved both in Australia and around the world. Upon request, schools are provided with support materials to introduce the topic to students or to follow up with students after a presentation.

A major project linked to the program is the annual Refugee Week School Competition which takes place in June with a range of both government and non-government schools being approached to involve their students in a competition relating to asylum seekers and refugees. This year's theme, 'No one chooses to be an asylum seeker,' was widely and well received by schools.

FOR THE PAST YEAR, WE CELEBRATE:

Speaking to 26 different school groups and organisation between late January and 30 June 2011. This involved approximately 2000 students and their teachers.

Growing links between the ASRC and government schools, in particular through the Refugee Week School Competition.

Youth and Students Staff

1 volunteer coordinator (unpaid)
1 volunteer

'The best thing about speaking to school groups is being able to tell them that seeking asylum in Australia is NOT illegal even for those who come by boat.'

Volunteer

Philanthropic and Corporate Engagement

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

Corporate Volunteer

The Philanthropic and Corporate Engagement Program has developed lasting and meaningful partnerships with philanthropic foundations and trusts, corporations and state governments which want to make a difference to our community.

These relationships provide significant financial support for our services and programs and, with their help, we were able to continue to provide our current services and to develop new long-term initiatives.

The ASRC particularly relies on the support of philanthropic trusts and foundations to deliver innovative programs and services that address the needs to some of the most vulnerable people in Victoria. Philanthropic partners choose to support a range of specific programs that have tangible and measurable outcomes and benefits for asylum seekers.

We also wish to thank our corporate partners who have participated in other ways at the ARSC, through corporate volunteering, in-kind support providing much needed goods and services, and workplace giving programs.

In 2010–2011, the ASRC was successful in its submission to the State Government Skills Victoria for Pathways to Employment Program.

These partnerships support members and their families, volunteers and staff members at the ASRC.

Philanthropic and Corporate Engagement

1 paid staff (full-time)

12 volunteers

Marketing and Fundraising

Australia. Built by boat people.

Nearly half of the ASRC's income comes from events, appeals, and community donations—individuals, fundraisers, and community groups such as schools and faith based organisations.

In 2010–2011, the Marketing and Fundraising Program focused on consolidating income from these important activities in innovative and creative ways, such as developing a community fundraising kit and ensuring regular communication with donors and supporters. In addition, the program developed and implemented a robust communication strategy to work towards achieving the key goal of promoting positive community attitudes towards asylum seekers. The communication strategy focussed on developing and communicating the ASRC's three key messages and maintaining a strong social media presence.

FOR THE PAST YEAR, WE CELEBRATE:

- > The launch of a new website and blog.
- > The success of Run 4 Refugees, raising a record amount for the ASRC for a single event.
- > Sustaining a steady income generated from appeals in a tough financial climate where the average decrease in fundraising across the sector was 30%.
- > The ASRC's 10-year-anniversary celebration with over 800 past and present asylum seekers, volunteers, staff and supporters.
- > Online communication with donors, supporters and volunteers through regular electronic bulletins and the active use of social media such as facebook and twitter.
- > The development and communication of the ASRC's three key messages
- > The publication of fact sheets and myth-busters ensuring the community is provided with up to date and accurate information regarding asylum seekers.
- > Contribution to the asylum seeker debate, providing a rational, positive voice.

Marketing and Fundraising Staff

1 full-time staff
15 volunteers

Empowerment
PILLAR

Social and Community Development

The Social and Community Development Program provides a range of activities to empower, support and encourage asylum seekers to create a sense of belonging and connectedness and to reduce loneliness and social isolation. The activities provide an opportunity for asylum seekers to interact with the ASRC beyond a reliance on charitable services and supports.

For the past year, we celebrate involving 422 members in program activities.

ORIENTATION

- > Provided 187 tours of the CBD and local areas for asylum seekers.
- > Provided weekly group information sessions around topics pertinent to asylum seekers, such as Women's Sexual Health, Travellers Aid, and access to the YMCA.
- > Made associations with libraries, community health centres, neighbourhood houses, ethnic groups or organisations, places of worship, social and recreation groups, markets, education services, and gym, sporting, swimming centres.

MENTOR PROGRAM

- > Matched 56 asylum seekers with volunteer mentors.
- > Coordinated monthly mentor gatherings.
- > Developed a screening, training and a supportive mentor-matching program.
- > Developed group de-briefing sessions for mentors.
- > Conducted graduation ceremonies for mentors and mentees.
- > Maintained partnerships with external mentoring programs, i.e. Victorian Youth Mentoring Alliance.

SOCIAL AND RECREATION

- > Conducted monthly activities and distributed free tickets to various activities.
- > Conducted monthly outings for asylum seekers.
- > Maintained partnerships with YMCA, Reclink, and developed new partnerships with the Big Issue and Railway Neighbourhood House.
- > Joined the Wellbeing Network Group.
- > Received funding by Parks Victoria to conduct day trips to their parks.

WOMEN'S GROUP

- > Conducted weekly sessions from March to July 2011, in which 33 participated in total, with an average of six women per session.

ARTS PROGRAM – NOT JUST MY STORY (NJMS)

- > Successfully coordinated three work-in-progress performances—receiving rave reviews—held in May 2011 as part of the Human Rights Arts and Film Festival involving 28 asylum seekers as performers.
- > Performed at the ASRC 10-year anniversary and prepared for The Light in Winter festival held in July 2011.
- > Formed partnerships with the Human Rights Arts Festival and St Martins Youth Arts Centre.
- > Secured one scholarship placement at St Martins and two scholarship placements for Westside Circus.

Social and Community Development Staff

1 paid staff (0.6)

73 volunteers

Employment and Training (ASSET)

'When I joined the Employment Program I never expected this much help so fast. As a refugee we find it hard to get a job while trying ourselves, but with the help of the ASRC Employment Program team I got a very good job with good pay.'

Employment Program Participant

The Employment and Training Program (ASSET) has continued with its core business of working with members to identify their work goals and develop pathways to achieve them. There have been two stand-out projects this year. One is the successful partnership between ASSET and the Department of Transport, which has seen eight applicants placed in paid work experience.

The other outstanding success this financial year is an Australian first: the Vocational Education Training (VET) Access Program for asylum seekers, which has placed over 120 people into suitable VET courses since the beginning of 2011. Through access to vocational study, asylum seekers have become self sufficient and able to move forward with their lives by contributing their skills and abilities to the community.

Further to these achievements, we celebrate the assistance of over 390 asylum seekers through over 1500 appointments. Over 250 successfully gained paid work placements.

In the year ahead, the big challenges for ASSET will be to work within the larger community to broker new targeted partnerships that provide opportunities for specific work experiences and employment. Furthermore, with the awarding of the Victorian Skills Commission grant of \$100 000, ASSET will be working in collaboration with the Education Program to create a best-practice employment-finding model for working with people seeking asylum. Employment and Education will continue to streamline the operation for clients and staff helping to add value to people's lives through sustainable employment.

Employment and Training Staff

2 paid staff (1 full-time, 1 part-time 0.8)
34 volunteers

Education

'This course was great because I learned everything I had to know about work rights. Whenever I had been treated unfairly, I knew exactly what my rights are, and it was just so great to participate in this course.'

A lady from Burmese background currently working in Crown Casino as a cleaner

The Education Program provides access to English language education via Home English Teaching (HET) and English as a Second Language (ESL). HET averages 85 matches at any one time, while ESL averages 40 students per week.

HET has continued to provide lessons for those members who, for various reasons, are unable to attend classes at the centre. These asylum seekers often live in outlying areas, and have minimal access to local classes. HET volunteer tutors have shown great commitment to their students, often travelling from afar, at times by public transport or bicycle. Many student-teacher matches have resulted in strong friendships that continue after members receive permanent residency. HET volunteers have also been asked to assist members with specialist needs, such as academic English, VCE tutoring and beginner English.

The ESL Program has continued to provide quality English classes five mornings a week for the past year. Student numbers have fluctuated during that time, but the classes have been well-attended and students have reported enjoying themselves and feeling welcomed. The classes are focussed on assisting students to learn and practice the language they require in order to be able to access community services and events, understand what's happening politically and socially in Australia, and to communicate with people in their local community.

The Workplace English course has been run three times this year, providing students with an understanding of aspects of the Australian workplace environments including OHS, Equal Opportunity, writing resumes and job applications, and how to successfully present in job interviews and meetings.

FOR THE PAST YEAR, WE CELEBRATE:

- > The dedication of Sue Nash and Val Campbell who both retired as volunteer coordinators after several years of coordinating the HET and ESL programs. Their hard work has meant that the programs have continued to provide excellent services, and we are very grateful for their leadership.
- > The employment of a full-time Education Program Coordinator who has injected new energy into the programs.
- > The provision of high-quality, creative and interesting classes for members by a team of enthusiastic and committed teachers. Facilitators have also done a fantastic job of engaging students in the Workplace English course, which has had about 45 enrolments over the course of the year.

Education Staff

1 full-time paid staff

101 volunteers (86 HET, 15 ESL)

ASRC Catering

'The food was hands down the best lunch catering we've had here at work. I will definitely be ordering from ASRC Catering again in the future.'

Lucy Berry, Oxfam Australia

ASRC Catering has gone from strength to strength in 2010–2011, employing 18 asylum seekers, and catering for over 300 events from our kitchen in Brunswick, rented courtesy of Baptcare. New customers include the National Australia Bank, Calliden Group, Environment Protection Authority, the Cancer Council of Victoria and Adam Bandt's Australian Greens Office. Other catering events include weddings, cocktail parties, conferences, annual general meetings, as well as first, eighteenth, seventieth, and eightieth birthday parties.

We are the preferred caterer for a number of organisations including Department of Sustainability and Environment, Australian Greens, the Arts House (Melbourne City Council), and numerous departments within the University of Melbourne. We continue to provide catering for the Australian Catholic University (now in our 5th year), Department of Health and the Wheeler Centre.

In addition to catering services, ASRC Catering has continued to provide a range of spices, sweets, and nuts, and other products, which are sold through the ever expanding shop at the ASRC.

This year we have celebrated the growth of our social enterprise despite using no advertising—all increases are due to word of mouth. The program has also celebrated the success of employing and training many asylum seekers and refugees and watching their confidence increase as their skills improve. Further to this, a large number of asylum seekers who have left working with ASRC Catering have found employment in other areas of hospitality.

ASRC Catering Staff

3 paid staff (part-time)
18 asylum seekers employed
2 volunteers

Health

'The Health Program staff have been so responsive to my needs for help. When I first came to the clinic I had much pain and was feeling poorly. Over the last few months, they have given me care and free medicines so that I now feel stronger and am able to look after myself better.'

ASRC Member

Throughout the year, the Health Program provided medical, allied and complementary-health-care services to 261 members through 1282 appointments.

A daily primary health clinic was delivered through the support of seven medical doctors. Four physiotherapists and two massage therapists also delivered care on a weekly basis. A range of sub-acute and acute nursing health care, health education and advocacy to external health-care providers for specialty health care was given to members by eight nurses.

The quality of primary health care provided to members would not have been possible without the support of a number of pro bono service organisations that provided a range of diagnostic services including pathology and medical imaging. Health program staff liaised with public hospitals and community health centres to arrange referrals for specialty care and to strengthen a member's continuity of care in the community.

Throughout the year, routine and acute dental care was organised for members through one of Victoria's community dental health facilities. In addition to primary health care, many waivers were provided for members who required life-saving prescription medication who would otherwise be unable to afford treatment.

The Health Program works closely with the Australian Red Cross to advocate for members to gain financial support who are unable to work for various medical reasons.

FOR THE PAST YEAR, WE CELEBRATE:

- > Contribution to the revised guide to asylum seeker access to health and community services in Victoria hospital circular.
- > Establishment and review of health program systems to strengthen the quality and continuity of care provided to members within the organisation and for those referred to external organisations.

Health Staff

3 paid staff (1x1FTE, 1x0.4FTE, 1x0.8FTE)
20 volunteers
2 volunteers

Justice
PILLAR

Casework

'The Casework Program has been amazing in assisting asylum seekers through the refugee determination process with the aim to improve their quality of life. My time in the casework program at the ASRC has been an extremely positive experience. This has been both professionally and personally rewarding for me and I felt well supported by the casework team at all times.'

Erin H, former student and current casework volunteer.

In 2010–2011, the Casework Program underwent significant change and growth in the staff, volunteer and member areas. The program continues the commitment to ensuring that the time spent while seeking asylum is as meaningful as possible, regardless of asylum claim outcomes. The program achieves this by encouraging asylum seekers to engage in relevant services to reach their individual goals.

In 2010–2011, the program supported over 1000 members, including 543 new members and their families. This is approximately 100 more than the same time last year. The Casework Program provides approximately 40 structured appointments, as well as an additional 100 informal drop-in appointments, per week.

There have been some particular challenges in terms of the decreased rates of acceptance of our members, particularly into the Red Cross Asylum Seeker Assistance Scheme and the Community Assistance and Support Program. The Casework Program has advocated at a variety of levels to address this issue.

The program is as strong as it is because of the incredible ongoing commitment by the Casework Program volunteers. The combined experience of staff and volunteers in the Casework Program is around 193 years.

Continued development and investment in partnerships with other welfare agencies have resulted in strengthening access for asylum seekers to other relevant services, such as to housing, health as well as to mainstream welfare agencies.

FOR THE PAST YEAR, WE CELEBRATE:

- > Advocating for asylum seekers to gain access to relevant and necessary services at a micro and macro level. The NASAVic housing coalition is one example of the ongoing efforts to educate the mainstream sector to allow asylum seekers to gain access to these valuable services. In late 2010, the ASRC released its welfare report, *Destitute and Uncertain*, highlighting the many challenges faced by asylum seekers living in the community today, including key recommendations.
- > An increased focus on developing skilled volunteer base resulting in greater outcomes for asylum seekers both internal and external.

Casework Staff

2 full-time and 2 part-time paid staff (3EFT)

84 volunteers

5 social work and community welfare work placements

Counselling

The ASRC Counselling program provided specialist pro bono counselling and mental health services for asylum seekers who experienced high levels of psychological distress. The program provided services to over 200 asylum seekers through over 1200 appointments delivered by experienced psychologists, social workers, counsellors and psychiatrists. The ASRC Counselling Program attempts to alleviate some of the distress of asylum seekers who have suffered trauma, grief and loss.

THE PROGRAM CONTINUED TO OFFER A FULLY INTEGRATED SERVICE, WHICH INCLUDES:

- > An independent and flexible counselling program which allows counsellors to respond to the needs of the client as they arise.
- > A daytime counselling program for individuals, children, couples and/or families who require long term counselling and assessment.
- > Psychiatric assessment and treatment program that runs during weekdays and out-of-hours on Saturday mornings by pro bono psychiatrists.
- > Counselling- and psychiatric-report writing for legal services and funding applications.
- > A counselling program that supports clients of the ASRC legal clinic.
- > A monthly KidsZone social program for children, young people and families.
- > Professional supervision and debriefing services for all staff and volunteers of the ASRC.
- > Training and development for counsellors and staff of the ASRC.

FOR THE PAST YEAR, WE CELEBRATE:

- > The development of partnerships with other welfare organisations. Our relationship with these agencies has resulted in better access for asylum seekers to other appropriate services, as well as increased training opportunities for our volunteer counsellors. Two agencies that deserve mention are Save the Children and Foundation House.
- > The alliance with Save the Children enables asylum seeker children, families and young people who are part of the ASRC's KidsZone Program to access the incredible resources of that organisation's Mobile Playbus.
- > This year we have built upon an existing relationship with Foundation House that has led to increased access to training courses for our volunteers. Foundation House offers specialised training for people who work with survivors of torture and trauma. This Professional Development has provided a unique opportunity for our volunteer counsellors to increase their skills and knowledge in this specialised area.

Counselling Staff

4 part-time paid staff
1 volunteer coordinator (kidsZone)
70 volunteers (including 12 in kidsZone)

Human Rights Law Program

"This is one of the best days of my life. Now I can start my life again."

Client for whom the Minister of Immigration and Citizenship intervened after six-and-a-half years of uncertainty.

This year, the Human Rights Law Program maintained its focus on providing a quality, independent, free legal service to asylum seekers. We provided over 1900 hours of service, representing 241 cases, of which 160 are new cases. In addition, we also have 48 active family reunification and partner visa cases and 25 visas were granted during the year.

Early in 2010, an entirely new team started working in the Human Rights Law Program. A new program manager took over coordination and management of the program and oversaw a major restructuring of the program and the way it operates, including increased support for asylum seekers, staff and volunteers. Volunteers are a crucial part of the operation of the program. The focus for the year has been on increasing efficiency, better supervising, supporting and training volunteers and improving the program's overall sustainability.

We also continued to work on law reform, policy and advocacy work throughout the year with the Human Rights Law Program contributing to the following:

- > Australian Law Reform Commission family violence and immigration inquiry April 2011.
- > Attorney General's discussion paper on forced and servile marriage February 2011.
- > NGO consultation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights June 2011.
- > Various forums and submissions such as Convention on Child Rights and Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security.

FOR THE PAST YEAR, WE CELEBRATE:

- > 82 positive decisions during the year. Based on an average of 2.2 people per file, this means roughly 180 people won the right to remain in Australia.
- > The onshore-offshore team gained 25 humanitarian and partner visas for clients during the year, allowing 25 clients to reunite with their families and affecting about 100 people's lives.
- > The Legal Services Board Grant to empower asylum seekers received in 2010 for a project commencing 2011 (ongoing).
- > A partnership with Mallesons for judicial review cases and administrative support.
- > Winning asylum for a man who had been waiting for 17 and a half years.

Human Rights Law Program Staff

4 full-time paid staff
1 trainee
3 student placement volunteers
107 volunteers
4 internships
2 practical legal placements

Supporting Asylum Seekers at Appointments

"I appreciate the dedication of SASA volunteers who, as well as providing support for members, often step up into an advocacy role with health professionals. SASA volunteers cope well with the variety and complexity of appointments and make a significant contribution to a multi-disciplinary approach to ASRC's support of its members."

Asrc staff member

The Supporting Asylum Seekers at Appointments Program (SASA) provides practical and moral support for ASRC members when they attend official appointments. Volunteers accompany members to a range of places, the most frequent being the Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

In the past year, SASA assisted 111 asylum seekers through 220 appointments. Of the 299 appointments, 64 were to lodge an application for a protection visa, 46 were for biometrics and 101 were for Compliance for BVE extensions. The other reason for many appointments was medical, for which there were 64 appointments.

FOR THE PAST YEAR, WE CELEBRATE:

- > Broadening the program to include a wider range of appointments, including providing increased health support.
- > Recruitment of excellent new volunteers.

Supporting Asylum Seekers at Appointments Staff

1 volunteer coordinator (unpaid)
2 trainees
22 volunteers

Campaigns

On the Campaigns Program front, the ASRC concentrated on Ending Mandatory Detention with activities ranging from community education, lobbying politicians both locally and in Canberra and advocating for people detained across Australia. Following visits to the three Darwin detention camps, as well as Scherger in Far North Queensland, the program released photos and stories both in the media and through the ASRC website to inform Australians about what is happening in their name. Until this time there were no photos of Scherger or information about the conditions there. A major result of this exposure was pressure for all school age-children in detention to have access to schooling.

The program has also rigorously opposed off shore processing, both in Malaysia and Nauru with practical actions and pressure. The ASRC supporters mounted an email campaign to inform the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Geneva that many Australians had grave concerns about the Malaysia policy and do not support sending 800 people to an uncertain fate. The High Commissioner acknowledged these concerns.

Seeking the release of children from detention has been another priority for the Campaigns Program. We used stories, facts and figures to gain support for a change in policy. We teamed up with GetUp in taking a group of young former detainees to Canberra to talk directly to the politicians and the media about what it was like to be a young refugee in detention.

The Government and Opposition's inhuman policy and lack of positive leadership on human rights for asylum seekers and refugees is an ongoing challenge. We continue to engage in the media debate on the issue bringing both the harsh facts and the human stories of bravery and endurance of refugees to a public which is increasingly disturbed by what is happening in our country.

FOR THE PAST YEAR, WE CELEBRATE:

- > Being part of the campaign to get children and families released from detention and into community detention.
- > Gaining permission to take unaccompanied minors out of detention for lunches, visits to parks and beaches, and to see them turn from frightened, depressed kids into happy teenagers if only for a few hours.
- > Contributing to a range of forums, conferences and submissions on asylum seekers and human rights such as parliamentary enquiries, NGO reports and UNHCR and RCOA roundtables.
- > Contributing to an average of six positive asylum seeker media stories per month.
- > Being an independent and constant voice advocating for the rights of asylum seekers and a human policy towards asylum seekers.

Campaigns Staff

1 paid staff

11 volunteers



Sustainability
PILLAR

Reception, Operations, IT, Finance

"Oh thank you a million times, it was getting very frustrating. You're a legend."

From staff member to the IT team.

Whilst never claiming to be on the glamorous side of the ASRC, the programs within the Sustainability Pillar (the often forgotten fifth pillar!) are crucial to the long-term viability of the ASRC. The **Reception, Operations, IT** and **Finance** programs are made up of over 38 volunteers and three paid staff, with duties ranging from ensuring our financial systems remains transparent and accountable, to being the first point of call at reception when an asylum seeker in need presents. The Sustainability Pillar programs are vital to ensuring the ASRC meets its Strategic Plan goals and aims.

The ASRC's reception and IT teams are made up entirely of volunteers. It is testament to the volunteers that these programs are run seamlessly while providing services that are at the heart and soul of the ASRC.

With 23 Programs and 716 volunteers and 34 staff at the ASRC and with the demand for service ever increasing, the continuity of information and processes is an on-going challenge. In 2011-2012, the sustainability team will focus on improving our data collection and processes to support the programs with their aid, research, policy reform, information sharing and ultimately the lives of asylum seekers.

FOR THE PAST YEAR, WE CELEBRATE:

- > Completing an environmental audit in conjunction with the Alternative Technology Association (ATA) with the aim of introducing processes and measures to reduce the size of our environmental 'foot print'.
- > Upgrading our 'fleet' of over 100 on-site PCs, which are all donated second-hand units.
- > Developing and implementing a risk management system for the ASRC.

Corporate and Philanthropic Engagement Staff

3 paid staff (2 part-time, 1 full-time)
2 volunteer coordinators (unpaid: IT and reception)
IT: 6 volunteers
Reception: 23 volunteers
Operations: 5 volunteers
Finance: 4 volunteers

Financial Report

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2011

	2011	2010
	\$	\$
INCOME		
Fundraising events income	190,637	145,420
Catering	364,125	281,925
Donations	708,684	592,627
Merchandise sales	33,845	29,624
Sponsorship and grants	885,729	1,057,758
Miscellaneous income	8,976	7,825
	2,191,996	2,115,179
EXPENDITURE		
Program expenses	296,550	368,579
Administration	384,902	379,447
Employment expenses	1,603,877	1,292,537
Fundraising activity costs	51,166	40,038
Catering costs	63,319	82,469
	2,399,814	2,163,070
Operating profit	(207,818)	(47,891)
Interest income	73,625	67,090
Profit before income tax	(134,193)	19,199
Income tax expense	—	—
Profit after income tax	(134,193)	19,199
Retained Profits at the beginning of the financial year	860,334	841,135
Retained profits at the end of the financial year	726,141	860,334

ASSETS AND LIABILITIES STATEMENT 30 JUNE 2011

	2011	2010
	\$	\$
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash	1,463,734	1,400,262
Trade and other receivables	127,732	78,640
Inventories	29,170	29,579
Total Current Assets	1,620,636	1,508,481
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Property, plant and equipment	102,243	36,051
Total non-current assets	102,243	36,051
Total Assets	1,722,879	1,544,532
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Amounts received in advance	795,117	526,846
Trade and other creditors	109,541	76,893
Provisions	72,959	63,750
Total current liabilities	977,617	667,489
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Provisions	19,121	16,709
Total non-current liabilities	19,121	16,709
Total liabilities	996,738	684,198
Net assets	726,141	860,334
MEMBERS' FUNDS		
Retained profits	726,141	860,334
Total members' funds	726,141	860,334

These abridged financial statements are prepared from the full audited financial statements. A detailed copy of the audited financial statements are available on request.

Thank you

The ASRC would like to thank and acknowledge the following donors, supporters and partners for their key role in helping us help asylum seekers in 2010–2011.

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

'Dear ASRC, You're a great looking Centre —nice colour, nice rooms. But most of all you have great people—people who care and support others in a community.'

'To everyone who made me realise that there are many types of family... ASRC has and always will be about the people'

' Dear ASRC, My life is better because of you!'

'ASRC. Your work is inspirational and reminds us all that another way in possible.'

'ASRC, Happy 10th! A decade, wow. Love is what you are made of and we thank you for it'

I believe in a fair go.
I welcome asylum seekers.



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