



Annual Report **2018**

### **Asylum Seeker Resource Centre**

The Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC) is both a place and part of a movement. As an independent not-for-profit organisation, our 30+ programs support and empower people seeking asylum to maximise their own physical, mental and social wellbeing. As a movement, we mobilise and unite communities to create lasting social and policy change for people seeking asylum in Australia.

We are proud to be owned and run by our community of volunteers and supporters.

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



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## Acknowledgement of country

The ASRC would like to acknowledge the Wurundjeri and Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation as the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which the ASRC stands. We acknowledge that the land was never ceded. We pay our respects to them, their customs, their cultures, to elders past and present and to their emerging leaders.

## Welcome from the Chair

The last 12 months have seen unprecedented challenges for people seeking asylum in Australia. Throughout the turmoil, the ASRC stood strong, fearless and independent as a place and as part of a movement. Slowly but surely, the tide is turning.

The year started with the ASRC helping 891 people lodge responses to the Government's near-impossible 1 October deadline for protection claims under the Fast Track process. It continued with a visit to Manus Island to witness and to report on the atrocious conditions, first-hand.

And just as it appeared no challenge could deteriorate the situation further, the termination of Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) payments affecting up to 12,000 people was announced, leaving many without any form of income and creating an overwhelming homelessness and welfare crisis.

The ASRC rose to every challenge this year with defiance – and emerged stronger than ever.

We assisted 3,571 people seeking asylum in many ways, such as through legal triage and health appointments, programs to empower and support self-determination, and community meals. Meanwhile, we grew our fundraising income by 41% to a record \$15.1m, further strengthening our financial sustainability, and delivering a surplus of \$1.3m to be invested in 2018-19.

With the extraordinary generosity of our donors, we secured a new \$2.6m Dandenong building and will commence the delivery of much-needed services to that local community in 2019.

The Board initiated a review of the Strategic Plan 2015-18, seeing enormous progress towards the ASRC's vision but with more work to do. Out of this review came the Strategic Plan 2018-21, which will guide us through the next three years. Looking ahead, our vision and ambitions remain the same, while revisions to our core goals ensure we are responsive to the changing and challenging environment.

Finally we continued to strengthen our Board, welcoming Suzana Vlahovic (Audit Partner at Deloitte) as Treasurer during the year, and adding further depth as we moved into the 2018-19 year with new members Haleh Homaei (CEO of Port Phillip Housing Authority) and Marie Sellstrom (National President of Rural Australians for Refugees).



As I write, public support for the #KidsOffNauru campaign continues to grow, and Dr Kerryn Phelps has won the seat of Wentworth on a strongly pro-refugee agenda, leaving a minority Government. Dare we hope that the pendulum is starting to swing?

It's certainly been an eventful and challenging first year for me as ASRC Chair. I'm immensely proud of all the ASRC's donors, employees, volunteers, leadership team and of course Kon, our indefatigable and iconic CEO. Please join me in reflecting on the ASRC's achievements in 2017-18, and in doubling our resolve for the year ahead.

**Mike Sum**  
Chair

## Year in review from the CEO

Last year was a year of extraordinary challenge and triumph, where the human rights and safety of people seeking asylum were under constant attack and the ASRC rallied each time.

As the CEO, looking back at the year that was, I am filled with immense pride in our dedicated and resilient staff, volunteers, members, Board and supporters of our work.



As this report shows, we had to mobilise in the face of an arbitrary and draconian October 1 legal deadline for asylum claims; our lawyers rose to the task and helped everyone on our waitlist, which was an amazing achievement. We partnered with our sector to campaign for a safety net and no income cuts and we launched #ChangeThePolicy outlining our vision for a humane refugee policy. We even visited Manus Island in November – prompted by the Australian Government's action of abandoning 606 men in the detention camp, cutting off all medicine, power, food and water. Our goal was to document the medical emergency occurring there, gathering evidence to inform our advocacy, so we could bring the crisis to the public's urgent attention.

Critically, for a 17th year we were at the coalface caring for thousands of people in need, providing 60,000 hot meals, 4,677 medical appointments, 7,506 hours of English classes, 64,643 nights of shelter, Foodbank visits for 700 people each week and assisting 1,464 people through our legal triage program. We delivered programs and

activities that enable people seeking asylum to learn in a supportive environment, including 116 women joining our Women's Empowerment Program and 48 people participating in our Entrepreneurs' Program. We also continued to work across the country with our movement that is positively changing the narrative on refugees: the #RightTrack project.

Most importantly, we remained a place of safety, welcome, community and sanctuary to people in need of protection. The ASRC has also been a place for everyday Australians to give back, be part of the solution and help make a difference and I am so grateful to our 1,085 active volunteers for the year, and to our 38,000 donors. I am, however, most in awe of our members, the people seeking asylum who have crossed sea and land to save their families and themselves; this is courage and grit personified.

I remain hopeful, despite the challenges of the past year. I genuinely believe that we are seeing the tide finally turning in community sentiment for a more compassionate refugee policy while also knowing there is still much work to be done. We need to see all offshore camps closed, all refugee children, families and adults on Nauru and Manus brought to safety, a fair legal process, permanent protection and family reunion, a guaranteed safety net for people during the asylum process, a significant increase in our refugee intake and a genuine regional plan.

The ASRC will continue to champion real change while remaining at the coalface to meet the critical and unmet need of people seeking asylum for as long as we are needed.

**Kon Karapanagiotidis**  
CEO

## Snapshot

# 3,571

people seeking asylum and refugees were supported this year

# 316,929

estimated volunteer hours



# 60,000

hot meals



# DONOR

numbers grew from 23,000 to 38,000



# 1,085

active volunteers, of whom **72 are people seeking asylum**

# 1,464

people seen through legal triage service

# 7,506

hours of free English lessons

# 64,643

nights of shelter

# 700

people rely on Foodbank each week

# 1,600

people attended 63 #righttrack events

# 4,677

Health Clinic appointments

# 44%

growth in Fundraising revenue

# 48

Entrepreneurs Program participants

# 34,500

hours of employment offered through our social enterprises

# Winner

Victorian Premier's Volunteer Champion Awards 2017 and Volunteer Victoria's Innovation Award 2017. Finalist, Law Institute of Victoria's Community Legal Organisation of the Year 2017.

# 116

women joined the Women's Empowerment Program

# 244

job placements through the Employment Program

# 2,543

General Access Program appointments

# 24,298

people signed up to hear more about our work

# A year in reflection

## Issues facing people seeking asylum in Australia

As an organisation, we work with people seeking asylum who often have no other sources of support. They may be yet to lodge a protection visa application, in the primary stages of assessment, or are in review, post-review or ministerial stages of appeal.

This year, the landscape in which we operate shifted significantly: successive policy changes had a profound impact on people seeking asylum and on our teams who deliver services to them; and, as Australia marked the fifth year of offshore processing, our teams were overwhelmed by the increase in requests for assistance from those on Nauru and Manus Island.

### Reductions in SRSS provision

Previously, some people seeking asylum had access to the Department of Home Affairs' Status Resolution Support Service (SRSS), a 'safety net' of 89% of Centrelink benefits. Since August 2017, eligibility has been progressively restricted, removing this income for:

- People who study full-time;
- People who have sent money home to family or friends;
- People (typically students or visitors who came by plane) on other types of visas while their 'substantive' visa is still valid; and
- Some people moved from offshore processing to community detention for medical reasons (#LetThemStay group).

Many people have limited rights to work or study while they wait for a visa outcome. And while some may have the right to work, many have not been assessed to evaluate their *capacity* to work.

### Sector response to SRSS changes

From our many meetings across the sector, it is clear that services are already at capacity.

We worked with the Network of Asylum Seeker Agencies of Victoria (NASAVic) to develop a response to the SRSS changes. This network includes the Red Cross, Baptcare, Cabrini, Foundation House and more. In May 2018 we hosted 40 mainstream welfare organisations to discuss concerns, highlight opportunities, and develop a coordinated response to these punitive cuts.

Like many other groups, we worked closely with local councils to help their advocacy efforts at state and federal levels, and ensure they can maintain services for the most vulnerable. We also joined a national coalition of more than 15 agencies to launch a campaign, #RoofOverMyHead, aimed at reversing the cuts.

### Worsening offshore crisis

This year marks five years of offshore processing. On 31 October 2017 the Government ordered all staff and personnel to abandon the 606 men in the Manus Island Regional Processing Centre, leaving them without food, water, power or medicine. In response, three ASRC staff visited Manus Island in November to witness and report on the crisis, generating widespread media attention. Some 400 men remain, with deteriorating physical and mental health and no certainty on their future.

The ASRC's detention advocacy team has been overwhelmed with requests from people on Nauru, many of whom need critical medical care – including children suffering from significant trauma. We worked with legal partners to secure the removal of around 30 children to Australia, but more than 100 remain in conditions that perpetuate their trauma.

### Responding to the Fast Track deadline

We continued our assistance for those who are subject to the flawed 'Fast Track' process – people who arrived by boat, mainly between 2010 and 2013, making them subject to new laws aimed at curbing boat arrivals.

In May 2017, the arbitrary deadline of 1 October 2017 was imposed for the lodgement of all Fast Track applications – a long and complex form of roughly 60 pages, to be completed in English.

A massive effort from our Human Rights Law Program, with key legal partners, ensured we met the deadline for all 891 people who requested our help (Read more about this on page 31). Since then, our focus has been on providing legal support to prepare people seeking asylum for interviews with the Department.

The Government's justification was that applications would be completed by the end of 2017; almost a year on, however, 41% of Fast Track applicants are still waiting for a decision.

## People seeking asylum supported by the ASRC

As a result of ongoing policy decisions and changes by the Australian Government, we have experienced unprecedented demand for our services this year. For example:

- An increase of 86% in requests for support, in particular for homelessness, destitution, acute mental health issues, domestic violence, food insecurity, material aid and financial assistance.
- Longer wait times for important ASRC services such as casework support (more than 60 days in some instances), which has put pressure on the General Assistance Program.
- 307% increase in demand for Rent Assistance from 2016-17. Almost a third of the 338 individuals supported were children ineligible for any other support.
- Increase in both the number of ASRC health services clients (up 56%) and the complexity of their health issues, physical and mental.
- 210 people supported by the Detention Rights Advocacy Program – an almost three-fold increase on 2016-17, and 130 of them new to the ASRC.
- 250 clients supported to undertake a judicial review of decisions by the Immigration Assessment Authority (IAA) and the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.
- Higher demand from mainstream welfare, health and services supporting people seeking asylum wanting their clients to access the ASRC.

If current policies persist, we are likely to see hundreds if not thousands more families seeking support from the ASRC and other groups. We will continue to lobby federal, state and local governments alongside other organisations to address the very real concern that families will be left destitute and homeless.

## Snapshot



The ASRC provided services to 3,571 people, 89% of them in Footscray and 11% from our centre in Dandenong.



We support people from 80 different countries. The top countries of origin are Iran, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Myanmar, Ethiopia, Vietnam and Bangladesh.



Many of the people seeking asylum who live in the community have been waiting for an outcome on their claim for protection for close to five years.

# Strategic Plan 2015-2018 and our vision for 2021

As we embark on our new three-year Strategic Plan, it's a good time to reflect on how we performed against our last plan.

Our organisation has grown in every way since 2015 — from staff and volunteer numbers to the range of programs we offer — reflecting the increasing number of people seeking asylum who receive minimal or no meaningful support and no federal government funding.

Across our four Strategic Objectives, we saw great successes but still face significant work to achieve our vision: that all people seeking asylum in Australia have their human rights upheld and receive the support and opportunities they need to live independently. This vision drives our new Strategic Plan for 2018-21.

## Core goal 1:

**People seeking asylum are treated fairly and humanely with their rights respected under international human rights law.**

We are proud of how we have scaled up our legal services — expanding from one to five legal clinics, launching an advice phone service and establishing a drop-in triage program — how we adapted our models of service delivery, and, more recently, worked around the clock to meet new deadlines for all asylum claims. Partnerships, from universities such as La Trobe to law firms like Maurice Blackburn and the National Justice Project, have boosted the capacity and impact of our work. Within refugee communities, we have built broader awareness of legal rights through innovative workshops, multilingual resources and outreach education programs.

We have campaigned fearlessly and effectively for fair and just law and policy, from campaigning to close Manus and Nauru to demanding a fair legal process, permanent protection, family reunion and an increase in the refugee intake.

However, for all our hard work, we still face a draconian legal system, record numbers of people in detention and tens of thousands still in limbo.

## Core goal 2:

**People seeking asylum are valued and are able to determine and advance their own futures.**

Through our Innovation Hub we have placed nearly 1,000 people into TAFE courses and hundreds more into employment.

We have invested significantly in nurturing the next generation of leaders with lived experience while building pathways into employment through our social enterprises, mentoring, job placement and community development programs.

Our practice model is informed and in some cases designed by the beneficiaries (i.e. people seeking asylum). This delivers real opportunities for refugees to lead, shape and drive our campaigning and policy work while giving them the agency to determine their own needs and goals.

Many challenges remain, including Federal Government policy that denies people seeking asylum the right to work at times, or makes them unemployable due to unfair visa restrictions, or denies access to almost all federally funded employment programs.

## Core goal 3:

**People seeking asylum experience the best possible physical, mental and social well-being.**

Through our Humanitarian Services model we have provided critical health, casework, aid and food support to more people than ever before. This includes:

- Housing for more than 240 people on any given night
- Food and household essentials to 700 people each week through Foodbank
- Medical care and medicines for hundreds of people
- Nutritious hot meals for around 220 people daily
- Aid, nappies and Myki to thousands each year

We have been innovative in working towards the best possible physical, mental health and social wellbeing outcomes: from providing the state's first immunisation clinic for people seeking asylum, to holistic mental health and casework programs, to diverse Community Development, Women's and Youth Empowerment Programs.

## Core goal 4:

**A thriving, people-centred organisation that is financially and operationally sustainable.**

Our structures of governance have gone from strength to strength, ensuring our financial and risk management systems are robust in an ever-changing environment. We have applied new monitoring and evaluation frameworks to each of our services and improved how we manage the privacy and confidentiality of our members.

At the heart of all we do is our people, from members (people seeking asylum) to staff, volunteers and supporters, and our feedback mechanisms with all groups have shown our approach is meeting expectations. In January 2017, we were proud to become a Child Safe organisation.

The ASRC takes great pride in our ability to innovate and, in 2016, we delivered the world's first Telethon on World Refugee Day. A strategic review of all fundraising and marketing activity has culminated in a roadmap that offers greater income diversity and sustainable long-term revenue.

## Raising our ambitions: Strategic Plan 2018-2021

Our new Strategic Plan 2018-21 is our most ambitious yet, driven by what the people we are here to serve — refugees — have asked us to do. The four revised core goals aim to meet the needs of people seeking asylum so they can live with independence, equality and safety.

These goals are:

1. We increase impact by focussing on critical and unmet needs through collaboration, innovation and evaluation.
2. We are positioned to respond to immediate and long-term challenges locally and regionally.
3. We work together to build a powerful movement that leads effective social change for people seeking asylum.
4. We operate sustainably and are transparent and accountable to our community.

Read more about these goals at [www.asrc.org.au/strategic-plan](http://www.asrc.org.au/strategic-plan).



A delegation of ASRC staff and members on a lobbying visit to Canberra

# HUMANITARIAN SERVICES

Our frontline programs are essential humanitarian services that focus on the welfare and happiness of people seeking asylum. They have been designed to empower people to maximise their own physical, mental and social wellbeing, while ensuring they have access to justice.

This year we began to feel the full impact of the dismantling of the Status Resolution Support Service (SRSS) program across Australia, with an increase in the number of people at extreme risk of homelessness, hunger, and the resulting physical and mental health impacts of having no income.



## ANOUSHA'S STORY

Since Anousha\* arrived in Australia by boat in 2012, she has been managing the stress of caring for her husband, who suffers from severe mental illness, as well as supporting her son.

During the primary stages of their protection visa application, the family received Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) and income support. Every few months they saw their caseworker at an external agency but Anousha and her family struggled and fell into significant debt.

They were subsequently rejected by the Immigration Assessment Authority (IAA) and cut off from SRSS payments and casework by the Department of Home Affairs. For more than a year the family had no work rights, Medicare or income support.

Before she was referred to the ASRC, Anousha's physical health had declined significantly, but she was reluctant to engage with counselling or request a referral to see a psychiatrist.

Her volunteer caseworker began to build a rapport and Anousha felt able to talk about the significant stress she was under. Her caseworker organised care plan meetings to ensure that she and her family were able to keep a roof over their heads. This was achieved with strong advocacy to utility companies, ASRC rental support, and involving external agencies in the meetings.

Over time, as the team helped stabilise Anousha's situation, she found the breathing space to focus on her own physical and mental health and engage with a psychiatrist at the ASRC.

With the support of the ASRC, Anousha now feels more informed to face the road ahead with her family.

\*NOT HER REAL NAME/PHOTO



## GAP and Material Aid

# 16,106

days of public transport travel allowed members to attend legal and healthcare appointments, job interviews and housing engagements

# 2,543

GAP appointments in 2017-18

# 700

children's toys donated during Christmas and Eid celebrations

### General Access Program

The General Access Program (GAP) provides essential services, with the long-term aim of helping people seeking asylum achieve the best possible physical, mental and social wellbeing.

Three staff members, supported by 50 volunteers, work across four distinct areas to provide food, crisis accommodation, employment and legal advice, counselling and healthcare, and material aid, as well as referrals where required.

Numbers continued to increase in 2017-18: GAP provided advice, referrals and assistance to 2,279 people seeking asylum. Of these, 932 people were new to the ASRC and received information and short-term support through 2,543 appointments.

The number of people who became ASRC members also increased in 2017-18, up 30% on the previous year to 377 people.

### Material Aid

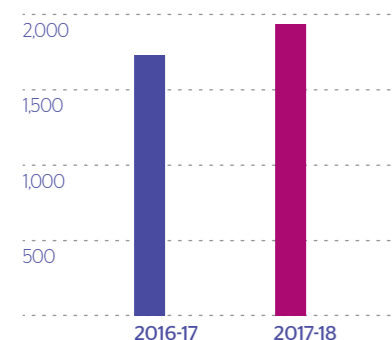
The removal of the basic safety net – the Status Resolution Support Service (SRSS) – for many people seeking asylum resulted in unprecedented demand for GAP's services, including material aid.

Public donations helped thousands of members with essentials including:

- 16,106 days of Myki travel cards;
- 1,788 packs of nappies; and
- 700 children's toys during Christmas and Eid celebrations.



Number of GAP appointments per month (average)



## Client Services Program

Client Services is at the forefront of helping people seeking asylum survive day-to-day throughout their refugee determination process. Numbers fluctuate throughout the year but overall we saw a surge in the number of people accessing our service: we supported approximately 900 people in 2017-18 across the Client Services team.

People in need of intensive support – often related to housing safety and mental wellbeing – received help from seven staff and 37 volunteers across the program through casework and continuing care, housing support and rent assistance, and counselling.

Often they needed assistance from multiple areas: around four in five who receive housing services or counselling also receive help from other Client Services programs.

The team worked closely with many groups including the Red Cross, AMES and Life without Barriers, to ensure the safety of the most vulnerable people.

### Casework Program

The Casework team empowers people seeking asylum by helping them understand the services available and how to access them, within the ASRC and through external referrals. This focuses on their immediate safety – whether from domestic violence or self-harm – and food security, as well as practical support including legal, health, mental health and housing.

In 2017-18, we supported approximately 500 people during the year – up 22% on 2016-17 – of whom 174 accessed the program for the first time.

Each person works with one of 27 volunteer caseworkers to identify and prioritise their individual needs. This important relationship helps them plan to achieve short-term and long-term goals.

### Continuing Care

The Continuing Care Program builds upon the casework model to support clients who present with multiple complex needs and require additional or intensive support. These are high-risk clients who are typically dealing with mental health issues often compounded by a lack of access to services and security.

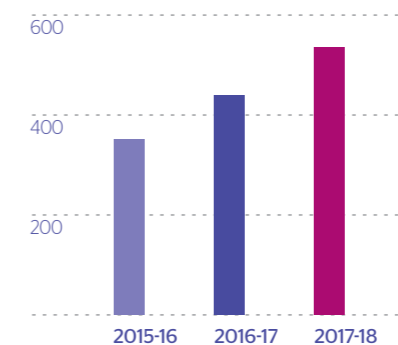
### Counselling

The Counselling Program helps people seeking asylum develop skills to address the challenges they face during their determination process, which can include depression, anxiety or other mental health conditions.

In 2017-18, an average of 40 people were provided with counselling appointments at any one time, which continued the upwards trend.

In a dedicated space, clients work individually with one of seven volunteers, learning how to express and discuss issues, increase self-awareness and develop strategies that support their immediate and longer-term wellbeing.

Number of casework clients



### Rent Assistance and Housing Support

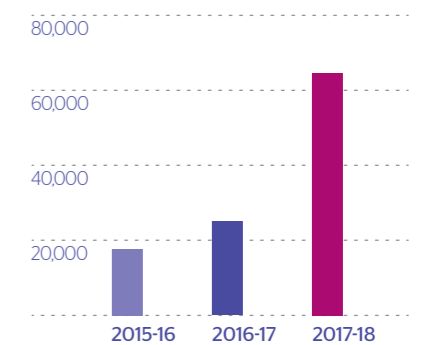
Stable, safe and long-term housing is a critical goal for the wellbeing and independence of people seeking asylum. Our program helped in two ways:

The **Rental Assistance Program** helped 338 vulnerable members in 2017-18 who did not have access to income or other financial resources. They received payments, advocacy and referrals to housing providers, private landlords and real estate agencies.

**Housing Support** provided advice and advocacy to 60 members on housing options within Melbourne and Victoria. This included help with rental assistance applications, referrals to external options and crisis accommodation.

We worked with external Housing Establishment Fund providers, the NasaVic working group, and housing providers who provided mainstream homelessness support services, to improve access to services and referral pathways.

Number of nights of shelter



# Community Food Programs

Our food programs provide access to nutritious meals and help people seeking asylum make healthy food choices to support their wellbeing. In 2017-18, a team of four part-time staff and around 250 volunteers worked to improve food security for people and ensure no-one goes hungry.

## Community Meals

Community Meals is at the heart of the ASRC, the place where five days each week people seeking asylum, volunteers and staff enjoy a nutritious lunch together. The focus this year was on meeting increased demand: in 2017-18, we delivered an average of 220 meals per day and up to 240 meals on occasion.

For many members, the community meal is their only hot meal for the day. It's also an opportunity to connect with the Australian community and others with lived experience.

People seeking asylum made up one quarter of our 72 volunteers and we continued to actively recruit to increase this proportion.

## Foodbank

Foodbank, our free grocery store, made it possible for more than 700 people each week to shop for their own food and household essentials, 90% of which were donated by the community and food rescue organisations FareShare, OzHarvest and SecondBite.

Demand grew by 13% in 2017-18, with 80 new people accessing the program weekly. Overall, 62% of Foodbank visitors had no income and 41% were children.

The program successfully ran regular food drives to meet demand, while our new Harvest of Hope (see opposite) delivered additional fresh produce.

Among our 155 volunteers are several nutritionists, who undertook Food Security Surveys throughout the year to evaluate how well these items met people's needs.

To help familiarise members with Australian produce and enable them to make healthy choices, we continued to offer cooking classes through our partnership with OzHarvest.

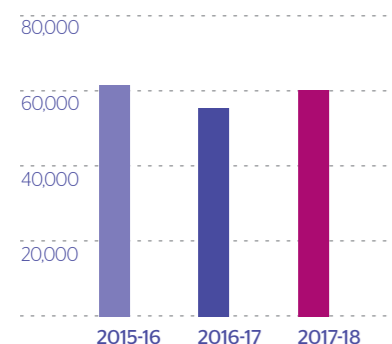


Photo by Zen Photography

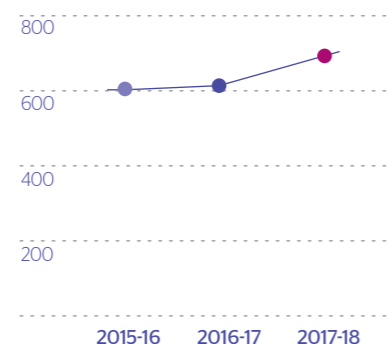
**396,000**  
the approximate number of community meals provided in 10 years.

**11**  
the number of dedicated volunteers who reached the milestone of 10 years with Community Food Programs in 2017-18.

Approximate number of Community Meals



Number of average weekly Foodbank users



## Harvest of Hope

In late 2017, we launched Harvest of Hope — an urban market garden south of Melbourne that supplies fresh produce to our food programs.

Tended by 33 new volunteers, including two people seeking asylum, the garden produced an estimated \$30,000 of crops — that's up to 40 crates of produce each week at peak harvest time. For our members seeking asylum, this has enabled them to enjoy the benefits of growing their own food.

A survey of Foodbank users in June 2018 shows this new program is already having a big impact: before, less than five percent strongly agreed they were "able to take home sufficient amounts of fresh vegetables from Foodbank". This increased to more than 41% in June.

Learn more about all food programs at [www.asrc.org.au/food](http://www.asrc.org.au/food).

"This year we have many choices and colourful vegetables to take home."

Harvest of Hope survey respondent, June 2018



Zucchini, eggplant, capsicum and more in our Harvest of Hope garden

# Health Program

The Health Program is a core part of our holistic approach to the physical and mental wellbeing of people seeking asylum, many of whom have no access to Medicare and no income.

In 2017-18, 708 people were treated in our Health Clinic. More than a quarter (221) were new to the ASRC, and we developed refugee health plans to enable appropriate access to primary and specialist services.

Three specialist community health nurses, two nurse immunisers and 70 volunteer healthcare professionals provided primary services such as GP and nurse clinics, physiotherapy, immunisation, acupuncture and podiatry, massage therapy, psychiatry, pain management, and diabetes education.

## First Aid

The first aid program, which started in 2016-17, has now delivered 20 training sessions to staff, volunteers and refugees. Of the 225 people who gained certification (HLTAID001 and HLTAID004) over this two-year period, 20% were people seeking asylum.

The increase in patient numbers from 2016-17 is the result of people losing Medicare benefits due to changes to government policy.

To help people seeking asylum manage their own health and understand their rights to access free health care, the team continued to offer health promotion, education and health literacy sessions.

## Highlights:

### Immunisation program:

In the program's third year, 258 people received full catch-up immunisations. The program was recognised as an essential health service with renewed State Government support.

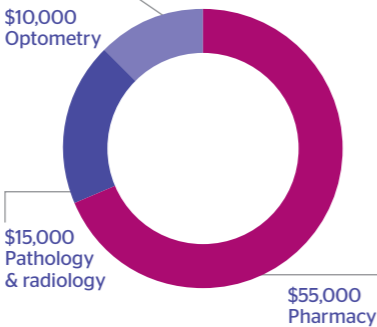
### Essential services partnerships:

Partnerships brokered during the year with healthcare providers secured free services across pharmacy, pathology, radiology and optometry services to a value of approximately \$80,000 (see chart).

### Advocacy to the sector:

We provided professional development and guidance across the broad health sector. The ASRC also advocated for access to healthcare for people seeking asylum through our membership of more than 10 advisory groups and councils.

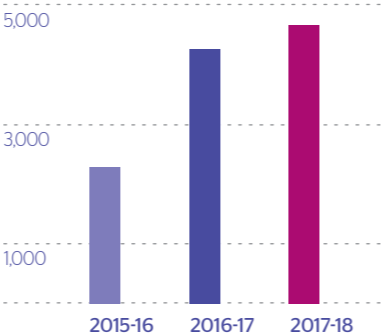
Value of essential services partnerships



708

individual patients accessed the Health Clinic in 2017-18

Health Clinic appointments



# PROGRAMS THAT EMPOWER

The Empowerment Pathways programs form the front face of Hub programs, and run a range of individual and group program activities that create a safe and supportive environment for people seeking asylum to collaboratively learn and build self-determination. Our program knows that empowerment looks different for everyone, but involves living a life with meaning and purpose.

The programs work in partnership with the participants, recognising their unique strengths, skills and experiences, and helping them to identify their goals. We listen deeply to their hopes, dreams and aspirations, and support them in their journey towards realising their full potential.



# Women's Empowerment Program



Many women seeking asylum come from countries where their education and employment opportunities may be restricted or limited. The Women's Empowerment Program (WEP) provides support, connections and pathways to social and economic independence for these women. Our goal is to bridge gaps in educational opportunity so participants can build new skills, regain confidence and realise their full potential.

Volunteers saw 116 women through Intake Assessment to understand their experience and needs. These volunteers are familiar with the issues specifically affecting women seeking asylum, ensuring new members are comfortable. Waiting times for assessment and access to the WEP increased this year due to higher numbers requesting appointments.

This year we delivered:

- three hospitality training sessions in Food Handling, Responsible Service of Alcohol and Barista. Thirty-five women completed the training and gained accreditation certificates.

- two computer training courses in Microsoft Word and Excel. A total of 15 women received certificates of completion at basic and intermediate levels.
- four information sessions covering the Visa Determination Process, Employment Law – including Workplace Safety and Discrimination and Harassment – Financial Literacy, and Starting Your Business as an alternative to employment.
- the ASRC's first International Women's Day event in March 2018, where three current and former program participants shared their stories in front of more than 100 women.

Of the participants who completed hospitality training and computer training, 13 have since found paid employment, enabling them to become financially independent.

Referrals to other programs are also key to enabling women to enhance their skills, build social networks and practise English.

## 116

new women joined the program

## 15

women completed computer training in Word and Excel

## 35

women completed certificate level vocational training

### NABHITHA'S STORY

Nabhitha\* arrived in Australia in 2009. She and her husband are from India, and have two children aged eight and five. As the holder of a temporary visa (Bridging Visa E), she has work rights but no study rights.

Nabhitha has an undergraduate degree in science and a Master's degree in pharmaceutical science from university in India. She's a trained pharmacist, but is still looking for work.

For eight years after she came to Australia, Nabhitha felt isolated and disconnected. She had minimal English language skills and struggled to communicate with others. She also had very little association with others in the Indian community and rarely participated in social events.

This all changed when she started attending the Women's Empowerment Program (WEP) in October 2017.

Now an active member of WEP, Nabhitha regularly attends women's weekly programs. She has made many friends and significantly improved her English. She has attended Food Handling, Responsible Service of Alcohol and Barista (Hospitality) trainings, as well as computer training sessions. She participates in social and community engagement activities, women's-only swimming lessons, yoga and a weekly sewing program.

Nabhitha's communication and interpersonal skills have greatly improved, and she is now job-ready for any work available.

\*NOT HER REAL NAME/PHOTO



## Community Engagement and Development

**Through Community Engagement and Development, people seeking asylum can develop meaningful relationships with the Australian community while increasing their confidence and improving their mental and physical health.**

In 2017-18, 185 people took part for the first time, with more than 500 people participating during the year.

Music and art groups throughout the year encouraged people to explore their creativity and discover new talents. Fifteen people met weekly for Musical Journeys 'jam' sessions and the program also offered piano and guitar lessons.

Our soccer team – The Seekers – competed in the Victorian Soccer Division One competition and community competitions throughout the year, and the Reserves Team won their overall division – a brilliant result! The Cricket Program worked to connect people seeking asylum with local clubs offering free or subsidised membership.

Up to 50 people attended monthly outings, helping them develop independence and a greater cultural understanding of the Australian community. The Home Hosting program, offered with Rural Australians for Refugees and Social Justice Advocates of the Sapphire Coast, enabled 25 members to get to know Victoria's rural areas and their residents in visits to Bendigo, Strathbogie and the Sapphire Coast.

The Women's Swimming Program was extended beyond its pilot period into 2017-18 thanks to philanthropic support. More than 100 women registered for the program, which covered the costs of pool entry and swimming instructors.

## Empowerment Pathways Program

Empowerment Pathways is the first point of engagement for people who would like to access the ASRC's education, employment and community programs in the Innovation Hub. Each person is supported to create an individual plan that will enable them to become socially connected, financially independent and empowered to determine their future.

In 2017-18, 494 people became members of the Innovation Hub across our empowerment programs and were nurtured to pursue their professional and personal goals.

Around 20 members were able to volunteer as administrators in the program which provided for some their first experience working in Australia, as well as an opportunity to develop their English language skills and understand the Australian workplace environment.

## Youth Empowerment Program

**20**  
graduates from the 10-week ASRC Youth Program

**15**  
people secured tertiary education scholarships

**8**  
young artists will be exhibited at Deakin University Art Collection Galleries

**40**  
young people attended the Scholarship Information session for 2019 study

**Young people seeking asylum face complex issues – such as language barriers, the ongoing impact of trauma and dislocation, and disrupted education – as they try to find their identity in another country and culture. This can be compounded by confusion around the many study pathways and uncertainty around how to achieve the job or career they want.**

To improve the outcomes for people under 30 seeking asylum, the Youth Empowerment Program provides tailored individual and peer-to-peer support, helping them navigate their options and build independence and practical skills.

In 2017-18 we connected 158 young people to opportunities including employment assistance and referrals to government-subsidised vocational courses.

Fifteen young people received highly sought-after fee-waiver scholarships, securing tertiary education places at RMIT, Deakin, Victoria, Monash and Swinburne universities. This included

a scholarship awarded to a female program participant for a Bachelor of Engineering (Civil and Infrastructure Honours). An additional five young people were referred to the St Joseph College Learning Centre for VCAL courses.

This year we offered the first-of-its-kind Youth Photography Program, developed in collaboration with Deakin University: in October 2018, the eight participants will have their works on show at Deakin University Art Collection Galleries in the "Journey through life: Artworks by the ASRC Youth Group members" exhibition.

We again ran our 10-week Youth Program, in which participants are mentored by the Program Coordinator and by previous program graduates. Twenty-two young people enrolled and 20 graduated on completion. The curriculum develops capability in areas including interview competency, financial literacy, goal setting, understanding workplace rights and responsibilities, and skills to enable young people to become leaders in their communities.



# Education Programs

## ASVET Program

The Asylum Seeker Vocational Education and Training (ASVET) Program is a Victorian State Government-funded initiative that helps eligible people gain access to VET courses.

This type of training is critical to the advancement of refugees and people seeking asylum, leading to the qualifications necessary for them to participate in Australian society, become more financially secure, and make a positive and valued contribution to our nation.

Over the two-year period June 2016 to June 2018, ASVET's goal was to directly refer up to 1,000 eligible applicants to a range of Government-subsidised and free training and apprenticeship-pathway courses. We achieved this, with a total of 903 referrals.

Towards the end of the first year, the program held its first conference – Celebrate the Journey – for VET providers, refugees, people seeking asylum and community stakeholders to share learnings and celebrate the achievements of participants.

# 903

ASVET participants over two years

# 308

people currently studying or have recently completed their course

In 2017-18, participation was affected by changes to Status Resolution Support Services eligibility: those studying could lose their small supporting payment and have no means of support unless they could find immediate employment. New participant referrals decreased as a result in the second year – from 521 in 2016-17 to 382 – while people already studying had to consider whether they could stay in their course.

We delivered two progress reports to the Department of Education (DET). In June 2018, we published the final report for the 2016-2018 contract, providing an overview of the data collected and the implementation of strategies, initiatives and outcomes. This will be distributed to DET, funders and stakeholders.

A new three-year contract will run from July 2018.

## EAL Program

Active at both our Footscray and Dandenong centres, the English as an Additional Language (EAL) Program helps people seeking asylum to build their English skills and confidence in a supportive environment. Qualified teachers run classes daily across different levels. Footscray also offers a Home English Tutoring (HET) Program for people unable to come to the Centre.

This year, we purchased resources that better reflect our multicultural student group as well as the First Peoples of Australia, helping participants understand and embrace new social contexts.

# 7,506

hours of free EAL learning in Dandenong and Footscray

# 479

participants accessed the EAL program in total

Our HET Program expanded to 30 people receiving weekly lessons – up from 22 in 2016-17 – and we held two catch-ups for volunteers. We also launched online support for HET volunteers through our learning system LEX, for accessing resources and sharing lesson ideas.

As part of Pathways to Employment at the Dandenong Centre, we implemented a short course in Work Health and Safety for those with a lower level of English. This gave participants without an income – or soon to lose their income – a chance to boost their employment potential. Five people completed the course, four of whom were given two weeks' work experience, while two secured between two and five weeks of paid work.

Additionally, we developed the English and Support app to enable ASRC members and people seeking asylum to find EAL classes, food and material aid in the Greater Dandenong area.

## PERSISTENCE PAYS OFF FOR ELIE

When Elie' came to Australia with his family in 2013, he already had a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering and Environmental Technology and several years of professional engineering experience in Rwanda, plus a Masters in Environmental Science from the Netherlands thanks to a UNESCO-IHE scholarship.

In Melbourne, he worked for three years as a Personal Care Assistant and cleaner, continually looking for work appropriate to his experience.

"I was always thinking how I could go back to my career. I tried to apply for many professional jobs, but I always got unsuccessful response due to lack of local experience."

To improve his chances, Elie joined the ASRC Mentoring Program and was successfully matched with his mentor in 2016. Together they "developed a road map of how I could achieve my goal: to find an internship or graduate/professional job" – adapting his résumé, creating a LinkedIn profile, and preparing applications. "First, we made a list of organisations and companies related to my field. We applied through their websites and searched on different sites like Seek, Jora etc."

Despite many unsuccessful applications, Elie persevered. "My mentor encouraged me to call up and find out why my application was rejected, to better prepare me for future applications, and she encouraged me to keep on applying."

"My Mentor was very helpful. She organised for me to meet someone in different organisations and she introduced me through phone calls, emails and LinkedIn. We continued to apply for jobs until I was called for an interview at Melbourne Water. My mentor helped a lot for that interview, she coached me and taught me how to answer behavioural questions."

Eli's efforts, resilience and willingness to adapt his professional knowledge for the local context paid off in June 2018 when he was offered the role of Project Engineer with Melbourne Water.

\*NOT HIS REAL PHOTO



# Mentoring and Entrepreneurs Programs



Photo by Sian Findlay

## Mentoring Program

The Professional & Vocational Mentoring Program matches people seeking asylum with volunteer mentors from the vocational, professional and business sectors.

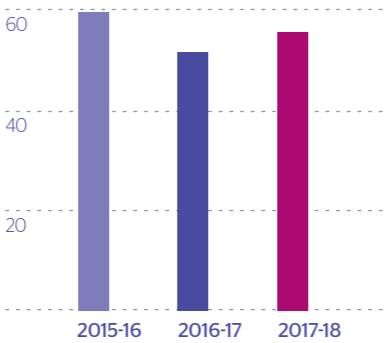
Fifty-six people started the 12-month program in 2017-2018 to gain help planning their career or career re-entry by understanding the Australian workplace, developing their skills, engaging in professional networking, and accessing educational, training and employment pathways.

Nine mentees from last year's program graduated with a ceremony and now have access to forums for ongoing collaboration.

We hosted two networking events and our external partners hosted an additional three, allowing mentees to mingle in a safe, informal setting where they can gain confidence in their professional journeys.

The program continued to grow in 2017-18 and is now supported by 44 mentors – 12 of whom are on-site at Footscray. Future focus will be on ensuring it is managed in a sustainable way and helping participants use their full skill sets rather than just accepting roles to meet their immediate needs.

Number of people being mentored



## Entrepreneurs Program

The ASRC Entrepreneurs Program helps refugees and people seeking asylum build the skills to create their own successful small businesses. A personalised plan gives them access to one-on-one coaching, industry specialists, business services, funding and networks.

Through the program, people improve their language skills, increase their confidence by testing business ideas, and learn about the local business environment and culture. This allows them to integrate into Australian culture through economic and social participation.

Forty eight people were active participants in this year's program.

We made a number of improvements in 2017-18, including:

- reviewing and creating a more flexible program framework;
- rolling out coaching training; and
- developing a Learning & Coaching framework that can be replicated in all settings.

Notably, we formed a number of new partnerships:

- Small Business Victoria and Fitzroy Academy provide resources for our coaches and learning materials for program participants;
- I am a Boat Person delivers financial literacy workshops; and
- Thrive Refugee Enterprises and Many Rivers provide micro-finance loans.

We also established a new partnership with Unbound to co-deliver networking events by providing venues, catering, themes and speakers. This increased our capacity to focus on encouraging attendees to make the most of these events.

56  
new program  
participants

9  
mentees from  
2017 graduated



## BETTY'S STORY

Betty lived in Melbourne for a year, spending time in her local library or at home, before a friend introduced her to the ASRC. Eighteen months on, she takes English classes and sewing classes and works for ASRC Cleaning.

"I found the English classes very useful and through this I found ASRC Cleaning. The Centre is very willing to help everyone in need of work, especially serious people.

"I already had experience from Egypt, where I was the team leader. It is important to be friendly and have good manners - these are things I have. Now I help train my colleagues and we work together with staff to solve problems before they happen.

"I love to work with others, and I like to learn every day from people around me. We are all from different countries so when we communicate I try to explain in a way they understand, using my hands, showing them."

Betty feels the best part of the job is "All of it! It feels like a family, part of a community.

The most important thing is to love the work; if you love your job, you will be successful. I treat the work like it is my own house."

She is a regular visitor to the Footscray centre and her experience with ASRC Cleaning has made her hopeful that she will find long-term future employment.

"This is an introduction to work and maybe I will find a job. Through work, you feel your own worth, you feel valued."

\*NOT HER REAL PHOTO

# Employment Programs and Social Enterprises

## Employment Program

The ASRC Employment Program supports people seeking asylum in finding their preferred work so they can progress their careers in Australia. We work in partnership with them to identify pathways to entry-level opportunities, as well as their longer-term vocational goals.

Employment restores hope to people seeking asylum, and the right job opportunity can be transformational for ASRC clients and their families. In 2017-18, 445 new people were referred into the Employment Program; a substantial increase on previous years. More than 600 people remain engaged with the program at some level, with many returning when roles finish, after they gain new VET qualifications, or when they'd like to progress further in their employment pathways and explore career progression.

Through our focus on increasing paid work opportunities, we enabled 227 people seeking asylum to secure jobs – around a quarter of which are full-time – and 17 obtained internships/traineeships. Meanwhile, we formed 63 new partnerships with supportive local employers and businesses.

# 445

members referred to the Employment Program

# 80%

of offered vacancies filled

## ASRC Catering

The ASRC Catering social enterprise experienced significant growth in revenue in 2017-18, up 32% to \$1,437,348.

The program is now in its 13th year and employed 27 people seeking asylum – two more than in 2016-17.

In addition to skills gained in the kitchen from our experienced mentor chefs, participants benefitted from valuable work experience as bar and wait staff at events. The number of events increased this year by almost a quarter to 1,355, up from 1,091 in 2016-17, driven by multi-day functions in particular.

*“We had fabulous feedback about the quality of the food, and the lunch boxes were a big hit. We won't hesitate to use your services in the future.”*

Jenny Dwyer Associates

# 17,318

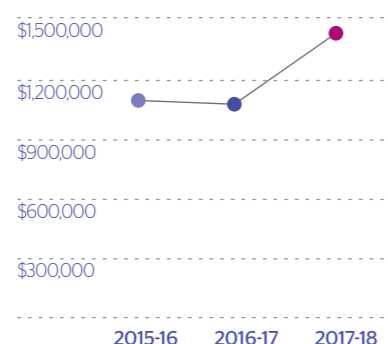
hours of paid ASRC Catering employment offered

Through access to industry accreditations such as Responsible Service of Alcohol, ASRC Catering continued to support pathways to ongoing paid employment.

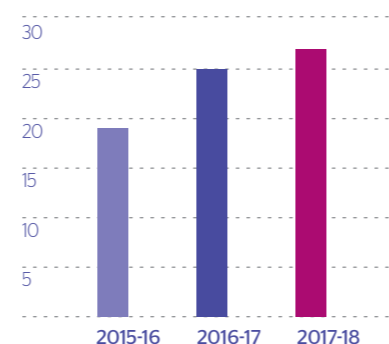
To meet demand, this year we were able to offer 18% more hours of paid employment than in 2016-17. At the same time, our focus is on managing the business growth in a sustainable way, ensuring the right systems and processes are in place to maintain quality. To this end, retained earnings to reinvest increased by 71% to \$159,000 from \$93,000 in 2016-17.

For client testimonials and more about ASRC Catering visit [www.catering.asrc.org.au](http://www.catering.asrc.org.au).

ASRC Catering revenue



Number of people employed



## ASRC Cleaning

As a social enterprise, ASRC Cleaning's priority is to help people seeking asylum gain the skills and experience that will lead to long-term employment.

For many staff, ASRC Cleaning provides their first exposure to the local work culture and community, and the opportunity to gain references.

A total of 40 people were employed during 2017-18 – an average of 23.5 each month and an increase of 17% on last year – providing professional cleaning services to more than 500 domestic and commercial clients across the Melbourne region. They are supported by two staff and a volunteer team of 29.

Members completed a total of 6,604 engagements, an overall increase of 26% on 2016-17. Domestic cleaning engagements rose 31% and commercial cleaning grew 18%, driven partly by an emerging trend among organisations to seek a social benefit from their procurement contracts.

As the number of clients grew, so too did the number of paid hours – 17,045 in 2017-18, up 29% from 13,186 in 2016-17. Revenue increased 30% on 2016-17 to \$658,760, exceeding forecast.



Improvements to the booking system and processes for clients and staff, anticipated for this year, remain a goal for 2018-19.

Find out more about the service at [www.asrc.org.au/cleaning](http://www.asrc.org.au/cleaning).

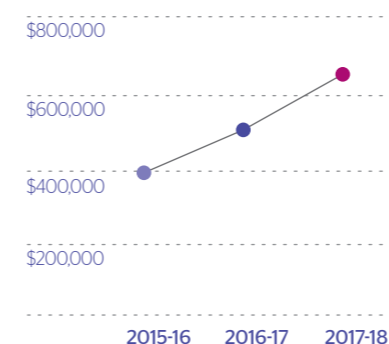
# 17,045

hours of paid employment

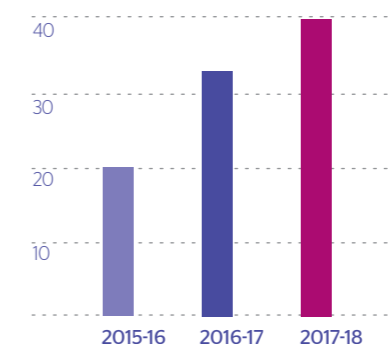
# 500+

domestic and commercial clients

ASRC Cleaning revenue



Number of people employed



# ACCESS TO JUSTICE

In a country where the rights of people seeking asylum and refugees are slowly eroding, the ASRC provides and advocates for access to justice for those who have sought safety on our shores. We continue to work with our movement to effect change for people seeking asylum through access to pro bono legal services, detention rights, engaging campaigns to change attitudes and supporting grassroots organising.

Our principles are guided by consultation with people seeking asylum, and our vision is informed by what will have the biggest impact on the lives of those our government's policies currently oppress. We work at local, state and national levels to empower people to advocate for change, and provide tools and resources to improve the collective effectiveness of our advocacy.



## Human Rights Law Program

The Human Rights Law Program (HRLP) provides free, expert legal advice and representation to people at all stages of the refugee status determination process – including those in onshore and offshore detention.

The team of 14 lawyers and more than 200 volunteers – including law firm employees, barristers, and law students – worked to protect the rights of individuals, while pushing for systemic change of the laws and policies that create the injustice we see every day.

### Key issues and trends

The expansion and entrenchment of punitive laws and policies made 2017-18 a very difficult year for people seeking asylum. Major trends included:

- Unprecedented effort to meet the Government's arbitrary 1 October 2017 deadline for Fast Track applications.
- Slow, unfair and poor-quality processing in Fast Track applications and an increase in the number of applicants refused at primary and review stages, who now have limited legal options;
- Further cuts to Status Resolution Support Services – see page 8 for more;
- A major increase in the cancellation of protection visas, leaving refugees facing either indefinite detention or return to countries of persecution;
- The blanket refusal by the Minister to exercise his discretion to intervene; and
- The continuation of offshore Regional Processing Centres, combined with the failure to re-settle recognised refugees in a timely manner.

### 'Fast Track' recognition

The fantastic work of our volunteers and students to help 891 people lodge their applications by the deadline was recognised with Volunteer Victoria's 2017 'Innovation Award'.

We were also finalists in the Law Institute of Victoria's annual award for 'Community Legal Organisation of the Year', in recognition of all areas of our work.

### Judicial review of merits-review decisions

We advised and assisted more than 250 clients seeking judicial review of decisions by the Immigration Assessment Authority (IAA) and the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. We prepared 58 briefs to pro bono counsel and ran 45 matters, 13 of which were heard during the year, resulting in nine successful outcomes. By challenging unfair aspects of the IAA and visa cancellations processes, we also made a valuable contribution to the development of case law precedents.

### Legal triage service

Operating five days per week, the service responded to requests from 1,464 clients: 720 'walk-ins', 473 through our telephone advice service, and 271 clients referred from other ASRC programs or other organisations. Thanks to our partnership with La Trobe University Law School, 55 law student volunteers, working under supervision, dealt with Fast Track and bridging visa applications and work rights issues.

### General legal clinics

Our Wednesday night general clinics continued for people at all stages of the determination process. In 49 clinics we helped 552 people seeking asylum and refugees, around 80% of them through face to face appointments.

### Legal casework

In 2017-18 the team carried close to 300 cases at any given time. Our lawyers and pro-bono partners represented 40 clients at interviews with the Department of Home Affairs and helped a further 70 clients prepare for interviews.

# 1,464

new requests processed through legal triage

# 3,517

legal appointments offered

# 473

people accessed our free phone legal advice service

### Partnerships and networks

We continued to fill gaps by consolidating existing pro bono relationships and establishing new ones, extending the benefits beyond the ASRC's legal team: a number of our partners have provided crucial services to Detention Rights Advocacy to bring critically unwell children and adults from offshore processing centres to safety in Australia.

### Law reform, policy and advocacy

To explain the impacts of various law reform proposals, and to advocate for humane and fair treatment of people seeking asylum, we made more than five major submissions to parliamentary committees on topics including conditions in immigration detention centres, access to citizenship, due process in visa cancellations processes, and the regulation of migration agents.

# Human Rights Law Program ctd

## Gender Clinic & Network

The ASRC's Gender Clinic is Australia's only specialised service for people seeking asylum who are facing gender-based persecution. Gender-related claims are typically complex. Many cases relate to different forms of gender-based violence, much of it family related, both in Australia and overseas, and can interact with matters before family and criminal courts.

During 2017-18, the Clinic – run by one lawyer and eight all-female volunteers – supported 157 clients (mainly women). The Clinic had around 30 ongoing clients at any one time and provided full legal representation in 26 matters.

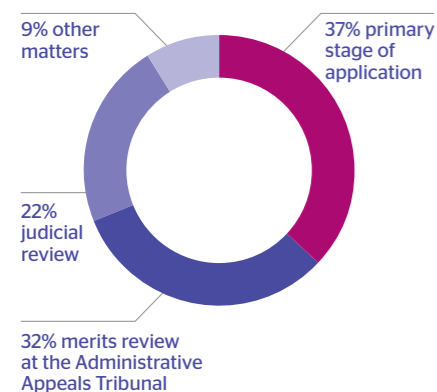
We worked with other partners such as the Women's Legal Service and Refugee Legal to create a Family Law/Family Violence and Migration Network. The Network shares knowledge between migration, family and criminal law lawyers, enabling more coordinated support for victims of family violence.

Read more about the clinic at [www.asrc.org.au/gender-agenda](http://www.asrc.org.au/gender-agenda)

# 157

clients (mainly women) received specialised gender-responsive legal assistance

Assistance required by gender clinic clients



*Baby Samuel, one of the children brought to Australia from Nauru through the work of the National Justice Project*

## National Justice Project

The National Justice Project are a civil rights organisation dedicated to tackling systemic injustice and racism within government institutions. They work in the area of human rights law and one program they work on is to ensure that people seeking asylum have access to adequate and timely medical treatment. A vast majority of their work on these cases is with the ASRC's Detention Rights Advocacy Program (DRAP).

While the ASRC provides the case work support for the people and families in offshore detention, our pro bono partnerships with organisations like the National Justice Project are invaluable as we refer to them when lawyers are required.

Emma Hearne is a Senior Solicitor with the National Justice Project and has been involved with the ASRC since January 2018.

"The Detention Rights Advocacy Program provides support that would otherwise not be available: it's the only program of its kind providing life-changing assistance and case work to those in offshore detention, to people who are often well beyond crisis point.

"Providing families with someone to talk to and casework management, and helping them get the legal and medical support they need, is highly important and necessary to the survival of those seeking asylum who have been detained in our offshore detention system.

"The DRAP team has been able to have a life-changing effect on people who are at breaking point and near death, as well as playing a vital role in successfully bringing well over 30 children and their families to Australia for medical treatment.

"I hope the team will continue to grow and find greater support and assistance with their case load; they are unable to reach the high need for their services with more than 80 people on the waiting list.

"It is without a doubt that – without their work – more lives would have been lost in offshore detention centres."

# Strategic Advocacy and Campaigns

The ASRC's approach for creating social change is to work with our political leaders and lobby for policy change while simultaneously mobilising people around mass campaigns. In the past year, our lobbying and law reform efforts included NGO consultations and input into United Nations' Global Compact on Refugees, law reform submissions, appearing at senate enquiries, lobbying trips to Canberra and the development of key policy papers.

We continued to work with advocacy partners to coordinate and lead key campaigns, which included:

## #KeepThemSafe

We successfully mobilised people to raise awareness about the 1 October 2017 Fast Track Legal deadline. While the deadline didn't change, the combined advocacy efforts resulted in additional translation services and access to funded legal services. The campaign put a spotlight on the legal challenges facing people seeking asylum and has supported our lobbying efforts attempting to repeal Fast Track.

## #RoofOverMyHead

We joined key sector partners to fight cuts to income support for people living in our communities. The campaign included key ASRC representatives featuring in the media, a lobbying trip to Canberra, petition delivery to the Prime Minister's Office and a community delegation of people with lived experience. Our efforts resulted in a delay to the commencement of the cuts to families and key politicians speaking out publicly.

## #EvacuateNow

We visited Manus in November 2017 to act as witness to what is happening offshore. Our report and exclusive photos and stories resulted in significant media attention and mass mobilisation. We continue to advocate for an end to offshore processing and the evacuation of all men, women and children from Manus and Nauru.

## #ChangeThePolicy

In early 2018, we launched a campaign outlining our vision for the humane and compassionate treatment of people seeking asylum, which included the release of five policy papers in the key areas of fair process, permanent protection, community based processing, universal safety net and humane regional approach.

Keep up to date at [www.asrc.org.au/campaigns](http://www.asrc.org.au/campaigns).



Photo by Norman Katende

## Detention Rights Advocacy

**The Detention Rights Advocacy Program works with people seeking asylum and refugees in Nauru, Papua New Guinea (including Manus), and in immigration detention in Australia.**

In 2017-18, we supported 210 people in urgent need – an almost three-fold increase from 2016-17. Of these, 130 were new to the ASRC. To enable us to respond to this growing capacity, two staff joined the program and we now have 12 active volunteers.

Part of the ASRC's humanitarian stream, this team acts as a voice for those in detention and maintains its efforts to:

- advocate for emergency medical assistance for those encountering serious and life-threatening illnesses, risk of self-harm and suicide, or in mental health crisis; and

- provide legal support and advice, and refer people to services that can help in the detention environment.

Our advocacy efforts included discussions with Australian Border Force and detention service providers on individual and systemic issues. Publicly, the ASRC was highly visible through proactive and reactive media commentary, including extensive social media coverage, and played a significant part in supporting ASRC campaigns.

For more on the crisis in offshore processing, see page 8 of this report and [www.asrc.org.au/child-trauma-on-nauru](http://www.asrc.org.au/child-trauma-on-nauru).

## Advocacy and Power Program

**The Advocacy and Power Program (APP) aims to support the diversification of advocacy, recognising that voices of people impacted by government policies are often missing from public conversation on asylum and immigration.**

APP is a four-month program that offers master classes – run by media and advocacy professionals – personal coaches, and a presentation evening. In 2017-18, we ran the program in Melbourne and Sydney (with Brisbane starting July 2018), with eight to 10 participants in each city.

Participants developed skills in storytelling, video, public speaking, writing for media and social media, giving media interviews, and advocacy campaigning. This gives them the confidence to provide insight into their own lived experience and join the conversation to shift community attitudes towards people seeking asylum.

Several of the 2017-18 participants appeared on ABC's Matter of Fact and SBS World News, as well as in podcasts and online stories.

They also created content for the ASRC blog, 'Voices for Freedom' – available at [www.asrc.org.au/voices-for-freedom](http://www.asrc.org.au/voices-for-freedom). Learn more about the Advocacy and Power Program at [www.asrc.org.au/advocacy-and-power-program](http://www.asrc.org.au/advocacy-and-power-program).

## Schools and Youth Action Program

### Youth Action Program

The Youth Action Project (YAP) is a network of young people taking action to support the rights of people seeking asylum.

YAP engages in a mix of activities including work groups of young people based on their electorate, network meet-ups, and training for participants to increase their capability to take action.

To boost the impact of YAP, in 2017-18 our nine volunteers focused on building a strong community volunteer base, and offering four rounds of youth organiser internships.

As a result, we supported seven existing work groups and a further six groups are in different stages of establishment. These groups have undertaken a range of activities: two took part in #RightTrack conversations, five organised delegations to their MP, two engaged with local business, and eight organised street canvassing and photo petitions in their communities.



### Schools Program

The role of the ASRC Schools Program is to educate and engage children and young people on the issues impacting people seeking asylum. As well as providing primary and secondary school education sessions, this year the program expanded to include workshops and a major conference for senior school and university students wishing to advocate and take action.

In 2017-18, a total of 7,804 students from 143 schools were educated through the Schools Program. A further eight high schools attended our inaugural ChangeMakers Conference, and two advocacy workshops were conducted with senior students as part of other youth conferences held across Victoria.

Schools also play an important role in supporting the work of ASRC Fundraising and Foodbank.

# 7,804

students from 143 schools participated in the Schools Program

The Schools Program would not exist without the amazing team of volunteer speakers who are passionate about and dedicated to educating children and young people about the ASRC and the impact of government policy on people seeking asylum.

## Building and resourcing a movement

# 63

events in three states

# 1,600

people trained to hold #RightTrack conversations

# 19

meetings with MPs in their electorate

# 180

pledges to hold conversations

When any of us are treated unfairly, we stand up for each other and demand our leaders step up and act. Successive governments have played politics with the lives of people – including children – seeking asylum but we know that individuals from all walks of life feel deeply uncomfortable about how they are being treated.

The aim of #RightTrack is to resource a community-led movement that shifts attitudes and influences national policy. It does this by demonstrating to MPs that their constituents support the following policies:

- A **Fair Process** that fairly assesses people's cases for asylum.
- **Living in our Community** to allow people to live in peace and dignity in our community rather than detention.
- **Permanent Protection** and family reunion to refugees and their families.

In 2017-18, #RightTrack continued to support groups of local constituents, including people with lived experience of seeking asylum, to advocate with MPs across 19 electorates in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria for fair process, community processing and permanent protection.

At 63 events across Australia, #RightTrack directly trained and resourced more than 1,600 people to have persuasive conversations and shift attitudes. In Victoria, this included 80 participants who were then able to facilitate conversations with almost 700 people across 14 electorates. Nationally, 180 people pledged to hold conversations as part of building national dialogue for fairness, safety and freedom in the lead up to the federal election.

The ASRC, through #RightTrack, brought more communities into the conversation about seeking asylum, guided by our shared values, not politics and fear. We have seen attitudes shift, and people are resoundingly saying they want elected representatives to create a fair process for people seeking asylum. Working in partnership with others, we helped build and resource a movement that advocates for politicians to show the courage to treat people seeking asylum with fairness and dignity. At the heart of this movement are people with lived experience of seeking asylum and refugee backgrounds.

### #RightTrack case study

#### NORTH SYDNEY RESIDENTS DEMAND A STOP TO CUTS

In early 2018, the Federal Government announced a drastic reduction in income support and counselling and trauma services for 12,500 people seeking asylum nationally who were previously eligible to receive a basic safety net. The ASRC has seen a significant increase in demand for services and assistance as a result. (For more on this policy change see page 8 – A year in reflection)

In June, Hannah Laney, who attended a #RightTrack training session in March and now volunteers with the ASRC, organised a delegation to meet Trent Zimmerman, Liberal MP for North Sydney.

Hannah, along with Josh Dowton – a pastor with the Baptist church – Uniting Church Minister Michael

Thomas, and Sydney Alliance volunteer Shoshana Faire, explained how the cuts will affect people seeking asylum. They also asked Mr Zimmerman – as their elected representative – to voice his opposition to the cuts in parliament, the media and the Liberal Party.

In response, Mr Zimmerman agreed to write to the Department of Home Affairs and raise the issue within his party.

The advocacy led by Hannah and supported by ASRC staff in Sydney resulted in Mr Zimmerman demonstrating support for people seeking asylum and agreeing to discuss this issue and their concerns at higher levels.



(L to R) Pastor Josh Dowton, Shoshana Faire, Trent Zimmerman MP, ASRC volunteer Hannah Laney, and Reverend Michael Thomas



## Our team

9

face-to-face  
courses for staff

168

staff attendees in  
face-to-face courses

70

volunteers completed  
Manual Handling  
online training

792

volunteer inductions  
completed online

122

staff (96.1 full time  
equivalent)

### Investing in our people

Across the ASRC and our social enterprises, we continued our focus on culture and the engagement of employees. We have an extremely diverse employee base, from lawyers to chefs, social workers to IT analysts, plus nurses, teachers, marketing and business specialists, and more. We rely on their significant expertise to deliver more than 30 different programs.

Like many organisations, this diversity of skills and working environments provides People & Culture with the challenge of effectively managing the attraction and recruitment, retention, development, engagement and alignment of our workforce. Contributing to the challenge is the complex and increasingly demanding climate in which we operate.

### Expanding development opportunities

Through a balance of face-to-face workshops, on-the-job training and coaching, and online learning, we provide our staff and volunteers with varied training options that consider their preferences, availability and knowledge levels. Achievements this year included:

- A new Capability Framework, which maps out the specific skills, qualifications and experience staff and volunteers require in our complex and challenging environment. It was introduced to directors and managers during 2017-18 and the rollout will continue in 2018-19.
- The new and widely accessible *Lunch and Learn* program. *Lunch and Learn* sessions provide a 'taster' and tips and lead into online learning, one-on-one coaching and face-to-face team workshops, to deliver a tailored, multi-dimensional experience.
- Two new programs — *Potential Change* and *STEPS* — specifically designed to help managers develop their strengths, build their teams and lead with confidence.

Our online learning platform, LEX, continued to expand this year, offering staff and volunteers specialised technical skills, safety programs, team-building skills and organisation-wide compliance training.

Overall, these activities support staff and volunteers to do their best work, which in turn enables them to embrace and encourage the resilience, entrepreneurial spirit and potential of refugees and people seeking asylum.

### Tracking staff engagement

To understand how engaged our staff are and how we can continue to provide a positive working environment, we conducted our third comprehensive employee engagement survey. The ASRC's 'alignment and engagement' profile was within the average range for Australian not-for-profit organisations, highlighting strengths such as our work environment and culture, a well-regarded senior leadership team, and our client-centric approach. Areas of improvement included staff development, clarity of long-term direction, and investment in systems. This has provided critical input into the ASRC's new Strategic Plan 2018-21 and annual budget process.

### Valuing our volunteers

Volunteers are the lifeblood of the ASRC; they deliver and make possible our many programs. Read more about volunteer engagement opposite.

### Focussing on safety

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all our staff and volunteers, we invested in a new role — OHS Coordinator — and new OHS Working Group, which includes a sub-committee of the Wellbeing Group. Aided by a pro bono consultant, the Wellbeing Group conducted a Health and Wellbeing survey for staff and volunteers. This will inform our Wellbeing Strategy.

In its second year, our online learning platform has enabled all staff and volunteers to access health and safety-related modules, including evacuation and manual handling training.

## Volunteer engagement

**At the core of our centre are our incredible volunteers — more than 1,000 strong in 2017-18. Each and every program at the ASRC relies on their skill, commitment and passion.**

Key to the success of this volunteer workforce is diversity — whether age, ethnicity, professional expertise or social background, we are endowed with a richness of knowledge and experience that enables the ASRC to deliver literally millions of dollars' worth of services at minimal cost.

This year the standards of excellence achieved by ASRC and its volunteers have been formally recognised in winning a number of awards, including the 2017 Innovation Award from Volunteering Victoria for our Human Rights Law Program Fast Track Clinics, and an Impact Award from the Victorian Premier's Volunteer Champion Awards.

In the past 12 months, we have needed volunteers to face and navigate unprecedented challenges and complexity, as well as expand into new programs and services.

To meet this challenge, we have begun to develop and deliver more volunteer training — online and face-to-face — and we're creating more flexible roles to allow more people to volunteer, especially those who aren't available during business hours.

ASRC volunteers are a rare kind of generous, and without them we would not be able to provide vital services and resources to people seeking asylum.

1,085

active volunteers

72

member volunteers

279

volunteers  
contributing for more  
than three years

317,000

hours (approx.) worked  
by volunteers



# Leadership Team

The Leadership Team is comprised of the Chief Executive Officer, General Manager and the Stream Directors. Its primary responsibilities are to: implement the strategic plan; ensure responsible delivery of programs and services in line with funding agreements; manage and develop our people; manage risk and compliance appropriately; role model our values and foster a culture of inclusion, teamwork and accountability.



**Abiola Ajetomobi**  
Innovation Hub



**Cath Hoban**  
Fundraising & Marketing



**Jana Favero**  
Advocacy and Campaigns



**Julie Rowan**  
Shared Business Services



**Kon Karapanagiotidis**  
CEO and Founder



**Naomi Fennell**  
People & Culture



**Sherrine Clark**  
Humanitarian Services



**Steve Betinsky**  
Social Enterprises

# The Board

The ASRC Board is the governing arm of the ASRC Association. Its primary responsibilities are the governance and sustainability of the ASRC, as well as strategic, fiduciary and monitoring functions that include ensuring the organisation remains viable and effective, to secure its long-term future.



**Sr Brigid Arthur**



**Rebekah Lautman**



**Jane Marshall**  
*(Until October 2017)*



**Kam Razmara**



**Mike Sum**  
(Chair)



**Suzana Vlahovic**

## GOOD FUN & GOOD FRIENDS

After fleeing post-war poverty and oppression in Vietnam, Uyen moved to Australia in 1993. She lived here illegally before connecting with the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre in 2006.

“When I came to the immigration firm, they rejected my file. A lady told me to come here. I saw a lawyer, she helped me.”

Unable to work, Uyen poured her energy into volunteering at the food bank five days a week. Almost a decade later, Uyen continues to contribute to the ASRC twice a week. She says her relationship with ASRC is built on “good fun and good friends”.

As well as helping out with the food bank, Uyen has spent time with the Women’s Empowerment Group, joining in on cooking classes and trips to the city. What she enjoyed most about these times was “sharing stories; sitting down and talking together”.

Uyen loves the community spirit at the ASRC. She says: “the Lord gave me too much, so I need to share. We need to help each other.”

## Operational sustainability

### Investment in systems and infrastructure

This year we completed phase one of the largest investment in technology and systems in the ASRC's history. The multi-year Digital Ecosystem Optimisation Program (DEOP) is critical to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of our program delivery and to maintaining a strong IT infrastructure. In 2017-18, we identified the requirements that will form a strong foundation for the future, and completed the delivery of:

- improved collaboration with the introduction of Skype for business, to connect staff more easily with colleagues and clients in any location;
- better IT security; and
- a stable environment, with no unscheduled outages to IT, phone and internet systems, even during high-demand events such as the Telethon.

This continues in the first quarter of 2018-19 with upgrades to key Human Resources and Payroll systems.

We engaged experts in 'human-centred design' to conduct research that will help us deliver our services better. The activity brought together people who use the services with those who design and deliver them, and mapped out the steps required to access them — whether in-person, over the phone or online. This exercise enabled us to use real insights and experiences to improve the way we deliver some projects and programs.

### Risk management and compliance

Embedding risk management into everything we do continued this year, led by the Risk Committee. External risk management consultants, InConsult, were engaged to undertake an independent review of our risk management framework and practices. Implementation of their recommendations will occur in 2018-19.

### Governance

In November 2017, Suzana Vlahovic joined the ASRC Board as Treasurer. An Audit Partner at professional services firm Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, Suzana's focus is on guiding the organisation from a financial perspective as we continue our strong growth trajectory.

Also supporting our growth, the Finance Committee completed the development of the three-year finance roadmap to support prudent and sustainable investment as we embark on our new Strategic Plan 2018-21.

### Operating ethically

The ASRC has a firm commitment to socially responsible behaviour, human rights, and maintaining a high standard of ethical conduct. We recognise and value the contribution of corporate partnerships, both financially and through in-kind support, and it is vital that our partners uphold the integrity of our work and reputation. Our Ethical Engagement Policy sets out how we maintain our standards when working with other organisations.

### Monitoring and evaluation

In 2017-18, we continued to embed monitoring and evaluation processes into our program management cycle. This activity has helped programs clearly articulate their broader goals and outcomes so they can remain focused while building their capacity to measure those outcomes.

An external assessment of our capacity in this space will inform our approach to monitoring and evaluation over the next two years, enabling us to strengthen the impact our programs have for people seeking asylum.

Additionally, we established a framework to measure the impact and reach of our #RightTrack strategy to change the current narrative around issues facing people seeking asylum. The campaign has subsequently tracked shifting attitudes in the community, and the extent to which this translates into grassroots activism.

## Fundraising

**As the need for our many services and programs increases, it is essential that we continue to find ways to expand our fundraising. This year, a series of innovative activities and an enormous effort resulted in fundraising and philanthropic revenue increasing by 44% over 2016-17.**

A dedicated team led by a new Director of Fundraising & Marketing, Cath Hoban, coordinated the contributions of volunteers, philanthropic funders and of course the many thousands of generous supporters whose donations, large and small, help fund our work.

Here are some of the highlights:

### Winter Appeal

The ASRC Winter Appeal runs each year from 1 May to 30 June. This year our target was \$1.71 million — more than 30% higher than the previous appeal, to reflect the increased demands on our services. Thanks to an incredible response from more than 8,000 supporters, the Appeal raised a record \$2.13 million. This year's theme was focused on the humanitarian services of the ASRC across housing, health and community food pillars, to address the impact of Government policy changes regarding Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS).

With this year's annual ASRC Telethon, the two winter campaigns generated more than 35% of our annual individual giving revenue, making it our strongest-ever fundraising period.

### ASRC Telethon

Our third Telethon in June 2018 raised \$889,000 against a target of \$550,000. We recruited 3,003 new donors and delivered a 18:1 return on investment through new activities such as the celebrity auction, and expanding our use of SMS, digital marketing, contactless payments with retail partners and matched corporate giving.

### #LetThemStay appeal

In August 2017, following the Australian Government's introduction of a six-month deportation deadline for people moved from offshore detention to Australia for medical reasons, we launched an emergency appeal. Planned and implemented in 24 hours, "Let Them Stay" raised more than \$770,000 in 10 days to help people seeking asylum who were affected by this decision and others in dire need.

### Benchmarking our efforts

Always striving to improve our impact, this year we designed an external benchmarking project of all our fundraising and philanthropic programs against 21 other charities. The ASRC's 12-month growth of 21% was in stark contrast to a market decline of 14% and over a four-year period we had the highest growth rate of all charities in the benchmark. Revenue generated per staff FTE was the second highest at more than \$1m.

### Grants and partnerships

Key partnerships continue to be critical in enabling the ASRC to expand services and in May we hosted a special event to thank more than 200 major donors and pro bono partnerships. While enjoying canapés by ASRC Catering and music from ASRC's Musical Journeys at the historic Meat Market in North Melbourne, donors heard from people seeking asylum and our staff about the impact these generous contributions have on our community.

We managed more than 140 grant relationships to secure more than \$3.3 million in funding — the most in ASRC history. We also secured new multi-year grant partnerships in support of our Health and Employment program and to develop our Social Enterprises.

### Our community in numbers:

Active donor numbers grew from 23,000 to

**38,000**

**25%**

increase (from 2,782 to 3,464) in regular monthly donors

**446**

people and community organisations donated proceeds from their fundraising events — from head shaves to sausage sizzles — to the ASRC

**24,298**

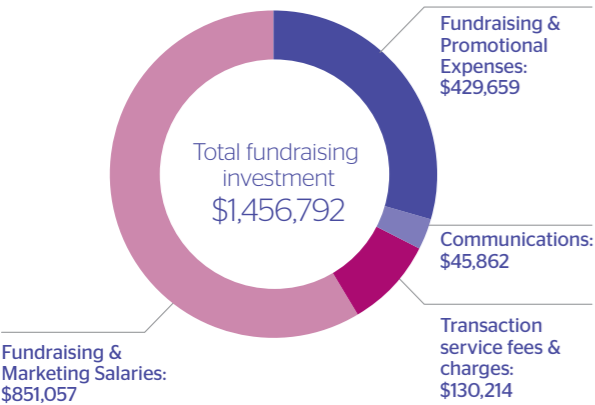
people signed up to hear more about our work



Photo by Tim Turner

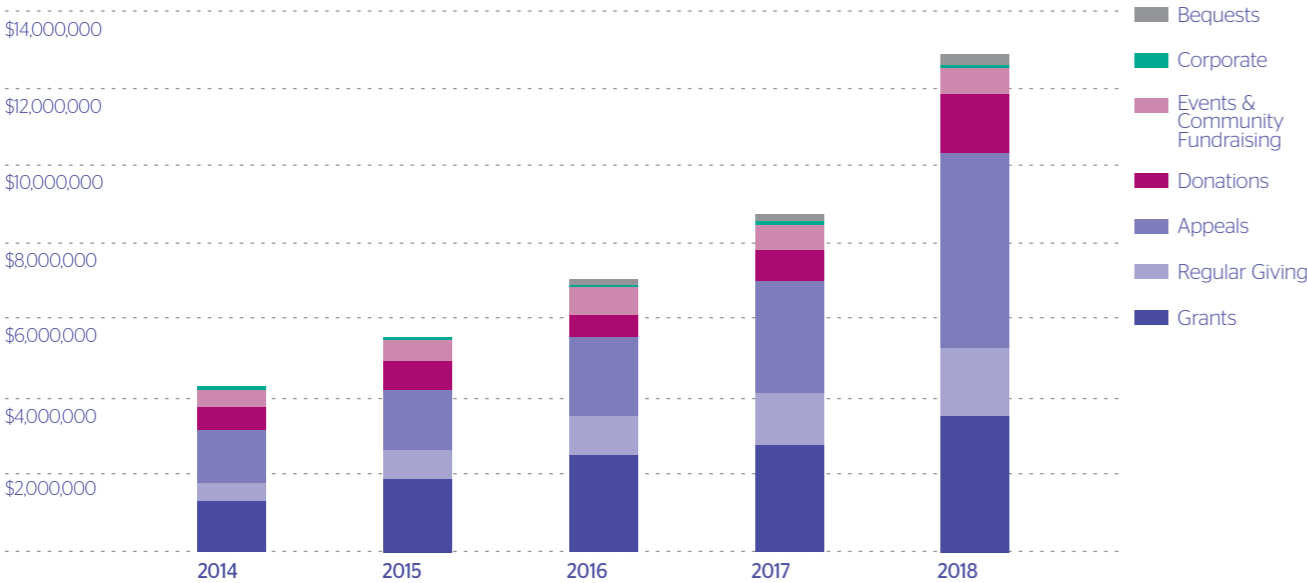
# Fundraising ctd

## Fundraising and promotions

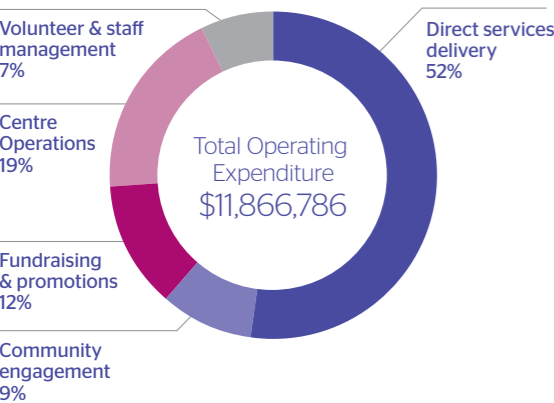


44%  
increase in  
fundraising revenue

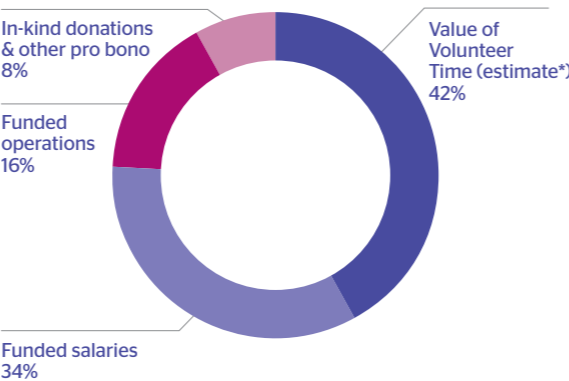
## Fundraising and philanthropic income



## Where donations go



## How the ASRC is resourced



\*estimate calculated from the hours (almost 317,000) contributed by 1,085 volunteers in 2017-18, based on the ABS unpaid work rate of \$37.02 per hour.



## O'BRIEN FOUNDATION

All gifts to the ASRC are invaluable, but some are also transformational. A special example is the three-year project funding granted to our Human Rights Law Program (HRLP) by the Noel and Carmel O'Brien Family Foundation. Received in 2015, the grant responded to a sharp increase in the need for legal services for people seeking asylum, due to legislative changes and cuts to federal funding. Our focus for the gift was to increase access to justice by building our Pro Bono Legal Network - an extensive network of solicitors, barristers, migration agents and organisations all committed to justice for people seeking asylum. Since September 2015, 330 members of this network have helped 451 clients through legal clinics. Education and information sessions in multiple languages were attended by 337 people seeking asylum. The legal triage service established under the project provided advice and referrals to 1,239 clients. The capacity of this network was critical to the ASRC being able to help all Fast Track clients lodge their visa applications on time. Legal network partners continue to help clients attending interviews with the Department of Home Affairs, in judicial review applications before the courts, and through advocacy on broader issues of justice and human rights. The workload has not lessened, but the network is now embedded in HRLP operations, delivering vital assistance to people seeking asylum as well as to our lawyers and other ASRC programs such as Detention Rights Advocacy. The benefits of this gift have been widespread, and will continue to have an impact far beyond the lifespan of the three-year project it made possible.

# Financial performance

## Analysis of financial results

### Income

The ASRC's total income in 2017-18 increased by 41% to \$15.1m, up from \$10.8m last year. The majority of the growth came from:

- Fundraising, donations, grants and other income bought in an additional \$3.94m in 2017-18 or 43% increase, driven by successful appeals and increased realisation of grant-funded projects
- Social enterprises contributed an additional \$448k or 27%, driven by growth from both ASRC Catering and ASRC Cleaning.

The surplus for the year was \$1.26m to be returned to reserves. Total unrestricted reserves are \$5.6m, which covers approximately five months of core operating expenditure. This is in line with the reserves policy guidance that the level of unrestricted reserves should cover between four and six months of general operating costs including program monitoring expenses.

### Expenditure

Total expenditure for the year increased by 40% to \$13.9m.

The ASRC continues to focus on its core mission to protect, empower and support people seeking asylum. Expenditure on core service delivery increased by 40% to \$11.9m. The majority of this increase came from:

- \$2.2m increase in direct service delivery across the board including the Human Rights Law Program, housing, health clinic, Foodbank, the Dandenong office, support to manage new presentations and new members to the ASRC and innovation hub programs;

- \$204k increase in community engagement expenditure, driven by the expansion of grassroots communities networks in Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales;
- \$342k increase in centre operations, driven by increased investment in data management, IT and additional resourcing to support core program support roles;
- \$250k increase in volunteer and staff management, including the establishment of a dedicated learning and development team;
- \$624k increased investment into the fundraising and marketing programs to meet the increased demands of growing humanitarian programs; and
- Non-core expenditure attributed to social enterprises grew by \$306k or 18%. This has been driven by strong growth in both ASRC Cleaning and ASRC Catering and offset by the decommissioning of the Food Justice Truck.

### Assets

Total assets increased during the year, predominantly as cash on hand, which was \$1m higher at the end of 2017-18. This was driven by the better-than-expected Telethon and Winter Appeal results late in the financial year.

### Liabilities

Total Liabilities have decreased by \$60k in total when compared with 2016-17. While total employee liabilities have increased, this is offset by a decrease in unexpended grant income.

### Cash flow

The statement of cash flows shows an increase of \$1m for the year.

This is made up of cash inflows of \$1.07m for operating activities, predominantly due to the higher-than-expected Telethon and Winter Appeal results.

There were net cash outflows of \$74k for investments into infrastructure and equipment.

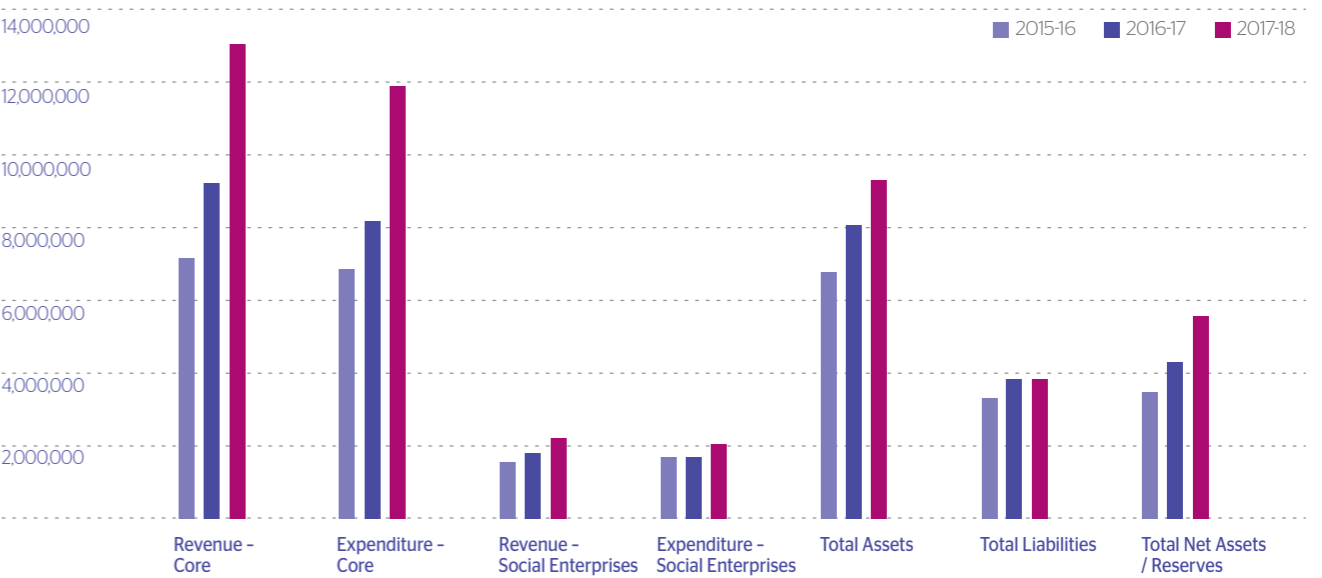
### Reserves

Under the general guidance of the Reserves Policy ([www.asrc.org.au/reservespolicy](http://www.asrc.org.au/reservespolicy)) the ASRC has a level of unrestricted reserves that cover at least four months and no more than six months of general operating costs. As at 30 June 2018 the ASRC's retained surpluses or reserves was \$5.6m, which equates to just over five months operating costs.

# Financial snapshot



## Changes in key balances



## Statement of Profit or Loss & Other Comprehensive Income

At 30 June 2018	2017-18 \$	2016-17 \$
<b>Income</b>		
Fundraising	5,310,701	3,189,933
Donations	4,043,256	2,984,217
Grants	3,522,213	2,774,921
Social Enterprises – ASRC Catering	1,437,348	1,088,484
Social Enterprises – ASRC Cleaning	658,760	508,686
Social Enterprises – ASRC Food Justice Truck	15,587	66,739
Interest received	108,075	107,223
Other income	51,508	43,355
	<b>15,147,448</b>	<b>10,763,558</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Salaries and wages	9,439,001	7,034,908
Stream operations	4,455,966	2,911,014
	<b>13,894,967</b>	<b>9,945,922</b>
<b>Surplus for the year</b>	<b>1,252,481</b>	<b>817,636</b>
<b>Other comprehensive income</b>		
Gain on disposal of assets	3,792	0
Total other comprehensive income	3,792	0
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	<b>1,256,273</b>	<b>817,636</b>

## Statement of Financial Position

At 30 June 2018	2017-18 \$	2016-17 \$
<b>Assets</b>		
<b>Current assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	7,000,792	6,005,434
Trade and other receivables	1,220,281	914,749
Inventories	10,461	27,142
Prepayments	189,857	172,317
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>8,421,391</b>	<b>7,119,642</b>
<b>Non-current assets</b>		
Plant and equipment	889,359	997,138
Intangible assets	6,278	11,448
<b>Total non-current assets</b>	<b>895,637</b>	<b>1,008,586</b>
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>9,317,028</b>	<b>8,128,228</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
<b>Current liabilities</b>		
Trade and other payables	697,654	546,656
Employee benefits	677,014	501,536
Unexpended income	2,272,187	2,706,723
<b>Total current liabilities</b>	<b>3,646,855</b>	<b>3,754,915</b>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>		
Employee benefits	96,396	55,809
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>	<b>96,396</b>	<b>55,809</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>3,743,251</b>	<b>3,810,724</b>
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>5,573,777</b>	<b>4,317,504</b>
<b>Members' funds</b>		
Retained surpluses	5,573,777	4,317,504
<b>Total members' funds</b>	<b>5,573,777</b>	<b>4,317,504</b>

Financial Summary

At 30 June 2018	2017-18 \$	2016-17 \$	2015-16 \$	2014-15 \$	2013-14 \$
<b>Revenue &amp; Expenditure – Core</b>					
Total revenue & other income	13,035,753	9,099,649	7,087,050	5,771,848	4,433,873
Total expenditure	11,862,994	8,224,183	6,835,238	5,053,799	3,805,876
Operating surplus / (deficit) – Core	1,172,659	875,467	251,813	718,049	627,997
<b>Revenue &amp; Expenditure – Social Enterprises</b>					
Total revenue & other income	2,111,695	1,663,909	1,573,951	973,057	921,731
Total expenditure	2,028,181	1,721,740	1,609,543	910,380	738,012
Operating surplus / (deficit) – Non-core	83,514	(57,831)	(35,592)	62,678	183,719
<b>Revenue &amp; Expenditure – Total</b>					
Total revenue & other income	15,147,448	10,763,558	8,661,002	6,744,905	5,355,604
Total expenditure	13,891,175	9,945,922	8,444,781	5,964,179	4,543,888
Operating surplus / (deficit) – Total	1,256,273	817,636	216,221	780,727	811,716
<b>Assets &amp; Liabilities</b>					
Total assets	9,317,028	8,128,225	6,814,042	5,646,972	4,557,885
Total liabilities	3,743,251	3,810,722	3,314,174	2,363,325	2,054,965
Net assets	5,573,777	4,317,503	3,499,868	3,283,647	2,502,920
<b>Cash Flows</b>					
Net cash from operating activities	1,069,562	1,123,977	1,433,846	898,675	1,485,866
Net cash to investing activities	(74,204)	(100,977)	(239,169)	(302,296)	181,033
Net cash from financing activities	—	—	—	(30,000)	(42,086)
Cash and cash equivalents at 30 June	7,000,792	6,005,434	4,982,434	3,787,757	3,221,378

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

Auditors Declaration



**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF ASYLUM SEEKER RESOURCE CENTRE INC.**

**Report on the Financial Report**

**Opinion**  
We have audited the financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc. (the entity), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2018, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and statement by the members of the board.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc., is in accordance with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

- (i) giving a true and fair view of the entity's financial position as at 30 June 2018 and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- (ii) complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1 and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013*.

**Basis for opinion**  
We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. We are independent of the entity in accordance with the auditor independence requirements and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We confirm that the independence declaration required by the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, which has been given to the Board of the Entity, would be in the same terms if given to the Board as at the time of this auditor's report.

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

**Emphasis of matter regarding basis of accounting**  
Without modifying our opinion, we draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report is prepared to assist the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc. to comply with the financial reporting provisions of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

**Responsibilities of Board Members' for the Financial Report**  
The Board of the entity is responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and have determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 to the financial statements is appropriate to meet the requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and is appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The board is also responsible for such internal control as the board determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the board is responsible for assessing the entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the board either intend to liquidate the entity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those board members are responsible for overseeing the Association's financial reporting process.

**Auditor's responsibility for the audit of the financial report**  
Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit 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.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by those charged with governance.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Entity to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.



Nexia Melbourne Audit Pty Ltd  
Melbourne

*Dated: this 30<sup>th</sup> day of October 2018*



Andrew S. Wehrens  
Director

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The ASRC gratefully acknowledges our patrons and ambassadors who have continued to raise awareness of our work and advocate for people seeking asylum and refugees.

We thank you for your efforts in shining a light on this important cause: Julian Burnside AO QC, Eva Cox AO, Michael Kirby AC CMG, Tamie Fraser AO and Patron in Memoriam Malcolm Fraser AC CH, Faustina Agolley, Imogen Bailey, Susan Carland, The Cat Empire,

Carolyn Creswell, Wally de Backer, Corinne Grant, Leila Gurruwiwi, Taj Lingam, Missy Higgins, Patrick McGorry AO, Circus Oz, Michael Short, Mark Seymour, Christos Tsiolkas, Arnold Zable.

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