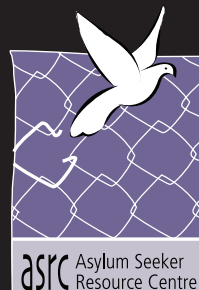
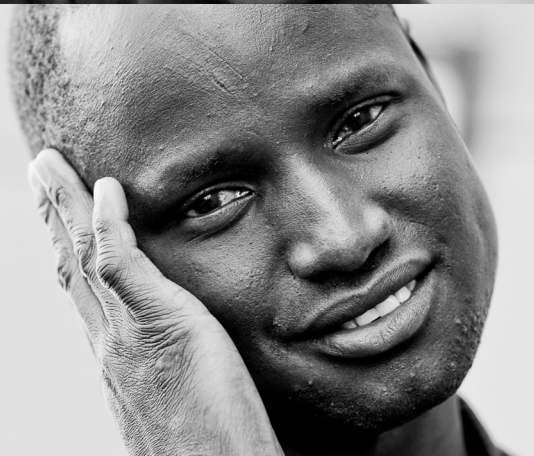


# ASYLUM SEEKER RESOURCE CENTRE



**Annual Report**  
**2012 – 2013**

**AUSTRALIA. Built by boat people.**

- 3 Chairperson's message
- 4 Ambassador's message
- 5 CEO's message
- 6 Key Facts & Figures
- 7 Board, Patrons and Ambassadors

#### AID PILLAR

- 9 Material Aid
- 10 Food bank
- 11 Community Meals

#### COMMUNITY PILLAR

- 13 Campaigns & Detention Rights Advocacy
- 14 Volunteer Support and Member Participation
- 15 Philanthropic and Corporate Engagement
- 16 Fundraising
- 17 Community Speakers
- 18 Youth and Students

#### EMPOWERMENT PILLAR

- 20 Social and Community Development
- 21 Education
- 22 Employment
- 23 ASRC Catering
- 24 ASRC Cleaning

#### JUSTICE PILLAR

- 26 Human Rights Law
- 27 Supporting Asylum Seekers At Appointments (SASA)
- 28 Health
- 29 Casework
- 30 Counselling

#### SUSTAINABILITY PILLAR

- 32 Finance
- 33 Human Resources
- 34 Information Technology (IT)
- 35 Operations
- 36 Administration
- 37 Financial Report
- 39 Thank you



## CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

In preparing this message, I am reminded that there are just too few words.

Too few words to say how dramatically our challenges have risen with each successive year and government. Too few words that capture the hardship, the spirit and resilience of asylum seekers. Too few words to express the injustices that accompany the globalisation of indifference. And too few superlatives that speak to the accomplishment of the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, its staff, volunteers and supporters. In a sea of unconcern and confusion, the ASRC has remained a source of hope and safe harbour, a brave advocate, a defender of the facts, and a statement of what it is to lead.

In 2012-13, the ASRC has continued to provide industry-leading programs across its strategic pillars of Aid, Empowerment, Justice and Community. The Centre has also developed a more comprehensive, evidence-based model of service delivery, and honed its strengths-based approach to supporting asylum seekers in generating their own outcomes.

Every day, our casework, human rights law and health programs meet the urgent needs presenting in escalating numbers to the Centre. Over the year, we also made close to 6000 provisions of material aid, tabled more than 36,000 community meals and supported 618 families with food supplies.

Our education program secured qualifications for 243 asylum seekers, our employment program placed 110 members in employment, and close to 200 people were empowered through our ESL classes.

ASRC Catering delighted patrons at 653 events, and ASRC Cleaning extended our social enterprise achievements with 300 hours of cleaning service.

## *Matthew Tutty*

Indicative of the strength of its voice, the ASRC's 'Right to Work' campaign attracted the support of 90 agencies nationally to campaign for the dignity of work rights for all asylum seekers. Shaping the current debate and connecting with future generations, the Speakers Program reached 8000 people across 103 groups, and our 'Hot Potato' campaign inspired 10 million conversations on the eve of the Australian general election.

Without doubt, the ASRC is making a difference.

These successes belong to an incredible community. The Board offers its thanks to our courageous CEO, Kon Karapanagiotidis, to the ASRC Directors for their vision and commitment, to the staff for their passion and perseverance, to our lifeblood - the volunteers, to our patrons, ambassadors, donors, partners and financial supporters. And my own thanks to the Board for their service.

Looking forward, the only thing greater than our challenge is our vision.

Globally, forced displacement is at an 18 year high, translating to a new refugee or displaced person every 4.1 seconds. The plight of refugee populations is a question of humanity, not domestic politics. The ASRC rises to this true challenge with a vision that all those seeking asylum in Australia have their human rights upheld and that those seeking asylum in our community receive the support and opportunities they need to live independently. The stories contained in these pages are a testament to that bold but achievable vision.

We are pleased to present our Annual Report for 2012-13, and to reflect on the many accomplishments of an organisation and the people for whom it exists.

**Matthew Tutty**  
**ASRC Chairman**

## AMBASSADOR'S MESSAGE

*Mark Seymour*

I was asked to perform at the detention centre in Broadmeadows and I was overwhelmed by the enthusiasm and grace of the asylum seekers I met there. Everyone I spoke to displayed a genuine desire to become a productive member of the Australian community. Some had been incarcerated there for upwards of four years. The experience drove home to me in a very real and confronting way, how thoroughly maligned and demonised 'asylum seekers' have become in the escalating national hysteria surrounding boat arrivals from Indonesia.

Later, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd announced the PNG solution under which any asylum seekers arriving by boat without a visa would be refused settlement in Australia and instead permanently re-settled in Papua New Guinea.

I was shocked by the deep cynicism of this decision. I saw it as the last straw and very quickly began to look for ways to exploit my profile to draw attention to the appalling treatment we are dishing out to these people. I have for a long time been ashamed and saddened by the policies of containment and punishment that the Federal government has enshrined in legislation in order to grand stand notions of sovereignty that are entirely rhetorical and not supported by the facts on the ground as to:

- who asylum seekers really are, and
- why they are actually coming here.

I am totally sick of not being told the facts!

I stumbled across the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre on Facebook and pitched my services as a potential advocate. The ASRC takes a direct, hands-on approach to the welfare and protection of asylum seekers in our community. I am deeply impressed by the professionalism and courage of the ASRC but above all, I feel a strong affinity with its fiercely independent spirit.

As a proud Australian, I believe we are a fundamentally generous, optimistic people who have the capacity to embrace the world around us in a positive and compassionate way. The idea that we should be suspicious of people arriving here uninvited, contradicts the very nature of our origins. We are a nation of immigrants. In fact, many of my ancestors had no choice in the matter of coming here but made good just the same. I believe that by definition 'asylum seekers' are driven to find shelter in the same way, so I identify with them very deeply.

We are living in dangerous times. Australia is being manoeuvred into a state of isolation by political forces that are using asylum seekers as a national scapegoat to distract the public from a broader conservative agenda.

I want to stand beside the ASRC in its work to dispel the rising tide of hate speech we are witnessing in this country. Above all, I want to be useful!

**Mark Seymour, Singer/Songwriter  
ASRC Ambassador**



## CEO'S MESSAGE

In looking back at the last year of the ASRC I am filled with great pride and hope, but also filled with great anger at seeing what is being done to asylum seekers in this nation.

It really was a year of highs and lows. On the one hand I remain so proud of our organisation for being so fiercely independent now and forever. So proud of the fact that we have such an extraordinary group of staff and volunteers at the ASRC who have led with vision and passion and been fearless in their pursuit of justice for people seeking asylum. I am excited by the possibilities. When I look at the last year and see that we have reached 10,000 people who we have cared for and supported. Since we started 12 years ago that is a humbling and extraordinary milestone for us to look back on with great joy. But at the same time I am also filled with deep anger to see the way in which this country continues to regress when it comes to human rights protections that are afforded to people seeking asylum. In looking at this year, on the one hand we have continued to thrive and grow as an organisation. One of the great highlights for me was the opening of our new centre in Dandenong. It was a really joyous occasion, seeing us reach out with an education and employment centre to empower people seeking asylum in that area. People filled with such extraordinary courage and resilience, and with so much potential, all they are in need of is opportunity. At the same time I am also really excited to see us continue to provide world-class service delivery to people in great need and at great risk and provided in this wonderful holistic one-stop-shop model of care. But the challenges are going to be great as we face the coming years.

We began our work this past year, going out to the community and talking about the Innovation Hub, a model for empowering asylum seekers. Asylum seekers are resilient, resourceful, extraordinary people who, given the opportunity, can thrive. And we have this vision to end poverty for all people seeking asylum by simply giving them the opportunity to be part of our economy and community by unlocking their potential. And we can't wait to make that a reality in the coming year.

## *Kon Karapanagiotidis OAM*

The big challenges have been to see the Gillard and Rudd governments sit there and continue to strip away from people seeking asylum, their most basic human rights and freedoms. From the right to work to the right to a fair legal process, to sending people offshore with the promise that they will never be resettled again in this country. Truly appalling to see our government being so regressive when it comes to the treatment and upholding of the human rights of people seeking asylum.

In the coming year the challenges will be great. And while the needs of asylum seekers increase so will the demand on our services. I want to reassure those who look to us for help by saying that we are prepared to meet this challenge. In the coming financial year, we will significantly boost our fundraising efforts, ensuring our move to a new home that is three times the size of our current Centre, making it possible for us to support more than 4,000 asylum seekers.

We will remain as fearless, as outspoken as ever before, continuing to fight for our simple vision of a country that sees the issue of asylum for the humanitarian issue that it is. As a country that welcomes people seeking our protection with open arms and treats them with humanity and dignity. As a country that gives them a fair go, a safety net and the opportunity to thrive and to succeed like so many refugees in the past have in this country.

We will continue to fight for a country where community is informed and compassionate in its attitudes and while we have real leadership of government, based on principle and upholding the rule of law. These are the things that we will fight and champion for and these are the things that we will continue to do whatever it takes in terms of our continued passionate advocacy until this dream is realised.

## **Kon Karapanagiotidis OAM, ASRC Founder**

## 2012 – 2013 Key facts and figures

The ASRC delivered 25 programs to more than 1250 asylum seeker members at any one time with the help of 872 volunteers and 36 paid staff.

### Aid

- Provided 29,495 nappies to families with young children
- Foodbank hosted 7,664 visits
- Prepared 36,400 meals, feeding approximately 140 people each day.

### Community

- Launched the Right to Work campaign, advocating for all asylum seekers regardless of date or mode of arrival, the Right to Work which attracted the support of more than 90 agencies nationally.
- The Community Speakers Program presented to 8000 people across 103 groups.
- Nearly 7,400 students and their teachers from about 60 different schools and educational institutions received presentations by the Youth and Students Program.

### Empowerment

- 1,672 hours of ESL classes to ASRC members
- 260 ASRC members supported through the Employment Program which also brokered 110 employment placements
- 653 events managed by ASRC Catering
- ASRC Cleaning provided more than 300 hours of cleaning service to clients.

### Justice

- 1,359 ongoing members supported by Casework
- 2,231 legal appointments were conducted
- 1,760 appointments were hosted by the Counselling Program
- Health Program hosted 1,615 appointments for 320 ASRC members

### Sustainability

- Resolved more than 250 requests for IT support
- Installed 50 new computers

# 2012 – 2013 Snapshot



**36,400 meals**  
approx 140 hot lunches daily



**7,664**  
foodbank visits



**2,231**  
legal appointments



**260 members**  
received employment  
support

## ASRC Board

Matthew Tutty	<i>Chairman</i>
Joseph Corponi	<i>Treasurer</i>
Brigid Arthur	
Paul Harrison	
Kon Karapanagiotidis	<i>CEO and Founder</i>
Rebekah Lautman	
Nga Luu	
Kate Sutton	

## Patrons & Ambassadors

### PATRONS

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

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

Julian Burnside AO QC  
*‘Australian Living National Treasure’*

Eva Cox  
*Writer, Academic*

### AMBASSADORS

Imogen Bailey  
*Actor*

Corinne Grant  
*Writer, Comedian and TV Presenter*

Professor Patrick McGorry  
*2010 Australian of the Year*

Mark Seymour  
*Singer, Songwriter*

Michael Short  
*Writer/Interviewer/Producer*

The Cat Empire  
*Australian musical group*

Christos Tsiolkas  
*Author*

Arnold Zable  
*Writer, Storyteller, Educator, and Human Rights Advocate*

# AID PILLAR

*The Aid Pillar provides essential, life-saving assistance to asylum seekers to ensure physical, mental and social well-being.*

Our Aid Pillar provides the following programs:

- Material Aid
- Foodbank
- Community Meals





# MATERIAL AID PROGRAM

*“The items were very much needed... it kept us positive in this foreign land. With the international phone cards we even called our loved ones (back) home which truly gave us relief to hear our parent’s and relative’s voices.”* Hamid

Without guaranteed work rights, access to healthcare or essential settlement services, people who are seeking asylum in Australia struggle to meet the basics: food, shelter, transport and clothing. The efforts of the Material Aid Program address the impoverished circumstances of asylum seekers by providing emergency relief services, along with serving as a conduit to mainstream service providers such as the Salvation Army.

A significant function of the Material Aid Program is to cultivate relationships with key partner agencies. The Material Aid Program has continued its participation on the Emergency Relief Working Group of the Network of Asylum Seeker Agencies (NASAVic). In doing so, capacity is building within the community sector to address the material needs of asylum seekers.

In 2012 – 2013 the Material Aid Program provided services to 1,210 ASRC members, providing basic items for families and single people alike, including nappies and maternity products, access to public transport (Myki cards and top ups), mobile phones and calling cards, kitchenware, bedding and department store gift cards. The seasonal campaigns concentrated on ‘back to school’ stationery for students of all ages, coats and blankets over the winter and Christmas toys for children.

In addition to directly providing practical, tangible items, Material Aid volunteers referred ASRC members to mainstream emergency-relief services for assistance with acquiring clothing, furniture and other basic household goods.

With 5,992 presentations made, this program provided asylum seekers with:

- 142,732 hours (around 6,000 days) of access to public transport

- 29,495 nappies
- 156 mobile phones, \$12,000 worth of local calls and \$700 worth of international calls
- Enough blankets and coats for 300 asylum seekers

## Achievements

The Material Aid Manager successfully lobbied and liaised with Public Transport Victoria and the Transport Ticketing Authority to resolve concerns around convenient access and use of the new smart card ticketing system, Myki. Doing so resulted in ASRC being provided with on-site technology so that credit may be applied to Myki passes on the spot and the program team can easily instruct ASRC members how to use this system. This four-year arrangement will ensure that the Material Aid Program will be able to directly provide public transport assistance for ASRC members.

## Our work in the year ahead

While it is encouraging that there are an increasing number of asylum seekers being released from detention, the reality is such that many of these people do not have access to work rights or comprehensive support from agencies contracted by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

The ASRC’s Material Aid Program, much like the emergency relief sector in general, struggles to deal with increasing demand. This program will continue to partner with the mainstream emergency relief sector and the asylum seeker sector to find effective solutions to meet the increasing demand for urgent assistance.

## Material Aid Program Team:

1 part time staff; 12 volunteers

# FOODBANK PROGRAM

*“The ASRC is my family, so I wanted to volunteer here. Foodbank is giving much food to asylum seekers. It is the best help to them, especially those who have no income. ASRC is like a mother to asylum seekers, always taking care of them.”* Juma, former member, current foodbank volunteer

**Access to healthy, nutritious food is universally regarded as one of the most fundamental human rights. In this developed country, Australia, many people who come here seeking asylum receive little or no support to meet their basic human needs including adequate nutrition. The Foodbank offers members a plentiful and diverse food supply that meets their nutritional and cultural needs, all the while ensuring that food and essential items are distributed in a fair and dignified manner.**

ASRC members may attend the Foodbank on a weekly basis to personally choose the groceries they need. All of the available foodstuffs are organised into food groups, and shoppers may make their own selections, within set limits. This ‘supermarket’ model means that rather than being handed a food parcel, members have a fair, dignified and empowering shopping experience.

Throughout 2012 – 2013, the Foodbank provided food to 618 families (1,360 people)

With 7,664 visits paid to the Foodbank this past year, this program provided:

- *groceries and related supplies for 155 families per week*
- *142 trolleys to help individuals and families get their shopping safely home.*

## **Achievements:**

A food security screening tool was designed by volunteer dietitians to ensure that members receive enough food and to learn about the gaps in their nutritional intake and knowledge. The development of this project met a

fundamental priority of Foodbank which is to continually improve the quality of food offered in addition to the quantity.

To meet the increased demand, the Foodbank received a 30% increase in food donations from individuals, community groups, schools and faith-based organisations.

## **Our work in the year ahead:**

The majority of people accessing the Foodbank live below the poverty line. In fact, about one-third of all families who present to the Foodbank do not have any source of income or financial support. Workplace exclusion and poverty have far-reaching and devastating consequences on all aspects of life, with impacts on physical and mental health being stark and immediate.

In the year ahead, the Foodbank Program anticipates a significant increase in demand resulting from legislative changes which affect the work rights of asylum seekers living in the community. The Foodbank Program will conduct a Nutrition Research Project in partnership with senior academics from Deakin University that will help to better understand what ASRC members need and want from this program in order to obtain a healthy diet that is culturally appropriate. The study will also address other barriers to food security such as familiarity with food stuffs, cooking knowledge, transport and storage. A peer-reviewed article including recommendations for the Foodbank will be completed in 2014.

## **Foodbank Program Team:**

1 part time staff; 62 volunteers

# COMMUNITY MEALS PROGRAM

*"I come once a week for lunch and meet up with the friends I have made at the ASRC. We talk and support each other; it's all very good for us."* Joseph

**The tradition of 'breaking bread' is centuries old and one that is alive and well at the ASRC. Holding with tradition, the ASRC's Community Meals program brings people together to share - to share a meal, to share a story.**

Every day that the ASRC opens its doors, the Community Meals Program provides a hot, nutritious and free meal for members, volunteers, staff and visitors. For many people who are seeking asylum, this midday meal is often their only hot meal of the day. The dining room at the ASRC is a place for people to feed their bodies as well as their souls by making new friends and sharing a meal with people who care.

Throughout 2012-2013, the Community Meals volunteer team prepared 36,400 meals, feeding approximately 140 people each day. The program continued its focus on providing nutritious, culturally-appropriate meals for ASRC's members, volunteers and staff, whilst providing a place of peace and social inclusion.

## **Achievements:**

The Community Meals Program experienced an increase in demand of over 10% on the previous year. This program successfully met this demand due to the donation of a new commercial rice cooker, which enabled the team to prepare greater quantities of this staple.

Also helping to meet the demand was improvement in volunteer retention along with contributions of fresh produce, ensuring the provision of healthy meals each day.

It must be said that on any given day, the Community Meals team arrive at the Centre, not knowing just what ingredients they will have to cook with or exactly how many people they will be cooking for. Nor do they cook in a commercial kitchen; the facilities at the ASRC are quite basic.

As a means of increasing a sense of community and empowering members, the Community Meals Program ran cooking classes for asylum seekers and refugees, funded by the City of Yarra and took place in the Atherton Gardens housing estate in Fitzroy. The goals of the classes included improving nutrition knowledge, food-handling skills and also being a social support for the community. On average, there were 10 students per session.

## **Our work in the year ahead:**

With more people needing a hot meal more often, this program expects to be challenged in securing enough healthy food to feed more than 160 people per day. .

## **Community Meals Program Team:**

1 part time staff; 61 volunteers

# COMMUNITY PILLAR

*The ASRC Community Pillar is responsible for working toward achieving financial sustainability for the ASRC and changing community attitudes toward asylum seekers. One of the main aims of the Community Pillar is to create sustainable social and policy change in regards to asylum seekers.*

Our Community Pillar provides the following programs:

- Campaigns and Detention Rights Advocacy
- Volunteer Support
- Philanthropic and Corporate Engagement
- Fundraising
- Community Speakers
- Youth and Students





# CAMPAIGNS & DETENTION RIGHTS ADVOCACY PROGRAM

*“High quality research and even common sense tell us that work is a key pillar of personal identity and an antidote to poverty and despair. The right to work for asylum seekers is a fundamental human one which Australia must respect.”* Patrick McGorry, former Australian of the Year and ASRC Ambassador

**Responsible for public advocacy and awareness raising at a local and national level, the Campaigns and Detention Rights Advocacy team lobbies for humane policy change, represents the rights of individual asylum seekers and promotes positive community and media attitudes toward asylum seekers. The ASRC is an active member of a number of national sector working groups and contributes to state and federal policy discussions.**

A main focus in 2012-2013 was preparation for the launch of a major attitude change campaign, the Hot Potato. Greater community education through the development of timely myth busters and clear messages was also a priority, with a new ASRC website launched.

In recognition of the changing environment and increasing numbers of people in detention without champions, the role of Detention Rights Advocate was created to offer much needed support to individuals who too often fall through the cracks.

## **Advocacy in Action:**

Midnight phone calls from Christmas Island and advocacy to Canberra stopped the removal of a boy back to certain persecution. Getting names and boat numbers to lawyers who can act for clients on Christmas Island who were subject to enhanced screening and deportation was instrumental in stopping many of these abuses.

By visiting detention centres and listening to the problems of those locked up, ASRC assisted in the release of people who were long term detained, including many refugees whose cases were accepted and security-cleared yet remained in detention without reason. Ongoing advocacy in collaboration with the sector resulted in the release of people from detention, re-screening of asylum seekers who were screened out and children in Melbourne detention finally being enrolled in local schools. Lobbying Ministers ensured that they knew the effects of their policies and occasionally produced small positive changes.

The ASRC remains the only agency which is totally independent from Federal government funding and as such, our advocacy is fearless, uncompromised by contracts and confidentiality

clauses. In the current environment this is critical in fighting the human rights abuses of asylum seekers both in detention and in the community.

## **Achievements:**

- *Contributed to over 15 submissions and consultations, including:*
  - Annual UNHCR consultations
  - Expert Panel consultations
  - Opposition to offshore processing legislation and various Parliamentary Enquiries
- *Partnered with ethnic communities and lawyers resulting in the SZQRB decision, ensuring people have another chance for assessment. Nearly two hundred Hazara cases are affected by this decision as well as many others.*
- *Launched the Right to Work campaign, advocating for all asylum seekers regardless of date or mode of arrival, the Right to Work attracted the support of over 90 agencies nationally. This campaign enabled the sector to have a united voice regarding the right to work for asylum seekers. The campaign received a high volume of media and political attention and the issue of right to work for asylum seekers was on the agenda with high-level engagement with politicians from all major parties.*

## **Our work in the year ahead:**

Following the instalment of a new government promising a hard-line asylum seeker policy, this team will continue to advocate in a hostile, political environment. Through the Hot Potato campaign, community outreach and education will continue.

A priority is to reframe the asylum seeker issue as a humanitarian issue through greater collaboration, lobbying and community education. Finding room in a highly politicised environment to cut through with facts to combat misconception and misunderstanding is going to be a huge challenge in 2013-2014.

## **Campaign Team:**

1 full time staff; 1 part time staff;  
1 intern; 7 volunteers

# VOLUNTEER SUPPORT AND MEMBER PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

*It's a real privilege to volunteer with ASRC. I've met the most fascinating people from all walks of life, from every corner of the world. On one hand, it's very humbling: I really get how lucky I am. And on the other hand, it's the most amazing feeling to know that my contribution of time means so very much to someone and actually makes a difference."* Marion

**Volunteers are at the heart of the ASRC. It is with the support of more than 800 volunteers that the ASRC is able to provide its programs and services, from Foodbank to physiotherapy and everything in between.**

Throughout the year, the Volunteer Support team grew from 14 people to 27 (including 10 ASRC members). With 469 new volunteers having been recruited, the ASRC's volunteer pool increased to 872 individuals. It is fair to say that in one way or another each and every ASRC member was assisted by a volunteer.

The program focussed on building the Volunteer Support team. In successfully having done so, the team was able to better manage the increased number of people who expressed an interest in volunteering at the ASRC. Another area of focus was having improved the way data was collected and managed, resulting in a more streamlined process for the program.

## **Achievements:**

- 1,163 people attended one of four information evenings
- 469 new volunteers were recruited and inducted
- Established a volunteer register with more than 1,000 volunteers on a waiting list.

Involving nearly 400 volunteers, this program conducted a project to improve volunteer engagement. Featuring focus groups, one-on-one interviews and an online survey, this project resulted in a considerable amount of detailed

feedback from current volunteers. Outcomes from this research will form the basis of the program's priorities over the coming years.

## **Our work in the year ahead:**

As the ASRC continues to grow, the Volunteer Support Program will need to remain flexible and responsive to the organisation's changing needs. Team members will work closely with program managers to ensure they have the capability to manage increasing numbers of volunteers to meet the demands of their programs. Volunteer engagement will continue to be a priority and will focus on ongoing training and development, better utilisation of current volunteers' skills and experience and will feature a collaborative feedback and review process between staff and volunteers.



@ asrc1



[www.facebook.com/Asylum.Seeker.Resource.Centre.ASRC](http://www.facebook.com/Asylum.Seeker.Resource.Centre.ASRC) 43,196 'Likes'

[www.righttowork.com.au](http://www.righttowork.com.au)

[www.thehotpotato.com.au](http://www.thehotpotato.com.au)

**Volunteer Support & Member Participation Program Team:**  
1 full time staff; 27 volunteers

# PHILANTHROPIC AND CORPORATE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

*"I enjoyed the Foodbank work. It was great to do something different and see how it helps those in serious need. This highlighted for me the serious lack of something I took for granted - basic groceries".*

Paul, Corporate Volunteer

**The ASRC could not offer quality services to asylum seekers without the assistance of the philanthropic trusts, foundations and corporates that support our programs. They play a significant role in the long-term viability of the centre. With their generous contributions we continue to introduce very much needed new and innovative programs and support services within the Victorian community.**

The ASRC relies on the generosity of trusts, foundations and corporates to be able to deliver innovative programs and services which address the needs of its members, some of the most vulnerable people in Australia.

Despite continued economic challenges the year ending was another outstanding year in philanthropy with 57 philanthropic foundations and trusts contributing over one million dollars' worth of support.

In particular we want to acknowledge the contribution of our philanthropic partners who have supported us over a number of years. These partners have allowed the ASRC to grow and to respond to the need in the community and have contributed to our economic sustainability.

## **Achievements:**

- 70% success rate for funding applications submitted.
- ASRC CEO, Kon Karapanagiotidis OAM, selected as a finalist for the Human Rights Medal in Human the Rights Awards 2012 (Australian Human Rights Commission).

We would like to acknowledge our 25+ partners who choose to support a range of specific programs at the ASRC including: Legal, Health, Employment and Aid.

We would also like to thank the Victorian Government, for the financial support of our Aid and Education Programs. These programs allowed very practical support by providing families with food and material goods and allowing asylum seekers to enter TAFE courses.

## **Our work in the year ahead:**

Recognising that multi-year funding would enable the ASRC to better respond to crises and opportunities, along with building internal and external capacity, this program will focus on securing more multi-year grants with philanthropic partners. Doing so significantly contributes to the sustainability of the ASRC and improves planning and leadership development.

**Philanthropic and Corporate Engagement Team:**  
1 full time staff; 7 volunteers

# FUNDRAISING PROGRAM

*"I am Jewish, and my grandparents and their families came from Europe during the Holocaust. In the circumstances that arose, my family was very lucky to be able to escape. Helping the ASRC, for me, is like helping the people that once were my family."* Noa, community fundraiser

**The ASRC's Fundraising Program serves to create and support opportunities for people in the community to help make a real difference in the lives of asylum seekers by contributing essential funds to the Centre's programs and services.**

Building on the success of the previous financial year, which saw the establishment of the ASRC's dedicated Fundraising program, the 2012-2013 year was one of consolidation for the Fundraising Program.

The key areas of focus for this program were community fundraising activities, the Champions of Change pledge donor program, bi-annual appeals and the online shop.

## **Achievements:**

- *87 individuals and community groups hosted fundraising events.*
- *240 people participated in Run 4 Refugees*
- The 2013 Winter Appeal was a highlight in the ASRC's fundraising calendar. In the lead up to the Federal election, with both major parties exploiting the asylum seeker issue, the community strongly rallied around the ASRC, demonstrating its support of the Centre's work by donating to this appeal, making it the most successful one to date.

## **Our work in the year ahead:**

Over the past 12 months ASRC has seen a constant increase in the demand for services. With the new government planning and implementing even further punitive policy towards asylum seekers, this pattern will continue. To support the ASRC to meet the growing needs of asylum seekers who are being forced into poverty and hardship through unfair government policy, community support will be critical to the Centre raising more funds to increase service provision.

**Fundraising Team: 1 full time staff; 7 volunteers**



# COMMUNITY SPEAKERS PROGRAM

*"It (your talk) has completely changed my attitude and point of view regarding the definition of asylum seekers. I was totally... in shock. Very appreciative with being informed of the facts."* Bronwyn N.

**Comprised of a team of engaging, experienced presenters, members of the Community Speakers Program engaged with as many, and as broad a group of people as possible to share facts about asylum seekers with the community.**

Throughout the year, the Community Speakers Program connected with a wide range of people throughout Victoria, and presented for the first time in Sydney. Organisations which hosted presentations included faith based organisations, universities, government groups, corporations and community service groups.

## **Achievements:**

- *Presented to 8000 people across 103 groups*

A training program was developed and implemented to respond to the needs of those community organisations which have limited experience working with asylum seekers.

## **Our work in the year ahead:**

In light of the new political landscape, the focus of the Community Speakers Program will be to keep the public engaged in the conversation about asylum seekers and presenting the facts around this issue and offering clear options for action.

A new, innovative recruitment and skill development program will serve to hone and sharpen the skills of the program's speakers. In addition to presentation materials being refined, there will be greater awareness-raising of this program as it is promoted to new audiences with diverse backgrounds and to groups in more locations.



**Community Speakers Team:** 12 volunteers  
(including the program manager)

# YOUTH AND STUDENTS PROGRAM

*“Volunteering with the ASRC’s Youth and Students Program has been an enlightening experience. It has also helped me to understand the political process in Australia. Observing the developments in policy from both sides has been an unmistakable exercise in populist politics that has convinced me of the need for political leadership in this country.”* Melanie

**Through the Youth and Students Program, primary and secondary school students are provided with facts about asylum seekers in our community in an interactive, positive learning environment.**

In 2012-2013, the number of speaking engagements at schools doubled since the previous year. To accommodate the increase in requests, additional volunteers were recruited in order for this team to present to more than 7,000 students.

To provide curriculum support for teacher’s units of work relating to asylum seekers in Australia, work commenced which linked to the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) and the Australian curriculum (AusVELS).

## **Achievements:**

- *Nearly 7,400 students and their teachers from about 60 different schools and educational institutions received presentations by the Youth and Students Program.*
- *A full complement of volunteer staff to manage the program, from administration, to developing resources and delivering presentations.*

## **Our work in the year ahead:**

As the demand for the services of the Youth and Students Program continues to grow, it will be important to increase the number of speakers who are available to present in the schools. Consequently, the recruitment and training of additional volunteers with skills appropriate for presenting to students will be imperative. Furthermore, a growing number of requests from regional Victoria have inspired the team to consider developing an audio visual resource that may be provided to schools in these areas.



**Youth And Students Program Team:**  
1 part time staff; 5.5 volunteers

# EMPOWERMENT PILLAR

*The Empowerment Pillar serves to foster the independence and self-determination of asylum seekers through community development and access to employment and education pathways.*

Our Empowerment Pillar provides the following programs:

- Community and Social Development
- Education
- Employment
- ASRC Catering
- ASRC Cleaning



# SOCIAL & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

*"When I arrived in Australia I felt lost. Soccer made it easier to make friends and open my mind."*

Ivan, SRC soccer program participant

Through the activities of the Social and Community Development Program, ASRC's members gain a sense of belonging and connectedness as they become acquainted with their new communities. Ultimately, participation in the range of activities offered through this program serve to overcome loneliness and social isolation and improve the overall mental health of asylum seekers in Australia.

Throughout the 2012-2013 year, 476 ASRC members participated in Social and Community Development activities. This program focused on three streams of activities: Orientation, Mentoring and, Social and Recreation.

Orientation: connected people with relevant groups and services in their new communities, such as places of worship and community health centres. Throughout 2012-2013, a number of tours were conducted including tours of the Melbourne CBD and linkages were made with local ethnic groups, markets, libraries and Neighbourhood Houses.

Mentoring: volunteer mentors were matched with asylum seekers who together enjoyed social outings as a way of practicing English and combating depression, which is often related to social isolation.

Social and Recreation: regular outings were organised for asylum seekers to get involved in local arts and sporting events. ASRC members were involved in the weekly soccer program which was part of the VicSoccer League and, a monthly social and recreation outing which was largely supported by Parks Victoria.

## Achievements:

- *Developed an Orientation Handbook for Orientation Guide*
- *Established partnerships with Reclink, YMCA and the Victorian Youth Mentoring Alliance*
- *100 matches of volunteer mentors with ASRC members*

Through the Social and Community Development Program, the ASRC participated in the Light in Winter Festival. This project involved a group of ASRC members who publicly performed a piece at Federation Square in Melbourne. As part of the Festival, the ASRC worked in partnership with Change Media to develop a documentary which explored the themes of racism and democracy.

## Our work in the year ahead:

This program's goal for the coming year is to continue to connect asylum seekers with relevant community activities and promote healthy, social inclusion. In order to meet the growing demand for community connections, the Social and Community Development team will develop and implement a strategic plan to ensure that more ASRC members have the opportunity to take part in more social and recreational activities.

**Social and Community Development Program Team:**  
1 full time staff; 100 volunteers including 4 student placements



# EDUCATION PROGRAM

*“For many months, I improved my English and finally I am very comfortable to speak and write English. Now I can speak with people in the shops and feel good.”* Edwin

**The Education Program provides ASRC’s members with the opportunity to learn practical English skills through the Home English Teaching (HET) program and onsite English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Every weekday morning beginner, pre-intermediate and intermediate ESL classes are delivered to groups of students at the ASRC. In addition, the Home English Tutoring (HET) program supports the learning of English one-one in homes or local libraries.**

Throughout the 2012-2013 year, this program provided:

- 1,672 hours of ESL classes to ASRC members
- 504 appointments with education advisors
- 243 referrals for concession places in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses through the Victorian Training Guarantee
- 198 ASRC members with ESL classes
- 68 ASRC members with HET sessions, and
- 32 members with weekly home tutoring classes

The ESL classes featured a new curriculum which was developed further over the year to provide continuity and progression in the teaching program. The new course enabled teachers to work together better in order to improve the English language skills of ASRC members.

The Education Program’s volunteers continued to provide sound education advice and support to students throughout their studies. This team focused on putting systems in place which allows for growth in the program over the coming

years, all the while maintaining the high level of support to members, which is vital for positive course outcomes.

## **Achievements:**

The Education Program secured funding from the Victorian Government until 2016 for the VET program to support a limited number of asylum seekers in accessing subsidised training under the Victorian Training Guarantee.

This program assisted 243 asylum seekers to study a qualification on their pathway to employment. The team established a post-placement support team and implemented a number of procedures to better facilitate links between education and the employment program.

## **Our work in the year ahead:**

As the Education Program continues to experience significant increases in the number of ASRC members being referred to its ESL classes, this team will build its programs to meet the growing demand, paying particular attention to those students who have more advanced English skills.

This program will continue to support its education advisors so that they may provide individuals with tailored education advice and the appropriate referrals to Vocational Education and Training. With the growing number of training organisations along with the increasing number of asylum seekers requesting such educational opportunities, the focus of this program will be on building relationships with training organisations in addition to ensuring that caseworkers are regularly updated with all program guidelines.

**Education Program Team: 1 full time staff; 98 volunteers**

# EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

*"I don't know how I will ever pay you back as you have been nothing but great to me."* Venessa, ASRC member

**The main goal of the Employment Program is to support ASRC members in their efforts to become ready for work and to be able to access employment opportunities. This program team focuses on developing relationships with appropriate employers and recruiters.**

To support members in becoming job-ready, this program team's Employment Advisors made a total of 1,011 one hour, one-on-one, appointments with ASRC members. This process also included three Job Skills Training sessions.

## **Achievements:**

- 110 employment placements
- Supported 260 ASRC members
- Completed the *Pathways to Participation*, a pilot project which was funded by the State government. This project resulted in a Good Practice Guide, outlining best practice for supporting asylum seekers and refugees in their training and employment seeking efforts. This guide was released at the completion of the project.
- Developed and launched ASSET, a unique website aimed at bringing together employers, education providers and asylum seekers who are seeking work. It is believed that no other similar website exists.
- Developed the WORCs (Working Online with Refugee Connections) website, an online tool linking asylum seekers of professional backgrounds with Victoria-based professionals with the same background. The goal is for asylum seekers to increase their professional networks and access opportunities in their field.

- Commenced preparations for the opening of the Dandenong office, which will offer much-needed English classes and in time, offer employment support to those who live and work in this area.

## **Our work in the year ahead:**

The ongoing negative public and political discussion about asylum seekers continues to impact the public's perception of asylum seekers' right, and willingness, to work. This combined with very short-term visas being granted to asylum seekers means that it will be difficult for them to secure work, as employers are concerned about these people losing their right to work, or potentially even being deported. The Employment Program team will continue to offer training to ASRC members while pursuing employment partners.



## **Employment Program Team:**

1 full time staff; 1 part time staff; 27 volunteers.

# ASRC CATERING

*"I have used ASRC catering over a dozen times in the last 6 months to cater to my conferences. The service is exceptional, the food is great and my conference attendees love the food. And it's both sustainable and for a great cause. Great food, Great Service, Great Cause – you really can't go wrong with ASRC Catering."* Bobby Kuriakose Marketing & Events Manager, Australian Nursing Federation

**ASRC Catering is a social enterprise established to employ asylum seekers who have the right and capacity to work. Through this program, asylum seekers may access pathways to further employment opportunities through education, training and hands-on work experience. In addition to raising awareness about asylum seeker and refugee issues, ASRC Catering positively demonstrates how asylum seekers make a positive contribution to our society.**

Throughout 2012-2013, ASRC Catering provided educational and employment pathways for 25 ASRC members.

Operating from a commercial kitchen rented from Baptcare in Brunswick, this past year ASRC Catering employed and trained 25 asylum seekers and refugees from diverse backgrounds. Over the course of the year, three key staff were trained to the point of being able to prepare, cook, deliver and fully service a function independently and unsupervised, a first for ASRC Catering.

ASRC Catering enjoyed a number of new clients, such as Hocking Stuart Real Estate Agents, Aesop, Lort Smith Animal Hospital, The National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) and Lush Cosmetics Australia.

The types of events it catered included milestone birthday parties, funerals, cocktail parties and corporate functions (conferences and AGMs).

Throughout the 2012-2013 year, ASRC Catering provided service to:

- 653 events (an increase from 320 events in the previous year)
- several large events which catered for more than 400 guests each

## **Achievements:**

In addition to significantly increasing business (without the support of a marketing strategy or advertising budget), a new stream of opportunities presented itself in the way of catering for weddings. ASRC Catering successfully serviced 14 weddings.

## **Our work in the year ahead:**

Having reached capacity at the current kitchen facility, ASRC Catering is limited to the number of functions it can service at any one time, consequently, it is limited to the number of asylum seekers and refugees it can train and employ. One particular goal is see more staff secure drivers' licenses to assist with the deliveries.



**ASRC Catering team:**  
4 part time staff; 4 volunteers

# ASRC CLEANING

*"I use this service and have the most wonderful, beautiful person clean my house every fortnight. I am lucky to have met him and proud to support this program."* ASRC Cleaning client

Established in early 2013, the organisation's newest social enterprise ASRC Cleaning provides ASRC members with training opportunities as a pathway to employment. ASRC Cleaning offers residential and commercial cleaning services within 10 kilometres of Melbourne's CBD.

## Achievements:

From January through June 2013, feasibility and market research was undertaken, cleaners were recruited and a training path was set up with Complex Training Academy for a Certificate II: Cleaning Operations.

In its first year of operation, ASRC Cleaning supported four members as they all successfully completed a Certificate II: Cleaning Operations and who went on to work independently. In its first few months of business, ASRC Cleaning provided more than 300 hours of cleaning service to clients.

## Our work in the year ahead:

With the foundation of this venture now firmly established, ASRC Cleaning will concentrate on increasing the number of cleaners and in turn focus on staff retention. For many of the asylum seekers who undergo this training and commence work as a cleaner, this opportunity is often a stepping stone toward other professional goals.

This social enterprise will also concentrate on expanding business into commercial markets and ultimately increasing the number of clients.



## ASRC Cleaning team:

1 full time staff; 5 casual; 7 volunteers



# JUSTICE PILLAR

*The Justice Pillar is responsible for securing justice for asylum seekers through legal, welfare and advocacy services.*

Our Justice Pillar provides the following programs -

Human Rights Law  
Supporting Asylum Seekers at  
Appointments (SASA)  
Health  
Casework  
Counselling



# HUMAN RIGHTS LAW PROGRAM

*“You are the best people in the world, and the program is excellent. We came here as refugees so the main point for us is to solve our legal problems. Without this program, can you imagine what will happen to us? The legal team gives me hope. It is not easy to meet people like that in this world.” Josef*

**The Human Rights Law Program works relentlessly to meet the basic need of all ASRC members: to be granted a visa to remain in Australia and ultimately to establish a life free from persecution. This team provides legal assistance to asylum seekers throughout the refugee determination process, from the initial application for a protection visa at the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) to the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) and, where necessary, before the Courts, the Minister and the United Nations.**

Throughout 2012 – 2013, the Human Rights Law Program:

- Provided legal assistance to 503 asylum seekers
- Conducted 2231 legal appointments
- Offered referral information by phone to approximately 120 additional asylum seekers
- Successful in securing visas for 96 members
- Successfully represented 21 members at the RRT
- Successfully represented eight members at Court

The Human Rights Law Program mentored and trained more than 100 legal volunteers and engaged in Community Legal Education to inform and strengthen the asylum-seeker sector. The Human Rights Law Program developed “Refwiki”, a comprehensive on-line research database featuring the human rights situation in more than 18 countries. Members of the Human Rights Law Program worked closely with teams across the ASRC and the Law Institute of Victoria’s Refugee Law Reform Committee to promote fair and humane asylum seeker policies.

## **Achievements:**

- Employed a fifth full-time solicitor to implement the IMA Pilot Project to assist unrepresented boat-arrival asylum seekers; engaged the assistance of more than 35 barristers to represent these clients at Court.
- Became one of the first Community Legal Centres in Victoria to be accredited under the National Association of Community Legal Centres’ National Accreditation Scheme. The Human Rights Law Program also hosted a graduate lawyer placement for four months through the Federation of Community Legal Centres’ Law Graduate Scheme.
- Worked closely with the Public Interest Law Clearing House and law firms such as Allens, King & Wood Mallesons, Russell Kennedy, Maddocks, and members of the Victorian Bar to secure pro bono support for the Human Rights Law Program and ASRC members.
- Secured a six-month solicitor secondment from commercial law firm Allens.

## **Our work in the year ahead:**

In light of the government’s proposal to end legal aid for asylum seekers who arrive by boat, the Human Rights Law Program expects to be faced with an unprecedented number of asylum seekers asking for help as there may be almost nowhere else to turn for free legal assistance. In response to such high demand in the community, the Human Rights Law Program will collaborate even more closely with the legal sector to encourage increased pro bono support for this program’s services.

## **Human Rights Law Program Team:**

5 full time solicitors; 12 interns; 115 volunteers

## SUPPORTING ASYLUM SEEKERS AT APPOINTMENTS PROGRAM

*“Without our service, asylum seekers would be forced to attend these appointments alone. I myself, sometimes find difficult what is required of them by the various bureaucracies – imagine having to do it in a foreign language, at times of high anxiety and with no support. Time and time again I see how our service assists to reduce this stress for our clients and demystify the various processes they are required to take part in.” Anne*

**The SASA Program provides much-needed support to vulnerable ASRC members for the many official appointments they must attend during the process of seeking asylum. As policies regarding asylum seekers became significantly more harsh throughout the year, the on the ground implementation of these policies caused high levels of anxiety for many ASRC members.**

For an asylum seeker, the presence and support of a SASA team member can help to alleviate their stress when navigating a complex system in a foreign language. SASA team members provide immediate support, while conducting follow up work to ensure that the member is linked in with their caseworker to provide ongoing support.

### **Achievements:**

Throughout 2012 – 2013, SASA team members attended a total of 165 appointments with 83 individual asylum seekers. Eighty per cent of these appointments were in relation to the member’s visa resolution, while support was also provided for health appointments and housing issues.

### **Our work in the year ahead:**

As the ASRC continues to prioritise the most vulnerable asylum seekers – particularly those in the latter stages of the determination process – the demand upon the SASA service will grow.

SASA’s challenge over the coming year will be to meet this growing demand and to remain responsive to the ever changing processes and protocols. This will be done by ensuring volunteers are equipped with knowledge about the various appointments, as well as increasing capacity to work with complex clients.

To create greater support for SASA volunteers and ASRC members alike, the SASA Program will merge the Casework Program as they share many synergies and hence, will result in efficiencies.

**SASA Program Team: 18 volunteers**

# HEALTH PROGRAM

**Asylum seekers who reside in communities and are without access to Medicare are considerably vulnerable and at-risk. The ASRC addresses this challenge through its Health Program, the largest of its kind in Australia.**

Throughout 2012-2013, the Health Program hosted 1,615 appointments for 320 ASRC members. Daily, primary health and nursing clinics are delivered by volunteer medical professionals including doctors, psychiatrists, nurses and a range of allied health professionals. The Health Program team also advocate to external health care providers, liaise with service organisations to provide pro bono pathology and medical imaging services, along with dental and eye care.

The Health Program also participates in broader advocacy as a member of the Victorian Refugee Health Network. Through the ASRC's involvement with the network, healthcare needs of community based asylum seekers remain visible and on the agenda.

## Achievements:

- *Established a partnership with Gary Bohmer Pharmacy in North Melbourne which enabled ASRC members to access prescription medications at extremely cost-effective prices, saving the ASRC thousands of dollars.*
- *Strengthened relationships between the ASRC and community health providers. This built referral pathways and allowed the Health Program staff to share their expertise about the specific health needs of asylum seekers and refugees.*
- *Worked with the Victorian Refugee Health Network (VRHN) reference group to lobby the Victorian Government, which resulted in the announcement of an additional \$22 million over four years being added to refugee health funding.*

## Our work in the year ahead:

Over recent years asylum seekers have gained greater access to Medicare. Unfortunately, many still remain ineligible and medical expenses continue to rise. As long as asylum seekers continue to remain without this basic safety net, or access to such supports as a health care card, the high demand on the ASRC Health Program will continue.

The Health Program strongly supports the ASRC's Right to Work Campaign. Experience has shown the Health team that when people have a protracted denial of the right to work, they are likely to experience increased rates of depression, anxiety, somatisation and physical illness. The Health Program is braced to see many of these presentations over the coming year as a result of the government's denial of work rights.



**Health Program team: 4 part time; 52 volunteers**



# CASEWORK PROGRAM

*“Caseworkers place immense importance on the client’s physical and emotional wellbeing, doing all they can to support clients to be self-sufficient and comfortable while at the same time preparing them for the future”.* Christina K (former Caseworker)

**The Casework Program supports asylum seekers by providing crisis intervention, ongoing case management, goal setting, generalist counselling and support around a range of welfare issues. Caseworkers are responsible for helping asylum seekers with referrals to services in the areas of health, housing, immigration, immigration law, social and recreational activities, financial planning and assistance, material aid, employment and education.**

A continued rise in the number of asylum seekers removed from detention and placed in the community significantly impacted the demand for this program’s services. The number of asylum seekers requesting support increased during 2012-2013, with 1,331 new people presenting for assistance throughout the year. At the end of the financial year the Casework Program was supporting 1,359 ongoing clients.

## **Achievements:**

- *Met the need of an increasingly complex client group, many of whom have spent lengthy periods in detention, experienced homelessness, have mental and physical health issues and have a lack of supports in the community.*
- *Built the capacity of staff and volunteers across the organisation to work with asylum seekers with complex mental health needs.*
- *Provided lifesaving linkages to relevant mental health services, ensuring at risk clients were well supported and safe.*

- *Streamlined intake processes and worked collaboratively with other asylum seeker agencies in order to provide a referral option for asylum seekers without any government funded support.*
- *Built a team of specialised housing workers to address the high increase in demand.*
- *Provided training and ongoing support to 120 active volunteers. Volunteer roles were expanded to manage new presentations, complex cases and housing support.*
- *Supported six student placements, ensuring a commitment to supporting the development of future social and welfare workers.*

## **Our work in the year ahead:**

Throughout the year, planning took place to restructure the Justice Pillar programs. A newly established Client Services Program will incorporate the Casework, Counselling and SASA programs under the one umbrella, with the aim of creating a more integrated, collaborative and efficient service model. This model will be implemented in 2013 – 2014.

The Client Services team will continue to support the most vulnerable asylum seekers in the community, while challenging the inhumane and unfair treatment of asylum seekers through their research and advocacy work. With more asylum seekers in need of support than ever before, the program will have a strong focus upon strengthening relationships with external agencies to ensure access to services for community based asylum seekers.

## **Casework Program Team:**

4 full time; 1 part time; 6 student interns; 120 volunteers

# COUNSELLING PROGRAM

*"I wouldn't still be here if it wasn't for counselling. I've remembered all the things you taught me and I'm using it to help other people in my new job."* Marta, former ASRC member

**The Counselling Program offers pro bono specialist counselling to ASRC members with the aim of alleviating the high levels of psychological distress endured by many clients as a result of grief, loss and torture and trauma.**

Comprised of experienced psychologists, social workers, counsellors and psychiatrists, this team provides a fully integrated mental health service for ASRC members. To best manage the increasing number of asylum seekers presenting with complex mental health issues, this team also works very closely with those in the Casework Program to ensure the most comprehensive care possible.

## **Achievements:**

- *Hosted 1,760 appointments*
- *Supported approximately 100 ongoing clients at any given time*
- *200 ASRC members were assessed by the Counselling Program. Those who did not go on to become ongoing clients were referred to specialist services in the community*
- *Developed partnerships with external counselling services; positive relationships with these agencies have resulted in better access to mainstream services for asylum seekers.*

## **Our work in the year ahead:**

To remain responsive to the rising number of asylum seekers presenting with complex mental health issues, this program will aim to recruit experienced volunteer counsellors and psychologists, while providing training and development opportunities for those already involved in the program. The program will continue to develop partnerships within the community in order to generate greater access to community mental health services for asylum seekers.

Over the coming year, the Counselling service will work closely with the Complex Casework team to up skill workers within the other ASRC Programs to work effectively with clients with mental health issues.

## **Counselling Program Team:**

1 full time; 1 part time; 22 volunteers

# Sustainability PILLAR

*The ASRC Sustainability Pillar is responsible for providing the organisation with strategic operational support through stewardship of its human, financial and technology resources. With the role of CEO included in this Pillar, Sustainability strives to strengthen the capacity of the ASRC to operate in a holistic and sustainable manner.*

Our Sustainability Pillar provides the following programs -

- Finance
- Human Resources
- Information Technology (IT)
- Operations
- Administration



# FINANCE PROGRAM

*“The entertainment packaging introduced this year has been such a positive initiative introduced by the Finance Program. It has helped significantly in helping to deal with the cost of living pressures. The process is very straightforward and the team has done a fantastic job in implementing and maintaining the system in a way that is so user-friendly.”* Simon, legal team staff member

**Responsible for delivering efficient business services, the Finance Program manages financial information necessary to ensure the sustainability and financial viability of the ASRC.**

In 2012-2013, the Finance Program developed best practice capabilities and improved processes. At the centre of this program's activities was efficient preparation of financial statements, audit compliance, management reporting and budget analysis. Overall, this program served to support both the management and board's strategic decision making with regard to governance and risk management.

On a daily basis, this team provided additional support in the areas of accounts receivable and payable, cash management, the banking and payroll for all ASRC programs including social enterprises ASRC Catering and newly established ASRC Cleaning.

## **Achievements:**

- *Successful implementation of the entertainment packaging scheme as evidenced by 88% of eligible ASRC team members taking advantage of. This resulted in substantial tax savings for our employees, with minimal cost to the ASRC.*

A significant milestone of this program was the implementation of a Forecast Model. The introduction of Forecasting has resulted in the ability to better analyse ASRC's financial data to better inform the directors and Board in their decision making.

## **Our work in the year ahead:**

Shifts which occur in the political and economic landscapes are expected to impact the activities of the Finance Program. Specifically, with the commencement of the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission (ACNC), the new peak regulator of charities, there will be a number of reforms, including reporting obligations, which the ASRC must comply with.

To ensure the continued financial sustainability of the ASRC, this program's initiatives include an expansion of the program's volunteer base and a finance policy database. The Finance Program will continue to provide the ASRC with support in effective decision making and maximising resource allocation in line with the goals of the new strategic plan.

## **Finance Program Team:**

1 full time staff; 1 part time staff; 4 volunteers

# HUMAN RESOURCES PROGRAM

*"I was really impressed with the induction training I received when I started with ASRC. I felt really supported in the work I was commencing. Not only did I have a lot of background on the organisation, but I was reassured with all of the practical policies in place to help me do my job to the best of my ability."*

Patricia

**The Human Resources Program stewards the welfare, retention and development of the ASRC's staff team members.**

This program's team focussed strongly on establishing the Human Resource function at the ASRC. It was the first time that the ASRC had a designated Human Resources Manager hence this team's priority was to develop a complete human resources strategy.

The program's strategy was created on the basis of results from the previous year's Employee Satisfaction Survey in addition to an audit of all policies and procedures which had previously been developed.

## **Achievements:**

- *Rolled out Performance Management Plans to support team members in understanding their priorities and to better manage workloads.*
- *Implemented a Professional Development Budget as a means of investing in ASRC team members and their ongoing development training.*

Most significantly was the development of the Human Resources Strategy, of which, all of the strategic priorities were implemented:

- *Improved salary packaging for team staff members*
- *Comprehensive policies and procedures were developed*

- *Performance Management for all staff was introduced*
- *A professional development program and budget has been established*
- *Additional support has been made available to team staff members through the Employee Assistance Program*
- *Aligned with the new Award legislation changes.*

## **Our work in the year ahead:**

With all of the priorities of the strategic plan having been actioned, a platform has been created from which the ASRC will continue to build the capacity of its team over the next four years of the strategic plan, and beyond.

As the ASRC continues to grow, areas of focus for this program will be the physical work environment, OH&S, and identifying critical roles and succession planning. Members of this program team will also pay attention to providing professional development opportunities, aligning employee and volunteer policies, and implementing strategies to improve employee retention.

**Human Resources Program Team:**  
1 part time staff; 3 volunteers



# INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) PROGRAM

*"We only notice the work of the IT team when something goes wrong and without fail they are there to help. We rarely see them in-person but rest easy in the knowledge that they are monitoring, fixing, updating and keeping us online."* Sheelagh

**The IT Program, completely comprised by volunteers, manages the technological requirements of the ASRC from responding to requests for support to licensing computers.**

Throughout 2012 – 2013, the main focus of this program was to increase the number of volunteers on this team.

## **Achievements:**

- *Resolved more than 250 requests for IT support*
- *Introduced Rhino Support, a new help desk management system*
- *Replaced a back-up server to ensure disaster recovery and business continuity.*

A significant accomplishment of the IT Program was the installation of 50 new computers, complete with software upgrades (Windows 7) at the ASRC, in addition to installing new licences and setting up the network in Dandenong.

The IT team were able to better respond to requests through the introduction of help desk management software and better governance and team structure.

The team also commenced preparation for the technical requirements of the Dandenong office, to be opened in the coming year.

## **Our work in the year ahead:**

The IT Program will concentrate on increasing the size of its team to help meet the growing needs of the ASRC. One specific goal is to have support volunteers onsite during business hours who can immediately address any technical difficulties which may result in efficiencies. Another goal is to provide an appropriate level of technical support to those in the Dandenong office.

**IT Program Team: 10 volunteers**

# OPERATIONS PROGRAM

*“The Operations Team are fantastic. They do the unglamorous jobs around the place and always without complaint. I want them to know that we notice.”* Fiona

**The Operations Program manages the practical, operational issues which arise on a daily basis at the ASRC. This team is integral to the successful functioning of the ASRC by employing cost-saving initiatives and services. This has included the switch to more affordable generic stationery and cleaning supplies and having established relationships with tradespeople for in-kind services such as electrical and plumbing work.**

One of the main priorities for this new team was to be able to respond quickly and efficiently to OH&S issues. Consequently, a dedicated OH&S Committee was established. Another priority was to determine the most cost-efficient means of operating the Centre. To support the ASRC a volunteer role for General Legal Counsel was established.

## **Achievements:**

- *Stabilised office supply expenditure by engaging a low cost stationery and equipment supplier.*
- *Centralised the ordering of office supplies, organised the donations of office equipment and offers of pro bono services.*
- *Established and consolidated administration and operating systems in order to streamline a range of tasks, which included but were not limited to contract renewals, vehicle repairs and urgent maintenance*

Combined, these successes have contributed to tighter budgetary control and the overall financial viability of the ASRC.

**Operations Program Team: 8 volunteers**

# ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM

*“The Admin team are the gateway to the ASRC. They are the link between the members, the volunteers, the visitors, the donors and the staff. They have an understanding of the way each program operates. It is incredible how smoothly it all runs.”* Emily

**The Administration Program, a team entirely comprised of volunteers, has been described as the ‘face’ of the ASRC. Responding to a range of queries from anxious asylum seekers to the general public alike, it is a member of the Administration Program team who first receives each phone call and in-person enquiry about the ASRC.**

This program was highly focussed on responding to increased queries about the ASRC’s programs and services. The increase in queries was two-fold: more asylum seekers being in need of more assistance and, asylum seekers in general were the subject of much media attention, resulting in a significantly increased number of queries from the public (including journalists, students and community groups).

## **Achievements:**

- *Expanded the team to include volunteers who provided dedicated assistance with coordinating appointments for the Casework and Legal Program teams.*
- *Additional team volunteers at the reception desk resulted in a more efficient flow of information between Administration and the various Program teams, allowing the team to spend more time with ASRC members.*
- *Electronic record keeping and the establishment of a database for appointments and meetings has created considerable efficiencies for this team.*

Every step taken in the right direction, no matter how small, is considered a great accomplishment at the ASRC. Such success in the Administration Program included the installation of an extra computer and the ability to process donations and purchases via electronic funds transfer (EFT).

## **Our work in the year ahead:**

As the ASRC grows and continues to offer more vital services to asylum seekers, the Administration Program team will keep abreast of all updates and changes in order to accurately and efficiently share information with asylum seekers and all those who make enquires of the ASRC.

**Administration Program team: 45 volunteers**

# FINANCIAL REPORT

## Statement of Profit or Loss

For the Year Ended 30 June 2013

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
Fundraising income	1,083,367	577,093
Donations Income	1,167,371	459,472
Grant Income	929,773	1,151,758
Cleaning revenue	7,087	
Income from commercial operations	573,699	366,495
Interest received	64,340	58,024
Merchandise	56,405	40,009
Other income	14,402	24,644
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	3,896,444	2,677,495
 <b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Cost of goods sold	34,262	17,266
Salaries and wages	2,124,329	1,779,270
Justice	82,924	119,635
Aid	135,956	140,056
Empowerment	75,500	50,217
Community	88,840	46,046
Sustainability	317,995	385,697
Commercial operations - cleaning	1,993	
Commercial operations - catering	125,297	78,419
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	2,987,096	2,616,06
Income tax expense		
Profit after income tax	<hr/>	<hr/>
	909,348	60,889
 <b>Retained profit at the beginning of the financial year</b>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	781,856	720,966
<b>Retained profits at the end of the financial year</b>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	1,691,204	781,855

# FINANCIAL REPORT

## Assets and liabilities statement

30 June 2013

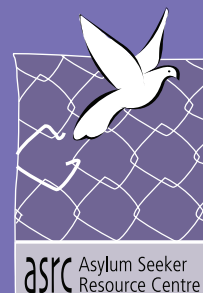
	2013 \$	2012 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,596,565	301,807
Short-term deposits	1,105,671	960,000
Trade and other receivables	306,087	151,628
Inventories	25,249	53,763
Prepayments	6,667	
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	2,950,239	1,467,198
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Plant and equipment	119,642	156,384
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	119,642	156,384
TOTAL ASSETS	3,069,881	1,623,582
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other payables	281,399	170,924
Lease liability	16,865	36,921
Non interest loans	60,000	
Provision for employee benefits	117,137	78,845
Unexpended income	903,276	543,227
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	1,378,677	829,547
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Employee benefits		12,179
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		12,179
TOTAL LIABILITIES	1,378,677	841,856
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	1,691,204	781,856
<b>MEMBERS' FUNDS</b>		
Retained profits	1,691,204	781,856
<b>TOTAL MEMBERS' EQUITY</b>	1,691,204	781,856



# THANK YOU

The ASRC would like to thank and acknowledge the following donors, supporters and partners for their key role in supporting us to help asylum seekers in 2012 – 2013. While we make every effort to recognise all of our supporters, we apologise for any errors or omissions.

- Aesop
- Andyinc Foundation
- Ark Resources
- Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation
- Bella Union
- Bell Charitable Fund
- Benevolent Foundation
- Bernard & Mary Euhus Charitable Trust
- Besen Family Foundation
- Bokhara Foundation
- Bureau Veritas
- Caroline Durree Foundation
- CERES
- Change Media
- Circus Oz
- City of Melbourne
- City of Yarra Council
- Colonial Foundation
- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
- Department of Transport (DoT)
- Department of Premier and Cabinet (OMAC)
- Directioneering
- Eirene Lucas Foundation
- English Foundation
- Erica Foundation
- Euphonic Investments
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- Feed Melbourne
- Foodbank Victoria
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- Human Rights Arts and Film Festival (HRAFF)
- Igniting Change
- Jagen Nominees Pty Ltd
- Jerry Poon and the Operatives
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- Young Family Foundation



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