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Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project

CURRENT CHARTER OF THE BRIGIDINE ASYLUM SEEKERS' PROJECT

I was a stranger and you made me welcome ...

AIMS of the Brigidine Asylum Seekers' Project

- To provide hospitality and practical support for asylum seekers
- To actively network with like-minded individuals and groups who are working for justice for asylum seekers
- To promote advocacy for the rights of asylum seekers.
- To raise awareness of asylum seeker issues and concerns through a range of activities

BELIEFS informing the Brigidine Asylum Seekers' Project

Universal rights

- Every person has **the right** to seek and be given asylum if forced to flee his/her country to escape persecution.

Australia's responsibilities

- It is reasonable to assume that Australian authorities should have a **disposition to include and support people** rather than exclude, to **heal rather than harm**.
- As a **democratic developed country**, Australia should offer sanctuary to people who flee persecution in their own country.
- No asylum seeker should be denied access to Australia **at the borders**.
- No person coming to Australia to seek freedom and safety should be **detained**.
- **Derogatory terms** such as 'queue jumpers' and 'illegals' are inappropriate and should never be used to refer to asylum seekers.
- Australia should take a **fair share** of the world's refugees and displaced persons.
- **The care of asylum seekers** should be the responsibility of government and not delegated to profit-making private companies

Procedures

- Immigration controls, including visa restrictions, anti-terrorist and anti-smuggling measures, should not infringe on the rights of all asylum seekers to access **fair and efficient asylum determination procedures**; they should never undermine Australia's international obligations prohibiting arbitrary and indefinite detention or the return of refugees and asylum seekers to territories where their lives or freedom may be threatened.

Rights within Australia

- Asylum seekers should be **treated in the same way** as refugees from refugee camps across the world invited by the Australian government to settle in Australia.
- Individuals seeking asylum should be given **reasonable financial and material support** by the government.
- While cases are being reviewed, all persons seeking asylum should be able to live with **dignity and freedom of movement within the community**.
- There should be **fair and efficient asylum determination procedures** and the burden of proof should not be unreasonable or depend unduly on legal technicalities.
- The process of determining the status of an asylum seekers' application should include **an explanation of all rights** in the language of the asylum seeker, and immediate and regular access to family, lawyers and doctors.
- Asylum seekers should be free to be **reunited with their families** as soon as possible

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