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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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