

STRENGTH AND KINDNESS

Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project (BASP)



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

Newsletter 66 October 2013

The Project aims to:

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

Australia's policies and practices towards asylum seekers are cruel, dehumanising, punitive and by any decent humanitarian standards wrong. For many years now the Australian government's treatment of asylum seekers has been internationally criticised for breaching human rights standards. Indeed in August of this year, Australia was found guilty of almost 150 violations of international law over the indefinite detention of 46 refugees in one of the most damning assessments of human rights in this country by a United Nations committee.

Despite various forms of local resistance, the situation over the last few decades has only become worse, with both major political parties offering only slightly different versions of the same cruel policy of deterrence and punishment. One of the worst aspects of these unrelentingly repressive and even violent practices is that they will become normalised so that ordinary citizens show little concern about them. Michael Parenti a political analyst from USA said "The worst forms of tyranny, or certainly the most successful ones, are not those we rail against but those that so insinuate themselves into the imagery of our consciousness, and the fabric of our lives, as not to be perceived as tyranny"

We have been constantly exposed to phrases like "illegals" and "queue jumpers" and "boat arrivals" with the logic that these are not like us, not individual normal human beings, never given a name. A truism surely is that you have to break a law before you are an illegal. When we as a nation stop asking What law did this person break? What queue did they jump? In what ways are these people who came in a boat any different to all others who came here in a boat over the past decades? We have slipped into an acceptance that what is happening to asylum seekers is normal. Ultimately a state of indifference may have been created, a state in which evil has become routine and is failing to shock and promote change.

If we accept the appointment of a three-star head of the Government's new Operation Sovereign Borders task force, and do not see it as incongruous that a military person is needed to hound poor people on boats from proceeding to ask for protection we have become inured to a form of tyranny.

Sovereign borders suggest we are under attack. To imagine that people on barely seaworthy fishing boats pose any threat to Australia is bizarre and would be amusing if it was not so cruel to poor traumatised

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SCOTT MORRISON



Asylum seekers suffer family pressures

Fatima* and Ali, their three year old daughter, Hashi and Ali's mother, Halouma arrived in Australia on a boat about ten months ago. Fatima is desperately missing her mother. She comes from a family of girls and she misses her sisters companionship too. She knows that it will be years before the visa status of herself and family are resolved and the anxiety and loneliness is driving her to distraction. It is also putting a lot of strain on her relationship with Ali. This is exacerbated by the fact that they are all home each day. In their own country Ali went to work each day and Fatima says now they cannot visit places for lack of money and they are beginning to argue a lot. Ali is feeling guilty that it was his decision to leave for safety. He recognises how unhappy Fatima is.

Saria and Musa see themselves as Hasaras from Afghanistan but were born and lived as children in Iran, their families moved to Syria and they have fled from there because of the turmoil and terror. Musa is a traditional man and he believes no other man should live in their house. He therefore has refused to sublet a spare bedroom they have to a couple who could in this way share the rent. Saria says they can barely pay the rent by themselves and thinks her husband is just being authoritarian and unwilling to see they need to do things differently.



Abdullah was a business man in Iran. He arranged for his wife and two children to leave because he believed the authorities would be suspicious if he left the country with his whole family. They arrived before the 13th July this year and are in a northern suburb of Melbourne. Abdul left Iran with two other children after July and is on Christmas Island threatened with being sent to Manus Island and with no prospect of ever seeing his wife and children who are in Melbourne ever again. There seems no way out of this awful situation and Hasra as a wife and mother is inconsolable.

Mohamad is an Iranian man who has been put back into immigration detention because he has been charged with a criminal offence. It seems to us that this was through a misunderstanding and hopefully he will be released without a conviction after the court case. However his wife Nasrin is nearly eight months pregnant and the couple have two other small children. Nasrin even wanted to go into detention again with Mohamad. Now both are questioning the viability of staying in Australia.

For these and many families the rapid pace of change in their lives - along with many unpredictable events is leading to a loss of confidence and a lot of stress. Families don't stop being families because of asylum claims, and indeed the refugee experience can have a big impact on how each member of the family copes. Asylum seekers endure additional pressures on their relationships as a result of trauma, family separation, loss and grief, significant periods of time spent apart and cultural differences once in Australia.

The added trauma of hearing themselves described as unwanted and illegally here is also part of the strain. The experience of being in detention (particularly if they have had children in detention too) adds to the complex mixture of guilt and sometimes blame.

* All names in this piece have been changed

Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project

Discussion Night 4 -2013

Thursday 14th November

Why are so many people HAVING to flee for their lives? It's not a simple story...

And an update on current government policies

Guest speaker: Dr Linda Briskman

Linda Briskman is Professor of Human Rights at Swinburne University of Technology. Her research and advocacy primarily focuses on asylum seeker rights. She co-authored (with Susie Latham and Chris Goddard) *Human rights overboard: Seeking asylum in Australia* which was the winner of the Australian Human Rights Commission 2008 Literature (non fiction) award.

Time: 7.30 – 9.30p.m

Venue:

St Joseph's Hall

(beside the bluestone church)

274 Rouse St

Port Melbourne



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Contact: 03 96962107

Donations to the Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project are tax deductible

Have you heard about the Protest in Canberra, which is being organised for Monday 18 November – during the first sitting of the new Parliament.

People will be travelling to Canberra from as far away as Perth to show their disgust at Australia's punitive approach to those seeking asylum here.

Will you join the protest? Buses are being organised from Melbourne, Sydney and Newcastle. Many people will also travel independently to be there.

Please register online if you are planning to be part of this important action – it will help us to plan the specific action on the day if we know how many people will be here.

If you are planning to travel on one of the buses, please book as soon as possible – but no later than 10 November – so we can make sure we have the right number of buses booked.

<http://www.trybooking.com/64849>

Take Action for Refugee Rights **JOIN THE PROTEST** Converge on **Canberra**



Monday 18 November, 11am in front of Parliament House

It's time to tell our parliamentarians to STOP

VIOLATING HUMAN RIGHTS,

to abandon the policies that punish, and to adopt compassionate policies that protect asylum seekers:

- Permanent visas, not temporary protection visas

- Increase annual intake of refugees to at least 30,000

- Family reunion for refugees

- Greatly expanded refugee resettlement from transit countries in our region

- A fair legal process for all refugee claims

- Right to work and study for asylum seekers

- Close all offshore and onshore detention centres

- No deportations of asylum seekers

- Safe transport to Australia for refugees in the region

TRAVEL INDEPENDENTLY, OR GET A TICKET ON THE BUS

LET US KNOW YOU ARE PLANNING TO BE THERE! Please register by 10 November if possible.

Go to <http://www.trybooking.com/64849> – Canberra Refugee Protest Action to **REGISTER** so we know you are coming or to **BUY BUS TICKETS**.

The bus will leave Melbourne CBD at 10pm Sunday 17 November and return to Melbourne by 11.30pm on Monday 18 November.

Bus Tix: \$60 conc. \$100 full fare \$120 solidarity Refugees & asylum seekers travel free

The Australian Government's institutionalised cruelty to asylum seekers

Currently there seems a lack of political space to argue for the rights of asylum seekers in this country. Both major parties have established policies that at best keep people in limbo and at worst consign them to harsh, intolerable futures.

As a nation we have moved away from deterring asylum seekers from coming to Australia to punishment for any who dares to come.

There are 25,000 people in Australia on Bridging Visas or in Community detention. None have any safe or secure future. The government has said that they will only issue Temporary Visas—this being the second time that the Coalition has issued TPVs. The first version was introduced by the Howard Government in 1999 and was repealed by the Labor Government in 2008. The new TPV is harsher than the original, mainly because it has no pathway to a permanent visa — once granted, it is likely that the best you will ever get in Australia is a TPV. This applies to all asylum seekers arriving by boat.

Legally, holders of this new TPV cannot be granted any permanent protection visa; they will have work rights but there is no access to family reunion. For many individuals who have been working through the morass of legal problems for years and are still on Bridging Visas this is the worst thing that can happen to them—it has all only been worthwhile if they can reunite with their families. We know so many men for whom this is true and our hearts are heavy for them.

The new Government has said they intend to remove the right to appeal initial negative decisions by the Department of Immigration (now called the Department of Immigration and Border Protection). The ability of asylum seekers to appeal to courts and have an independent review of their refugee case would mean, on current figures that about 80% of people would be rejected. Independent review and access to courts provide safeguards against errors in decision-making that could place the lives of asylum seekers at risk if they are returned. Australia's constitution guarantees a role for the courts to determine the lawfulness of decision-making and ensure that anyone subject to a government decision is provided with procedural fairness.

As well, the Government has said they will stop the funding of legal advice to asylum seekers. This scheme (called IAAAS) was introduced to enable asylum seekers fill in applications and appeal any rejections if they wished to. Without this assistance most asylum seekers will not be able to manage the application for protection. It would apply not only to new arrivals but to the 30,000 people currently in Australia who may be accessing the service.

As well this government is continuing the previous government's policy of sending all new arrivals to Manus Island or Nauru with no possibility of ever being settled in Australia. Some families already have family members in Australia so this is extraordinarily cruel.

The pre-election threat to buy fishing boats in Indonesia seems to have quietly died. And the vaunted 'turn the boats back' had been hard to implement with Indonesia reminding Australia that unilateral action does not sit easily within diplomatic realities!

In the meantime a different cohort of people are arriving by boat: many young single women, elderly people, pregnant women, minors. We are not sure what this means. But it surely asks questions about the beyond harsh measures being adopted.



But we can't take in everyone (for people who like figures)

We probably can't but we need to put this statement (often made) into perspective. About 400,000 people come in and out of Australia every year. Our Migration Program this year is set at 190,000 permanent settlers ... Australia's population is 24 million....

Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Program has two components – the onshore protection program and the offshore resettlement program. An annual quota is set for the total intake of these programs; under the present government, the numbers are reduced to 13,750 (from Labor's 20,000).

For some years until a year ago, as part of this program, there were 6000 offshore Refugee visas (resettlement places nearly all of which were referred by UNHCR) and 7750 other refugee and humanitarian visas (split as needed between onshore protection visas—people arriving by boat or air—and offshore Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) visas—family reunion individuals or others having special needs like women at risk). The number of offshore Refugee visas was increased to 12,000 for 2012-13 and the number of other refugee and humanitarian visas increased by just 250 places to 8000.

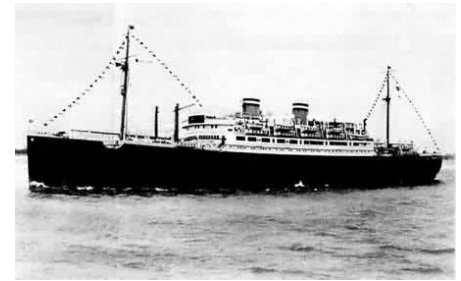
Unlike any other refugee accepting nation, Australia's onshore and offshore programs are numerically linked. This means that every time an onshore applicant is granted a protection visa, a place is deducted from the offshore program. This is where the 'queue' argument is derived from and the linking adds to misconceptions around 'good' and 'bad' refugees, those who wait and those who don't. In recent years the majority of onshore entrants who come without authorisation are from Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Iran, Burma and Iraq – for these people there is no 'queue' to join en-route and no Convention signatory country along the way who could provide sustainable protection.

Since 2008 the onshore program has had one visa category. From 1999 to 2008, there were permanent and temporary protection visas (TPVs) depending on whether a person arrived by plane with a visa or by boat without a visa. TPVs were valid for either three or five years and holders were not entitled to apply for any family members to join them. Some people were granted one TPV after another, having to reapply and facing the possibility of being returned to the place they fled. People's ability to study, find employment and become part of the community was inhibited by the temporary nature of their legal stay in Australia. After 2008, these visa holders were granted Resolution of Status visas, Class CD (Subclass 851)

So how has DIBP (Department of Immigration and Border Protection) regulated the number of onshore protection visas to keep within that cap of 7750 or 8000 places? Up until 2011-12, all indications were that they did this only by reducing the number of SHP visas. However, in 2012-13, we believe DIAC slowed down the issuing of onshore protection visas because they were, for the first time, in danger of exceeding the "other" visa quota with onshore protection visas alone.

While on the subject of numbers, 2.1 million refugees have moved out of Syria into the five surrounding countries: Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq. 13% of the population of Lebanon is now made up of refugees from Syria.

And Australia has 8732 in detention (Iranians 31%, Sri Lankans 14%, Vietnamese 9%, Afghans 8%, Pakistanis 7%) and there are 2739 people in community detention.



<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/stlouis.html>

Can it ever be in the national interest to act contrary to human rights?

On Sunday, June 4, 1939, the German passenger liner S.S. St. Louis hovered close to the shores of Miami Beach with 907 Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany on board. U.S. Coast Guard cutters surrounded the ship to halt attempts by the refugees to reach shore. The ship had been scheduled to land its passengers in Havana, Cuba, but the Nazi propaganda machine had swayed Cuban public opinion and, consequently, President Frederico Bru reneged on his offer of asylum. The crew and refugees on the St. Louis were waiting for a decision by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt on their request for political asylum—their final hope. Their request was ignored, and after attempts to broker an agreement with the Dominican Republic failed, the ship was left with no alternative but to return to Europe. The German captain, more humane than the Americans ashore, brought these refugees to Holland, Belgium, France, and Britain. A year later, the Nazis invaded Holland, Belgium, and France, and nearly half of the St. Louis refugees eventually perished in Nazi gas chambers.

Half a century later, and half a world away, a drama reminiscent of the fated "Voyage of the Damned" played out. Only this time, instead of Jews, the refugees were Afghans; and, instead of Nazis, it was the oppressive Taliban they were fleeing. Instead of American politics, Australian politics controlled. But like those aboard the Voyage of the Damned, these asylum seekers had as their rescuer a principled and humane ship captain. On Sunday, August 26, 2001, Ame Rinnan, the Norwegian captain of the Tampa, responded to a call from Australian Search and Rescue and discovered an Indonesian ferry in distress. The sinking wooden vessel was loaded with nearly 440 asylum seekers attempting to reach Christmas Island, Australia. The captain and his crew rescued the ferry passengers and brought them on board the Tampa, a Norwegian cargo vessel. Recognizing that his ship was in violation of safety standards, and bowing to pressure by the rescued asylum seekers, Captain Rinnan proceeded to nearby Christmas Island. The Tampa's small crew of twenty-seven feared that the rescued passengers would overpower them. Australian officials, who initially granted permission to Captain Rinnan to offload his additional passengers, later changed their minds. Instead, when the vessel reached Australia's territorial seas, the government sent out a naval vessel to turn back the Tampa. The mostly Afghan migrants endured a tense, weeklong standoff in which multiple states, the United Nations and international organizations weighed in. They were finally transported to the island nation of Nauru for refugee claim processing.

The threat by the current government to turn boats back is eerily similar. And the quick 'turn around' of probably about 2000 Tamils and their deportation back to Sri Lanka has overtones of both the stories above.

Mobina, Ali and Mr Froth

When she awoke, she remembered that today would be a bit different from the normal pattern of time dragging slowly, with nothing new to do, nothing new to see. She was used to the daily routine, but hated it. This morning she was excited. She dressed in her special purple dress that she only wore for important occasions. Luckily, her mother worked very hard to make sure that her clothes were spotlessly clean all the time.

Since their living quarters were so small, it did not take the family long to get ready. Excitement mounting, Mobina, her brother Ali and their parents waited for Sr Brigid and Pamela to collect them from the detention centre. They have been in detention for many months and this was an opportunity for them to go out for the day. At last after a number of checks they were outside. Ah! The air smelt sweeter on the other side of the fence. The sun seemed to sparkle a little brighter as well. Mobina and Ali couldn't wait to arrive at their destination.

Finally the car stopped and the family entered the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre where there was a special program for the afternoon. The children couldn't believe what they were seeing. The sound of laughter and the sight of children playing overwhelmed them. Mobina felt nervous. What was she meant to do? She didn't know how to play, what if she made a mistake? Would her mother be cross? Would her father be disappointed in her?

There were lots of grown-ups in the room, some really friendly teachers who came just to help the kids have fun. Mobina stood to one side watching everyone very carefully. She could tell that they wanted her to join in, but she felt too nervous. She noticed a man, dressed in a funny green cap with a special feather on top. He was Mr Froth. He showed everyone how to make very interesting shaped bubbles using some soapy water that then people could chase and even push around. Then he made a special big bubble that went right around a whole child, sometimes with even two or three children inside! Fascinated, Mobina moved a little closer. Mr Froth invited her to join in. She was scared. What would happen to her inside this 'thing' that Mr Froth was making?

She saw that the other children were enjoying the bubble and were not hurt in any way, so she edged closer, hoping to be allowed a turn. Mr Froth saw her and helped her into the circle so that he could make a bubble around her. All of a sudden, she was inside it! Everything looked and felt different. The walls of the bubble looked cool and wet. Everything on the outside of the bubble looked funny, out of shape and odd. She felt a laugh bubbling up inside her. She smiled, she giggled. Once she started to laugh she couldn't stop herself. This was a wonderful feeling. All too soon her bubble burst. She couldn't wait until it was her turn again. Ali had a go as well. Mr Froth gave Ali a special utensil and Ali was able to make wonderful bubbles around



other children. Mr Froth told Ali he was so good that he himself would soon be out of a job. Mobina was very proud of Ali.

All too soon it was time to leave. Mobina begged her mother, "Can we come back again next week?" Some colour had entered her world.

[Dr Froth is a Bubble Artist, Scientist, Educator and Entrepreneur and details are on the web]

A comparison:

Turkey, Iraq, Lebanon & Jordan Have accepted 1 million Syrian refugee children in 12 months.

Australia has deported 23 children to Nauru with hundreds more planned by Abbott Gov.

To be cruel to children is unbelievable.

The Leader of the Opposition
The Hon. Tony Abbott MHR
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
16 August 2013

Eugene Hurley is the Catholic Bishop of Darwin. This is obviously written before the election.

Dear Mr. Abbott,

I have just returned to my office from the Wickham Point and the Blaydin detention centres here in Darwin.

Sadly, I have been involved with detention centres since the creation of the Woomera centre, followed by Baxter and now, over the last six years, with the various and expanding centres here in Darwin.

I experienced once again today, the suffocating frustration of the unnecessary pain we inflict on one another. I celebrated Holy Mass with a large number of Vietnamese families, made up of men, women, children and women waiting to give birth. The celebration was prayerful and wonderful, until the moment of parting.

I was reminded of something a young man said to me during one of my visits to Woomera, all those years ago. I was saying something about freedom.

He replied, "Father, if freedom is all you have known, then you have never known freedom." I sensed the horrible truth of that statement again today.

I was also conscious of that beautiful speech made when the UNHCR accepted the Nobel Prize in 1981. In part it states, "Throughout the history of mankind people have been uprooted against their will. Time and time again, lives and values built from generation to generation have been shattered without warning. But throughout history mankind has also reacted to such upheavals and brought succour to the uprooted. Be it through individual gestures or concerted action and solidarity, those people have been offered help and shelter and a chance to become dignified, free citizens again. Through the ages, the giving of sanctuary had become one of the noblest traditions of human nature. Communities, institutions, cities and nations have generously opened their doors to refugees."

I sit here at my desk with a heavy heart and a deep and abiding sadness, that the leaders of the nation that my father, as an immigrant, taught me to love with a passion, have adopted such a brutal, uncompassionate and immoral stance towards refugees. I imagine he would be embarrassed and saddened by what has occurred.

It occurred to me today that neither the Prime Minister or yourself know the story of any one of these people.

Neither do the great Australian community.

I find that it is quite impossible to dismiss these people with all the mindless, well-crafted slogans, when you actually look into their eyes, hold their babies and feel their grief.

There has been a concerted campaign to demonise these people and keep them isolated from the great Australian public. It has been successful in appealing to the less noble aspects of our nation's soul and that saddens me. I feel no pride in this attitude that leads to such reprehensible policies, on both sides of our political spectrum.

I cringe when people draw my attention to elements of our history like The White Australia Policy and the fact that we didn't even count our Indigenous sisters and brothers until the mid 1900's. I cringe and wish those things were not true. It is hard to imagine that we as a nation could have done those things.

I judge the attitude of our political leaders to refugees and asylum seekers to be in the same shameful category as the above mentioned. In years to come, Australians who love this country will be in disbelief that we as a nation could have been so uncharacteristically cruel for short term political advantage.

It seems that nothing will influence your policy in this matter, other than the political imperative, but I could not sit idly by without feeling complicit in a sad and shameful chapter of this country which I have always believed to be better than that.

Sometime I would love to share with you some of the stories I have had the privilege of being part of over the years. I am sure you would be greatly moved. Sadly, for so many, such a moment will be all too late.

Yours Sincerely,

Bishop E. Hurley.

English classes

We have just begun to organise English classes for people in the 'no advantage' group. We are hoping that this may break down the isolation for a number of people. For a start we aim to teach people in their own homes—maybe with a few people coming together to learn. As time goes on we may be able to find a room where more people could be taught together.

If anyone is in a position to commit to helping we would be glad to hear from you. At this stage we will concentrate on people who live in Broadmeadows, Epping, Lalor, Thomastown and suburbs in the north. We have two coordinators: Phil Steele and Sue Woods. If you would like to volunteer contact Phil on 0419311582 or Sue on 95346366

Date	Boats	People
19th Jul/ 26th Jul	16	~1300
27th Jul/ 2nd Aug	4	362
3rd Aug/ 9th Aug	6	475
10th Aug/ 16th Aug	4	276
17th Aug/ 23rd Aug	3	441
24th Aug/ 30th Aug	6	362
31st Aug/ 6th Sep	3	184
ELECTION		
7th Sept/ 13th Sept	5	481
14th Sept/ 20th Sept	3	306
21st Sept/ 27th Spet	5	205
28th Sept/ Oct 4th	4	240
Oct 5th/ Oct 11th	2	153
Oct 12th/ Oct 18th	2	115
Oct 19th/ Oct 25th		

www.archiearchive.wordpress.com

As can be seen from the table above, the harsh policies have not stopped boats arriving thus far but they have definitely slowed down. However, if the boats stop altogether this will only prove that our treatment of asylum seekers is as bad or worse than the places people are fleeing from.

Ironic?

Australia is spending \$2.3 billion on offshore centres while the UNHCR is expected to deal with crises in Syria, Mali, Afghanistan and elsewhere to assist 25 million people around the globe this year with a budget of \$3.7 billion.

One of the most difficult things for a person in immigration detention to sustain is the seemingly capricious nature of the process. So much depends on chance. Recently I was visiting a man who had been a long time in detention and I met two of his friends – all had been together in Christmas Island when they first arrived on boats. The two friends have had Permanent Visas for between two and three years and are getting on with their lives (not forgetting their friend which is wonderful). The differences between their cases is simply that M. who is still in detention was accused (and eventually found not guilty) of bad behaviour in detention. M. continues to be detained!

Assistance needed

For some years now Rani and a small band of volunteers have set up and managed the garden at the rear of 60 Beaconsfield Pde, Albert Park—the house where woman needing accommodation live.

If anyone could help this great work, and could commit to some time on the second Saturday of each month would you please contact Rani 0405405757 or Mary 0413716983





Help offered

We have been very amazed at the level of support for families.

BASP has been offered a number of different houses that are rent free for families. This has been wonderful for those able to access this help. It also sets up opportunities for communal relationships to develop.

Wonderful day at Macedon

We had a wonderful day at Macedon on the 8th September —fundraising and awareness raising combined. Thanks so much to all who made this a magical day.



Warrnambool Picnic for Compassion

A small group of wonderful people organised this afternoon in the Botanical Gardens in Warrnambool. About 150 people were present and a program of music and talking was great. Brigid spoke and an asylum seeker, Jethro from Nigeria spoke. Jethro lives locally and obviously had made friends in the town.

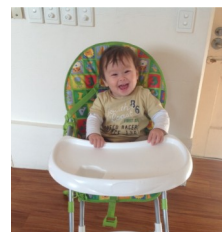
Mousa (pictured) from Chad and recently given a Bridging Visa to live in the community, came from Melbourne with Kubaz an Iraqi man still in detention.

Every one present enjoyed the day and offered solidarity with asylum seekers and refugees.



Our resident BASP baby is growing apace.

He loves drawers, cupboards, buttons, switches, doors and indeed anything that can open, close, turn on or otherwise be manipulated. To us he is a symbol of hope amidst desperation and uncertainty.



Echuca

Five couples from Echuca spent some time with BASP and visited families, came to the detention



centre with us and generally got to know some of our asylum seekers friends.

As a result Dharshini and Radushan had a holiday in Echuca with Barb and Trevor Green.

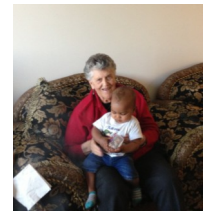
Moving on



It is wonderful to have people BASP has been able to support for an extended time be ready and able to begin independent lives.

Melshw moved out from 60 Beaconsfield Pde a few weeks ago and her confidence is captured in this photo.

Nurta and baby Ayub also moved to their own unit and Jude is visiting in this photo.



Centre for Dialogue

Every year the Centre for Dialogue at LaTrobe University runs a course for young Muslim leaders from Australia and beyond to provide those doing the course opportunities to interact with other faiths, cultures and customs.

One part of this program has always been a visit to BASP and this gives a chance to introduce one or more asylum seekers as well as talk about BASP goals and



work. We usually have some engaging dialogue. It would be great to have more such opportunities to build respect between different groups.

How you can help ...

Advocacy

Write to your local member of Parliament (or call in and see them) and ask for a more humane approach to asylum seekers

Food that is very welcome

Eggs, sugar, rice, flour, salt, two minute noodles, cooking oil, tea and coffee, long life milk, tuna, canned tomatoes, canned fruit, spaghetti or other pasta, chick peas, canned beans

Other goods always in demand

Cleaning materials and dishwashing detergents, toilet paper

Something Special

A voucher for Coles, Big W, Kmart or similar stores allows asylum seekers the independence to buy something they really want and need.

Employment

We are very keen to hear from anyone who has a job opportunity for asylum seekers.

Contact: (03) 9696 2107 or bssc@cyberspace.net.au

Donations

Donations can be made by cheque to Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project, 52 Beaconsfield Pde, Albert Park or directly to **Brigidine Asylum Seekers Trust Account: bsb: 083-004; a/c: 56-924-6603**

THANK YOU

to the many people who have given money, vouchers, household goods, food or other assistance.

We cannot take up all offers from people who are willing to volunteer their services—not because there are not needs but because we do not have enough time to organise the services needed. However, we are trying to get better at this.



We believe that with your help we have helped a lot of individual people seeking protection. We are dismayed that, along with many other groups, we have not been able to achieve a more compassionate government approach in Australia to these very vulnerable folk. To all asylum seekers, along with all in BASP, we pledge that we will be at your side as you seek a more dignified and safer life for yourselves and your families.

We invite all who would like to drop in to our home any time after 5pm in Albert Park (52 Beaconsfield Pde, Albert Park) on Sunday 15th December to have some Christmas cheer and to give us an opportunity to say thanks.

Brigid Arthur

Catherine Kelly