

STRENGTH AND KINDNESS

Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project (BASP)



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

Newsletter 107 September 2022

The Project aims to:

- * provide hospitality and practical support for people seeking asylum
- * 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

Has anything changed for asylum seekers since the election?

Unfortunately we have to say 'very little'. The Biloela family is back in the town that welcomed them. About eight or nine people who have been in long term detention have been released (there is no obvious reason why these particular ones have been chosen over others). The way the current Government talks about asylum seekers is better. However to date there are no substantial changes.

The processing of claims and the inability to get action from the Department seems unchanged.

We believe the Government will ensure TPVs and SHEVs will become Permanent visas but there is no time line for this to happen. However there are many asylum seekers whose lives remain in limbo. This is now a decade long situation for many.

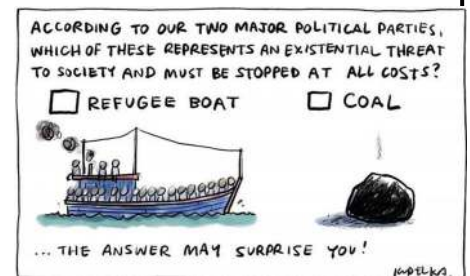
About 100,000 people in the community are asylum seekers. Of these 65,000 are awaiting their application outcome. Of these 19,000 are on TPVs and SHEVs. About 30,000 have been rejected but remain in Australia – usually because they cannot be returned to their country of origin. Slightly more than 2000 have no visas or access to work, Medicare, Centrelink, or social services.

Some of these have been brought to Australia from Nauru or PNG for medical treatment. The Australian Government considers their stay in Australia temporary. A change that is not on the Government's radar, but we believe should be, involves those who arrived in Australian waters after 19 July 2013 and can never resettle in Australia under the current law. As of 31 January 2022, there are **1,175** of these transitory persons in Australia.

From BASP's point of view, the biggest issue that does not appear to be being addressed is income support for all those asylum seekers who have no money because:

- There is no access to any government stream of income such as Centrelink payments for asylum seekers
- their visas do not allow work rights
- they can't work because of trauma related mental and/or physical health issues
- they are single parents with small children
- Insecure housing means they cannot easily apply for jobs
- they have casual work that means they do not get paid if there is insufficient work available, it rains and work not possible and so on.

People seeking asylum have few options. Without community support for rent, utilities, food transport and phone they are destitute.



On the next page we outline other areas for advocacy for rights for asylum seekers.

Donations to the Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project are tax deductible

Release those in closed detention in Australia

*Unless someone poses a serious risk to the Australian community we believe that after initial checks are made they should not be in closed detention. For many years our Project has helped people exiting Immigration Detention and we are absolutely convinced that the health of those detained is seriously affected proportionately with the time detained. **The experience of people working with incarcerated asylum seekers has shown the longer people are held in detention the less likely they are capable of leading any kind of productive life when released.***

Finding a real and lasting solution for the people still stuck in Australia's offshore processing system.

More than nine years after offshore processing re-started, 1,384 people remain in limbo as at 1 April, 2022. A significant number of these have refugee status. 216 people remain offshore in PNG or Nauru. Even when the 450 people from Nauru are re-settled in New Zealand; the 275 in the United States and the approx. 159 settled in Canada due to private sponsorship, it leaves more than 500 people affected by the offshore processing policy left with nowhere to go.

Give some security for those brought to Australia for medical reasons.

1,168 people are in Australia after medical transfers and, while the majority live in the community on short term visas or in community detention, many of these people living on bridging visas have no access to basic income or casework support and are struggling to survive

Provide an income safety net support for people in Australia awaiting the resolution of their visa status

There is also the need for a safety net payment for the 30,000 people awaiting interminably, it seems, while they wait for an initial decision on their application for onshore protection. These people are being kept alive by Charities and Church groups who cannot keep up with requests for rental, utilities and emergency relief payments. Without this support there will be an increasing number of people destitute. Giving work rights to all asylum seekers in the community, no matter what their visa status, is crucial. Many cannot work for a whole variety of reasons – but for those who can engage in work, this right is vital.

Permanent Visas for TPV and SHEV holders and Family Reunion

*With the welcome promise of the abolition of TPV and SHEV visas we suggest the **granting of Permanent Protection Visas** to those affected be done as soon as possible. The granting of Permanent Visas would allow individuals to begin the process of family reunion through Australia's family or humanitarian programs.*

Prolonged family separation has had a profound impact on refugees and their relatives, here and overseas. Some families have now been separated for at least 10 years and this makes for added difficulties when applying for a dependent Child visa or a Partner visa. There are difficulties to be overcome but family reunion is vital for the long term welfare of refugees and their mental health.

Mental health, social and employment support:

We suggest the government consult with relevant non-government organisations (NGOs) and agencies to design a range of services tailored to different groups in the legacy caseload, including mental health and social services, and education, employment, and training assistance programs. A national migrant/refugee employment strategy is required.

Expand the Refugee and Humanitarian Program

There have been progressive cuts to Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Program reducing it to an all-time low. Australia is well placed to make a much more significant contribution to solutions for refugees through resettlement. We know how Australia has benefitted from the life-long contribution of the 900,000 refugees to whom we have given permanent residency over the past 75 years.

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

BASP Discussion Session 2

2pm –3.30 pm

Wednesday, 21st September 2022

At 54 Beaconsfield Pde Albert Park

David Manne: The current state of play for people seeking asylum in Australia

David Manne is a human rights lawyer and Executive Director of Refugee Legal. David has worked tirelessly for the most vulnerable asylum seekers for over twenty years.



There will also be a chance to be updated on BASP activities and challenges

Another calendar item: a fundraiser for BASP.

Second Trivia Night for 2022 will be held on Friday, 7 October

\$30 per person.

Contact: Colette 9598 7329 or colfoxw@gmail.com

Our last trivia night raised over \$5000 and we had a lot of fun!

Trivia night Results and Honour Board

May 2022	Kilbreda Lunch Tablers
October 2021	Mission Impossible
July 2021	Sister Act
October 2020	Brigid and Libby

You can see this is getting serious!

Housing and Emergency Relief

Rental housing is increasingly a challenge for the general community and continues to be an issue for people seeking asylum who have no income, are unable to work and no prospect of a resolution to their circumstances any time soon!



BASP continues to be delighted and humbled by the generosity of others in this regard. The Sisters of Charity have leased a house to BASP (free) for several years and this has housed a number of groups until they became independent. It is currently home to a couple and their 3 daughters, offering stability in their very uncertain lives. The health of both parents is precarious and they have been waiting 9 years for a visa. The Sisters have now transferred the house to the ownership of BASP which is an extraordinary gift.

At around the same time, we received a similar offer from the Little Company of Mary Sisters. This too is an amazing and most welcome gift, immediately utilised to help house 2 of the men released from nine years detention, including 2 years' hotel detention.

Recently we have been contacted by a couple offering a house at low rental for a family in need. We had a perfect and immediate fit of a family of 4 currently in a shared house needing more space as a 5th member is on the way. The timing and opportunity were perfect.

However there are others BASP is unable to house, including people with significant mental health issues or in need of physical assistance where supervision and monitoring on site is required.

Last week we received a call to say a young man, who had been held in detention for 6 years from age 15 and was being released that day. The government pays for 2-4 weeks in a transition hotel pending some housing being found. BASP contacted a couple who have hosted a young man in their home in the past and gave him security and stability until he was able to move into independent living. They were immediately open to the option of helping another released man if needed. He is exploring all possibilities at this point but we are so appreciative of the instant offer to help.

Likewise, a couple in outer Melbourne called to advise the unit/bungalow in their backyard was again available for someone in need. We had just received a referral for a young man, with no work or income, needing accommodation. He had been sleeping in a car and headed there straight away. Once he had a place to stay, he quickly secured some casual work and will be able to pay rent (very low) rather than BASP paying.

In August we housed 169 people and paid the rent of a further 108.

BASP expenditure for housing and emergency relief for July 2022 and August 2022:

Rent for July was \$95,635 and for August \$115,434.

If the cost for August continues, this will be \$1,385,208 for this financial year. This is rent paid to people who are in rental properties but can't pay the rent and also the rent in places taken out in our name. The houses leased by BASP are often given to us at less than market value. BASP pays no rent to houses we own or are gifted to us.

Emergency relief (ER) in July was \$31,695.38 and in August was \$42,569.63

At the rate of August ER expenditure this will be \$510,835.56 for this financial year. We expect this to be higher because of the dire straits many are in.

This is where your donations go!

Jobs and asylum seekers

The news this past week has been dominated by the Jobs Summit, It has been obvious that the world of employment for asylum seekers is markedly different from most of the rest of the population.

At a time when Australia is in desperate need of workers, many skilled, hardworking people are excluded from the labour market, despite wanting to work. It is estimated that at any given time 1 in every 3 people seeking asylum, of which there are around 100,000, in Australia on a bridging visa, will lack the right to work.

Getting a job is an important factor in the welfare of asylum seekers. However, even with the right to work, they face a unique set of barriers:

- Those who have just been in long term detention face very significant challenges. Most want to work immediately but for people who have never lived in the Australian community and who know virtually nothing about the reality of work, money, transport, how to apply for jobs and so on, it is another formidable hill to climb. In fact, it is a miracle that some succeed immediately!
- Probably due to stress and various forms of trauma, most people seeking asylum have significant physical and mental health issues. Sometimes these can be addressed when they become more a part of the community but some are long term and many will never be healed.
- The experience of institutional life in immigration detention with its isolation and despair has a significant impact on each person's ability to cope with ordinary life when they are released. This includes employment.
- The most obvious, although not necessarily the biggest challenge, is limited English proficiency. We have come to believe that so long as an employee knows enough English to be safe in the work place (and not cause any safety problems for others) they will usually learn more functional English on the job than in English classes.
- One of the big problems for asylum seekers is getting affordable housing close to employment. Often places in which they can afford to live (including places that BASP can afford) have limited access to get to work sites. It is a challenge for many to understand Australian workplace culture and systems, including what wages are reasonable. Different people take different lengths of time to acclimatize to being free, look for and maintain a job. Most experience, skills and qualifications that asylum seekers have are not recognized in Australia. Many are told they need experience in this country.
- Probably the biggest barrier BASP faces when assisting asylum seekers find work, is getting around visa requirements. Sometimes this is employers who see the word Bridging Visa and think the person will only be able to work short term. Many of the jobs available are 'contract' and the work is casual and tends to be subject to huge variations in actual employment. Those who have no Bridging visa are looking for cash in hand opportunities and these are even more insecure. Most accept insecure work because it is all they can get.
- For women, the pressures around getting children to and from school and domestic responsibilities usually make working extremely difficult.

Some very generous employers have offered job places and have worked very hard to make it successful for people seeking asylum. Sometimes this has succeeded and sometimes not. However, BASP has been very grateful to those who have been willing to give asylum seekers a go.

Please let us know of opportunities you come across.



Poem – Call No One Stranger

You first saw them by the roadside
standing at the crossroads, waiting...
listening...watching...
They walked in silence, small bundles on their
backs
clutching other bits in their hands.
Fear on the faces of those women, men, and
children.
Frightened by the past, fearful of the future.
Will no one understand their pain?
Will anyone open a door to receive them?
Look again and you will see
familiar people...
mothers and fathers,
sisters and brothers,
grandparents.
Listen and you will hear
familiar sounds...
talking, crying, laughing.
Understand and you will know
the stuff of which your dreams are made...
love and laughter, security and safety,
peace and prosperity...
are their dreams, too.
That which is joy to every human heart
is not alien to theirs.
The peace you long for is that same peace
they strive for.
We stand together as one...
drawing warmth from the same sun and
life from the same earth
And though we travel on different roads
We're part of one God, one Earth, one Universe...
There are no strangers.
Tears shed in compassion...
songs of love and dreams of peace
make us all one.
Recognize your family in the stranger
Open your door, invite them in
to sit at your table
and share your bread.
Call no one stranger
whose roots are kin to your own...
whose lives all spring from the
One Great Fountain of Life!

“Call No One Stranger” by Patricia Mulhall

Patricia Mulhall is a Brigidine Sister who lives in England.

Some years ago while working with the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) in UK and campaigning for refugees and asylum seekers, Patricia Mulhall csb wrote a poem: “Call No-one Stranger”



Patricia’s poem caught the eye of a ‘Together in Hope’ choir in the USA and has been put to music! Recently, The Stranger’ was premiered at the Trondheim International Olavsfest in Norway. Patricia was an invited guest!

Last month, Patricia wrote this:

One cannot but be conscious of the fact that almost 700 desperate migrants crossed the English Channel in 14 small boats a few days' ago, 1 August - the highest number in a single day so far this year. Desperate people taking desperate measures seeking refuge in the UK. This brings the total to more than 17,000 since the start of this year. Despite the harsh policy of the Home Office, it does not seem to deter them. Despite also that Ms Patel has agreed with the East African country, Rwanda, to send those deemed 'illegal' under the new immigration rules, to that country.

Pope Francis calls us to act in solidarity with refugees and migrants. One way we can respond to this call is to raise awareness of their plight, offer hospitality, assist with humanitarian aid, pray earnestly for peace, assist with development so people do not have to leave their homes. The need is great. It calls for our generous response.

Could you write a letter/ send an email to your local MP and/or to the Minister for Immigration, the Minister for Home affairs, the Prime Minister or any other people you would like to influence ... There are a lot of issues which need to be addressed: family reunion is one which should touch everyone's heart.



Family Reunion

Current policies towards refugees and people seeking asylum prolong family separation and exacerbate its negative impacts. Some of these are:

- They target people who attempt to, or have successfully arrived in Australia seeking asylum without a valid visa (usually by boat which was the only way possible). As of May 2021, there were 105,498 people seeking asylum in Australia who do not have access to family reunion pathways in Australia. Of the 4,183 people sent to offshore processing facilities in Nauru and PNG, 2,306 people are either in Australia or remain on Nauru and PNG without access to family reunion pathways.
- They apply to both adults and children, including people who arrive in Australia as unaccompanied minors.
- A key condition of TPVs and SHEVs are that those given these visas have had no way to apply for family reunion
- They have separated families when some members arrived before and some after 19 July 2013 (so that some family members were onshore and others offshore)
- There is no access to family reunion whilst their claim for protection is being assessed and determined. In recent years, there have been growing delays and backlogs at every level of assessment of claims, including in the court system. These delays and backlogs have also prolonged
- The length of time that individuals have been separated from their family members is growing all the time. Prolonged family separation has significant negative impacts on the physical and mental wellbeing of everyone involved.- whose relationships with spouses, parents, children, and siblings overseas have broken down. This can happen for a range of reasons, including because the person living in Australia is unable to provide financially for their family; because family members left behind do not understand. The reasons for prolonged separation and lose trust in their family living in Australia; or because a child left behind at a young age has grown up without a parent.

The main policy impacting family reunion for refugees is Ministerial Direction 80. Direction 80 places applications for family members of people who came by boat at the end of the queue. As there are always new visa applications which are placed in front, in practice this means these people cannot reunite with their family and their visas will never be processed. This is despite paying a significant application fee.

Australia needs a new family reunion visa stream within the Special Humanitarian Program (SHP), which should be made available to all refugees in Australia.

The need for a new structure in Australia to manage the flow of refugees and asylum seekers

Asylum seeking is a humanitarian issue rather than an issue of border security or defence. People seeking asylum must be treated with compassion, as our equals in rights and dignity. We believe there is a need to shift these decision-making responsibilities from the Minister to public officials and make them open, transparent, compellable and reviewable. The whole edifice of the military style 'operation sovereign borders' does not lead to a compassionate and understanding bureaucracy to manage people with many trauma related issues.

Lately there have been debates about migration and employment where the issue of asylum seekers could have been raised but apparently weren't. A small justice oriented group of skilled people whose work it was to ensure the rights of asylum seekers and refugees could have represented them in these debates.



The Discussion session held at BASP on July 13 was attended by about 50 interested people to hear Josh Burns, local MP discuss the government’s position on people seeking asylum. It was a 2 way information session with Josh encouraging people to write letters (better than emails) to their local MPs and relevant ministers.

His office subsequently sent through a copy of his speech to Parliament on July 28, as follows:

Mr BURNS (Mcnamara) (13:39): *If you drive down Beaconsfield Parade in Albert Park, you will see that it is one of the most picturesque parts of Melbourne. It is truly beautiful, driving down Beaconsfield Parade. Along the way, you'll see an incredible convent, which is home to the Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project. I was pleased to visit my old friend Sister Brigid Arthur, who was also recently awarded the Officer of the Order of Australia, which is an outstanding recognition of someone who has literally given her life to help and serve others. Anyone who has come across Sister Brigid knows that she is a person of integrity, great effort and great capacity. She was one of the founders of the asylum seeker project there in Albert Park, along with Sister Catherine Kelly before she passed away.*

I was joined by Libby Saunders, one of the key people in the Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project. I met with many local people who want to see an end to the cruel practices of vulnerable people being used as political footballs in this country. We have to be better than that, and we've already started the important work of reforming many different parts of our humanitarian program. We're going to get people off TPVs and SHEVs and put them into permanent protection because they've deemed to be bona fide asylum seekers. It comes in a long list of reforms that we're going to do to bring humanity back to this important policy area.

Russell Broadbent MP Member for Monash also made a statement to the Parliament – acknowledging BASP and congratulating Brigid on the Queen’s Birthday award.

Quite a large number of Members of Parliament sent letters and messages. We are very pleased that this has brought the issue of asylum seekers to the fore.



Medical care has a lot of problems for asylum seekers

Those who have been off shore and are in Australia for treatment have to get this help through IHMS—a company contracted through the Department of Home Affairs to provide primary and mental health care to those in community detention. From our experience, getting this help is a very very slow process. A woman who has serious health issues after giving birth to a child on Nauru has chosen to go with her family to the US without her health issues addressed. As she said ‘I can’t get help here so if I don’t get it in the US it can’t be any worse’.



For asylum seekers in the community who do not have Medicare, going to the doctor means paying anything from \$85 to over \$100. BASP is also finding that a lot of the medication prescribed by doctors are very expensive. This may well be because of the complex health needs of many of our folk. Those who don’t have Medicare don’t have any money!

The easiest way of getting attention for asylum seekers is presenting at a public hospital. The Victorian Government has been compassionate in granting this service for people and it has been a great boon. However a better option for the whole health system would be granting Medicare to everyone while they are in Australia. We always feel very sorry for people who are embarrassed having to come to us and ask for help.

On the other hand, there are many services that are amazing in their care. One man who said recently “I am just trying to stay alive” got some help from a clinic and was able to say “I now want to live”.



SAVE THE DATE
Saturday 12th November 2022

ART meets ACTIVISM to support REFUGEES
ART AUCTION FUNDRAISER

More than 25 leading artists have donated works for auction to highlight the need to treat refugees and asylum seekers with dignity and compassion. Funds raised will be shared between the Brigidine Asylum Seeker Project (BASP) and Refugee Action Collective Victoria (RAC-Vic).

The 'in person' auction will be held on
Saturday 12th November
Auction at 2pm
(doors open midday)

at the
Meat Market Stables
2 Wreckyn Street, North Melbourne

A website will be created whereby art works will be available to view online

A spokesperson for RAC-Vic Camille McDonald says "*We are extremely grateful for the generous contributions from the arts community and are very excited by the prospect of making a difference to the lives of asylum seekers and refugees*".

Sr Brigid Arthur, Project Co-ordinator for BASP says, "*It's an amazing offer to hold this art auction to help BASP. There are huge needs currently among asylum seekers with many people having no money to pay rent and utilities, so all help is gratefully received.*"

more information coming soon
or contact Camille on 0439 473 046

A new contract between the Australian Government and the Nauruan government

Offshore detention and the processing of applications for protection is one of the black spots in Australia history. There are still about 217 people on Nauru and PNG—not in closed detention but in very precarious and dangerous situations. Since being reintroduced by the Labor government on 19 July 2013, more than 3000 people seeking asylum in Australia by boat have instead been detained offshore and prevented from resettling in Australia. Since 2012 Australia has spent more than \$7 billion on this arrangement with Nauru and PNG. No new asylum seeker arrivals have been sent to Nauru since 2014 but the cost of the regime has remained between \$35 million and \$40 million a month. 977 people have been transferred from these two islands to the US under the controversial United States resettlement deal.

We are therefore very disappointed that the new Labor Government has replaced the firm that ran the island detention regime with a private US prisons company to keep Nauru and potentially resume offshore detention. This would seem to have been an ideal time to put an end to the horrors that have been perpetrated in Nauru and to have shown us that the new government has a new approach to offshore detention.

Meanwhile most of the approximately 300 people transferred from Nauru and PNG for urgent medical treatment are still in Australia. According to our current law, they cannot settle here and will have to find a new country in which to settle.



Cabrini Hub, Brunswick offers a great support to people seeking asylum, who have no Medicare and physical or mental health issues. We confer often about people mutually known to us but due to Covid and the busy-ness of work, we don't often catch up in person. So- it was great to have a visit at BASP from Tracie Cabrie, General Manager- Cabrini Outreach and Nicholas Mueller, Psychologist / Team leader specialist mental health service.



BASP provides **emergency relief** to many people still waiting for a visa determination and with no income support. This has increased further since the State Government Covid funds, administered by Red Cross, ended at the end of June.

BASP cannot meet all the needs of people in this category but we do what we can.

The feedback we receive indicates how much this help means.

“Hello All -Thank you very very much for your help. i am in struggle to pay off of many bills. as a single mother with an unwell elderly mom. i need to take care both mom and my son. it is very challenging situation under my status as an asylum seeker.

i appreciate so much for your understanding and your big help. □□□□ thanks also from my family.”

From a GP who referred a desperate family for help: “I’ve just had a phone consultation with Kazem and he told me that his car is getting fixed today! And that this is all thanks to you. This is just wonderful as now he’s able to get his family to appointments and other places, and the Persian-language weekend school for his older son. I thought Kazem sounded much happier today. Bless you and thank you for helping this family. This has absolutely made my day believe me & it means so much to this family.”

Hi Brigid & Libby,

[A very heart warming note from a great couple, Jan and Michael, supporters of BASP. The reference to Marian is the person who looks for jobs for the asylum seekers who approach BASP for help getting a job].

A young twenty year old man who had been in immigration detention for six years was released just over a week ago.

Meeting him the day after he was released (absolutely unexpectedly) was wonderful—and a bit exhausting.

The company contracted to look after him for a period of two to a maximum of four weeks, housed him in a student type unit in Swanston Street near Melbourne University. When we met him, he was very keen to go on a tram, go to MacDonaldis, walk around the city and just talk. He had the energy and exuberance of most twenty year olds and was very excited to be free. He was also very grateful and polite as he accepted some assistance. He wanted to eat at a Middle eastern café and by sheer chance we found one.



We are still negotiating a place for our young friend to live. And we are hoping for many more to be released.

Just updating you on the situation of H (S's) brother. Thank you for giving us Marian's contact details. We spoke with Marian and she gave us information that we were able to follow up on. H has found work (through his own initiative), in an area of interest to him (mechanical). The proviso was that he provide his own tools. Michael loaded him up with tools, tool box, trolley, etc. As you know Michael has retired and has tools in his workshop that are too good to discard, hence he has held onto them, and is pleased they are going to a good home.

H also expressed interest in learning to play his guitar and I was able to provide him with a few books that should prove very helpful to him. He came over to our home last night. He is a delightful young man and we feel privileged to include him as part of our family.

Kindest regards



Amazing supporters

Helping the Stranger – a Year 12 Endeavour

Brigid, along with 8 year 12 girls from St Columba’s College and Bert (with his trailer) met at the home of a single mother of 4, which needed a major working bee inside and out. Caring for 4 children alone is a big enough challenge but this was compounded by her being in a car accident last year, leaving her in pain, and limiting her energy and mobility. Thus, things can easily get on top of you. The girls with two staff members worked diligently inside and Bert did a sterling job in the yard and street front.

By the time they left, the house looked greatly improved and the mother was delighted.



The girls brought some food for the children to eat when they came in from school. What a lovely thought.

They also brought along all the cleaning materials and things needed to work with maximum efficiency.

Brigid was so impressed with the respect, and care the girls showed—quietly and without any fuss cleaning and tidying for about four hours.

Invaluable Volunteers

Over the years we have mentioned John Meyer often in newsletters as he has collected donated furniture, stored it and then taken it to individuals and families all over Melbourne.



However, all good things come to an end and John has hung up his boots on the furniture removal aspect of this role, while still willing to help with smaller tasks when available. BASP thanks him wholeheartedly for all the kilometres covered and all the heavy lifting he has done in helping people seeking asylum to make a house a home. He has also trained a number of asylum seekers over the years in Aussie work practices as a stepping stone to future employment or as a means of feeling useful when they have no work rights. We wish him a healthy and more relaxed time ahead.

A Toyota van was donated to BASP a year or so ago. It is old, manual and most of us are reluctant to give it a go. Marg Fyfe, a Brigidine, has been the game one to take it out to pick up or deliver items. We have now had 2 other volunteers, Tony and Karen, offering to use it for BASP collections and after their first run, they have named it “The Beast”. We thank them for their ongoing offer which will help in part to cover the work previously done by John.

Bert is another volunteer who has a trailer and is an ingenious handyman. We are lucky to be able to call on his skills too. Patrick is a Mission leader at a secondary college and is able to help some weekends. When asked recently if he could do the lawns at one of our houses, he said he’d be on camp but arranged for a friend to do it.

With volunteers like these, BASP is able to reach and assist many people.

Thanks to all who help us extend the support needed by so many.

The investiture of Brigid’s AO award was held on Sept 6 at Government House. The four guests she was allowed were two of her sisters, Colleen and Clare, Louise Cleary csb. and Libby. It was a beautiful day and much excitement as people from all walks of life received awards. The governor paraphrased Shakespeare, and spoke of how goodness shines on a weary world. Very apt.

A reception and meeting with the governor followed the ceremony. While waiting for this, the young St John’s ambulance officer (pictured) approached us and to our delight it was a young woman who BASP had helped when she fled horror in Iran in 2014. We arranged accommodation for her with Richard and Barbara, community hosts, who supported and housed her for over 3 years. She has since trained for this vital work with St John’s. She has permanent residency and is confident and happy and awaiting citizenship.



We are grateful for any of the following food (or vouchers to buy food and household necessities).



We currently have enough tinned food except for cans of fruit and tomatoes. Tinned soup does not seem to be taken.

The following are still very much appreciated:

1 kg Sugar, cooking oil, salt, pepper, tea, coffee

Herbs and spices

Blocks or individual wrapped cheese. Eggs.

1 litre Long life milk, **honey is a most appreciated food**, noodles, tuna, 1 kg basmati rice, dates, jam (especially any red jam)



Gladwrap, tinfoil, pegs for hanging out washing,

Sweet and Savoury Biscuits, Snacks for school lunches (even when home!),

Spices: coriander, cinnamon, ginger, Shampoo and Conditioner, Shaving Cream and shavers,

Toothpaste and toothbrushes. Soap, deodorants

Garbage bags and bin liners (small and large)

We seemingly never have enough washing powder, dish washing detergents and household cleaning products.

For anyone wishing to make a donation, the Project Bank details are: Brigidine Asylum Seekers Trust
Account: bsb: 083-004; a/c: 56-924-6603; NAB.

Please put your name on the entry and please email us at contact@basp.org.au after making a donation so we can send you a tax deductible receipt. We will send a newsletter but feel free to tell us that you don't want one.



We never cease to be amazed at how lucky we are at BASP to have such generous supporters. And we marvel that so many people we support continue to be courageous and resilient in spite of all they have been through. Recently a young girl in Year 9 at school, rang to say her laptop had broken and she couldn't do her school work. BASP had a couple donated and we tried these out but the school said they were too old. So our young friend (and her mother in the background) rang clearly torn by whether to ask for a laptop or money for the bills. Then the mother spoke clearly in her own language and her daughter said "My mother says school is more important so don't talk about the bills." We were able to help with both but reflected that no family should be having to choose between education and paying for electricity.



We thank you for the help you give BASP. So many schools, parishes, other groups and individuals bring in food and household necessities. We only survive with financial donations and for this ongoing assistance we say thanks on behalf of all those who really are struggling in the morass of our country's chaotic and often unjust visa processing.

Brigid Arthur

Libby Saunders

(BASP Coordinators)