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## To find out more about how you can help ...

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Visit our [website](#) for details of :

### Asylum Seeker News

### Support Documents

These are designed to assist parishes consider how they may support asylum seekers and refugees.

### Newsletters

We produce a bimonthly newsletter. To subscribe, email [adrian.foley@css.org.au](mailto:adrian.foley@css.org.au)

### Forums

We hold several forums for parishes each year to provide opportunities for parishioners to learn what can and is being done by parishes to support asylum seekers. These forums are advertised on our website and in our Newsletter. Please join us at one of these.



December 2016

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## Who are Asylum Seekers?

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An asylum seeker is a person who has fled their own country because of persecution or danger and applied for protection as a refugee.

Like us, they are people with real hopes and fears, with families and with dreams for a better future.

They are not highly funded by our government as some people believe, but if they are fortunate—*may* receive 89% of the Newstart allowance, itself barely enough to live on; many are not allowed to work, or if they are, their uncertain resident status often makes it difficult for them to obtain work.

Australia has international obligations to protect the human rights of all asylum seekers and refugees who arrive in Australia.

For more details see the Australian Human Rights Commission website: <https://www.humanrights.gov.au>.

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## For further Information

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Contact:- Program leader, Adrian Foley, at

[adrian.foley@css.org.au](mailto:adrian.foley@css.org.au)

Visit: <http://www.css.org.au/Asylum-Seekers-Support>  
and look for the 'Welcome' logo



# Asylum Seeker Parish Support Program



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## WELCOME THE ASYLUM SEEKER PARISH SUPPORT PROGRAM VISION STATEMENT

### Our Charter

- To promote the Gospel message of welcome and support for asylum seekers and refugees to Catholic parishes.
- To encourage parishes to reach out to asylum seekers and refugees, in appropriate ways within the capacity of each parish.
- To recognise and celebrate the contributions of parishes providing support for asylum seekers.
- To support parishes, agencies and individuals advocating for more humane asylum seeker policies.

### Our Vision

- Increasing numbers of Catholic parishes reaching out and supporting asylum seekers and refugees in their parishes and in the broader community.
- A humane asylum seeker policy in Australia, where asylum seekers and refugees are welcomed and helped to settle in our communities

## Parishes can Assist by:-

*Asylum seekers and refugees need shelter, gainful employment and friendship.*

One of the greatest needs asylum seekers have is for **accommodation**. Your parish may be able to raise funds to rent a house (or contribute together with other parishes or donors to a family's rent), either in your local area or elsewhere. Alternatively, you may wish to provide support for expenses associated with maintaining accommodation.

**Befriend an asylum seeker family.** Show them friendship, make them feel welcome in your community. Ask them if you can help in any way.

**Always respect the person's/family's privacy and independence.**

**Volunteer.** Many organisations are already doing great work. You and your parish can help **support those who are already helping**. This can include fundraising, donating money or donating food, providing hospitality, English language conversation or teaching English as a second language or using social enterprises such as cleaners and caterers providing work for asylum seekers and raising funds to support asylum seekers.

### Get involved in community support programs

- Join in the daily community meals at the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC)
- Collect food and living essentials items in your parish and donate to ASRC and Brigidine Asylum Seeker Project (BASP)
- Join the BASP Family Support English Conversation Group and visit families

## Parishes can Assist by:-

**Education campaigns** are very important. Why not hold a community dinner to discuss and promote this issue and raise funds to support asylum seekers?

Consider **a banner for your local church, school or grounds**, showing your Parish's support for asylum seekers.

**Set up an asylum seeker and refugee support group within your Parish.** Become advocates for asylum seekers in your Parish; keep your Parish informed on what is happening to asylum seekers in Australia.

**Find out what the Bible and the Church have to say** about supporting asylum seekers.

**Make your voice heard** Write to your local MP. Write letters to newspapers, etc highlighting specific issues that show the injustice that asylum seekers may be facing, as well as to seek a resolution to the problems you raise.

**Invite speakers** to visit your parish or group

**Find out the facts about asylum seekers and refugees** There are many misconceptions about asylum seekers and refugees. See our website for a list of useful links.

**Visit the websites of agencies** that support asylum seekers and refugees, to see what they are doing and how you can help (see our website for a list)

