







## Acknowledgement of country

The ASRC would like to acknowledge the Wurundjeri and Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation as traditional owners and custodians of the land on which the ASRC stands. We acknowledge that the land was never ceded and we pay our respect to them, their customs, their culture, to elders past and present and to their emerging leaders.

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# Welcome from the Chair

As the ASRC entered the 2019-20 financial year, our Board and Leadership Team looked positively and optimistically to the year ahead.

We had finished the previous year in robust financial and operational health, and with the major triumph of the new Medevac legislation being passed, potentially signalling the end of offshore detention. What could possibly disrupt the momentum finally moving our way, and that of people seeking asylum?

Well, 2019-20 didn't quite pan out as expected. Not only was Medevac repealed in December 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic took hold in March, disrupting every aspect of the ASRC's operations. It disproportionately endangered the welfare and health of refugees and people seeking asylum and threatened our very existence as an organisation.

Six months later as I write this, we are not yet out of the woods – but I am proud to report that the ASRC has not just survived, but thrived. Amazingly, we are as strong and as financially robust as we have ever been, and are providing more food, housing, employment, health and legal services than we have ever done before. And, working with the wider sector, our strategic advocacy and mobilisation is more prominent than ever.

How did we get to this position? It would have been easier to scale-down impacted operations and deliver services remotely to try and protect ourselves. However, in an environment of unprecedented need from the people that we serve, we decided this was not consistent with our values and therefore, not an option.

As a Board and management team, we made a strategic choice to double down on our mission, purpose, and values – to achieve success by being constant to our purpose. We adapted, we innovated, we collaborated, and we supported our sector partners.

As we had hoped, our supporters, our donors, our staff and volunteers, and the members we support backed us unwaveringly through adversity and we cannot thank them enough.

The Board continues to hold a positive long-term view of the future and sees great opportunities for the ASRC to grow our impact for the benefit of the people that we serve.

In particular, we are delighted to have employed and onboarded more than 100 people seeking asylum in June as part of the Victorian Government's Working for Victoria initiative. We're also tremendously excited at the prospect of launching our new Dandenong Hub in 2020-21. This is a major growth investment that will enable the ASRC and partners to provide a full range of support services to an under-served community in Melbourne's South-East.

From a governance perspective, we were saddened to lose our Treasurer Suzana Vlahovic, who made a tremendous contribution in her three years at the ASRC. However, we were delighted to transition smoothly with the immediate appointment of Chester Hii. Chester, like Suzana, is a highly experienced and respected Audit Partner from Deloitte Australia.



Strengthening our Board processes further, we created a third Board Subcommittee to support the area of People and Culture, in addition to our existing Finance and Risk Management Subcommittees.

Each subcommittee is chaired by a Board Member and comprises a range of other Board Members, external subject matter specialists (all volunteers, like the Board) and senior ASRC management. They bring great insight and value to the ASRC, and I would like to thank them for their skill and dedication.

2020-21 will be the ASRC's 20th year of operation since being founded by Kon in June 2001. I have no doubt it will be another challenging and exciting year, but quietly hope to myself that it will be less eventful than 2020.

**Mike Sum**  
Chair, ASRC Board

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**“The secret to success  
is constancy to purpose”**

- Benjamin Disraeli  
(19th century British Prime Minister)

# CEO year in review

In every sense 2019-20 was a year of mixed fortunes.

While COVID-19 became the defining event for us all, the first eight months of the year were busier than ever as we began another four years of an Australian Government focussed on ever-more punitive measures for people seeking asylum and refugees. Despite the uncertainty and immense challenges we faced, our incredible movement – made up of individuals, community groups and businesses – was unwavering in their commitment to supporting and advocating for people seeking asylum and backed us every step of the way.

As we entered the new year we continued to fight for and support refugees in detention offshore, achieving the evacuation of almost 200 people to Australia on medical grounds before the Medevac law was cruelly repealed in December 2019. It quickly became clear the Government was not delivering the medical care it agreed to, keeping people locked in make-shift hotel detention centres so we kept the pressure on the Government to take action, through campaigning and submitting formal submissions to Senate inquiries.

The closure of our Dandenong office after significant water damage was a difficult decision to make but one that brought new opportunity. I am pleased to say we completed planning for a new, ground-breaking Integrated Services Hub in Dandenong which will open in 2021 and will help us better meet the critical needs of people living in Melbourne's South-East region.

In March 2020, as the threat of COVID-19 took effect, everything changed. I want to take you on a journey of what it has meant for the ASRC, from the heart and unvarnished. The refugee story I've spent my life encouraging people to empathise with – the grief of family separation, uncertainty for the future, and loss of freedom – suddenly became relatable for everyone. We had hoped this pandemic might finally awaken the heart and conscience of the Australian Government, but to no avail. Instead, it exposed the long-known realisation that we are not really in this together; the community we support was simply left to perish.

When the crisis presented the opportunity to do and be better, we knew not to waste it. Early on, we stated our

commitment to keeping our doors open, and we achieved that. We were brave and fearless, from our volunteers, to our staff, to the Board. Because what was the point of surviving as an organisation if we forsook our mission and values when it mattered most?

I'm proud to say we continued to live true to our purpose. It was daunting at times, knowing there was a risk to our health as essential workers; but we knew that those depending on our services were at greater risk. With nowhere else to turn, they needed us to be their supermarket, pharmacy, local GP, and the roof over their heads. When our Foodbank shelves went empty, we knew so too would their shelves. We were their lifeline in this crisis.

We reorganised our entire physical operations and service delivery model and made an unprecedented investment to help us meet the escalating critical need.

Our Foodbank became a contactless home delivery service to respond to a 200% spike in demand. We fed close to 1,000 people every week.

Faced with a 283% spike in housing demand, we paid rent online for hundreds of people. We provided digital pharmacy vouchers for vital medicines and delivered nappy and myki tops up in advance so families could remain at home. Our face-to-face legal and health clinics became teleclinics that quickly filled and developed wait lists and our social workers crisis-triaged 1,800 people and completed hundreds of welfare checks each month.

We became more determined than ever to help as many people as possible. So, we tripled our budget for frontline services in April, trusting that the community would respond. And it did, which is a credit to the strength of our growing movement who also continued to advocate at record levels to demand the Government consider people seeking asylum in their COVID-19 response measures.

In the face of a challenge that affected everyone in the community, we were overwhelmed by the response to our fundraising appeals. Our 2020 Telethon on World Refugee Day (June 20) surpassed all expectations and the tally of the previous year.

The other side of this story, which I must share, is the challenge of surviving financially as an organisation and keeping our staff safe. By sharing the



burden, making voluntary sacrifices, innovating in our service delivery, and pausing everything non-essential, we survived. No staff were stood down during COVID-19 and we are incredibly proud of this. Our staff have been so brave and selfless and we want you to know we have found a way so far to keep all our people safe, as we all matter at a time like now.

As we enter the final year of our 2018-21 Strategic Plan, we already know we have the ability to change and adapt our service delivery to cope with the unexpected. We know we have a committed and capable workforce, supported so generously by more than 1,200 volunteers and backed by our community of compassion. And we know that until we see a change in the Government policy, we will need to keep fighting and advocating for hundreds of people seeking asylum, onshore and offshore.

We are planning for a future no-one expected a year ago. While the pandemic has made this year more complicated than we could have imagined, we head into the new financial year from a place of stability and strength, ready to begin our most ambitious 3-year strategic plan.

We know that without significant effort and action, people seeking asylum will be the last to recover from this pandemic. Times like these demand a radical approach, one that doesn't merely cover over the cracks of inequality but heals them and builds something better and more enduring in its place. As always, hope will remain our strategy and the belief that a better future is possible for people seeking asylum.

**Kon Karapanagiotidis**  
CEO, OAM

## Our impact in 2019-20



**6,808**

people seeking asylum  
(including 921 new members)  
supported by the ASRC

**82%**  
of members  
had no income

**66%**  
of members  
without  
study rights

**57%**  
of members  
without  
work rights



**56,427**

nights of shelter  
offered to 401 people,  
including children



Members received  
**\$77,307**  
worth of essential  
medications

**146**

temporary  
or permanent  
protection visas  
secured



Supported  
**3,039**  
people presenting at  
the doors of the  
ASRC in crisis



Provided legal aid  
to nearly  
**2,300**  
people seeking asylum who were  
unable to access legal support  
elsewhere

**1,511**

new people  
supported through  
General Access  
Program



Distributed  
**\$1.73 million**  
of fresh food to feed  
families and individuals



Powered by  
the support of:



**6,300**  
regular donors  
(46% increase)



**+88,000**  
donors who made  
a one off gift



**336,499**  
hours of service  
provided by volunteers  
(worth \$13.4 million  
in wages)

**1,024**

people supported  
with material aid



**5,186**  
health  
appointments



**6,949**  
hours of English  
classes offered



**\$1.31 million**  
donated by  
**+12,000**  
donors at the ASRC Telethon  
on World Refugee Day

hours of English  
classes offered

**\$156,722**  
worth of pro bono allied  
health services



**322**

job placements secured by  
the Employment Program  
(14% increase)

**222**

people referred to  
RTOs for subsidised  
VET courses

**106**

people seeking asylum  
employed with the ASRC  
through Working For  
Victoria Initiative  
(6 month contract)

## Political and environmental context

Like many in May 2019, we had anticipated a change in Government and a more compassionate and fair approach to asylum policy. We expected the change would reduce demand on our services and provide people with pathways to independence and a fair process; this expectation was wiped out with the election result.

The reality of the Morrison Government's re-election was the continuation of an asylum policy based on deterrence and punishment and we entered the 2019-20 year with the knowledge we were again facing a hostile political environment.

Immediately it was clear we would need to fight harder and more strategically in 2019-20 to ensure people seeking asylum were treated fairly, not forced further into destitution, their lives and futures in limbo.

Even before COVID-19 hit, the road was challenging and bumpy as we continued to deliver critical services while advocating against further reductions in the rights and access to a safety net for people seeking asylum.

### Repeal of Medevac reverses a hard-fought win

The force with which politics can affect the lives of people seeking asylum became quickly and uncomfortably real early in the year. One of the first priorities of the re-elected Morrison Government was to repeal the Medevac legislation, placing the fate of sick refugees held in offshore processing on Nauru and Papua New Guinea back into the hands of politicians, instead of doctors.

The much-celebrated and hard-fought win that came with the passing of the Medevac law in 2019 was under threat. An increased parliamentary majority for the Government meant it would be easier to reverse the law that had already enabled hundreds of sick refugees to access lifesaving medical treatment in Australia.

Our lobbying efforts, and those of the broader sector, were nothing short of herculean. Together, our cross-sector collaboration and coordination succeeded in mobilising tens of thousands of people and a strong ASRC contingent appeared before the Senate inquiry to oppose the Medivac repeal and ultimately delayed the repeal vote.

Despite these extraordinary efforts, the Medevac law was repealed in December 2019.

Under Medevac legislation, 192 people had been transferred to Australia, including eight people separated from their families during an earlier transfer.

Their fate, and the fate of those transferred to Australia for medical treatment or other reasons *before* the Medevac legislation, was, and remains, uncertain. It became obvious that the Government's intention for this group of around 1,220 people – from Nauru and PNG and defined by the Government as 'transitory persons' – was to keep people in detention facilities, break them through cruelty and encourage them to return to their home country, or attempt to forcibly remove them back to offshore detention.

### Changes to Department cloud transparency

The restructure of the Department of Home Affairs and temporary change in Immigration Minister responsibilities complicated our law reform and policy efforts in 2019-20. The structure of multiple Ministers under one Department made it much less clear who had accountability and decision making authority for different aspects of law and policy.

This new, more-complicated structure meant we needed to make multiple efforts simultaneously rather than directing them at one Minister or decision maker. What remained unchanged was the hardline stance on people who arrived in Australia by boat since 2013.

We continued to speak up in response to various proposed changes to the Migration Act that would have devastating consequences on people seeking asylum both in onshore detention and those living in the community while their claims are processed. These changes included Bills to: prohibit items such as mobile phones in detention facilities; strengthen the character test which would increase the Government's ability to cancel visas; and other punitive laws and policies designed





to negatively affect people seeking asylum and refugees. Between March and June this year alone, we contributed to four Parliamentary inquiries.

### Shrinking safety net, growing demand

Multiple policy decisions continued to have a major impact on people seeking asylum this year. Among the greatest was the continued lack of safety nets available for those living in the community, regardless of how they arrived in Australia. The Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) payment is a small income allowance afforded to people in the initial stages of the refugee determination process and is the only safety net available for those who are looking for work. The Government started tightening eligibility criteria for SRSS support in 2017 leaving thousands of people seeking asylum without an income and no way to provide for themselves and their families.

A lack of safety net, coupled with the uncertainty of temporary protection visa status, causes enormous distress and insecurity for people seeking asylum. The burden on our frontline service delivery teams and across the sector was similarly enormous in 2019-20.

The ASRC is one of the only lifelines for people seeking asylum and we responded by providing food and housing security, access to justice, and basic medical care, a response only possible because of community support. Our push for systemic change and a compassionate asylum policy is in direct response to the people we support, the stories they tell us and the critical need we are unable to fully meet.

### COVID-19 compounds health and financial hardships

In normal times, people seeking asylum are among the most vulnerable in our community; many cannot access Centrelink, Medicare, or other social security benefits that allow them to live independently in the community. This already challenging environment was exacerbated by COVID-19. After March, the pandemic exposed people to even greater risk of destitution and loss.

While the Government acted swiftly to introduce a COVID-19 financial safety net, this did not extend to people seeking asylum and refugees. They were not eligible for JobSeeker or JobKeeper payments or other income support mechanisms available through Centrelink, despite a significant number

of people being gainfully employed across Australia, paying tax, and running successful businesses; that was, until COVID-19 struck.

The result was unprecedented: we saw a threefold increase in requests for assistance overnight. When many other service providers were forced to close, we remained open so our members could continue to access the services and programs that meet their diverse and often complex needs.

While our focus on delivering services didn't waver, the pandemic significantly affected our operating environment.

*More detail on this impact and our response to COVID-19 is on page 10.*



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# Responding to the critical and unmet need

The process of seeking asylum in Australia can be extremely uncertain, complex, and stressful. The challenges are compounded by the prospect of temporary or ongoing unemployment, mental health issues and a lack of income support. The emergence of COVID-19 in March 2020 only added to the crisis, as more people seeking asylum struggled to meet even their most basic day-to-day needs.

Without support from our frontline services, people would have remained at real risk of homelessness, hunger, and health crises as they moved through the refugee determination process.

## A new response to basic needs and housing

We launched the Housing Supports Program (HSP) in September 2019 to bring three aspects together:

- direct payment of rent or crisis accommodation. We provided 56,427 nights of shelter to 229 adults and 172 children.
- Basic Needs Emergency Relief, helping people identify their greatest needs then developing an appropriate support plan, such as paying for utilities or clothing. The plans include education about their rights, and other ways to access direct financial aid.
- material aid for everyday items such as myki transport card, nappies, and other baby items.

We met the basic needs of 1,024 people, with significantly more requesting our help in the last quarter: mass employment losses due to COVID-19 affected many people seeking asylum, who often work in casual or 'gig economy' jobs. The need for crisis housing, or more suitable shelter for those most vulnerable to the health crisis, was at its peak in 2019-20.

By measuring and reporting on the new program, we successfully secured additional funding from the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

As part of the NASAVic Housing Working Group and as a consultation resource for the homelessness and asylum seeker sectors, we continued to provide leadership and education on the issues people seeking asylum face in finding long-term stable housing.

## Health care and a health crisis

Health appointments increased almost 241% this year, an increase that was driven mostly by COVID-19 in the last quarter.

In addition to the financial impacts of the pandemic and continued reduction in SRSS, we saw our members affected by:

- escalating mental health issues
- the cancellation of elective surgeries
- the suspension of some allied health services
- limited GP appointments
- longer waiting times for dental hospital appointments by six to 12 months

Our most vulnerable clients – those in high-risk age brackets or with existing health conditions – were unable to come to us for medical help and the overall complexity of presentations increased.

From March to June 2020, 51% of the 100 people referred to our Health clinic had little or no income and 28% had recently lost access to Medicare.

COVID-19 forced us to refocus on what we could deliver safely, with a volunteer workforce depleted from 78 people to just 10 due to safety restrictions.

The essential clinics and consultations continued mostly through telehealth.

Important advocacy and education activities also continued. These included:

- calling all clients at increased risk, to provide education and advice on COVID-19
- streamlining our intake process to give new members quick access to care and medication

- advising pharmacy clients how to access waivers via email and receive medications via post
- advocating for members to access services at local councils and local health providers

## The growth of food insecurity

The importance of our Community Food Program extends beyond simply providing people with food and groceries; equitable access to culturally appropriate food, alongside opportunities for social connection and education about health choices, can improve their psychosocial and physical health.

In addition to our investment in ensuring people have food security, which is funded by cash donors, we also received \$1.2 million worth of food and groceries (\$100,000 came through the Festive Food Drive in December).

Each week, before COVID-19, we provided on average 972 nutritious meals in our Footscray premises. We also supported 209 households (650 people) with essential food and grocery items through our Foodbank. Two thirds of those accessing Foodbank had no income; by June 2020, this had risen to 91%, and 376 households (953 people) were accessing Foodbank weekly.

To respond to this food insecurity, we transformed the Foodbank service, preparing packs of fresh and non-perishable food and groceries. Between April and June we provided 4,472 packs from the Footscray centre and via a minimal-contact home delivery service. ASRC Catering staff were redeployed to Community Meals Program, preparing and distributing 4,923 takeaway meals for members.



Our now-established Harvest of Hope food garden provided almost \$56,700 of fresh produce for Foodbank and community meals. We also made use of ongoing relationships with the OzHarvest Food Essentials program and other groups and individuals to address demand.

### A cohesive support model

The Client Services Program offers support to vulnerable members with multiple or complex needs. The interactions we have with them, through counselling and casework, are founded on cultural inclusiveness and are also trauma-informed and strengths-based. This ensures we recognise our members' inherent qualities and skills to move through the challenges they face.

Our aim is to help them towards independence and keep them connected to the community. During the year, Client Services supported more than 680 individuals in casework.

The roll-out of the new counselling program, which followed a review that began last financial year, was affected by COVID-19. We experienced a rapid increase in casework clients from what had been a fairly stable number. Demand rose 518% between January and June, as monthly requests for support grew from an average of 224 to 1,386. In response, we changed our model from intensive support to short-term crisis intervention.

At the same time, our valuable volunteer network was reduced by around 80%. To minimise the impact, and to offer continuity of care, we started a pilot of volunteers working from home.

### A critical first-access point

New Presentations is the entry point for people seeking asylum to obtain ASRC support and services. Part of the General Access Program, New Presentations supported 1,511 people this year.

It gave clients who were most vulnerable and in need of support quicker and more tailored access to our services and referrals to external agencies as appropriate. Partnerships with organisations across the sector created a more seamless process.

The program was heavily affected by COVID-19. Some of those asking for our help for the first time had previously been financially independent. They joined the existing numbers of people unable or unauthorised to work.

Excluded from the Government's JobKeeper and JobSeeker, people seeking asylum massively increased their requests for support.

In the last three months of 2019-20, the average number of individuals and families we supported per month rose by a third, from 205 to 320, a trend certain to continue into 2020-21. Crisis accommodation costs rose to \$54,786 – 11 times higher than the previous quarter. Follow-up referrals and activities for newly presenting clients quadrupled to 2,042, at a time when our volunteer numbers temporarily dropped by half.

### Detention support and advocacy continues

We continued our efforts to provide individual advocacy, casework and crisis intervention to people indefinitely detained in offshore processing centres and in onshore detention. Of the 273 people approved under Medevac for urgent medical care in Australia, almost 200 were transferred before the law's repeal in December 2019.

Our advocacy work in 2020 included visits to those people in detention in Melbourne and highlighting the additional risks of COVID-19 to all clients in detention.



**401**

people housed

=

**56,427**

nights of shelter



**5,186**

patient health appointments



**652**

people on average accessed Foodbank each week



**1,511**

new people supported through General Access Program

=

**3,093**

client appointments

# COVID-19 impact and response

This year, COVID-19 brought unexpected and increased challenges that the ASRC has endeavoured to respond to. In March 2020 we saw a sudden rise in the number of people needing help at a time when face-to-face service delivery for existing clients was also severely affected.

The unique circumstances COVID-19 presented required a rethink in our approach to some programs and significant investment in frontline services so we could meet the unprecedented demand for support.

## The emergence of the pandemic

A few weeks into 2020, as the pandemic began to have a significant impact across Australia, our teams saw a sudden increase in the number of people requesting help. People seeking asylum who had previously been able to maintain their independence and had not used our services in many years, began to seek help as they saw their income drop or completely disappear.

For people already receiving our support, who may only have used one or two services earlier in the year, the pandemic also increased their need and the complexity of support required.

When the Federal Government announced its JobSeeker and JobKeeper payments and other income supports through Centrelink, people seeking asylum were entirely absent from this plan.

From March to June, people came to us in unprecedented numbers because they had lost their jobs or were affected by the ongoing cuts to SRSS, which continued to be made through the emerging global health crisis. Large numbers of people saw their debts accumulating at a time when traditional community services or supports were at capacity or had lost their own streams of income. Without an income or any safety net, people were unable to provide their families with the basics like food, healthcare and shelter.

Many expressed concerns to us about the health impact of COVID-19 and, with no access to healthcare, they were exposed to the very worst of this pandemic. This was compounded by the fears the sector held about those in detention facilities, which had become unsafe due to a lack of access to PPE, and the inability for people to follow social distancing

advice because of overcrowding. Detainees experienced even greater isolation as visits were suspended.

## Our role as a critical service

At a time when the demand for our services was exponentially increasing, our operational model was significantly affected by the Government's COVID-19 restrictions.

However, recognition as an 'Essential Service' by the State Government meant we could lawfully honour our commitment to keeping our doors open and maintaining continuity of service to those most vulnerable. Our focus became scaling up our services so we could continue to meet, without any interruption, the diverse and often complex needs of people seeking asylum.

We provided critical and lifesaving services such as food packs, crisis housing, nappies, health support as well as assistance with a wide range of issues including legal representation, mental health, housing, and family violence.

We adjusted some of our internal teams so we could reallocate resources to where they were most needed. Through the generous donations of the public, philanthropy and institutional funding, we were able to make a record investment of more than \$3 million to address the escalating critical and unmet need in the first three months of the pandemic.

We continued our valuable relationship with the DHHS and, with other agencies

across the sector, advocated for continued and increased support systems to be in place. Significant contributions from the Victorian State Government were made to support the ASRC Housing Supports, General Access and Community Food Programs.

Between late March and the end of June 2020 we witnessed significant increases in multiple programs, due primarily to COVID-19.

## Finding new ways to continue our advocacy

Despite the pandemic, our work to mobilise the movement, build advocacy networks and lobby MPs locally and in the halls of parliament in Canberra did not stop, it was just done differently: all of this moved online with the introduction of COVID-19 restrictions.

We realigned our campaign and advocacy goals with a COVID-19 lens. Our priority was ensuring we could still contribute to the national debate, highlight the inadequacies of support for people seeking asylum and refugees during COVID, influence law reform, and mobilise people to take action in the new reality. We continued to brief the media to shine a light on the impacts of punitive Government policy.

On a state and community level, we worked as part of a national coalition on the #NobodyLeftBehind campaign, continuing our focus on meeting people's basic needs and fostering their journey back into social and economic participation.

Program	Weekly average, March 2020 (start of COVID restrictions)	Weekly average, June 2020	% Increase
Foodbank	258 emergency packs	419 emergency packs	62%
Pharmacy waiver	32 people	67 people	109%
Casework and General Access Programs	197 tasks	346 tasks	75%
Housing	175 people	330 people	89%



# Advocating for social change

In the first half of the year, our emphasis was on stopping the repeal of the Medevac legislation and supporting the 'Home to Biloela' campaign. At the start of 2020 the ASRC was preparing to launch an Australia-wide advocacy campaign, months in the planning, as well as the Community Advocacy and Power Program. COVID-19 brought a sharp change to our priorities. With people seeking asylum and refugees some of the worst impacted by COVID-19, the need for systemic change and our advocacy work has never been more important.

For thousands of people seeking asylum, 2020 marked at least eight years of being trapped in an abusive system. Long-term uncertainty, family separation, inconsistent visa conditions, a biased and unfair legal process, and a discriminatory narrative all compounded the challenges they face.

To influence political outcomes and reset media narratives, we worked collaboratively with other sector partners to grow the campaigning capacity of the refugee sector, by:

- supporting grassroots groups
- publishing influential reports
- contributing to parliamentary inquiries
- sending delegations to parliament to lobby on key policies
- mobilising more than 150,000 people to take a political action
- maintaining a regular voice across national, commercial, and independent media.

## Medevac is repealed

Our campaign to oppose the repeal of Medevac dominated the first half of the 2019-20 financial year. We led direct lobbying in parliament and worked with politicians from all parties to try and retain the legislation. Publicly, we helped tens of thousands of advocates engage their local MPs on the issue.

Despite the disappointing outcome, research showed that the campaign had shifted public sentiment and a majority of Australians supported keeping the legislation.

## The 'Home to Bilo' campaign

We fought to bring Priya, Nades, and their girls home to Biloela in Queensland. Our community of hope sent the family a powerful message as we filled our homes, our social media accounts, and the Prime Minister's office with Freedom Birds. Sadly, the family remains on Christmas Island so our fight for their freedom continues into 2020-21.

## The voices of lived experience

Underpinning our advocacy strategy is the commitment that people with lived experience lead the conversation on the issues they face. This year we supported the inception of the powerful Justice for Refugees movement, led by people seeking asylum. We continued our support of a speaker's program in schools, which since launch has given thousands of people the opportunity to hear from advocates with lived experience who are leading the discussion on human rights and refugee issues.

## Detention advocacy

Following the repeal of Medevac, we convened a group of more than 50 individuals and organisations to focus on securing the release of people from immigration detention.

A highlight was seeing human rights heroes Aziz Adam Abdul and Behrouz Boochani achieve freedom. The elevated voices of Shaminda Kanapathi, Mostafa (Moz) Azimitabar, Farhad Bandesh, Farhad Rahmati and others in the mainstream media also bolstered the movement.

We remain determined and hopeful to end the government's indefinite detention regime.

## COVID-19 and #NobodyLeftBehind

The emergence of COVID-19 reinvigorated our advocacy efforts. As part of a national coalition of refugee communities, frontline services, and advocacy organisations, we coordinated a collective response to the most pressing issues. This included leading lobbying efforts at a federal and state level and mobilising thousands of people to contact key members of parliament.



# Protecting human rights

Our lawyers provide full representation for people seeking asylum with complex cases or complex needs at all stages of the refugee determination process. From initial applications to judicial reviews, we help clients living in the community as well in immigration detention. We work to give them a better chance of a fair legal outcome, in line with international human rights and refugee law.

At any given time in 2019-20 we had 390 to 400 active full representation cases – around 10% higher than last year – with a spike in the final quarter.

## High demand for legal services

New requests for legal assistance grew by almost 11% this year to 1,383. Of these requests, we were able to provide legal assistance in 961 cases, and 705 of these were provided with ongoing legal assistance.

Triage remains the first stop for new legal clients. By prioritising people based on need, we can connect them to any legal and non-legal services they need more quickly.

We offered almost 340 appointments at our Wednesday Night Clinic, helping 290 primary applicants at all stages of the determination process. Clients are helped mainly by volunteer lawyers and paralegals under the supervision of an ASRC lawyer.

Now in its fifth year, the specialised Gender Clinic welcomed 87 clients in 204 appointments – a slight decrease on last year due to the increased time spent with each client. This safe service aims to protect people from being returned to situations of gender-based persecution overseas, including due to their fear of family violence or harm due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. The Clinic also protects people experiencing, or at risk of, family violence in Australia.

In the La Trobe University Clinic, senior law students helped 98 people seeking asylum. Working under supervision, the students helped people obtain bridging visas, improve existing visa conditions and renew protection visas.

In April, we moved to a new paperless case management system for client files, which helped us respond more quickly and manage case files more efficiently. As we felt the significant impact of COVID-19, and converted all services to

remote delivery, we were able to ensure that client files were all kept updated and avoid a massive filing backlog.

## Vital partnerships continue to grow

We continued to build valuable relationships to expand the capacity of the legal sector to provide pro bono assistance. These partnerships also increased our reach and capacity to undertake more cases, and more complex cases.

Across the sector, partnerships augmented our advocacy for policy change and law reform – and prevented the enactment of several detrimental proposed laws. We continued to work closely with other community legal centres and legal professional peak bodies to advocate to Government and authorities on the need to improve policies, laws and legal processes for people seeking asylum. We hosted a quarterly Barristers Discussion Group on migration issues for the Victorian Bar and regularly briefed barristers in litigation matters.

## Our important role as advocates

Throughout the year, we made sure the voices of people seeking asylum and the need to protect their human rights were heard by Government, legal authorities and the media. We focused efforts on securing income support, work rights and access to Medicare, each of these being essential to people's survival during the pandemic. We advocated for all people to be granted bridging visas and for the automatic renewal of these to ensure that no one became unlawful during this period. In light of the Australian Government's poor response to managing the risk of COVID-19 in detention centres, including its failure to release people as advised by public health experts, we prepared numerous complaints on behalf of our clients and engaged in public advocacy for the release of immigration detainees.

We also provided submissions to Parliamentary committees and inquiries, to resist proposed negative changes to migration legislation, and on the poor response to COVID-19 for people seeking asylum and others on temporary visas.





The Government's hostility towards people in immigration detention intensified further in 2019-20. The numbers of people detained during the pandemic increased significantly, despite the increased health risks. All visits to detention centres were suspended.

### No positive change in detention

The Government's hostility towards people in immigration detention intensified further in 2019-20. The numbers of people detained during the pandemic increased significantly, despite the increased health risks. All visits to detention centres were suspended. Rather than releasing people to ease the pressure on detention centres' capacity, the Government re-commissioned Christmas Island detention centre and then engaged in a risky strategy of transferring detainees from Australian states with high rates of COVID-19 transmission to those with little or no infections, contrary to state travel restrictions. The Government also proposed new laws that would further encroach on the basic human rights of those detained.

The average period of detention blew out to 564 days, with nearly 100 people across the country now detained for more than five years. These cases are particularly complex, resource-intensive, and require specialised skills, grit and determination.

Many people held in detention are frequently transferred interstate between centres, disrupting their family relationships as well as their access to legal and other services and to support networks. Many also struggle to gain access to adequate medical treatment. We remain deeply concerned at the lack of accountability for the duration of their detention as well as the treatment and conditions that people are subject to,

and the ever-tightening access procedures, even for legal and health service providers.

This year, we have seen a continuation of the trend in increased numbers of protection visa cancellations, leaving more people facing the very real threat of being held in indefinite detention in Australia or returned to situations of persecution in breach of Australia's obligations under the Refugee Convention and other human rights treaties.

### Results from Fast Track Clinics

In 2017, the HRLP assisted 894 people to lodge applications for Temporary Protection Visas, within a very short period of time in order to meet the Government-imposed deadline of 1 October 2017.

Of the 388 people we have contacted so far, some 136 (35%) have since been granted either three or five year protection visas, and are now safe from being returned to their home countries for those periods. We continue to fight for the rights of those still stuck in the protracted and unfair Fast Track system.

The Fast Track Clinics involved a massive and innovative effort by our lawyers, volunteers and partner firms, who worked weekends, nights and days in our legal clinics to ensure that every person who sought our help was able to apply by the 1 October deadline. We would like to acknowledge and thank every person and partner who contributed to this outstanding result and we look forward to more visas being granted to this cohort in the future.



# 1,383

new requests for legal assistance (up 11%)



# 961

legal assistance requests supported



# 136

temporary visas granted since 2017 via Fast Track legal clinic

## Litigation targets systemic issues

As a litigation practice, we acted in 32 matters in the Federal Circuit Court and the Federal Court. They covered a wide range of systemic issues and many had legal significance, including:

- different aspects of the Fast Track application process, such as limitations on submitting 'new information'
- the ongoing coronial investigation into a death in immigration detention
- Freedom of Information access to Serco manuals for the treatment of people in detention centres, previously withheld on grounds of commercial confidentiality
- a case where the Court found that the Immigration Assessment Authority's decision concerning our client was infected by apprehended bias due to the Department providing the IAA with irrelevant prejudicial information about our client
- clarifying the lawful application of the 'internal relocation' test, including for women victims of domestic violence and children
- the cancellation of people's visas when they were found to be owed protection

## Significant legal cases of 2019-20

Numerous cases this year demonstrate how drawn-out and resource-intensive the process is for people seeking asylum. We achieved success in several longstanding and difficult cases involving people who arrived by boat between 2010 and 2012. Not surprisingly, after years in legal limbo, all were suffering from significant mental health issues. This is where our holistic model of assistance really shines: through persistence and by combining our legal expertise with housing, health, and casework services, we were able to achieve positive outcomes.

A client from Afghanistan, who arrived back in 2010, was finally granted a temporary protection visa. Despite this 'win', his visa only lasts for five years, when he will likely need to re-apply. Sadly, he is still not permitted to sponsor his wife and children – who he hasn't seen since his arrival – and his eight years of employment, working on a bridging visa in a regional area, will not count towards the permanent visa pathway.

A client from Pakistan secured a temporary protection visa, eight years after arriving by boat. Tragic family circumstances and a protracted process affected him severely. For the past two to three years he was homeless, so missed several Department interview appointments. He was also the victim of a violent crime but was too afraid to report it due to his insecure legal status. Eventually we tracked him down and convinced the Department to give him another interview chance. Working closely with our humanitarian services team, we supported him through the process to secure protection as a refugee.

After five years in detention, and almost 15 years after applying for protection,

another client was granted a bridging visa. Despite having two children born in Australia, one of whom is a citizen, little had changed legally during his detention; the catalyst was a senior lawyer digging deep into his case history, which uncovered a flaw in the Department's reasons for refusing him a bridging visa.

In the Federal Court, many cases this year examined the lawfulness of the Minister's refusal or cancellation of visas where Australia is obliged to provide protection. In one significant win, the court ruled against the Minister's argument that our client, who was owed protection as a refugee, should still be refused a visa. The alternative was a forced return to the country where he faces persecution or indefinite immigration detention in Australia.

We also achieved several significant wins at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) this year. A Rohingya family had difficulties disproving to the Department that they held another nationality they could rely upon. The Tribunal accepted the client's evidence and our legal submissions at both primary and review stages, resulting

in them securing protection visas as refugees.

In another successful review application at the AAT, we secured the release from detention of a client from Bangladesh in circumstances where very few Bangladeshi clients are successful. He was granted a five-year protection visa after being detained for seven years since he arrived in 2012.

We helped one of our female clients avoid being subject to a particularly difficult law for those the Department believes may hold multiple nationalities. We argued that our client was not a national of either of her purported nationalities and was actually stateless. Had we been unsuccessful, our client would have required Ministerial intervention for her case to continue; instead, she was granted a protection visa.

A significant number of Sri Lankan Tamil clients were granted SHEV visas on grounds of the risk of gender-based persecution. While Sri Lankan cases have generally become increasingly difficult to win in recent years, we have continued to have good success rates for our female Sri Lankan clients.





## Finally, a home for Khadija

Khadija arrived in Australia, alone and an older woman, eight years ago. Her story is testament to her courage and determination and highlights the way our holistic model supports members' needs.

With our help, she applied for a protection visa. Eighteen months later, the Department refused her application. We helped her apply to the Refugee Review Tribunal but two more years led to another refusal. After another two-year delay, she was successful at the Federal Circuit Court and referred back to the Tribunal, where she gave evidence. But the Member left the Tribunal before deciding her case and 12 months passed before a new hearing.

Throughout this time, Khadija's physical and mental health had been deteriorating. The ASRC in Footscray provided almost daily companionship, food, and other services. Over many years, she received help from the housing and casework teams,

the volunteer psychologist, and counsellors. In 2019 she became wholly economically dependent on the ASRC when she was cut off from SRSS. This enormous pressure caused a further decline in her health.

One Friday afternoon, about eight weeks before her Tribunal appointment, Khadija fell and broke her foot. For around 12 hours she lay, unable to move, and too worried about the cost to call for an ambulance. She phoned us on the Monday morning, and we took her to hospital. Right at that time, her low rent apartment became unavailable so she became homeless. Her Medicare card also expired, and we worked urgently so she could receive the treatment and rehabilitation she needed.

Much of her case preparation was done by her hospital bed. We learned that hospital was planning to discharge her just two days before her Tribunal date. Our advocacy prevented her from being discharged into homelessness, in a wheelchair and in need of basic daily care. The hospital agreed to extend her

discharge until the day after the hearing.

The hearing was not completed within one day, so the Tribunal carried it over to the following week. Our legal and casework teams intervened again to delay Khadija's discharge until after her second hearing.

After the Tribunal ruled in her favour, she secured a few days' emergency accommodation, then her SRSS application was finally approved and she found stable housing. It took the Department a further five months, until March 2020, to grant her a permanent protection visa.

Khadija came into the ASRC to be greeted and congratulated by the four lawyers who had worked on her case at different stages, three counsellors, and a psychologist. Teams right across the ASRC shared in her joy and relief. She stated: "ASRC has been my true home for eight years. I have had no other home. This has been my home. There is no way that I could have survived this without the ASRC".



# Empowering people through employment and education

The ASRC's Education and Employment Programs have the shared goal of empowering people seeking asylum and increasing their potential to secure meaningful, long-term jobs and independence. People seeking asylum who are unemployed or under-employed are one of the few in Australia who are denied income support while looking for work. Towards the end of 2019-20, education and retraining became an important option due to growing unemployment.

## Creating stronger pathways to employment

The Employment Program helps people seeking asylum overcome the unique challenges they face as job-seekers, so they can become skilled, independent employees and progress their careers.

Through our strong partnerships with more than 110 employers, we helped people secure 322 jobs in 2019-20. Almost one in three were full-time roles and 40% were in the applicants' preferred field or chosen career path.

Long-term success and sustainability are key measures for the program. Full-time ongoing work brings security and stability, allowing people to support themselves and their families, while exercising self-agency.

Pathways to Employment (PTE), which includes English for Work classes, offers a unique combination of training, work experience, and support for people with minimal or low English levels. In 2019-20 PTE advisors helped 72 participants with topics such as searching and applying for jobs, networking, and workplace culture.

## New trial aims to boost employability

With funding from the DHHS, we ran a trial in the Brimbank area with a Victorian employment service provider, WCIG, to assist members facing complex barriers to employment, including risk of homelessness.

In partnership with the City of Greater Dandenong we also trialled the Employment Readiness Scale, which objectively identifies an individual's strengths and barriers. The results allowed us to develop tailored action plans that would increase the employability of participants.

## The value of professional mentoring

The Mentoring Program connects members with a professional background to mentors in their field or industry. This year, 52 members identified mentoring opportunities as a valuable support to navigate career aspirations and we were able to match 28 of them with a professional from their industry. We saw the positive impact of the program late in the year, when three health professionals were employed by DHHS to support the response to COVID-19.

## COVID-19 and Working for Victoria

Our Employment Program was significantly affected by COVID-19. From an average of around 400 participants each year, in 2019-20 numbers doubled to more than 800. Significantly, around 229 people lost work in the last quarter and 70 people were returning after previously becoming independent. The number of employer partners decreased and most placements were cancelled, including 19 due to start in April alone.

At the same time, the State Government's Working for Victoria initiative allowed us to:

- directly employ more than 106 people seeking asylum in six-month roles across the ASRC
- increase job placements by 18%

This initiative also addressed a key goal in our Strategic Plan: placing more people with lived experience at the heart of our operations and service delivery.

A survey of the new recruits showed that 27% of the 77 respondents had previously undertaken an ASVET course, showing its positive influence on the futures of people seeking asylum and refugees on temporary protection visas.

Through the ASVET program, which we manage on behalf of the Victorian Government, we provide advice and referrals so eligible people can study with Registered Training Organisations (RTOs).

This year, we saw a drop in referrals and reduction in education appointments due to the pandemic and the need for people to secure paid work (over study).

## Research for better outcomes

In February 2020, we conducted research into the success factors and barriers to education and training that affect employment opportunities, two years post-referral. Our response to the findings included:

- a childcare pilot with Yarraville Community Centre to address the gender imbalance in employment outcomes
- a partnership with the Victorian Trades Hall Council to increase uptake of paid traineeships or apprenticeships

## Opportunities to develop soft skills

The Empowerment Pathways Program provides people with the opportunity to engage socially, make new connections and immerse themselves in their new community through various social activities and workshops. The program delivered ten social outings in the first eight months of the year to venues including Clip n Climb Williamstown, Imax Cinema, Science Works, Werribee Open Range Zoo, the MCG for an AFL match, and the Melbourne Aquarium. Over 300 members and their families were engaged in these activities and an additional 489 complimentary tickets to other arts and cultural events were distributed. Unfortunately from March 2020, all group based activities had to be put on hold due to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, placing people at greater risk of social isolation and loneliness.



## Abdul\* takes the next step

One man who has benefitted first-hand from the Employment Program is Abdul.

When he came to the ASRC, he needed help to find a 'survival job' - anything that would give him an income to support his family. With his Bridging Visa A, he had searched unsuccessfully for roles in his previous career.

As part of the employment preparation activities, he attended a session about an entry level role in the services industry. We referred him to our ASRC Social Enterprises team and he was hired.

While working in the social enterprise, he engaged with our post-placement support services and joined the ASRC's Mentoring Program - opportunities he describes as "very helpful to me. That helped me to be open to opportunities related to my experience directly and indirectly."

What was most helpful, Abdul said, was "getting support to write a CV and cover letter". He also learned ways to search for jobs and the skills needed in interviews. In particular, he reported that learning about the cultural expectations of interviews gave him the confidence and skills to perform well in future interviews.

Six months into his work with the Social Enterprise, Abdul began to apply for jobs in his field of interest. Early in 2020, one of the many strong relationships we have with employers in Victoria had a positive result: a role opened up that was suited to his skills and experience. We immediately referred him for the role. After going through the recruitment process that only a few months earlier had been new and overwhelming, he was hired, and remains employed there on a full-time basis.


For Abdul, this has been life-changing.

"Getting a job in Australia has the biggest impact on my life," he said. "I feel part of the Australian workforce in addition to being part of the society. The feeling of supporting myself and my family has both material and psychological impact."

He is keen to encourage others to take part in the programs that helped him.

"The training and support I get from ASRC helped me greatly. I advise my friends to follow through the training and support programs that are available."

\* not his real name/photo



"Getting a job in Australia has the biggest impact on my life. I feel part of the Australian workforce in addition to being part of the society. The feeling of supporting myself and my family has both material and psychological impact."



# Impact through social enterprises

Our two long-running social enterprises create meaningful opportunities and employment pathways for people seeking asylum. In supportive and professional environments, participants gain direct experience of the Australian workplace, with training that improves their longer-term employability.

Any surplus revenue generated from these two programs supports their future sustainability.

The revenue of both enterprises was affected by COVID-19 restrictions from March 2020. Cancellations and Government restrictions forced us to look for new ways to provide financial security for our staff, while supporting community health and wellbeing.

## ASRC Cleaning

ASRC Cleaning continued its strong pattern of growth, providing 28,450 hours of paid employment – up 39% on last year. Our workforce more than doubled to 65 members to meet this demand, despite the impact of COVID-19. From March to June, COVID-19 concerns and Government restrictions led dozens of customers to suspend or cancel their cleaning services. This resulted in a 19% decrease in monthly revenue in the last quarter; at the same time, 72 domestic and three commercial customers offered to make voluntary payments without receiving a service. This ensured their cleaners maintained a steady income at a very uncertain time.

Highlights included:

- securing 1,139 hours of local employment through our pilot partnership with Banyule City Council, part of our new place-based pathways with social enterprises and local government
- expanding our two largest commercial contracts to provide employment for seven individuals
- launching a new touchpoint cleaning service in May, in direct response to the pandemic
- launching 'Core Skills for Work' – a framework to deliver targeted training and support to participants, while exposing them to a range of employment and career pathways

[www.cleaning.asrc.org.au](http://www.cleaning.asrc.org.au)

## ASRC Catering

After a solid start to the 2019-20 year, ASRC Catering was severely hit by the cancellation of 85 events and the closure of the catering operation at the end of March. Staff were immediately deployed to the ASRC's Community Food Program, to ensure people seeking asylum with no income support could still access nutritious food. More than 4,400 free takeaway meals were prepared by the end of June, replacing the community lunches for up to 1,000 people each week in Footscray.

A new service of vegetarian heat-at-home meals launched in May 2020, furthering our efforts to retain staff and to counteract the impact of COVID-19 restrictions. Each purchased meal funds one care meal for a person seeking asylum, and we will continue this service alongside event catering.

New Head Chef and Mentor Chef appointments have created a workplace that is truly industry-standard, closely reflecting what participants will go on to experience elsewhere.

[www.catering.asrc.org.au](http://www.catering.asrc.org.au)



# 104

people employed  
in social enterprises



# \$1.74 million

combined revenue to reinvest  
into the employment of people  
seeking asylum



# 44,846

combined hours of  
employment provided



# 11,467

domestic and  
commercial  
cleaning jobs



# Building a movement

The ASRC plays an integral role in developing effective social change, working with a diverse range of sector partners to change public opinion across broad segments of society. We do this through deep public engagement that offers our movement the chance to take political and financial action.

## Building our community

In 2019-20 the ASRC's online community of compassionate supporters and advocates grew to more than 350,000 people. Together, they are united in their solidarity with refugees and commitment to creating a fairer, more inclusive and just Australia for people seeking asylum.

The ASRC takes a whole-of-society approach to advocating for the rights of people seeking asylum. We mobilised our ever-growing community around major campaigns, both online and at the grassroots level, which saw more than 150,000 people take an action to achieve social change. Key campaigns included the #NobodyLeftBehind and the Medevac Repeal, working in collaboration with sector partners and community groups.

## Raising awareness: storytelling hits the streets

We took an important message of hope and awareness through the streets of Melbourne and to a national audience via Channel Ten's *The Project* from September to December 2019. With support from the Yarra Trams Community Partnerships Program, an ASRC-branded tram carried our powerful campaign, 'The Story Beside You', to the public. Through emotive digital storytelling and this moving billboard, 'The Story Beside You' invited the public to discover an alternative story of people seeking asylum and to sign a pledge demonstrating their welcome of refugees.

## Right Track movement and Breakthrough Conversations

We continued to resource the Right Track movement, supporting grassroots groups around the country that focus on refugee justice.

We also launched Breakthrough Conversations, a ground-breaking project founded on research that trains people in how to change the hearts and minds of those who are conflicted about asylum policy. At workshops across Australia 205 people completed the training and

we will continue to expand the training to business organisations and community groups.

## A movement powered by people

As an organisation that is independent of Federal Government funding, donations from the community make much of our work possible. A donation is also a powerful form of activism – symbolic of people's values, a protest against poor policy and an often-public display of their appetite for social change. In 2019-20, more than 55,000 people made a donation to the ASRC, of which 16,600 gave for the first time. More than 12,000 people donated to the ASRC Telethon on World Refugee Day, raising \$1.31 million in one day.

## Through fundraising, we build community

The community behind the ASRC's work is diverse, passionate and adept at finding creative ways to support people seeking asylum. In 2019-20, Run 4 Refugees extended its reach, with runners, walkers and joggers joining Team ASRC in events in six capital cities plus regional Victoria. Birthday celebrations that support the ASRC also grew, with more than 4,000 people making a donation to the ASRC in lieu of a gift to their loved ones.

Despite restrictions putting space between our community fundraisers and their friends, our supporters did their best to keep connected. Through events, personal challenges, morning teas and sales, more than 300 people raised funds for the ASRC, engaging more than 2,300 of their supporters in our cause along the way.

This support was never more visible than during Feast for Freedom where fundraisers host a Feast, cooking recipes gifted by refugees. Held annually in March, this year's feast saw 917 hosts from across Australia register to hold a Feast for friends and family. While the campaign came to an untimely halt due

to COVID-19 restrictions, home-based Feast hosts kept to their commitment, some cooking their dishes and delivering them (safely) to guests who couldn't make it on the day.



# 150,000

people took a political action



# 16,600

people made their first donation in support of people seeking asylum



# 12,000

people donated to the ASRC Telethon



# 3,317

people donated or took part in Feast for Freedom

# Partnering with the community to power change

The challenges faced by people seeking asylum require an all of community approach to build systemic change. Alongside individuals and groups, businesses partner with us to bring about real, long-term change through philanthropy, social procurement, strategic investment and by donating their time and expertise and by being bold advocates on social issues.

## Multi-layered partnerships

When working with our strategic partners, we increase our impact when we involve their staff, customers and clients across many organisational layers. This helps us reach new audiences, build organisational capacity, raise funds and generate in-kind and pro bono support. We are truly grateful to the hundreds of partners who support our work.

A proud example of a longstanding and deep partnership is with Aesop and the Aesop Foundation. This partnership focuses on driving long-term change, while delivering on the most immediate needs of people seeking asylum. Aesop's commitment to amplify the voices of those who may not always have a platform is helping to ensure people seeking asylum remain at the very centre of refugee discourse through our Community Advocacy and Power Program (CAPP). Aesop's partnership

in this program builds capacity for our work with people with lived experience through storytelling, equipping them with the skills to speak publicly, engage media and build influence through campaigning and organising. We know that people seeking asylum are the experts in their own lives, and Aesop's commitment to CAPP will help create future generations of advocates for change.

Like many of our partners, Aesop's staff are central to a thriving partnership. They are and are deeply involved in volunteering opportunities across our Foodbank, Community Meals Kitchen and Harvest of Hope, while also developing their own capacity for philanthropy through workplace giving, which supports the sustainability of the ASRC's work. Coupled with Aesop's generous in-kind support, this partnership delivers sustainable, long-term impact for people seeking asylum.

When working with our strategic partners, we increase our impact when we seek to involve staff, customers and clients, partnering across many organisational layers.

## Partnerships driving change through opportunity

An important part of our work is developing independence and agency in people seeking asylum so they can thrive in the community. Organisations such as John Holland, Metro Trains and Yarra Trams partner with us to deliver impact through employment pathways, providing people with job placements that help them progress their careers in Australia. Our partnership with the Victorian Trades Hall furthered our capacity to provide employment pathways for people in 2019-20, delivering 106 positions through the Working for Victoria Initiative.

The Western Program Alliance/Level Crossing Removal Project is the largest partner to ASRC Cleaning's commercial services, providing sustainable employment to many people in what is often their first position in the Australian job market. More recently, this partnership has extended into roles within their offices, further embedding the impact of our work and building new opportunities and career pathways for people seeking asylum.



# Building capacity through fundraising and philanthropy

As an organisation proudly independent of Federal Government funding, our work is powered by a community of compassionate and committed individuals and organisations who share our vision for a more welcoming and just Australia. Each contribution makes our service delivery and advocacy work possible, ensuring we can respond to critical and unmet need, build a platform for change, and support people to not only survive but thrive in the community.

## Maintaining a mix of fundraising activities

This year we fully realised the return on our previous strategic investment in fundraising and organisation-wide marketing. The ASRC's mix of fundraising activities raised \$16.3 million (excluding grants), up from \$11.7 million in 2018-19. Thanks to the generosity and commitment of ASRC supporters, we saw growth in all key areas of fundraising activity, despite a difficult environment due to COVID-19. Overall income from fundraising, marketing and philanthropic funding reached a record \$20.8 million in 2019-20.

## The importance of individual giving

Individual gifts support the areas of greatest need within the organisation. In 2019-20, more than 55,000 cash donations were made to an ASRC appeal or as a one-off or regular gift. We welcomed around 12,000 new people into our donor community, with their first donation to support our work. This included a unique group of donors who have chosen to leave a gift to the ASRC in their Will through our "Forever Free. Always Welcome" program.

A Will bequest is one way to support our ongoing work and critical response activities; regular donors are also essential to our future. Their commitment allows us to plan how best to meet peoples' individual and collective needs, based on our four strategic goals. In 2019-20, just over 6,300 people made a monthly gift, up from 4,310 in 2018-19.

## Events across our community

On 20 June 2020, a powerful group of people with lived experience, our media and community partners, a host of influential Australians and more than 12,000 generous people took part in the ASRC Telethon on World Refugee Day. Despite the pandemic limiting our live celebrations, our community rallied online and at home, raising more than \$1.31 million to support people seeking asylum and refugees.

The very foundations of the ASRC are built on the generosity of the public, and the events and activities hosted by those in our movement are a cornerstone of our fundraising. Through events we organised – such as the Run for Refugees and Feast for Freedom – as well as activities led by individuals and groups across Australia, our community fundraisers raised just over \$1 million in 2019-20.

## Growth in our philanthropic work

We took a coordinated approach to building philanthropic relationships with individuals, families, and private ancillary funds during the year. As this area of our work continues to grow, it is bringing the philanthropic ambitions of our community to life. Through sound management and effective communication about the impact and outcomes, the portfolio grew by more than \$1 million, including our COVID-19 Emergency Appeal.

## A long-term view to partnerships

Across the year, we secured more than \$7.5 million in grants, in collaboration and partnership with a diverse range

of funders. These included a number of multi-year partnerships, which allow us to take a long-term view of our work practices. At the same time, we distributed around \$4.4 million of grant funding to support all core service delivery and advocacy programs. The ASRC is grateful for the flexibility shown by our more than 130 funding partners when we changed our focus in response to the pandemic.

## Sustainable fundraising

Our investment in fundraising remained relatively static on 2018-19 figures: the total cost of fundraising as a percentage of fundraising income (excluding grants) was 15%. This reflects a higher return than last year, as every \$1 we invested in fundraising generated a return of almost \$7, while maintaining a strategic and sustainable level of investment to meet the future needs of the organisation.

## A year like no other

The ASRC realised a surplus of \$4.6 million in 2019-20, largely due to the community's incredibly generous response to our COVID-19 Emergency Appeal in March/April. More than 14,000 people donated \$3.3 million – a record for an emergency appeal. We have a long-term commitment to those most vulnerable to the impacts of the pandemic and pledged at least \$3 million to areas of greatest need. This doubles the existing investment across 2020-21.

The ASRC is committed to upholding transparency and our obligations under the Fundraising Institute Australia Code of Conduct. As this report reflects our work to June 2020, much of the reporting on this investment will be in our 2020-21 annual report and in ongoing communication to donors.



# Backed by an army of volunteers

Every program across the ASRC felt the benefit and commitment of our volunteers in 2019-20. The value we place on them is enormous and we are grateful for the work they do, which is so critical to our ability to deliver services. Numbers remained almost unchanged this year at 1,152. These volunteers contributed almost 336,500 hours of their time to ongoing outreach and support for thousands of people seeking asylum and refugees.

Interest in volunteering remained high in 2019-20. We had 583 new volunteers fill 132 separate roles – an incredible number that we achieved through four regular rounds of recruitment. We also ran targeted recruitment for specialist roles and, where possible, redeployed volunteers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In March, we were proud to see one of our longest-standing volunteers, Sister Rita Malavisi, named Volunteer of the Year by the Fundraising Institute Australia. Sister Rita provided 17 years of service to the ASRC before moving overseas in 2019 to continue her advocacy work. She was a committed Foodbank volunteer and an active fundraiser as one of the “Nuns on the Run” in the ASRC’s Run for Refugees each year taking part in the Melbourne Marathon. We thank her and congratulate her for this award.

Also in March, COVID-19 had a profound and immediate effect on our program. Our Volunteer Engagement team responded quickly to minimise the impact on our volunteers and the work they do.

Our response included:

- changing daily face-to-face briefings to weekly video sessions with the CEO and Volunteer Engagement Manager

- moving approx. 250 volunteers to remote working and completing appropriate personal and digital safety checks
- expanding our weekly Volunteer Bulletin with more news, self-care and education ideas, and a new weekly update video
- adding a COVID-Safe module to our online learning platform

This year’s National Volunteer Week in May moved entirely online due to COVID-19. Still, we celebrated our volunteers through multiple online events, and phoned all those who reached a service milestone. Each day during the week we also published articles online about our volunteers and the amazing work they do.

During the year we had to place around 500 volunteers on temporary leave but look forward to welcoming them back when it is safe to do so.



## 1,152

volunteers  
(approx 200 FTE roles)



## 40

member volunteers



## 336,499

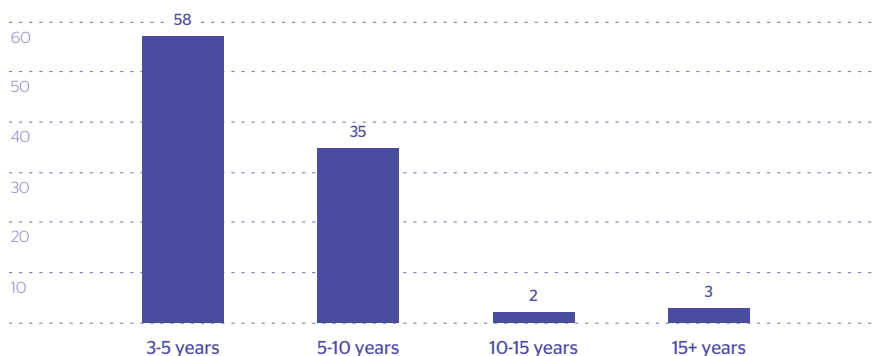
hours of time and expertise  
provided by volunteers



## \$13.37 million

in wage value of volunteer time

### Volunteers who reached milestones in 2019-20



# A sustainable and thriving organisation

Our work has great breadth but is always focused on meeting our mission, vision and long-term strategic goals. We are committed to doing so in an accountable, sustainable way and to developing the capacity of the organisation to thrive, through efficiencies of scale and quality of output. We continue to invest in our people and infrastructure, so we can look to the future with courage and confidence, knowing we are well placed to deliver the best possible outcomes for, and with, people seeking asylum.

## Investment in our people

This year we increased our focus on the wellbeing of our staff and volunteers. While this has always been a priority, the emergence of COVID-19 brought about significant challenges and changes for our workforce in a short time. To support their physical and mental wellbeing, we increased access to reflective practice, created a formal debriefing process, and introduced wellbeing modules and plans within our online learning portal, LEX, which we continued to use to onboard and induct staff and volunteers.

Throughout 2019-20, the organisation maintained its commitment to building the capacity of staff too. We continued the 'Managers Program', delivering it to staff across the organisation to enhance their leadership skills, while further course iterations for the wider organisation were delivered, focusing on engaging in feedback, managing time and priorities and developing courage in communications, in line with the existing Capability Framework.

## Investment in systems and technology

For the Human Rights Law Program, case management was revolutionised with the delivery of the Advologix Legal Suite. This software integrated our existing database with client files, giving us a more efficient and transparent way to provide services to those who need them most. This further enhanced the ASRC's approach to best practice management of a community legal centre and our accreditation under the peak national body, the National Association of Community Legal Centres.

The launch of a new community fundraising system brought a "one-stop shop" online for supporters in the community who wished to take part in an event or fundraise on our

behalf. This enabled us to reduce manual and administrative workload. We also enhanced the security of our web and donation collection with a move to more secure and compliant software under the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard.

Across our social enterprises, new websites for ASRC Cleaning and ASRC Catering delivered growth in customer numbers and furthered our social impact through employment. Behind the scenes, a new customer management system, Foodstorm, enabled us to improve our operations in the catering enterprise.

The organisation reconfirmed our commitment to optimising the digital ecosystem and relaunched the Supporter One project (formerly known as DEOP). This major project will deliver significant organisational efficiency and enhance our engagement with a myriad of supporters. Like all complex infrastructure projects, preparation and project methodology are central to success. This year we focused on building the appropriate foundations, ready to implement the project in 2020-21.

## Celebrating our success

Recognition from external bodies acknowledges the efforts of our staff across the organisation as they deliver best practice work in their chosen fields and ultimately deliver the best outcomes for people seeking asylum. In 2020, our Fundraising & Marketing Stream was recognised nationally, winning two awards at the Fundraising Institute Australia Awards for Excellence. One of our longest-serving volunteers, Sister Rita Malavisi, was awarded National Volunteer of the Year for her incredible dedication and service to the ASRC.

## Governance

In 2019-20, our People & Culture Committee, the most recent layer of the organisation's governance structure, was

formalised with industry-leading, external membership. This committee is focused on centering our people and their wellbeing, the connection between organisational values and workplace engagement and increased professional development.

The Board of the ASRC also farewelled our Treasurer, Susana Vlahovic, and welcomed the new Treasurer and Chair of our Finance Committee, Chester Hii.

## Organisational change

As we prepare to enter the final year of our three-year strategic plan, and look to the future with great ambition, we said goodbye - temporarily at least - to some existing programs. After storm damage forced us to shut the doors to our Dandenong site, we decided to formally close the operation. Instead, we began working with community partners to operate services through other means, in anticipation of our new building. During the pandemic, we also decided to close the existing Entrepreneurship Program, recognising the difficult climate for this sector. This has allowed us to centralise our efforts on employment pathways and outcomes for the foreseeable future.

## Investing in infrastructure

A grant from the State Government allowed us to instal a new lift in our Footscray Centre. This provides greater accessibility to the people who require it while improving access to critical services such as Foodbank. This coincided with the start of works in our Footscray Centre to re-engage with space not being fully used, before the arrival of the pandemic.

In Dandenong, although building works stalled in the later part of the year due to COVID-19, we made progress on our new integrated service hub. This will support people seeking asylum across the Greater Dandenong region and is expected to open in 2021.

## Leadership team

The Leadership Team is comprised of the Chief Executive Officer, General Manager and the Stream Directors. Its primary responsibilities are to: implement the strategic plan; ensure responsible delivery of programs and services in line with funding agreements; manage and develop our people; manage risk and compliance appropriately; role model our values and foster a culture of inclusion, teamwork and accountability.



**Abiola Ajetomobi**  
Innovation Hub



**Anastasia Magriplis**  
Advocacy & Service  
Operations



**Alan White**  
Fundraising & Marketing  
(November 2019 - current)



**Gregory Storer**  
General Manager



**Jana Favero**  
Advocacy & Campaigns



**Joanne Kakafikas**  
People & Services



**Kon Karapanagiotidis, OAM**  
CEO & Founder



**Sherrine Clark**  
Humanitarian Services



**Kate Mohay**  
Finance  
(April 2020 - current)



**Robyn Stevens**  
Human Resources  
(April 2020 - current)



**Cath Hoban**  
Fundraising & Marketing  
(To November 2019)



**Eugene McCrory**  
Finance  
(To March 2020)

## The Board

The ASRC Board is the governing arm of the ASRC Association. Its primary responsibilities are the governance and sustainability of the ASRC, as well as strategic, fiduciary and monitoring functions that include ensuring the organisation remains viable and effective, to secure its long-term future.



**Mike Sum**  
Chair



**Rebekah Lautman**



**Marie Sellstrom**



**Greg Tucker**



**Haleh Homaei**



**Suzana Vlahovic**  
(until November 2019)



**Chester Hii**  
(November 2019 to current)



# Financial performance

In 2019-20, ASRC increased its direct service delivery to continue to deliver its mission to protect, empower and support people seeking asylum in line with the increased need for these services, while delivering a surplus for the year of \$7.7 million. \$2.8 million of this relates to donated land and buildings, and \$2.5 million was earned during the Winter Appeal in June 2020, which will be used to continue to support the increased needs of the ASRC's members during and after the pandemic.

## Income

Total revenue in 2019-20 increased by 57% from the prior year, reaching \$276 million (compared to \$176 million in 2018-19). 46% (\$4.6 million) of the growth came from fundraising and donations, with the Emergency Appeal at the beginning of the pandemic making up \$2.5 million of that increase. Strong support in regular giving, major donors, and general donations all contributed to this outcome. In addition to these, a donation of land and building made up \$2.8 million, and JobKeeper received totalled \$1.2 million.

The capacity to generate income by ASRC Cleaning and ASRC Catering were heavily impacted by the pandemic. Whilst ASRC Cleaning were able to continue offering limited services, ASRC Catering was severely impacted due to majority of its income arising from event bookings. Overall, the social enterprises contributed \$2.4 million of the total revenue, a slight drop in gross revenue from 2018-19.

## Reserves and cash

The operating surplus for 2019-20 lifted the organisation's reserves to \$13.4 million, which covers approximately nine months of core operating expenditure. This is above the reserves policy guidance ([asrc.org.au/reservespolicy](http://asrc.org.au/reservespolicy)) that unrestricted reserves should cover between four and six months of general operating costs.

Cash and cash equivalent holdings at year end were \$14.5 million, \$7.2 million more than 2018-19. \$4.4 million of these reserves relate to grant funds received in advance that are committed to be spent on future programming. The remaining \$10.1 million will support the increased demand in operational spend due to the increased needs of members during the pandemic, as well as some

investment in strategic initiatives to better position ASRC for future demands and growth. Whilst this level of cash and equivalent holdings is high, due to the increased demand in ASRC's services during the pandemic, this level of cash and reserves is required and prudent to ensure our financial sustainability. This is critical given our funding model, as the ASRC receives no Federal Government funding for our services to protect our independence.

## Assets

Total assets more than doubled to \$21.6 million during the year, predominantly from higher cash reserves. Other major factors are the donation of land and buildings valued at \$2.8 million, and reclassified leased assets in line with AASB 16 represents \$1.1 million of total assets.

## Liabilities

Total liabilities increased by \$3.9 million compared to 2018-19. More than half of this relates to grant income received in advance that are committed to be spent on future programming. Lease liabilities were recognised in 2019-20 in line with AASB 16.

An increase in staff numbers has contributed to an increase in employee leave provisions. ASRC made a conscious decision to not force its employees to reduce hours or take forced leave during the pandemic.

## Cash flow

The ASRC reported a positive cash flow of \$7.2 million in 2019-20. Net cash inflow from operating activities was \$8 million, offset by net cash outflow of investing activities of \$0.5 million and net cash outflow from financing activities of \$0.4 million. Investing activities included work to improve Footscray

facilities, investment in system upgrades (ongoing), and commencement of work on the new Dandenong Hub, anticipated to open in 2021.

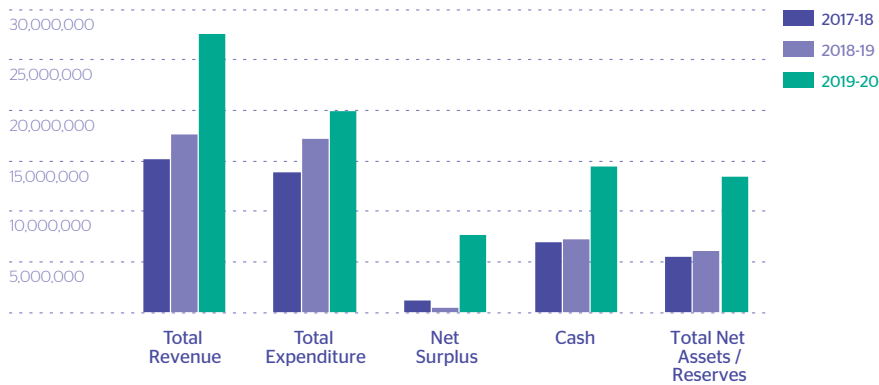
## Expenditure

Total expenditure in 2019-20 was \$20 million, \$2.8 million (17%) higher than 2018-19. The majority of this increase came from:

- \$1.4 million increase in direct service delivery across our programs, including our Community Food Program, case work support for those in detention, Human Rights Law Program and growth in the number of people supported through our General Access Program and Innovation Hub.
- There was a \$0.2 million investment into the fundraising and marketing stream to support the strong growth in fundraising income.
- Centre operations also received a \$1 million increase in expenditure which was driven by an investment in systems, processes and governance to sustainably support the ongoing growth across our programming, social enterprises and fundraising.
- A drop of \$0.1 million in programs that engaged the community and advocated for the rights of people seeking asylum due to the restrictions on interactions during the pandemic.
- Combined social enterprises expenditure increased by \$0.4 million or 14%, to \$3 million, predominantly in salaries and wages.

# Financial snapshot

## Changes in key balances



### 57%

increase in total revenue

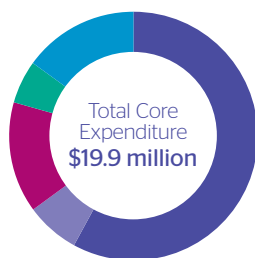
### 24%

increase in donations

### \$7.7 million\*

returned to reserves

## Where the money went



58%  
Service Delivery

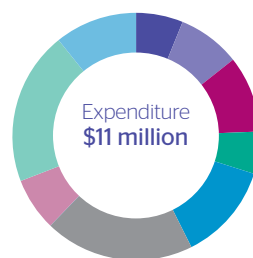
7%  
Community  
Engagement

14%  
Fundraising  
Costs

6%  
Staff and  
Volunteer  
Management

15%  
Accountability and  
Administration

## Service delivery and advocacy



6%  
General Access  
and Material Aid

8%  
Client Services  
program

10%  
Community Food  
program

6%  
Health

13%  
Housing Support

19%  
Education,  
Employment  
and Empowerment  
programs

7%  
Detention Rights  
Program

20%  
Humanitarian  
Rights Law  
Program

11%  
Asylum Seeker  
Rights Advocacy

### 17%

increase in net surplus  
operating revenue

### 5%

decrease in social  
enterprise revenue

\*This year, our surplus revenue has meant the ASRC has a higher than usual return to reserves. This is due in part to the high volume of support from the community, including our COVID-19 emergency appeal which raised in excess of \$3.3 million. Given the significant increase in demand on our services projected over the foreseeable future, the ASRC is committed to utilising these reserves to address the critical and unmet need. This is already evidenced by an unprecedented \$3 million increase in investment in direct services across the current and 2020-21 financial years.

# Auditor's Declaration



## Report of the Independent Auditor on the Summarised Financial Statements to the Members of Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc.

### Opinion

The summary financial statements, which comprise the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2020 and the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the year then ended are derived from the audited financial report of Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc. for the year ended 30 June 2020.

In our opinion, the accompanying summary financial statements are consistent, in all material respects, with (or a fair summary of) the audited financial report, on the basis described in Note 1 to the audited financial report of Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc. for the year ended 30 June 2020.

### Summary Financial Statements

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by the Australian Accounting Standards. Reading the summary financial statements and the auditor's report thereon, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial report and the auditor's report thereon.

The summary financial statements and the audited financial report do not reflect the effects of events that occurred subsequent to the date of our report on the audited financial report.

### The Audited Financial Report and Our Report Thereon

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the audited financial report in our report dated 27th October 2020.

That report also includes an emphasis of matter regarding the basis of accounting.

### Board of Management's Responsibility for the Summary Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the summary financial statements.

### Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the summary financial statements are consistent, in all material respects, with (or are a fair summary of) the audited financial report based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with Auditing Standard ASA 810 Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements.

**Nexia Melbourne Audit Pty Ltd**  
Melbourne

**Andrew S. Wehrens**  
Director

Dated this 30<sup>th</sup> day of November 2020

**Nexia Melbourne Audit Pty Ltd**  
Registered Audit Company 291969  
Level 12, 31 Queen Street  
Melbourne VIC 3000  
p +61 3 8613 8888  
f +61 3 8613 8800  
e info@nexiamelbourne.com.au  
w nexia.com.au

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# Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the Year Ended 30 June 2020	2019-20 \$	2018-19 \$
<b>Income</b>		
Fundraising	9,157,110	5,947,841
Donations	7,182,851	5,786,510
Grants	4,648,915	3,133,386
Social enterprises	2,431,701	2,547,045
Interest received	78,145	112,970
In-specie donation	2,800,000	-
Government support - JobKeeper	1,224,000	-
Other income	101,985	85,235
	<b>27,624,707</b>	<b>17,612,987</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Salaries and wages*	14,048,249	11,887,468
Stream operations	5,922,500	5,238,181
	<b>19,970,749</b>	<b>17,125,649</b>
<b>Surplus for the year</b>	<b>7,653,958</b>	<b>487,338</b>
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	<b>7,653,958</b>	<b>487,338</b>

\*Of the \$14,048,249 spent on salaries and wages in 2019-20, 19% related to the salaries and wages of the combined social enterprises (16%) and Working For Victoria initiative (3%).

# Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2020	2019-20 \$	2018-19 \$
<b>Assets</b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	14,499,730	7,327,330
Trade and other receivables	2,094,698	1,649,215
Inventories	17,712	10,461
Prepayments	220,101	227,303
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>16,832,241</b>	<b>9,214,309</b>
<b>Non-current Assets</b>		
Plant and equipment	3,895,833	1,114,186
Intangible assets	-	35,987
Right-of-use assets	852,226	-
<b>Total Non-current Assets</b>	<b>4,748,059</b>	<b>1,150,173</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>21,580,300</b>	<b>10,364,482</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Lease liabilities	299,160	-
Trade and other payables	1,329,675	1,164,043
Financial liability	9,245	-
Employee benefits	1,063,434	813,803
Unexpended income	4,434,150	2,237,713
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>7,135,664</b>	<b>4,215,559</b>
<b>Non-current Liabilities</b>		
Lease liabilities	839,221	-
Employee benefits	206,670	87,808
<b>Total Non-current Liabilities</b>	<b>1,045,891</b>	<b>87,808</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>8,181,555</b>	<b>4,303,367</b>
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>13,398,745</b>	<b>6,061,115</b>
<b>Members' Funds</b>		
Retained surpluses	13,398,745	6,061,115
<b>Total Members' Funds</b>	<b>13,398,745</b>	<b>6,061,115</b>

# Financial performance

As at 30 June 2020	2019-20 \$	2018-19 \$	2017-18 \$	2016-17 \$	2015-16 \$
<b>Revenue &amp; Expenditure - Core</b>					
Total Revenue & Other income	25,193,006	14,832,301	13,039,545	9,099,649	7,087,051
Total Expenditure	17,086,502	14,561,100	11,866,786	8,224,182	6,835,238
Operating Surplus / (Deficit) - Core	8,106,504	271,201	1,172,759	875,467	251,813
<b>Revenue &amp; Expenditure - Social Enterprises</b>					
Total Revenue & Other income	2,431,701	2,780,686	2,111,695	1,663,909	1,573,951
Total Expenditure	2,884,246	2,564,549	2,028,181	1,721,740	1,609,543
Operating Suplus / (Deficit) - Non-core	(452,546)	216,137	83,514	(57,831)	(35,592)
<b>Revenue &amp; Expenditure - Total</b>					
Total Revenue & Other income	27,624,707	17,612,987	15,151,240	10,763,558	8,661,002
Total Expenditure	19,970,749	17,125,649	13,894,967	9,945,922	8,444,781
Operating Suplus / (Deficit) - Total	7,653,958	487,338	1,256,273	817,636	216,221
<b>Assets &amp; Liabilities</b>					
Total Assets	21,580,300	10,364,482	9,317,028	8,128,228	6,814,042
Total Liabilities	8,181,555	4,303,367	3,743,251	3,810,724	3,314,174
Net Assets	13,398,745	6,061,115	5,573,777	4,317,504	3,499,868
<b>Cash Flows</b>					
Net cash from operating activities	8,034,420	818,472	1,069,562	1,123,977	1,433,846
Net cash to investing activities	(508,175)	(491,934)	(74,204)	(100,977)	(239,169)
Net cash to financing activities	(353,845)	-	-	-	-
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at 30 June</b>	<b>14,499,730</b>	<b>7,327,330</b>	<b>7,000,792</b>	<b>6,005,434</b>	<b>4,982,434</b>



# Our supporters

Thank you to the following people, organisations and community groups who gave the equivalent of \$10,000 or more in funding or \$20,000 or more in-kind or pro bono support in 2019-20.

ABC Philanthropy	Chobani	Frank & Mary Choate	LUCRF Super Community Program	Sirius Foundation
Acorn Nursery	Chris Horan QC	Gadens	Lush Cosmetics	Slater and Gordon Lawyers
Aesop	Circus Oz	Garner Davies Architects	MaiTri Foundation	St Vincent's Hospital
Aesop Foundation	City of Greater Dandenong	Genny & Tony Nunan	Malcolm McGrath	StrEAT
Albert Johnston	Claire Keating & Lester Hughes	Georgina Costello SC	Margaret S. Ross AM	Suellen Jones
Alex & Rusty Russell	Claire Murphy Fund, a sub-fund of the Australian Communities Foundation	GoDaddy Registry Australia Pty Ltd	Matthew Albert	Summers Family Stewardship Trust
Alex Yang	Clear Horizon	Goodwill Wine	Maurice Blackburn Lawyers	Tamera Jones - Potential Change
Allens Philanthropy Committee	Clothier Anderson Immigration Lawyers	Gourlay Charitable Trust	McLeod Family Foundation	The Brown Family Foundation
AMES	Collier Charitable Fund	Greg & Jenny Vero	Medevac Evacuation Response Group	The Elizabeth and Barry Davies Charitable Foundation
Ange Ferguson	Collingwood Yard	Hackett Foundation	Metro Trains	The Jack Brockhoff Foundation
Angel Aleksov	CommBank Staff Foundation	Hangid Foundation	Michael & Amanda Da Gama Pinto	The Kimberley Foundation
Animus Distillery	Community Enterprise Foundation	Haverstock Hill Foundation	Michael Nossal & Jo Porter	The Mercer Family Foundation
Ann Miller	Cooper Investors Philanthropy Fund	Heather Drew	Mike & Mim Bartlett	The Metamorphic Foundation
Anne Ross	Dawna Wright & Peter, Liam & Myles Riedel	Hilary Miller	Mike & Tanja Chester	The Noel and Carmel O'Brien Family Foundation
Annie Williams	Deloitte	Hoffman Foundation	Min Guo	The Ray & Margaret Wilson Foundation
Arcare Family Foundation	Department of Education and Training	Howard Packer	Moose Toys	The Robert and Irene Gilbert Family Trust
Australia Post	Department of Health and Human Services	Howard-Robbins family	Nick Middendorp Family Foundation	The Ross Trust
Australian Communities Foundation Ltd	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions	i=Change	Nick Wood	The Shine On Foundation
Banyule Council	Department of Premier and Cabinet	IFM Investors	NR Peace and Justice Fund	The Skrzynski Family - Sky Foundation
Barlow Foundation	Drakensberg Trust	Igniting Change	O'Rourke family	Tom and Catherine Nguyen
Barr Family Foundation	E C White Trust as managed by Equity Trustees	Immunisation Program, Health Protection Branch, Diversity Unit	Olaf Ciolek	Tom Hannon
Bates Smart	Eirene Lucas Foundation	In memory of Moya Hogan	Parachute Digital	Tony Hartnell
Bernadette Welch	Ellen Koshland & James McCaughey	Indigo Mountain Foundation	PMI Melbourne Chapter	Tsuno
Bernie & Virginia McIntosh	Fairlie and Dennis Nassau	Inner North Community Foundation	Pool of Dreams, Claire Eliza's Gift a part of the Community Impact Foundation	UFS Dispensaries Ltd
Besen Family Foundation	Feed Victoria Appeal	Interface	Queen's College - University of Melbourne	Une Parkinson Foundation
Beverley Jackson Foundation	Fouress Foundation	Jane Harper Trust	Red Cross	Victoria Legal Aid
Brad Fresia & Allister D'Souza		Jannie Brown	Red Rocketship Foundation	Victoria Parsons
Brasher Family Foundation		Jennifer Smith	Refugee Council of Victoria	Victorian Government's Strategic Partnerships Program, in partnership with MiCare
Cameron Foundation		Jenny & Evan John	Richard & Janet Chauvel	Vincent Chiodo Charitable Foundation
CareerSeekers		Joanne Parkinson Foundation	Roberts Pike Foundation	Virgin Unite
CARI Foundation		Jocelyn Luck	RobMeree Foundation	Wai-Hong Tham
CCI Giving		John & Jo Grigg	Robyn Parker	Western Program Alliance / Level Crossing Removal Project
CERES Fair Food		John Holland Group	Rodney Solin	William Buckland Foundation
Chantal Humberstone		Jonamare at the APS Foundation	Rosemary & Michael Tabak	Wise Foundation
		Joseph Palmer Foundation - Halkyard Bequest	Rowe Family Foundation	Woolworths
		Kamener Family	Rural Australians for Refugees	Yarra Trams
		KFive + Kinnarps	Russell Kennedy Lawyers	Yarra Trams Community Partnership Program
		King & Wood Mallesons	Ruth Hoffman & Peter Halstead	
		KS Environmental Group	Rylock	
		Kym Jenkins	Santa Singh & Balwant Kaur	
		La Trobe University	Scanlon Foundation	
		Lawrence Acland Foundation	Seasol	
		Leo & Mina Fink Fund	Seasonal Supplies Pty Ltd	
		Leonie Van Raay	Seljak Brand	
		Life Without Barriers	Simon Lusted & Sally Bond	
		Limb Family Foundation	Simpson Family Foundation	
		Lisa de Ferrari SC		

## Patrons and Ambassadors

The ASRC gratefully acknowledges our patrons and ambassadors who partnered with us to raise awareness of our work and advocate for people seeking asylum and refugees. We thank them for their efforts in shining a light on this important cause.

Tamie Fraser, AO and Patron in memoriam Malcolm Fraser AC CH  
Julian Burnside AO QC  
Arnold Zable  
Carolyn Creswell  
Christos Tsiolkas  
Eva Cox AO  
Leila Gurruwiwi  
Madeline Hills  
Madeleine West  
Mark Seymour  
Michael Kirby AC CMG  
Missy Higgins  
Susan Carland  
Michael Short

# Our volunteers

The following people have provided between 3 and over 15 years of volunteer service to the ASRC. We thank you for your amazing contribution.

## 15+ year volunteers

Ruth Coulthurst  
Elizabeth Stewart  
Pam Rycroft  
Carolyn Paulin  
Emma White  
Helen Gourlay  
Elaine Brundle  
Jean Nash  
Richard Barber  
Joan Lynn  
Rob Mathew

## 10-15 years volunteers

Merron Selenitsch  
Jill Crawford  
Rosa Morstyn  
Zara Thompson  
Uyen Nguyen  
Joan Taylor  
Valma Byers  
Kiera Stevens  
Janet Bodycomb  
Duoc Nguyen  
Christine Hayward  
Dale Mackie  
Louise Koschmann  
John Molloy  
Alan Drummond  
Bronwyn Duncan  
Anne Lord  
Jenny Shao  
Jan Brady-Fry  
Helen Wirtz  
Margie Welsford  
Kevin Barry  
Nicky Dorevitch  
Anne Bartley

## 5-10 years volunteers

Ruth O'Rourke  
Symon McCallum  
Hannah Gibney  
Yatueta Usa  
Nazish Rafique  
Margot Clark  
Geoffrey Love  
Kathleen Love  
Spencer Law partners  
Viglietti  
Hani Vodstrcil  
Sophie Adley  
Desley Roy  
Louise Hayward  
Sarah Sorsby

Morag Milton  
Sam Fung  
Sandra McAuliffe  
Esmat Ansari  
Timothy Patton  
Maha Alomar Albarazi  
Laurence Beesley  
Melanie Malakunas  
Danielle Miles  
Pamela Walford  
David Cramond  
John Loon  
Andrew Falkland-Brown  
Scott Blair-West  
Tony Kent  
Ross Howie  
Amanda Oliver  
Jennifer McLoughlin  
Matthew Price  
Glenda Hutchinson  
Frances Nininahazwe  
David Mendelovits  
Yosuke Chapman  
Willem Drent  
Kristine Spark  
Helen Tilson  
Judith Carman  
Sam Poyas  
Susan Werner  
Kathy Hill  
Millicent Rees-Jones  
Phil Libbis  
Graham Warren  
Gwyneth Missen  
Steve Baird  
Gwen White  
Naomi Saporta  
Helene Orwin  
Lyn Andressen  
Simon Reynolds  
Angela Lane  
Caroline Odell  
Pauline Cleaver  
Doug Beecroft  
Gayle Napier  
Christopher Loo  
Jan Howard  
Anne Briggs  
Femida Hunter  
Jennifer Simpson  
Vivienne Hardisty  
Tadhg Dowling  
Andrew Barker

Haans Lewin  
Phil McMillan  
Tahntip Powtawe  
Andrew Button  
Dianne Fisher  
Pamela Every  
Stephen Lavender  
Bea Jones  
Ian Partridge  
Genevieve Moore  
Nicky Lo Bianco  
Taariq Hassan  
Sarah Kennedy  
Catherine Guinness  
Graeme Robinson  
Hans Zerno  
Melanie Wilson  
Ashlea Randle  
Brenda Todd  
Susan Fisher  
Geraldine Burne  
Gina Di Paolo  
Peter Hoare  
Lynette Crellin  
Gillian Fawcett  
Elizabeth Zenner  
Jan Hipgrave  
Debbie Phillips  
Jill Baird  
Patrick Boushel  
Chris Kennedy  
Sofia Drinjakovic  
Michel Beuchet  
Bruce Parr  
Jane Wilson  
Frances Collison  
Joanna Tapper  
Traudl Moon  
Anthony Lewis  
Yogi Pillay  
Pauline Brown  
Brendan McCarthy  
Christine Barrett  
KENNETH CHAN  
Brian Derum  
Catherine O'Leary  
Suellen Irving  
Carole Wigg  
Angela Woolard  
Andrew Trembath  
Anne Beuchet  
Philip Robson-Garth

## 3-5 years volunteers

Amanda Baldwin  
Alon Kaiser  
Ebony Lacy  
Annie Ward-Ambler  
Dermot Dignam  
William Erskine  
Daniella Murnane  
Mithran Vyravipillai  
Katie Henderson  
Ian Sadler  
Jody Guerow  
Marion Singer  
Rachel Allitt  
Nicolette Nieuwoudt  
Rebekah Politis  
Liz Barrow  
Lina Shaaban  
Alan Gruner  
Christine Vale  
Evelyn Flitman  
Mali Wilson  
Riley Tamaliunas  
William Robey  
Sarah Halls  
Andrea Hall  
Bruno Doring  
Yung Nguyen  
Tristan Krautz  
Martin Hemingway  
Ebtahag Mesak  
Ekhlal Mesak  
Mary McGuirk  
Laura Benson  
Lisa Milne  
Emma Tinning  
Claudia De Quadros  
Setareh Hakimjavadi  
Steph Brown  
Kate McCracken-Bell  
Chloe Powell  
Katherine O'Flaherty  
Alexandria Page-Robertson  
Helen Murphy Talbot  
Ray Wittman  
James Gilfillan  
Jane Mills  
Chris Darmanin  
Lesley Willett  
Carole Poon  
Shaibu Iddrisu  
Ashleigh Stefanovski  
Susan Goding

Thomas Williams  
Beth (Elizabeth) Walter  
Lenore Stephens  
Linda Weston  
Laura Coburn  
William Morgan  
Sue O'Reilly  
Kate O'Neill  
Peter Dapiran  
Abdul Razzaq  
Peter Hanrahan  
Margaret Bergin  
Val Maher  
Sue Cawthorn  
Catherine Pitman  
Lyn Smith  
Britt Haller  
Nino Bucci  
Khalida Shaheen  
Peter Conlon  
Madeline Wilson  
Francesca Demetriou  
Anne Klaric  
Susan Ackroyd  
Grant Nimmo  
Ciara Boyle  
Kay Pentland  
Peta Price  
Glenda Strong  
Michele Velik  
Bev Scott  
Jamie Phillips  
Christopher Higgins  
Jacqui Hagen  
Andrew Minko  
Gabrielle Cullen  
Jonathan Teh  
Denise Fraser  
Geraldine Butler  
Rebecca Kierce  
Margaret Brown  
Myf Evans  
Eliza Considine  
Kate Russell









**Asylum Seeker Resource Centre**

214-218 Nicholson Street  
Footscray VIC 3011

t: 03 9326 6066  
e: [admin@asrc.org.au](mailto:admin@asrc.org.au)

[asrc.org.au](http://asrc.org.au)