

Community Food Program

About the ASRC

The Asylum Seeker Resource Centre is a not-for-profit organisation which supports and empowers people seeking asylum who live in our community. Established in 2001 in a gifted space in Footscray, the organisation has grown from an informal foodbank to the largest independent humanitarian organisation in Australia supporting people who are seeking asylum. The ASRC receives no funding from the federal government, enabling us to maintain an independent voice that advocates for change.



We offer more than 40 holistic programs that protect people seeking asylum, including food and material aid, healthcare, education and training, employment pathways, legal aid and detention advocacy. Our aim is to support the wellbeing of our community, empower people to be as independent as possible and to have agency over their own future.

The Community Food Program

The ASRC Foodbank and daily Community Meals are collectively known as the Community Food Program. Five staff members oversee the program, with over 100 volunteers carrying out the day-to-day duties that keep the program viable. The objective of the program is to provide food security for people seeking asylum. The Foodbank represents a key area of support for our members. We rely on the community to keep our shelves stocked, with approximately 70% of Foodbank groceries donated by individuals, food rescue agencies, local businesses, families, schools, churches and other community groups. These donations provide essential food and goods for around 1000 people, many of whom are children. Most of those who are supported by ASRC Foodbank have no income and many have no work rights.



Increased demand for Foodbank

The ASRC has seen a growing number of families accessing our Foodbank as the rising cost of living hits the community, and those who are supported by organisations such as the ASRC become even more vulnerable. Some basic food items have increased as much as 300%, making the need for food donations now greater than ever.

How the ASRC Foodbank works

The ASRC Foodbank is much like a supermarket, where members can select the items they want from the shelves. Accompanied by a volunteer, shoppers take trolleys through the store where they can choose a mix of perishable and non-perishable items. These include fresh fruits and vegetables and dairy items such as eggs, milk and yogurt. Food quantities are allocated according to household size.



More than just food

Many people who are seeking asylum live with trauma and uncertainty, trapped in a political limbo that is out of their control. For these people, the ASRC Foodbank represents much more than a source of food; it provides a sense of dignity and empowerment. The food available at the ASRC Foodbank allows families to prepare familiar meals from their homelands, providing them with a sense of normalcy and connection.

The importance of our supporters

For nearly twenty years, the Foodbank has been able to supply food to those most vulnerable, thanks to donations from the community. Giving food is one of the most immediate and tangible ways to help people seeking asylum. It also sends a powerful message to people seeking asylum that we see them, we recognise that they are no different from us, and that we will welcome and support those who came here seeking safety to create a fair and compassionate Australia. There is no such thing as a donation too small; every contribution helps keep food on the table, and ensures the Foodbank remains a positive force in the lives of those seeking asylum. Without your support, we would not be able to do this.