

Annual report

2022 – 23



Founded in 2001, the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC) is Australia's largest human rights organisation providing support to people seeking asylum.

We are an independent not-for-profit organisation whose programs support and empower people seeking asylum to maximise their own physical, mental and social wellbeing.

We champion the rights of people seeking asylum and mobilise a community of compassion to create lasting social and policy change.

The ASRC movement is proudly supported by a community of committed volunteers and supporters.

Vision

Our vision is that people seeking asylum can live safely, sustainably, independently and equally.

Mission

Our mission is to support and empower people seeking asylum at critical junctions of their journey.

Building on our proximity to those with lived experience, we mobilise and partner for a community of compassion, justice and opportunity.

Acknowledgement of country

The ASRC would like to acknowledge the Wurundjeri 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.

***Privacy disclaimer**

Throughout this report, some of the names, identities and details of people seeking asylum and their stories have been changed to protect their privacy.

ABN 64 114 965 815

Table of Contents

2	Table of Contents	23	The Community of Compassion in Action Community & Events, Marketing & Brand
3	A Message from the Chair	25	The ASRC Community of Compassion
4	Letter from the CEO	27	A Movement Driven by Dedicated Volunteers Volunteer Engagement
5	Our impact in 2022-23	28	Organisational Reflection
7	Family Case Study	29	Refugee Resource Hub: Building Community in Dandenong
8	Essential Services: A Human Rights Based Approach Community Food Services, Health, Housing, Basic Needs, Response and Support	31	Securing the Future of our Organisation Fundraising, Philanthropy & Partnerships
12	Voice of Lived Experience: Mohammad Daghighaleh	32	Financial Performance
13	Refugee Leadership, Advocacy and Systemic Change	33	Financial Snapshot
15	Employment, Education & Empowerment Integrating vocational & empowerment pathways	41	Leadership Team & Board
17	Access to Justice & Protecting Human Rights Human Rights Law Program	42	Acknowledgements
19	Success stories in court and beyond: significant legal cases in 2022-23	46	ASRC's Commitment to Reconciliation
21	Impact through our Social Enterprises ASRC Catering and ASRC Cleaning	47	The cover this year: Refugee artist, Asad Ali



A Message from the Chair

I am pleased to share the ASRC's Annual Report for the 2022-23 financial year (FY23) with you and the rest of our wonderful community of supporters, volunteers, staff, and other advocates. To each person who has joined us on this journey towards fairness and protection for refugees and people seeking asylum in Australia - thank you for everything you have contributed. That we would not be here without your support is more true than in any other year. Together, we move forward with optimism, determination, and as a stronger and more resilient organisation than ever before.

2023 was a challenging year for the ASRC. However, thanks to our thousands of supporters, we made it to the other side and have taken this opportunity to learn from our experiences and have emerged with strengthened organisational foundations.

We entered FY23 with hope and an ambitious plan to deliver even more to our community than we had managed to do during COVID. As one of the only Victorian refugee organisations to keep its doors open during lockdowns, we saw a huge increase in demand for our services. We were humbled by the outpouring of support from the community, which allowed us to keep our services available. However, as we entered July 2022, the broader impacts of the cost of living crisis became more and more apparent. Donations started to fall significantly and began to endanger our organisation's financial stability. By December 2022, it was clear that the external environment was going to get worse, not better and this led to the launch of our emergency Save The ASRC appeal.

Because of the generosity of everyone who donated and supported our community in February 2023, we are still here. Because of you, the ASRC heads into 2024 stronger, more innovative, and more sustainable than ever before. We cannot express our gratitude enough. Our position going into next year is a great tribute to everyone who gave to keep us going, including the significant contributions of all our staff and volunteers who continued working towards our mission in the face of their own personal pressures.

To realign the scale of our organisation to a reduced revenue base, an organisational restructure was necessary. This included a reduction in the number of our employees. We took all steps available to avoid staff losses, which is always a last option. We acknowledge this was a challenging time for our workforce, especially those impacted directly, and we are grateful for each person's contribution to making a more welcoming Australia for people seeking asylum.

We have come through this challenging period with a strengthened governance framework, including enhanced risk management and financial reporting, as well as a revised and longer-term fundraising strategy. We took this opportunity to reinforce the foundations of our organisation in a way that was informed not only by recent challenges but also by our changed political landscape and the significant systemic wins we shared with the asylum seeker and refugee movement.

We engaged external experts to guide us as we redesigned the organisation. They supported our leadership team and brought best-practice knowledge of organisational restructuring and change management.

In 2023, we also welcomed new board member Lucy Chen. Lucy, whose parents came to Australia as refugees from Vietnam, joins the ASRC with valuable business and operational experience as co-CEO of her family's successful business, Chen Foods. In the year, we also farewelled previous board members Marie Sellstrom, Greg Tucker and Haleh Homaei, and we sincerely thank them for their many years of service. We are continuing a process to strengthen our board with new, experienced directors.

We look forward to FY24 with renewed optimism, determination, a refreshed organisation and a stronger financial platform. At the time of writing, we have launched our sustainability report.* This report shares our long-term plans and priorities with our donors, inviting them to partner with us over a multi-year horizon to provide unprecedented security and stability for our organisation and, most importantly, the courageous and resilient people we are privileged to serve.

Thank you for all of your support.

Mike Sum

Download the
Sustainability
Report [https://
asrc.org.au/
annual-reports/](https://asrc.org.au/annual-reports/)



Letter from the CEO

2023 was one of the ASRC's most extraordinary and challenging years since we first opened our doors over 22 years ago. And yet, despite the difficulties we faced, our organisation has never had a greater impact than the year that has just been. Thank you. We couldn't be more grateful to our supporters, our staff and volunteers, our Board, and many others in our community who have walked with us through this extremely challenging period.

In 2023, the movement to protect the rights of refugees and people seeking asylum achieved more systemic change than in any other year. Each win in the movement is made possible by each person who continues to support the actions demanding justice for refugees and people seeking asylum.

Let me walk you through some of the most groundbreaking policy changes that the movement achieved in FY23. We took a big step forward as a nation towards a better system for refugees in 2023 and saw permanent protection granted at last to 19,000 people who had been waiting for up to a decade on temporary visas. The ASRC's lobbying alongside many other advocates and organisations also saw an increase in Australia's refugee humanitarian program by an additional 2,125 places. In June, the last refugee held on Nauru for over ten years was evacuated to Australia off Nauru. Additionally, after 11 years of advocacy in the education space, we finally saw access to TAFE granted to people seeking asylum and refugees in Victoria. The ASRC has been proud to play a role in these and many other significant campaigns and work alongside refugees and other dedicated refugee advocates and organisations.

The significant groundswell we saw in the previous year reflects, of course, a changed political landscape after nine years of conservative governments. We found ourselves finally able to engage with our federal government in a way that was constructive and had hopeful conversations for the future. The

ASRC was frequently sought out by Members of Parliament for both policy and legal advice on key policy legislative areas.

At an organisational level, we also celebrated many achievements that reflect the contributions of every person who is a part of the ASRC community. We are proud to report that as of 2023, 56% of ASRC staff are people with lived experience of seeking asylum. We also scaled up to invest in and provide grants focused on refugee leadership by funding and training 13 refugee organisations in Australia directly through \$199K raised for this purpose.

We have implemented and continue to build on a human rights-based model of practice. We redesigned our ways of working to provide a more streamlined, integrated approach. We significantly invested in refugee leadership capacity through programs such as our Community Advocacy and Power Program. We worked hand in hand as a resource and allied to the refugee sector to help empower the movement.

These strides forward were possible thanks to our team of staff and volunteers who worked harder than ever before to capitalise on new political opportunities that were opening up, on top of business-as-usual caseloads and the huge influx of visa demands after the important end to temporary protection visas.

However, at an organisational level, we also had to overcome the biggest crisis in our history. Working to meet the huge and increasing demand for our services, we were then met with the cost of living crisis - that we felt immediately with a sharp decline in public donations - and rising interest rates, still impacting so many Australians. At the beginning of 2023, our organisation was at risk of closing its doors. Due to the extraordinary compassion and kindness of the Australian public, we remained open.

22,500 people rallied in the space of 19 days to donate \$5.2 million to enable the ASRC to remain solvent, stable and strong into the future. We are grateful beyond measure to everyone who reaffirmed their commitment to the vision we are working towards together - an Australia where refugees and people seeking asylum are safe, respected, and afforded the opportunities and safety nets that any person needs in a time of crisis. It is because of you that we are still here. Thank you.

The ASRC ended the financial year by going through significant changes. We had to cut our organisation by 26%, reducing our annual budget by \$6.2 million. We are incredibly grateful to our staff, volunteers, and all stakeholders for enduring

these changes and putting our community first. The concrete steps we have taken in 2023 have ensured our future financial sustainability, including an 18-month cash flow forecast and increased financial reserves.

Most importantly, this ensures our frontline services can continue seeing people transition from crisis to empowerment. In the last financial year, our lawyers provided crisis and ongoing assistance to even more refugees and people seeking asylum than in the previous financial year, including securing 230 visas for protection in Australia, amongst the 1,131 legal cases that we ran. Our education and employment teams continued to support people seeking education and employment opportunities, supporting 530 people in their own empowerment pathways. We also saw the trust and loyalty of customers growing for our social enterprises, which employ 91% of people with lived experience of seeking asylum and allowing ASRC Catering and ASRC Cleaning to mature their business offer.

The ASRC doubled down on essential services, providing critical aid, including 66,987 nights of shelter and 7,879 community meals. We made sure a safe roof and a warm meal was the first step for people to start recovering their confidence while they rebuild their lives in the community.

Your support through an incredibly trying year has made the achievements of 2023 possible and means our community can continue to drive systemic change for people seeking asylum and refugees in the years ahead.

I hope you enjoy reading about the impact that comes from supporting and investing in the ASRC community.


Kon Karapanagiotidis



To read more about the factors that influenced the situation and the measures taken to remain viable and sustainable into the future, please read our Sustainability Report <https://asrc.org.au/annual-reports/>



Our Impact



76 refugees and people seeking asylum were evacuated from Nauru to Australia

and a further 90 people were resettled from Nauru, PNG and Australia to New Zealand



230

successful visa applications, in addition to other visa wins in courts and tribunals



56%

of ASRC staff are people with lived experience of seeking asylum



101

people with lived experience of seeking asylum employed at ASRC Catering and ASRC Cleaning



48,749

hours of paid employment provided through our social enterprises



184

employers engaged with the ASRC throughout FY23 to provide employment opportunities to refugees and people seeking asylum



1,415

hours of English for Work classes delivered



66,987

nights of shelter provided to people at imminent risk of homelessness



7,879

community meals served



893

individuals and family groups assisted by ASRC lawyers



5,431

pro bono health appointments provided, equal to a value of \$173,011.35



469

households supported with basic needs like utility bills, household essentials, baby and child items, phone credit and education supplies



2,906

people being provided ongoing case coordination support by June 2023



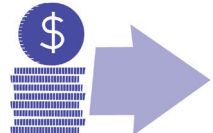
\$714K

spent on groceries for the community



128,400

hours of time and expertise provided by volunteers



\$199K

invested in training and funding provided to 13 refugee organisations in Australia



30,727

supporters completed 37,062 digital or organising actions in support of campaigns for safety, security and permanence for people seeking asylum



22,500

people rallied in the space of 19 days to donate \$5.2 million to enable the ASRC to continue our work



70%

of our income went to service delivery, advocacy, program support and social enterprises activities



42

joint statements, letters and submissions sent to parliament and politicians, including providing evidence at 3 parliamentary hearings



10

specialist partner organisations provided services on and offsite at the Refugee Resource Hub powered by the ASRC in Dandenong

Family

Case Study

A single mother, Hajira had fled family violence and was living in a shed when she came to the ASRC for the first time. With no work rights or income, she could not afford many essentials for herself and her new baby.

"The experience of being pregnant was so scary. I did not have money to go to the doctor. When the hospital told me I would have to pay for my blood tests and scans I did not know what to do. And I was very worried that all the stress would harm the baby."

Hajira came to Australia with her husband in 2015. Her husband had promised her a better life for them, where she could study what she wanted. She had always been interested in studying commerce and improving her English, and her husband promised her the opportunity to study what she wanted. The couple spent more than five years bouncing between temporary visas, hoping for permanency in their new country.

Unfortunately, life became extremely difficult for Hajira here in Australia. She had been experiencing physical and emotional abuse, and when she fell

pregnant, the violence became even worse. She was terrified for herself and her unborn child, completely isolated without any sources of income, and still financially dependent on her husband.

Somehow, Hajira gathered the courage to speak to a friend she had met at a community event. Her friend, who had also experienced family violence, helped her find shelter by connecting her with someone who rented Hajira a shed at the back of their house.

"I was freezing, and alone. Those days were full of sad thinking, confusion and hunger."

Hajira's friend had told her about the ASRC. When she first came to us, we helped her meet her immediate needs and lodge a protection visa. When she was granted a Bridging Visa E, she didn't get work or study rights, access to Medicare or any other social security payments until her application was assessed and processed.

Hajira, although initially relieved to hear she had a visa, was worried - with no income or support, how would she look after herself and her baby? Every

day, she faced decisions between whether to feed herself and her daughter, put money aside for rent, or meet her daughter's healthcare needs.

Thankfully, because of the support of our community of compassion, the ASRC was able to take at least some of the pressure off Hajira. She was immediately housed in crisis accommodation and received medical attention for herself and her baby. The Health Program nurses also facilitated appointments with a counsellor and a caseworker to help with her mental health and build a plan to get out of crisis mode.

"I am okay now. But for a while, it was very bad. The doctors and nurses in ASRC organised for me to get counselling and other help. All of ASRC helped me to get through this very bad time."

"For me, it's like a home. It's a place of safety, security, somewhere we can find help, speak to a person. This is the only resource for people like me seeking asylum."



Essential Services

A Human Rights Based Approach

With the immediate pandemic crisis over, demand for ASRC's essential services remained high as the people we serve navigated a new economic environment. The FY23 restructure ensured we could continue delivering across our priority areas: food, health, housing, basic needs and case coordination. Highlights included extending the ASRC food services to Dandenong and introducing a new case coordination model to support more of the many people coming to our centres.

Tackling food instability across Melbourne - Community Food Program

As COVID restrictions eased, the ASRC transitioned away from the home delivery service we ran throughout the pandemic. We were able to return to sourcing our own fresh produce, which meant our community could select the items they preferred in person once again. This allowed us to contain costs and, most importantly, welcome people for a hot, fresh lunch as part of our community meals program.

We learnt from the home delivery service that people facing food insecurity live in many parts of Melbourne, with a substantial population of people seeking asylum residing in Melbourne's South East. To help more people access the service and save people from travelling across Melbourne to Footscray, we extended the ASRC Foodbank to the Refugee Resource Hub in Dandenong. The RRH Foodbank opened in September 2022, becoming a highlight of our year. By the end of June 2023, more than 871 people in 333 households were accessing food and essential items through the new service in Dandenong.

We are also proud that the ASRC Foodbank service remained consistent throughout organisational changes, ensuring members could rely on the Community Food Program for a meal and to collect groceries for themselves and their families. Overall, 4,274 people accessed the ASRC Foodbank in FY23, a 61% increase from FY22. The introduction of our new Response and Support Team also improved our ability to assist people

straight away. Our emphasis on empowering people to seek longer-term solutions alongside providing immediate material aid meant we could continue to help more of our community.

In the second half of the year, we launched our Food Security Champions micro-campaign. This campaign asked community groups to donate one food staple each, like rice or flour. The impact of this was that we could put the money we would typically have spent on buying these staples towards other essential services like health and material aid like phone credit or public transport card top-ups, amongst other forms of support. More than 65 schools and organisations responded to our call out for champions. We would like to send a huge thanks to the community for responding so enthusiastically and for getting involved in supporting our Foodbank.

Providing the human right to healthcare - Health Program

The ASRC Health Program remained accessible to members throughout FY23, including minimal disruption of service provision during the organisational restructure. The health program continued to be nurse-led and maintained and supported by over 40 ongoing voluntary healthcare professionals. This voluntary workforce provided a comprehensive, multidisciplinary primary health service, including psychiatry, mental health, nursing, eye care, immunisations, and allied health care.

Access to medication and specialist services, alongside ongoing generalist healthcare, is a key concern for many ASRC members. FY23 saw several new pro bono services and partnerships developed to support members accessing the full range of healthcare services. A new pro bono service delivered in partnership with St Vincent's Pathology allowed ASRC members to access pathology and radiology services valued at \$14,000. We established partnerships with pharmaceutical companies, including Arrotec Pharmaceuticals and Seqirus Pharmaceuticals to increase access to essential medications and immunisations.

A compassionate access program was developed with another pharmaceutical company, making essential medication available to clients without Medicare. Our existing pharmacy waiver program remained relatively consistent in FY23, with \$137,627 of pharmacy costs waived for members. A partnership was also developed with the Australian College of Optometry (ACO), establishing eye clinics run by ACO optometrists within the ASRC health program. This allowed ASRC members to easily access eye care, testing and free glasses. So far, ACO has provided eye care services to 104 individuals, 64% of whom do

not have access to Medicare. The eye clinic was also supported by a Perpetual grant.

Unfortunately, we saw an increased presentation of clients with serious mental health concerns over the year. The health service has limited resources to support these clients, and access to community mental health services is a lengthy process. However, as a primary healthcare service, we have done everything within our capacity to ensure that the current staff and volunteers are adequately trained and skilled to support the people who rely on the health program for healthcare needs.

Working towards safe, secure homes for all - Housing Program

The Housing Program has seen an increase in demand from our members who are either facing primary homelessness, in housing distress or at imminent risk of homelessness. This increase is being driven by many factors, including the cost of living crisis and the low availability of rentals and other accommodation options.

In FY23, much more so than usual, we funded crisis accommodation for extended periods due to the lack of affordable and available accommodation alternatives. Crisis accommodation is \$1,500-\$2,500 per week for a family and is often unsuitable for long periods, for example due to a lack of cooking facilities or adequate space for children. The team is focused on finding new ways to reduce time spent in crisis accommodation, working in collaboration with other ASRC programs. In the last months of FY23, we have started to work on new longer-term accommodation alternatives, prioritising families and single women with dependents.

The Housing Program also assists people in finding creative solutions to gain access to the rental market, including short-term support with rental payments. We advocate for people seeking asylum to have greater access to government support, including subsidised accommodation, the Bond loan scheme and the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS). The ASRC has



Essential Services

A Human Rights Based Approach

developed good relationships with private landlords, especially in Melbourne's west, to create more housing opportunities for our clients. We provide three months' rent upfront plus bond to secure these tenancies, giving families time to set up while they engage in employment and save to take over the payments after this period. We have worked closely with charities and mainstream housing providers funded by the State government to provide more access to housing. This involves working towards relaxing eligibility criteria, such as requiring a Centrelink benefit to be referred.

The Housing Program was able to source longer-term accommodation for all single females who presented in the last quarter FY23, one of whom was seven months pregnant and another who was nine months pregnant with three children under the age of 5. This was achieved through generous housing offers from other charities and compassionate people offering reduced cost or free accommodation in their homes. An elderly couple were provided free accommodation through an offer from a senior person in the community who wanted to support people seeking asylum. This arrangement has been very successful for all involved.

Access to household essentials - Basic Needs Program

As well as support with housing, the ASRC provides individuals and families with basics like utility support, public transport, nappies, shoes and phone credit. Our priority is ensuring clients have access to water, gas and electricity.

In FY23, the program provided relief payments to 469 households, up from 308 in the previous financial year. This reflected an organisational decision to provide some assistance to more people. As part of this, we ended the Income Support program which prioritised only a small group of clients, and opened up eligibility for Basic Needs support for utility payments to more of our community. Applications are prioritised based on their vulnerabilities and resources, such as clients with complex health issues, people living in unsafe environments, people with no work rights and families with children.

In FY23, the ASRC partnered with organisations including Good Shepherd and Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria to deliver the Basic Needs program.

Responding to new inquiries and providing key services - Response and Support Team

Alongside our other essential services programs - food, health and housing - the ASRC also provides immediate, practical assistance to the many different needs of our community. This includes a drop-in service, information and referrals, and case management. In FY23, these

services were provided across two teams, ASRC Casework and Response and Support Team (RST). In June 2023, the two teams were brought together into the new Social Services Team (SST), whose work we look forward to reporting back to you on next financial year.

Prior to the restructure and the introduction of the new Response and Support program, the former Casework Program provided intensive, holistic casework to 456 clients during the year up to June 2023. The caseworkers were able to assist clients in navigating the school system, accessing external services to help their immediate needs close to their home, sustaining their accommodation, helping with applications for IMMI Cards (issued to certain visa holders who don't have and can't obtain a passport recognised by the Australian Government), navigating Medicare access and communicating with their legal support. The team also helped people with significant health concerns to access the care and treatment needed for an improved quality of life.

Throughout the year, the increased need for financial help and housing support reflected the rising cost of living in the post-COVID environment, as well as continued barriers to accessing mainstream support and the challenges clients face returning to work and study after periods of isolation. Throughout internal changes, the casework team maintained regular communications with clients including regarding changes to ASRC services.

RST also facilitated further access to services for people seeking asylum and refugees in FY23. RST were a team of cross-cultural workers and engagement specialists who offered a drop-in service and broad support to clients who requested the ASRC's support. RST always aims to support all who drop in or phone for a service, however responding to everyone's needs is not always possible as the demand for support is often greater than the staff capacity. The experience of RST highlights the failure of policy at the highest level, still putting people seeking asylum in the most difficult situations without providing the necessary support they need.

RST provided a flexible and responsive human rights-based support model, where clients were triaged and prioritised based on the most significant barriers to accessing their rights. The service bridged considerable gaps in support for many people on insecure visas who are not eligible for mainstream services or safety nets like Centrelink, Medicare and social housing. For example, the RST coordinated support for people and families experiencing family violence at imminent risk of homelessness, food insecurity, precarity and a range of other life circumstances.

“Everything is very expensive right now, so I'm very grateful I can come to the ASRC to receive help. When we get our protection visa and I can work, I'll come back and offer the same kindness.”

- Aaliya*

RST was staffed by a multidisciplinary team formed by staff, volunteers and students in placements, including cross-cultural workers, social workers, paralegals and nurses. By June 2023, the team consisted of 10 staff members, plus volunteers and students, working across reception and other client-facing areas. As the service became more visible, it became more and more known to people in need. Greater access to our services was demonstrated through the substantial increase in new people accessing the ASRC after RST was introduced in September 2022. On average, the service supported approximately 150 new enquiries per week, plus additional consults to support clients who needed multiple appointments to meet their goals. Almost all respondents reported that the service they received at the RST was good or very good.

The decision to combine the Casework and RST Services and launch the Social Services model was a response to the increasing numbers of people often requiring urgent, short-term interventions and access to case coordination and cross-cultural support. While the Casework program supported 456 people, intaking more people into this model of support was not a sustainable option for the ASRC. The RST model is designed to provide crisis support and interventions. The trauma and hardship faced by people seeking asylum and refugees is compounded by the protracted and unfair asylum policies in Australia, an issue that cannot be resolved through working with individuals and families intensively nor through only assisting with immediate needs. The decision to provide a more accessible case coordination model will now enable the ASRC to support people with their most critical needs as many times as is needed while also using the evidence and stories of people to bolster our advocacy for systemic change.

The service reflects the ASRC's human rights-based approach and emphasis on empowerment. 97% of respondents felt that RST supported them in making decisions about their needs and goals.



“ I like to come to the ASRC because I feel less judged here than anywhere else. I came to Australia seeking protection and I found protection in this home.”

- Renu*

\$714K

spent on groceries
for the community

2,481

Myki top-ups were provided

5,431

pro bono health appointments
provided, equal to a value of
\$173,011.35

66,987

nights of shelter provided to people at
imminent risk of homelessness

342

new ASRC members supported
with immediate healthcare needs,
alongside 65 existing members
with ongoing healthcare needs

7,879

community meals served

469

households supported with other
basic needs, including utility bills,
household essentials, baby and child
items, phone credit and education
supplies

Nappy support provided

1,145

times for families
with young children

2,906

people being provided ongoing case
coordination support by June 2023





Voice of Lived Experience: Mohammad Daghagheleh

I was 15 years old when I started campaigning with the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre. My journey started by joining public events, which is also where my intrigue and interest in the legal and political system began. When I was younger, I decided the only way we could achieve justice was by changing harmful laws and policies. I've since come to the realisation that there are also other ways to drive meaningful change.

My family fled Iran in 2023. My father came first, alone, and was placed in the Manus detention centre for six months. I came afterwards, with my mother and my sisters. We were taken to the detention centre on Christmas Island, then the Darwin Detention Centre and finally we were brought to the community in Melbourne. I was 9 years old.

Just recently we were finally part of the Resolution of Status visas. After about 12 years of being on temporary visas, we are finally transitioning to permanency. It feels like hope.

The only thing I can remember is Australia.

Australia is my home, I've spent a lot more time in Australia than I spent in Iran. I did most of my primary schooling here, all of my secondary school education, my friends are all Australian - this is where I've made my memories. I consider this home.

When I was a child, I had all these ideals about politics. I had once believed that a career in politics was my calling. While my perspective on the way justice can be achieved has evolved over time, it is my experiences at the ASRC that have ignited my passion for learning the law and using it to help others.

Two years ago I volunteered with the ASRC triage team and I loved it. It was direct care, the clients were asking me questions about their matter and I was able to assist them. After that, I applied for a paralegal position at ASRC. When I first started I was scared, I doubted myself. I wasn't sure if I was equipped to do it but being in this environment changed everything - the people who work and volunteer at the ASRC are so genuine and caring.

Working as a paralegal, especially with my own lived experience, can be emotionally taxing, but it also has its benefits.

Sometimes clients feel like the person sitting on the other side of the computer has no idea what they're going through. When I see a client who seems worried or anxious, I let them know that I've been through the exact same visa determination process - in fact, I'm still going through it. I know their pain, I know their struggles.

It can be particularly tough when you have a client in a very similar situation to what you went through. You really sympathise.

You remember the feeling of being in this world of migration, of it shaping your whole life, and feeling inescapable. You'd give anything to just be ordinary and not think about being a refugee, or a person seeking asylum for a day.

I find motivation from my family, remembering the great sacrifices my parents have made to provide us with a safe and secure future. The best I can do is to try and offer the same to a person who is in the position I have been in, or the position I'm still in.

Working with this unique perspective offers some exceptional moments, too.

I remember the night when the government announced the news about the TPV/SHEV finally having a pathway for permanency. It was very sudden. Coming into work the following day, we had an influx of walk-ins all wanting more information on how and when they could apply. It was a surreal moment of joy and excitement for me because I was going through the exact same thing as them.

Seeing a sense of hope and relief on their faces felt great.

A day in the life of an ASRC paralegal

Mornings are spent responding to clients who come to the Centre with a new problem, or a new request. We get their details and fill out paperwork. If the client doesn't speak English then we can organise translation, and I'm lucky that I speak a bit of Arabic and Persian which helps me work with more people.

We're mindful of the stress and anxiety that waiting in a lobby causes people. We're currently trialling a new system to help reduce wait time and make the process less stressful.

When we're not looking after new clients, we're handling ongoing legal matters. There's a lot to be done.

I enjoy seeing tangible results from my efforts, the feeling I get from witnessing families being reunited and seeing a smile on the clients' faces is genuinely something I don't think I can get elsewhere.

Being part of the ASRC's Human Rights Law Program is special.

I've worked in migration law before, in a private setting, and from that, I know it's not always like it is at the ASRC. My leaders are always supportive and we debrief regularly, we work together on how we can handle things better. I appreciate it as it's not easy to find in the legal world. When I walk into the HRLP space, I feel like I'm walking into my family home.

Managing my academic studies alongside my work at the ASRC is a balancing act. I'm at university Monday to Wednesday and then I work the remainder of the week at the ASRC. I try to fit all my essays and study in on the weekends and make time to prepare for the 2XU triathlon I'm doing with my dad. It will be a special father and son moment to cross the line together and celebrate how far we've come.

My ultimate dream, after I complete my undergraduate studies and pursue a postgraduate law degree at the University of Melbourne, is to open a boutique migration law firm. I'd like to dedicate my weekend to pro bono work, specifically assisting those in need of offshore humanitarian visas.

Looking ahead, I'm just really excited to apply for citizenship, it will make things much easier. There are so many things that as a young person you want to experience: travel, visiting my sister overseas, a semester studying abroad. I feel like when I do get citizenship, hopefully sometime next year, I will feel a bit more Australian. I think it will genuinely be a life-changing moment for me.

Refugee Leadership, Advocacy & Systemic Change

FY23 was another busy year of advocacy and campaigning towards the systemic changes we need to ensure people seeking asylum can rebuild their lives in safety in Australia. Since the election of the Albanese Government, our ability to work directly with political representatives has increased. This shift brought some positive political commitments; however, real change has nonetheless been hard fought for and slow to achieve given the previous decade of policy failures that need to be undone. Some key wins we celebrated alongside the broader refugee movement included universal access to TAFE for people seeking asylum and refugees in Victoria, the evacuation of people from Nauru, the increase of 2,125 places in Australia's refugee humanitarian intake program and last but not least, the much-anticipated announcement of a pathway to permanency for people on TPV/SHEV.

What we're fighting for together: Our four priorities

In October 2022, we launched our four ASRC Policy and Advocacy priorities, following a six-month consultation process with people with lived experience:

1. **Fairness:** Refugees and people seeking asylum in Australia should have permanent protection and a clear resettlement pathway.
2. **Safety:** All people in Australia should have access to safety nets and mainstream social support, as well as having all of their human rights upheld.

3. **Freedom:** Arbitrary and indefinite detention must end. Australia is an international outlier, keeping refugees in detention with no effective independent oversight, minimum standards or timeframes.
4. **Support:** The ASRC prioritises supporting refugee-led campaigns. Any role for the ASRC's advocacy to play will be informed by the requests and joint efforts of refugee-led campaigns.

Two new departments to amplify our impact

In November 2023, the Advocacy and Campaigns department was split into two departments as part of the ASRC restructure so that our organisation could have a more significant impact from refugee leadership, campaigns and organising, and political and media engagement.

The new Refugee Leadership and Advocacy department brings together ASRC work on refugee leadership, advocacy, campaigns and community organising. The focus is on building the community movement for change through public campaigns and community organising, helping us to shift public opinion and shape the narrative around refugees and people seeking asylum in Australia. Our advocacy and campaigns work is guided by people with lived experience. We aim to provide more and more refugee leadership opportunities, and our team supports refugee-led campaigns by adding value and support where we can.

The second of our new departments is Systemic Change. This team covers media, policy, and political lobbying and includes the existing Detention Rights Advocacy Program. Our work here focuses on structural inequality, systemic policy failures and political decision-making, which results in the deprivation of human rights for people seeking asylum and refugees in Australia - from visa policies to healthcare, housing, education, and employment. The Systemic Change department also works closely alongside leaders with lived experience of seeking asylum, putting refugee voices inside the halls of parliament and in other key political arenas where decisions about their lives and futures are being discussed.

Our two new teams work closely together and with the rest of the organisation in a way that provides crucial insights and advice to inform all advocacy, campaigns, lobbying and media work. The team works closely with refugee leaders, both internal and external to the ASRC, to strengthen the influence of our grassroots community of asylum-seeker advocates and achieve systemic change together.

Law reform

In the past year, we saw real progress towards our advocacy goals of permanent protection for refugees and their families and a fair refugee status determination process for people seeking asylum. In February 2023, the federal government announced that approximately 19,000 Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) and Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV) holders would be eligible to apply for permanent Resolution of Status visas. As of June 2023, 3,000 visas granting permanent protection had been granted. We continue to advocate for swift visa processing to grant more people permanent safety in Australia.

In the same month, Ministerial Direction 80 was abolished. This policy discriminated against refugees who arrived by sea by deprioritising their family visa applications. Under the new policy, Ministerial Direction 102, all families will be entitled to have their family visa applications dealt with under the usual processes, regardless of how they travelled to Australia.

In December, the federal government also announced plans to abolish the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and replace it with a new federal administrative review body, which will address concerns regarding protracted delays and bias. The new appeals body will include a transparent and merit-based system of appointments. This is an important step towards establishing a fair and efficient refugee status determination process.

Fairness and a path to permanence

In October, we travelled to Canberra with Betia Shakiba, Vashini Jayakumar and Asma Mohammadrhim. The three women met with MPs and senators to speak about the impacts they experienced as refugees on temporary visas. Subsequently, crossbench MPs called on the Albanese Government to live up to its promise to transition refugees living with Temporary Protection and Safe Haven Enterprise Visas to permanence. As mentioned above, the Albanese Government formally announced a pathway to permanent residence for around 19,000 refugees living with the uncertainty of temporary visas. However, at least 10,000 additional people remain in limbo after the announcement with no clear pathway to permanence.

A fair and equal safety net

In September, as unions, employers, civil society and government assembled in Canberra for the Jobs and Skills summit, we launched a campaign calling on the Albanese Government to let people seeking asylum work, study and access a fair social safety net. Member for Goldstein Zoe Daniel tabled our 10,000 signature petition in Parliament



“I joined CAPP because it’s about allowing people to have a voice, but also using my voice and my lived experience to enable belonging, diversity and inclusion in Australia.”

- Sarah Charles, CAPP graduate

the following month after we brought politicians, academics, employers and people seeking asylum together in support.

In the lead-up to the May budget, our report Poverty Through Policy revealed how Federal governments have excluded 98% of people seeking asylum from any social safety net while denying thousands of people the right to work or study during a prolonged, inefficient refugee assessment process.

Freedom from detention

Significant advocacy work over not only the past year, but the past decade, at last saw the Australian government evacuate one of the last refugees they were holding on Nauru to Australia. When Nauru went into COVID-19 lockdown, we raised the alarm after refugees reported being unable to access food and medicine. In February, we joined with other human rights organisations to welcome the introduction to the Senate of the Migration Amendment Evacuation to Safety Bill 2023, by Senator Nick McKim. Unfortunately, the Labor Government and Liberal Opposition voted with One Nation to defeat the legislation, which would have offered immediate evacuation to around 160 refugees held in PNG and Nauru.

We continued our advocacy, lobbying individually for each person on Nauru and PNG, working with social workers, doctors, lawyers and advocates to raise awareness around the circumstances that people found themselves in, their deteriorating health conditions and dire predicament.

From the start of the year until July we saw 105 people evacuated from Nauru to safety in Australia. This was a huge moment of celebration for the ASRC, all of the people involved in the relentless advocacy that took place, and of course, the refugees who were personally impacted. Evacuation and freedom for people seeking asylum and refugees from Nauru to Australia was achieved through sustained individual and systemic advocacy, including Medevac briefs, risk notifications and public campaigns.

In June 2023, after the evacuation announcement, we launched a further campaign calling for the evacuation of dozens of refugees who have been abandoned in PNG. These refugees have remained in detention in PNG even after the Australian government ended offshore processing in December 2021.

Detention Rights Advocacy Program

Alongside others in the movement, ASRC’s DRAP and Systemic Change programs contributed to the medical evacuation of almost all people seeking asylum and refugees on Nauru, the

resettlement of more than 100 people to New Zealand, Canada and the USA, and a reduction on the numbers of people held in PNG, to 62 by the end of FY23. DRAP also sent 23 medical evacuation (Medevac) briefs to the Ministers for Home Affairs & Immigration, 60 risk notifications to authorities, and wrote to UNHCR on behalf of approximately 50 people seeking asylum and refugees held on Nauru and in PNG.

Supporting refugee-led leadership

In FY23, we scaled up to invest in and deliver grants focused on refugee leadership by providing \$199K of funding to 13 refugee organisations in Australia through the ASRC. This initiative will support ambitious refugee-led organisations to grow in maturity and deliver impactful results by providing them with leadership coaching, training and funding, including building stronger partnerships within the sector.

Thirty-nine refugee advocates completed our Community Advocacy and Power Program (CAPP) between July and December 2022. Participants worked on different advocacy projects, including organising rallies, speaking to media, organising community sports and art events, podcast training and meeting with MPs. CAPP alumni also had access to subsequent training after graduating, including further podcast training and a public speaking masterclass in Melbourne and a masterclass on public narrative and storytelling in Sydney.

Our Organising team has also worked to support and amplify community refugee campaigns across the country, including regular monthly Refugee Advocacy Sector Calls and grassroots strategies such as mobilising communities to contact MPs, attend rallies, facilitating events, and training grassroots advocates in the refugee sector.



Read more about the policies at <https://asrc.org.au/policies>

500

phone calls or WhatsApp messages sent to refugees and people seeking asylum in Nauru, PNG and onshore to provide trauma-informed support and case management

76

refugees and people seeking asylum were evacuated from Nauru to Australia, and a further 90 people were resettled from Nauru, PNG and Australia, to New Zealand

3,100

media mentions of ASRC across online news as well as radio and TV

57

participants completed the Community Advocacy and Power Program. There are now more than 120 CAPP alumni around Australia

13,190

supporters completed 15,098 digital campaign or organising actions in support of our campaigns to let people seeking asylum work, study and access a fair and equal social safety net

8,757

supporters completed 10,305 digital or organising actions in support of our campaigns to win freedom from arbitrary and indefinite detention

42

joint statements, letters and submissions sent to parliament and politicians, including providing evidence at 3 parliamentary hearings

8,780

supporters completed 11,659 digital or organising actions in support of our campaigns for a fair refugee process and permanence for people subjected to the unfair “fast track” system

Employment, Education & Empowerment – Integrating Vocational & Empowerment Pathways

Coming out of COVID, the ASRC continued to experience a huge demand for our services as the employment market, education providers, and the broader community opened up; allowing people seeking asylum with the right to work and study to once again fully pursue their professional and personal goals. While facing the challenges of increased demand during an organisational restructure, we continued to serve our community with the same dedication. We also looked for new ways to work with ASRC members to break down the barriers refugees and people seeking asylum face when trying to access education and employment opportunities. As a result of the ASRC's restructure, the Education, Employment and Empowerment Programs were merged in FY23, becoming the Vocational and Empowerment Pathways Program. This program restructure aims to streamline and align our services, goals and priorities to better support our community.

Pathways to financial independence: the Employment Program

The ASRC's Employment Program prioritises and supports people seeking asylum who face the greatest challenges in finding safe, suitable, and sustainable work in their preferred fields. We provide employment preparation, vacancy referral and placement support services to assist our members to become skilled, independent job-seekers. We advocate for access, equity and self-agency so that people have the opportunity to succeed on the job, and progress their careers and lives in Australia.

As part of our employment services, we offer warm referrals to the network of potential employers we are constantly developing. Special thanks go to the 184 employers who engaged with the ASRC's employment programs in the last year. Through partnerships, we source vacancies to match our members' vocational needs, skills and goals, across a wide range of sectors, businesses and organisations, including the ASRC's own social enterprises.

In FY23 we were thrilled to receive confirmation that the Property Council of Victoria would participate in our professional mentoring and leadership development program in the next financial year, which creates more mentorship opportunities for refugees and people seeking asylum. We also partnered with the Body Shop in their 2023 open hiring program for Christmas casuals. This allowed our clients priority access to this employment opportunity. We also established a partnership with Kinetic transport services to promote a trainee bus drivers program for women from asylum and refugee backgrounds.

We provided 316 employment support appointments in FY23. These appointments are a way to facilitate connections and intersections between our employment and education programs, helping to identify opportunities for people to upskill in their areas of interest and labour market demands. This includes one-on-one time with dedicated career coaches or employment advisor appointments to support people seeking asylum as they start or progress their career journey in Australia.

Learning as a Pathway for Independence in Australia: the Education Program

English for Work classes

The ASRC English program has provided free and accessible language classes at levels 1, 2 and 3, for many years. These classes typically catered for people who would otherwise be excluded from learning English due to visa conditions or significant personal challenges. The impact of COVID lockdowns led us to implement online classes in 2020 for level 2 and 3 learners. Still, many level 1 learners could not engage due to a lack of digital literacy skills and the English level limitations. As COVID restrictions relaxed in September 2022, we were once again able to run the face-to-face level 1 classes. Level 2 and 3 online classes were discontinued in June 2023.

Taking up a new vocation: ASVET

Of the total 530 people we provided with employment support in 2023, the ASRC assisted 143 people to engage in vocational training. The Asylum Seeker Vocational Education and Training (ASVET) program is a Victorian state government

initiative which until recently, only allowed people seeking asylum and temporary refugees holding one of the five bridging visa types to access subsidised Skills First Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses at domestic concession rates.

We were delighted when the Victorian State government announced that from the next financial year, many more people holding bridging visas and refugee visas will be able to access courses at the Skills First subsidised and concessional rate. This is a big win as many people have been excluded from education and training opportunities due to the prohibitive cost of international student rates.

Our employment team continued to conduct outreach in 2022 to promote ASVET to prospective scholarship applicants. We collaborate with universities, schools, refugee organisations, past scholarship recipients, and the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre. We provided advice to 61 individual applicants in 2022 about the application process, the documents they need and how to present their application. In late 2022, we launched a student webpage (<https://asrc.org.au/vet/students>) to complement the existing web page for providers and to ensure that information about the range of education options is readily available to prospective students.

The ASVET program also supports the ASRC's advocacy initiatives. For example, the ASVET team played a substantial role in advocating for expanded eligibility for people holding a range of bridging visas. We believe this ongoing advocacy has been instrumental in the Victorian state government's decision to expand the eligibility ASVET from July 2023.

In FY23 we also worked closely with the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industries and Regions to identify and navigate potential challenges regarding access to ASVET funding for people holding temporary visas during their transition to permanent visas. This collaborative advocacy and communication led to strategies and policies being developed to ensure that people could enrol or remain in courses even if they had already started or completed the process for transitioning to a Resolution of Status visa.

Building skills, staying connected: the Women's Empowerment Program

The Women's Empowerment Program (WEP) supports women seeking asylum and refugees in building skills and capacity to overcome barriers to their social and economic participation. Our program provides women opportunities to stay active and connected in the community, including holistic empowerment and wellbeing programs. A

key factor contributing to the success of this program is providing a safe and supportive space for women members to engage, learn from each other, form friendships and networks, and develop a sense of belonging.

The WEP supported 52 women members in FY23, including women who do not have work or study rights. Some of the events and activities we organised included a morning tea, backyard gardening workshops, and a photographic project in collaboration with the University of Melbourne. The women who participated in the PhotoVoice Research Project went on to present an exhibition of works on their everyday experiences and untold stories of uncertainty, hope, aspiration and resilience while seeking asylum. We also organised Mother's Day spa treatments in collaboration with Victoria University Beauty and Make Up School. Our members received manicure and pedicure treatments from the makeup school students. All of our programs focus on the physical and emotional wellbeing of our members, as well as offering opportunities to develop new skills and opportunities to connect with others in the community.

“ This (ASRC) is my home. I learnt English here, my English is now good, level 3, I studied and now I am working. I used to live with my sister, now I have my own place, I work and pay rent, I drive too and have a car. I am now independent, I earn my own money and I drive myself to work and other places.”

- Bassima, Women's Empowerment Program



530

people were provided with employment support, including 168 new referrals

605

Vocational Education Training appointments attended by ASRC members

1,415

hours of English for Work classes delivered

10

women supported by the ASRC to attend the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health 2022 Pace Leadership Program, a 7-week training focused on advocacy, participation and communication skills

184

employers engaged with the ASRC throughout FY23 to provide opportunities to refugees and people seeking asylum

Access to Justice & Protecting Human Rights: The Human Rights Law Program

The Human Rights Law Program (HRLP) is ASRC's legal team, a specialist service providing critical support to people forced to flee their country of birth because of persecution. This financial year, we worked on a total of 1,131 matters. This represents approximately a 6 per cent increase in matters from the previous financial year, even in a pressured funding environment and with organisational changes throughout FY23. Despite challenges, including an ever-increasing demand for our services, HRLP responded to more than 5,000 people, ran key strategic litigation, and redesigned the way we support ASRC members to have an even greater impact. The ASRC is one of the only services that works on complex cases across all stages of the refugee status determination process, including litigation.

The HRLP offers a unique service, offering full legal representation, advice and clinics to people who need help the most. We prioritise women and children fleeing violence and exploitation, including trafficking, people fleeing persecution for their sexuality, stateless people, people facing indefinite detention, people with serious health issues and people facing homelessness.

For many of our clients, we are the only service that can offer them legal assistance. It's alarming how little government support exists for refugees to access a lawyer, especially given the inaccessibility of Australia's convoluted, confusing and unjust visa processing system. Ensuring a stable visa status is essential for our community, providing the security people need to start rebuilding their lives.

Streamlining the way we work to help more people

In response to the pressured funding environment and restructures, our team developed a new model for our triage processes, duty program and legal clinics. The Temporary Visa Clinic also closed due to changes to the law and funding from the Federal Government to other legal services, which ASRC does not accept to maintain independence. We are now able to refer these matters to other services so we can focus on matters that are not funded elsewhere.

Our new intake and referral model, the Response and Support Team (RST), was established in December 2022. We have already achieved a 50 per cent decrease in wait times from the same time last year, where clients were waiting on average 16 days and now expect to wait no more than 9 days for assistance. The new model often allows the legal team to provide legal assistance and advice the same day they present to the centre. 335 new requests were resolved through RST such that no further intervention was needed, providing a significant increase in our ability to provide one-off substantive legal advice.

We have further supported the development of the new intake model by recruiting a full-time equivalent Senior Paralegal in November 2022, ensuring the community gets access to specialist support as soon as possible, and introducing continuous improvement processes. Together, these measures have increased the amount, quality, and speed of legal assistance we can provide. This service is built around ensuring dignity and agency to those presenting, things typically denied people when engaging with the refugee status determination process.

Delivering essential advice through specialist legal clinics

HRLP includes several specialist legal clinics to serve groups in the community that we are aware have specific legal needs and concerns. In 2023 our combined clinics offered 472 appointments.

- The Gender Clinic held over 180 appointments for 113 highly complex and vulnerable clients and family groups in the past financial year.
- The Dandenong Generalist Clinic held 281 appointments for over 197 of our clients residing in Melbourne's South Eastern areas.
- Before it closed in March 2023, the Temporary Visa Clinic held 116 appointments for 60 clients.
- Our Wednesday Night Clinic held 294 appointments for 207 individuals or family units in the 22-23 financial year.

Strategic litigation and advocacy to achieve systemic change

The outcomes of cases we take to Australia's courts and tribunals often have impacts that reach even farther than the life of the person seeking a visa decision. These legal decisions can set an important precedent for future cases and change the lives of many other people facing similar blocks to securing visa certainty. HRLP engages in strategic litigation before the Federal Court of Australia, Federal Circuit Court, and High Court on key legal issues faced by refugees and people seeking asylum, including the rights of children, protecting the rights of women who have experienced gender-based violence, and protection of the rights of refugees facing visa cancellation.

Our team also collaborates closely with the Refugee Leadership, Advocacy and Systemic Change team on several key campaigns. In FY23, we briefed politicians on proposed laws (such as the Migration Amendment (Evacuation to Safety) Bill 2023) and other legal issues that affect people seeking asylum and refugees. This included providing numerous submissions to Parliamentary and Senate Inquiries, such as the Government's inquiry regarding permanent migration.

We consulted extensively with the Federal Government and other stakeholders about issues impacting victim-survivors of gender-based violence. We advocated for and, in collaboration with others, achieved major changes in the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children to include migrants and women with temporary status. We also advised on the inappropriate treatment of women seeking asylum and people fleeing persecution for their sexuality in the refugee status determination process and the urgent need for reform regarding access to justice for people fleeing family violence, particularly women and children.

We continued to advocate for a resolution to the detention crisis, including highlighting the impact of detention on our clients and direct advocacy, with a major impact on our clients and the detention space more broadly.

With the broader refugee sector, we advocated for the Federal Government to fulfil their election commitment to provide a pathway to permanent protection for people on temporary protection visas and advised the government on legal avenues for the conversion.

Expertise of ASRC lawyers acknowledged

Beyond politics, our team's expertise is often sought out for community presentations and legal education. In March 2023 our Principal Solicitor was invited to present on the Refugee Law panel

at the Law Council of Australia Immigration Law Conference. She has also delivered professional development seminars for the broader legal sector at the Law Institute of Victoria. In February 2023, our Gender Clinic Coordinator attended and presented at the Queer Displacements Conference in Sydney hosted by the Forcibly Displaced Persons Network. In 2023, our principal solicitor was recognised as one of Australasian Lawyer's Most Influential Lawyers in 2023.

Acknowledging our fearless pro bono barristers

HRLP is fortunate to work with some extraordinarily committed members of the Bar who provide pro bono work for ASRC members who need to appear in Court or at the Tribunal, or who otherwise need specialist legal advice. We would like to acknowledge the support of NSW and Victorian Bars for their pro bono work in this space.

“The visa process was so difficult. They were questioning if I was really gay and if I was in danger to return home, even after I showed the threats I was getting. I was not given the right to work or access to Medicare while I waited, and on my first try, I was denied protection in Australia. I then found the ASRC and the lawyers helped me fight the decision.”
- *Taraneh, HRLP client



893

individuals and family groups
assisted by ASRC lawyers

1,131

legal cases worked on across the year,
a 6% increase on the previous financial year
despite a 25% reduction in staff capacity

1,009

responses to new requests
for legal assistance

230

successful visa applications,
in addition to other visa wins
in courts and tribunals

180

specialist Gender Clinic appointments
for 113 individuals and family groups

Success Stories in Court & Beyond: Significant Legal Cases in 2022-23

In FY23, ASRC lawyers obtained decisions in 12 full-representation litigation cases in Australia's federal courts, with an ultimate success rate of over 90 per cent. As a comparison, roughly 7% of cases succeeded in the FCFCOA from 1 January 2013 to 11 March 2021. We also won at least 15 cases in the General Division and 13 cases in the Migration & Refugee Division of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal in FY23. We lost just one case in each division. Litigation outcomes typically represent years of work – here is a glimpse at some of the wins we shared with our clients in the last year.

Reducing the discrimination experienced by migrant women and children

We assisted a single mother seeking asylum to have her daughter's Australian citizenship recognised by the federal government. The Department of Home Affairs refused to accept the overwhelming amount of evidence establishing the parent-child relationship between this child and her Australian-citizen father, which would deprive her of her right to citizenship. We challenged this in Australia's federal courts and succeeded, but the Department appealed the decision. On appeal, we were once again successful. The eight-year-old child is now recognised as a citizen, able to access the rights afforded to Australian citizens, which she had been denied throughout the six years it took to go through this citizenship process.

Beyond the impact on this family, the case will reduce the discrimination commonly experienced by other women and children whose migration applications are treated with suspicion and who are held to discriminatory and unjust standards of evidence, despite the particular barriers women with insecure status face, impairing their ability to access their rights. Already, services across Australia have written to us about the positive impact of this case on their clients' matters.

A visa and an escape from gender-based violence

A mother of three fleeing severe gender-based violence sought our help after she experienced sexual exploitation and blackmail and was in fear of harm to her children. As a result of these experiences, she lives with complex mental health issues, and her mental health was further impacted by the uncertainty and instability of navigating the protection visa status determination process.

ASRC lawyers approached our client's case holistically, ensuring she had the support she needed to stay safe, including family law services to protect her children. We also advocated for her case to be expedited to reduce the extraordinary pressure on her and her family, and were successful in obtaining security for her and her children. The ASRC has received growing demand for legal assistance with clients facing sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex (SOGII) issues.

Many of our clients were released after years in detention

Significantly in FY23, several ASRC members our lawyers had worked with for many years were released from detention.

One man, acknowledged by the government as a refugee but detained because he had provided a document his family had given him without knowing it was not issued with authority, was released on a temporary visa after approaching a decade in detention. We continue to advocate for permanent visa security for him.

Another client with schizophrenia and an intellectual disability, detained since 2016, was released after it was recognised that a forcible return to his country of origin would be a death sentence, for his health and other reasons.

Another man who had been held in detention for over seven years was released after over four years of advocacy by our team for his release. We fought alongside our client to have his humanitarian visa restored. Our client sought judicial review of the Minister's decision. He was initially unsuccessful, but on appeal, the Full Federal Court found in his favour and required the Tribunal to make a new decision. We continued to support the client in securing a positive outcome in the Tribunal, and he was finally reunited with his family after years of separation and is rebuilding his life in the community.

A woman who came to Australia as a child was also released after years of hardship and distress in detention. We continue to advocate for permanent security for her.


Another man who had arrived in Australia as a child was released into community detention after four long years, and advocacy including in court, meaning he can finally pursue his processes in safety and with his family.

We also succeeded in advocating for a man whose wife, children and other family were already in Australia to be transferred from Nauru to be with them.

Fighting for swift outcomes

A man sought our help after sudden changes to his situation. He was quickly assisted in our Clinics to lodge an application, and then offered full representation after complexities were identified. We ensured he had support by connecting him with other ASRC services and, after attendance at interviews and submissions, were able to secure a visa for him within nine months. The client said he could not have survived without this assistance. He is now working full-time and seeking avenues to evacuate his family to safety in a third country.

Figures for March 2023 show an average processing time of 793 days for protection visa applications – over 2 years. This does not include review processes, which can add years more to the process. This, coupled with the denial of work and study rights, can cause extreme harm, including homelessness and a decline in health. In all cases, we fight for outcomes at the earliest possible opportunity to limit the harm done to people as they wait.



“I could not have survived without the ASRC legal assistance. I am now working full-time and seeking avenues to evacuate my family to safety in a third country.”
- Motaz*

Impact Through Our Social Enterprises

The ASRC's two social enterprises - ASRC Catering & ASRC Cleaning - continued to create paid work, future employment pathways and financial security for refugees and people seeking asylum in FY23. We completed a change of management process that began with a review of our enterprises in 2021, setting us strong for a self-sustainable future. Our new social enterprise plan places even greater emphasis on supporting our staff and includes a restructure that introduces new opportunities at different levels for our staff.

ASRC Catering

The past year saw steady employment continued for catering staff and several new initiatives launched. With staff participation, we successfully launched ASRC Catering's Spring and Winter menus, including the introduction of halal chicken options for a business that had been primarily vegetarian. This introduction aimed to open new markets for us and attract clients who, without this option, would not consider ASRC Catering.

In the 2022 Christmas period, we also created ASRC Catering Gift Boxes for the first time to test customers' interest in retail options from the social enterprise. The boxes included specialist food items, including Harchana's Malaysian pineapple jam and Walima's Bangladeshi curry paste -original recipes of staff members Harchana and Walima.

We were thrilled to successfully secure a new van for ASRC Catering. The van was received from a grant from the Victorian Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions for a refrigerated vehicle to scale up our catering social enterprise. This meant we could expand our menu to include meat options and deliver food to customers. We have been able to expand our food offering and services to further geographic destinations and provide catering for larger events such as weddings.

In FY23, we opened Journeys Café by ASRC at the University of Melbourne's Parkville campus, and as

of June, we were nearly ready to open the second at the Southbank campus. This is a joint initiative between ASRC Catering and the University of Melbourne to create training and employment pathways for refugees and people seeking asylum, as well as to offer nutritious and affordable food to students at the University.

We are committed to creating a safe space where people with lived experience of seeking asylum can skill up and gain experience in the hospitality industry. The Journeys Café offers a mostly vegetarian menu that showcases the rich cultural heritage of our employees through delicious world flavours. This space has allowed our staff to gain skills in coffee making and customer service.

ASRC Cleaning

FY23 was a steady income year for ASRC Cleaning, even despite a drop in domestic customers probably attributable to reduced household budgets as the cost of living rose. Thanks to a growing number of commercial customers and jobs, overall revenue increased by \$77,610, representing a growth of 6% from the previous financial year. We also saw an increase in interest in our end-of-lease services, including professional carpet cleaning, with 107 services booked.

ASRC Cleaning also launched a Christmas gift box in 2022. The ASRC Cleaning Kitchen Essentials gift box was a pilot of 200 boxes which created more hours of paid employment for staff who assisted in their creation and packing over a span of three months. All profits went directly to supporting ASRC Cleaning staff with further training and development.

In FY23, ASRC Cleaning also secured two vans. One of them was generously donated by a commercial customer, FKA Children's Services, to whom we are incredibly grateful. These vans will ease the lives of our staff who currently mainly travel by public transport, and will allow us to increase our service offer.

Growing future employment options: pathway development planning

ASRC Cleaning employed 10 more staff than in the previous financial year and began to work more closely with sector partners, who supported us with referrals and post-placement support options. ASRC Catering also grew its team by 11 staff, with some new team members having never worked in hospitality.

With generous support from The Noel and Carmel O'Brien Family Foundation, the social enterprises have actively advanced their Pathway Support Program for employees with lived experience. Launched in the inaugural year, the initiative boosted workforce confidence, enhanced capabilities, and significantly impacted

our leaders, fostering overall success and growth in our Social Enterprise businesses. In FY23, a new role, the ASRC Social Enterprise Employee Engagement Coordinator, was introduced, allowing staff to create ongoing Pathway Development Plans (PDPs). Resources from this grant support staff in training, obtaining qualifications, and developing diverse skills, such as hospitality, forklift operation, commercial cleaning, English language proficiency, mental health and disability awareness, and office skills. This comprehensive initiative aligns with the goal of fostering growth and success within Social Enterprise businesses.

Both social enterprises offer pathways for the staff with lived experience to grow in confidence and move into leadership positions. ASRC Catering offers 4 team leader positions, and ASRC Cleaning has 2 team leaders and 1 senior team leader. 90% of our social enterprises' staff have lived experience of seeking asylum.

Social Enterprises

Case Study

"I am from Malaysia, I can't believe that I have been here in Australia for six years. In my own country, I didn't go anywhere: just work, temple, home - sometimes I went shopping with my grandma.

When I arrived, I was scared to meet people but slowly I learned that I don't need to be scared here. The first time I went to my caseworker's house, I asked a few people for directions, everyone I asked was kind - men and women.

When I first arrived it was very hard to get a job, cover letters, references, certificates, paperwork - these things weren't needed in my country.

I started ASRC Catering on May 24th 2021. I was nervous, because in my country I had only cooked and cleaned at home.

This was my first experience, my first job.

How I cook at home, is how I cook here - it's my style. Sambal with yellow lentils and vegetables, bubur, green lentils with coconut, pandan, fried noodles - these are the flavours of Malaysia.

Everyone here is very nice, the mentor chefs and the admin staff - wonderful people. They treat everyone like a family. If you don't know something, or you don't understand, you can simply ask and they will teach you calmly, step-by-step. The staff have helped me with many problems.

In that kitchen, I learnt a lot of things: how to be patient with other people and how to work quickly when times are busy.

I have a 9-year-old son who goes to primary school here. The advice I gave him is, "if you want to get something, you have to say something. If you want anything, you must be brave".

This year, I am very excited to learn how to use computers and write emails - I enjoy learning. My 9-year-old son tells me, "Mumma, you have to learn!".

I'm so happy to work at ASRC Catering."

Tulasi, ASRC Catering team member, leader at Journeys Café



71

people with lived experience of seeking asylum employed at ASRC Cleaning

30,373

hours of paid employment provided through ASRC Cleaning

30

people with lived experience of seeking asylum employed at ASRC Catering

18,376

hours of paid employment provided through ASRC Catering

3

new vans to expand our services, one for catering and two for cleaning

The Community of Compassion in Action

FY23 showed us the power of the ASRC community more than ever. As well as the extraordinary outpouring of support in response to our Save the ASRC appeal, our supporters were also busy organising cake stalls, comedy nights, art auctions and participating in our regular ASRC events like Feast For Freedom, Run4Refugees and the World Refugee Day Telethon. Thank you to each and every person who generously gave their time, material support or who made a donation or purchased something from the ASRC Shop. We appreciate each and every contribution you have made towards providing essential services and the hope for a safer future for people seeking asylum and refugees.

The community fundraising events that power our work

We saw incredible community support for our events in FY23, with over 500 people hosting a Feast for Freedom, over 100 people taking part in public running events with Run4Refugees and more than 200 people in our KMS of Compassion sport event. The combined efforts of these event participants raised approximately \$591k in support of people seeking asylum.

World Refugee Day Telethon powered by the ASRC

On 20 June 2023, we celebrated our 8th World Refugee Day Telethon powered by the ASRC, continuing to focus on embedding the voices of people with lived experience of seeking asylum and working more closely alongside refugee leaders to help highlight the issues that matter to the community. All stories told as of World Refugee Day focused on people seeking asylum, refugees or people with lived experience of seeking asylum, highlighting their voices, experiences and the values they want to see in the community,

The World Refugee Day Telethon is a celebration and an opportunity for unity and a conversation for change – it's where the community comes together to create a fairer, more welcoming and compassionate Australia.

In FY23, the full-day event established a physical call centre at the Footscray Centre, staffed by ASRC staff and volunteers, plus key opinion makers, including celebrities and social media influencers. All volunteers took donations by phone over the course of the day. We also emphasised social media engagement given a trend in supporter preference for engaging online. The event is marketed predominantly through social media, as well as via SMS and email, still, traditional media remains in the mix and supporters can read the stories in some publications.

In FY23, 8,220 people donated to the ASRC Telethon, raising more than \$1.4 million. Forty key opinion makers also participated in the promotion, supporting the event through social media networks, media connections or donating high-value items for the auction.

A special thanks also to the match funding partners who supported this event, including Maurice Blackburn Lawyers, Tenet Recruitment, the Da Gama Pinto Foundation, Bloch Friis-O'Toole Family and other anonymous donors, who doubled the donations at key hours throughout the day, helping us reach our target.

Coming together to Feast for Freedom

In F23, Feast for Freedom raised \$387,470, with 514 feasts hosted and 4,420 people donating to a feast. The event is a shared food experience in aid of people seeking asylum and a celebration of what unites us. Individuals are invited to register to host their own fundraising feast with friends, family or colleagues and are challenged to cook recipes gifted by refugee cooks. A very special thanks to our refugee cooks Benny and Esmat, who generously provided recipes for this year's event.

Other community fundraising

Our compassionate community continues to support us in many other traditional and non-traditional ways, raising approximately \$284k last FY. From schools and kinders fundraising for us with bake sales and non-uniform days, through to church and parish collections, op shop sales, gift wrapping fundraisers and proceeds from art exhibitions and concerts, we were once again humbled by the compassion and commitment of communities around Australia to fighting for fairness for refugees.

Tom Ballard, together with Wil Anderson, hosted a fantastic fundraising show at the 2023

Melbourne Comedy Festival. This special night of A-grade comedy excellence featured a secret line-up of the very best comedians and raised over \$25,000.

Trinity Gardens School in South Australia gathered their community together for a beautiful Indian Celebration Night to raise funds for the ASRC. Delicious food, dancing and detailed henna painting were all part of the fun, with the school community raising \$600 to help support our food, health and housing programs.

ASRC Shop

For the festive season in 2022 we collaborated with refugee Hazara artist Razia Ghazal to create a beautiful range of items for our Festive Gift Guide, available for sale at the ASRC Shop. Along with delicious hampers from our social enterprise, ASRC Catering & a gift box from ASRC Cleaning, plus favourite staples, almost 1,800 supporters purchased items throughout the year. FY23 ended for the ASRC Shop with sales of nearly \$197k.

The ASRC Shop provides a different experience for our supporters through the purchasing of ethically sourced and made pieces that show their values. To ensure the sustainability of ASRC Shop, we made the strategic decision to open only in peak periods such as the festive season in November and December and June for World Refugee Week. This approach was adopted to maximise revenue, reduce costs and allow the ASRC to continue to focus on the essential services we provide to our community.

Amplifying our voice with digital platforms

We continued to reach new communities through our digital content in FY23. We generated more than 36 million impressions across all social media platforms, which included 1.8 million views, likes and shares. The total audience of ASRC grew by 3.3% in FY23, with the organisation reaching a total of 483,368 people across our owned platforms.



“For all refugees, ASRC means hope. When I came to Australia, I only knew a few words of English: yes, no, hello. I started English classes at the ASRC, and since then I have been volunteering for more than 7 years, first in the kitchen, then in the food bank. I know that this place is so helpful for refugees.”

- Esmat, hero cook Feast for Freedom 2023



“It’s good to support the ASRC so they can continue the good work they are doing. They have so many things they do for people; supplying medication, giving Myki for transportation, finding jobs for people seeking asylum. People who don’t have food come here to eat. Giving is very good.”

- Benny, hero cook Feast for Freedom 2023

\$1,416,918.25

raised at the 8th World Refugee Day Telethon powered by the ASRC

825

people participated Feast for Freedom, KMs of Compassion, Run4Refugees

160

bake sales, bike rides, market stalls and other community fundraising events organised by ASRC supporters

Our online community grew

3.3%

across social media platforms

1,826,386

engagements with our digital content



VOLUNTEER

“I have been volunteering at the ASRC for just over 10 years in various roles. I started in Employment when we were in North Melbourne and then moved to Legal Triage for a few months before landing in Health where I was for about 7 years. I’ve recently moved to Fundraising - just for a change.

I also work in the online shop each Christmas which is fun and amazing to see how many wonderful people there are out there buying the merchandise and spreading the word.

This volunteering journey was triggered many years ago by John Howard with his infamous declaration during the Tampa crisis. From then on, I wanted to help.

I’ve always found volunteering incredibly satisfying, I get to hang out with like minded people and I really value being able to stay up to date and inform people about the work of the ASRC.”

– Gillian Fawcett, Volunteer



CORPORATE PARTNER

“Aesop is a proud partner of the ASRC. At the heart of the Aesop Foundation, we want to contribute to a fairer society for all.

ASRC are leading the way to change the future for refugees in Australia. Our partnership extends beyond grantmaking, Aesop colleagues are giving their time and talent through volunteer initiatives, supporting ASRC’s development. By working with and advocating for refugees, and supporting training initiatives, ASRC is helping refugee leaders to ensure they are heard at the highest levels, and ultimately having a seat at the table where decisions about refugee rights are made.”

– Catherine O’Dea, Chair of the Aesop Foundation

THE COMMUNITY



“The ASRC provides a holistic approach in addressing the challenges refugees encounter.

Everyone has seen the photos and heard the accounts of the conditions that so many people seeking asylum have to endure, there is an overwhelming feeling of ‘what can be done to help?’, “what can I do?” - I have found the ASRC to be the answer.

It is great to be able to ‘do something to help’ by supporting the ASRC. Not only are the rights of refugees protected but the Australian community reaps the benefits of the work of ASRC.

Last year, a Refugee Resource Hub (RRH) was opened in Dandenong, this houses several charities in the one building. So instead of different charitable groups trying to operate on their own, now with RRH there is a partnership combined approach to social change and service delivery to help in an outer Melbourne area.”

– Leonie Van Raay, Donor



“The Asylum Seeker Resource Centre is not only my place of work, it’s home. The people I work with and welcome, feel like family.

I first arrived in Australia in 2014, as a refugee. The ASRC was the first place of hope I had. Since then, I have been empowered on my pathway into my current role as the Head of Refugee Resource Hub in Dandenong.

As someone with lived experience, working with people seeking asylum and the refugee community, brings me closer to achieving my goals of seeing refugees live safely and sustainably, whilst being treated equally and fairly.

One of the things I am most proud of is being part of an intentionally diverse team at the RRH.. We have created an environment of support and welcoming for people who come from a range of different backgrounds to have their stories heard, to feel safe and to feel free.

- Qutbiyallam Timor, Head of Refugee Resource Hub

535

volunteers gave their time to ASRC, including

15

volunteers with lived experience of seeking asylum

150

community members greeted each day by the ASRC's volunteer reception team at our centre in Footscray

\$5,367,984

is the estimated wage cost volunteers bring with their time and expertise back to the ASRC*

128,400

hours of time and expertise provided by volunteers

42

volunteers completed more than 10 years volunteering with the ASRC

A Movement Driven by Dedicated Volunteers

The first face and voice people see and hear when they visit the ASRC for support is a volunteer. Volunteers are the spine of the ASRC and have been since the organisation began 22 years ago. The impacts of COVID saw a decline in volunteering for many organisations, including the ASRC, leading to an increase in the organisational investment in employees to meet organisational demands. Still, our core remains attached to the volunteer spirit that for decades supported the ASRC.

Rebuilding our volunteering capacity has been a critical area of focus. While volunteering has steadily been growing, the increasing cost of living and the limit on people's availability remain challenges. 535 extraordinary people continued to support us by volunteering in FY23.

Our volunteer reception team is the gateway to the ASRC, welcoming and responding to more than 150 people each day with their inquiries in FY23. Our Community Food Services Program volunteer army expanded to cover the RRH Foodbank in Dandenong and we were able to re-launch the Community Meals Program relying almost uniquely on volunteers cooking up delicious, culturally familiar lunches for clients to share in our community dining area.

Volunteer Teachers continued to support clients with level 1, 2, and 3 English for Work Classes.

“I started volunteering for the ASRC because I value its independence and relentless courage to stand up to our public officials. I've met loads of lovely people in the process and I'm so so grateful that I can contribute to the ASRC's important work!”
- Kate Zwar, ASRC Volunteer

improving people's English language skills and providing an opportunity for clients to come together and build connections while learning. The Health Program volunteers, currently formed by 43 active health practitioners, continued to support people through the incredible services of medical and health professionals donating their time in areas including psychiatry, mental health, general practice, physiotherapy, immunisation, acupuncture, and nursing. This tiny snapshot of the contribution of volunteers is only a small glimpse of the immense contribution volunteers make to the ASRC.

As well as being critical for frontline services, including in areas like the Human Rights Law Program, ASRC volunteers also power our work behind the scenes in operational and corporate roles, including facilities management, administration, marketing and fundraising. This keeps our organisation sustainable and functional.

In our volunteer engagement efforts in FY23, one of our primary goals was to create a meaningful and fulfilling experience for our volunteers. To achieve this, we initially outlined a strategy focusing on personalised volunteer roles that align with individual skills and interests. We established regular communication channels, including feedback sessions and a weekly volunteer bulletin.

Our Volunteer Engagement team created an ongoing recruitment process via the ASRC website. Instead of recruiting every two months, programs can now recruit on a rolling, as-needed basis. This allows teams to better plan for their volunteering needs and better respond to program changes. It also provides a better experience for external supporters who are interested in volunteering with the ASRC. As a result, programs are able to onboard and train volunteers more quickly to assist members.



*all volunteers contribute with an average of 6 hours per week by 40 weeks of the year - Calculation made using volunteering.com.au/resources-tools/cost-of-volunteering-calculator/

Organisational Reflection

In the first half of FY23, the ASRC saw a sharp decline in public donations due to the cost of living crisis, inflation, interest rate rises and the aftermath of COVID. At the same time, we experienced a sharp increase in several of our service delivery costs, for instance, a 30% increase in emergency housing costs for clients and a 42% increase in costs to provide utilities to people in need, amongst other services. For the first time in our history, we saw a 70% drop in food donated to the ASRC Foodbank, impacting our ability to focus the funds donated to other service delivery.

This led to the Save the ASRC emergency appeal in February 2023, where we were humbled by the generosity and support we received. Our work in the months that followed was focused on building greater sustainability to ensure we are here to do what we do best, providing care and opportunity for our community, and a renewed focus on governance and transparency.

How we grew after a time of crisis

In the months that followed this financial crisis, we went through a significant process of consultation and internal change to ensure we could continue to serve our community. We spent six months seeking the input of staff, volunteers, donors, stakeholders and - most importantly - the people with lived experience we work alongside and serve.

Our new financial operating environment meant we needed to reduce our annual operating budget

by approximately \$6.0 million, effective from July 2023. This meant redesigning our organisation to be 22% smaller to ensure we live within our financial means. We are working towards further income diversification and expansion of our fundraising portfolio to manage risk. We remain committed to keeping our community, and stakeholders informed about how we track now and into the future.

Strengthening governance

In FY23, we began a comprehensive process of strengthening the ASRC's governance and procedures to ensure a sustainable and accountable organisation. This included a complete review of existing governance structures, which will lead to developing new policies and improving those we already have in place. This will ensure that we are accountable in our work and achieve the best possible outcomes for our community. We are also developing a new intranet and other communication channels to ensure all staff can easily access and remain informed about policies and procedures.

Delivering on Strategic Plan - Year 2 targets

Despite navigating a painful and difficult organisational restructure in the middle of FY23, we entirely delivered the second year targets of our strategic plan, on top of our business-as-usual activities. Over the year, we have:

- implemented a human rights-based model of practice, including an investment of \$199K in refugee leadership and sector capacity across 13 refugee-led organisations.
- championed a far more diverse organisation, growing representation of staff with refugee backgrounds to 57%
- invested in program quality and impact measurement frameworks
- ensured that all our budgeting, forecasting and finance systems have been matured and have been independently verified and tested
- put systems in place to ensure that governance and risk management are now at a standard that will protect us
- continued to work towards income diversification and expansion of the fundraising portfolio, including from donors, philanthropic funders and State government.

Prioritising program quality and impact

In FY23, the ASRC established its new Program Quality and Impact department to ensure we are doing our best work for and with people seeking asylum and working in a trauma-informed,

rights-based and culturally responsive way.

This new team builds on existing learning and continuous improvement initiatives with the addition of more structured staff learning and development processes. We have built on and redesigned existing systems and practices with an emphasis on the following:

- safety in our physical, psycho-social and cultural environment
- sustainability and scalability in our ways of working
- systems to ensure data quality and integrity for program monitoring, evaluation and reporting purposes
- responsiveness to the rights, needs, goals and challenges of our community.

This work will strengthen the ASRC's capacity for impact reporting in the medium to long-term. It will also enhance our transparency and accountability to members, donors, funders and stakeholders.

A more diverse organisation

We couldn't have the impact we do without a diverse organisation. Ensuring that ASRC staff come from a range of diverse backgrounds, and include people with direct experience of seeking asylum is a central strategic goal. As an organisation, we have committed to ensuring 50% of our staff are people with lived experience of seeking asylum. We have already achieved this target and currently sit at 57% representation.

In consultation with our Lived Experience Advisory Group, in FY23, we progressed our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy in preparation for its release in FY24. The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy will be supported by a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, including training to continuously improve the ability of all staff to work alongside people with lived experience of seeking asylum. We also reviewed our recruitment and retention strategies to improve the experience of people with lived experience as a priority, and then improve the experience of our broader workforce. This includes committing to having a person with lived experience on interview panels.



To read more about our diversification and sustainability plans, please read our Sustainability Report <https://asrc.org.au/annual-reports/>

Refugee Resource Hub: Building Community in Dandenong

2023 was the first year since the Dandenong Refugee Resource Hub officially opened its doors in May 2022, and has since welcomed more than 2,500 refugees and people seeking asylum from the City of Greater Dandenong and surrounding areas, including Cardinia, Casey, Frankston, Knox and Monash. The RRH is designed as a place of community and a one-stop-shop where people can seek services and information, from education, employment and training to legal, health, social and women's services. The huge demand for services in Melbourne's South East reflects the increasing number of people seeking asylum and refugees living in and around Dandenong, many of whom have complex needs. The RRH brings multiple support services and organisations together under one roof to better help refugees with their daily and long-term needs to rebuild their lives in safety.

Connection and collaborative impact in our first year

The Greater Dandenong City Council area has the largest number of people seeking asylum of any Victorian municipality. In 2023, the ASRC worked in partnership with support organisations, local government, and advocates to provide the best possible support and services, recognising that in a diverse sector and an ever-evolving political environment, no single organisation can address all of the complex needs of people seeking asylum.

The RRH services spread across six priority areas identified from community consultation: housing, English language skills, employment, legal assistance, material assistance, and physical and mental health. These services are delivered in

collaboration with our eight co-locating partners and two virtual partners who operate off-site.

Getting people straight to the right service - RRH Access and Support Team

Similar to the Response and Support team in Footscray, our RRH Access and Support team is a rapid service delivery team, providing health, legal, casework and other assistance and support in-person at the Dandenong Hub, including referrals to other external service providers where appropriate.

The team comprises a range of professional staff, students doing their placements and volunteers who assist drop-in and referred clients, as well as providing information and referrals to relevant services. This includes referrals to employment, education, health, housing, food, and financial services, many of which we are fortunate to have on-site at the RRH, as the hub was designed for this purpose. We also regularly provide warm referrals to other local services, including Monash Health, Foundation House, Red Cross, Wayss, and Dandenong City Council.

A Foodbank for Dandenong

In 2023, we were proud to successfully launch the RRH Foodbank. The service provides groceries and essential items for eligible members. We supported 333 households each week and are grateful for the ongoing dedication of our 21 volunteers who work across three shifts per week to make the service delivery possible.

We are also grateful to the local community, including local schools and church groups, who have generously donated food to the food program. Chobani and Soap Aid are both based in Dandenong and provide all of our yoghurt and soap for free. While we are very grateful for these donations and partnerships, we still purchase most of our supplies from wholesalers and Coles, spending over \$10,000/month to meet the demand. We also partly rely on Foodbank Victoria in Dandenong weekly for donations or low-cost supplies. Most fresh produce comes from a local Afghan business at the Dandenong market, allowing us access to fresher, more affordable fruit and vegetables while we support refugee-led businesses.

Accessible legal and visa services

At our Dandenong Hub, the ASRC Human Rights Law Program (HRLP) provided legal services, including a generalist clinic, which held 281 appointments for 197 clients, and the specialist Temporary Visa Clinic.

Due to the 2023 restructuring process, major service redesign was identified and needed, including the closure of the Dandenong generalist legal clinic. These changes will continue to be

implemented into next year to ensure we provide the best services possible to the community. Members were referred to local organisations, and others continued consulting in person and remotely with the Footscray team.

Supporting people to access education and employment

We work with people in Dandenong, as we do in Footscray, as they identify and work towards their education and employment goals.

The ASRC Education program provided a total of 134 Asylum Seeker Vocational Education and Training (ASVET) appointments to help people into the program, including 43 referrals to training providers and 42 scholarship appointments.

Regarding employment support, the team received 87 referrals to work with people ready to start their pathway to meaningful employment. The ASRC Employment program also facilitated 267 career coach appointments with the support of volunteers, helping people seeking asylum find a way forward to achieve their employment goals.

65 referrals were provided to external agencies who support ASRC members by offering them free support, training and cultural and practical advice to find industry-specific opportunities or remuneration information.

As part of the impact delivered by our partners in supporting people's education and employment needs, we can highlight the work of SisterWorks, one of the partners operating from the RRH. They supported 107 women from refugee and migrant backgrounds living in the Dandenong area to graduate from their Employment Pathways Program, with 46% gaining employment shortly after graduating.

Service partners

Organisations co-located at RRH with ASRC:

OneSight EssilorLuxottica Foundation.

Aims to help eliminate uncorrected poor vision in one generation. In FY23, they assisted 104 people with their eyesight and eye health and provided 87 pairs of glasses at the RRH.

Multicultural Youth Support Services

Seeks to build resilience in young people who come from marginalised multicultural communities.

SisterWorks

Their mission is to support women from refugee, asylum seeking or migrant backgrounds to improve their confidence, mental wellbeing, sense of belonging and economic outlook.

Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre

Delivers services to newly arrived and established people with migrant and refugee backgrounds in the northern and western Melbourne areas, working with individuals and families to help them successfully settle into all aspects of community life.

Refugee Council of Australia

As an advocacy organisation, RCOA is the national umbrella body for refugees and people seeking asylum and those who support them. Their core purpose is to promote the development of humane, lawful and constructive policies towards refugees and people seeking asylum.

Australian Hazara Women's Friendship Network (AHWFN) provides women from Hazara refugee and migrant backgrounds with the opportunity to feel comfortable, supported and empowered in their communities. One of their most interesting initiatives is their 6-day Learning Driving course, especially designed and delivered for women wanting to recover or discover their independence in Australia.

Orangesky

Provides laundry and shower pop up services focusing on creating a safe, positive and supportive environment for people who may be feeling disconnected from the community. In FY23, they delivered ten shifts of laundry services to the community of refugees and people seeking asylum who otherwise would have had a difficult time washing their clothes and other items.

Centre for Migrant Refugee Health

The Centre for Migrant and Refugee Health (CMRH) is a not-for-profit organisation with a public health focus to improve mental health and well-being for Australian migrant, refugee, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.

Off-site partners:

South-East Monash Legal Service

South-East Monash Legal Services provides free and confidential legal services across the south-east, including the City of Greater Dandenong, Casey and Cardinia.

Monash Health Refugee Health and Wellbeing

Provides comprehensive primary care and tertiary services, including infectious diseases, paediatrics and psychiatry.

“...this centre held my hand like a saviour and connected me to life when I was in the most difficult situation...when I was disappointed with everyone and everything.”
- Walina*



2,642

total drop-in visits by community members to RRH

2,500

people seeking and refugees received support from the RRH, our co-locating partners or through other partnerships

871

people supported by RRH foodbank, with 1943 total grocery shopping visits made

8

specialist partner organisations providing services under the one roof, 2 partners providing services off-site

267

career coach appointments facilitated by the Employment program

134

ASVET appointments provided by the Education program to help people access free vocational education

197

people received legal support at the Dandenong RRH

Securing the Future of Our Organisation

Fundraising, Philanthropy & Partnerships

In FY23 the ASRC received strong financial support from across our community. We were particularly humbled by the generosity of all who gave to our Save the ASRC Appeal and of course the ongoing support from all of our donors, trusts, foundations, corporate partners, and local and state government grantmakers. This combined support meant that we could continue to provide essential services and fight for systemic change for all refugees and asylum seekers. However, we were impacted by a challenging economic landscape which saw an overall decline in our fundraising income.

Our community of supporters came together like never before

In February 2023, we had seven weeks to save the ASRC from possible closure as a result of a downturn in income due to tough economic times. We were truly humbled by our community of 22,631 individual donors who supported us with donations of over \$5,163,000 in 19 days.

An individual gift, either on occasion or on a monthly basis, is the cornerstone of what makes the ASRC's work possible. Individual donations from our passionate supporters go towards where the need is greatest. This is because, unlike some grants and other funding streams, community donations aren't tied to a particular area of work. This allows us to apply funds to where the needs are greatest at the time.

Donations from our individual donors isn't tied to a particular area of work so it allows us to be flexible and apply it to where the need is greatest at that time which means we can cover all of our costs eg. back office staff, M& E etc

The incredible generosity of our donors saw more than 144,592 donations made to an ASRC appeal,

event or community fundraising activity, whether as a one-off general donation or as a regular monthly gift. We also welcomed around 14,170 new people into our donor network with a first-time gift.

Our Individual Giving team was focused on growing our Regular Giving program. Monthly donations provide a sustainable and reliable income stream that allows us to plan ahead and budget appropriately. At the end of the financial year, we had 9,761 people in our monthly giving program, an increase from 8,400 at the end of the previous financial year, representing a 16 per cent increase.

We are always moved by those in our community who choose to remember the ASRC in their Will; last year five people left a legacy gift to support our work.

Grants

The goal of our Grants team is to secure sustainable and long-term funding to deliver services as a part of ASRC's broader strategy to diversify our fundraising streams. This past financial year, the ASRC continued to receive vital support from the philanthropic sector, local government and the Victorian State Government to help run our essential programs and services.

However, the grants portfolio saw a reduction in size of more than 50% from the previous FY. This can be largely attributed to a reduction in healthcare and COVID-related grants as pandemic funding wound down.

As part of the ASRC's funding diversification strategy, our grants team worked closely with a varied range of philanthropic organisations, and state and local government agencies to raise funding for crucial ASRC programs. Over the 2022-23 financial year, the grants team received an incredibly generous grant from The Noel and Carmel O'Brien Family Foundation for the next three years. This was the largest single grant income recognised towards an ASRC program, and will enable our Social Enterprise team to provide life-changing opportunities and support to our members.

One of the team's primary goals in FY23 was to secure funding for the ASRC's largest work stream, Humanitarian Operations & Resilience. The team was successful in securing new grant funding from the Department of Health and the Department of Families Fairness and Housing as part of the Victorian Government's efforts to improve mental health outcomes in the community. The funding was applied flexibly in

accordance with our aims to provide holistic support to members and provided vital resources for our Housing and Aid, Health, Social Services, and Community Food programs. These programs are some of the largest in the organisation, and the grants allowed the ASRC to provide sustainable support services to members.

Overall, the Grants team secured more than \$4 million in funding from government grants, philanthropic trusts and foundations (against a budget of \$3.7m) in order to provide essential health and wellbeing support for ASRC members.

Philanthropy and partnerships

Over 160 families, individuals, and financial intermediaries made up our community of philanthropic donors in FY23. We also had 20 corporate partnerships give either financial or in-kind support.

For the World Refugee Day Telethon 2023, we secured \$105,000 from five matched givers - generous major donors and corporate partners of the ASRC. This match-giving activity was done across four time slots when we encouraged the community to give and have their donations doubled. As a result, we raised a total of \$211,902.42 during the hours of power.

The Yarra Trams Community Partnerships Program supported the ASRC's 'Welcome Refugees into the Workforce' awareness campaign in 2023. The campaign aims to build community understanding and empathy for the challenges refugees face when joining the workforce. Thanks to the Yarra Trams partnership, a photographic portrait of Marjan, one of the refugee heroines of the campaign, featured on a wrapped tram that travelled on tram routes 48 and 109 in Melbourne from May to September 2023.

We also had a very generous \$50,000 donation from major donors Steve and Vonnie Frazer that was put towards our Community, Advocacy & Power Program to train the next generation of leaders of the refugee community. They were both present for our Melbourne CAPP graduation, where they saw the direct impact of their donation by listening to all the inspiring stories and course highlights mentioned by our graduates.

To find out more about the impact of the Noel and Carmel O'Brien Family Foundation, go to page 21



“Our foundation supports the ASRC, knowing that refugees in Melbourne would have no one else to turn to for support if the organisation did not exist. The ASRC meets so many of their needs by providing essential services such as health, food and legal aid to this vulnerable community.”

- Mitty Williams,
The Kimberley Foundation

11,338

individuals gave monthly donations, including 3,676 new monthly donors in the last financial year alone

14,170

people gave to the ASRC for the first times

133

major donors who gave \$3,930,488

29

grants from trusts and foundations totalling \$1,665,333

9

local and state government grants totalling \$2907,637

20

corporate partners supported our work, giving \$345,427

Financial Performance

In the 2022/23 financial year, the organisation initiated a significant financial turnaround, and the year ended well with a modest \$1.7m surplus (\$1.5m comprehensive result) (FY2021/22 \$-5.3 deficit). This was achieved thanks to the Save the ASRC Appeal, which ensured organisational financial stabilisation. This is a solid result in the current environment and a testament to the dedication of our supporters.

Revenue has increased by 19% (\$4.7m) since the prior year to \$29.8m, with a lift from the Save the ASRC Appeal (\$5.2m). This emergency appeal offset a decline in other fundraising income streams. Our reported revenue increase also stems from the ASRC recognising in-kind donations for the first time. We have included this income to ensure our donors' contributions of all types are recognised and reported, and in order to capture our impact holistically. In-kind income for FY22/23 was \$0.8m. We are also proud that our Social Enterprises contributed to income growth (+\$0.3m, 10%) coming out of the pandemic.

Overall, the ASRC's expenditure decreased by 7% (\$-2.2m) compared to the prior year to \$28.1m. We undertook a number of cost savings measures in preparation for rightsizing the organisation to an income profile aligned with the current economic climate. These measures were driven by winding back program spending to align with grant income for housing, food, and client disbursements (\$1.0m). Staff costs have decreased by \$0.8m, driven by consolidating our staff structure and casual workforce. Operational cost savings measures also contributed to a reduction in spending by \$0.4m.

We are proud that 70% of income went to service delivery, advocacy, program support and social enterprises activities, demonstrating our commitment to maximise support for the communities we serve.

Our Balance Sheet was strengthened, with a modest surplus of \$1.7m surplus (\$1.5m comprehensive result). The ASRC maintains financial reserves equivalent to a minimum of four months of operating expenses for the organisation to safeguard operations, in addition to reserves held to mitigate fundraising income risks and to allow for strategic investment.

As the ASRC does not draw on federal government funding, maintaining prudent reserves protects our independence and sustainability. The ASRC's Reserve balance as of 30 June 2023 is \$14.4m.

The ASRC's Leadership team undertook a review of projected funding allocations for future years, taking into account the changing economic environment, cost of living pressures and the needs of our community. Financial analysis indicated that some structural changes were required to realign the ASRC's cost base and effectively deliver on our strategy. A restructure was announced at the end of the financial year, with costs recognised in the financial statements.

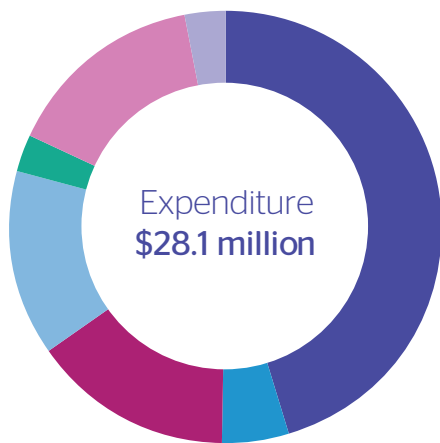
Management is confident that the organisation is financially well-positioned going into FY23/24 to service our community.

Financial Snapshot

Changes in key balances

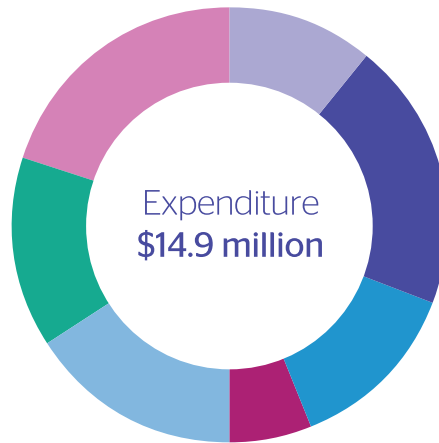


Where the money went



- 46% Service Delivery
- 5% Community Engagement
- 15% Fundraising Costs
- 14% Social Enterprises
- 3% Staff & Volunteer Management
- 15% Accountability & Administration
- 3% Resource Hub

Service delivery & advocacy



- 20% Client Services & Material aid program
- 13% Community Food program
- 6% Health
- 16% Housing Support
- 14% Education, Employment & Empowerment programs
- 20% Humanitarian Rights Law Program
- 11% Asylum Seeker Rights Advocacy

Financial Statements

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc.

ABN 64 114 965 815

Financial Statements

For the year ended 30 June 2023

Financial Statements

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc.

Contents

30 June 2023

Directors' Report	3
Auditor's Independence Declaration	5
Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income	6
Statement of financial position	7
Statement of changes in equity	8
Statement of cash flows	9
Notes to the financial statements	10
Directors' declaration	21
Independent auditor's report to the members of Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc.	22

General information

The financial statements cover Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc. ('the Incorporated Association'). The financial statements are presented in Australian dollars, which is the Incorporated Association's functional and presentation currency.

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc. is a not-for-profit organisation incorporated in Victoria under the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 ('the Act').

A description of the nature of the Association's operation and its principal activities are included in the directors' report, which is not part of the financial statements.

The financial statements were authorised for issue, in accordance with a resolution of directors, on 16 November 2023. The directors have the power to amend and reissue the financial statements.

Registered office and principal place of business

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc.
214-218 Nicholson Street
FOOTSCRAY VIC 3011

Financial Statements

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc. Directors' report 30 June 2023

The Board members present their report, together with the financial statements, on the entity Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc. (referred to hereafter as the 'the Incorporated Association') for the year ended 30 June 2023.

Directors

The following persons were directors of Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc. during the whole of the financial year and up to the date of this report, unless otherwise stated:

Name	Position	Appointed / Resigned
Mike Sum	Chair	
Gregory Tucker		Resigned on 22-11-2022
Haleh Homaei		Resigned on 30-06-2023
Rebekah Lautman		
John Pham		
Marija Maher		
Katelyn Bonato	Treasurer	
Lucy Chen		Appointed on 23-02-2023

Objectives

The organisation's ultimate objective is to ensure people seeking asylum and refugees can live safely, sustainably, independently and equally.

Strategy for achieving the objectives

Our strategic goals for 2022-2024 are:

- We will prioritise and embed the voice and rights of people seeking asylum and refugees in our work.
- Our services, advocacy and culture will be aligned to the human rights of our members, people seeking asylum and refugees.
- Our integrated, streamlined approach will deliver the best possible experience and outcomes for our members, people seeking asylum and refugees.
- We will work with the movement as a valued advocacy and sector partner to realise the rights of people seeking asylum and refugees.

Principal activities

The Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc. is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that is committed to upholding the human rights of all people seeking asylum.

Our mission is to protect people seeking protection from persecution and destitution, support well-being and dignity, and empower them to advance their own future. We do this by offering 30 holistic programs that provide legal assistance, education and employment services, social and housing support, healthcare services, emergency relief and food to more than 6,800 people each year.

Performance measures

The ASRC is embedding a new, evidence-based quality framework for human rights-based practice in line with our 2022-2024 Strategy. This includes a systematic review of our existing program logic models and measurement & evaluation plans to embed a trauma informed and rights-based approach in our work. This will establish a basis for continuous improvement in our efforts to create positive change, not only for individuals and families seeking asylum, but structural and systemic change through policy and legislative reform. We will identify key performance indicators across our frontline services and advocacy programs, as well as build the data systems to evaluate our outcomes against external quality and compliance standards. This will improve our capacity for impact reporting, as well as our transparency and accountability to clients, funders and stakeholders.

Review of operations

The surplus for the Incorporated Association amounted to \$1,658,904 (30 June 2022: Deficit of \$5,292,775).

Matters subsequent to the end of the financial year

No matter or circumstance has arisen since 30 June 2023 that has significantly affected, or may significantly affect the Incorporated Association's operations, the results of those operations, or the Incorporated Association's state of affairs in future financial years.

Likely developments and expected results of operations

Information on likely developments in the operations of the Incorporated Association and the expected results of operations have not been included in this report because the directors believe it would be likely to result in unreasonable prejudice to the Incorporated Association.

Environmental issues

The Incorporated Association's operations are not regulated by any significant environmental regulations under a law of the Commonwealth or of a state or territory of Australia.

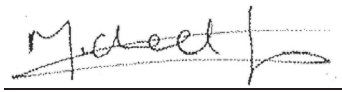
Financial Statements

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc.
Directors' report
30 June 2023

Auditor's Independence Declaration

A copy of the auditor's independence declaration as required under section 307C of the *Corporations Act 2001* is set out immediately after this directors' report.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors, pursuant to section 298(2)(a) of the *Corporations Act 2001*.



Mike Sum
Chair



Katelyn Bonato
Treasurer

16 November 2023
Melbourne, Victoria

Financial Statements



RSM Australia Partners

Level 21, 55 Collins Street Melbourne VIC 3000
PO Box 248 Collins Street West VIC 8007

T +61 (0) 3 9286 8000

F +61 (0) 3 9286 8199

www.rsm.com.au

Auditors Independence Declaration under Section 60 40 of the *Australian Charities and Not for profits Commission Act 2012*

As lead auditor for the audit of the financial report of Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc. for the year ended 30 June 2023, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been no contraventions of:

- (i) the auditor independence requirements of the Australian professional accounting bodies; and
- (ii) any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'K J Dundon'.

RSM AUSTRALIA PARTNERS

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'K J Dundon'.

K J DUNDON
Partner

Dated: 16 November 2023
Melbourne, Victoria

Financial Statements

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc.
Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income
For the year ended 30 June 2023

	Note	2023 \$	2022 \$
Revenue	3	29,767,800	25,043,420
Expenditure			
Salaries and wages	4	(18,712,289)	(19,631,257)
Stream operations	5	(9,396,607)	(10,704,938)
Surplus/(deficit) before income tax expense		<u>1,658,904</u>	<u>(5,292,775)</u>
Income tax expense		-	-
Surplus/(deficit) after income tax expense for the year attributable to the members of Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc.		<u>1,658,904</u>	<u>(5,292,775)</u>
Other comprehensive loss for the year, net of tax		(140,617)	-
Total comprehensive income/(loss) for the year attributable to the members of Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc.		<u><u>1,518,287</u></u>	<u><u>(5,292,775)</u></u>

The above statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Financial Statements

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc.
Statement of financial position
As at 30 June 2023

	Note	2023 \$	2022 \$
Assets			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	6	12,355,717	9,948,898
Trade and other receivables	7	1,371,880	1,307,198
Inventories		-	116,095
Prepayments		275,137	324,858
Total current assets		14,002,734	11,697,049
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	8	5,245,985	5,633,479
Right-of-use assets	9	107,833	323,497
Prepayments		63,000	49,500
Total non-current assets		5,416,818	6,006,476
Total assets		19,419,552	17,703,525
Liabilities			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	10	1,991,167	1,968,142
Contract liabilities	11	704,884	258,647
Lease liabilities	12	163,608	315,482
Employee benefits	13	1,837,630	1,752,079
Total current liabilities		4,697,289	4,294,350
Non-current liabilities			
Lease liabilities	12	-	163,608
Employee benefits	13	142,391	183,982
Total non-current liabilities		142,391	347,590
Total liabilities		4,839,680	4,641,940
Net assets		14,579,872	13,061,585
Equity			
Retained surpluses		14,720,489	13,061,585
Asset Revaluation Reserve		(140,617)	-
Total equity		14,579,872	13,061,585

The above statement of financial position should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Financial Statements

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc.
Statement of changes in equity
For the year ended 30 June 2023

	Asset Revaluation Reserve \$	Retained surpluses \$	Total equity \$
Balance at 1 July 2021	-	18,354,360	18,354,360
Surplus/(deficit) after income tax expense for the year	-	(5,292,775)	(5,292,775)
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax	-	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	-	(5,292,775)	(5,292,775)
Balance at 30 June 2022	-	13,061,585	13,061,585
Balance at 1 July 2022	-	13,061,585	13,061,585
Surplus/(deficit) after income tax expense for the year	-	1,658,904	1,658,904
Other comprehensive loss for the year, net of tax	(140,617)	-	(140,617)
Total comprehensive income for the year	(140,617)	1,658,904	1,518,287
Balance at 30 June 2023	(140,617)	14,720,489	14,579,872

The above statement of changes in equity should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Financial Statements

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc.
Statement of cash flows
For the year ended 30 June 2023

	Note	2023 \$	2022 \$
Cash flows from operating activities			
Receipts from fundraising, donations and grants		27,437,729	22,026,152
Receipts from social enterprise		3,172,091	2,916,831
Other receipts		236,104	193,368
Interest received		57,138	1,064
Payments to suppliers		(9,245,909)	(10,825,249)
Payments to employees		(18,668,329)	(19,148,244)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities		<u>2,988,824</u>	<u>(4,836,078)</u>
Cash flows from investing activities			
Payments for property, plant and equipment		(273,106)	(1,549,244)
Proceeds from sale of property, plant and equipment		20,084	-
Proceeds from security deposits		(13,500)	36,400
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		<u>(266,523)</u>	<u>(1,512,844)</u>
Cash flows from financing activities			
Repayment of lease liabilities		(315,482)	(331,750)
Net cash provided by/(used in) financing activities		<u>(315,482)</u>	<u>(331,750)</u>
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		2,406,819	(6,680,672)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		9,948,898	16,629,570
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	6	<u><u>12,355,717</u></u>	<u><u>9,948,898</u></u>

The above statement of cash flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Financial Statements

**Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc.
Notes to the financial statements
30 June 2023**

Note 1. Significant accounting policies

The principal accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

New or amended Accounting Standards and Interpretations adopted

The Incorporated Association has adopted all of the new or amended Accounting Standards and Interpretations issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board ('AASB') that are mandatory for the current reporting period.

Any new or amended Accounting Standards or Interpretations that are not yet mandatory have not been early adopted.

Basis of preparation

These general purpose financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosure issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board ('AASB'), the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012, the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and associated regulations, as appropriate for not-for-profit oriented entities.

Historical cost convention

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, except for, where applicable, the revaluation of financial assets and liabilities at fair value through profit or loss, financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income, investment properties, certain classes of property, plant and equipment and derivative financial instruments.

Critical accounting estimates

The preparation of the financial statements requires the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires management to exercise its judgement in the process of applying the Incorporated Association's accounting policies. The areas involving a higher degree of judgement or complexity, or areas where assumptions and estimates are significant to the financial statements, are disclosed in note 2.

Revenue recognition

The Incorporated Association recognises revenue as follows:

Revenue from contracts with customers

Revenue is recognised at an amount that reflects the consideration to which the Incorporated Association is expected to be entitled in exchange for transferring goods or services to a customer. For each contract with a customer, the Incorporated Association: identifies the contract with a customer; identifies the performance obligations in the contract; determines the transaction price which takes into account estimates of variable consideration and the time value of money; allocates the transaction price to the separate performance obligations on the basis of the relative stand-alone selling price of each distinct good or service to be delivered; and recognises revenue when or as each performance obligation is satisfied in a manner that depicts the transfer to the customer of the goods or services promised.

Donations

Donations and bequests are recognised as revenue when the Incorporated Association obtains control over the funds, donations collected but not received from external parties are accrued.

In-specie donations are recognised at an agreed value when the Incorporated Association obtains control of the asset.

Goods donated in-kind are recorded at the assets fair value when the Incorporated Association obtains control of the asset.

Grants

Grant revenue is recognised in profit or loss when the Incorporated Association satisfies the performance obligations stated within the funding agreements.

If conditions are attached to the grant which must be satisfied before the Incorporated Association is eligible to retain the contribution, the grant will be recognised in the statement of financial position as a liability until those conditions are satisfied.

Financial Statements

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc.
Notes to the financial statements
30 June 2023

Note 1. Significant accounting policies (continued)

Revenue recognition (continued)

Interest

Interest revenue is recognised as interest accrues using the effective interest method. This is a method of calculating the amortised cost of a financial asset and allocating the interest income over the relevant period using the effective interest rate, which is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash receipts through the expected life of the financial asset to the net carrying amount of the financial asset.

Other revenue

Other revenue is recognised when it is received or when the right to receive payment is established.

Income tax

The Incorporated Association is exempt from income tax under Division 50 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

Current and non-current classification

Assets and liabilities are presented in the statement of financial position based on current and non-current classification.

An asset is classified as current when: it is either expected to be realised or intended to be sold or consumed in the Incorporated Association's normal operating cycle; it is held primarily for the purpose of trading; it is expected to be realised within 12 months after the reporting period; or the asset is cash or cash equivalent unless restricted from being exchanged or used to settle a liability for at least 12 months after the reporting period. All other assets are classified as non-current.

A liability is classified as current when: it is either expected to be settled in the Incorporated Association's normal operating cycle; it is held primarily for the purpose of trading; it is due to be settled within 12 months after the reporting period; or there is no unconditional right to defer the settlement of the liability for at least 12 months after the reporting period. All other liabilities are classified as non-current.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents includes cash on hand, deposits held at call with financial institutions, other short-term, highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and which are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value.

Trade and other receivables

Trade receivables are initially recognised at fair value and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less any allowance for expected credit losses. Trade receivables are generally due for settlement within 30 days.

The Incorporated Association has applied the simplified approach to measuring expected credit losses, which uses a lifetime expected loss allowance. To measure the expected credit losses, trade receivables have been grouped based on days overdue.

Other receivables are recognised at amortised cost, less any allowance for expected credit losses.

Investments and other financial assets

Investments and other financial assets are initially measured at fair value. Transaction costs are included as part of the initial measurement, except for financial assets at fair value through profit or loss. Such assets are subsequently measured at either amortised cost or fair value depending on their classification. Classification is determined based on both the business model within which such assets are held and the contractual cash flow characteristics of the financial asset unless an accounting mismatch is being avoided.

Financial assets are derecognised when the rights to receive cash flows have expired or have been transferred and the Incorporated Association has transferred substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership. When there is no reasonable expectation of recovering part or all of a financial asset, its carrying value is written off.

Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss

Financial assets not measured at amortised cost or at fair value through other comprehensive income are classified as financial assets at fair value through profit or loss. Typically, such financial assets will be either: (i) held for trading, where they are acquired for the purpose of selling in the short-term with an intention of making a profit, or a derivative; or (ii) designated as such upon initial recognition where permitted. Fair value movements are recognised in profit or loss.

Financial Statements

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc.
Notes to the financial statements
30 June 2023

Note 1. Significant accounting policies (continued)

Investments and other financial assets (continued)

Impairment of financial assets

The Incorporated Association recognises a loss allowance for expected credit losses on financial assets which are either measured at amortised cost or fair value through other comprehensive income. The measurement of the loss allowance depends upon the Incorporated Association's assessment at the end of each reporting period as to whether the financial instrument's credit risk has increased significantly since initial recognition, based on reasonable and supportable information that is available, without undue cost or effort to obtain.

Where there has not been a significant increase in exposure to credit risk since initial recognition, a 12-month expected credit loss allowance is estimated. This represents a portion of the asset's lifetime expected credit losses that is attributable to a default event that is possible within the next 12 months. Where a financial asset has become credit impaired or where it is determined that credit risk has increased significantly, the loss allowance is based on the asset's lifetime expected credit losses. The amount of expected credit loss recognised is measured on the basis of the probability weighted present value of anticipated cash shortfalls over the life of the instrument discounted at the original effective interest rate.

For financial assets mandatorily measured at fair value through other comprehensive income, the loss allowance is recognised in other comprehensive income with a corresponding expense through profit or loss. In all other cases, the loss allowance reduces the asset's carrying value with a corresponding expense through profit or loss.

Property, plant and equipment

Land and buildings are shown at fair value, based on periodic, at least every 3 years, valuations by external independent valuers, less subsequent depreciation and impairment for buildings. The valuations are undertaken more frequently if there is a material change in the fair value relative to the carrying amount. Any accumulated depreciation at the date of revaluation is eliminated against the gross carrying amount of the asset and the net amount is restated to the revalued amount of the asset. Increases in the carrying amounts arising on revaluation of land and buildings are credited in other comprehensive income through to the revaluation surplus reserve in equity. Any revaluation decrements are initially taken in other comprehensive income through to the revaluation surplus reserve to the extent of any previous revaluation surplus of the same asset. Thereafter the decrements are taken to profit or loss.

Plant and equipment is stated at historical cost less accumulated depreciation and impairment. Historical cost includes expenditure that is directly attributable to the acquisition of the items.

Depreciation is calculated on a straight-line basis to write off the net cost of each item of property, plant and equipment (excluding land) over their expected useful lives as follows:

Freehold Buildings	5% (20 years)
Leasehold Improvements	5% (20 years)
Office Equipment	20% (5 years)
Furniture, Fixtures & Fittings	10% (10 years)
IT Hardware & Software	25% (4 years)
Motor Vehicles	12.5% (8 years)

The residual values, useful lives and depreciation methods are reviewed, and adjusted if appropriate, at each reporting date.

Leasehold improvements are depreciated over the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful life of the assets, whichever is shorter.

An item of property, plant and equipment is derecognised upon disposal or when there is no future economic benefit to the Incorporated Association. Gains and losses between the carrying amount and the disposal proceeds are taken to profit or loss. Any revaluation surplus reserve relating to the item disposed of is transferred directly to retained profits.

Financial Statements

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc.
Notes to the financial statements
30 June 2023

Note 1. Significant accounting policies (continued)

Right-of-use assets

A right-of-use asset is recognised at the commencement date of a lease. The right-of-use asset is measured at cost, which comprises the initial amount of the lease liability, adjusted for, as applicable, any lease payments made at or before the commencement date net of any lease incentives received, any initial direct costs incurred, and, except where included in the cost of inventories, an estimate of costs expected to be incurred for dismantling and removing the underlying asset, and restoring the site or asset.

Right-of-use assets are depreciated on a straight-line basis over the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful life of the asset, whichever is the shorter. Where the Incorporated Association expects to obtain ownership of the leased asset at the end of the lease term, the depreciation is over its estimated useful life. Right-of-use assets are subject to impairment or adjusted for any remeasurement of lease liabilities.

The Incorporated Association has elected not to recognise a right-of-use asset and corresponding lease liability for short-term leases with terms of 12 months or less and leases of low-value assets. Lease payments on these assets are expensed to profit or loss as incurred.

Trade and other payables

These amounts represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the Incorporated Association prior to the end of the financial year and which are unpaid. Due to their short-term nature they are measured at amortised cost and are not discounted. The amounts are unsecured and are usually paid within 30 days of recognition.

Contract liabilities

Contract liabilities represent the Incorporated Association's obligation to transfer goods or services to a customer and are recognised when a customer pays consideration, or when the Incorporated Association recognises a receivable to reflect its unconditional right to consideration (whichever is earlier) before the Incorporated Association has transferred the goods or services to the customer.

Lease liabilities

A lease liability is recognised at the commencement date of a lease. The lease liability is initially recognised at the present value of the lease payments to be made over the term of the lease, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease or, if that rate cannot be readily determined, the Incorporated Association's incremental borrowing rate. Lease payments comprise of fixed payments less any lease incentives receivable, variable lease payments that depend on an index or a rate, amounts expected to be paid under residual value guarantees, exercise price of a purchase option when the exercise of the option is reasonably certain to occur, and any anticipated termination penalties. The variable lease payments that do not depend on an index or a rate are expensed in the period in which they are incurred.

Lease liabilities are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. The carrying amounts are remeasured if there is a change in the following: future lease payments arising from a change in an index or a rate used; residual guarantee; lease term; certainty of a purchase option and termination penalties. When a lease liability is remeasured, an adjustment is made to the corresponding right-of-use asset, or to profit or loss if the carrying amount of the right-of-use asset is fully written down.

Employee benefits

Short-term employee benefits

Liabilities for wages and salaries, including non-monetary benefits, annual leave and long service leave expected to be settled wholly within 12 months of the reporting date are measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled.

Other long-term employee benefits

The liability for annual leave and long service leave not expected to be settled within 12 months of the reporting date are measured at the present value of expected future payments to be made in respect of services provided by employees up to the reporting date using the projected unit credit method. Consideration is given to expected future wage and salary levels, experience of employee departures and periods of service. Expected future payments are discounted using market yields at the reporting date on corporate bonds with terms to maturity and currency that match, as closely as possible, the estimated future cash outflows.

Defined contribution superannuation expense

Contributions to defined contribution superannuation plans are expensed in the period in which they are incurred.

Financial Statements

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc.
Notes to the financial statements
30 June 2023

Note 1. Significant accounting policies (continued)

Fair value measurement

When an asset or liability, financial or non-financial, is measured at fair value for recognition or disclosure purposes, the fair value is based on the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date; and assumes that the transaction will take place either: in the principal market; or in the absence of a principal market, in the most advantageous market.

Fair value is measured using the assumptions that market participants would use when pricing the asset or liability, assuming they act in their economic best interests. For non-financial assets, the fair value measurement is based on its highest and best use. Valuation techniques that are appropriate in the circumstances and for which sufficient data are available to measure fair value, are used, maximising the use of relevant observable inputs and minimising the use of unobservable inputs.

Goods and Services Tax ('GST') and other similar taxes

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of associated GST, unless the GST incurred is not recoverable from the tax authority. In this case it is recognised as part of the cost of the acquisition of the asset or as part of the expense.

Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the tax authority is included in other receivables or other payables in the statement of financial position.

Cash flows are presented on a gross basis. The GST components of cash flows arising from investing or financing activities which are recoverable from, or payable to the tax authority, are presented as operating cash flows.

Commitments and contingencies are disclosed net of the amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the tax authority.

Financial Statements

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc.
Notes to the financial statements
30 June 2023

Note 2. Critical accounting judgements, estimates and assumptions

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts in the financial statements. Management continually evaluates its judgements and estimates in relation to assets, liabilities, contingent liabilities, revenue and expenses. Management bases its judgements, estimates and assumptions on historical experience and on other various factors, including expectations of future events, management believes to be reasonable under the circumstances. The resulting accounting judgements and estimates will seldom equal the related actual results. The judgements, estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities (refer to the respective notes) within the next financial year are discussed below.

Allowance for expected credit losses

The allowance for expected credit losses assessment requires a degree of estimation and judgement. It is based on the lifetime expected credit loss, grouped based on days overdue, and makes assumptions to allocate an overall expected credit loss rate for each group. These assumptions include recent sales experience and historical collection rates.

Estimation of useful lives of assets

The Incorporated Association determines the estimated useful lives and related depreciation and amortisation charges for its property, plant and equipment and finite life intangible assets. The useful lives could change significantly as a result of technical innovations or some other event. The depreciation and amortisation charge will increase where the useful lives are less than previously estimated lives, or technically obsolete or non-strategic assets that have been abandoned or sold will be written off or written down.

Impairment of non-financial assets other than goodwill and other indefinite life intangible assets

The Incorporated Association assesses impairment of non-financial assets other than goodwill and other indefinite life intangible assets at each reporting date by evaluating conditions specific to the Incorporated Association and to the particular asset that may lead to impairment. If an impairment trigger exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is determined. This involves fair value less costs of disposal or value-in-use calculations, which incorporate a number of key estimates and assumptions.

Lease term

The lease term is a significant component in the measurement of both the right-of-use asset and lease liability. Judgement is exercised in determining whether there is reasonable certainty that an option to extend the lease or purchase the underlying asset will be exercised, or an option to terminate the lease will not be exercised, when ascertaining the periods to be included in the lease term. In determining the lease term, all facts and circumstances that create an economical incentive to exercise an extension option, or not to exercise a termination option, are considered at the lease commencement date. Factors considered may include the importance of the asset to the Incorporated Association's operations; comparison of terms and conditions to prevailing market rates; incurrence of significant penalties; existence of significant leasehold improvements; and the costs and disruption to replace the asset. The Incorporated Association reassesses whether it is reasonably certain to exercise an extension option, or not exercise a termination option, if there is a significant event or significant change in circumstances.

Lease term

Where the interest rate implicit in a lease cannot be readily determined, an incremental borrowing rate is estimated to discount future lease payments to measure the present value of the lease liability at the lease commencement date. Such a rate is based on what the Incorporated Association estimates it would have to pay a third party to borrow the funds necessary to obtain an asset of a similar value to the right-of-use asset, with similar terms, security and economic environment.

Employee benefits provision

As discussed in note 1, the liability for employee benefits expected to be settled more than 12 months from the reporting date are recognised and measured at the present value of the estimated future cash flows to be made in respect of all employees at the reporting date. In determining the present value of the liability, estimates of attrition rates and pay increases through promotion and inflation have been taken into account.

Financial Statements

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc.
Notes to the financial statements
30 June 2023

Note 3. Revenue

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
<i>Revenue from contracts with customers</i>		
Grants	4,572,970	4,846,883
Social enterprises	2,964,095	2,598,956
	<u>7,537,065</u>	<u>7,445,839</u>
<i>Other revenue</i>		
Fundraising	10,537,784	7,233,702
Donations	10,636,124	10,169,447
Goods donated In Kind	763,585	-
Interest received	57,138	1,064
Other income	236,104	193,368
	<u>22,230,735</u>	<u>17,597,581</u>
Revenue	<u>29,767,800</u>	<u>25,043,420</u>

Disaggregation of revenue

The disaggregation of revenue from contracts with customers is as follows:

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
<i>Timing of revenue recognition</i>		
Services transferred at a point in time	2,964,095	2,598,956
Services transferred over time	4,572,970	4,846,883
	<u>7,537,065</u>	<u>7,445,839</u>

Note 4. Salaries and wages*

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Advocacy	1,147,321	1,083,422
Fundraising & Marketing	1,947,835	2,339,168
Law Program	2,636,776	2,679,155
Humanitarian services	5,252,918	5,264,613
Refugee Resource Hub	603,446	1,565,598
Monitoring and evaluation	118,948	87,624
Staff & Volunteer Management	642,379	766,272
Shared Services & Administration	3,305,844	3,162,416
Social enterprises	3,056,822	2,682,989
	<u>18,712,289</u>	<u>19,631,257</u>

Note 5. Stream operations*

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Advocacy	554,033	228,460
Fundraising & Marketing	2,415,434	1,540,921
Law Program	415,856	261,190
Humanitarian services	4,256,224	4,317,886
Refugee Resource Hub	260,454	257,563
Monitoring and evaluation	12,551	2,290
Staff & Volunteer Management	170,900	536,088
Shared Services & Administration	306,765	2,849,386
Social enterprises	1,004,390	711,154
	<u>9,396,607</u>	<u>10,704,938</u>

* In financial year 2022-2023, ASRC has reviewed its expenditure structure in order to ensure program costing reflects a truer picture of the organisation's cost profile. This review has factored in allocating management cost, ICT and property cost to programs for service delivery and advocacy in line with service usage.

Financial Statements

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc.
Notes to the financial statements
30 June 2023

Note 6. Current assets - cash and cash equivalents

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Cash on hand	333	447
Cash at bank	12,355,384	9,948,451
	<u>12,355,717</u>	<u>9,948,898</u>

Reconciliation to cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year

The above figures are reconciled to cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year as shown in the statement of cash flows as follows:

Balances as above	<u>12,355,717</u>	<u>9,948,898</u>
Balance as per statement of cash flows	<u>12,355,717</u>	<u>9,948,898</u>

Note 7. Current assets - trade and other receivables

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Trade receivables	348,842	260,428
Provision for doubtful debts	(2,996)	(5,397)
Donations receivable	1,026,034	1,052,167
	<u>1,371,880</u>	<u>1,307,198</u>

Note 8. Non-current assets - property, plant and equipment

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Freehold land - at valuation	2,100,000	2,100,000
Freehold building - at valuation	2,400,000	2,570,629
Less: Accumulated depreciation	-	(77,582)
	<u>4,500,000</u>	<u>4,593,047</u>
Furniture, fixtures and fittings - at cost	35,975	53,225
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(8,576)	(9,051)
	<u>27,399</u>	<u>44,174</u>
Motor vehicles - at cost	309,093	383,606
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(174,910)	(218,799)
	<u>134,183</u>	<u>164,807</u>
Office equipment - at cost	707,441	832,342
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(321,013)	(365,080)
	<u>386,428</u>	<u>467,262</u>
Leasehold Improvements - at cost	1,841,741	1,779,411
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(1,643,766)	(1,415,222)
	<u>197,975</u>	<u>364,189</u>
	<u>5,245,985</u>	<u>5,633,479</u>

Financial Statements

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc.
Notes to the financial statements
30 June 2023

Note 8. Non-current assets - property, plant and equipment (continued)

Reconciliations

Reconciliations of the written down values at the beginning and end of the current and previous financial year are set out below:

	Freehold land and buildings	Furniture	Vehicles	Equipment	Leasehold improvements	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Balance at 1 July 2022	4,593,047	44,174	164,807	467,262	364,189	5,633,479
Additions	145,727	-	6,952	54,237	66,190	273,106
Disposals	(1,038)	(11,618)	-	(6,873)	(555)	(20,084)
Revaluation	(140,617)	-	-	-	-	(140,617)
Depreciation expense	(97,119)	(5,157)	(37,577)	(128,198)	(231,849)	(499,900)
Balance at 30 June 2023	<u>4,500,000</u>	<u>27,399</u>	<u>134,183</u>	<u>386,428</u>	<u>197,975</u>	<u>5,245,985</u>

Valuations of land and buildings

Land and buildings are shown at their fair value based on periodic, but at least triennial, valuations by external independent valuers, less subsequent depreciation for buildings.

In periods when the land and building are not subject to an independent valuation, the Directors conduct a Directors' valuation to ensure the carrying amount for the land and buildings is not materially different to the fair value.

The land and buildings were independently valued at 17 March 2023 by Insight Property. The valuation was based on a direct comparison method. The land and buildings are categorised within the fair value hierarchy at Level 3, which relates to valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is unobservable.

The Directors believe the carrying amount of the land and buildings materially reflects their current fair value as at 30 June 2023.

Financial Statements

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc.
Notes to the financial statements
30 June 2023

Note 9. Right-of-use assets

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Right-of-use assets	2,339,241	2,339,241
Less: Accumulated depreciation	<u>(2,231,408)</u>	<u>(2,015,744)</u>
	<u>107,833</u>	<u>323,497</u>

The Incorporated Association leases land and buildings for its offices under agreements of between five to fifteen years with, in some cases, options to extend. The leases have various clauses. On renewal, the terms of the leases are renegotiated.

The Incorporated Association leases office equipment under agreements of less than two years. The lease are either short-term or low-value, so have been expensed as incurred and not capitalised as right-of-use assets.

Note 10. Current liabilities - trade and other payables

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Trade payables	844,033	898,883
Accrued salaries and superannuation payable	<u>1,147,134</u>	<u>1,069,259</u>
	<u>1,991,167</u>	<u>1,968,142</u>

Note 11. Current liabilities - contract liabilities

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Grants received in advance	<u>704,884</u>	<u>258,647</u>

Note 12. Lease liabilities

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
CURRENT		
Lease liabilities	<u>163,608</u>	<u>315,482</u>
NON-CURRENT		
Lease liabilities	<u>-</u>	<u>163,608</u>
	<u>163,608</u>	<u>479,090</u>

Future lease payments

Future lease payments are due as follows:

Within one year	165,949	331,898
One to five years	-	165,949
More than five years	-	-
	<u>165,949</u>	<u>497,847</u>

Note 13. Employee benefits

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
CURRENT		
Annual leave	1,331,599	1,458,833
Long service leave	<u>506,031</u>	<u>293,246</u>
	<u>1,837,630</u>	<u>1,752,079</u>
NON-CURRENT		
Long service leave	<u>142,391</u>	<u>183,982</u>
	<u>1,980,021</u>	<u>1,936,061</u>

Financial Statements

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc. Notes to the financial statements 30 June 2023

Note 14. Key management personnel disclosures

Compensation

The aggregate compensation made to members of key management personnel of the Incorporated Association is set out below:

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Aggregate compensation	<u>1,152,885</u>	<u>1,917,496</u>

Note 15. Remuneration of auditors

During the financial year the following fees were paid or payable for services provided by RSM Australia Partners, the auditor of the Incorporated Association, its network firm and unrelated firms:

	2023 \$	2022 \$
<i>Audit services - RSM Australia Partners</i> Audit of the financial statements	<u>41,500</u>	<u>25,000</u>

Note 16. Contingent assets

In the opinion of the Board, the Incorporated Association did not have any contingent assets at 30 June 2023 (30 June 2022: None).

Note 17. Contingent liabilities

In the opinion of the Board, the Incorporated Association did not have any contingent liabilities at 30 June 2023 (30 June 2022: None).

Note 18. Related party transactions

Key management personnel

Disclosures relating to key management personnel are set out in note 14.

Transactions with related parties

The following transactions between related parties are on normal commercial terms and conditions no more favourable than those available to other parties unless otherwise stated.

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Book donation by Kon Karapanagiotidis	151,775	-
Consulting fees paid to PricewaterhouseCoopers (Katelyn Bonato is a Partner at PwC)**	6,926	90,229
ASRC cleaning income from Children's Ground	3,621	-

**Katelyn Bonato had declared all interests and was not involved in the selection of PwC for consulting purposes.

Receivable from and payable to related parties

The were no balances outstanding at the reporting date in relation to transactions with related parties.

Loans to/from related parties

There were no loans to or from related parties at the current and previous reporting date.

Terms and conditions

All transactions were made on normal commercial terms and conditions and at market rates.

Note 19. Events after the reporting period

No matters or circumstances have arisen since 30 June 2023 that has significantly affected, or may significantly affect the Incorporated Association's operations, the results of those operations, or the Incorporated Association's state of affairs in future financial years.

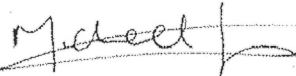
Financial Statements

**Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc.
Directors' declaration
30 June 2023**

In the directors' opinion:

- the attached financial statements and notes comply with the Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures, the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and Associations Incorporation Form Act 2012, the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and associated regulations;
- the attached financial statements and notes give a true and fair view of the Incorporated Association's financial position as at 30 June 2023 and of its performance for the financial year ended on that date; and
- there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Incorporated Association will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors pursuant to section 295(5)(a) of the *Corporations Act 2001*.



Mike Sum
Chair



Katelyn Bonato
Treasurer

16 November 2023
Melbourne, Victoria

Financial Statements



RSM Australia Partners

Level 21, 55 Collins Street Melbourne VIC 3000
PO Box 248 Collins Street West VIC 8007

T +61 (0) 3 9286 8000
F +61 (0) 3 9286 8199

www.rsm.com.au

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Members of Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc.

Opinion

We have audited the financial report of Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc., which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2023, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, the statement of changes in equity and the statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the directors' declaration.

In our opinion, the financial report of Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc. has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

- (a) giving a true and fair view of the registered entity's financial position as at 30 June 2023 and of its financial performance and cash flows for the year ended on that date; and
- (b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures under AASB 1060 *General Purpose Financial Statements – Simplified Disclosures for For-Profit and Not-for-Profit Tier 2 Entities* and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2012*.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc. in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Other Information

Those charged with governance are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc.'s annual report for the year ended 30 June 2023 but does not include the financial report and the auditor's report thereon.

Our opinion on the financial report does not cover the other information and accordingly we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial report, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial report or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

22

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Financial Statements



Responsibilities of the Directors for the Financial Report

The directors of the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc. are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures under AASB 1060 *General Purpose Financial Statements – Simplified Disclosures for For-Profit and Not-for-Profit Tier 2 Entities* and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* (ACNC Act) and for such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the directors are responsible for assessing Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc.'s ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Inc. or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial report is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website at: http://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors_responsibilities/ar4.pdf. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Rsm

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'K J Dundon'.

K J DUNDON
Partner

Dated: 20 November 2023
Melbourne, Victoria

Leadership Team

The Leadership Team comprises the Chief Executive Officer, the General Manager (until January 2023) and the Stream Directors.

In this financial year, three additional Executive Director roles were created to provide executive support to the CEO and Board. The executive director roles were projected to finish with the ASRC by the first trimester of the new financial year 23/24, as per results of the restructuring process developed in consultation with all staff.

The Leadership Team's 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.

- Kon Karapanagiotidis, CEO
- Alan White, Executive Director of External Engagement (End date: 23/11/2022)
- Amanda Armstrong, Executive Director of External Engagement (Appointment date: 31/01/2021)
- Amanda Schofield, Head of Giving & Experience (Appointment date: 01/04/2023)
- Anastasia Magriplis, Head of Humanitarian Operations and Resilience
- Angela Taylor, CFO (Appointment date: 24/04/2023)
- Camille Walles, Head of Program Quality & Impact (Appointment date: 01/12/2022)
- Flor Sedighi, Head of Refugee Business (Appointment date: 14/11/2022)
- Jana Favero, Head of Systemic Change
- Jo Kakafikas, General Manager (End date: 03/02/2023)
- Matt Pritchard, Director of Corporate Services
- Mathew Stewart, CFO (Appointment & End date: 22/08/2022 to 28/04/2023)
- Nadine Haddad, Executive Director of Community (Appointment date: 05/09/2022)
- Natalie Capp, Executive Director of People and Culture (Appointment date: 31/01/2021)
- Ogy Simic, Head of Refugee Leadership & Advocacy (Appointment date: 01/12/2022)
- Qutbiyallam Timor, Head of Refugee Resource Hub
- Robyn Stevens, Director of Human Resources (End date: 28 /09/2022)
- Sherrine Clark, Director of Humanitarian Services (End date: 11/11/2022 -after 12 months of extended leave)

Board

The ASRC Board is the governing arm of the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre - ASRC Inc. 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
- Greg Tucker, Board Member (end date: November 2022)
- Haleh Homaei, Board Member (end date: June 2023)
- John Pham, Board Member
- Katelyn Bonato, Treasurer
- Lucy Chen (start date: February 2023)
- Marie Sellstrom, Board Member (end date September 2022)
- Marija Maher, Board Member
- Rebekah Lautman, Board Member

Acknowledgements

Our Supporters

Thank you to the following people, organisations and community groups for their contribution to the ASRC who gave the equivalent of \$10,000 or more in funding or \$20,000 in-kind or pro bono support in 2022-2023.

Acorn Nursery (Van der Horst Family)
Aesop
Aesop Foundation
Alison & John Cameron
Angel Aleksov
Ann Miller AM
Arrotex
Ashhurst
ASIH
Australian College of Optometry
Australian Garlic Producers
Beverley Jackson Foundation
Big Group Hug
Bloch/Friis-O'Toole Family
Bryn Overend
Carolynne Hamilton
Catherine Bourne
Cathy Quealy
Chris Smyth and Jan Wright
Claire Keating and Lester Hughes
Deakin University
Department of Health
Department of Premier and Cabinet
DGB Health Pty Ltd
DGP Foundation
Dr Adam McBeth
Dr Jai Nathani
Dr Nina Zimmerman
Drakensberg Trust
Elizabeth Cross
Eric and Elizabeth McKay
EWOV (Energy and Water Ombudsman of Victoria)
Flinders Grandmothers for Refugees
Foodbank Victoria
Foundation &
Gabrielle and John Avery
Gadens
Georgina Costello SC
Georgina Phillips
Gourlay Charitable Trust
Greater Dandenong Council
Greg and Jenny Vero
Guy Coffey
Guy Gilbert SC
Haverstock Hill Foundation
Hoffman Foundation
Hugh Crosthwaite
i=Change
Igniting Change
Indigo Mountain Foundation
Isobel and David Jones Family Foundation
Janine Brown
Joanna Baevski
Joanne Parkinson Foundation
Jocelyn Luck
John Pratt
Joseph Palmer Foundation - Halkyard Bequest
Julian Murphy
Julie Zhou
Kate Leavey & Peter Savage
Keolis Downer proud operator of Yarra Trams
Kinetic
King and Wood Mallesons
Kon Karapanagiotidis
Lawrence Ackland Foundation
Leo and Mina Fink Fund
Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation
MaiTri Employment
Mathew Kenneally
Matthew Albert
Maurice Blackburn Lawyers
McNally Family Foundation
Mim and Mike Bartlett
Min Guo
Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart
Monetta Wafers by Seasonal Supplies
Moose Happy Kids Foundation
Moyna Wilson
Naylor Stewart Foundation
Nick Wood S.C.
Noel and Carmel O'Brien Family Foundation
OzHarvest
Penelope and Ian Ward-Ambler
Public Interest Advocacy Centre
Red Cross
Red Rocketship
Robert C Bulley Charitable Fund
Roberts Pike Foundation
RobMaree Foundation
Russell Kennedy Lawyers
Ruth Eisner
Serp Hills Foundation
Shannon Finegan
Shine On Foundation
Simspon Family Foundation
Slater and Gordon Lawyers
Spotlight Foundation
St.Vincent's Pathology
Stand Up for Refugees (Wil Anderson, Tom Ballard, various artists, made with the help of the Melbourne Comedy Festival & Token Events)
Summers Family Stewardship Trust
The Danks Trust
The Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions
The Felton Bequest
The First Eddystone Foundation
The Hoffman Foundation
The Kimberley Foundation
The Kups Family
The Late Patricia Stoddart
The Orloff Family Foundation Trust
The Phyllis Connor Memorial Trust, as managed by Equity Trustees
The Robison Family
The Ross Trust
The University of Melbourne
The Wood Foundation
Toshi
Tsuno
Une Parkinson Foundation
Victoria Legal Aid
Virgin Unite
West Welcome Wagon
White & Case
Youth in Philanthropy Employment

Acknowledgements

Our Volunteers

Thank you for your volunteer service.

20+ years

Jean Nash
Rob Mathew
Joan Lynn

15-20 years

Bronwyn Duncan
Uyen Nguyen
Anne Lord
Jenny Shao
Ruth Coulthurst
Elizabeth Stewart

10-15 years

Lynette Crellin
Brendan McCarthy
Gillian Fawcett
Susan Fisher
Jill Baird
Catherine Guinness
Melanie Wilson
Gillian Fawcett
Andrew Button
Bruce Parr
Chris Kennedy
Frances Collison
Rebekah Lautman
Dianne Fisher
Brian Derum
Pam Every
Ian Partridge
Stephen Lavender
Jane Wilson
Yogi Pillay
Anthony Lewis
Catherine OLeary
Duoc Nguyen
Dale Mackie
Janet Bodycomb

7-10 years volunteers

Ciara Boyle
Jacqui Hagen
Glenda Strong
Louise Hayward
Rebecca Kierce
Myf Evans
Chris Higgins
Symon Mccallum
Kay Pentland
Glenda Strong
Geraldine Butler
Esmat Ansari
Mike Sum
Timothy Patton
David Cramond
Phil Libbis
Maha Alomar Albarazi
Pam Walford
Scott Blair-West
Judy Carman
Tadhg Dowling
Nicky Lo Bianco
Taariq Hassan
Phil McMillan
Joanna Tapper
Helene Orwin
Stephen Baird
Gayle Napier

5-7 years volunteers

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Mali Wilson
Katie Henderson
Gerard Powell
Nicolette Nieuwoudt
Irena Poloczek
Swathi Shanmukhasundaram
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Caroline Mccomb
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Margaret Bergin
Laura Viglietti
Peter Dapiran
Sue O'Reilly
Madeline Wilson
Val Maher

3-5 years volunteers

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Amie Inmon
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Molly Cooke
Katherine Aird
Sarah Matthews
Shyamni Chokshi
Darcy Stern
Sophie Tiller
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Majella Nugent
Maureen Abdullah Hameed
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Katie Yates
Ka Earl Tan
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Claire Scott
Natalie Fonda
Timothy Szalek
Juliet Wright-Single
Audrey Thoman
Ally Shelton
Jennifer Webb
Liam Mirabile
Rosemarie De Haas
Leslyn Thompson
Rachel Bowyer
Rosalind Stanley
Bobbi Murphy
Emma Wilson
Andy Bennett
Rochelle Umansky
Andrew Jarnicki
Yvonne O'Neill
Meg Selianakis
Parisa Pajang
CC Hua
Annie Dolan
Ana Gargano
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Alison Kirwan
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Merry Lovell
Heidi Yuen
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Kate Stern
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Champions of hope

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The ASRC's Commitment to Reconciliation

The ASRC has always stood for an inclusive, compassionate and just Australia.

As a human rights organisation that speaks out against injustice for refugees and people seeking asylum, we join the fight for justice for and with First Nations people.

Our vision is that all Australians, starting with First Nations people, and those who have come here seeking asylum, can live safely, sustainably, independently and equally. We imagine a future where the cultures, histories and rights of First Nations people are recognised and valued by every Australian and are a proud part of our shared national identity.

As part of our commitment to achieving that vision, we established and began working on the ASRC's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), which was published in FY23. Our RAP is part of our contribution toward reconciliation. We acknowledge First Nations people's unceded sovereignty and recognise and celebrate their continuing connections to land, waters, communities, cultures and customs.

We aim to provide a strong example to our sector and community by demonstrating our commitment to reconciliation in all of our work.

Our Approach

The launch of our first Reflect RAP Plan in 2022 is an important milestone for the ASRC in our commitment to supporting work to end exclusion and discrimination that has been so damaging for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Our first RAP is the culmination of three years of consultation and learning to develop a plan that will contribute to better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and bring our communities together in reconciliation.

In committing to a Reconciliation Action Plan, the ASRC understands the role we must play in promoting and supporting meaningful reconciliation that empowers First Nations people and enables their advancement in Australia. Our commitment sits at the highest level, including the CEO and representatives of the ASRC Leadership Team, and our reconciliation initiatives are embedded in our organisational strategy.

Our Reflect RAP is focused on three areas that will guide our reconciliation efforts:

Building Relationships & Respect

We will continue to build strong relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to help inform our work and establish representation from First Nations within our organisation and activities. We will build a close relationship with Reconciliation Australia and promote and celebrate with our people key initiatives like National Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC week, 'Change the Date' actions and Uluru Statement from the Heart.

We will demonstrate respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by observing cultural protocols and will continue to build our people's cultural awareness and competency through additional education and training.

Community Engagement

We will promote reconciliation and cultural understanding not only within our network of staff, volunteers and the people we support but also among the community and partners who support our work. We will promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence, identifying opportunities to positively engage external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes and raise awareness of key reconciliation initiatives.

Creating Employment & Supplier Opportunities

We will improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development and increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to contribute to the growth of the Indigenous business sector.

**ALWAYS WAS
AND ALWAYS
WILL BE
ABORIGINAL
LAND.**

ASRC RAP
Working Group

The cover this year: Refugee artist, Asad Ali

The cover of this annual report is graced by Asad Ali's work, *We Are All Australia*, commissioned by the ASRC.

Asad is an artist and educator living in Melbourne, where he has been residing as a refugee. Born in Quetta, Pakistan, Asad holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University Of Balochistan, a Master of Fine Arts from the College of Art & Design, University of the Punjab, where he was a Gold Medalist, and an MA in Visual Arts from the National College of Arts Lahore where he received Honors in 2014. He has worked as an artist for the Avari Hotel and taught at the Fine Arts department of the city campus in Quetta, Pakistan. Asad also taught at the National College of Art as a drawing teacher and was an audio video assistant for eight years. In his last years in Pakistan, Asad worked for the University Of Balochistan in the fine arts department.

He has shown his work in national and international exhibitions, including as a member of the Awami Art Collective (Group Artists and Educators). In 2019, Asad worked as an artist project member on an archeological museum project with the Faiz Foundation and UNESCO.

In his practice, Asad brings together mixed media painting, collage and video installation to reflect on the present and memory.

In *We Are All Australia*, Asad drew inspiration from the ASRC community coming together in different forms – from our members who come to the centre seeking a friendly face and assistance to supporters who back our advocacy efforts and donate their time and funds. The work also draws on being at the ASRC Centre in Footscray on a busy morning when it often feels like a family gathering – full of movement, kind encounters and delicious food. Asadi also tapped

into his love for Australia's native plants, landscapes and architecture, including some parts of his new home -Australia- alongside more subtle references to a longing for the homes many refugees can't go back to.

His piece represents the Australia he lives in, where we are all Australian, with our diversity and different walks of life. We are very grateful to Asadi to be able to share the work with you as part of this Annual Report.

For commissions:

Asad Ali

asad505ali@gmail.com

+61 470 590 795



