



# Bridge for Asylum Seekers Foundation

UnitingCare NSW.ACT

**Newsletter  
March 2006**

**Honorary Chairperson:**  
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**ABN 78 722 539**

## Welcome Back

Dear Friends,

I trust you all had a wonderful holiday and are now well and truly into your work and fun for the year.

The BASF management committee is back at work too. As well as our usual efforts to assist asylum seekers in our community, we are redoubling our efforts to raise money and awareness. We are currently organising a concert to be held at the Sydney Town Hall on Thursday, 23 March. Details of the event are included in this newsletter, and I urge you all to book early for what is going to be a wonderful evening in the company of both friends and new faces.

In our December 2005 newsletter, I told you that there had been many bright spots to cheer us and keep us going — I would like to share one of them with you now. Below I have included part of a letter from a woman whose husband committed suicide while on a Bridging Visa E. She headed it “Gratitude.”

*“Dear Virginia, I wish to thank you and the rest of the team very sincerely for this very timely assistance. My son and I are completely over the moon. We are truly grateful, very grateful indeed. Last Wednesday the Asylum Seekers Centre gave me some money and so I paid my rent and bought my*

**We urgently need DENTISTS (and doctors, psychiatrists, lawyers and just plain friends) to do pro bono work, research cases, sell raffle tickets or help at community fairs.**

*son a new pair of undies ... It feels to me as if some sort of iron bar has been lifted off my back ... Our journey has been wrought with pain but we, like many others, have hope because of the tireless efforts of people like you and your team. My son has forever begged me to give him a ride on the monorails in the city ... I shall do that. I told him the day the Asylum Seekers Centre called me and said our application [for assistance] has been successful. His reply was a resounding YYYY-EEEESSSS, he was so happy and oh, the wide grin on my son’s dial forced a tear down my cheeks. Once again thank you very kindly for the assistance. God Bless.”*

**“ ... It feels to me as if some sort of iron bar has been lifted off my back ... ”**

I feel there is very little more to say after this, except to inform you that I must take a leave of absence from my post as chair-

person of BASF for several months while I undergo medical treatment and recuperate. While I’m away you can still send your correspondence to [asylumseekersfoundation@bigpond.com](mailto:asylumseekersfoundation@bigpond.com) or to PO Box 483, Glebe NSW 2037. My fellow committee members will respond to you as soon as possible. I will let you know as soon as I return to chair BASF.

Best wishes to you and your loved ones for the coming year.

*Virginia Walker*

Honorary Chairperson.

**BUILDING BRIDGES**  
**Sydney Towns**

**Hall**

**6:30 for 7 pm**

**Thursday, 23**

**March**

**Julie McCrossin,  
Julian Burnside QC,  
John Doyle  
and a huge**

**RAFFLE**

**To book tickets for  
the night and for  
books of raffle  
tickets call Kate on  
9810 5826.**

**Amnesty  
Balmain &  
Rozelle group**

**Invite you to  
dinner by the  
harbour in a private  
home in Birchgrove  
\$20 per head plus  
drinks**

**All proceeds to BASF**  
Come along and hear  
Kate Maclurcan sing  
and hear one of the  
refugees we support,  
tell their story  
**5 pm Sunday,  
11 March**

**RSVP: 9810 3841 or  
9810 7724**

## Building Bridges

Dear Friends,

We are holding our largest ever event to date on Thursday, 23 March at the Sydney Town Hall. **Building Bridges** has a fantastic line-up! **Julie McCrossin** will interview **Julian Burnside QC**. **Marion Lê** (migration agent) will speak on the current situation. **John Doyle (Roy & HG)**

will conduct a charity auction. Entertainment by: **Hat Trick, Didjeridu Dingo, Pat Drummond, Mick Hamilton & Australia's Irish dancing Champions Sacha & Mikhailae Kaless.** **Cheikh Kone** will speak on behalf of refugees.

We hope to FILL Sydney Town hall with friends & supporters! We recommend you book tickets by faxing (9555 9193) or posting

your credit card details using the box below. **Or** post us a cheque/money order made out to 'BASF'. No tickets will be issued, but your name will be held at the door.

Enquiries: 9810 5826 or [building.bridges@hotmail.com](mailto:building.bridges@hotmail.com).

I am looking forward to seeing you all for a fabulous night  
Kate Maclurcan — BASF

## Councils support BASF

Last year we asked councils in declared **Refugee Welcome Zones** to support us in maintaining the position of part-time coordinator, currently held by Kate

Maclurcan. We are pleased to announce the following generous contributions so far:

- **Hornsby Council** \$5000
- **Willoughby Council** \$2000
- **Marrickville Council** \$2000

• **Canterbury Council** \$1000. BASF is indebted to these councils and particularly to **Leichhardt Council** and **City of Sydney** for their ongoing support along with **UnitingCare**.

## Visiting Villawood

Asylum seekers living in detention centres rely on regular visits from volunteers who provide much needed emotional and practical support. We would like to thank everyone who has made the journey to visit a detention centre and share part of a letter from a Villawood visitor.

*"The visit went well yesterday ... The atmosphere was made a bit more festive with Croatian food*

*brought in ... from the Croatian Club (I think) and shared round at a long table under the trees ... I spoke to "John" from Syria quite a bit. He is at a low ebb, so it was good to see him smile and even raise a laugh by the time we left. I was struck by the resilience of most in what is an appalling situation for anybody to be living in. I hope to go again ... Thanks again for introducing us to something so worth doing."*

## Australia Day Lunch

Sixty supporters enjoyed a wonderful lunch on Thursday, 26 January at Sue and Nigel Bowra's Palm Beach house. We thank our gracious hosts who opened their lovely home and provided marvellous food and stunning views. Proceeds to BASF of \$4,000.

### Bridge for Asylum Seekers Foundation

PO Box 483, Glebe NSW 2037 T) (02) 9810 5826 W) [www.asylumseekersfoundation.com](http://www.asylumseekersfoundation.com)  
[building.bridges@hotmail.com](mailto:building.bridges@hotmail.com)

Please reserve my tickets for **Building Bridges**: \$20 adult & \$10 concessions. Raffle tickets \$50 per book of 10. I enclose a cheque/money order/credit card details for:

Building Bridges: \_\_\_\_\_ tickets \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Raffle tickets: \_\_\_\_\_ books \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

- Visa  
 MasterCard  
 Bankcard

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**DONATIONS to Bridge for Asylum Seekers Foundation are fully TAX DEDUCTIBLE**