



At this half-way point in the Financial Year 2013/2014, the BASF Management Committee would like to thank the following organisations for the \$84,250 in Grants received to support asylum seekers in this financial year and for which we are most grateful.

From registered Clubs via the NSW Club Grants Scheme:

- Ashfield RSL (\$2,000)
- Asquith Leagues (\$1,000)
- Auburn RSL (\$19,500)
- Canterbury Hurlstone Park RSL Club (\$12,000)
- Earlwood Bardwell Park RSL (\$2,000)
- Hornsby RSL (\$3,000)
- Illawarra Catholic Club (\$7,200)
- Wenty Leagues (\$13,200)
- West's Ashfield (\$5,200)

From Private Foundations

The Marion and E H Flack Trust (\$12,000)

Mary MacKillop Foundation Ltd (\$7,150).

Thanks too to Leichhardt Council for their continued sponsorship and support in many ways including nominating BASF as their charity of choice at their Earthbeat event on 10 November.

Christmas Appeal

During the last 8-week period (covering the last part of October, November and early December 2013), BASF has provided just over \$65,000 in assistance to 57 adults and 15 children who were in dire straits awaiting the processing of their claims for asylum.

Because we have provided more rental assistance than previously, this has had a big impact upon our remaining funds. We do not want asylum seekers to be sleeping in parks or garages as has been happening. That is why our Christmas appeal this year is specifically directed at providing this additional financial assistance to the families who need help with rental support.

Virginia Walker, Honorary Chairperson

A case-worker's observations of how BASF funds help

BASF and the Asylum Seekers Centre (ASC) have been working together since 2003 to assist asylum seekers living in our community. BASF provides the financial support to prevent homelessness and destitution and ASC provides the complementary services of casework, medical and health services, education, recreation and employment assistance.

The ASC has confirmed that the number of asylum seekers seeking assistance is now higher than at any other time in their 20-year history, with more than 1,100 people from 45 different countries being assisted by ASC last year. In the past year, ASC saw at least 3 new homeless asylum seekers every week and in the last week alone, 45 people turned up at the ASC and 30 of these were either homeless or in need of financial assistance.

Why this sudden influx? Asylum seekers previously released from detention centres with financial support are now being released without any support.

The Minister has chosen not to renew a large number of Bridging Visas for Irregular Maritime Arrivals (Boat arrivals) living in the community, which means they immediately lose the right to work, and access to Medicare and are they are not eligible for financial support.

The waiting time for those eligible for government support has increased from 6-10 weeks to 4-5 months.

Complementary protection (awarded to people who cannot be returned to their home countries because of significant risk of suffering cruel, degrading and inhumane treatment but falling outside the definition of refugee – such as women threatened with Genital Mutilation) has been removed from the Migration Act. Further worsening the situation, the government has capped the number of permanent protection visas which means that no further permanent protection visas will be issued until July 2014, leaving asylum seekers in increasingly desperate circumstances.

How many of us would be able to sustain ourselves and our families for months on end without any income, far from the support of family and friends?

New Face Book Page

We have set up a **BASF facebook page** which we plan to use to keep everyone up to date with how we are helping asylum seekers. The page aims to give insight into why they are seeking asylum and how they are experiencing Australia. We will also share topical facts and figures on the impact of asylum seeker policies.

The page will also link with other similar pages such as the Asylum Seeker Centre.

By clicking 'like' you will provide evidence of the numbers of people who are concerned about the issue. You can comment on items you see on the page and contribute your own thoughts. We will also use the page to update our events calendar and show photographs of recent events (for example the recent lunch at Efendi in Balmain.)

To find the page go to: <https://www.facebook.com/bridgeforasylumseekers>

Generously supported by:



THE MARIAN AND E.H. FLACK TRUST

Ashfield RSL
The Lucky Club



Efendy Lunch – by John Newton food writer and BASF supporter



The last BASF lunch for the year was held, as usual, at Efendy Restaurant on Sunday November 24. We had 30 guests and raised \$2700. It was a smaller group than previously but that didn't affect either the quality of the food or the determination of those present to make a difference. If anything, the continuing deterioration of conditions for asylum seekers, the almost inhumane efforts of government to demonise and humiliate these people made the event more meaningful.

Many thanks to all who attended and were so generous with both donations and buying raffle tickets and I am sure you would want to thank Susan Meyer (pictured) and her able assistant Andrew Clark for organising yet another successful event.

Understanding our supporters

We are very keen to understand more about you. Why? Because if we have better information on where people live and how old they are (roughly!) then when we put together a grant application in local areas we can demonstrate the level of support we have in that community. This is really important will make a big difference in helping us access some very generous grants.

For those of you who receive mailed newsletters we are adding a short questionnaire into the envelope to find out more about you and would really appreciate you returning it. To those of you who use email we will be emailing you in the new year for this information.

Best wishes to you all for the festive season and the New Year ahead

From everyone at BASF



Donations

Payments can be made by post or by phone & by cheque, postal order, credit card or EFT:

Bridge for Asylum Seekers Foundation

ABN 78 722 539 923

PO Box 829, Five Dock NSW 2046

Tel: 9712-7784 or Mob: 0418- 261-160 asylumseekersfoundation@bigpond.com

Donations of \$2.00 and over are tax deductible

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Donation amount: _____

Credit Card Payment:

Visa or MasterCard. Card No: _____

Name on card _____

Expiry Date: ____/____ CSV: ____ (3 digit security code)

Signature: _____

Direct deposit to: UnitingCare - Bridge for Asylum Seekers BSB: 634 634. Account no: 100028813.

To ensure that you receive a tax-deductible receipt, please email your name and address, the date of the deposit and the amount deposited to asylumseekersfoundation@bigpond.com.

