



# A Movement of the Heart

## Support for People Seeking Asylum

### Urgently Needed

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In recent days, a number of refugees and people seeking asylum who have been detained in the Kangaroo Point Hotel were released into the community. They will be given limited income support and accommodation for between 3 and 6 weeks. After that time, they will be in the same boat as hundreds of other people seeking asylum, including families, in SE Queensland who do not receive help in the form of income support and accommodation.

All of these people seeking asylum are in a very difficult situation. Some have the right to work and access to Medicare, but others do not. For some who have the right to work, it is very difficult to get work at all or enough work to look after themselves and their families. Some are dealing with serious illness and are homeless. Some have been living in the community for several years still waiting for a final decision on their claim for protection. Others have exhausted all legal options available to them to pursue protection from the Australian Government, but have nowhere to go. The way people have arrived here varies from person to person. Some have a visa of some form; others do not. The right to work or to Medicare support is not enjoyed by all. The COVID-19 pandemic has made things much worse for all of them.

To leave hundreds of people desperate to find food to put on the table and to be at risk of being homeless is simply cruel and inhumane. Without income and accommodation support and without work, they rely on the compassionate support of the community.

Many Queenslanders have supported these groups of people seeking asylum with offers of accommodation, financial donations, gift and phone cards, non-perishable food, clothing, toiletries and other basic necessities. Without this support, their struggle to live with dignity would be so much more difficult. With the release of the men detained at the Kangaroo Point Hotel, the need for our compassion only increases

#### **A Movement of the Heart**

We who follow Jesus are a movement of the heart, challenging cruelty and harshness with love and compassion. Jesus invites us to welcome the stranger, to feed the hungry, to give shelter to those without a home and to care for those in need. We do not judge people's circumstances or worthiness. We simply love and care for all who are in need with merciful and compassionate hearts just as the Good Samaritan did.

#### **Asylum Seeker and Refugee Assistance (ASRA) Program**

For the last couple of years, the Queensland Government has come to the aid of hundreds of people seeking asylum and refugees who do not have enough money to survive, who cannot afford a place to rent and who cannot find work. The Government has funded the ASRA Program which offers emergency relief and case managed support to people seeking asylum. 7 major community organisations work together to provide this

support. Around 700 people have been supported by the ASRA program. The need far outweighs the resources available and the funding contract will end in May.

You can help to maintain this vital support by approaching your local State MP and telling them that you want the Queensland Government to continue funding ASRA into the future and for the funds available to be increased.

You can also help the people supported by ASRA by making donations to help pay the rent for people seeking asylum, by offering a unit or home for accommodating people seeking asylum or by helping them to find employment.

If you want to offer practical support to ASRA or if you need more information about ASRA to help you make an approach to your local MP, please contact Anne Hilton, the ASRA Coordinator, at [anneh@communify.org.au](mailto:anneh@communify.org.au).

## **A Wide Range of Opportunities to Provide Support**

Many other groups and organisations help people seeking asylum in SE Queensland in different ways. You can help to replace the cruelty of Government policies with compassion and love by supporting one or a number of these organisations with donations of cash, gift and phone cards, food, offers of accommodation, etc. The type of support that will be accepted by each organisation may vary. Here are contact details for some of these organisations:

- ❖ **Multicultural Australia:** Keirnan Fitzpatrick, [keirnanf@multiculturalaustralia.org.au](mailto:keirnanf@multiculturalaustralia.org.au)
- ❖ **Access Inc (Logan):** 3412 8222
- ❖ **The Romero Centre:** Beata Ostapiej-Piatkowski, Manager, 3013 0100, [beata.ostapiej-piatkowski@mercyys.org.au](mailto:beata.ostapiej-piatkowski@mercyys.org.au)
- ❖ **St Paul's Community Hub, Woodridge:** Jon Soroan, 3208 2868, [jsoroan@bne.catholic.edu.au](mailto:jsoroan@bne.catholic.edu.au)
- ❖ **Logan Together:** Zahir Ul Husnian, 0413 169 240, [shahzahir2006@yahoo.com](mailto:shahzahir2006@yahoo.com)
- ❖ **Refugee Association of Logan:** Chris Miranda, 0438 621 383, [ral.logan.qld@gmail.com](mailto:ral.logan.qld@gmail.com)
- ❖ **The Society of St Vincent de Paul:** [qld.donations@svdpqld.org.au](mailto:qld.donations@svdpqld.org.au) or 1800 846643
- ❖ **Indooroopilly Uniting Church Refugee & Asylum Seeker Welcome Centre:** Malcolm Dunning, [malcolmd@exemail.com.au](mailto:malcolmd@exemail.com.au), or the church office, 3878 9535
- ❖ **World Wellness Group:** 3333 2100, [admin@worldwellnessgroup.org.au](mailto:admin@worldwellnessgroup.org.au)
- ❖ **Refugee and Immigration Legal Service:** 3846 9300 or donate via <https://www.rails.org.au/donate>
- ❖ **Red Cross Migration Services and Support:** [3367 7222](tel:33677222)

*This information has been compiled by the Catholic Justice & Peace Commission of the Archdiocese of Brisbane. If you need more information, please contact the Commission on 3324 3441 or [cjpc@bne.catholic.net.au](mailto:cjpc@bne.catholic.net.au)*

