# Contents

**Asylum seekers and refugees** 3

- Who are they? 3
- The facts 3
- What difficulties do asylum seekers face? 4

**Why is Anglicare involved?** 5

- Created in God’s image 5
- A heritage of inclusion 6
- Transformed by grace 6
- Do not worry about tomorrow 7
- Love that lights the world 7

**How Anglicare is responding** 8

**How you can be involved** 9

- Pray 9
- Support existing church ministries serving asylum seekers 9
- Offer housing 15
- Use your profession 15
- Connect, partner, share and learn 17
Asylum seekers and refugees

Who are they?

In Australia the terms ‘asylum seeker’ and ‘refugee’ are not interchangeable.

An asylum seeker is a person who has fled their home country and is seeking protection in another country as a refugee but has not yet had their claim to refugee status finalised.

A refugee is a person who, ‘owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his/her nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself/herself of the protection of that country (UNHCR).

More than 90 per cent of asylum seekers arriving by boat to Australia during the period 2009-2012 had their claims assessed as being genuine at which point they became refugees.

The facts

Both asylum seekers and refugees are among the most vulnerable people in society.

In Australia, government funding is provided to not-for-profit agencies so they can support refugees through a range of services.

This same level of funding is not available for asylum seekers who thus rely more heavily on community groups for basic support and assistance with living in a new environment.

In the community, asylum seekers are generally provided with just 89 per cent of the Newstart allowance (i.e. approx $450 per fortnight for a single person) which needs to cover housing, food and transport.

Some do not receive any support at all.
What difficulties do asylum seekers face?

Many are restricted from work rights and from participating in formal education programs. This restriction includes government-funded ESL classes, however 45 hours of English training can be accessed. This is normally insufficient.

They often have insufficient funds for food and transport, let alone accommodation.

Accommodation is one of their most critical needs due to lack of finances, rental history, employment and knowledge of the system – in addition to discrimination.

Most lack basic household items such as furniture, bedding and cooking utensils.

Language difficulties are a further barrier to being able to participate in society.

Both before and after arrival in Australia asylum seekers would have experienced a range of hardships including such things as violence, war, torture, abuse, stress, discrimination, and loss. They have suffered significant trauma; many have seen family members killed and had houses destroyed. They have been through horrible situations and risked their lives to get here. They come to us grieving and broken.
Motivated and equipped for all we do through the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, Anglicare exists to provide Christ-centred services and advocacy for the vulnerable and socially excluded.

Here are five insights from the Scriptures which help outline the Biblical narrative of love for the outsider and how it is relevant to our response to asylum seekers.

**Created in God’s image**

Each and every person is precious, by right of being created by God in His own image (Gen 1:26-27). This truth revealed to us by God has a few implications for how we treat asylum seekers. All image-bearers should be protected (Gen 9:5-6). Moreover the manner in which we treat any other image-bearer largely reveals our attitude towards God (Proverbs 14:31, 1 John 4:19-21). This is a central truth that should frame all our thoughts on this issue.
Having had an encounter with Jesus, having seen His love for us in the cross and having become his disciples, we can now see the world and those we encounter differently. Jesus’ death and resurrection is the perfect expression of God’s great grace, mercy and true compassion. Through it he restores our humanity and equips us by his Spirit to now be gracious, merciful and compassionate. We now seek to put aside the things that might divide us from God and each other, to lay down our lives for the sake of others, and our blessing is to extend even as far as our enemy (Matt 5:43-45). Asylum seekers, whether we see them as aliens, foreigners, or outsiders are clearly within these bounds; God’s grace is inclusive, not exclusive. This is antithetical to the way of the world. The way the world portrays the outsider; the way the media portrays the stranger, the foreigner, and the asylum seeker, makes them out to be dangerous, and therefore to be feared or rejected. But we love – for he first loved us. We have been reformed into the image of Christ, we have become our brother’s keeper (1 John 3:16-18), and in this service we see true humanity - the humanity of Jesus.

A heritage of inclusion

In the Old Testament law, there is a recurring theme of how to treat foreigners; to love them, to treat them as if they were one of their own, care for them and provide justice (Lev 19:9-10, Lev 19:34, Deut 24:17-18). The Israelites may have been tempted to turn them away, to mistreat them if they did arrive, to pay them less or to oppress them. God knew their hearts, like ours, could be tempted to such action and so gave specific instructions to the contrary. In fact God set in place systems like the tithe to provide for the foreigners, so they may eat and be satisfied (Deut 14:28-29). God also gave reasons for these instructions. Firstly, he reminds the Israelites that they were once aliens in Egypt and that the Promised Land is a gift they did not earn (Deut 6:10-13). Secondly, since God loves the vulnerable and the marginalised so should we (Deut 10:17-19).
Love that lights the world

God has put asylum seekers in our midst, and as people transformed by him, and by his Spirit we have clear instructions; “love your neighbour as yourself” (Mark 12:31). Jesus made it clear that this was not subject to exceptions or loopholes (Luke 10:29–37). This love is to be personal (shown to those at hand) and not based on worthiness (shown to those in need). As we see with the neighbourly Samaritan in Luke 10, this love may be risky, costly and has the possibility of being comprehensive. Furthermore we remember, just as the Israelites did, that everything we have is not our own, but a gift from God to be used for his will; to share the love that we ourselves have been shown. Through this love we aim to share Christ with asylum seekers and hope God rescues them as he did us. The people of Israel were told to do this for the foreigner amongst them (Deut 31:12), and we are called to make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:19-20). The nations of the world have come to Australia and asylum seekers often come from nations that are closed to the gospel. What an amazing opportunity we have!

Do not worry about tomorrow

Throughout all of history God has always used both good and bad situations to achieve his will. We see in biblical history that refugees and asylum seekers are important to God and have played a significant role in God’s plan. Joseph’s family moved to Egypt to escape a famine, Moses escaped from Egypt after having killed a man, David spent years of his early life seeking asylum from Saul, Jesus himself started life as a refugee when Joseph and Mary sought asylum in Egypt and the early church of Jerusalem became refugees, scattered among the surrounding nations to escape persecution. These situations are often tragic and filled with pain - the result of a fallen world – but in each case God achieves his will. So when these situations occur, we should not fear the consequences, or be anxious about providing protection. We do not need to worry that they will be a burden too great for us; God will provide what we need (Matt 6:25-26). We do not need to worry that some of those who seek asylum are different to us; God made both them and us in His image. We do not need to worry because God is in control and our hope is in Christ. Instead as always we “seek first his kingdom and his righteousness” (Matt 6:33); we follow the instructions that he has given, to show love transformed by his love.

You may never have met an asylum seeker or perhaps they have inundated your church. Either way, God’s word shapes our hearts and actions towards them. And in this way, living ourselves as “strangers and aliens” in this world, we will bring God glory through our good deeds (1 Pet. 2:11-12).
How Anglicare is responding

We have become aware that there are many Christians who are concerned about asylum seeker issues in Australia and want to become involved but don’t know how or where to begin. We also know that churches in some areas of Sydney are trying to respond to the significant material, personal and spiritual needs of increasing numbers of asylum seekers approaching them for help.

Anglicare has a long history of working with migrants and refugees and we want to use our experience and connections to help people learn more about asylum seekers and how to serve and love them.

Through our Asylum Seeker Outreach Worker, Anglicare is working with churches and other agencies to:

- Identify needs and avenues for support and create channels to link them.
- Develop opportunities for churches and individuals to participate in this area of ministry.
- Coordinate practical and material support.
- Facilitate information and training for those working with, or interested in working with, asylum seekers and refugees.

There are many needs and challenges currently faced by asylum seekers and refugees in Australia. While this poses a challenge to Anglicare as we struggle to provide support for asylum seekers to the desired level, it is a perfect opportunity for local churches to step up and lead the way in caring for those most in need in our community. It is our hope that Christians get amongst asylum seekers to welcome, love, and care for them.
How you can be involved

The needs of asylum seekers are great and varied. This resource provides practical ways in which all Christians and churches can contribute to meeting these needs.

Pray

Prayer is an essential means of support through which you can partner with the churches on the front line of asylum seeker ministry. In difficult times, prayer is such a practical form of support for asylum seekers and an excellent reminder that God is in control of this situation and using it to achieve his will. You could form a prayer group, or just pray on your own. If you would like to receive monthly prayer points you can sign up for our monthly prayer e-mail. E-mail asylumseekerprayer@anglicare.org.au to express your interest.

Support existing church ministries serving asylum seekers

How would you respond if asylum seekers arrived at your church seeking help?

For at least ten churches in the Sydney Diocese this is not a hypothetical question. Dozens, in some cases hundreds of asylum seekers have come to them seeking personal, material and spiritual assistance. Each church has responded to the best of their ability but they need support.

One of the greatest needs of all these churches is having enough people to respond to asylum seekers with friendship. Through friendships with local Australians asylum seekers can learn about our society, practise English language skills and have someone looking out for their needs. There is tremendous opportunity for Christ's love to be shown through the simple act of friendship.
Liverpool South Anglican Church

**What:** Asylum Seeker Service  
**Who:** A group of friendly Christians  
**When:** Sunday 11:30am

Liverpool South Anglican is connected with many Tamil asylum seekers and runs activities for them after the regular Sunday church service. These may include testimonies from Christians translated into Tamil, an activity such as writing a résumé, teaching ESL or a talk on an interesting topic. This formal time commences after the church service and goes from 12pm-12:45pm after which they enjoy lunch and fellowship together until 2pm. Groups of new people would add more diversity and interest to these activities and allow the regular church helpers to focus on building relationships.

If your church would like to send a group of 5-10 people to help with this service on a regular basis (e.g. once a month) contact Manoj Chacko.

Church members also transport asylum seekers from Liverpool station to their church at Lurnea on Sunday mornings (around 11:30am) and drop them back again in the afternoon. These asylum seekers travel from areas such as Toongabbie, Blacktown, Granville and Auburn.

Contact Manoj Chacko  
Phone: 9601 5526 (church office)  
Mobile: 0413 304 300  
Email: chax@bigpond.net.au

St Philip’s Anglican Church  

Auburn

**What:** Easy English Bible Class  
**Who:** Committed Christians who have previous experience in some form of Christian ministry.  
**When:** Monday 11am-12pm – hoping to add extra days with more teachers.

**What:** ESL class  
**Who:** Any English speakers (St Philip’s or Anglicare can provide ESL training)  
**When:** Monday 9:30am-12:00pm – hoping to add extra days with more teachers.

St Philip’s has been reaching out to asylum seekers in the community, reading the Bible with them in their homes as well as providing food, clothes, blankets, furniture and appliances. They have many contacts however they cannot expand the ESL and Easy English Bible programs without more teachers!

Contact Tim Cocks or Goodson Muleya  
Phone: 9649 7228 (church office)  
Email: office@stphilipsauburn.com.au  
Church Address: 48 Hall St, Auburn
Good Shepherd Anglican Church Greenacre and St Andrew’s Lakemba, Evening Congregation

What: ESL class
Who: Any English speakers (Anglicare can provide ESL training)
When: Thursday 10:30am (Greenacre)
       Thursday 7:30pm (Lakemba)

What: 1-to-1 English classes
Who: Christians with some cross-cultural experience
When: Flexible

What: Home-tutors for high school children
Who: People able to tutor high school English and other subjects (requires Working With Children Check and denominational volunteer safe ministry training).
When: Flexible – after school

John Bales, the minister of Greenacre, has been sharing the gospel with people from different cultural backgrounds for many years. Many who cross his path are asylum seekers who have a variety of needs. He has contacts with families who would appreciate help for their children to integrate into school and Australian society more effectively.

Margaret Powell is an outreach worker with Georges River region, based in Lakemba and Greenacre. Her main work is with women from Middle Eastern or South Asian background.

Contact John Bales
Phone: 0417 251 756
Email: goodshepherdanglican@gmail.com
Church Address: Good Shepherd: 80 Pandora St, Greenacre
Anglicare Diocese of Sydney
St. Andrews: Corner Lakemba and Quigg St, Lakemba
Mail: PO Box 396 Greenacre, 2190

St John’s Anglican Church West Strathfield

What: Home visiting and Bible study
Who: Christians with good Bible knowledge and keen to share the gospel with other cultures.
When: Flexible

What: ESL classes
Who: No experience required aside from an ability to love people from different backgrounds.
When: 7:30pm Tuesday

What: Fellowship
Who: People who would like to pray for, meet one on one with, and generally befriend refugees and asylum seekers.
When: Flexible

St John's has been reaching out to the Tamil asylum seekers in their community. This is primarily through ESL classes and the minister, Clive, reading the Bible with them in their homes. Clive is also aiming to start a Tamil/English service and needs locals to come and join the congregation so that it can be a welcoming environment that runs smoothly. Contact him if you are interested in joining that congregation when it starts.

Contact Clive Buultjens
Mobile: 0403 238 665
Email: dcliveb@gmail.com
Church Address: 93 Newton Rd, Strathfield West
**St James’ Anglican Church Beralta**

**What:** ESL classes  
**Who:** No experience required aside from an ability to love people from different backgrounds.  
**When:** Wednesday 10am-12pm  

St James’ is a church which has good contacts with many asylum seeker families and young men. There are lots of opportunities for cross-cultural ministry at this church, including ESL classes and Easy English Bible classes. They would love people who are interested in cross cultural ministry to visit their services and perhaps consider joining the church. The church is also looking for people to help out with Kids’ Club and/or Youth Group on Friday afternoons and evenings as there is a need in this area and asylum seeker children and youth attend these groups. They particularly need people with Mandarin, Cantonese, Dari and Farsi language skills.

**Contact:** Jo-Ann Elvery (cross-cultural worker)  
**Phone:** 8915 1906 (church office)  
**Email:** stjamesberala@gmail.com  
**Church Address:** 19 Crawford St, Beralta  
**Service times:** 9:30am and 6:00pm Sunday (6pm is Easy English)

---

**St Anne’s Anglican Church Ryde**

**What:** ESL classes  
**Who:** No experience required aside from an ability to love people from different backgrounds.  
**When:** Wednesday 9:30-11:30am  

A nearby transitionary accommodation hotel brought many asylum seekers to St Anne’s seeking help and a lot have maintained contact after they’ve moved on. St Anne’s has run a number of programs providing services and fellowship for asylum seekers. The current programs and services include Bible study with Farsi resources, an intermediate writing and reading English course, Australian-themed movie nights and provision of Mybus and grocery cards to help out with living and travel expenses. They have various social outings and events. So aside from the regular ESL program, check in for other ways which you can assist their ministries.

**Contact:** Greg Burke  
**Phone:** 9809 1322  
**Email:** greg@stannes.org.au.  
**Church Address:** 42-50 Church St, Ryde.
**Guildford Anglican Church**

Guildford Anglican Church has been in contact with Pakistani and Afghani asylum seekers. They don’t currently have any formal programs but would really appreciate people who are eager to build relationships with their contacts. You could visit the church’s social soccer events or church service to start meeting asylum seekers or contact the church to learn more about ways to serve.

Contact Tim Booker  
Phone: 9632 8545  
Email: tbooker@guildford.anglican.asn.au  
Church Address: 2 Bolton Street, Guildford

---

**St John’s Anglican Cathedral Parramatta**

**What:** ESL classes  
**When:** 10am-12pm Tues and Thurs (School Term)

St John’s Parramatta has a large Iranian ministry run by the Persian minister Dr Michael Safari which includes ESL classes. There are more than one hundred participants, many of whom are young male asylum seekers. ESL is a great opportunity to connect with people and provides very practical support which helps them participate in our society.

Contact Michael Safari  
Phone: 9891 0703  
Mobile: 0419 614 492  
Church Address: 187 Church St Mall, Parramatta
St Barnabas’ Anglican Church Fairfield

The Fairfield area has a large population of refugees and asylum seekers – many of whom don’t know anyone outside their own community. St Barnabas’ have had some contact through their English and Easy English Bible classes but want to expand their outreach and need help to do this. St Barnabas’ invites people who love Jesus and have a heart to assist refugees and asylum seekers, to come and spend time in (or even move to) the Fairfield area and make time to get to know neighbours, build friendships and point them to Jesus. How great it would be for asylum seekers to get to know caring Christians who could look to their needs and help them adjust to life in Australia!

Contact Anh Ton
Phone: 0418 456 923
Email: arnn23@gmail.com
Offer housing

Asylum seekers experience great difficulty finding affordable rental accommodation due to very limited income and discrimination.

Providing affordable accommodation by making available a room, granny flat or property to rent is a great way to reach out in love.

The churches listed below often have asylum seekers in need of accommodation. Please contact one (or more) of the churches listed below to discuss how you might be able to assist an individual/family. Include in your email details about the type of accommodation, dwelling capacity, available dates and any preference for male/female/family. A church representative will discuss possible options with you and provide an information sheet with suggestions about how to organise the accommodation arrangement.

Churches:

St James Berala  
Contact Jo-Ann Elvery  
Phone: 8915 1906 (church office)  
Email: stjamesberala@gmail.com

St Johns Strathfield  
Contact Clive Buultjens  
Mobile: 0403 238 665  
Email: dcliveb@gmail.com

St Philip’s Anglican Church Auburn  
Contact Tim Cocks or Goodson Muleya  
Phone: 9649 7228 (church office)  
Email: office@stphilipsauburn.com.au

Good Shepherd Anglican Church Greenacre and St Andrew’s Lakemba  
Contact John Bales  
Phone: 0417 251 756  
Email: goodshepherdanglican@gmail.com

Use your profession

Dentist or Health Professional

Asylum seekers have trouble accessing healthcare. Some do not have Medicare cards and those who do can still face difficulty in navigating the health system. Dental health is often particularly poor among asylum seekers and they find it difficult to access appropriate care. It would be a powerful display of Jesus’ love if dentists or health professionals in the church who wanted to help asylum seekers were to offer a few hours a week to see asylum seeker patients pro bono.

Psychologist

There is a great need for trained psychologists as many asylum seekers suffer some form of mental illness as a result of trauma and/or their time in detention. If you are a trained psychologist you may consider volunteering with STARTTS.

NSW SERVICE FOR THE TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION OF TORTURE AND TRAUMA SURVIVORS (STARTTS)  
STARTTS is a not-for-profit charity which assists people from refugee backgrounds with torture and trauma histories. STARTTS provides information and mental health and counselling services to asylum seekers living in the community, in Community Detention, and living within Immigration Detention facilities.  
Website: http://www.startts.org.au/  
Phone: (02) 9794 1900  
Email: startts@sswhs.nsw.gov.au.
Lawyer

Lawyers are crucial in progressing the cases of asylum seekers in the courts. Currently asylum seekers receive no government funded legal support. You may want to consider volunteering in some capacity with asylum seeker legal support groups such as the following:

**Refugee Advice and Casework Service (RACS)**
RACS provides expert advice and legal assistance to asylum seekers and refugees. However a recent change in policy has cut government funding from the Immigration Advice and Application Assistance Scheme (IAAAS) to deny representation like this for people who arrived in Australia without documentation, either by plane or boat. Unfortunately asylum seekers often don’t have documentation and thus they are placed in this category. RACS will be relying on donations to fund this work in the future.

Website: www.racs.org.au
Phone: 02 9114 1600
Email: admin@racs.org.au

**Balmain for Refugees:**
A Uniting Church group which does casework for failed asylum cases.

Website: http://balmainchurch.org.au/balmain-for-refugees/
Contact: fbmilne@iprimus.com.au (Frances Milne)

**Salvos Legal Humanitarian**
A specialist law firm that provides free legal advice and support to financially or otherwise disadvantaged people in New South Wales and Queensland and assists asylum seekers and refugees amongst others.

Contact: probonodesk@salvoslegal.com.au (read website for info to include in email)

For further information on how you can volunteer your professional services contact Anglicare’s Asylum Seeker Outreach Worker.

Contact: Amelia Savage
Phone: 9895 8186
Email: asavage@anglicare.org.au
Connect, partner, share and learn

Anglicare’s Outreach Worker for Asylum Seekers is available to discuss anything regarding asylum seekers with you. You can chat with her about the number of ways you can get involved.

Anglicare can:

Connect you with a church serving asylum seekers

If you love the idea of helping out at a church that has asylum seekers in its midst, Anglicare can help you find a church whose needs suit your abilities. Whether you want to volunteer, visit, or support through either goods or prayer, we can help find you a match that works.

Form a partnership with you and your church

By forming a partnership with Anglicare, we can help your whole church become more involved with the asylum seeker issue. We can:

- Present a Christian perspective of the asylum seeker issue at your church or at a separate church function.
- Help you to host an outing for asylum seekers. This is a great way to welcome and enjoy fellowship with asylum seekers and their supporters.
- Keep you updated on this issue and help you to support this work with prayer via our monthly prayer email. Email asylumseekerprayer@anglicare.org.au to express your interest.
- Help you run an event to educate your congregation on the asylum seeker issue from a Christian perspective. Such events could include an information night, movie night, or a refugee simulation game.
Provide Training

Anglicare ESL: Anglicare organises training days twice a year, as well as introductory ESL training at your church.
Phone: 9895 8119
Email: esl@anglicare.org.au

Other: If you are interested in finding other areas of training regarding working with asylum seekers or cross cultural ministry, Anglicare can either provide this training or help you to find it depending on the circumstance.

Offer Resources and Information

You may be an information person who needs some resources to help you understand this important issue. Perhaps you want to check facts out of your own interest, or provide information to someone else, or maybe an asylum seeker you meet asks a question you don’t know the answer to. You can contact our Outreach Worker at Anglicare if you need any information regarding asylum seekers. If the information can’t be personally provided by her, she will refer you onto the relevant agencies. You can also ask for her resource list that has a number of other organisations working with asylum seekers in specific ways that you might like to be involved in.

Amelia Savage
Outreach Worker (Asylum Seekers)
Migrant and Refugee Services
Anglicare
T: 9895 8186
M: 0407 865 785
E: asavage@anglicare.org.au