



# GETTING INVOLVED – IN VICTORIA

As you have seen in the stories on Road to Refuge, refugees face complex and varied difficulties at all stages of their journeys. More often than not, these difficulties don't end upon reaching Australia, Many face gruelling conditions of indefinite detention and for those allowed into the community, they face navigating an expensive and foreign legal system, supporting a family on close to nothing, accessing healthcare and transport in a new country or starting school in a new language.

There are opportunities to provide support in many different ways – whether you have specific skills that can be put to use, or energy and passion to volunteer.

## ***VOLUNTEERING***

Many organizations run entirely on people like you volunteering their time. This is a great way to support refugees, learn more about the issues they face and build enduring relationships. You can employ your specific skills or volunteer your time in any way it's needed.

### ***On the Ground***

This is a good place to start if you are looking to volunteer at a grassroots level to provide welcome for refugees in Australia and support with building a life in a new country.

- The Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC)
- **Brigidene Asylum Seeker Project** (<http://basp.org.au/be-involved/>)
- The Welcome Group
- The West Welcome Wagon
- RISE
- **Friends of Refugees** (<http://www.friendsofrefugees.org.au/>)
- Bicycles for Asylum Seekers

### ***Legal Services***

Legal knowledge is indispensable in ensuring the rights of asylum seekers are upheld. There are many ways to apply your skills, from helping to navigate the legal system and providing legal advice, to engaging with policy and implementing law reform.

- The ASRC's Human Rights Law Program
- RILC

### ***In the Community***

These are various ways to assist refugees in engaging with and creating strong communities, and enabling people to take up opportunities available to all Australians. This can be structured within a program, or could be more informal social and emotional support, building meaningful relationships.

- Brigidene Asylum Seeker Project
- Friends of Refugees
- Edmund Rice Asylum Seeker Program (Community Centre) ([cm@edmundrice.org](mailto:cm@edmundrice.org))
- Visit asylum seekers and refugees in detention through BASP (<http://basp.org.au/be-involved/>) or Befriend a Child in Detention (<https://befriendachildindetention.wordpress.com/get-involved/join-the-visiting-team/>)
- Tutoring through SAIL
- Tutoring through the Centre for Multicultural Youth
- Sports Without Borders

## *FUNDRASING AND DONATING*

Many organisations that provide vital support and services for refugees rely heavily on financial donations from the community; fundraising – through an organisation or through your own community – is crucial to keep these services running. Direct donations of goods are also always needed – fundamental items such as phone cards and sanitary products, as well as household goods and food.

These are essential ways of providing support without having to commit much time in the long term, and know that your contribution goes directly to those who need it.

- Fundraise to support the ASRC
- Donate to support the ASRC
- Friends of Refugees (<http://www.friendsofrefugees.org.au/>)
- The Welcome Group – Bridging the Gaps
- The West Welcome Wagon
- Donate to RILC
- The Refugee Council
- RISE Food bank
- ASRC's food bank and material aid network
- Bicycles for Asylum Seekers

## *ADVOCACY*

This can involve campaigning to ensure the rights of refugees are upheld, and promoting public awareness of the issues concerning them. Advocacy helps to implement immediate action on urgent issues, and create social and political change in the long term.

- Volunteer through the ASRC
- Amnesty Refugee Network
- Welcome to Australia
- Road to Refuge (email [info@roadtorefuge.com](mailto:info@roadtorefuge.com))
- Write for Right Now
- RISE
- If you are a granny – Grandmothers Against Detention of Refugee Children (ADRC)