

2015 Annual Report



 Stained glass chapel window in Nairobi

Keeping the flame of hope alive

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02 Message from the Chair of the JRS Board



2015 was a particularly exciting year for JRS, despite our concern at the many challenges facing those seeking asylum in Australia. The beginning of the year saw the establishment of Arrupe Place, a drop-in and resource centre for people seeking asylum. The Sisters of Mercy heard of the search for suitable premises in Parramatta and offered the use of a house. This provided a wonderful venue where staff and volunteers soon developed a warm and homely atmosphere that was quickly appreciated by their clients.

Other religious congregations also collaborated with the provision of personnel and financial assistance. Soon, partnerships were forged with individuals, schools, universities, businesses and other non-government organisations, allowing Arrupe Place to offer a range of services and activities.

With changes to Government policies and funding arrangements, most of JRS's other activities had been wound up at the end of 2014. We continue to provide accommodation at Blaiket Shelter for single men, and the facility was refurbished by Seven Consulting. The case work for Blaiket Shelter residents has been transferred to Arrupe Place.

Advocacy, communication, education and fund-raising continued, with success in relation to NSW transport concessions, partnerships and the generosity of benefactors. The Melbourne Cup Luncheon was also a social and financial success.

These and other achievements are a tribute to the leadership of Fr Aloysious Mowe SJ and the talented leadership team and staff, as well as to the generosity and skill of all who volunteered their time to assist in the many tasks that give hope to people who are otherwise so marginalised as asylum seekers in Australia.

Annette Cunliffe rsc, Chair of the JRS Board

“[JRS] helped my [asylum seeker] brother so much, so much. Because my brother was thinking everything is finished, he was very badly depressed. He said, ‘there are some other people who think about me’. It was a big help for my brother.”

Iranian woman

Our board members



As a JRS board member since 2008, and a former director of Jesuit Mission, I was privileged to be associated with Jesuit Refugee Service, an organisation that provides the professional guidance and advocacy so needed by asylum seekers, and which treats asylum seekers with the dignity and compassion that they deserve.

Phil Crotty SJ



I have found working with the Jesuits, understanding the spirituality of St Ignatius and being immersed in their many good works has inspired me to really embrace my position on the JRS Board. The plight of refugees unfortunately has become the focus equivalent to kicking a football around and no humanity considerations at all. I want to make a significant contribution of engagement and change.

Graham Fear



The strength of JRS's engagement in advocacy, whether at a national level or internationally, lies in its grounded accompaniment of and service to refugees. The JRS mission reflects the importance of knowing the people whose cause we plead.

Dr Eve Lester



I have been working with refugees for nearly 30 years in various capacities, most recently as a lawyer and a board member for JRS. Listening to their stories has changed my life. Their stories and the unfair way we treat asylum seekers in Australia drives me to seek some justice for them.

Kerry Murphy

03 Message from the Director

“We will never forget JRS and the welcome we received here.”

Father of two from Egypt



2015 marked the 35th anniversary of Jesuit Refugee Service. This was not a cause for celebration, as our continued existence testifies to the violence and conflict that continues to ravage many parts of the world, and the closing of borders and doors to those who have to find protection from such conflict. This anniversary was instead an occasion for JRS to reaffirm our commitment to the vision of our founder, Pedro Arrupe SJ, who desired a generous response that would see us accompany, serve, and advocate for refugees.

It was fitting that JRS Australia marked the anniversary by opening Arrupe Place, a new drop-in centre in western Sydney for people seeking asylum. We took as our inspiration not just the foundational charism of Fr Arrupe, but also the example and exhortation of Pope Francis, who said in his message to JRS marking our anniversary:

The Jesuit Refugee Service works to offer hope and prospects to refugees... provides refugees with the wherewithal to progress beyond survival, to keep alive the flame of hope, to believe in the future and to make plans... All your projects have this ultimate aim: to help refugees to grow in self-confidence, to realise their highest inherent potential and to be able to defend their rights as individuals and communities.

We are grateful to our many supporters and donors for making possible this work of keeping the flame of hope alive. To all who belong to this JRS family, I wish to share the final words that Pope Francis spoke to JRS on the occasion of this anniversary:

Remember the words of Jesus: ‘Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy’ (Mt 5:7). Take these words with you always, so that they can bring you encouragement and consolation.

Fr Aloysious Mowe SJ, Director of JRS Australia

“JRS has opened the door for me and I want to make sure that door is open for others.”

Egyptian asylum seeker



Arrupe Place, Parramatta

Values, vision and purpose

Jesuit Refugee Service is an international Catholic organisation with a mission to accompany, serve and advocate on behalf of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons. JRS was launched in 1981 in response to the plight of thousands of Vietnamese boat people fleeing war in that country. Today, we work in 47 countries, providing assistance to refugees in camps and cities, internally displaced people, asylum seekers and those held in detention centres. Our programmes focus chiefly on education, emergency assistance, healthcare, livelihood activities, social services and pastoral care. Many of those who work for JRS are volunteers.

In 2015, JRS served over 1500 asylum seekers living in the Australian community, primarily in western Sydney. Services included casework support, financial assistance, temporary accommodation, legal assistance, form-filling support, a foodbank, English classes, Cooking Together lunches, and other social support activities. As a Catholic organisation, JRS is inspired by the compassion and love of Jesus for the poor and the marginalised. JRS dreams of, and is working towards, a world free from frontiers, divisions and forcible displacement, where people can move freely and securely – a world where the value of hospitality is extended to everyone.



Shelter Project

Arrupe Place

In 2014, through a series of needs analyses and consultations, JRS identified numerous challenges facing asylum seekers and refugees, including a lack of financial resources, a lack of access to safe and affordable housing, the need for legal services and employment support, poor mental and physical health and social isolation. In response to these needs, at the beginning of 2015 JRS opened Arrupe Place, a drop-in centre in Parramatta, western Sydney, where large numbers of asylum seekers and refugees live. By partnering with religious and refugee-focused organisations, the centre strengthened the capacity of vulnerable asylum seekers by increasing their access to relevant services and support. Our services included the following:

English classes

Around 80 individuals accessed professional English language support while attending more than 100 English classes throughout the year..

Employment-seeking

Arrupe Place offered job search and resume-writing assistance, and offered two job-search workshops in partnership with Training for Change in order to strengthen clients' job search skills.

Health

Almost 300 clients were given access to quality fresh and non-perishable food during 35 foodbank days in 2015. Two health workshops were conducted during a Women's Health and Pamper Day held at Arrupe Place.

“ [JRS] is like a helping hand. A big, big helping hand. ”

Iranian asylum seeker

Social wellbeing

Staff and volunteers conducted 33 home visits, reducing the isolation felt by many asylum seekers and refugees. However, clients have preferred to visit Arrupe Place itself rather than have people come to their home, and so the home visit programme will be reviewed. Cooking Together sessions were held throughout the year in an effort to strengthen clients' connection with the community.

Legal Aid

JRS partnered with the Refugee Advice and Casework Service (RACS) to run a legal clinic based at Arrupe Place. The clinic provided over 1200 asylum seekers with much needed legal advice, as well as information on the Fast Track Assessment process. JRS also worked with RACS to train volunteers to provide clerical form filling assistance, as well as partnering with Baker & McKenzie to provide people with pro-bono assistance with civil law issues.

Accommodation

Access to safe, appropriate and affordable accommodation remained a key issue for asylum seekers in 2015. The Blaiket Shelter in Kings Cross continued to provide accommodation to single adult males at the merits review stages of the asylum process. JRS staff have also noted the need for accommodation options for those whose applications for protection have been rejected, but who have no access to financial support and no work rights. Funds made available through the Sisters of Charity Foundation brought much-needed assistance to families at risk of homelessness, allowing them to stay in their homes while they sought out more sustainable financial support options.

Shelter Project Advocacy

In 2015 The Shelter Project focused on empowering individual asylum seekers to self-advocate by improving their access to information so that they could better navigate systems and services. JRS also worked in collaboration with members of the Health Housing Welfare Working Group and the Asylum Seeker Interagency to successfully lobby the NSW State Government for asylum seekers to be granted Opal concession cards.

“ All of my friends in JRS ...had a special role in building the foundation of my new life. Without their help I am sure that I would not have made it. ”

Afghani asylum seeker

Educational outreach

JRS reached more than 2,000 people in 2015 through community information sessions, school talks, workshops, placements and the 2015 Refugee Week photographic exhibition, *Lost & Found: The Case for Courage*.

In particular, JRS staff spent time planning for long-term engagement with Jesuit and Catholic schools around Sydney, with a particular focus on formalising relationships, developing an educational resource to be incorporated into the existing curriculum, and establishing a more structured JRS speaking programme.

"By engaging more deeply and investing in relationships with schools and school students, we have an opportunity to create more awareness of the work we do and provide opportunities for schools to provide further practical support for our services," said Matthew Potts, Schools Engagement Officer.

"Moreover, it offers an opportunity to equip the next generation of Australian leaders to engage deeply with the growing issue of displacement and to advocate for a more compassionate response from our government and others in the region."


One of those who raised awareness in 2015 was Sudanese refugee Reath Kawang Nyack, who shone light on those still living in refugee camps. "I feel a responsibility to tell my story," he said. "My story that is much bigger than myself. Give voice to those who can't get to speak because they are dead, or they are in refugee camps."

"I feel mentally the weight is gone. I feel peaceful. I can sleep."

Naseer, Pakistan
(Permanent Resident - 2015)

Recognition

Arrupe Place was the recipient of the Australian Psychological Society's 2015 Community Wellbeing Award. The principal criteria for the award were the involvement of volunteers in the programme and the contribution it made to the wellbeing of those in the local community. Arrupe Place was nominated for the award by Parramatta City Council.

 David Moutou, Parramatta Council, with Maeve Brown, Manager of the Arrupe Project, and Oliver White, Assistant Director of JRS, at the awards presentation



Advocacy

JRS consistently urged the Australian government to end its policy of offshore processing and other elements of Operation Sovereign Borders, such as the turning back of boats bearing people seeking protection, and the return to Vietnam and Sri Lanka of people in danger of persecution in those countries. JRS was also actively involved in efforts to urge the government to find alternatives to the detention of people seeking asylum, in particular children and families.

JRS continued to advocate for better protection spaces in the Asia Pacific region through a more strategic engagement by Australia with regional governments. It provided advice and feedback to the government on resettlement priorities, the treatment of detained asylum seekers, and the welfare of asylum seekers in the community, during regular meetings of peak refugee agencies with the Department of Immigration and Border Control.

Through the director's participation in the Australian government's Irregular Migration Research Advisory group JRS provided expertise and critical engagement in key areas of policy research.

JRS was able to respond to many requests from schools, parishes, and community groups for talks and seminars about policy, Catholic Social Teaching, and practical responses to the needs of people seeking asylum.

06 Volunteers assisting JRS



Volunteers are known to be happier, healthier and to sleep better than those who don't volunteer. But though they receive benefits for themselves, they are motivated to be there for others. That is certainly the case for our volunteers, who fulfil JRS's mission by accompanying, serving and advocating for asylum seekers.

Volunteers have underpinned the work of JRS since it first started working in refugee camps in south-east Asia in the 1980s. Since opening Arrupe Place in January 2015, many people have offered to volunteer and we have facilitated several training programmes.




JRS volunteers bring diverse skills but, more importantly, are the face of compassion in their various roles at both Arrupe Place and Blaiket Shelter. This compassion is shown by accompaniment, as expressed in our mission statement: the ability to listen to asylum seekers' stories and to give them respect to build their confidence.

Volunteers can empower clients and help them to become more independent, despite their treatment by the Government. Volunteers are the face of the real Australia - the country of the fair go.

Sr Margaret Guy (top) and Anne Porter (bottom), JRS Volunteer Coordinators



 JRS volunteers are honoured during National Volunteer Week

Volunteers

On Tuesdays, when we have the Cooking Together group, the clients come and share their cultural cooking with us, and the atmosphere of sharing and love and community is really beautiful. I feel that I receive back – I get to experience all these cultures and all these foods, it's a wonderful experience.

Linda Wisoloth

The staff at JRS have such an attitude of respect and compassion, and everybody who walks in through the door is treated as an equal - in fact, even more, is made to feel like someone special, including the volunteers. That's something that's so rare and so precious to have these days, and makes working as a volunteer a privilege.

Alana Simpson

I felt that I would like to help people to feel at home, and that was something that I could do, I was comfortable building community, making people feel at home, and the reason I stay is because I feel that that's what's happening.

Marianne Dwyer

Part of what's kept me coming back is the communal aspect of the whole JRS enterprise and their intent on the formation of their volunteers. I like what I see. I like the way they're working. I'm very happy to be part of an organisation that is so out there in helping these needy people in an unjust system.

Elizabeth Murray

As a volunteer in hospitality at Arrupe Place, I have had the opportunity to serve cups of coffee or tea and biscuits to our clients with a smile. I always remember that if I can't speak or understand their language, my friendliness should do it.

Ron Dizon

07 Partners

“Don't worry, we will wait.
Where else can we go?”
RACS client from Iran

JRS has entered into partnerships with seven other organisations in the provision of services at Arrupe Place. These include the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta, the Sisters of Charity, the Good Samaritan Sisters, the Australian Red Cross, the Refugee Advice and Casework Service (RACS), Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE), and Training for Change. Two other partners, NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS) and Baker & McKenzie, are providing free counselling services and legal assistance in civil law cases, respectively, to asylum seekers. JRS's work would not be possible without the collaborative input of these like-minded religious and secular organisations.

Partners

Sisters of Charity



We see our relationship with JRS as an expression of the 2014 Chapter endorsement of ongoing collaboration with co-workers and colleagues. Currently, collaboration includes chairing of the JRS board, participation in the [running of]

Arrupe Place and financial assistance. Several Sisters of Charity are engaged in ministry with people seeking asylum and JRS offers them support and information.

**Sr Clare Nolan, Congregational Leader,
Sisters of Charity of Australia**

Family Creative Hub at Information and Cultural Exchange



JRS has been an inspiring and incredible organisation that partnered with us to provide interesting and engaging English

Conversational classes to our group of mothers. The beautiful volunteer teacher provided much-needed patience and had a wonderful approach to teaching. The JRS team and volunteers do an amazing job and should be commended for their genuine dedication and hard work towards the wellbeing of refugees and asylum seekers.

**Yamane Fayed, Community Hub leader at
Information of Cultural Exchange**

Good Samaritans



The vision statement of the congregation includes our call to be a neighbour in accord with the Parable of the Good Samaritan. By joining up with other religious congregations we are able to contribute more effectively than trying to go it alone.

Sr Clare Condon, Superior of the Good Samaritans

Sisters of Mercy



At the heart of the mission of the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta today is the plight of asylum seekers and refugees. To have

Arrupe Place situated within our grounds and know that we are able to make a contribution to the work of JRS enables us, to bring to reality, in a practical way, the Mercy of our God.

Sr Mary-Louise Petro rsm, Congregation Vicar

Training For Change

[We] joined with JRS to deliver its Asylum Seeker Employment Training programme to people holding Bridging Visa E. Delivered in their own language, the programme helps people who have gained Australian work rights for the first time to learn about employment systems, finding work, taxation and what their rights are in the workplace.

Elizabeth Schaffer, Director, Training For Change

RACS



REFUGEE
ADVICE &
CASEWORK
SERVICE

Everyone from RACS who has the opportunity to work at

JRS always says what a wonderful environment it provides for the clients. JRS's volunteers are among the most kind, compassionate and patient people in the sector.

Jemma Hollands, Refugee Advice and Casework Service

Australian Red Cross

Arrupe Place certainly has a vibe that makes you know that you are safe. It must be the people and tranquillity of the environment.

Annie Harvey, Red Cross

Word of thanks

A final vote of gratitude must go to those individuals and organisations, too numerous to list, who made JRS's work among asylum seekers and refugees possible in 2015. Every donation – of time, money, goods – helped in some way to advance the cause of these thoroughly marginalised people. In particular we would like to thank the Xavier Social Justice Network for organising the annual JRS dinner in Melbourne; Andrew and Renata Kaldor for holding a JRS fundraising event in their home; and all who supported the JRS Melbourne Cup Luncheon. We at JRS are deeply grateful for your contributions to our work.

08 Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year ended 31 December 2015

Revenue		1,440,517
General donations	387,669	
Shelter project donations	509,236	
Grants	447,850	
Other income	95,762	
Expenditure		952,874
Administrative employee expenses	101,797	
Administrative expenses	102,085	
Advocacy – travel expenses	13,086	
Advocacy and communications employee expenses	65,652	
Advocacy and communications expenses	24,917	
Detention project expenses	331	
Depreciation expenses	14,037	
Fundraising expenses	15,348	
Shelter project expenses	508,308	
Stipends to religious congregations	107,312	
Results from operating activities		487,643
Financial income	10,204	
Financial costs	-1,538	
Net interest income		8,666
Surplus for the period		496,309
Total comprehensive income		496,309

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