



AUSTRALIA

2018 annual report



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2 our people

Board members

SR Annette Cunliffe RSC
Catherine Verschuer (since September 2018)
Elizabeth Biok
Dr Eve Lester
Fr Gregory Jabobs SJ
Dr Lisa Connell (Social Ministries representative from the Jesuit Province of Australia - observer)

Staff and Volunteers

Angela Gallard – Caseworker (until June 2018)
Anne Nesbitt – Project Officer – Refugees and People Seeking Asylum
Anne Porter (volunteer) – Volunteer’s Coordinator
Anne Rutherford – Communications and Community Organising Coordinator (from November 2018)
Avril Janks – Communications Coordinator (until April 2018)
Carolina Gottardo – Director
Janelle Massih – Caseworker
Joanna Brooke – Community Development Coordinator
Katie Spiroski – Casework Manager (from November 2018)
Kim Mandelik – Office Manager

Kim Smith - Caseworker
Leonie Dyer – Employment Project Coordinator
Maeve Brown – Manager, Arrupe Project
Sr Margaret Guy RSC – Arrupe Project Volunteer Coordinator
Nicole Ascaino – Caseworker (from November 2018)
Nishadh Rego – Policy and Advocacy Coordinator
Sarah Fraser – Finding Safety Project Officer (from October 2018)
Sr Sarah Puls SGS – Casework Team Leader (until November 2018)
Stephanie Beckwith – Caseworker & Finding Safety Coordinator
Susana Gale – Accountant





Although 2018 saw no reduction in the number or severity of the challenges facing those seeking asylum in Australia, JRS Australia realised some remarkable achievements, thanks to the committed staff, volunteers, donors, partners and board members.

Significantly, many of these were carried out in close collaboration with other agencies with a similar focus. Other initiatives depended on the generosity of those individuals and groups who believe strongly in our goals and offered support in many different ways.

The mission of JRS is to accompany, serve and advocate for the rights of refugees, people seeking asylum and other forcibly displaced persons. JRS Australia continues to be faithful to that mission and to carry it out with creativity and energy, enhancing its efforts through significant partnerships. Now, we are part of Sydney Alliance; a diverse coalition of community organisers that includes church and non-religious groups. We also value our partnership with the NSW Humanitarian Hub; an alliance of four groups who serve refugees and asylum seekers and collaborate in educating and deploying volunteers effectively. JRS also continues its association with the Diocese of Parramatta and its strategy of "Walking with Refugees and People Seeking Protection".

Our advocacy stems from our experiences of accompanying and serving these people and this report details some wonderful examples of advocacy, usually in partnership with others. Some examples that spring to mind are the efforts of the group Wentworth for Refugees that JRS was part of alongside other organisations and that organised a special forum to which all candidates were invited in the lead up to the by-election in that electorate. The four candidates who attended offered support, at least for advocating to remove all children from offshore detention on Manus Island and Nauru.

Other important advocacy and education efforts included a series of "Table Talks" in parishes and presentations in schools as well as at Conferences such as the Refugee Council's Refugee Alternatives Conference. These occasions often allowed refugee voices to be heard by those attending. As a member of the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN), JRS Australia, through our Director, had been closely involved in the development and adoption of the UN Global Compacts; namely, the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and the Global Compact for Safe and Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM). Disappointingly, Australia declined to adopt the GCM.

Throughout the year, many grants were sought and obtained. Valued programs and engagement with donors and potential donors also continued and the impact of rapidly changing government policies and processes were monitored and managed as far as possible.

The Board has sought to support the work of the wonderful staff and volunteers. In 2018, the annual Christmas function provided an opportunity to meet many of these and also meet those using our service in the delightful new space at Westmead, made so homely and welcoming by both clients and workers.

I am once more privileged to offer sincere thanks, on behalf of all at JRS Australia, to each person and group. Without such support, JRS could not continue to accompany, serve and advocate for those who are so sadly marginalised in Australia, while they have had to flee their own country of origin. May the contributions these people make to this nation, and the world, in the future offer some return for your generosity, which God will also reward, if, as Jesus promised, even a cup of cold water offered in God's name will not lose its reward.

Annette Cunliffe RSC
Chair of the Board, JRS Australia

4 director's address



For JRS Australia, 2018 was a year of contrast. A deteriorating policy environment was met with some policy wins and encouraging developments for JRS' accompaniment, service, and advocacy work.

Asylum and refugee policy is increasingly punitive. The government has continued promoting a forced destitution agenda marked by the draconian cuts in Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS), a basic minimum safety net for the most vulnerable people seeking asylum. The effects of these policies translate to increased hunger and destitution. For example, demand for our Foodbank has increased by 50 percent.

JRS also worked with many people who have been transferred from Manus Island and Nauru on medical grounds after years of being subjected to inhumane treatment and living in limbo. Caseworkers often mention that they had not previously seen the complexity of cases that we are now witnessing, and the alarming levels of need.

Our work accompanying and serving refugees and people seeking asylum continues to be a light within these shadows. This year, JRS directly supported 3068 people through our specialist casework, emergency relief, employment support, foodbank, legal clinics run in partnership with Refugee Advice and Casework Service (RACS), English classes and diverse groups and social support activities.

The Wentworth for Refugees campaign contributed to children being transferred from Nauru and the delays in the implementation some SRSS changes. There were also successes with a campaign on childcare that resulted in Sydney's Canterbury-Bankstown Council launching a one year trial of free childcare placements to families that are seeking asylum.

This year, JRS opened a new drop-in centre in Westmead, thanks to the generosity of the Marist Brothers. These wonderful premises have helped to create a more vibrant community and give us the potential to open new programs at Westmead.

2018 also marked the launch of our Finding Safety program and JRS' new women's only space in Parramatta. Finding Safety supports women seeking asylum who are survivors, or at-risk of, sexual and gender based violence, thanks to the generous

funding of Women NSW and to the continued support of the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta.

2018 has also been a year of partnerships. "Empowered to Work (ETW)" enabled us to provide tailored employment support to 223 people seeking asylum. Partnerships with the Sydney Alliance, the Diocese of Parramatta, and others, continue and help us promote change in "hearts and minds" to refugees and people seeking asylum. Many thanks to all of our partners for accompanying us in our journey.

This year, we strengthened advocacy and policy initiatives by engaging with Parliamentarians on a cross-party basis, beginning our community organising program, and conducting a targeted advocacy strategy. We also linked national, regional and global dimensions in our work both on regional solutions in the Asia Pacific and with the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN.) We have also influenced the development and implementation of the two Global Compacts, a once-in-lifetime historic opportunity in migration governance and increased responsibility sharing.

JRS has also been active in schools and parishes. We continue advancing "the Bookends Project" alongside the Australian Jesuit Province, supporting the launch of the Nangami Peace and Justice Group in North Sydney and developing many other activities.

We are grateful to our funders, big and small. Your contributions have made such a strong difference to JRS and enable us to do our job. Sustainable funding continues to be a significant challenge for JRS and we are grateful to the Noel and Carmel O'Brien Foundation for enabling us to recruit a Fundraising and Development Coordinator.

A heartfelt thank you to JRS' amazingly committed staff and volunteers. Through your daily work, you make a big difference to people in the most challenging circumstances. We continue to be inspired by the resilience of the people that we accompany and serve.

Finally, a tribute to our JRS board, skilfully led by our chair, Sr Annette Cunliffe RSC, and its committed members that drive JRS' governance in the right direction and who are extremely supportive of our work. I feel grateful to have such a supportive team and to be able to make a difference.

Carolina Gottardo
Director, JRS Australia

what JRS is doing to help people seeking asylum



5



We work to uphold the rights of people who are in the process of seeking asylum so they can empower themselves and live meaningful and dignified lives in Australia.



We assist families through the asylum process, providing support and information as well as legal assistance through our partners.



We provide tailored employment assistance to people seeking asylum based on their individual needs and skills-sets via resume writing, job searching, interview preparation, referrals to English classes, training through TAFE and establishing relationships with potential employers.



We welcome people into our community centre providing a place of welcome and hospitality, running activities such as community lunches, women's health and pamper days, homework group and men's group.



We lobby and promote the rights of forcibly displaced people, encouraging dignified treatment and fairer asylum processes in Australia and around the world.



We run English classes and teach people the communication tools they need to empower themselves, to understand their rights and meet and form lasting relationships.



We help families seeking asylum find accommodation and provide them with emergency relief payments, providing them with much needed support and safety.



We provide fresh food and essential items to the most vulnerable people seeking asylum in our community through our Foodbank program which operates like a supermarket so people are supported to choose items they need most, free of charge.

6 a year of achievement



3068 people seeking asylum* served and **5,018** service or program engagements



286 single adults and family groups supported with emergency financial assistance



223 people assisted with work readiness and employment support through our Empowered to Work program



24 families (including 40 adults and 46 children) and **19** single men assisted with accommodation support



1,223 people received legal advice through the 88 legal clinics run at Arrupe Place in partnership with RACS



Over 703 Opal Card concession applications completed, giving people seeking asylum access to discounted public transport



245 English classes, including Play with English sessions, held



Over 1000 people had access to fresh food and essential items through our foodbank



48 'Cooking Together' meals shared



96 dedicated volunteers donated their time in 2018 to ensure our work continued

**People seeking asylum includes single women and men, couples and families with children*

Policy development and analysis

- JRS presented at 18 conferences and participated in 16 policy roundtables.
- JRS published 5 op-eds, 2 policy reports, 4 policy submissions and 9 issue briefs.
- JRS staff are active in 35 policy/advocacy networks at local, national, regional and global levels.

Advocacy

- JRS led or participated in 41 meetings with federal, state and local government decision-makers.
- JRS advocacy, campaigns and service work received 47 media mentions; including Al Jazeera, Sydney Morning Herald and Guardian Australia.

Community Engagement

- JRS reached 10,750 students in Sydney, Melbourne, Geelong, Ballina, Hervey Bay, Adelaide and Perth.
- JRS participated in 12 table talks reaching 1024 people.
- JRS participated in or hosted multiple community talks and forums reaching 860 people.



Year at a glance

**March
2018**

- Membership of Sydney Alliance and 'Fair Process' campaign.

**April
2018**

- Additional restrictions to the eligibility criteria of the Status Resolution Support Service (SRSS) announced.

**May
2018**

- Jesuit Province gathering on 'the Bookends Project' at St. Aloysius.
- Forum held with the Forced Migration Network, University of NSW on the gender responsive implementation of the Global Compacts.

**June
2018**

- Funding from Women NSW Domestic and Family Violence Innovation fund for the Finding Safety Project.
- National Day of Action for Roof Over My Head, which included a delegation to meet Minister of Home Affairs and delivering a petition to PM's Office.

**July
2018**

- Civic Leaders Forum in partnership with the Asylum Seekers Centre, House of Welcome, Life Without Barriers, Settlement Services International and Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS), to inform the broader community about the changes to the SRSS and facilitate coordination.

**August
2018**

- JRS Director addresses Australian Catholic Social Justice Council (ACSJC) Conference on SRSS.

**September
2018**

- Parliamentary trip to Canberra and meetings with 13 MPs on 6 key issues.
- Launch of the Nangami Peace and Justice group formed by parishioners of Our Lady of the Way in North Sydney.

**October
2018**

- Wentworth for Refugees by-election forum held with candidates.
- JRS relocates its main drop-in and community space to Westmead.
- JRS opens new Women's Space in Parramatta.

**November
2018**

- Launch of the Free from Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Report.
- Forum on the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) implementation held with the University of Western Sydney, Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN), International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Peter Shergold, NSW Coordinator General for Refugee Resettlement.
- Canterbury-Bankstown Council offers free childcare places for families seeking asylum at risk of homelessness and destitution.

**December
2018**

- Adoption of the Global Compacts and JRS participation in the adoption conference.

8 our works

Changes and Cuts to the Status Resolution Support Service (SRSS)



2018 began with the announcement of further drastic changes and cuts to the federally funded Status Resolution Support Service (SRSS), following on from cuts that had started in 2017. SRSS provides people seeking asylum with casework, torture and trauma counselling, access to medical care, and limited financial payments capped at 89% of the Newstart payment (roughly \$240/week for a single adult).

By the end of 2018, the number of people on the SRSS program had dropped from over 13,000 people to less than 7,000 people. Under these changes, many people arriving in Australia by plane to seek asylum became ineligible for support. Payments to people seeking asylum who had arrived by boat was scrapped. The shift towards cost-saving and self-sufficiency continues. Yet, JRS and our partners, have contributed to delaying the pace of the cuts through ongoing advocacy work.

Casework Support and Emergency Relief

JRS continues to work with people seeking asylum and refugees who arrived in Australia either by plane or by boat; with people at all stages of the asylum process, including those who have received negative decisions through the Fast Track process. We proudly support vulnerable migrants; including women who have experienced domestic and family violence (DFV) and cannot return home, and

are ineligible for the safety and support through DFV visa provisions; as well as those left in the community without visas and without options after years of trying to prove their refugee claims.

Many are chronically suicidal; stuck in a cycle of prolonged uncertainty, destitution, separation, trauma and so-called "lethal hopelessness." We acknowledge the profound resilience of the people we serve to keep going when it seems there is nothing left and the care, constancy and dedication of JRS staff and volunteers in the face of such suffering.

In these conditions, the provision of casework and emergency relief is incredibly difficult. Each week, our casework team meets to decide who we can support. Which homeless family are we able to help? Is there enough for a young man with a heart condition who has just lost SRSS support and lost his access to Medicare? Or for a pregnant woman with children who is struggling to make ends meet? There are always far more people in need of support than we have the funds or casework-capacity to assist.

Employment

Given the significant changes to the eligibility criteria for SRSS, the only way for people to support themselves is to find work. This includes people on short-term Bridging Visas, who do not speak English, who may have ongoing health and mental health conditions and can often be forced into situations of exploitation.

The Empowered to Work (ETW) program, run in partnership with House of Welcome, was initially funded for 18 months by grants through the City of Parramatta and the Cumberland Councils Stronger Communities Fund. JRS is grateful to have secured funding through the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation and Planet Wheeler Foundation to keep the program running for another 12 months through the end of 2019.

In 2018, ETW supported 223 people with employment assistance based on their individual needs and skills through resume writing, job searching and interview preparation, referrals to English classes and training through TAFE. Since July 2017, roughly 60 percent of the program participants, 133 people, have gained part-time/



JRS' Leonie Dyer, Coordinator of the 'Empowered to Work' employment program (centred), receives the 'Best Project' Award at the 2018 STARTTS Humanitarian Awards; with the support of colleagues, Carolina Gottardo, JRS Australia Director (left), and Maeve Brown, Arrupe Project Manager (right).

casual employment or enrolled in further training.

In 2019, ETW will train more volunteers to ensure that participants can access workshops covering topics such as job searching, rights and responsibilities at work, interview preparation, how to apply for a tax file number, police checks and more.

Ongoing Support for People Transferred to Australia from Nauru and Manus Island for Medical Treatment

In 2018, JRS continued to support individuals and families transferred to Australia for medical treatment from Nauru and Manus Island. Some were released into the community on short-term Bridging Visas with no certainty of how long they can stay in Australia or where they will be resettled. Others remain in community detention with family members sometimes split between hospitals and detention



facilities. All are incredibly resilient, but also very isolated. Many are eager to have regular contact through home visits or to come into the community centre for activities. Some need accompaniment and pastoral care, whilst others need casework and employment support

It is difficult to witness and to walk alongside people so traumatised by our own government. However, it has also shown the strength and resolve of the people we serve, and the importance of our mission to accompany, serve and advocate for the rights of those most marginalised.

New space, new possibilities - JRS relocates to Westmead



In 2016 and 2017, the JRS Arrupe Project operated from two small cottages, providing casework support, legal clinics, Foodbank, English classes, and a variety of social support programs including, an Arts and Wellbeing Program, Women's Health

10 our works



and Pamper Days, Men's Group, Homework Help and Cooking Together lunches.

During 2018, the Marist Brothers, with the support of the Diocese of Parramatta, generously offered us the use of their residence in Westmead to support the people we serve. This was a blessing, as we were overstretched in our existing spaces and dealing with increasing demand.

Moving to Westmead has been a platform to collaborate with clients to plan the new centre and services around their needs, gifts, and aspirations. This year, JRS worked in partnership with the people we serve to create more leadership opportunities. As well as giving advice and input into how we set-up the centre, some individuals created visual art works; in particular, a mural in the children's room.

Since the move, many JRS clients have become regular volunteers at the centre, through cooking, facilitating art activities, hospitality, organising cultural events and collaborating on fundraising campaigns. Between October and December, JRS clients gave 150 hours of their time volunteering. In December, JRS ran a Christmas market that was facilitated by clients and volunteers together and provided gifts to 165 children.

In 2019, JRS plans to enhance client leadership in all areas of our work. One of the first community-led projects for 2019 will be transforming the backyard into a community garden. JRS' Community

Moving to Westmead has been a platform to collaborate with clients to plan the new centre and services around their needs, gifts, and aspirations.

Development Coordinator is working with the people who access JRS support and programs, particularly young people, to review existing services and shape programs for the coming year.

Volunteers

In 2018, we were blessed to have the support of 96 dedicated volunteers and the continued commitment of our two hard working volunteer coordinators. Volunteers are essential to the reception and hospitality at Arrupe Place, the English classes, Foodbank, and social support provided at the Community Centre, as well as to the coordination of the house meetings and maintenance of the Blaiket Shelter that provides residential accommodation to homeless people seeking asylum and supported 19 single men through the year:

This year, JRS has continued to partner with the House of Welcome, the Asylum Seekers Centre and RACS as part of the NSW Humanitarian Hub to better support, coordinate and train volunteers.

Finding Safety Project

In mid-2018, JRS finalised a pilot-project funded by the City of Parramatta Council which examined the situation of women seeking asylum who are at-risk, or who are survivors, of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV). From this pilot, we published the report “Free from Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)”. This report was the result of interviews with women who are survivors of SGBV, as well as consultations with service providers from the asylum and women’s sectors.

Utilising this report as an evidence-base, JRS applied for further funding to establish a project providing support services and reducing incidences of SGBV. JRS Australia obtained three years of funding through WomenNSW to establish the Finding Safety project, which has been running since the opening of the JRS Women’s Space in Parramatta in October.

In establishing the Finding Safety project, we have also set up an Advisory Group made up of women who are seeking asylum. These women greatly inform the direction of the project and activities, including

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self advocacy and peer-to-peer support which consist of some of the key components of the program.

In the JRS Women’s Space, we have started a weekly ‘open day’ where women can drop in and participate in activities such as a peer-support group for survivors of SGBV, community activities, plus various workshops in the afternoon including art therapy, dance and cake decorating.

We also run workshops focused on rights’ awareness, the primary prevention of domestic and family violence and will be going out to different communities in Sydney to reach a wider number of women. Another aspect of the project is to develop cross-sector training for the asylum and women’s sectors and to develop self-led advocacy on these issues.



12 advocacy



Year 12 students from St Ignatius College in Adelaide spent 24 hours in 'The Cage' to raise awareness around issues faced by people seeking asylum and refugees in Australia.

Overview

2018 was an impactful year in JRS Australia's advocacy and policy development work. We were particularly active in campaigns to uphold the fundamental rights of people seeking asylum and refugees.

JRS Australia built strong relationships with decision makers. To highlight the most pressing human rights concerns for people seeking asylum, and for refugees in the community, JRS staff and leaders-with-lived-experience met with 41 federal and state politicians; including the Office of the Prime Minister, the Office of the Opposition leader, the Minister for Home Affairs and the Shadow Immigration Spokesperson.

JRS Australia enhanced its commitment to evidence-based policy development, centred on key interventions and we made four major policy submissions; produced nine issues-based policy briefs; wrote two academic publications, 6 articles on refugee policy for the popular media, and two policy reports.

JRS Australia also maintained an active presence in schools, parishes, and communities and started our community organising program engaging with 1884 members of the community.

A safety net for people seeking asylum in need: responding to changes in the Status Resolution Support Service (SRSS)

Since August 2017, the Australian government has progressively narrowed eligibility criteria for access to vital income support. As a key partner in the refugee sector's Roof Over My Head campaign, JRS Australia joined nine other NGOs at Parliament House to ask decision-makers to reverse the cuts and prevent a homelessness crisis in Sydney and Melbourne. The delegation delivered a petition of more than 12,000 signatures to the Prime Minister's Office.

JRS Australia also met with Federal government, opposition, and cross-benchers and with state government officials, public servants, and local government councillors to discuss the impacts of the cuts on people affected as well as the pressures placed upon state and local governments and charities as a direct result of the cuts.

In April 2018, JRS Australia joined with Catholic leaders and organisations to release a joint statement calling for a reversal of the cuts. We also presented the issue, and its impacts, to social justice coordinators from across Australia at the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council's (ACSJC) annual conference.

JRS Australia partnered with service providers in Sydney to raise awareness among civic leaders of the extent of the problem and galvanise local action. Close to 100 community leaders in Western Sydney attended.

Civil society pressure contributed to slowing-down some of the changes and the ongoing exclusion of family groups from these cuts. JRS Australia will continue to advocate for a safety net for people seeking asylum, refugees, and migrants who need it.

A fairer process and permanent protection for people seeking asylum

In 2018, JRS Australia became a member of the Sydney Alliance; a civic coalition of over 40 groups all advocating for an equitable city.

JRS Australia helped launch a campaign to reintroduce permanent protection and a fair, transparent refugee status determination (RSD) process for people seeking asylum.

JRS Australia also helped organise community delegations to Parliamentarians in seats across Western Sydney, reiterating the failures of Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs) and Safe Haven Enterprise Visas (SHEVs), the need for means tested government-funded legal aid, and the procedural fairness problems with the Immigration Assessment

Authority (IAA). JRS Australia briefed federal parliamentarians on the issue in both Melbourne and Canberra.

This campaign contributed to the Australian Labor Party (ALP) stating support for these goals in its National Policy Platform in December 2018. JRS Australia will continue to advocate for these goals until all people seeking asylum in the Australian community have had a fair go at claiming protection.

Wentworth for Refugees

JRS Australia was a key partner in “Wentworth for Refugees (W4R)”, a non-partisan campaigning initiative to ensure that candidates in the Wentworth by-election responded to the community’s views on children in offshore detention and SRSS cuts.

Local leaders signed a public letter asking candidates to attend a town hall forum in Waverley (pictured). More than 50 volunteers held close to 1000 public conversations across the electorate raising awareness of the issues, inviting candidates to the forum.

As a result, close to three hundred people attended the forum. ‘Children in detention’ became a central issue of the 2018 by-election culminating in a successful national campaign to evacuate all children from offshore detention facilities.



14 advocacy



Carolina Gottardo, JRS Australia Director speaking at the United Nations in Morocco.

Adopting and implementing the Global Compacts

Pope Francis' '20 Points of Action' calls for the prioritisation of the Global Compacts in order to welcome, protect, promote and integrate all migrants and refugees. As a member of the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN), JRS Australia was a leading civil society participant at the member-state negotiations on the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) and at the final consultation on the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). JRS Australia (through APRRN) influenced multiple member-states to adopt stronger positions on key human rights issues.

JRS Australia lobbied parliamentarians in Australia on the importance of the Compacts for regional protection solutions in the Asia-Pacific region, and their relevance, for forced migrants in our country. In December 2018, JRS Australia coordinated an open letter from 34 reputable civil society groups calling on the government to adopt the GCM.

JRS Australia participated at a regional conference organised by JRS Cambodia on the implementation of the Global Compacts and is working closely with the Jesuit Asia Pacific Conference on this issue.

JRS Australia also contributed to public debates on the Compacts through academic publications, analysis, media interviews, at the International Metropolis Conference in Sydney, the Refugee Alternatives Conference in Melbourne, and multiple regional and global forums, including the GCM

Adoption conference in Marrakech.

In November 2018, JRS Australia co-convened a public forum with Western Sydney University on the Compacts with the participation of International Organization for Migration (IOM), APRRN and Peter Shergold. In the coming months, JRS Australia will continue to push for adoption and a National Implementation Plan.

JRS Australia was also a key partner on a project with the Forced Migration Network at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) to ensure the implementation of the GCR from a gender responsive perspective in the Asia Pacific region and a part of the Expert Working Group led by Professor Alex Aleinikoff from the Zolberg Institute on the implementation of the GCR. JRS continues advocating with APRRN on the importance of the active participation of refugees, migrants and civil society (including faith based organisations) on the implementation of the Compacts.

Engagement with Schools

In 2018, JRS continued to work with Jesuit schools, as well as Catholic and independent schools in Sydney, to raise the issues faced by refugees and people seeking asylum through school visits, staff training, and awareness-raising activities.

The Refugee Voices program; a speaking program run in partnership with Refugee Council of Australia; had another successful year. School visits increased

from 20 schools in 2017 to 30 schools in 2018 and 2200 students heard a speaker with lived experience share her/his story. They participated in a discussion on how to practically support the people JRS serves. An additional 4900 students attended school assemblies when a JRS representative spoke about our work.

The Bookends Project - Across the Jesuit Province of Australia, 'the Bookends Project' continues its mission. This is a groundbreaking initiative of the Provincial and the Australian Jesuit Province to raise awareness and prompt actions to support people seeking asylum, refugees and indigenous people. In 2018, a workshop for stakeholders from several Jesuit ministries resulted in the identification of the three stages of the Bookends Project namely, 'Get to Know', 'Come to Understand' and 'Get to Work.'

Based on the workshop outcomes, an action plan was developed and is being implemented across the Province. One of the key goals of the 2019 Bookends action plan is to expand Table Talks and the Refugee Voices program across Jesuit parishes and schools. JRS is partnering with Sydney Alliance to run Table Talks. In 2018, JRS reached 1024 people through 12 Table Talks. The Bookends Project also supported the launch of the Nangami Peace and Justice group at Our Lady of the Way parish in North Sydney, led by parishioners. The group has developed a number of activities through the year.

Advocate with lived experience - Hava

As a refugee in Australia, Hava Rezaie is a powerful voice. Throughout her life Hava has striven to improve the social standing of marginalised people and of women.

Born in Afghanistan, Hava is part of the Hazara community, a minority ethnic group that has, and continues, to be persecuted. To escape prejudice, Hava relocated to Iran for 25 years. "During that time I finished my school and completed my teaching degree."

Hava also remained passionate about elevating the rights of disenfranchised groups. "In Iran, I established schools for all refugees; as they did not have access to education. Right now, one of the schools that I had created is still open, but it has



some problems and is in need of support."

Following this time, Hava returned to Afghanistan. For ten years, she was the Director of the Department of Women's Affairs in the Daykundi province. During this period, Hava also completed a law degree.

After that, "I was put into gaol by the Taliban -- and tortured -- I received a humanitarian visa to come to Australia."

JRS Australia has been fortunate to witness Hava's leadership and bravery. Throughout Sydney, Hava speaks at a number of Table Talks where a person with lived experience as a refugee, or seeking asylum, speaks to a community and tells their story. Table Talks are powerful in changing hearts and minds on these central issues.

Currently, Hava also continues to strive for education. "In 2018, my daughter and I achieved our High School Certificates, and today, both my daughter and I are studying. My daughter studies at Western Sydney University and I am with the Australian Catholic University. My son is also studying at Newcastle University."

Always an advocate for social justice, Hava notes, "I also volunteer with Sydney Alliance as a part of the federal campaign team to help change policies and meet with politicians and talk about the plight of asylum seekers in my community."

Interested in refugee stories?

JRS is hosting a number of Table Talks in Sydney and NSW, where Hava, and other speakers, tell their story. If interested, please email: anne.rutherford@jrs.org.au

16 real life stories

The story of Soraya

In 2012, Soraya* and her husband arrived in Australia by boat. They did not know whether they could stay, but they knew they were safe. In Western Sydney, the couple made a life for themselves and had two children. In 2019, the family were told that their Status Resolution Support Service (SRSS) support payments would be cut.

Initially, Soraya and her husband were able to support themselves, and their young family. Then, Soraya's husband sustained a back injury that meant he had long periods off work due to the pain. The payments through SRSS were enough to cover some expenses, but the family often made choices between food, medication, and public transport. When Soraya was 8 months pregnant, the family's SRSS payments were cut off. Unsure of how they would pay for rent or food, and terrified of being evicted before the arrival of their baby, Soraya came to JRS for support.

Through JRS, the family accessed emergency relief payments to keep their accommodation; JRS' Foodbank covered basic weekly grocery items; and the family also accessed ongoing casework support. This included referrals to the Dandelion Support Network for baby items, Anglicare for additional financial support, and to Refugee Health for an Early Childhood Nurse to visit Soraya and the baby, as the family were still waiting on Medicare access for their newborn due to delays in issuing a Bridging Visa. Soraya's JRS caseworker also referred her to RACS to help advocate with Immigration for the baby's bridging visa to be issued.

Soraya is particularly grateful for the calm reassurance of her caseworker and that JRS would do everything it could to make sure that she and her baby had access to services that would ensure their health, safety and wellbeing.



Pictured here is Katie Spiroski (Casework Manager) and Maeve Brown (Arrupe Project Manager) who oversee our casework team.

Since then, Soraya's husband has been able to return to work and is now supporting his young family, but they are appreciative that JRS was there when they had no where else to go. Soraya is particularly grateful for the calm reassurance of her caseworker and that JRS would do everything it could to make sure that she and her baby had access to services that would ensure their health, safety and wellbeing.

**Name has been changed to protect identity.*

Interview with Phil Wicks

Each week, JRS is helped by dedicated volunteers; one such volunteer is Phil Wicks. Two years ago, a JRS caseworker came to Phil's parish in Blackheath to speak about our work. Already, Phil had seen the injustice facing people seeking asylum on the news and had a desire to act. Phil thought, "It doesn't matter what I do, as long as I do something."

Phil volunteers on reception and also assists with Foodbank and hospitality. The most hectic day at the JRS community centre is Tuesday, as "it is the first day for Foodbank." Since the SRSS cuts, the livelihood of many people seeking asylum has been stripped away. Now, the demand for Foodbank is even higher and volunteers are kept very busy.

I know I can't solve the world's problems on refugees, but I can help locally.

JRS is honoured to have Phil as part of the team. JRS' Sister Margaret Guy RSC and Anne Porter coordinate the volunteers in their various roles. "When people want to volunteer, they take part in training", explained Phil. "Some may have a background in employment, so will help with resumes and help people find jobs. Some are helpful with hospitality. Others will have the ability to do reception. Others will work in the Foodbank. English is another big thing. Usually ex-teachers teach English."

When asked why Phil specifically chose to volunteer with JRS, Phil explained that, "the Jesuits are well organised and they know what they are doing." Another factor that 'sealed the deal' was JRS' policy of dealing "with everybody [even those] who can't get help from anywhere else."

"So many of the clients have a depression background," continued Phil. "They try to be nice and happy. But when you get talking to them, it becomes apparent."

"As volunteers, we can't be involved in their affairs, but we can chat. If it is a cricket country, you talk cricket. If it is a soccer country, then you speak to them about soccer."

When asked whether he would recommend other people getting involved, Phil said, "Oh yes! It's so satisfying. I look forward to coming every week or fortnight. The people themselves are very appreciative."

"It's terrific," Phil said. "I know I can't solve the world's problems on refugees, but I can help locally." Our volunteers are a vital part of the JRS community.

Once again, JRS extends our thanks to Phil, and indeed to all of our incredible volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering with JRS, please get in touch. Email: volunteers@jrs.org.au



18 acknowledgements

JRS Australia is fortunate to be comprised of, and supported by, such wonderful people.

First of all, we thank our dedicated JRS staff and volunteers. All of you work in various ways to facilitate the empowerment of refugees and people seeking asylum. This daily dedication in accompanying, serving and advocating for the rights of the people we serve, are the very embodiment of JRS values and Ignatian spirituality. Without you, we could not continue our important work.

We are ever so grateful to all of our donors, supporters, grant providers and partners. Your meaningful contribution allows us to provide critical services, accompaniment, and assistance to the most vulnerable in our community. With all our hearts, we thank you.

Only with your help, can we advocate for positive change and we are honoured that you value our work. Your solidarity in advancing the dignity of people seeking asylum and refugees is deeply appreciated as JRS does not receive regular government funding and our vital services are provided free of charge. Consequently, the support from individuals, corporations, philanthropic organisations and community groups, like you, is essential. All your contributions, whether the contribution is big or small, have made such a difference to JRS and continue enabling us to do our job.

Finally, and most importantly, we are grateful to the people that we serve. All of you are incredible, brave and resilient people. All of you have talent, kindness and a contribution to make to this country. We are honoured to walk with you and we thank you.

We would like to thank the following grant providers and supporters for your incredible support:

- Catholic Church Insurance
- City of Parramatta Council Capacity Building Grants
- City of Parramatta Council Stronger Communities Fund
- City of Parramatta Prevention of Violence Against Women Grant
- Department of Social Services (DSS) Grant (through Australian Red Cross)
- Hogan Family Foundation
- Jesuit Province of Australia
- KPMG
- Limb Family Foundation
- Marist Brothers of Australia
- Noel and Carmel O'Brien Foundation
- Our Lady of the Way Parish
- Planet Wheeler Foundation
- Sidney Myer Fund
- Sisters of Charity Foundation
- Sisters of the Good Samaritan Foundation
- Sisters of Mercy Parramatta
- Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation (VFFF)
- VivCourt
- Women NSW – Domestic and Family Violence Innovation Fund

JRS would also like to extend a warm thank you to our remarkable partners who work alongside us tirelessly to provide hope, practical assistance to people seeking asylum:

- Act for Peace
- Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN)
- Australian Catholic University
- Australian National Committee on

- Refugee Women (ANCORW)
- Australian Red Cross
- Australian Women against Violence Alliance (AWAVA)
- Baker & McKenzie
- Carroll & O'Dea
- Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum (CAPSA)
- Catholic Religious Australia (CRA)
- Catholic Mission
- Catholic Social Justice Council
- D'Ambrá Murphy Lawyers
- DV NSW
- End Child Detention Coalition (ECDC)
- Forced Migration Network, University of New South Wales
- Good Shepherd Microfinance
- Grandmothers against Detention of Refugee Children NSW
- House of Welcome
- Humanitarian and Development Research Initiative (HADRI)
- Information & Cultural Exchange
- Jesuit Asia Pacific Conference (JCAP)
- Jesuit Communications
- Jesuit Education Australia
- Jesuit Mission
- Jesuit Province of Australia
- Jesuit Social Services
- JRS Asia Pacific
- JRS Cambodia,
- JRS Indonesia
- JRS Thailand
- Life Without Barriers
- Marist 180
- Mums 4 Refugees
- Newman College
- NSW Humanitarian Hub
- OneSight

- Our Lady of Mercy College
- Our Lady of the Way Parish
- Parramatta Catholic Education Office
- Refugee and Casework Support Service (RACS)
- Refugee Council of Australia
- Settlement Services International (SSI)
- STARTTS
- St Aloysius College
- St Canice's Parish
- St Ignatius Riverview College
- St Vincent de Paul Society
- Sydney Alliance
- The Asylum Seekers Centre
- The Archdiocese of Sydney
- The Diocese of Parramatta
- The Cardoner Project
- The City of Parramatta Council
- The Dandelion Foundation
- The Generous and the Grateful
- The Institute Sisters of Mercy Australia and PNG
- The Islamic Council of Victoria
- The Reginald Murphy Centre
- The Sisters of Charity
- The Sisters of Mercy Parramatta
- The Sisters of the Good Samaritan
- The Ursuline Sisters
- Training for Change
- Uniting Church of Australia
- Western Sydney University
- Xavier Social Justice Network

We are truly blessed to have such a magnificent group of people helping us to continue our mission to accompany, serve and advocate for the rights of refugees and people seeking asylum now and into the future.



Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year ended 31 December 2018

		\$
Revenue		1,521,550
Fundraising events	18,455	
Donations	925,294	
Project funding	77,640	
Grants	495,083	
Other income	5,078	
Expenses		1,491,621
Staffing expenses	469,989	
Administrative expenses	135,237	
Depreciation expenses	10,319	
Fundraising expenses	907	
Travel expenses	11,980	
Direct projects costs	739,564	
Grant expenses	123,625	
Results from operating activities		29,929
Financial income		5,813
Financial costs		-1,218
Net financial income		4,595
Surplus for the period		34,524
Other comprehensive income		-
Total comprehensive income		34,524



Make a difference. *Please act now.*

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Suburb _____ State _____ Postcode _____

Telephone (_____) _____

Email _____



Please return to:

Jesuit Refugee Service
PO Box 522, Kings Cross NSW 1340
Ph 02 9356 3888 | Fax 02 9356 3021
Email info@jrs.org.au | www.jrs.org.au

I wish to make a donation as follows:

\$50 \$75 \$100 \$250 \$500 Other \$ _____

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OR I enclose a cheque/money order

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OR please debit my credit card the amount of \$ _____

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Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible

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