

CHANGING LIVES
CHANGING MINDS
CHANGING RULES



25 years of support to people
seeking asylum in Australia



the
power of
humanity



**I CAME TO THIS
COUNTRY AS A
STRANGER, DID
NOT KNOW WHERE
ANYTHING WAS...
NOW RED CROSS
HAS SHOWN ME
EVERYTHING AND
NOW I AM DEPENDING
ON MYSELF.**

- RED CROSS CLIENT



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FOREWORDS



YVES DACCORD

Director-General, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

Australian Red Cross has long been at the forefront of humanitarian response to the plight of asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants in Australia – a beacon of humanity in the face of what has become an increasingly politicised and polarising issue.

Be it through its nationwide Red Cross Hubs offering advice and support to migrants; its work helping those in immigration detention; or its efforts in tracing and reconnecting families who have lost contact in transit, Australian Red Cross stands as a champion of human dignity for the most vulnerable people in society.

The Australian Red Cross is a highly valued partner of the ICRC – both within Australia and internationally. Its support for our visits to people held in immigration detention facilities on Manus Island and in Nauru is just one example. I am confident this partnership will go from strength to strength, as our humanitarian environment becomes ever more complex.



ELHADJ AS SY

Secretary General, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

On behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), I warmly salute the longstanding leadership role of Australian Red Cross, one of our most committed members on the issue of migration.

In policy and in practice – in Australia, the Pacific region, and worldwide – Australian Red Cross has been and remains a tower of strength.

Domestically, its longstanding and exceptional support for asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and victims of trafficking has given it a voice with both the Australian people and government. Australian Red Cross has presented and championed International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement positions, and also co-chaired and hosted our network of Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies in the Asia Pacific region, readily sharing

its programmes, experience and expertise.

Australian Red Cross made a huge contribution to the development of our 2017 IFRC Global Strategy on Migration, and is also an active member of our Global Migration Task Force. It has spoken powerfully on behalf of the wider Movement in global consultations on the Global Compact for Migration. Australian Red Cross has been a great champion for vulnerable people on the move: the public, policy and human impacts of its work have been and will be felt by millions.



NOEL CLEMENT

Director of Migration, Emergencies
and Movement Relations
Australian Red Cross

Red Cross has been a leader in support for people seeking asylum in Australia for over 25 years, and we will continue our important contribution to this work.

From the establishment of the Asylum Seeker Assistance Scheme, in 1992, the commencement of our detention monitoring program, the implementation of the first alternatives to held detention for families and children through to the massive expansion of community based care to support thousands of people seeking asylum with the support of 20 partner organisations. At every stage, Red Cross people have stepped up to respond to changing circumstances while maintaining their focus on humanity at all times.

Now, as we end our involvement as a contracted provider of the Status Resolution Support Service, and continue building on other long standing and new programs, we reflect on some of the many changes we have been involved with to date. This includes federal government policy changes, state government interventions, building the capacity of the asylum seeker sector and improvements to the wellbeing of people seeking asylum.

We take this time to acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of our staff, volunteers, members and sector partners over this first 25 years of working with people made vulnerable by migration.

With each deliberate and decisive action – whether a conversation with a client who leaves our offices feeling heard, or our direct engagement with government that results in a positive change – we know that Red Cross people have an impact.

We hope this reflection, voiced by people we've supported, current and former Red Cross people, and partners local and global, will illustrate the significance of this everyday work.

Australian Red Cross' commitment to providing humanitarian support to people made vulnerable through migration will continue to grow and change into our future. While there are people seeking asylum and people whose humanitarian needs are not being met, Red Cross will respond in accordance with our Fundamental Principles.

We take pride in the fact that support will continue for the most vulnerable through our work and that of a strong, connected & collaborative sector – at all times holding people's needs at the centre of our shared work.

We're enormously proud of what we've collectively achieved and I'm looking forward to the amazing contributions of Red Cross people and partners over the next 25 years and beyond.



Judy Slatyer

CEO Australian Red Cross

Ross Pinney

President, Australian Red Cross

I extend a huge thank you to all Red Cross people who have been a part of our work supporting people seeking asylum and other migrants in transition. Red Cross has stepped up to respond to changing circumstances in this space across the last 25 years, while maintaining our focus on humanity at all times.

I know this will continue as we prepare to support thousands more over the coming years, and as we broaden our contribution to migration work at both regional and global levels. I'm looking forward to the amazing contributions of Red Cross people over the next 25 years and beyond.



Red Cross' role
as auxiliary to
public authorities
in the humanitarian
field and our
Fundamental
Principles

Australian Red Cross has a unique position as auxiliary to public authorities (government) in the humanitarian field. This status, recognised through the Royal Charter that established the National Society, includes a specific mandate in times of war but extends to many other humanitarian activities such as disasters and emergencies.

As a National Society within the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, all Red Cross work is guided by the seven

Fundamental Principles. Each of these Fundamental Principles is at the core of what we do and why we do it.

Fundamental Principles

- Humanity
- Impartiality
- Neutrality
- Independence
- Voluntary Service
- Unity
- Universality

INTRODUCTION

Australian Red Cross work with refugees, people seeking asylum, and other migrants who have experienced vulnerability

This report *Changing Lives, Changing Minds, Changing Rules*, explores the achievements and challenges of the first 25 years of Australian Red Cross' (Red Cross) work with migrants, and in particular the critical aspects of our work specifically with people seeking asylum, including:

- the human impact of our work and how, through partnerships with government, sector partners, communities and individuals, we've helped change thousands of lives;
- the impact on the rules, and in particular contributions to public policy approaches and addressing structural barriers to support and services; and
- the impact on minds, behaviours and practice, particularly around capacity building of the sector, engagement of thousands of volunteers, members and staff, and fostering a sense of belonging and welcome.

Underpinning this work is the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement's Fundamental Principles, and our global, regional and local role in supporting people seeking asylum and refugees throughout their migration journey. This support for migrants who experience vulnerability in Australia remains central to Red Cross' work and continues; our specific programs in this area can be found in more detail on the following page of this report.

The Red Cross Red Crescent Movement has supported people impacted by migration throughout its history. In Australia, Red Cross has been reconnecting families separated by conflict, disaster and migration since our inception in 1914. A specific focus on the humanitarian needs of asylum seekers and refugees emerged with the inception of the Asylum Seeker Assistance Scheme (ASAS) in January 1993. The ASAS program assisted people seeking asylum in Australia who were facing hardship by providing financial payments, limited health care, and other benefits while their applications for protection were being processed. Red Cross had been recognised as an appropriate partner to deliver this program, due to the organisation's nationwide reach with state, territory and regional offices, its experience in large scale service provision, as well as its global connections to the network of National Societies and Movement partners resulting in a level of recognition and trust amongst diverse communities within Australia.

This report focuses specifically on this work with people seeking asylum, including a reflection on Red Cross' role as a service provider in the Status Resolution Support Service (SRSS) which comes to an end in June 2018. In collecting the information featured in the following pages, we spoke with Red Cross people past and present, interviewed asylum seekers and refugees we've previously supported and approached sector partners from across this period. What became clear was, the achievements of these years owe so much to so many. While the report features a number of key voices of these years, it openly acknowledges the impossibility of capturing the huge number of Red Cross people, clients, and partners in the sector who each played their own part in this work.

Our sincere thankyou to all who have been involved over this first 25 years, and to those who've directly contributed to this reflection.



Australian Red Cross/Archives

OUR WORK WITH PEOPLE SEEKING SAFETY



Supporting people seeking safety by working with Red Cross Red Crescent in countries of origin, transit and destination



Helping people seeking asylum in Australia to access the services and support they need



Reconnecting families separated by war, disaster and migration



Working with people who have been subjected to trafficking, forced marriage or labour exploitation



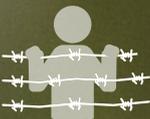
Supporting people falling through the gaps with everyday essentials



Helping refugees settle in their new communities



Helping people find and enjoy work in Australia



Monitoring the treatment of people in immigration detention



Starting conversations in schools, workplaces and communities to help build understanding



RED CROSS IS THE PLACE THAT I AM SAFE. WHEN SOMEBODY MEETS YOU AND ACCEPTS YOU WITHOUT KNOWING YOU IS INCREDIBLE. SOMETIMES I FEEL LONELY AND HELPLESS BUT HERE I FEEL STRONG AND SUPPORTED.

1990s

Credit: Conor Ashleigh

CHANGING LIVES

During its first year, the ASAS program supported people seeking asylum from China, Sri Lanka, the former Yugoslavia, East Timor, India, Fiji, Iran, Iraq and Pakistan, reflecting people seeking safety from the era's global conflicts and political upheavals. By February 1993, the program was operational across Australia, with the largest client numbers in Victoria, followed by New South Wales (NSW).

In Victoria, a large portion of the client group were East Timorese who had entered Australia in 1994, and applied for protection in the face of conflict in their homeland. For a number of years they made up the majority of ASAS-eligible clients. The processing of their claims for protection had been deferred by successive governments until East Timor's 2002 independence, with some in the group remaining in limbo for close to a decade, or longer. The support provided by ASAS to this client group was important for ensuring a sense of dignity, stability and security when events in East Timor were

causing both hope and despair. One East Timorese client wrote in 1999:

My husband lost his new part-time job. I was desperately losing all hope. We had no way out but to write a letter to the Immigration Department asking for help. The baby was eleven weeks old. Two weeks passed and we didn't get an answer. This was the critical time for my baby and I couldn't wait any more. I rang the Immigration Department two times and on the phone I couldn't control my feelings of anxiety. Crying tears stopped me talking. The very kind officer told me the telephone number of the Australian Red Cross. I contacted a lady who later became my case manager. She was very responsible and patient. What followed unbelievably changed my whole life.

In NSW, Mim Merrick managed the program in its first years and recalls clients coming from three distinct backgrounds: Chinese nationals fearing persecution following the Tiananmen Square incident, Sri Lankan Tamils fleeing their country's civil

war and Fijians who claimed to have been involved in the Fiji coups of 1987.

For Red Cross people, working with the people seeking asylum was extremely rewarding. Leslie Prior, one of the first NSW caseworkers reflected on this personal impact of her work:

I admired the clients so much, their strength and resilience of the things that they had been through, and it changed my perspective on my own life... it just made me realise how strong a person can be, and that resilience of people, and although I'm not a person of faith, their faith was just absolutely unshakeable, and that helped them get through so many of the difficult times for them, the horrendous times for them.

KOSOVAN SAFE HAVEN INTERVENTION

Between May and June 1999, following the outbreak of conflict in Kosovo, the Australian Government agreed to provide "Safe Haven" for 4,000 Kosovars. Red Cross and a number of service providers were asked to support the group, who were residing on Army bases around Australia. Megan Goodwin, then a Tracing caseworker stationed at the Bandiana Safe Haven on the Victorian border, recounted:

Operation Safe Haven was a very interesting model... from a Red Cross perspective. Because we were all living there together, the stakeholder engagement and the collaboration between army and government and local service providers, that was fantastic, because you really got to know each other really well and work well together.

Red Cross' role was to offer Family Tracing services to the population, assisting the Kosovars to reconnect with missing family members. Over a demanding two-month period, 123 Tracing and Red Cross Message cases were opened, and information and referral services were provided by Red Cross people in an additional 458 cases. The operation highlighted Red Cross' ability to activate at speed, and build productive relationships with clients and

other stakeholders on the ground and across the world at a time of significant complexity and conflict.



EAST TIMORESE SAFE HAVEN INTERVENTION

Later in September of the same year, the Safe Haven model was repeated, this time with a smaller group of 1,450 East Timorese who had been evacuated from the besieged UN compound in Dili. Distinct from the larger ASAS population Red Cross was already supporting, the group was moved into in the Safe Havens at Leeuwin Barracks in Perth, Puckapunyal Barracks in Victoria and East Hills in Sydney. Red Cross provided support in the Safe Havens, offering Family Tracing support to help them re-establish contact with family still in East Timor.



Credit: Bird, Ross

TRACING IN DETENTION

Red Cross began visiting immigration detention facilities in November 1991, following a suggestion from the Department of Immigration that it provide family Tracing and Red Cross Message (RCM) services to people detained. Visits were conducted by staff and volunteers from Red Cross' International Tracing Service (now Restoring Family Links), who reconnected families separated by war, disaster and migration across international borders and allowed the exchange of family news. In a time before internet access and with the expense of international phone calls, this communication was highly valued by clients. In addition to the provision of Tracing and RCM services, Red Cross people provided a number of emotional and material supports to people in immigration detention throughout this period. These visits were undertaken across Australia, in all states and territories where an immigration detention centre was located. This support continues but under a very different model outlined later in this paper.

CHANGING MINDS

BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF AN EMERGING SECTOR

The complexity of people's needs was apparent to caseworkers from early in the program, as was the recognition that many people would need supports beyond the program. Jenny Mitchell, in her capacity as the founding ASAS manager in Victoria noted:

The number of clients quickly increased, as did the ASAS staff's awareness of the need for community development work to develop and make contact with services to improve asylum seekers' access to housing, education and most importantly, health care.

Red Cross people worked hard to build on productive relationships across the sector and wider community to improve support for people seeking asylum in all states and territories. In Victoria, Red Cross developed close cooperative relationships with the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture Inc (Foundation House), as well as a number of church and community groups. In NSW, the team sought out collaborations with their local partners at the Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) and nuns from Sydney's Catholic Church. In 1993, the church provided a building off South Dowling St that became a service centre of sorts, as well as a social hub for people seeking asylum in Sydney.

By the mid-1990s, these collaborative relationships were further formalised by Red Cross in

NSW with the establishment of the Asylum Seekers Interagency, which reaffirmed partnerships with community groups and organisations that offered services assisting people seeking asylum. Caseworker Leslie Prior, recalled:

We were finding that the more clients we supported, they had so many needs that we couldn't meet, and we knew of other agencies that probably were able to help them in some way... We just looked around for different community groups that we thought might be of some use to our clients... We started off as a very small interagency, and it grew and grew to the point where it became invitation only because it was just massive, absolutely massive and quite uncontrollable as a meeting!

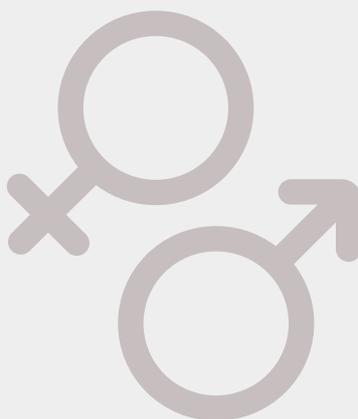
CHANGING RULES

From the earliest negotiations of ASAS, Red Cross considered how its role as a humanitarian organisation could influence policy decision makers to more strongly incorporate humanitarian values and best support people. It was important for Red Cross in these first years of ASAS to consider factors affecting people's eligibility for the program. The two key barriers people faced in this respect were the six month waiting period for support from their claim for protection date, and the ineligibility of people in the review stage of their claims. Throughout this time, Red Cross and other organisations sought changes to these barriers with some successes.



Clients Supported in 1990s

Adult: 1815
Child: 482
Total: 2297



Gender of Clients Supported in 1990s

Female: 40.50%
Male: 59.50%



Country of origin for clients supported in the first year of ASAS

China, Sri Lanka,
the former Yugoslavia,
East Timor, India, Fiji,
Iran, Iraq and Pakistan.

+ MEDICAL CARE FOR CLIENTS

An area of policy that saw a number of positive changes in the program's first years was medical care. Initially ASAS had been funded to cover only limited health care, and many caseworkers noted the significant impact that this had on their client's health and wellbeing. Caseworkers tried hard to stretch funding to cover the costs of doctor's appointments. However as many medications were prohibitively expensive and a considerable number of clients had health problems, this was not a durable solution.

With only incremental increases to medical supports throughout the 1990s on a Federal level, Red Cross people, with sector partners, across different states and territories sought to bridge this gap locally. For example, in Victoria caseworkers organized a series of information sessions for pharmacists and doctors, to educate them about the needs of people seeking asylum who were ineligible for Medicare at the time. Staff and volunteers reached out to hundreds of medical practices across the state, creating a list of pro bono doctors that caseworkers could refer clients to for medical care.

In NSW, Red Cross people worked hard to make connections with local doctors in areas with a high concentration of people seeking asylum, and were overwhelmed with the positive responses to provide free General Practitioner visits for clients. They also connected with nearby pharmacies. This led to Red Cross proposing to the Department of Immigration that medication be covered for people seeking asylum in need. An agreement was struck that allowed selected pharmacists to provide medication to clients with costs covered by ASAS. The majority of clients were able to get their medication as they needed it, which both reassured them their medical conditions were being looked after and, enabled them to focus on resolution of their visa status.



Credit: Rodney Dekker

CHANGING LIVES

As policies and external factors changed, so did the numbers and demographics of people seeking asylum in Australia. At the beginning of the decade in June 2000, ASAS had 20 caseworkers across Australia. Thirteen were located in Victoria across its five outreach centres, along with a number of committed volunteers. Clients being supported by the program numbered 1,973 nationally.

SUPPORTING THE EAST TIMORESE CLIENT GROUP

In March 2002, the Government announced that the longstanding East Timorese client group was scheduled to have their protection applications assessed after many years of uncertainty. Red Cross had built a strong understanding of the situations of their East Timorese clients and recognised some of the barriers clients faced to be able to have their visa situation resolved. While Red Cross did not involve itself in the visa decision process, it did support

clients to present information on their health and welfare issues for consideration. This ensured the authorities had full information to make informed decisions taking account of circumstances and needs. Most clients received permanent visas to remain in Australia, and by 2004 the program had wound back to around a quarter of its former size.

NAURU OFFSHORE SETTLEMENT

In 2005 Red Cross, in partnership with Foundation House and the Department of Immigration, assisted a group of 25 refugees to settle in Melbourne, following their long-term detention on Nauru. The group was characterised by extensive mental health issues and complex needs, and was granted temporary protection. While their detention had become an issue of significant political and public interest, Red Cross ensured their settlement was handled discreetly and professionally to ensure a focus on the wellbeing of the men. Red Cross assisted the group's transition into the community, and provided intense settlement support that enabled them to begin new lives in Australia.

WEST PAPUAN SETTLEMENT

Red Cross discreetly stepped up again in 2006 to help settle a group of 41 West Papuan people seeking asylum who had been granted temporary protection. A number of complex needs had been identified within the group and after being transferred to Melbourne from Christmas Island, Red Cross provided casework and settlement support in collaboration with Foundation House. A member of the West Papuan group who gained permanent residency in 2008, remembered Red Cross' support in adjusting to life in Australia:

We got a lot of help from Australian Red Cross. They organised the accommodation, health and English course... They explained how to get to school, and how to get the tram – this is a tram ticket, and if you're sitting on the seat you need to stand up to give the elder people priority to sit. And how to use the mobile phone, to say hello to my parents.

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS AND PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM

Other examples of Red Cross quiet but focused humanitarian work in this era came as the result of several international sporting events held in Australia

across this period where participants sought asylum, with some ultimately being granted protection. These events posed a challenge to the sector to be able to respond to participant's needs quickly, and often on a large scale. The Homeless World Cup in 2008 was one such example. Prior to the event, sector organisations came together to discuss their shared concerns, and pre-emptively developed needs assessment tools. Red Cross established a pop-up clinic that could receive the increased flow of clients. Kim van den Nouwelant was a Team Leader at the time, and remembered the weekly numbers for new ASAS assessments spiking from four to 40 in this period. Red Cross worked closely with the Department of Immigration, communicating the complex needs surrounding the cohort, and with the State Government around providing housing for the group. Kim described this collaboration as:

Red Cross would do our humanitarian diplomacy... we would be providing compelling evidence of needs, and risk, through quiet channels. Meanwhile, other organisations, like the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, took a much more activist approach... We were able to come in from the side and offer solutions.



EMERGENCY RELIEF

Red Cross started the Emergency Relief program in 2002 to support people frequently at risk of poverty, malnutrition and social isolation. Emergency Relief provides financial or material assistance to people seeking asylum, refugees and migrants who are suffering financial hardship and are not eligible for other support. Red Cross staff and volunteers provided assistance to more than 12,000 people across Australia between 2002 and 2017, by providing vouchers for essential items, one off cash payments, transport assistance and material aid.

Funded solely by public donations and private grants to Red Cross, the program is a growing area of service provision for Red Cross and other sector organisations today, as numbers of migrants, refugees and people seeking safety in the community experiencing hardship continue to increase. These issues are further detailed in Red Cross' 'Falling through the gaps report' published in 2017.

CHANGING MINDS

A GROWING SECTOR

The 2000s marked a real shift in the way Red Cross worked with the sector, with the number and capacity of organisations providing services to people seeking asylum growing to meet expanding needs in the community. This collaborative spirit was demonstrated across Red Cross in a number of ways. In Victoria, Red Cross hosted interagency casework forums, and participated with sector agencies in group supervision on casework practice hosted by Foundation House. Kim van den Nouwelant recounts:

Learning together actually helped foster a shared understanding of the different challenges that different organisations faced. And helped break down the barriers which, in turn, meant that clients got a more seamless experience between organisations.

Relationships formed with other organisations in these forums also led to more formal collaborations, such as the Network of Asylum Seeker Agencies in Victoria (NASA-Vic). In 2009 a subgroup of NASA-Vic involving Red Cross, Hotham Mission Asylum Seeker Project and Homeground Housing sought to respond to a growing occurrence of disadvantage and difficulty in accessing housing experienced by clients from asylum seeker backgrounds. Through continued advocacy and the provision of a strong evidence base, the group worked with State Government to create a housing establishment fund for people seeking asylum who were facing homelessness.

A group of agencies in Melbourne worked together on what was known as the 'Welfare Offer' – an alternative model to held detention for families and children. While this was not originally adopted by government, changes in 2005 led to the introduction of community detention program, which was first rolled out in NSW. Annie Harvey, NSW Migration Support Programs Manager had then been working with a partner organisation collaborating with Red Cross on the program's

rollout. Within four weeks of the program's announcement, children and families arrived in Sydney from detention facilities across the state and country needing individual case plans and accommodation. Recalling the speed required to set up the program:

It was such a pressured but incredibly collaborative approach to just making this happen. It was the first taste I'd had within the sector of an organisation that could activate, and that's the whole approach the Red Cross takes to emergencies. So whether they're humanitarian emergencies like kids in detention or natural disasters, it's like, "What do we need to make this happen?"... and we made it happen.

CHANGING RULES

The new millennium marked a period of productive engagement with government and the sector on issues relating to people seeking asylum, as Red Cross' auxiliary role provided a space for direct dialogue and increased cooperation.

HUMANITARIAN DIPLOMACY

The development of Red Cross' influence through humanitarian diplomacy was a significant feature of the decade. In this period, Red Cross built on existing sector partnerships and strengthened relationships with government that were based on consistency, a principled and direct dialogue, and the strong humanitarian values central to the Movement. Paris Aristotle, CEO of Foundation House, describes Red Cross' humanitarian diplomacy in practice:

Red Cross was always prepared to put its views to government, it didn't do that through campaigning in the press or anything like that. Its international credibility as an interlocutor and the domestic credibility that it had meant that it could have conversations with appropriately senior people and say what it needed to say – and sometimes that was much more direct than



people may have given it credit for. But that was really possible because of Red Cross' position of neutrality and that it's not primarily an activist agency in the sense of the word.

In practice, this productive relationship with the Department of Immigration and other organisations in this period was best expressed in two distinct initiatives introduced in 2005 and 2006 respectively: Community Detention (CD) and the Community Care Pilot (CCP).

COMMUNITY DETENTION PROGRAM

Also known as Residence Determination, the Community Detention (CD) program provided case management support to people who were still subject to detention according to government policy, but not held in a closed detention facility. As noted earlier, prior to this Red Cross was part of a group of agencies that developed the "Welfare Offer", which proposed alternative approaches for the care of families and children outside of a held detention environment. Red Cross had also contributed pro bono legal advice on the changes required to existing legislation in order to be able to release families and children out of detention and into the care of community agencies. In 2005, when there was pressure on government to consider an alternative to holding children and families in closed detention facilities, this advice was drawn upon. With the strong leadership of sector partners like Grant Mitchell at Hotham Mission and Paris Aristotle at Foundation House, Red Cross was able to lead implementation of the new approach with the Department of Immigration.

Red Cross was approached to undertake the

lead agency role. This request from the Department was based on the organisation's proven ability to deliver nation-wide programs, and significant expertise working with the client group through its work supporting people in both immigration detention and through the ASAS program, as well as the organisation's adherence to its principles of independence and neutrality throughout this work.

Red Cross and the Department of Immigration moved 90 people out of detention within 10 days. Red Cross people developed and conducted assessments for the families, drafted care plans outlining the services and support each family would require in the community, had the plans approved by the Department of Immigration, found temporary accommodation, organised welfare payments and support services and arranged 24 hour care and support for unaccompanied children. Reflecting on the organisation's willingness to activate quickly and engage with solutions, then Red Cross Manager Hang Vo recalled:

We were doing case templates, doing stuff late at night because we had nothing, when we had the release of families and children from detention... it was a crazy timeframe that we had to work to. We had to work with a whole lot of agencies and we were just making it up as we were going along. But the fact was that we said yes and we made it happen, and we delivered. I think that earned that respect and the reliability.

The expansion of Community Detention later in 2010 was another significant achievement for Red Cross and is described in further detail in the 'Changing Minds' section of the relevant period.



Clients Supported in 2000s

Adult: 5600
Child: 2039
Total: 7639



Gender of Clients Supported in 2000s

Female: 42.75%
Male: 57.25%

COMMUNITY CARE PILOT

The Community Care Pilot was conceived the following year, in collaboration once more with the Department of Immigration and sector leaders at Red Cross, Hotham Mission and Foundation House. Delivered in partnership with the Department, the International Organisation for Migration, legal services and other welfare agencies, the pilot focused on people in the community who had unresolved visa status over many years, a group which extended beyond people seeking asylum. It sought to demonstrate that if people are well supported in the community, provided with effective immigration case management, and are fully informed through the process with appropriate legal advice, they will be able to participate in the resolution of their visa status and to make informed decisions for their futures.

Managing the Community Care Pilot at the time, Nic Batch recalled:

It wasn't all about doing everything we could or supporting people to stay in Australia or it wasn't anything about having a particular outcome in mind, but helping people right from the beginning to think about what might happen, if you were to stay, or if you don't stay here and if you go somewhere else, whether that's to your home country or another place what would that mean for you?

More than 57 percent of the CCP's total 859 clients originated from 10 countries: China, Sri Lanka, Fiji, Indonesia, India, Lebanon, South Korea, Bangladesh, Philippines, and Turkey. Individual outcomes were varied: some clients on the pilot chose to return voluntarily, and others given permanent visa status, while a number of clients in visa categories

that no longer existed had their visas clarified. Throughout the pilot, relationships were strong with the Department of Immigration at both ground level between Red Cross and Department caseworkers, and more widely, with the Department of Immigration participating in stakeholder meetings and Red Cross holding a role on the Department-led pilot reference group.

The pilot was run in Victoria, NSW and Queensland. Such was its success that in July 2009, the Community Assistance Scheme (CAS) was launched and continues as Band 5 in the Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) program today, assisting people with complex visa pathways and significant vulnerabilities in need of support.

CREATING A FRAMEWORK FOR CHILDREN SEPARATED FROM THEIR FAMILIES

As the decade came to a close, Red Cross once again stepped up to support the humanitarian needs of people seeking asylum, this time in relation to unaccompanied children in detention. In November 2009, Red Cross was asked to support the transition of children out of immigration detention with two deadlines subsequently set – unaccompanied minors by Christmas and a majority of children and their families by June. There had been no precedent for this level of support in the community, so the provisions and safeguards necessary to support both accompanied and unaccompanied children adequately in community care needed to be developed in full. Working within a short timeframe, Red Cross pulled together a steering committee to devise a model that would provide a high standard of care to the group. Without federal child protection framework to support the model, Red Cross engaged non-government out-of-home care providers at a state level, under the

framework of state-based child protection laws. Lis de Vries was the Migration Support Programs National Manager at the time who oversaw this effort:

It was absolutely fascinating to see that work... [we were] creating the framework and also creating the protection, so the likes of Anglicare, MacKillop in Victoria; all of those around the country, they completely stepped up, and they were really keen to help.

As part of the steering committee, Red Cross developed the model which would provide care for around 20 minors aged 12-17 that next month. The following year in 2010, when larger numbers of children and families were released into community detention this work provided the framework for Red Cross and sector partners to support children separated from by their families across Australia.



FORMALISING RED CROSS' OBSERVER ROLE IN IMMIGRATION DETENTION

Another emerging issue of the period with the rising numbers of people seeking asylum being held in detention, was the formalisation of Red Cross' Humanitarian Observer role in immigration detention facilities. This happened in 2009 following a national review of the program and the signing of a new Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Immigration.

As earlier noted, Red Cross had been undertaking visits to detention since 1991, offering both Restoring Family Links services and running a number of local activities at a state and territory level. Visits were undertaken by both staff and volunteers and included volunteer programs that ranged from music classes in Sydney, to cooking and sewing classes in Melbourne. During regular visits, Red Cross people also provided material aid items such as phone cards or shampoo, and printed copies of newspapers in people's local languages to share.

The shift of program model in 2009 moved the focus from material and emotional supports to people in detention, to a more structured and nationally consistent approach, undertaking humanitarian monitoring and evidence collection through private, confidential interviews with people in detention, facility observations and engaging in humanitarian diplomacy with the Department of Immigration and Detention Service Providers. This changed model continues today as we remain focused on ensuring the safety, health, dignity and wellbeing of people in immigration detention is upheld and protected

When regional processing centres in Nauru and Papua New Guinea (Manus Island) opened in late 2001, Australian Red Cross undertook assessment visits to both centres to determine the need for Restoring Family Links services in April 2002 under the auspices of the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC). Finding a need amongst people in detention in Nauru, Red Cross commenced Tracing services in July 2002 until the centre was closed in December 2007. With the reopening of regional processing centres in 2012, Red Cross resumed visits to both centres in its role as Humanitarian Observer, this time by supporting the ICRC in its visits to both Nauru and Manus Island. ICRC visits to Nauru and Manus Island continue today with support of Australian Red Cross.

The Immigration Detention Monitoring Program (IDMP) runs today in all Australian detention facilities. Visits in Australia are facilitated by a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Immigration which recognises Red Cross' independent Humanitarian Observer role, and provides a channel for raising issues of humanitarian concern directly with the Department of Immigration as required. In accordance with Red Cross' Fundamental Principles including impartiality, independence, neutrality and humanity, all people in immigration detention can engage with Red Cross, regardless of the reasons for their detention.



Credit: Drew Duckworth

2010s



The impact that Red Cross has had on thousands of people's lives is impossible to quantify or to capture, but I have absolutely no doubt exists. Because Red Cross is working with people who are arguably at some of the most vulnerable positions that they've been in, short of facing the persecution in their own country. They're in a strange country without means of support, minimal contacts, don't know who to trust, and Red Cross has been there for thousands of such people.

That is probably the most important legacy... you possibly don't actually know the impact that you had on the majority of those people because they're not necessarily going to voice it or explain it. But just having somebody who's there that they can trust and having an organisation that they understand. The Red Cross Red Crescent logo means something to a lot of the people coming into this country, and it means trust. So that's a hugely important legacy.

- MARGARET PIPER

CHANGING LIVES

As the scale of Red Cross' work accelerated in this period alongside the increase in people arriving by boat seeking asylum, so did its human impact. Supporting people throughout their journey seeking safety was extremely powerful for staff and volunteers at Red Cross, particularly at times where clients experienced significant transitions such as exiting immigration detention. Red Cross Manager in Victoria Kim van den Nouwelant recalls working with volunteers to pick up a group of 30 people in the middle of the night from Essendon airport. The group had been in a boat accident off the coast of WA where people had been injured and also died:

It was around midnight and we'd had one person arrive from the hospital early in the afternoon. We'd dropped him off at his house, and went to the airport later that night to pick up a chartered flight with the other people. There were three other men who were going to be staying in that community detention property, and it was the first time they'd

seen each other since the boat accident. And they just embraced. It was incredibly emotional to see. The last time they'd seen each other... they didn't know whether they had lived or not lived. Being in moments like that is pretty moving.

With so many people arriving into the community, Red Cross volunteers and staff worked through the night for airport pickups such as this, providing a human face and a welcome to people seeking safety.

OCTOBER 1 DEADLINE FOR PROTECTION CLAIMS

For the organisation more widely, it was a privilege to be trusted to support clients throughout times of vulnerability or adversity. This was true for Red Cross' work with the 30,500 people seeking asylum who arrived in Australia by sea between August 2012 and January 2014 whose claims for protection were on

hold. A deadline of October 1, 2017 had been set by the Department of Immigration for all applications for protection to be lodged, without exception. Alongside sector partners Red Cross people across the country worked around the clock, engaging clients, working with legal providers and across the sector to make sure everyone was able to get their application submitted in time. As Refugee Legal's Executive Director David Manne recalls of the time:

Red Cross played a critical role in making sure that people were able to access the help they needed. What comes from that is the same spirit of concern for people... making sure that they're aware of what they need to bring and prepare, they've got good information about their background, their medical issues, aspects of their past or their present which could affect their ability to actually engage in the process or to recall traumatic events.



RED CROSS PEOPLE

It is important to note that throughout these years, Red Cross people worked through a very complex political environment to provide services to people seeking asylum in need. This was acknowledged by Professor Linda Briskman, as she recounted the research she had undertaken with the organisation in 2014 to review the Migration Support Programs Casework Model:

I think that thing that really struck me was the complicated political time during which this evaluation was undertaken... it was so difficult to provide services to asylum seekers because the policies were so tough. This really had an effect on staff. What I found really admirable was the way the staff were able to focus on the job they had to do to try and overcome the barriers that were in place, mainly external barriers, and do the best for people they were working with. And the few asylum-seekers I spoke to really affirmed that, you'll find some quotes in the report that are really quite moving from asylum seekers themselves about what Red Cross meant for them. I think that's a reflection of the dedication of staff.

Testament to this, were also the words shared by Red Cross' clients and former clients interviewed for this report, some of which are shared in the section 'Reflections from our clients' on page 31. The three clients we spoke with had all transitioned from being supported by Red Cross to volunteering or working with the organisation. This demonstrates the capacity for people who had been well supported in their pathways to protection, to be able to contribute meaningfully back to the Australian community. One former client, now working with Red Cross for over six years:

My plan was to do something different, but I always felt a sense of responsibility to give back, and that feeling itself led me to join Red Cross.

SUPPORTING OFFSHORE CLIENTS FACING HARDSHIP

Another example of a heightened response from the organisation was in relation to a small group of people who had been transferred from offshore centres to Australia for medical reasons. They had been living in the community with support. The group were then transitioned onto bridging visas with no supports in late 2017 and been given just three weeks to transition out of their accommodation. As they had been detained offshore for a number of years, Red Cross had a history with the clients through the work in immigration detention and recognised the significant vulnerability of the group. As National Manager Vicki Mau described, Red Cross felt the organisation:

...had a deep obligation to the group not only because they were vulnerable, but because we knew them. As Red Cross, we'd known them when they were in Iraq in conflict, we'd known them when they'd arrived on Christmas Island and we visited them in detention. And then we knew them when, with ICRC, we visited them on Nauru. Given for some of them we were also their Australian support agency, we had a continuity of care requirement as well.

The response across the organisation was particularly unique, as at a national level Red Cross initiated a cross-sector response that engaged all service providers who had been working with the group, discussing shared concerns around the removal of support. In each state and territory the sector came together to map needs and allocate responsibilities for casework, housing, medicine, mental health support and support to get into employment. Working quickly, Red Cross sought to secure additional donor funding to support the group, an effort which was successful. At a state level, with the sector, Red Cross was able to highlight the needs of Victorian based members of this group to the State Government. The Victorian Premier made an announcement that the State Government would step in to provide immediate funding of \$600,000 to support those living in Victoria.

Credit: iStock/shironosov



MIGRATION SUPPORT PROGRAMS (MSP) CASEWORK MODEL

One of the resources developed by Red Cross within this period was the MSP Casework Model. The model, created in 2012, marked an attempt to formalise and standardise Red Cross' casework practice and was underpinned by social work principles and the Red Cross humanitarian framework. The model recognised that a broader approach that extended beyond income support ensured better outcomes for clients. It integrated strength-based, client-centred, culturally competent, multisystemic, evidence-based and safety-based themes, and was accompanied by a series of Good Practice Guides, which were developed thematically on topics related to working with clients. The MSP Casework Model was reviewed by Professor Linda Briskman in 2014, who determined that the model made a significant impact on service delivery at Red Cross and contributed to casework practice knowledge development across the sector.

STRENGTHS AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

Another important advancement to casework practice in recent years is the development of the strengths and needs assessment framework (SANAF) which was first rolled out across the country in 2017 across all migration programs. The framework seeks to apply a consistent and comprehensive approach to assessing the strengths and needs of clients, and aligns with Red Cross' humanitarian mandate by identifying gaps in service provision beyond the scope of program funder requirements, including opportunities for potential cross-program referral. It recognises and develops the strengths, resilience, and capabilities inherent in this client group. Red Cross migration Manager Jennie Bunney recounts:



Clients Supported in 2010s

Adult: 28287
Child: 10148
Total: 38435



Gender of Clients Supported in 2010s

Female: 30.50%
Male: 69.50%



Top 5 Client Country of Origin in 2010s

Afghanistan: 17.84%
Iran: 17.13%
Sri Lanka: 12.08%
Pakistan: 7.91%
Iraq: 6.33%

We have had staff come back saying, "I didn't know this about my client before. Now that I'm using the SANAF I understand that this is happening in their lives." We have been able to collect some really good baseline data, and as we continue to use SANAF we'll be able to show the impacts that providing support can have on the lives of clients.

...the shared concern that refugees and asylum seekers who had arrived by boat are at increased risk of mental health problems certainly suicidal ideation and behaviour. So we were very conscious, both organisations, that risk factors such as torture, trauma, separation from family, social isolation, loss of culture, post arrival stress, language barriers, a whole range of things... meant that we were in a sense compelled to develop the program.

SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING FOR CASEWORKERS

Another training initiative, the 'Suicide Prevention Training' for caseworkers was developed as a result of a collaboration with Professor Nicholas Procter, one of Australia's leading experts in the field of asylum seeker mental health. Established in 2017 as the result of a crowd-funding initiative, Red Cross was a collaborator and a beneficiary of the training. As Professor Procter noted, the partnership came from:

Red Cross made a significant contribution towards the project's funding target alongside hundreds of members of the Australian community. The evidence-based training model has so far been rolled out across 400 caseworkers and support workers at Red Cross and other sector organisations Australia-wide. An initial analysis of the impact for staff and volunteers saw a positive shift in attitudes, and an increase in both caseworker confidence and competence when working with clients experiencing mental health problems.



One significant legacy for Red Cross will be the development of its partner agencies' capacity to respond to the needs of people seeking asylum. Many of these organisations went on to obtain independent contracts with the Department of Immigration and remain as SRSS providers today. Acknowledging this contribution to one such organisation, Settlement Services International (SSI) CEO Violet Roumeliotis recounted:

We hadn't done that work at all... and they brokered that very respectfully, and very generously and graciously. And now we do work in that area and we do it successfully and I think a lot of that has to do with the generosity of Red Cross and the sharing of their IP and their skills and expertise. They mentored us very well.

CHANGING MINDS

BUILDING THE SECTOR

In 2010 the Government expanded the Community Detention program, with Red Cross taking on the role of lead agency coordinating the delivery of the program in the community. Other welfare agencies and community organisations were sub-contracted by Red Cross to provide care such as accommodation, out-of-home care for minors and day-to-day casework support. Between October 2010 and July 2012, 4000 people had been approved to transition into community detention arrangements, close to half of which were children. This was a significant undertaking for Red Cross, even with its expertise and knowledge that had been built over years of experience supporting people made vulnerable by migration. However it also represented an even bigger opportunity to move significant numbers of children and vulnerable family groups out of closed immigration detention facilities, as well as expand the capacity and reach of the asylum seeker sector. Red Cross needed to quickly adapt to this new model of collaborative service delivery, delivering the program across formal partnerships and on an unprecedented scale. It managed this by sub-contracting 20 partner agencies to deliver the program, including many which were new to the asylum seeker work, and are still working in the space today. Sector partner and CEO of Foundation House, Paris Aristotle, noted:

I don't think there were many organisations in the country that could have done that or would have done it either because I don't think it was

the easiest path... But Red Cross took on that responsibility. It opened itself up to other agencies in terms of a partnership and collaboration. I can't remember many organisations that have ever done that before, that it had so many subcontracting arrangements with other providers while it's also delivering those services themselves, and doing it in a way that wasn't about self-interest, but was driven about both the interest of the clients in the first point, first respect and then in the interest of the sector and strengthening collaborations in the sector.

This period was one of significant growth for the sector, as numbers of people arriving by boat continued to rise, and Red Cross committed to further building the program and developing the capacity of partner agencies. Training programs, practitioner forums, as well as shared information and resources were all examples of the broader support and development that Red Cross sought to enact across the sector. Given both the speed and scale of the expansion, and the challenges of adapting to a new way of working, there were obstacles and opportunities for learning for both the organisation and its staff and volunteers, and these are detailed in the *2014 Reflections Report: Community Migration program*. At one point, the clients who had been moved into community care arrangements numbered 12,000, and Red Cross had 20 partner organisations, 900 of its own staff and thousands of volunteers across Australia working to support clients.

This work was happening also at a local level. In Western Australia, this involved building the sector and community support from the ground up.



Credit: Rodney Dekker

The WA team had been working with a small amount of clients prior to the 2010 expansion, across both the ASAS and CAS programs. With the huge increase in client numbers through the Community Detention program, the team reached out across the community to organisations and businesses that would be working with clients. Alenka Jeram Migration Support Programs WA Manager recalls the scale of the outreach:

Be it private GPs through the International Health and Medical Services (IHMS), be it hospitals, be it schools, Catholic schools and Islamic schools who were taking the kids in, teaching them cultural competency, advocating for basic services like using interpreters when people went to doctor's appointments. Sourcing appropriate allied health professionals that we needed on board, and then building the sector especially when we need to rely on others to help us. There was a lot of attention put on that work. And a lot of advocacy from management, but also from a caseworker perspective to get clients into services that they needed.

PRACTITIONER'S FORUMS

Red Cross Practitioner's Forums were an annual event which brought together hundreds of stakeholders from across the asylum seeker sector and community. With attendees from organisations that included service providers, universities, and legal, youth, community and health services, the day featured expert panels and presentations around thematic issues. There were also opportunities for workshops to collaborate, sharing best practice and devising solutions with other participants. Themes across past forums have covered: building resilience in a time of uncertainty, improving services for unaccompanied minors, social cohesion for people seeking asylum in the Australian community and most recently, addressing the gaps in service provision. As sector partner and CEO of Settlement Services International Violet Roumeliotis recounted:

Australian Red Cross took a critical role in leading this at their practice forums... as soon as you saw that that practice forum was coming up, I would make sure that I could go and certainly my key colleagues would be there as well, because we knew that there was an opportunity for us to showcase what we were doing, to hear what others were doing, great networking and a great sense of sector collaboration and solidarity.

SOCIAL COHESION INITIATIVES

Following the 2016 National Practitioner's Forum on Social Cohesion, Red Cross began a collaboration with the Department of Social Services (DSS) who attended the forum. DSS recognised the need to support social connectedness in the community and invested in a two year Red Cross pilot 'Here to Contribute'. This program aims to increase a sense of acceptance for migrants in transition, and build their capacity to participate in the workplace and community. By expanding on Red Cross' traditional work in directly meeting the humanitarian needs of asylum seekers, refugees and other vulnerable migrants, the 'Here to Contribute' program is creating enabling environments and empowering communities to respond.

'IN SEARCH OF SAFETY' PROGRAM

This social cohesion work builds on the success of the In Search of Safety (ISOS) program in Western Australia, which was established in 2013 with the support of the Scanlon Foundation. A key community education initiative teaching students and school communities about issues surrounding people seeking asylum, refugees and diversity, the program was initially run as a pilot targeting students in upper primary school (Year 6). It sought to promote a greater understanding and awareness of people seeking asylum in Australia, and the issues they face in seeking protection. The program engaged volunteers of refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds to share their experiences directly with school communities, and gave children the opportunity to ask questions. After overwhelmingly positive feedback, the pilot was then expanded as 'Pathways to Protection' in secondary schools and as 'Community Conversations' with groups in the community who wanted to know more about people seeking asylum. The program was then further extended into Victoria and ACT, before expanding across Australia in 2016.

In April 2018 an evaluation by Curtin University, measuring student knowledge, attitudes and intended interactions with asylum seekers both before and after the program, found there to be some very positive and lasting results. The evaluation, through surveys conducted before, immediately after and 8-9 months after participation, found that the program was "effective in positively shifting the student's knowledge about, and attitudes



Credit: Rodney Dekker

and intended behaviors towards asylum seekers, in both the short and longer term".

In Search of Safety continues to facilitate dialogue in primary and high schools, civic organisations and workplaces. In the 2016-17 financial year, Red Cross facilitated 319 sessions involving 11,914 participants in schools and community groups across Australia, with this further increasing over the July 2017 – May 2018 period to 339 sessions in schools, workplaces and community groups involving 14,577 participants.

IN WORK AUSTRALIA

Expanding beyond initiatives to drive community acceptance, and building on a range of job cafes, mentoring programs and volunteer pathways across the country, In Work Australia (IWA) was launched at the end of 2017 in partnership with business and government. Responding to client requests for more mentoring support that came out of a Red Cross Hackathon and through client surveys and assessments, it develops a friendly



ACCESS TO SCHOOLING IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

In WA, a significant achievement was obtaining access to public schooling for children in community detention and those who had arrived by boat to Australia. Joining forces with other local organisations Centre for Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Detainees (CARAD) and Mercy Care, and later other advocates, an evidence base was developed around issues impacting children and families due to a lack of access to schooling. This topic was also the focus of research into the issue by Curtin University. The research suggested that access to education was far more complex than just a right to attend, as there were a number of other barriers to participation faced by people seeking asylum including transport costs, availability of accommodation with proximity to essential services and the psychosocial burden. Armed with this research, the collective advocated directly with the West Australian Government for access over a number of years, and were successful at the end of 2016.



FURTHER EDUCATION IN TASMANIA

Another state which had previously very few people seeking asylum living in the community prior to the CD expansion was Tasmania, with a distinct lack of programs and services to support this group. At the end of 2013 there were fifteen young men who had arrived in Australia as children unaccompanied by their families living in Hobart who were unable to access further education. Many of the young men needed English language support and had had their education disrupted. Through Red Cross' collaboration with the Department of Education and TasTAFE, an agreement was put in place that supported the young men through the TAFE system and the Young Adult Migrant English Program.

professional network to help and mentor recently arrived migrants find and enjoy work in Australia, this program aims to build the skills and capacity of participants involved. Being new to Australia, finding a job is often the toughest challenge people face. IWA offers a digital platform for offering tips and job leads, face to face mentoring, and partners with employers to broker paid work internships. One mentee from South Australia shared her experiences:

Talking to someone who has more experience and contacts in the industry and life in Australia really helps to develop a plan that is focused and gives a lot of peace of mind knowing am heading in the proper direction.

CHANGING RULES

A decade that commenced with a significant increase in people seeking asylum arriving in Australia, the 2010s has also represented an increasingly difficult policy environment for Red Cross to navigate in its programs for vulnerable migrants. With initially larger numbers of people arriving by boat to Australia and the reintroduction of temporary visa classes in 2015, the uncertainty that many clients faced in their lives and the gaps in supporting them, was of significant concern for Red Cross.

The expansion of the Community Detention program in 2010 was a key development of the decade, and drew on Red Cross' belief that immigration detention should be a policy of last resort. Following sustained advocacy from Red Cross and the sector, and advice from key advisors to government, the decision was made to remove all children and their families from closed immigration detention into community-based care. Red Cross was approached to act as lead

agency for the expansion, and worked closely with the Department of Immigration, 20 partner organisations and other key stakeholders to establish and implement the framework for the program.

The numbers of people supported by Red Cross and its partners in the community grew rapidly between 2010 and 2013, as the numbers arriving by sea to Australia seeking protection continued to increase. Red Cross expanded its direct delivery and sub-contracted work to other organisations; government also directly contracted some agencies to provide further capacity to respond to the needs. When in November 2012, some major government policy shifts were announced for onshore arrivals, Red Cross released a public statement highlighting the organisation's position that prolonged immigration detention has significant impacts on the health and wellbeing of people, and that community-based arrangements are more appropriate, with timely resolution of applications for protection as key.

In 2015, the Department of Immigration integrated the CD, CAS and ASAS programs into the new Status Resolution Support Scheme (SRSS) model. After a competitive tender process, Red Cross was one of 11 agencies awarded contracts. With the caseload shared further across the contracted agencies, Red Cross undertook a significant reduction of staff roles. Throughout this time the organisation continued to support over 7000 clients and advocate for the humanitarian needs of the broader client group. By providing a strong evidence base in direct discussions with government, the organisation was able to advocate for a number of improvements to the program. This humanitarian diplomacy continued throughout the transition into the SRSS model at a Federal level, but was also increasingly occurring at a local level with state governments to address gaps in service provision and mobilize access to local services and support.

OUR WORK ACROSS AUSTRALIA

TAS

DAIRY TASMANIA

Red Cross worked with a client who was experienced in artificial insemination of cattle and contacted Dairy Tasmania to explore potential employment opportunities for this client. Through this contact, three clients were offered the opportunity to undertake a pre-employment training course. Subsequently, all three were offered positions on dairy farms.

In partnership with Dairy Tasmania, a pilot program was later undertaken to provide skills training to an additional 13 people seeking asylum. The customised training program was developed by the Skills Institute in Burnie, and was followed by a one-week work placement on dairy farms in Northern Tasmania. A second pilot was planned but did not proceed as clients no longer had the right to work.

SA

JOB CAFÉ

Since 2015, Red Cross has offered Job Café to migrants-in-transition in Adelaide. The aim of the seven-week course is to help participants gain skills and confidence to independently find employment. A team of experienced volunteers, including those with lived experience, lead the course. Topics covered during the course include:

- Job searching strategies
- Australian workplace culture
- Right and responsibilities in the workplace
- How to write a resume and cover letter
- Volunteering in South Australia
- Recognition of overseas qualifications

Of the participants surveyed, 50 per cent were successful in obtaining employment. The program continues today, led by volunteers and receives in-kind support from external strategic partners.

VIC

WHEEL POWER

“I think about people like me and I want to help”. Khaled, like many people seeking asylum who come to Australia, will always remember the anxiety he felt as he waited for the outcome of his asylum application. Khaled wanted to help people who were having a similar experience to his own and decided to volunteer with the Red Cross Emergency Relief bike program.

In Victoria, dedicated volunteer bike mechanics, like Khaled, recycle, refurbish and recondition second-hand bikes, ensuring they are roadworthy, safe and presentable. Once restored, the bikes are given free of charge to people seeking asylum. The bikes help overcome many challenges that peoples seeking asylum face. Hundreds of bikes have been refurbished and given away since 2005.





Credit: Amelia Wong

QLD

THE TUESDAY CLUB

Approximately 30 migrant women from Papua New Guinea, South Sudan, Myanmar, Solomon Islands, Thailand, Taiwan and the Philippines come together every Tuesday in Gatton to learn sewing, basic Microsoft Word and English.

This group was formed after Red Cross found regional migrant women were in danger of 'slipping through the cracks' once the first flush of TAFE training, migrant assistance and English classes were completed. Red Cross case worker Sue Williams noticed the problem in Gatton. "We asked them about 12 months ago what they would need to feel more connected to the community," Ms Williams said.

Everything was provided by volunteers; sewing machines, English classes, second-hand computers and community members as teachers. The project aims to be fully volunteer-led going forward, Ms Williams noting, "The women will be leaders in the project, they will be able to reach out to other people in the community and encourage others to come along."

WA

WE HAVE A WINNER!

Ali won two gold medals at the 2014 Wrestling Championships, following on from the three he won at the national championships in Canberra. Red Cross started working with Ali in 2011 when he arrived in Australia seeking asylum, helping him improve his English, make new friends and settle into his new community. Red Cross helped Ali with access to gym and a wrestling club, and facilitated attendance to the competitions. Ali hopes that he'll be able to become an Australian citizen one day so that he can win an Olympic gold medal for his new country!

NSW

SMILES ALL ROUND

In 2008, the Australian Dental Association (ADA) NSW established a partnership with Red Cross to provide much needed dental services for people seeking asylum. The program celebrated its 10 year anniversary of the clinics in 2018.

At the quarterly Red Cross clinics, ADA staff, volunteer dentists, dental assistants, dental students and Red Cross people work to ensure patients are given the fundamental pain relief they need, including scale and clean treatments, extractions and fillings. Patients are also given oral hygiene instruction and each go home with an oral health bag from Colgate, including a new toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste.

Feedback from the clinics have been overwhelmingly positive, with one patient saying:

“Thank you so much for organising my visit to a dentist. I am touched. I have never in my life had this best service. Not in any service. Respect. Love. Care. Thank you so much to the whole dental clinic.”

ACT

DAVID’S STORY

My name is David and I am from Sri Lanka. My family used to own a grocery shop in my hometown and we used to also sell homemade hot meals. My father used to run a bakery next door and I was often cooking curries to be sold to customers at our grocery shop. Our business has been destroyed during the war in 2003.

When I came to Canberra as Asylum Seeker I have met people for the Sri Lanka Community and amongst them there were some people who used to be my customers at the shop in Sri Lanka. They recognised me and they asked me to cook traditional food for the Sri Lanka community during some events. I was very pleased from the offer and from the fact that they were treating me as a family member. Furthermore, after the event they used to give me a lot of food to take back home with me, this was very helpful; in fact, until last year I had no work rights and it was very difficult to cover all expenses with the Centrelink payment.

In June, while I was working at the Community Garden a Red Cross Caseworker suggested that we

could have offered a lunch cooking veggies grown at Community garden for the Refugee World day. My workmates at the community garden immediately appointed me as the possible chef and they said that they would help me chopping veggies or anything else that was needed on that day.

We cooked at the Red Cross Road House in the city, and many people come, Red Cross clients, Red Cross staff and also people who were walking in the street from the general public. Everyone was very happy with the traditional food we prepared.

After some weeks from that lunch, I cooked again for the Sri Lanka community and the owner of Sri Lanka restaurant was there; he really enjoyed what I cooked and offered me free training to learn how to make additional Sri Lanka dishes. I have been learning new skills and helping him cooking for about three weeks. After three weeks he offered me a job.

I am now working full time as chef in that restaurant and I no longer rely on Centrelink payment. The whole Red Cross team came to have their team lunch at the restaurant to celebrate the beautiful outcome of my passion for cooking for the community.

NT

FOOTBALL WITHOUT BORDERS

The Red Cross NT MSP team was heavily involved in the inception of the Football Without Borders (FWB) program through the provision of resources and volunteers. During the early stages of the program the group visited detention centres, providing people seeking asylum an opportunity to play football and connect with the community. It is now an established organisation and FWB promotes the integration of refugees, asylum seekers and new migrants in the Darwin community by engagement through football. The program provides a great opportunity for participants to meet new people, building confidence in their place within the Darwin community.

FWB plays three days per week, and engages with a variety of playing groups around Darwin. The group provides support to participants including help finding work, transport and establish social connections.

REFLECTIONS FROM OUR SECTOR PARTNERS



PARIS ARISTOTLE

- CEO Foundation House

Speaking to it just from my own organisation's perspective, I don't think there's ever been a time where we would have considered Red Cross anything other than a partner or a collaborator in the work. I don't think there's ever been a time where we felt there's anything Red Cross has done or the way in which it sought to operate that would be threatening to us as an organisation or any other organisation for that matter. In an era of competitive tendering and organisations having to tussle for resources, I think it's incredibly admirable and rare that the primary focus has been on facilitating better partnerships so that clients get a better range of services.

You always knew that what they would bring would be in the clients' interest, not their own interest ... That they understood where their strengths were and what they could do well and where they needed assistance, and also where other organisations could share in the same space that they put strength in as well. There's not enough of that these days... I have seen a lot of organisations over the years operating in these spaces, here and overseas and I would put Australian Red Cross up there with the best of them.



DAVID MANNE

- Director Refugee Legal

I think the common thread in all of Red Cross's work has been the broad aim of upholding and pursuing human dignity for vulnerable people. That's the essence. And the foundation is a basic and abiding, a driving concern, for humanity and for upholding peoples' humanity but also acting on it to change the course of peoples' lives for the better. That's the daily work... That's where you get the underlying principal, or guiding principal, that the engagement is with the predicament of vulnerable people needing protection. It's concerned with improving protection for people, helping them to present their case, helping them to navigate the process, helping them

to live with the basic necessities, with dignity and also minimising harm. And also seeking to help them to seek a durable solution either here or overseas. But I think that's the common meeting point and I think that you can distil it to a basic driving concern for the humanity of people - but doing something about it.



REFUGEE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

Red Cross staff have been one of our strongest stakeholders and collaborators. They have been supportive not just of RCOA but of the broader sector, especially in offering space and facilities for sector Interagencies and networks. They provided us with secretariat support for many years, either for interagencies we chaired or for our annual national consultations in different states and territories... They have also been active participants in our policy networks and contributed immensely to identifying issues of concern. As the main organisation with a national presence, they have been invaluable in helping us understand the national picture.

...In particular, we feel that even where there is a government contract, Red Cross have always put the needs of their clients first. They have stood up for their clients and others in the sector in uncomfortable circumstances. All our interactions with Red Cross staff have been marked by a quiet and compassionate ethic of care, courtesy and respect. In a sector with many parts, Red Cross staff have always been a pleasure to work with and alongside.

Red Cross has definitely influenced the way the sector will be working in future. They advocated for their clients even when restricted by Government's contracts and have been a positive force in the sector who valued innovation when trying to support vulnerable people seeking asylum. Red Cross was never afraid of trying the unknown. Being the first service provider that supported people seeking asylum in different programs with ever-changing contracts, Red Cross put the principle of humanity as their first priority.

THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

VICKI MAU

National Manager –
Migration Support Programs

To our wonderful staff, volunteers, partners in the sector and all of those who have contributed to this work in the last 25 years.

As we have reflected back for this report, there has been so much work done by so many people to support people seeking safety in our country. Thousands of people have contributed to this legacy, with thousands of actions, big and small, that have made positive contributions to this work.

To our staff and volunteers: Your commitment to those we support has been nothing short of exceptional. We have been so fortunate in the organisation to have so many incredibly talented and passionate people, and so many committed volunteers, members and communities. As we transition out of the SRSS space, and seek to scale up our work to addressing growing needs in the community, we acknowledge that we will have said goodbye to many colleagues; throughout this, the ongoing professionalism of staff and your continued commitment to our clients throughout this time is remarkable.

To our sector partners: We're proud to continue this journey with you as Red Cross moves into a new era of providing support to people seeking asylum, and further mobilising communities

to ensure that we are a country of welcome for everyone. Our humanitarian work can only be achieved through partnership and we thank you for your commitment and dedication. For those who have contributed directly to this report: Thank you for your time and your thoughtful reflections on Red Cross' work and our collective contributions in this space.

To past, current, and future clients: our commitment to you remains. Red Cross continues to support those migrants facing vulnerabilities here, in the region and across the world. Our emblem remains a sign of safety and of welcome, and as well as our specific programs we reach out to you, and to our communities, to ensure our welcome extends to ongoing and meaningful participation and inclusion. We continue to listen, learn and act on your advice and your experiences, and to ensure that at all times, everyone in Australia, regardless of your visa status, your background, your religion or how you came here, has the opportunity to contribute and build a safe, dignified, diverse and vibrant future.

REFLECTIONS FROM OUR CLIENTS



I have always felt that my caseworker at the Red Cross was the only person I could really rely on and refer to. I think that in itself was a great sense of support to have, that there is someone called caseworker, even though the whole terminology was new for me, but mentally that feeling that you have someone there to support you was great... I always cherished the time that I had with my caseworkers, because of how welcoming and kind and approachable they were. It was amazing, it was a learning lesson for me as well, and that's what changed my direction in life to become a social worker. I never worked in this field before, and that was the starting point. Soon after I exited from Red Cross, I signed up as a volunteer.



Red Cross is the place that I am safe. When somebody meets you and accepts you without knowing you is incredible. Sometimes I feel lonely and helpless but here I feel strong and supported.



I didn't know the social programs of Australia. Where would I go? Where would I get this? The team at Red Cross assisted me. They interviewed me. They ticked all the boxes. They said, "You've got to supply this. You've got to do this. This is what we require from you." And, whenever I would come to them – I call them up on the phone, I send them an email, or I appear in person – they would never turn their back on me. They would always accept me with open arms.



I think the most important support the Red Cross provided was empathy, connection on a personal level, and wanting the best for us.



I think it really depends on the seven fundamental principles that we have here for Red Cross. I think the way that they deal with the clients, it's so natural and it's so unique... they welcome you [with] humanity and as a human being here, and they just deal with you as a human, not considering anything else like where you come from, which background or which skin colour you have.



Red Cross means so many things to me, especially their starting off my journey. I would like to say, here, that it means so much. It means my life, now. It means my life. Without Red Cross, I wouldn't be where I am today. From 2015 until now, and the experiences that I've gone through – they've assisted me all along the way. When I had nobody, they picked me up. They are really what they truly stand for – the humanity of the world.



TIMELINE

1990s

- 1991 - January** → Social Security Act amended: people seeking asylum unable to access Social Security Benefits
- 1992** → Mandatory detention introduced
- 1992 - July** → Creation of Asylum Seeker Assistance Scheme (ASAS)
- 1992** → Red Cross commences tracing visits to immigration detention
- 1993 - January** → Red Cross officially takes on the administration of the ASAS program under an agreement with the Australian Government
- 1996 - October** → Changes to ASAS eligibility restricted to persons who have not yet received a primary decision on their application for protection visa
- 1999 - May** → 'Operation Safe Haven', 4000 Kosovan refugees brought to Australia
- 1999 - July** → Changes to ASAS eligibility which includes both primary and review applicants awaiting decisions on their application for protection visa
- 1999 - Sept.** → 'Operation Safe Haven', 1450 East Timorese refugees brought to Australia

2000s

- 2002 - January** → Red Cross and other agencies work on the 'Welfare Offer' as an alternative to held detention for children and families
- 2004-2005** → Resolution of the long standing East Timorese protection visas by the Department
- 2005** → Community Detention (CD) was introduced
- 2006** → Community Care Pilot (CCP) was established
- 2008 - August** → Temporary Protection Visas abolished
- 2009** → Formalisation of Red Cross' monitoring role in detention
- 2009** → Community Assistance Scheme (CAS) launched on July 1, following the CCP's success

2010s

- 2010** → Expansion of CD to respond to growing numbers of families with children in detention
- 2011-2014** → Sub-contracted and developed the capacity of 21 partner agencies within CD program
- 2012** → A single processing system for asylum seekers, regardless of their mode of arrival, comes into effect
- 2012** → The Australian Government introduces legislation to allow offshore processing of asylum seekers in Nauru and Papua New Guinea
- 2013** → Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs) reintroduced
- 2015** → Introduction of integrated service delivery model (SRSS) and development of hub service centres
- 2018 - June** → End of Red Cross' SRSS contract
- 2018 - July** → Red Cross to commence co-design to develop new approaches to this work



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BEST FOR US.**

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