



Refugee

Newsletter of the Australian Refugee Association

On the way to Australian residency

16-year-old Ghulam arrived in Australia three weeks ago after fleeing Afghanistan with his mother and three siblings in 2001. With conditions in Quetta becoming increasingly insecure, Ghulam's mother found herself in a desperate situation. With no husband or male relative for support, she and her children are at constant risk of attack, exploitation and deportation as refugees in Pakistan. Ghulam, together with his two siblings, worked for four years weaving carpets to save the money for the boat trip to Australia. He is now a permanent resident of Australia and has a chance to secure his family's safety.

With increasing asylum seeker boat arrivals in recent months, ARA Migration has been involved in assisting some particularly difficult onshore cases. A small group of unaccompanied minors, accepted as refugees and granted permanent Protection Visas, have recently arrived in South Australia and are eager to be reunited with their families. The special visa conditions allowing this reunification, often widely misreported in the media, are commonly referred to as 'split family' provisions. Accepted refugees who have declared their immediate relatives (spouses, minor children, or parents if you are under 18 years of age) are able to sponsor them for resettlement to Australia under this prioritised category.

The reasons why these children have endured life-threatening conditions to travel to Australia alone are far more complex than commonly portrayed. Ummulbaneen Haidari, a Bi-cultural trainee at ARA, explains, 'Most of the children who arrive unaccompanied are from single mother households. While they would have some protection if their husbands were alive, these women are instead at great risk alone, unable to travel with so many young children and with no possibility of using regular immigration avenues.'

Most refugees have no chance of coming to the attention of the Australian Department of Immigration without a sponsor already in Australia. There is no longer a physical Australian Immigration presence in Pakistan. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Sub-Office in Quetta



Ummulbaneen Haidari from Afghanistan works at ARA as a Bi-Cultural Trainee.

has been closed for much of this year following the kidnapping of their Head of Office, John Solecki, in February. As a result, operations have been severely limited and resettlement even through the United Nations has become inaccessible.

Working in conjunction with Families SA, a taskforce was established by ARA Migration Services in May to assist the boys with their families' applications. With limited English and no financial resources, the young men are unable to pay for assistance and increasing arrivals are likely to mean that the service will quickly become unsustainable. With community support and donations, it is hoped that programs such as this one can continue.

For Ghulam, the process will be ongoing. If his mother's application is successful, it is nevertheless likely to be several months before she will arrive in Australia. In the meantime, he is hopeful that with the assistance he has received, there is a chance for his family to be reunited.

ARA gratefully acknowledges the support of its Corporate Partners and supporters. Together we can make a real difference to the lives of many.



Supporting tomorrow's Australians today!

The Director's View

ARA, like many not-for-profit organisations operates with limited working capital. A significant part of ARA's services are funded through grants or contracts. Any additional services that ARA provides that are needed by refugees and migrants are only possible through donations from members, supporters and the general public.



Since 1975 ARA has enjoyed continuous support from volunteers and donors, both individuals and businesses. In 2009, the work goes on, and so does the need for this support.

In the current environment, even a not-for-profit organisation must seek better ways to operate. In the past few months, ARA has been undergoing some significant changes. I hope you will notice further positive changes as we embark on a new journey. I can assure you that the standard of service and dedication to clients for which ARA is known remains central to our work.

To move forward ARA needs your continued support. The current appeal, supported by Lieutenant Governor of SA, Mr Hieu Van Le (being a refugee from Vietnam long ago) is a key part of our future. I hope you will be able to make a contribution.

You can also support the continuing work by attending ARA events and encouraging others to join you.

David Linn
Director



Sandra Dzafic

Casework

Sandra Dzafic manages the Casework area at ARA. The following gives a brief overview of the demands in this area.

Help Desk – Staff and trained volunteers provide general assistance, information and referrals to people who walk into the office. Assistance can include basic advice, information and referrals to specialist services as well as providing material and financial help, budget advice, help to fill out forms and a sympathetic ear! The service operates Monday to Friday from 9.30am to 4.30pm. Clients are required to provide a travel document.

Casework – ARA has a range of programs that assist/or support people from refugee backgrounds regardless of visa subclass.

- SGP Casework– involves assessment, planning, referral, advocacy and follow up. It is available to qualified permanent visa holders who have been in Australia less than 5 years.
- Complex Case Support – is intensive support that includes tailored case management and assistance to eligible clients who are in particularly difficult situations.
- Family Support Program – provides support and assistance to refugee families with children through individual casework regardless of the visa subclass and the date of arrival to Australia

Accommodation support – provides education and information sessions on housing, renting, house maintenance and assistance with application forms. This service is accessible through the Settlement Grant Program and is available for the clients who have been in Australia less than 5 years.

Refugee Travel Assistance – ARA has been working closely with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) to provide travel loans to approved proposers. In general, IOM provides up to 70% of the total amount. ARA provides information to proposers and assists with applications for the loans.



From left: John May (DFEEST), Trainers - Doug Gordon, David Carpenter, Hafez Zamani, (ARA Employment Services) Martin Threadgold (DFEEST)

Training for the future

ARA Employment was very proud of the clients who successfully completed the first round of the Western Futures funded Metal and Fabrication Training for this year. The Executive Officer of Western Futures, Martin Threadgold and the SA Works Regional Coordinator, John May attended the celebrations. All together there were 13 clients who celebrated the completion of the 9 weeks of training and received a certificate for their involvement. Reports from the trainers were especially pleasing for this group who have proven to be punctual, enthusiastic and at this point possibly the most work ready that they have had come through the training so far.

Family Support Program



Craig Heidenreich

The other day I visited a Sudanese woman (a widow with 5 children) because I had heard she was having trouble with her Landlord, and had no hot water.

Her English was low, so with the help of a bi-lingual worker we found out that for most of the past 7 months she had been without hot water, and when she or neighbors complained the Landlord just abused her. Needless to say she was feeling disempowered.

This woman had taken to waking at 5am each morning to boil enough water on her stove to bathe her 5 children, and wanted to find a new house.

That day we were fortunate! The answer was easy. A couple of minutes of investigating showed that the pilot light had blown out on her Hot Water service – within a few minutes the hot water was working, and she had her first lesson in lighting the pilot light (in case it blew out again.) The look on her face was priceless when she realised that with this little bit of knowledge she had control of a problem that had caused her no end of work and stress. Not to mention that she was free of relying on her capricious Landlord.

There are many women like her struggling all over the city with simple household problems. ARA has a visiting program through which we link up locals with newly arrived families. Please consider joining us in making life that bit more bearable for these newcomers?

Craig Heidenreich

Coordinator – Family Support Program
Manager, Community Development

The Family Support program is partially funded by DIAC through the SGP grant

Computer refurbishers

ARA continues to refurbish and distribute computers. A recent high point was an extremely generous donation of computers by the Smart State PC Donation Program, an initiative of the Premier and Cabinet. These modern computers had freshly installed Windows XP and Office software. Thank you very much indeed to all who made this Program possible.

Youth, Family and Community Awareness

Changes have recently occurred in the Settlement area with three new Managers being appointed to look after, Community Development (Craig Heidenreich), Casework (Sandra Dzafic) and Youth Family & Community Awareness.

The latter is managed by Natalie Matulick. Natalie and her team are responsible for the delivery of the following programs:

Homework Clubs



Homework support for high school students from refugee background. Students come to one of 5 Homework Clubs after school (Hillcrest – Mon, Woodville – Tues and Wed, Salisbury – Tues or Findon – Thurs) for individual tutoring with a volunteer tutor - in a supportive group environment.

Job-Ready Set Go

A program for young people aged 15 – 25 years, from refugee background who are currently studying and looking for part time work. The program runs over eight sessions and includes resume writing, interview skills, application forms and tax information.

Be Strong Be Safe

A series of workshops for young people about safety, well-being and making well informed decisions. The workshops are interactive, culturally appropriate and youth-friendly.

Parents in Education

A program that works with primary schools to engage parents with their school community. Currently supporting Flinders Park, Ingle Farm and St Brigid's Primary Schools.

Parents at Play / ARA Mum's Groups

Various parent support groups incorporating the importance of play, the Incredible Years program and parents supporting parents. Helping parents to help their children to be healthy and happy.

Men's Sessions

A range of sessions involving men from refugee background to come together to learn, share, talk and just generally support each other.

Workshops – Community Awareness Training.

ARA runs a range of Cultural Competency, Refugee Awareness, Cultural Immersion workshops. These can be run at ARA or at your venue and may be tailored to suit your agency or school needs.

Funding bodies include the Department of Immigration's Settlement Grant's Program, the Office for Youth and Community Benefits SA.

Thank You!

The support shown to ARA from members, friends and supporters never fails to delight all involved. Without this generosity and thoughtfulness ARA would not be able to achieve all it does. In this issue we would like to extend grateful thanks to following groups and individuals:

- **Mrs Pat Mackay** has been busily knitting Teddy Bears which have generously been donated to ARA
- **Ashley Kellett** for the donation of goods from the estate of the late Terrence Kellett
- **Marilyn Leitch** for the donation of special children's clothing
- **Mitcham Girls High School** for the donation of stationery
- **Inclusive Directions – Estha Edwards** for the donation of Christmas Hampers
- **Blackwell Funerals – Duncan Ferguson** for the donation of toys for Christmas gifts
- **Anna Ranaldo** for the donation of Christmas gifts
- **Pramila Bilimoria** for the coordination and delivery of over 120 'Shoe Boxes of Love' that were distributed prior to Christmas.

*Pramila Bilimoria with ARA staff
Dusko Cuckovic and Sandra Dzafic >*



- **United Way South Australia** for their corporate support with Christmas Gifts for ARA clients
Karen Kretschmer (above) in a sea of gifts
- **Janet Leske – Advertiser/ Sunday Mail** for the donation of toys
- **Bunnings Mile End** – donation to support Furniture Donation Centre
- **Sharon Bailey – Adelaide Bank** for their financial donation from the Christmas Welfare Program 2008

- **Carol Mundy and John Kemp** from Des's Mini Bus who arranged for the delivery of a Mini Bus full of Christmas gifts from United Way at Elizabeth to ARA at Underdale
John Kemp from Des's Mini Bus unloading gifts >



The Quaker Shop

On 1 July 1968, the Quaker Shop opened its doors to raise money for 'the relief of civilian war victims in Vietnam.' Quakers working in Vietnam wrote letters to Australian friends asking for money to provide aid to crisis areas created by the Vietnam War.

Since its inception they have raised many thousands of dollars to help those in need. In fact, over the past decade the shop has raised over \$500,000. They do this through the generosity of the community who donate goods that are sold through the Quaker Shop.

ARA is fortunate to be a recipient of some of these funds and we gratefully acknowledge this support over the years.

The Quaker Shop is at 51 Kensington Road Norwood with a Charity Bin located in Wattle Park Shopping Centre on Kensington Road. Good quality clothing items are always appreciated.



*Volunteer Staff at the Quaker Shop
L-R Christine James, Rona Watkins, Enid Ulbrich, Peter Farrow,
Janet Fensome & Rowena Vnuk.*

Editors Note:

ARA welcomes contributions to REFUGEE. Please contact Erika Marshall for details. Erika.Marshall@ausref.net Direct: 8161 3322

Please note the views represented in REFUGEE are not necessarily those of ARA.

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Are you looking for staff?

ARA has a large client base experienced in industrial, production, commercial and manufacturing environments.

Please contact the Manager, Employment Services **Hafez Zamani** on 8354 2951
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Supporting tomorrow's Australians today!