



## Bridge for Asylum Seekers Foundation

Uniting Care NSW ACT

**Bridge for Asylum Seekers Foundation (BASF)** was officially launched on 11 June 2003 by a broad coalition of churches, human rights groups, union members, political representatives and individuals. The Foundation raises money, mainly through donations, to financially assist asylum seekers on Bridging Visa Es (BVEs) and those who were released under the former Habeas Corpus orders who have no adequate means of survival.

Financial assistance is needed because asylum seekers on BVEs and the former Habeas Corpus orders are not permitted to work or to access government benefits of any kind including Medicare, Centrelink benefits, study rights or to work as volunteers, or even free access to public schools for their children.

These asylum seekers live in absolute poverty. At times there may be no food in the house and children may need urgent medical attention and clothing. There is nothing to do and nowhere to go. They live close to despair, relying entirely on the goodwill of friends and the community. Those families, friends and community networks who provide a place to live and financial assistance are often themselves struggling to survive financially. Asylum seekers dare not work because they will be returned to detention and their employers may be fined. Those who are stateless or cannot return to their country face the unthinkable alternatives of indefinite detention or freedom without the means of survival.

Every month, BASF provides supplementary living assistance to approximately 70 individuals to enable them to survive. Many of these are children. All recipients of funds have a genuine fear of persecution if they return to their home country and many come from countries which grossly and flagrantly abuse human rights including China, Iran, Afghanistan, Burma, Aceh, Middle Eastern countries, North African countries, and the Indian sub-continent. Some live with guarantors, friends or in housing provided by church or charity groups.

We are still helping asylum seekers who came to us in 2005. It is always heartening when we receive news of people being accepted and who now can start a new life for themselves.

In order to stretch our resources recipients are only being paid \$90 for an individual, and \$70 per person in a family group per week, depending on their circumstances. In some cases, a small one-off lump sum is given to an individual, such as for a medical emergency.

Bridge for Asylum Seekers Foundation is a Board Committee of UnitingCare NSW ACT and therefore donations to the Foundation of \$2.00 and over are tax deductible.

Donations may be made by:

. Cheque or money order to BASF's address at PO Box 829, Five Dock NSW 2046;

. Visa or Mastercard; or

Direct debit authority (the form is found on BASF's website) or from the Honorary Chairperson at PO Box 829, Five Dock NSW 2046. *The direct debit authority must be sent to the postal address of the Foundation for processing to ensure that a statement of donations is provided to the donor at the end of each financial year*

Email: [asylumseekersfoundation@bigpond.com](mailto:asylumseekersfoundation@bigpond.com)..

Website: [www.asylumseekersfoundation.com](http://www.asylumseekersfoundation.com)

Postal address : PO Box 829, FIVE DOCK NSW 2046

Phone : 0418 261 160

ABN 89 822 539 923