

2016 annual report



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Staff

Stephanie Beckwith, Caseworker

Maeve Brown, Manager – The Arrupe Project

Susana Gale, Accountant

Angela Gallard, Caseworker

Margaret Guy, rsc, Volunteer Coordinator –
Parramatta

Kim Mandellik, Office Manager

Janelle Massiah, Caseworker

Alex McGregor, Communications Officer until April
2016

Fr Aloysious Mowe, SJ, Country Director

Anne Porter, Volunteer Coordinator – Head Office &
Blaiket Shelter

Matthew Potts, Community Development and
Schools Engagement Officer

Sarah Puls, sgs, Casework Team Leader

Kim Smith, Caseworker

Oliver White, Assistant Director until December 2016

Board Members

Elizabeth Biok, joined December 2016

Fr Phil Crotty, SJ until June 2016

Sr Annette Cunliffe Chair

Graham Fear

Dr Eve Lester

Fr Gregory Jacobs, joined August 2016

Kerry Murphy, until July 2016





The year 2016 was, for JRS Australia, one of challenge and change as well as of the joy of some landmark achievements in our mission for refugees and asylum seekers.

Notable achievements included the opening and blessing of a second community centre in Grose Street, Parramatta. The success of the Arrupe project meant that extra space was needed to cater for the range of services and the number of clients. Leasing another free-standing house, near Arrupe Place, allowed JRS to maintain the homely welcoming feel of the sites.

Another feature of 2016 has been the close collaboration with other NSW refugee agencies in lobbying on behalf of refugees. One outcome has been NSW Government agreement to waive fees for education and training for asylum seekers. Another collaborative project was a proposal to several Foundations for funding to set up a Humanitarian Hub to coordinate the many volunteers who wish to assist in the work of the four agencies: JRS, Asylum Seekers Centre, House of Welcome and RACS.

There were changes in Board membership in 2016, with Fr Phil Crotty SJ replaced by Fr Greg Jacobs SJ and Mr Kerry Murphy replaced by Ms Elizabeth Biok. Both outgoing and incoming Board Members are to be thanked for their great generosity and the wisdom they have brought to the mission of JRS Australia.

We learnt that our Director, Fr Aloysius Mowe SJ was to move to JRS International as International Director of Advocacy in early 2017 and that we would need to seek a new Country Director. I wish to pay a tribute to Fr Aloysius for his visionary, gifted and

Another feature of 2016 has been the close collaboration with other NSW refugee agencies in lobbying on behalf of refugees.

committed contribution to this ministry for those on the margins of our society. We welcome Ms Carolina Gottardo to take on the role as Country Director. She comes with excellent experience for this ministry. Mr Oliver White, Assistant Director, also resigned late in the year. We would like to thank him for his contribution to JRS and all our advocacy efforts. Other long-standing staff members continue their generous and skilful contributions into 2017, together with a large number of volunteers, both lay and Religious.

The City of Parramatta declared itself a "Refugee Welcome Zone" in 2016 and has continued its support and generous contribution, financially and in kind, to the work of JRS. We were also delighted that the new Bishop of Parramatta, Bishop Vincent Long Nguyen OFMConv, himself a refugee, has shown his support for our work. Of course, I cannot conclude without thanking those who share in the work of JRS through their provision of financial or in kind contributions, volunteering, or ministering personally or through their support of the people and the ministry.

Annette Cunliffe rsc
Chair of the Board JRS Australia

4 director's address



2016 has been a year of global shake ups where the situation of forcibly displaced women, men and children around the world began to reach a tipping point. The scale of the crisis is alarming, with 65.3 million people displaced worldwide and a trend towards the erosion of the rights of those seeking sanctuary.

At the same time, there are opportunities with global efforts to protect the rights of refugees and migrants through the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants in September 2016 and the new architecture on asylum and migration that is currently being developed. However, this opportunity comes with the threat of watered-down rights and protections in a world where the respect and dignity of those most vulnerable are not being taken seriously.

Australia continues setting global trends with a world-renowned settlement programme helping refugees to successfully integrate in the country. This is contrasted by some of the most punitive asylum policies in the world that gravely discriminate against the rights of those arriving directly, particularly those arriving by boat, to Australia to seek protection. Deterrence policies such as “Turning Back the Boats,” mandatory and indefinite detention, off-shore processing, delays in refugee status determination and temporary protection visas for refugees, ignore international law and the rights and humanity of some of the most vulnerable members of our society.

JRS Australia continues providing accompaniment, services and advocacy to stand side-by-side with the women, men, and children that need it the most.”

All of these factors make the work of an organisation like JRS critically important. As a globally connected organisation focusing on the rights of those refugees and asylum seekers who are the most excluded, discriminated against and disempowered, JRS Australia continues providing accompaniment, services

and advocacy to stand side-by-side with the women, men and children that need it the most.

JRS's combination of front line services, holistic support based on individual need and accompaniment and hospitality, coupled with targeted advocacy to change the system and achieve long term change, is the heart of our organisation and its unique ethos.

I feel honoured to have joined JRS Australia during these crucial times and would like to commend the efforts and achievements of our fantastic team, amazing volunteers, effective board and the commitment from all our partners, donors and supporters.

I will strive to maintain the ethos of an organisation that feels welcoming and homely from the first time you step into it. I will utilise the knowledge and expertise I have garnered through my twenty years of experience working on human rights issues, as well as asylum and migration policies in different countries, so that we can continue making a difference to the lives of refugees and people seeking asylum.

Carolina Gottardo
Director, JRS Australia

a year of achievement



5

Over 3500 people seeking asylum* served by JRS Australia this year

159 people given financial assistance. JRS helped 142 of these to move onto more financially sustainable support and/or employment

53 people assisted with accommodation support

86 legal clinics run at Arrupe Place. 2931 people have attended these sessions

259 English classes were held

87 foodbank sessions held. 298 individuals are on the foodbank list, representing 769 family members

86 amazing volunteers donated their time in 2016 to ensure our work could continue

Every minute over 24 people are displaced. Only 0.0002%... of these people are resettled in Australia per year.

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

Year at a glance



January 2016

The JRS Arrupe Place Community Centre opens at 15 Grose St, our second location in Parramatta



June 2016

JRS receives a City of Parramatta Council Grant to focus on English and Employment.



January 2016

NSW Opal Transport Concessions now available for people seeking asylum, allowing people to travel for \$2.50/day



August 2016

Women seeking asylum attend JRS health and pamper day



February 2016

Arrupe Place wins a Western Sydney ZEST Award for Exceptional Community Partnership Project.



September 2016

Welcome Walk and Aboriginal Cultural Workshop held at Parramatta Lake with local Indigenous elders and people seeking asylum



March 2016

JRS and OPSM's charity partner, OneSight, host an Eye Clinic for people seeking asylum. 81 people were able to have free eye exams and 77 people were provided with free prescription glasses.



October 2016

JRS, the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta, and RCOA advocate for the City of Parramatta to become a Refugee Welcome Zone

6 our works



An update from the Arrupe Project

This has been a difficult year for the people we serve and while 2016 was a year of stronger partnerships and successful advocacy initiatives, it has also been a challenging year for those trying to seek protection in Australia and those working to support them. Tougher and tighter deadlines for protection applications have strained our already overstretched legal clinics, additional hurdles to government funded financial assistance have put individuals and families at greater risk of homelessness and destitution, and the reality of a life in limbo and potentially never seeing family again has pushed people to the edge. While these are certainly trying times, we remain even more resolved to accompany, serve and defend rights of people seeking asylum.

Arrupe Place Community Centre

In early 2016, we opened the doors of our second site in Parramatta, the Arrupe Place Community Centre. The Community Centre, located just 2 streets away from the casework and legal services provided at Arrupe Place, is now home to our Foodbank, English classes, and a variety of new social support programs including, an Arts and Wellbeing Program, Men's Group, and Cooking Together. While the Community Centre is a buzz with activities and things to do, it's also a place of welcome and hospitality, where people can feel free to come for a cup of tea and friendly listening ear.

Casework Support and Emergency Relief

The need for casework support, financial and material assistance, and temporary accommodation continues to grow. We are particularly concerned for those who have been through the primary interview and Administrative Appeals Tribunal or Immigration Assessment Authority stage and have been found not to be refugees and not owed protection in Australia. While people may still be able to appeal through the courts, they may have to survive for years without work rights, without access to government financial assistance, and without access to Medicare. Some people will have to make the difficult decision to return home, but for Hazaras from Afghanistan, Tamils from Sri Lanka, and for stateless Rohingyas and Kurds, the decision may put them at-risk of further persecution and for some, may be a matter of life or death.

Engagement with Schools and the Community

In 2016, JRS reached over 3900 students and community members through 28 talks, forums, and other awareness raising activities. JRS has also





worked with St Ignatius, Riverview to put together an e-book that will be used in Yr 10 Religious Education Curriculum. JRS has worked with Jesuit schools, Catholic schools in the Parramatta and Sydney Dioceses, the Sydney Alliance, and the Refugee Council of Australia to raise awareness of the issues faced by people seeking asylum, to tell the stories of the lived experiences of people from refugee backgrounds, and to discuss how people can practically help and support the people served by JRS.

Advocacy and policy

We are witnessing the largest forced displacement of people since WWII, and yet, it's not the voices of those being forced to flee their homes we hear, but the voices of the powerful. At JRS we believe this needs to change. We have been asked to "speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy." (Proverbs 31:8-9)

In 2016, JRS continued to advocate for the end to the Australian government's policy of offshore processing, as well as the use of boat turn backs, mandatory detention, and the detention of children. JRS remains greatly concerned for those stuck in transit, particularly in Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia. We continue to advocate for better regional protection spaces in the Asia Pacific region.

JRS has participated in high level lobbying efforts and in a wide range

of networking, information sharing and advocacy activities with both government and non-government organisations. This has included providing feedback to the Department of Immigration on the humanitarian resettlement programme and the treatment of detained asylum seekers, as well as providing information to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants on the issues faced by people seeking asylum living in the Australian community. We also continue to actively pursue change in the region and have participated in advocacy activities with the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN) and other key networks and forums.

In 2016, JRS Australia conducted talks and seminars on a range of topics at schools, parishes, universities and with community groups. In addition to our quarterly newsletter, LINK, our now monthly e-newsletter and our various social media platforms, we contributed to regional and international publications, religious publications, as well as writing articles for mainstream periodicals and academic journals.

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8 real life stories



Kanthi's Story

Kanthi* is a Tamil woman, who arrived by boat from Sri Lanka, and is seeking asylum in Australia along with her infant son and her husband.

As is the case with many of the people we serve, the circumstances of Kanthi and her family are quite complex and for a period of time the family did not have the right to work

Kanthi is constantly reminded of the trauma and violence she experienced during wartime, as she still has shrapnel lodged in her head from a bomb explosion near her home. There are painful memories, but there is also daily physical pain from her injuries.

As is the case with many of the people we serve, the circumstances of Kanthi and her family are quite complex and for a period of time the family did not have the right to work and were also ineligible for financial support through government funded services.

The family survived on savings, however, their debt was growing and when they were several weeks behind in rent, they came to see JRS.

JRS assisted the family with some emergency relief payments, however, we knew that we could not provide enough to sustain Kanthi's accommodation. At risk of homelessness, a JRS caseworker advocated on behalf of Kanthi and her child for urgent government financial assistance.

During this time, Kanthi became increasingly distressed and desperate to solve her financial issues. She cried throughout meetings with her caseworker and regularly mentioned that it would be better if she was not living, however, she knew she had to keep going for her young son.

While there were significant barriers to having her financial assistance application approved, Kanthi and her child were eventually successful because of the advocacy and support of JRS and other support organisations.

JRS' efforts have provided some security for Kanthi and her child, as well as giving Kanthi someone to lean on, in the form of her JRS caseworker, however, the family are still very much at-risk. This will not change until Kanthi's husband is given the right to work and the family are recognised as refugees and granted protection.

**Name has been changed to protect her identity*

Marthe's journey to volunteering for JRS

Marthe began volunteering at JRS after losing two of the closest people in her life.

‘It was the hardest thing I’ve ever faced and I knew if I wanted to get through it, I needed to find something worthwhile to do with my time,’ Marthe said.

Marthe said that JRS’s mission really stuck a chord with her as she too had once been a stranger here. At eighteen she’d married her husband in Mauritius and a month later they were on a boat heading for Australia.

‘I thought it was going to be the adventure of a lifetime, and it was,’ said Marthe. ‘But it was also incredibly hard. We didn’t have much and we’d left behind our support network of family and friends.’

Marthe had only been in Australia for a short time when she came down with a serious case of measles. It was then she met volunteers from the Salvation Army. They visited her, brought her food and cared for her while her husband looked for work.

‘It was the first time since arriving that I felt like I could really begin a new life here. It was the sort of kindness you can never forget,’ she said. ‘Volunteering at JRS is an opportunity for me to pass that kindness on to those in our community who need it most.’

Working in our food bank programme means Marthe gets to meet many of the amazing people we serve, all of them seeking asylum in Australia.

‘I see how difficult it is for them to accept our help. They are extremely grateful and need JRS’s assistance desperately, but at the same time what they’d really like is the opportunity to work, the chance to contribute meaningfully to our community,’ she said.

Marthe acknowledges that every person who comes to the Arrupe Place Community Centre is facing dire circumstances, but they take on each day with a bravery, strength and dignity that she so admires. She says it forces her to look at the broader picture and appreciate just how lucky she is.

‘Volunteering at JRS has helped me cope with my grief and everything else that was going on in my life,’ said Marthe. ‘The incredible staff and volunteers have become life-long friends. In them I’ve found the support I need to begin this new chapter of my journey. In the clients of JRS I’ve found the inspiration to keep moving forward.’

‘While it might be a cliché, I’ve discovered at JRS that what they say about volunteering is one hundred per cent true—you do always get so much more than you give.’



10 acknowledgements

Firstly, JRS Australia would like to thank our amazing staff and our passionate and committed team of volunteers. Volunteers are essential to the reception and hospitality at Arrupe Place, the English classes, Foodbank, and social support provided at the Community Centre, as well as to the coordination of the house meetings and maintenance of the Blaiket Shelter.

Most importantly, the staff and the volunteers are the embodiment of the JRS value of accompaniment, serving as the face and the heart of JRS. The welcome and warmth that is noted by so many of those that come through our doors is due, in large part, to our dedicated team. We couldn't do it without you.

We would also like to say a big thank you to our donors and supporters. We can't describe how much we appreciate your generosity. JRS Australia is also extremely grateful for the generosity of our institutional donors and community partners. As we do not receive regular government funding and provide all our services to the people we serve free of charge, it is essential we continue to receive the support from all of you, so we can continue to deliver our mission to accompany, serve and advocate for people seeking asylum.

JRS Australia is honoured that all our wonderful supporters value the people we serve as much as we do. Your meaningful contributions allow us to continue providing critical services and assistance to those most vulnerable in our community.

We would like to thank the following organisations for your incredible support :

- The Australian Province of the Society of Jesus
- The Scanlon Foundation
- The Sisters of Mercy Parramatta
- The Sisters of Charity Foundation
- The City of Parramatta Community Capacity Building Grants
- The Parramatta Club GRANTS - Granville Diggers Club
- The Magnolia Foundation
- The Rodney Judith O'Neil Foundation
- Newman College
- Xavier Social Justice Network

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

- The Sisters of Mercy Parramatta
- The Sisters of Charity
- The Sisters of the Good Samaritan
- RACS
- Australian Red Cross
- Baker & McKenzie
- Training for Change
- Information & Cultural Exchange
- Refugee Council of Australia
- The City of Parramatta Council
- OPSM - OneSight
- Good Shepherd Microfinance
- The Islamic Council of Victoria
- Mums 4 Refugees
- House of Welcome

- The Asylum Seekers Centre
- Parramatta Eels Educate
- Our Lady of Mercy College
- STARTTS
- The Reginald Murphy Centre
- Sydney Alliance
- Simple Love
- St Ignatius Riverview
- Community Migrant Resource Centre
- NSW Refugee Health
- Bright Employment
- Welcome Dinner Project
- The Nappy Collective
- Catholic Parish of St Canice's
- St Aloysius College
- The Parish of Our Lady of the Way

Additionally we would like to thank the following foundations for their contribution to our work with the NSW Humanitarian Hub in partnership with House of Welcome (part of St Francis Social Services), Asylum Seekers Centre and Refugee Advice and Casework Service (RACS):

- The Caledonian Foundation
- The Myer Foundation
- The Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation

We are truly blessed to have such a magnificent group of people helping us to give hope and support to people seeking asylum, one of the most marginalised groups in Australia.



Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year ended 31 December 2016

Revenue		1,379,833
General donations	104,621	
Arrupe project donations and other funding	896,331	
Grants	353,750	
Other income	25,131	
Expenditure		1,134,470
Administrative employee expenses	128,750	
Administrative expenses	103,622	
Advocacy and communications employee expenses	61,439	
Advocacy and communications expenses	19,173	
Advocacy - travel expenses	17,549	
Depreciation expenses	14,602	
Fundraising expenses	3,452	
Detention project expenses	4,734	
Arrupe project expenses	725,016	
Stipends to religious congregations	56,133	
Results from operating activities		245,363
Financial income		11,043
Financial costs		-1,812
Net interest income		9,231
Surplus for the period		254,594
Other comprehensive income		-
Total comprehensive income		254,594



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Please return to:

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 Email info@jrs.org.au | www.jrs.org.au



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OR I enclose a cheque/money order

payable to Jesuit Refugee Service for \$ _____

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

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