

NORTHERN BEACHES REFUGEE SANCTUARY LTD

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Welcome to the NBRs Summer 2018 Newsletter

We have had a busy and successful last six months. We have helped 250 refugees travel to Australia. We have now helped 5950 refugees come to Australia since we started. We are still seeing most of the families coming from Syria.

We were really busy between July and October, but the last two months has seen a slow down in requests for help. I expect it will pick up again in the New Year.

One of the families we assisted was eight orphans who were coming to live with their uncle and aunt. They will now be part of a family of ten children. The sponsors were delighted and grateful that we could help because it had taken three years to get the visa. Part of the approval process is a medical. There were some issues that needed to be resolved and then a DNA test was required. The sponsor had visited the children to take them for the interviews as well as to a safer city. He had run out of money and couldn't pay for the airfare. The children have arrived to great celebrations. The sponsors were so grateful that they were able to get a visa for them. The children will live in a safe country. They will go to school and get an education that wouldn't have been possible in their homeland.

We helped a young woman from Burundi who has been paying off her loan from her Centrelink benefit. The payments stopped as she had started work. She called to ask how to restart the payments.

I asked her how life was in Australia. She replied that everyone was so busy. Working all the time! She is working in aged care and enjoying it. She is paying off us as well as the bond for the flat she is in. Money is tight, but she is so pleased to be independent. She loves the freedom available here.

She said that she wanted to repay the money as quickly as possible as she knows the money is used for the next family. She also said that many of her work mates complain about paying tax but she said she is happy to pay tax as when she arrived the Government gave her money (Centrelink) for food and accommodation and she is happy to pay tax to help others who need help. Not a common view!

It was wonderful to hear the laughter and joy in her voice. She will be such an asset to Australia.

When we pay for an airfare, we expect the family to get the cheapest trip. This may include an extra stopover as the saving can be \$400 per person. We don't want to burden a family with additional expense when they arrive and we also want our funds to be used as efficiently as possible. However sometimes we need to get the direct flight, because some of the family members have medical issues.

We recently helped a family of 12. They were grandparents, children and grandchildren. The grandparents were old and had some health issues. They also needed to fly immediately. They booked the flights and we paid the fares which were nearly \$18,000. They can't return to Syria but for the elderly it must be such a culture shock to leave Lebanon and the next day be in Sydney. They were warmly welcomed by their Australian family. The sponsor couldn't raise the funds anywhere, so they were incredibly appreciative of our help.

There are some good signs that refugees on both Nauru and Manus Island will find resolution. Most of the children have already come to Australia for medical treatment and America is continuing to grant permanent visas. New Zealand is still offering to take 150 per year. Perhaps with the new balance of power in Parliament we might see Australia agree to the New Zealand offer.

Hopefully we will see the closing of these two detention camps soon. I understand that Australians are concerned by the arrival of refugees by boat, but keeping families in detention for years isn't justified.

We expect the allocation for refugee visas will remain 18,750 next year. Hopefully the discussion about reducing the total number of permanent resident visas will continue to exclude the refugee intake. The Labor party and Greens are both talking of increasing the number of refugee visas. We have seen a large increase in the number of asylum seekers applying for protection in Australia. They arrive mostly on tourist visas and then apply for protection. For each onshore visa granted we see a reduction in the off-shore allocation.

We will be looking for donations this year if you are able to help.

All donations are tax deductible.

The easiest way is to deposit money into our bank account. Please include your name as a reference. If you let me know by email that you have made a deposit I can email you the receipt.

Our bank account details are

Commonwealth Bank
The Northern Beaches Refugee Sanctuary Ltd
BSB 062197
Account 10993154

If you prefer to post a cheque can you make it payable to
The Northern Beaches Refugee Sanctuary Ltd
32 Aitken Ave
Queenscliff
NSW 2096

I would like to thank all those who have supported us in the past, as without your donations we couldn't have helped so many refugees.

Wishing you a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

David Addington
17/12/18