

NORTHERN BEACHES REFUGEE SANCTUARY LTD

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Welcome to the NBRs Winter 2019 Newsletter

We have had a busy and successful last six months. We will have helped 395 refugees travel to Australia by 30th June. This will be our busiest year ever. We have now helped 6345 refugees come to Australia since we started. We are still seeing most of the families coming from Syria and Iraq.

We have a waiting list for new families currently about 4-5 weeks. We have over 50 people on the list. The airfare from Beirut is about \$1,500.

It can be difficult as many of the families need to travel urgently. We recently had an 18-year woman who only had four days before the visa expired. She was in Syria and needed to get to Beirut to get a flight. We were able to prioritize the application due to the short expiry date of the visa. She arrived in time and is living with family in Melbourne.

The situation in Beirut is difficult. There are between 1 and 1.5 million Syrian refugees there. The Lebanese population is only 6 million. Rents are high and medical treatment is expensive. One of the reasons the sponsors can't pay the airfares is because they have been supporting the refugees while waiting for the visa to be granted. The sponsors are often people that we helped with their airfares when they came to Australia.

We recently had a family in urgent need of tickets as their lease was up and they didn't have money to renew. The landlord suggested that the wife could pay with sex. We put them to the top of the list and were able to get them to Sydney before she was exploited. Refugees are often exploited. In Australia we often hear about people smugglers, but they are only a part of the exploitation. Access to food, education, housing work and medical is always difficult.

We helped a family of three recently. They were orphans who had been sponsored by an uncle. The application was difficult and slow. There were many problems to overcome before the visa was granted. It took almost six years. Just before the visa was finally granted one of the applicants was hit by a car and very badly injured. She wasn't granted a visa. It is so sad. The life of a refugee is dangerous.

We work closely with a number of community groups. I asked a senior member of the Assyrian community to let our donors know how much their support is appreciated. This is what he wrote

" If I might say that words won't never express my gratitude, thankfulness and appreciation to the Northern Beaches Refugee sanctuary as one of the charitable organizations for its affordable loans which it is providing them to our Syrian and Iraqi families to secure their airfares. Five years ago, I lived as a Syrian refugee in Lebanon and I know what it means having no rights for work and medical support for refugees in transit countries and it seems to be a merciless punishment especially if you have a family and children. Currently many of our refugee families have got their visas and they are still awaiting their airfares funding applications to get

approved on the waiting list that might take up to five weeks leaving them continuing their miserable life struggling with the hard and tough conditions in Lebanon and Jordan. I've referred tens of families to the NBRS in my capacity as a community leader at the Assyrian Australian Social Development Club Inc. Many of those families have been lent and they will never forget what has been done to them and others are still awaiting. So, on behalf of all these families I would like to sincere thank your organization for its humanitarian aid and lofty mission. May your budget will be soon expanded more to shorten the lengthy of the waiting lists."

God bless you,
Kifarkis Nissan

We are looking to raise funds so that we can reduce the waiting list and assist more people in the next year. We helped approximately 10% of all those granted Special Humanitarian Visas in the last two years. The demand is growing, and we are struggling to help. We have lost some of our donors over the last few years when we weren't looking for donations. If you can help, we would be very grateful and so will those families who are waiting. If you can share this newsletter to friends and family that would be very helpful.

We are a practical and very efficient charity. We are all volunteers and our only expenses are transaction fees (less than 1% of our expenditure) as well as bad debts. Our bad debts are less than 2 percent of loans but have been slightly higher this year due to a large loan failure. We would expect bad debts would fall to below 2% next year. The airfares are repaid and then the money is reused. A donation will help for many years.

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 tax 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 so generously in the past, without your donations we couldn't have helped so many refugees.

David Addington
01/06/19