

NORTHERN BEACHES REFUGEE SANCTUARY LTD

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Welcome to the NBRs Winter 2022 Newsletter

We have had a busy six months with 282 airfares. They have arrived from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Congo. The largest numbers were from Syria and Iraq.

The Northern Beaches Refugee Sanctuary started assisting with airfare loans in 2003. In that time we have assisted 7633 people from 47 different countries. We have lent over \$10,000,000. We are all volunteers, our only expenses are bad debit, Centrelink transaction fees and registration fees. They amount to less than 2.5% of our total loans. The loan write offs are normally due to illness or death. Almost no one stops paying deliberately. Our total expenses work out as about \$35 per person that we help. A wonderful benefit for such a small amount.

We are looking for donations, which are tax deductible. We haven't looked for donations in the last two years. We only have enough money for the next month of airfares. We will then only be able to help from the repayments of loans. We have spent over \$920,000 on airfares in the last six months and received \$175,000 in repayments. The repayments will increase as the new loans start to repay.

We would be very grateful for donations and if you have friends or family who are sympathetic to refugees could you pass on our newsletter. If you have any connection with an organization who makes donations we would be delighted if you could give us their details. We have a long and successful track record for helping refugees.

We are still seeing strong demand for assistance. It costs about \$1600 per airfare so a family of 6 will be almost \$10,000. Australia's refugee program was cut during the COVID outbreak. The numbers were reduced from 18,750 to 13,750. The Labor party's policy was an increase in allocation to 27,000 by 2025. This will significantly increase the demand for our assistance.

Sadly, the numbers of refugees in the world continues to rise. The war in Ukraine has caused a large refugee movement in Europe.

We have helped an increasing number of families from Afghanistan. They are the family members of interpreters who worked with the Australia forces in Afghanistan. It is difficult to arrange the travel as the family need to get an exit permit from Pakistan. It depends on how long the family have been in Pakistan and if they are there legally. The exit permit is supposed to be free, but it can take a long time to be issued. We have some families who have waited up to six months. You can pay for an expediated visa but it is expensive. One of the families we assisted had to pay over USD \$10,000 but received the visa in a few days. We can't assist with the expediated visa just the airfares. We are delighted to be helping these families who have put their lives at serious risk by working with the Australia Forces. The pictures of the fall of Kabul were terrifying. The sponsors are really worried about the safety of their extended family members. We expect that we will see more families asking for help as the visas continue to be issued.

I recently had a call from a young Sudanese man we helped in 2011. He arrived with very limited English and a desire for education. He repaid the loan and we lost contact. He called to say that he has an accounting degree and is working towards becoming a Chartered Accountant. The pathway was more difficult for him as he was 19 when he arrived, so too old for school. He also needed to improve his English and catch up on general Education. He sounded so happy. He was asking how he could sponsor other family members. He volunteers with a community group. It is always lovely to hear how well people are doing.

We helped a family come eight years ago. Sadly the marriage broke down and the father raised the four children. He didn't have many family members here and so it was very difficult. He worked in aged care and disability. He then hurt his back. He stopped repaying the loan and tried to get his health and life working again. We told him that we would write off the loan. We kept in loose contact and assisted him with some letters of support for immigration matters. He recently called to say that his back is better and he is working again. He wanted to start repaying the outstanding loan. He knew that the loan had been written off but he wanted to repay to help the next family.

It is always a joy listening to the optimism of the new arrivals and the happiness of the family who have sponsored them. The sponsor of one of the recent families hadn't seen her family in more than 8 years. They arrived from Beirut where life is really difficult. 75% of the population live in poverty and 20% of the population are refugees. She was so happy that she had them with her and that they were safe. She didn't know how she was going to raise the cost of the airfare and was so happy that we were able to assist.

I expect that we will see a busy next year as the numbers of refugees increase and demand grows. I would like to thank those on the committee who give of their time to help so many. It is deeply rewarding for us all.

I would especially like to thank those who have donated money over the years. We wouldn't have been able to help many people without the generous and ongoing support of so many.

On behalf of those we assist a heartfelt thanks.

If you are able to make a donation can you transfer the money to our account.

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

Please email me your details so that I can email you a tax receipt.

Many thanks

David Addington
24/05/2022