

# NORTHERN BEACHES REFUGEE SANCTUARY LTD

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## Welcome to the NBRs Winter 2023 Newsletter

We have had a busy six months with 274 airfares paid. They have arrived from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Congo. The largest numbers were from Syria and Iraq.

The Northern Beaches Refugee Sanctuary's first family arrived in June 2003. We have now helped 8160 people from 48 different countries. It has been a wonderful 20 years filled with so many memories. We have met or talked to so many courageous people who have profoundly affected us. Stories of heartbreak and survival. I am often asked how well do people settle here? I think it is best summed up by saying a lot better than where they came from. I remember asking one lady "what is the best thing in Australia". She thought about it and then said, "not hearing gunfire at night". It makes me extremely grateful for the life I have.

We are still seeing strong demand for assistance. The cost of airfares has fallen back towards pre-covid levels. This makes flights more affordable. It also makes it easier for the families to repay the loan.

We are delighted to be assisting a lot more people from Afghanistan (75), most of whom are families of interpreters who worked with the Australian Defense Forces. They have been targeted because of their relatives working with the ADF. They have been forced to flee and most have travelled to Pakistan or India. Sadly, there isn't any safety there either. When the visas to Australia are granted, there is great relief and celebration. The sponsor in Australia will have been supporting the families. This makes it difficult to save the cost of the airfares. They may also have to pay for an exit permit. When they arrive in Australia the children will be able to get a good education. They will all have food and medical treatment. There will be challenges to overcome but their lives won't be at risk.

We recently helped one family. The son had worked with the ADF and suffered gunshot wounds. He was lucky to survive. He helped his parents and siblings escape to Afghanistan while they waited for a visa. They were not allowed to work so life was very difficult. One of the family required an operation which the sponsor paid for. He also paid for their accommodation and food. The sponsor still suffers from the injuries he sustained which has made work painful. He also has a wife and children to support. When the visa was granted, he couldn't pay for the airfare. We were able to help and the family will arrive soon. His children will meet their grandparents and uncles and aunts. They will have a chance of freedom. The girls will be able to get an education and work. They won't be constantly fearful of people trying to kill them. They are so grateful for the help, and I am so happy that we were able to help them. I am not sure if I will ever meet them as they live a long way away, but the courage and generosity of the sponsor has been an inspiration to me.

We assisted Mohamed with his parents and siblings when they were granted visas in 2015. They arrived and settled in Melbourne. Mohamed is a terrific person. He was able to help his family make a life in Australia. His wife was sad that only his family had visas and her family didn't. She missed her mother and siblings. He said "happy wife happy life". He then sponsored his wife's family. They were rejected which was difficult for them. He kept applying for his wife's mother and siblings. They were finally granted a visa and we helped again with a loan for the travel. Mohamed and his wife are so grateful they both have family here now and his children have both sides of the family to enjoy and love.

This is an email we received from one of our families that we helped. He can tell you what your donations are used for better than I can.

"Dear David,

I cannot express how grateful we are for your generous offer to help us purchase the tickets we needed. Yes, you can absolutely contact IOM and pay them \$12000 and the rest \$5000 we will manage. Your kindness and willingness to assist us have truly touched our hearts.

We understand that the amount you have contributed is significant and we are committed to repaying it back to you as soon as possible. Your support has been a tremendous help to us, and we promise to work hard to fulfill our obligations to you. Also, our family members are waiting for their Immicard which they will receive in 1 week and then the IOM will proceed to the next stage to get their exit permits from Pakistan.

Once again, thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Your assistance has made a real difference in our lives, and we will never forget your kindness."

IOM is The International Organization for migration. It assists refugees with travel arrangements.

IMMICards are the documents that refugees travel on. They are issued by the Australian Government.

They have arrived now and have already started to repay the loan.

We are looking for donations if you can help.

Donations are tax deductible and reused many times.

Our bad debts were about 0.3% of loans this year which is fantastic.

If you want to help please 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.

David Addington

06/06/2023