




MIGRATION TRENDS BRIEFING SESSION

ASYLUM SEEKERS CENTRE

DECEMBER 2025

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet today, and pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

We extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today.



Established in 1993, the Asylum Seekers Centre is the first organisation in Australia to open its doors to specifically welcome and support people seeking asylum.

We provide practical and personal support for people seeking safety in Greater Sydney, and advocate for fair and humane policies at every level.

Asylum Seekers Centre



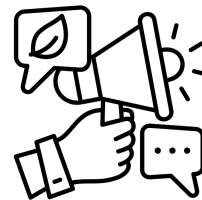
Place of welcome
and support for
people seeking
asylum in Sydney



Team of staff and a
network of
hundreds of
volunteers



Powered by grants
and donations,
limited state
government
funding



Advocate for fair
and humane
policies for refugees
and people seeking
asylum

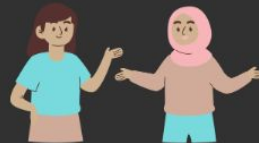
We help people seeking asylum by providing



Primary
health clinic



Employment
training



Complex casework
support



Emergency
living assistance



Family and school
support



Digital
connectivity



Childcare
support



LGBTIQIA+
support group



Transport
support



Recreational and
community activities



Medications



Advocacy for
systemic change



Community
lunches



English classes

**In 2024/25, we helped people from
90 different countries**



What is a Migrant?

WHO

A person who moves to a new country. It is voluntary choice for further opportunity and they are able to return home safely. Some people don't fit the legal definition of a refugee but could nevertheless be in danger if they went home.

WHY

Migration who moves to a new country often for a better job, education or family. Others feel they must leave because of poverty, political unrest, gang violence, natural disasters or other serious circumstances that exist there.

HOW

The process is legal, planned and costly

Apply for a visa overseas (skilled, spouse, family or student).

Be selected through a resettlement program.



What is a Refugee?

WHO

By the International definition (1951 Refugee Convention) is a person outside their country of nationality who has been forced to leave their country because of a well-founded fear of persecution, from one of these reasons: race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership of a particular social group, and is unable to return safely seeking.

WHY

They have threats to life or freedom;
torture or cruel/inhuman treatment;
severe violence or punishment;
systematic denial of basic rights;
gender-based or sexuality-based persecution;
persecution tied to family/community identity

HOW

When someone outside of Australia applies to be legally recognised as a refugee. They are usually registered with UNHCR.

The government selects some people from this pool for a humanitarian visa and have been officially recognised as needing protection.

What is an Asylum Seeker?

WHO

Someone who is seeking international protection. Their request for refugee status, or complementary protection status, has yet to be processed, or they may not yet have requested asylum but they intend to do so. Seeking asylum is a human right.

WHY

War, persecution and human rights violations force people to flee their homes. To escape violence or threats to their lives or freedoms, many must leave with just a few moments' notice, carrying little more than the clothes on their backs.

HOW

They come by plane on a tourist, student or other visa. They need to apply to be legally recognised as a refugee. While they seek asylum and await the outcome of their application, they are referred to as asylum-seekers and should be protected. They have no access to a safety net.



ASylum Seeker Statistics (Oct 2025)

Under changes to the law made in 2014, the Minister for Immigration can now place a 'cap' on protection visas issued to refugees in any year. **20,000 visas** in 2023–24, but only **3,250 were onshore Protection visas**.

This 'cap' sets a limit on the number of visas that can be granted. This means that, even if a person is recognised as a refugee in Australia, they cannot be granted a visa until the following year. This does not apply to temporary protection visas, but affects people seeking asylum by plane.

Using this power, the Minister has set a number each year for the number of visas that can be granted to people claiming asylum by plane, and those who are resettled from overseas.

People seeking asylum are now waiting several years for a decision to be made on their case.

Over 30,000 people are still waiting for an initial decision on their Protection Visa application.

Of those initially refused and still in Australia, the majority are still waiting for review at the Administrative Review Tribunal, in the courts or through the ministerial intervention process.

As at 31 August 2025, 48,041 were still awaiting an outcome at the Administrative Review Tribunal, 14,525 were awaiting judicial review, and 10,988 were on bridging visas, and the remainder (26,603) did not have a valid visa

84,913 people applied offshore in one year for **16,750 places** (2023-24)

2,159 visas went to **vulnerable women and children**.

HEALTH SERVICES

- Appointments with a registered nurse, GP and/or physiotherapist
- Help with getting medications
- Getting access to medical imaging
- Getting access to pathology services and screenings
- Getting access to counselling
- Connecting to specialist health services
- Getting access to dental and optometry
- Immunisations
- Health navigation to medical appointments organised by the ASC health nurses
- Health education and workshops
- Fee waivers (for clients without medicare)





**In Q4 of 2023/2024, the Service
saw 127 referrals**

**In Q3 of 2024/2025, the service
saw 188 referrals**

**A 48% increase in Health
Service Requests.**

Unique Health issues faced by people seeking asylum

- No safety net - Healthcare card
- No work rights - can't afford GP/specialist gap fees or medications
 - Medicare access - no medicare or inconsistent
- Navigating a new health system and no trust in systems
 - Language barriers
- Shame and stigma related to certain health issues in the LGBTQI+ community including BBVs/STIs
- Fear of being excluded from the community group and/or their protection claim being rejected
- Limited awareness of complex health conditions and service systems

General and Unique Health Challenges faced by PSA

General Health conditions include:

Mental Health -
Depression/anxiety/
complex PTSD/Complex
trauma/Psychosis

Diabetes
Cardiovascular Disease
Liver Disease

Women's Health
Men's Health
Paediatric Health
Infectious Disease

Complex Chronic Health:

People seeking Asylum
are more likely to
develop complexities of
disease due to lack of
access to healthcare

Declining Mental
Health and Suicide
Ideation - Complex
trauma

Family and
Domestic Violence
presentations -
both historic and
current

ASC Health initiatives



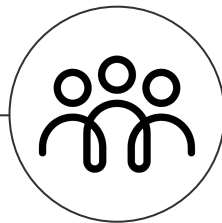
Blood Spot Hepatitis B,
hepatitis C and HIV testing

Partnership with Kirby
Foundation

On site testing = reduce
barriers to infectious
disease testing

ASC nurses have
completed training phase

Planned rollout testing to
clients in 2026



Health Navigator program:

Client's/ex-clients trained on
NSW Health System

Employed to work in health
clinic, alongside health
team

Experience used to
advocate for other clients,
and for reference to entry
into nursing/health fields

HOW YOU CAN HELP



Volunteer

Cook and serve a community lunch, or take a look at volunteer positions advertised on our website.



Shop with Impact

Buy your next gift or something special for yourself at our online shop - all profits go straight to ASC!



Spread the word

Read and share information and stories on our social media and website.



Donate a device

People seeking asylum need digital connection! We update and distribute mobile phones, laptops, and tablets.

HOW YOU CAN HELP



Challenge yourself

Run or walk in the City2Surf, give up coffee for a month to raise funds for the ASC.



Organise a fundraising event

Raise funds for the ASC by organising a trivia night, morning tea, bake sale, concert, art show, or more.



Tribute gifts

Ask family and friends to donate instead of gifts or as a tribute for birthdays, weddings, or in memory of someone.



Take a stand

Welcome people in your community, sign petitions, talk to your local member, join a march.



**THANK
YOU**

DATE MONTH YEAR



FIND OUT MORE



asylumseekerscentre.org.au