



RACS

REFUGEE ADVICE & CASEWORK SERVICE

**ANNUAL REPORT
FY 2021**

RACS MISSION

To achieve justice and dignity for refugees through the provision of effective legal services and influential advocacy.

Our strategic goals:

1. Provide accessible and life changing legal assistance to people seeking asylum.
2. Empower our clients and the community to engage with issues facing refugees.
3. Drive systematic change by leading public discourse on refugee issues.
4. Create strong long-term partnerships and a rewarding workplace for staff and volunteers.



Michael Kirby AC CMG, RACS Patron with staff and volunteers in the office

We achieve this through the commitment and dedication of:

- RACS' passionate staff members.
- 9 incredibly generous law firms who provide hundreds of hours of pro bono legal work each week.
- Barristers who provide their services free of charge.
- Our dedicated sector partners and allies who collaborate with us to advocate for change.
- Our generous funding partners and individual donors.
- Hundreds of passionate students and community volunteers who give up their time to help this community of refugees and people seeking asylum.

Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, the Traditional Custodians on whose lands we usually work, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and future. We also acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the various lands on which many of us are working from, due to COVID-19 measures, and we particularly acknowledge the Darug people whose land we share for most of our outreach locations. It always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

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"I will never forget how well informed and dedicated the team of lawyers were, who assisted me and my family. I genuinely appreciate the team who fiercely yet professionally stood and fought the case for us!"

– Former RACS Client

Stephanie Jones, RACS Solicitor



PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

This second year of the COVID-19 pandemic has created huge vulnerabilities in the refugee community here in Australia, as well as across the globe. RACS has continued to pivot and respond based on the community's needs, providing critical legal support during this uncertain time.

The 2020 budget announcement that thousands of people on temporary protection visas would be excluded from JobSeeker and JobKeeper support, alongside further cuts to the Status Resolution Support System, left many refugees and people seeking asylum facing destitution. What made this more inconceivable was the \$1.9 billion budgeted for offshore processing – a system designed to punish.

RACS was ready for the increase in calls for help and to work with our partners in the sector to ensure our clients could access welfare support. The majority of our work is with people on temporary visas and during a difficult year with Covid 19 it has been critical for us to ensure they were supported to re-apply for a further visa ahead of deadlines to avoid being placed into detention and losing important Medicare and work related rights.

In April 2021 we were notified that the Department of Home Affairs was unexpectedly expediting interviews for people seeking asylum in NSW who arrived in Australia by boat, aiming to complete all interviews by the end of June. These men, women and children were having their claims assessed by the restrictive fast track process, which lacks procedural fairness, and if refused a visa, they face great risk of being returned to danger.

The level of vulnerability we saw in this group was huge. People were experiencing significant mental illness, homelessness and some had critical healthcare needs that weren't being met. Thanks to our generous donors & supporters, as well as our allies at the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, \$180,000 was raised to ensure we could grow our team to support these men, women and children so that they did not have to face potentially the most important interview of their lives, alone.

It has now been 8 years since Australia's harmful offshore processing policy saw the introduction of 'no resettlement in Australia', forcing people seeking asylum who arrived by boat to face potentially indefinite detention in Papua New Guinea and Nauru. There are still hundreds of people held in offshore detention as well as many in Australia in alternative places of detention, after being transferred for medical treatment. Many further refugees and people seeking asylum in Australia remain on six month bridging visas, with no certainty over their futures.

RACS worked alongside over 180 organisations in the Time For A Home Alliance calling for the release and permanent resettlement of all affected by offshore detention. We were proud to join Thanush and Ramsiyar, two courageous young men who were recently released from detention, who delivered the Alliance's joint petition with nearly 37,000 signatures to Parliament House. We were thrilled to hear of a number of people being released at this same time, but there is much work to be done for those who remain detained, as well as continuing to support those in precarious visa situations here in the community.

We thank our Patron, the Honourable Michael Kirby AC CMB, for his continued support and our Ambassadors, Zaki Haidari, Hani Abdile and Dorothy Hoddinott AO for sharing their leadership and expertise with us. We were also pleased to welcome Mohammad Sakhvidi as a RACS Ambassador this year – an incredible young man whose story you can read further on in this annual report.

We thank our major donors, the University of New South Wales and our individual supporters who have continued to stand with RACS these years. It is because of you that we are able to continue our critical work.

Finally, we thank our tireless team for what has been another challenging year. Thank you for your commitment, your tenacity and your dedication to finding safety for people seeking protection.



Chris Yoo
President, RACS
Management
Committee



Sarah Dale
Centre Director and
Principal Solicitor,
RACS

FORCED DISPLACEMENT IN 2020-2021

At the end of 2020, there were 82.4 million people worldwide who were forcibly displaced as the result of persecution, conflict, human rights violations or serious events. Around half are under the age of 18.

More than two-thirds of these people came from just five countries: Syria, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan and Myanmar.

Issues such as climate change are adding to insecurity and conflict around the world, whilst millions of people remain stateless, having been denied a nationality and access to basic rights in their home countries.

Despite the ongoing global crisis, Australia's 2020-21 federal budget reduced the number of places available to refugees by 5,000 compared to the previous two years. Despite this reduction, Australia only fulfilled 5,947 out of 13,750 places in FY20-21. We can only hope this leaves opportunity for Australia to meet these commitments in later years, when travel is not affected by COVID-19. This budget also provided less financial support for refugees and people seeking asylum in the community, whilst at the same time increasing spends on detention and offshore processing.

Some eight years after the commencement of Offshore processing, there are people who remain held indefinitely in immigration detention facilities around Australia, whilst others remain held in appalling conditions on Papua New Guinea and Nauru. Of the refugees released into the community, the majority remain on short-term bridging visas without a safety net or hope for a home and a future; others remain in community detention.

Thousands more people remain in limbo on temporary protection visas, despite being recognised as refugees, requiring them to have to re-apply to remain safe every 3-5 years. They are unable to apply for family reunion to bring their families to safety, unable to leave the country without Ministerial permission, unable to access the same rights as permanent residents and citizens, which has left many struggling tenfold during COVID-19.

This year also saw the Department of Home Affairs deem places like Kabul in Afghanistan safe, despite continued reports of violence and Taliban encroachment. A DFAT report, relied upon by the Department of Home Affairs to judge asylum applications, was recognised by a UK tribunal court of being inaccurate when claiming Sri Lankans face low risk of torture.

As hostile and harsh decisions by the Australian Government continue to drive unprecedented levels of suffering upon the refugee community, there is an even greater need for RACS work.

Together, we are fighting for change and continue to advocate for the rights of people who need Australia's protection.



2020 - 2021 AT A GLANCE

7945

RACS RESPONDED TO OVER 7945 REQUESTS FOR LEGAL HELP.

131

LODGED 131 BRIDGING VISA APPLICATIONS FOR PEOPLE AFFECTED BY OFFSHORE PROCESSING AFTER BEING RELEASED FROM DETENTION.

261

PROVIDED 261 LEGAL SUPPORT SESSIONS TO WOMEN WHO HAVE SUFFERED OR ARE AT RISK OF FAMILY AND/OR GENDER BASED VIOLENCE.

216

ATTENDED 216 INTERVIEWS AND TRIBUNAL HEARINGS, SOME OF THE MOST CRUCIAL STEPS FOR PEOPLE SEEKING SAFETY.

55

SUPPORTED 55 PEOPLE TO APPEAL THROUGH OUR JUDICIAL REVIEW PROGRAM, GIVING THEM ONE LAST CHANCE AT STAYING SAFE IN AUSTRALIA.

14

LODGED 14 APPLICATIONS FOR CITIZENSHIP FOR STATELESS REFUGEE CHILDREN.

43,423

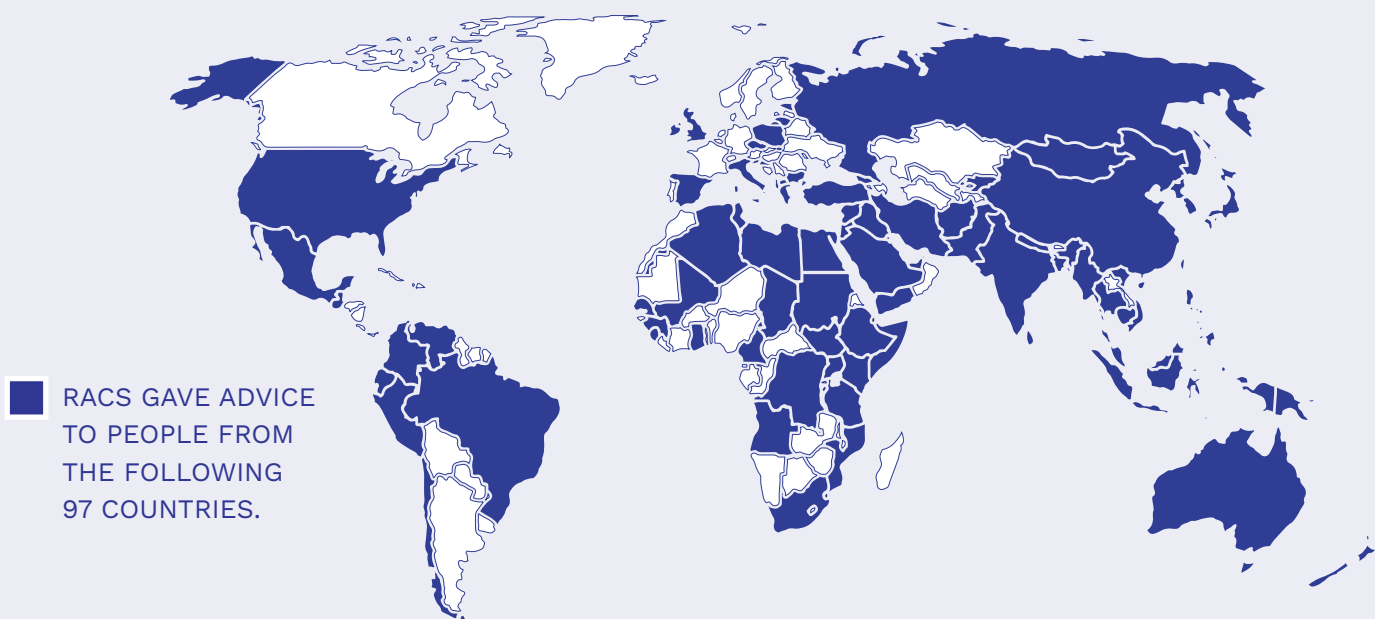
43,423 SIGNATURES WERE DELIVERED TO PARLIAMENT VIA PETITION'S CALLING FOR CHANGE.⁴

14,478

106 LEGAL VOLUNTEERS AND 5 SECONDEES PROVIDED 14,478 HOURS OF SUPPORT.

2000+

OVER 2000 PEOPLE DONATED TO RACS OR RAISED FUNDS TO MAKE SURE CRITICAL LEGAL SUPPORT WAS ACCESSIBLE.



4. This includes joint signatures with other organisations in the refugee sector

WHAT WE DO

Our Services

RACS supports individuals and families seeking asylum in Australia, by providing critical free legal advice and representation. Our services include supporting people to:

- Apply for protection visas and re-apply for temporary visas
- Apply for work rights or permission to travel
- Lodge appeals and make complaints in regard to mistreatment or rights violations.

Our outreach services in Auburn, Westmead and Parramatta ensure members of the refugee community can reach help. Since COVID-19 has forced us to work remotely, we offer our free services via telephone, with interpreters where needed.

Whilst many of Australia's refugee policies continue to be arbitrarily harsh and cruel, we advocate for justice by lobbying Government, preparing submissions to inquiries or reviews and providing comments on draft legislation or policies.

Who we support

We assist financially disadvantaged and vulnerable people seeking asylum and refugees in Australia, including: women seeking asylum who have experienced or fear violence, members of the LGBTIQ+ community, stateless people and refugees separated from family members.

We support people of all nationalities, ethnicities, religions, sexual orientation and gender identity, irrespective of how they arrived in Australia.

“When people seeking asylum from persecution arrive in Australia - by whatever means - and claim, as is their right, protection, they enter an extremely complex and seemingly ever changing system. It's a labyrinth of requirements and restrictions, of demands to apply within a specific period of time, and prohibitions from applying, of permits to work, or not, and access to support, or not.

When the Sidney Myer Fund was exploring where it could make an impactful contribution in the area of people seeking asylum, at a time when the rhetoric surrounding refugees and people seeking asylum was at its loudest, RACS stood out as a deeply engaged organisation making a significant difference in the lives of individuals and families through high quality legal support and advice.”



- Kirsty Allen, Sidney Myer Fund & The Myer Foundation

Ahmad Sawan, RACS Solicitor



OUR PROGRAMS



Legal Help For Refugees Clinic

RACS works closely with a number of law firms who, under RACS supervision, provide pro bono legal services to help refugees initially apply as well as re-apply for temporary visas before their current visas expires. In 2014, the Government implemented a policy that meant any person seeking asylum who arrived by boat would only ever be granted a temporary protection visa if found to be a refugee. This has resulted in thousands of people remaining in indefinite temporary limbo and needing to apply for new protection visas every 3-5 years. RACS' clinic has assisted thousands of people affected by this policy, supporting them with visa applications, statements, interviews, appeals and re-applications before the Department of Home Affairs.



Stateless Children Program

Stateless children are not recognised as citizens of any country in the world. Children born in Australia to stateless parents are sometimes only eligible for temporary visas, which means they need to re-apply for a temporary visa indefinitely every few years, heightening stress, insecurity and vulnerability. RACS' Stateless Children program helps stateless children born in Australia to apply for Australian citizenship, which could alleviate generational issues of statelessness in a family.



Women At Risk Program

RACS supports women seeking protection in Australia, who have experienced or fear they will experience sexual, gender-based, or domestic violence. As part of our partnership with the Jesuit Refugee Service, this program operates through their 'women's safe space', the only one of its kind in NSW dedicated to women and children seeking asylum. Since the pandemic, this service transitioned to telephone support in line with Government COVID-19 advice.



Family Reunion Program

Many refugees seeking protection become separated from their family or loved ones who they are forced to leave behind, prolonging the trauma they have already experienced. Refugees who receive permanent protection may have the chance to bring family members to Australia, however, there are significant barriers to achieving this. RACS' Family Reunion program provides critical legal advice about options to sponsor family members to Australia.



Judicial Review Program

The restrictive ‘fast-track’ process, which was introduced to assess claims of people seeking asylum who arrived in Australia by boat before 2014, lacks procedural fairness and denies people the opportunity to have a full review of their case. The only option available to people who have had their refugee claims refused by this process is to appeal at the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia. RACS’ Judicial Review Program ensures people at this stage of the process receive critical support and representation, giving them a final chance at staying safe here in Australia.



Assistance To Those Affected By Offshore Processing

RACS assists people affected by offshore processing who remain detained or living in the Australian community. We have a dedicated team which assists people with bridging visa renewals for those that have been released.

Before the Medevac law was repealed in December 2019, RACS supported people held in offshore detention to be transferred to Australia for urgent medical treatment.

For those that remain detained, RACS assists them to access their medical and detention records and ultimately seek for their release, particularly through our public advocacy.



Right To Seek Protection Program

In May 2017, 7,500 people seeking asylum were given a strict deadline of 1 October 2017 to lodge their applications for protection. For some, the ability to lodge a claim had only been opened a few months prior leaving insufficient time to complete the lengthy and complex application. RACS is still assisting people who, for various reasons, were unable to lodge applications before the deadline. As part of this program we also support people on temporary protection visas who were unable to re-apply for another visa before theirs expired.

“Many of us are fortunate enough to consider our home as a place of security and stability though in an increasingly uncertain world, for some, life is not so simple. Within a flash they are forced to abandon what they know and love and risk it all to find a better, safer life for themselves and their families. None of us are immune to this threat and as members of a global community it is our responsibility to help. RACS provides essential support to refugees and asylum seekers in their time of need. Through case work, advocacy and more they allow vulnerable individuals the opportunity they deserve to explore their options and be heard.”

- Paris Neilson, Neilson Foundation

MOHAMMAD SAKHVIDI, RACS' NEWEST AMBASSADOR

My name is Mohammad and I am RACS' newest Ambassador.

I am originally from Iran. I left almost eight years ago, alone at the age of 16, because I was no longer safe there.

After arriving in Australia by boat, **I thought everyone was against me.** Negative, de-humanising stories were being broadcast on TV and the laws and legislations in place meant I would be treated differently.

But over the years, as I got to know more and more people, I realised that there are many people out there keen to support and protect the rights of refugees.

My biggest motto since I left Iran is "nothing is impossible".

But some things are just too hard to deal with on your own and law is definitely not my cup of tea. I am sure my application for a visa would have been 10 times harder without the help of the lawyers at RACS.

From helping me with my application to preparing me for my interview, RACS were always just a phone call away. When I heard I had been granted a five-year temporary protection visa, known as a Safe Haven Enterprise Visa, I was overwhelmed. Although it was only for 5 years, at least I was safe for now.

I had always wanted to become an engineer and my path to become one was paved back home, but there were many obstacles on my way when I fled the country and arrived in Australia. So I worked hard, maybe twice as hard, to break the barriers and overcome the obstacles. **After completing an English intensive course I went on to tackle my HSC at Granville Boys High School.**

Luckily, I was honoured to be the first humanitarian scholarship recipient at the University of Technology Sydney – Faculty of Engineering - back in 2016. I went on to graduate with a degree in civil engineering.

Receiving the scholarship is definitely one of my proudest achievements, together with getting to know a number of truly supportive people and being mentored by one of my biggest inspirations and role model, CEO Brad Chan.

But, my most recent source of pride is definitely being named RACS' newest Ambassador.

RACS helped me when I needed it most and have supported me through many life-changing transitions. And they will help me to re-apply for another temporary visa when my current one expires.

My experience means I know what so many are going through.

Being on a temporary protection visa has its challenges, and I know many people who are struggling with the uncertainty and being unable to reunite with their families here in Australia. I know what it feels like going through endless highs and lows without your family by your side.

I am proud to be a voice for these men, women and children and to raise more awareness within our communities.

As RACS Ambassador, my message to the Australian Government is clear: **Whether we came here by air or by sea, a refugee is a refugee. There is no difference, we all seek the same thing – safety and peace.**

Mohammad Sakhvidi,
RACS Ambassador



Photo credit Charlotte Curd

AMBASSADOR SPOTLIGHT

RACS is guided by our ambassadors who have lived experience of being a refugee. We support them to share their voice, provide input on campaigns and advocacy and meet with politicians to communicate the impact of their policies.

Alongside Mohammad, featured on the previous page, we have the privilege of receiving guidance and support from Hani Abdile and Zaki Haidari.



Hani Abdile

Hani Abdile is a budding journalist, a poet and a refugee, who was supported by RACS to apply for protection. Since arriving in Australia, Hani has become a powerful ambassador for people seeking asylum.

This year Hani recited her poems, which often raise awareness of refugee issues, on [ABC's International Women's Day Q+A](#), [ABC's Radio National Breakfast](#), and featured in a short film created by Shark Island Institute and the Documentary Australia Foundation. She also spoke to [ABC's The Drum](#) and joined [The Cook Up with Adam Liaw](#) during Refugee Week, to share some of her favourite cultural dishes from her home country of Somalia.

Hani's drive to raise awareness of the impact of temporary protection visas led her to be featured in the Temporary Podcast Series from UNSW, The Guardian and the Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law, late last year, where she spoke about the challenges she has experienced in seeking asylum. Visit temporary.kaldorcentre.net.

RACS is proud to work alongside Hani, a creative and accomplished young woman, who continues to advocate for thousands of people who are denied their rights.

"People will rise, it doesn't matter what happens. There is always hope on the horizon."

– Hani Abdile



Photo credit Abdul Hekmat

Zaki Haidari

Zaki Haidari is a Leadership Coordinator at the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), marathon runner and refugee who was also supported by RACS to apply for protection. Zaki's advocacy grows from strength to strength, and he continuously stands up for the rights of the refugee and asylum seeker community here in Australia.

This year, Zaki appeared on [Al Jazeera news](#), [The Drum](#) and [ABC's Q+A](#) highlighting how refugees in Australia have been left behind during COVID-19, with a lack of financial support. Zaki also spoke of the stress and trauma that will have been caused by an unexpected acceleration of interviews for people seeking asylum in the fast-track process – a process that denies procedural fairness.

Towards the end of 2020, Zaki decided to run 500km – 100km for every year of his five-year temporary protection visa, to raise funds for RACS and highlight the challenges facing those on temporary protection visas. [Zaki completed his 500km at the doors of Parliament House](#), and raised \$27,599, smashing his target of \$5,000.

His immense advocacy has been recognised by the Australian Human Rights Commission who nominated him as [one of 10 finalists in its Human Rights Heroes awards](#). Zaki was also featured as part of the Temporary Podcast series, alongside Hani. Visit temporary.kaldorcentre.net.

RACS is grateful to work with Zaki, a courageous and powerful advocate who raises awareness of some of the most important issues of our time.

"It's important for me to advocate because being from the Hazara ethnic group, we have suffered a lot in Afghanistan. I feel that I have to come out and tell people who I am, why I came to Australia and why I left my country."

– Zaki Haidari

2020 – 2021 SIGNIFICANT EVENTS



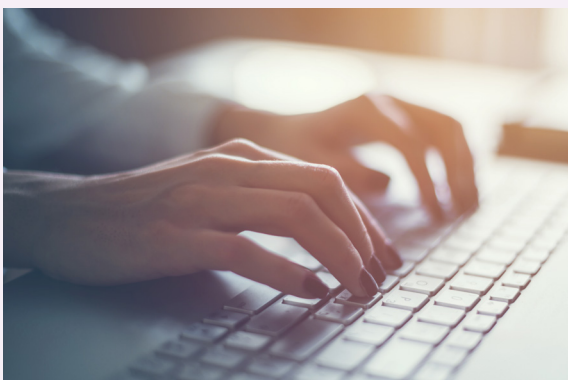
Sarah Dale, RACS Centre Director and Principal Solicitor speaking alongside Parliamentarians and sector colleagues, Thanush and Ramsiyar in Canberra.



Photo credit Jamila Shah



Report co-authors Sarah Dale, RACS Centre Director and Principal Solicitor, and Katie Robertson, Research Fellow at the Peter McMullin Centre on Statelessness



Time for a Home Alliance

RACS joined an alliance of 160 organisations and community networks calling on the Government to release all people transferred from Offshore Processing from detention and resettle them with a safe and permanent home. Sarah Dale joined sector colleagues Thanush, Ramisyar and Myo Win, refugees who had recently been released from detention, outside of Parliament House to hand a petition to the Labour Party, the Greens and cross bench MPs with 36,923 signatures. Overwhelming public pressure has led to the release of a number of people from detention since December 2020, but many remain detained.

Stateless Children's Report

RACS partnered with the Peter McMullin Centre on Statelessness to conduct ground-breaking research into the legal needs, barriers and gaps experienced by stateless refugee children and their families in accessing and acquiring Australian citizenship. The project aims to increase awareness among Australian stateless refugee communities about the entitlement to citizenship for Australian born children and link them with free, expert legal services.

Temporary - Award-winning Podcast Series

Temporary is an eight-part podcast from the Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law and UNSW Centre for Ideas, co-produced with Guardian Australia, which tells the stories of refugees known as the 'legacy caseload' - the 30,000 people living in Australia who have been left in limbo and denied their right to protection after arriving by boat. RACS supported the development of Temporary, with Ambassadors Zaki and Hani both sharing their stories, and RACS lawyers providing legal commentary. Visit temporary.kaldorcentre.net.

Data Breach Case

In January 2021, the Australian Government was ordered to pay compensation to almost 1300 people seeking asylum after accidentally leaking their highly sensitive personal information in 2014. RACS worked tirelessly over the years, in partnership with Slater & Gordon and other pro bono legal firms, to pursue this compensation for those affected. Our Pro bono partners devoted hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of time and money to assist with achieving this result.



RACS lawyers, Isobel McGarity, Alison Ryan, Mitchell Skipsey and Ben Lumsdaine with Zaki Haidari, RACS Ambassador at RunWest



Arif Hussein, Senior Solicitor, Maryam Zahid, Founder and Director of Afghan Women On The Move, Jan Fran, Walkley-award winning journalist, TV Presenter and commentator, and Mark Isaacs, Author



Sarah Dale, Centre Director and Principal Solicitor, Hannah Gray, Senior Solicitor, Amanda Hall, Clinic Coordinator, and Alison Ryan, Senior Supervising Solicitor

RunWest

RACS supporters and staff put on their running shoes and took to the streets of Western Sydney for community fun run RunWest, raising over \$11,500 for RACS' Auburn Outreach Program. Auburn is home to the largest community of refugees in NSW and every year RACS' Outreach Program supports thousands of people in this community, who need critical legal advice.

Refugee Week Schools Event

Dorothy Hoddinott AO, former principal of Holroyd High School where 60% of all students were of refugee background, joined Hani Abdile, RACS Ambassador, Ahmad Sawan, RACS Solicitor and Bakhit David, a former RACS client, on a panel as part of a special Refugee Week event for NSW high school students. The event was supported by the University of Technology and covered topics including the process for seeking safety in Australia, the challenges of living on a Temporary Visa and how young people can become involved in social justice issues.

RACS Book Club

RACS launched its inaugural Book Club - a bi-annual event featuring stories from around the world to highlight the experience of refugees, people seeking asylum and their communities. Our first book was *The Kabul Peace House* by Mark Isaacs, who was joined on a panel featuring Maryam Zahid, Founder and Director of Afghan Women On The Move, and Arif Hussein, RACS Senior Solicitor, moderated by Walkley-award winning journalist, TV Presenter and commentator, Jan Fran.

Lawyer's Weekly Women in Law Awards

Amanda Hall, Coordinator of RACS' Legal Help for Refugees Clinic was recognised as Legal Support Professional of the Year at the Women in Law awards 2021, for her tireless work supporting people seeking asylum with visa uncertainty.

Amanda works alongside two lawyers, whilst managing the workflow of over 30 pro bono lawyers who support the clinic. This team primarily assists people seeking asylum who arrived by boat in Australia after 13 August 2012, referred to as the fast-track cohort.

This cohort only have access to 3-5 year temporary protection visas. RACS assists them to re-apply for a subsequent visa, before their initial visa expires, in order to remain safe in Australia.

Amanda established a project in March 2020, at the start of the COVID-19 outbreak to support individuals and families who had very short timeframes in which they needed to re-apply for visas. Prior to the pandemic, Amanda also organised Community Legal Education sessions in partnership with the Auburn Centre for Community, in a number of different languages including Rohingya, Hazaragi, Tamil and Arabic.

PRO BONO SUPPORT

RACS is proud to be supported by a number of generous law firms, who showed their commitment to people seeking asylum by ensuring RACS continued to support thousands of people this year.

Thank you to pro bono lawyers from the following law firms:

- Allen & Overy
- Allens
- Baker McKenzie
- Gilbert + Tobin Lawyers
- Hall & Wilcox
- Hicksons Lawyers
- King & Wood Malletsons
- Herbert Smith Freehills
- Lander & Rogers
- Norton Rose Fulbright
- Slater & Gordon
- Wotton + Kearney

Before commencing work, pro bono lawyers receive dedicated training from the RACS legal team covering the complexities of immigration law and how to provide professional support to vulnerable, and often traumatised, people in what can be a confronting space to work. Once pro bono lawyers have completed training, RACS continues to supervise them, ensuring comprehensive support for people seeking asylum.

RACS is also extremely grateful to the following secondees and law firms who assisted with RACS secondments, some for more than 6 months at a time:

- William Berthelot, Allens
- Jessica Liu, Hall & Wilcox
- Kevin Dorostkar, Hall & Wilcox
- Ruby Lomi, Hall & Wilcox
- Daphne Zhou, Hicksons Lawyers
- Lolita Valderama, Hicksons Lawyers
- Rhiannon Kumar, Hicksons Lawyers
- Daniel Gray, King & Wood Malletsons
- Lucy Cornwell, King & Wood Malletsons
- Edward Lyons, Lander & Rogers
- Alice Cho, Norton Rose Fulbright
- Samantha Flood, Wotton + Kearney

Secondments at RACS enable solicitors, or graduates in the early years of their careers, to provide essential support to people seeking asylum whilst growing skills and confidence and gaining on-the-ground experience working for a community legal centre.

We are also grateful to the 29 barristers who have provided dedicated legal assistance to our Judicial Review Program.

“Allens is happy to be able to work closely with RACS to support asylum seekers, including by seconding a lawyer each year to work at RACS full time for six months. These secondments boost RACS’ capacity to manage its casework, while providing one of our lawyers with training and experience in migration law, enabling them to return to Allens well equipped to play a lead role in our pro bono practice.”

- Nicky Friedman | Director of Community Engagement



Allens & Linklaters

“We have been honoured to partner with the team at RACS through different iterations of its statement taking clinics. The expertise and supervision provided by RACS is second to none and the whole team are a delight to deal with. Our lawyers are very committed to working in such an important and under-resourced area of legal need.”

- Brigitte Rheinberger | Solicitor



HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS

“What impresses me most about the people at RACS is the total commitment to their clients. When there are emergencies, they are able to bring the legal profession together to assist. They are an inspiration to me and at Hall & Wilcox we are always ready to assist them in their important work.”

- Nathan Kennedy | Partner & Head of Pro Bono and Community



Hall & Wilcox
smarter law

“RACS play a significant role in the Australian community and provide an essential service for its clients. The RACS team work incredibly hard to ensure that every asylum seeker has a fair go and a fair chance to be heard. We are grateful for the opportunity to partner with RACS to support work that has such a significant impact on vulnerable people. Every lawyer from Lander & Rogers who has worked with RACS this year has reflected on how meaningful it is to be able to work closely with leading lawyers on complex legal issues, of their new understanding of the significant impact they can have working to advocate for asylum seekers, their sense of real privilege to listen to clients and the fulfilment in being able to contribute more broadly to significant issues in our community.”

**- Jo Renkin | Partner
Pro Bono, Community & Environment**



**LANDER
& ROGERS**

“At Norton Rose Fulbright Australia, our lawyers value immensely the opportunity to help asylum seekers in re-applying for temporary protection visas under RACS supervision. The adaptability of our lawyers, RACS and the clients to the changes necessitated by COVID-19 has really made all the difference in this collaboration throughout FY21, and we look forward to continuing our support in FY22.”

- Chris Owen | National Pro Bono Partner



NORTON ROSE FULBRIGHT

Daniel Gray, King & Wood Mallesons Secondcoe

11,628

RACS RECEIVED OVER
11,628 HOURS OF PRO
BONO LEGAL ASSISTANCE
THIS FINANCIAL YEAR.



VOLUNTEERING AND EDUCATION

45 Front-End Volunteers and 56 Practical Legal Trainees supported RACS this year with over 12,700 hours of critical front-line support. In return we ensured they had the opportunity to build their skills and experience, gain invaluable insight into working in a professional legal practice and better understand careers in social justice and human rights.

RACS is incredibly grateful to each and every one of these volunteers and the following universities, which support these vital placements: Australian Catholic University, Macquarie University, University of New South Wales, University of Queensland, University of Sydney, University of Technology Sydney, University of Wollongong, and Western Sydney University.

RACS also worked closely with the University of New South Wales, Macquarie University, the University of Technology Sydney, and Western Sydney University to provide training, expertise and knowledge to young people studying law. Whilst COVID-19 has restricted our ability to physically join the classroom, we continue to ensure the next generation of lawyers are educated on working within a human rights framework via remote learning.

RACS is extremely grateful to our Major Supporter the University of New South Wales who have provided free office space to RACS for over half a decade, and whose students complete placements in RACS' Legal Student Volunteering Program. We also appreciate the numerous law societies who have chosen to support RACS with fundraising and awareness-raising events.

“UNSW Law & Justice is proud to continue supporting RACS. Given the enormous challenges of the last two years, we value partnering with such a critical service to this vulnerable community.”

– Professor Andrew Lynch
Dean, Faculty of Law & Justice
UNSW Sydney



2300

RACS LEGAL VOLUNTEERS
PROVIDED OVER 2,300 HOURS
OF CRITICAL SUPPORT IN THE
20/21 FY

Emma Pintur, RACS Volunteer and Operations Coordinator

10,300

PRACTICAL LEGAL TRAINEES
PROVIDED OVER 10,300 HOURS
OF ONE-ON-ONE SUPPORT
TO RACS LAWYERS AND THE
PEOPLE THEY ASSIST

PEOPLE AND CULTURE

The team at RACS are dedicated and committed individuals, who work tirelessly to advocate and ensure the rights of people seeking asylum and refugees. RACS' role is to support people through their migration process as they navigate the complex and stressful process of seeking protection in Australia and having their families join them in safety.

RACS Management Committee

Chris Yoo, President

Partner, Genesis Capital
Managing Director, Purpose
Investment Partners

Daniel Ghezlbash, Vice-President

Associate Professor, Macquarie
Law School
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Clinic Coordinator

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Solicitor

Hannah Gray, Senior
Solicitor

Amanda Hall, Clinic
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Genevieve Howe,
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Arif Hussein, Senior
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Mitchell Skipsey, Senior
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Emily Taylor, Legal
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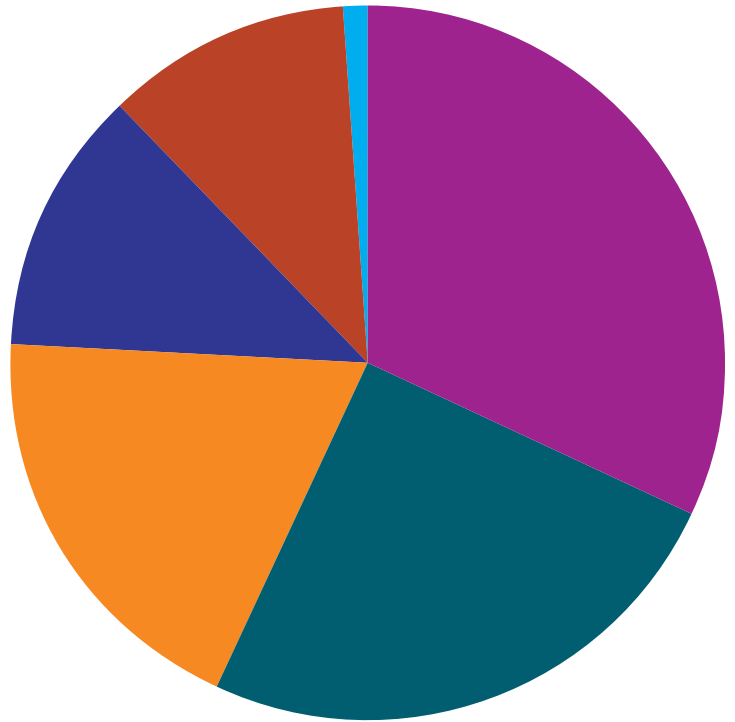
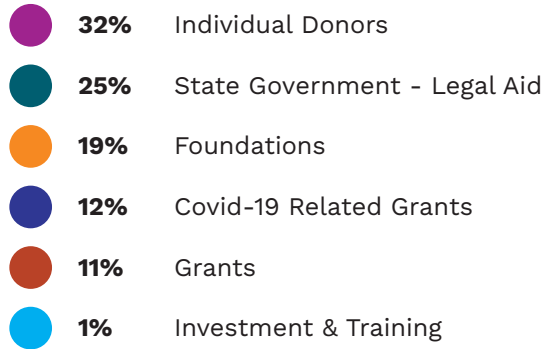
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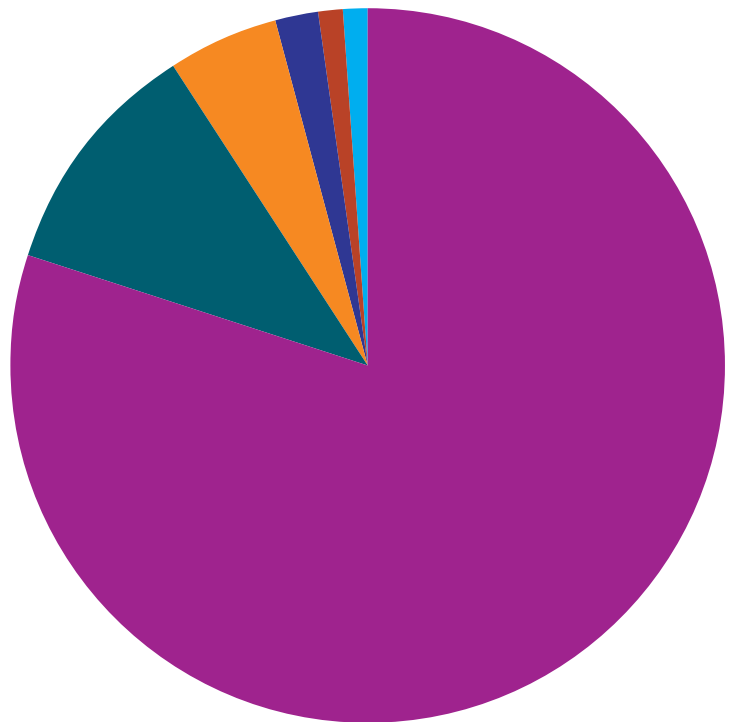
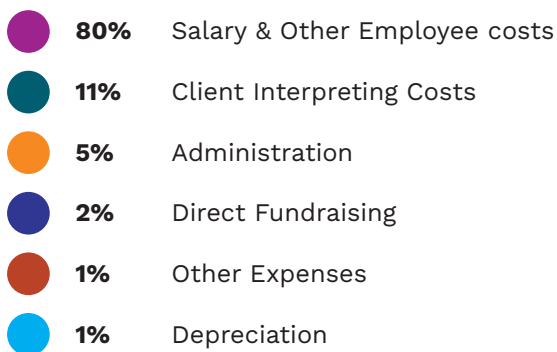


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