

Many doing it tough this winter

Robert Tickner

Chief Executive
Australian Red Cross

A growing number of our neighbours will face a lonely winter this year with as many as seven per cent, or 1.5 million Australians predicted to be considered isolated or very isolated this year.

Having friends around us makes us more resilient to life's knocks and challenges.

Red Cross helps people of all ages who are doing it tough. We help isolated people reconnect with their communities by assisting them to join social groups and build new

friendships. Red Cross also provides free phone calls to thousands of elderly Australians each day just to check they're OK.

We help people who are homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless, those with mental health issues and disadvantaged families who want a better future for their children.

Across the Asia Pacific region we are working provide clean drinking water and better sanitation, and help rebuild lives after major disasters.

All of our work relies heavily on the generosity of people like you who donate to Red Cross.

I'm asking everyone to dig deep before the 30th June to make sure Red Cross will always be there for our friends and neighbours.

To make a tax deductible donation by June 30, call 1800 811 700, go online, or use your smartphone to go to our website at redcross.org.au.

Kon Karapanagiotidis OAM

CEO and Founder, Asylum Seeker Resource Centre

For more than two decades, Kon has worked with marginalised communities as a lawyer, advocate, social worker and teacher.

In 2001, inspired by the struggles of his parents and his own childhood experiences of racism, Kon founded the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC). In just eight weeks, with the help of TAFE students he was teaching at the time, he opened the ASRC in a small shopfront in Footscray, starting with a few crates of food. From these humble beginnings, the ASRC has grown to become the largest non-federally funded provider of aid, advocacy, employment and health services for asylum seekers in Australia.

ASRC has assisted over 10 000 asylum seekers through a range of lifesaving services including Foodbank, material aid, legal, health, housing and counselling, employment and education, all without Federal Government funding. This is achieved with a team of more than 1100 dedicated volunteers and 46 paid staff.

For his work with asylum seekers, Kon has received an Order of Australia Medal, a Churchill Fellowship and a La Trobe University Young Achiever Award, as well as being named as a finalist for the Human Rights Medal and Australian of the Year (Victoria).

ASRC welcomes support from the community and legal profession. For more information on the ASRC and how you can contribute this valuable cause, please visit <http://www.asrc.org.au/> or telephone (03) 9326 6066.

You can follow Kon on Twitter: @Kon_K

