

## **RAR Home Hosting report      July 2019**

Home hosting is a branch of RAR refugee and asylum seeker advocacy that takes a variety of forms in various states of Australia – largely in New South Wales and Victoria. Home hosting also occurs through affiliated organizations such as Social Justice Advocates and the Brigidine Asylum Seeker Project.

The recent National Survey and follow up contact reported 24 RAR groups engaged in home hosting activities, with an additional 4 groups currently working towards instituting a homestay program.

The aims common to home hosting programs are:

- Respite for asylum-seekers and refugees
- Cultural exchange
- Community engagement
- Awareness of refugee issues
- Orientation towards living in a rural area

Home hosting programs exhibit the following formats, mostly arranged through liaison between a coordinator and an agency in a larger centre such as Melbourne, Sydney or Brisbane:

- regular visits of individuals and families to private homes
- twice-yearly group visits – individual hosts
- annual larger group visits – individual or group accommodation
- privately arranged visits through personal contacts

Larger groups often have their own homestay insurance, while smaller groups depend on the public liability insurance of individual hosts.

Visits occur throughout the year, with a higher number of visits on weekends and during school holidays. Activities undertaken during homestays include: fishing, bushwalking, soccer, swimming and other sports, music and cooking. Recent resettlement of large groups of refugees in larger centres such as Armidale have seen a decline in hosting activity due to the finite nature of volunteer resources available for refugee support.

A national home hosting register has been proposed with the aim of establishing a forum for mutual support and information-sharing.