

ARMIDALE SANCTUARY MONTHLY REPORT

JULY/AUGUST 2024

The Commemoration for the anniversary of the Ezidi massacre by ISIS at Sinjar, northern Iraq was held on 3 August in the Town Hall. As it was the 10th anniversary it was even more solemn than usual. Many members of the Armidale community, including the Mayor, as well as Ezidis and those who work with them attended. Some Ezidi survivors told their stories and the Mayor addressed the attendees. The event and the number of people attending is a recognition of the size and importance of the Ezidi community and the roots they have put down in Armidale. It was good to see Sanctuary members there supporting families they knew.

A second visit to the International English Centre at the Armidale Secondary College was arranged on 29 July for Committee members who were unable to attend the first time.

Sanctuary President Jeff Siegel received a letter of thanks for participating in the Multicultural Framework Review undertaken by the Department of Home Affairs. There were 216 public consultations across Australia and 796 public submissions received. The report made 29 recommendations for a general reform agenda aimed at 'positioning Australia to reach its full potential as a nation made up of many cultures, faiths and lived experiences'.

Sanctuary was also invited by officers of the Settlement section of the Department of Home Affairs based in Sydney, to an online meeting to discuss the success of refugee settlement in Armidale. Lucinda Wright attended the meeting for a wide ranging and free flowing discussion. She made the observation that although initially Sanctuary was across the general situation of the Ezidi community the growth in numbers meant that it was more difficult to know of successes or issues affecting particular families. Nevertheless the general impression was that the community was doing well. In this respect it is always useful for the Sanctuary Committee to have any feedback from volunteers who visit families and become aware of difficulties or situations that we may be able to help with.

And as a reminder, we will be holding one of our regular volunteer chat evenings on 28 August at 5pm at Kent House. Committee members, experienced volunteers and staff from the settlement agencies will be there to share their experiences and answer questions. Volunteers, particularly newer ones, find these sessions useful for widening their knowledge and contacts.

Looking ahead later in August, Sanctuary will be involved in the regular meetings held by Multicultural Development Team and the larger quarterly Humanitarian Settlement Program Network meeting, both organised by SSI.

Finally a few updates on Sanctuary organisation.

Gayle Davies and Lina Alhumana will be joining the Committee.

There are 12 families (22 people) requesting help Sanctuary volunteers and 6 volunteer allocations made. Three people applied to join Sanctuary but we would always welcome more as we can never meet all the requests.

As we are now quite a large organisation with Deductible Gift Status we must submit an Annual Information Statement to the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission, which we have done. We have also renewed our Public Liability Insurance.

Lucinda Wright

Vice President