

*Working to achieve equality, access
to justice and a commitment to
human rights for refugees*



**CASE for Refugees Annual Report
2007/2008**

Almaz's story

I arrived in Australia on 23 May 1995 on a Refugee Humanitarian Visa. I came from a refugee camp in Sudan. I have no children of my own. My nephews are the children of my brother, who died in about May 2001, and their mother died in about 2006, in Ethiopia. I decided when she died that I would take care of my nephews, as they did not have any one else to do so.

When my nephews' mother died, they went to stay with some distant relatives in a remote area of the countryside. But the relatives were not interested in looking after the children, they just wanted them to work herding sheep and goats in very dangerous conditions with landmines and dangerous wild animals. They would often have to work for days on end without rest, and no access to education, medical services or adequate food. My nephews then lived in an overcrowded orphanage until I could bring them to Australia to live with me.

Before I went to Ethiopia to visit my nephews, I contacted the Department of Immigration to see what I needed to do to bring the boys back to Australia with me. They referred me to CASE for Refugees for help. I received help in putting together documents and forms for an orphan visa, which would have been impossible for me to do without the help of CASE. My nephews arrived in Perth from Ethiopia in the middle of 2008. I actually confused the date the boys were to arrive, and when I arrived home from work, I had a call from the airport asking me where I was and why I was not at the airport to pick them up! I raced to the airport as fast as I could and hugged them and cried as soon as I saw them, it was such a happy day.

I am now mother and father for my nephews, they are safe and secure and have a better life in Australia. They are currently going to school to learn English until they can transfer to a mainstream school, and are very happy in Australia. They both now play in a soccer team, attend church and have friends and a community life like all children should have.

I am very thankful for all the help from CASE for Refugees to enable my nephews to live in Australia with me and live a happy and harmonious life.

Almaz

Pictured with her nephews, front cover

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Centre for Advocacy, Support and Education for Refugees, Inc (CASE) Highlights 2007-2008

CASE assists refugees and humanitarian visa applicants in their claims for protection and reunion with their family members. Since 2002, CASE has assisted almost 1500 clients. This comprises protection cases, which represent around 60 percent of the total, with the remainder being family reunion cases. The balance between protection and family reunion cases is shifting as family reunion work now comprises over 80% of CASE's caseload. At year's end, CASE had around 450 open cases representing around 730 clients. During the year, CASE had opened 180 new files. New clients are interviewed at CASE at an average rate of seven per week, and as at the date of publishing this report, there are 80 clients currently waiting to be scheduled for a first interview.

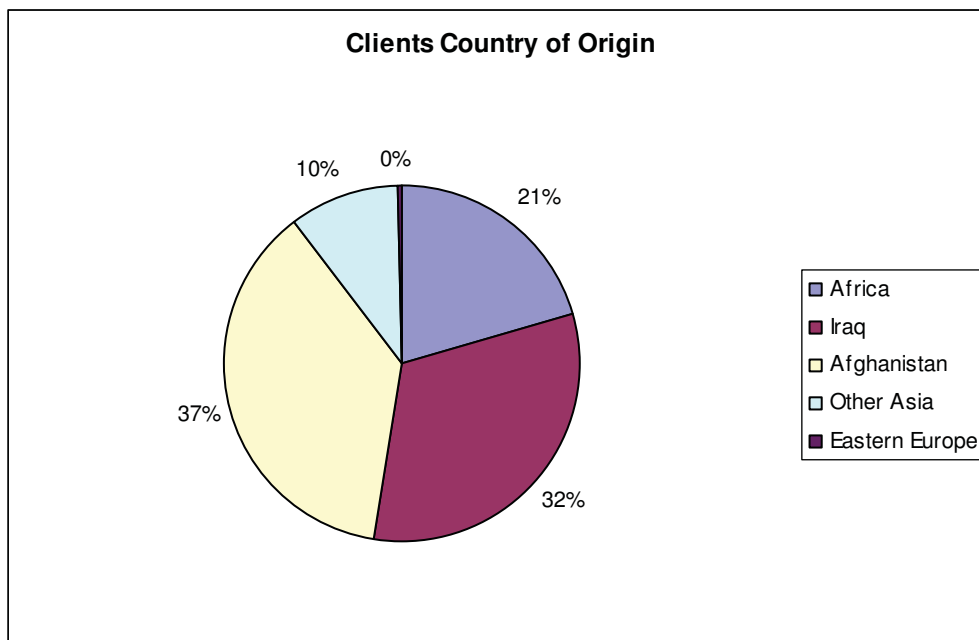


Figure 1: Distribution of Clients by Country of Origin as at 31 March 2008

During the year, CASE increased its staff numbers from three part time staff to seven part time staff during the year, including two Principal Solicitors, two Migration Agents, one Solicitor/Migration Agent, one Client Liaison Officer and one Office Administrator. Over 80 volunteers contributed their time and efforts to CASE during the year including migration agents, law students, lawyers and community members. CASE was also recognised a finalist in the 2007 Community Service Industry Awards for 'Strengthening Volunteering'.

CASE increased its total funds raised from \$152,933 during the previous financial year to \$242,110, representing an increase of over 50 percent.

CASE launched its new website in April 2008 at www.caseforrefugees.org.au.



Convenor's Report

The past financial year at CASE has been full of many new developments.

Following the departure of Anne de Soyza from the position of Principal Solicitor, we set about finding our new leader for the organization. While we conducted that search, we were grateful for the contribution of Peter Gaughwin who filled the position in August and early September 2007, and particularly Vanessa Moss who filled the position in September and October 2007. Vanessa is always first to offer help whenever the organization needs it and is now a facilitator for our volunteer training program. Our volunteers will surely benefit greatly from her guidance, expertise and support and for that we are most grateful.



Our search came to a happy conclusion with the appointment of Shayla Strapps and Amanda Goodier as Joint Principal Solicitors of the organization in a job-share role. While this was the first time that CASE had split the role of Principal Solicitor between two people, I am sure the Board and staff agree that the arrangement works extremely well with both coordinating and balancing each other's work and work methods perfectly. Shayla and Amanda's past experience in different types of community legal centres also afforded CASE the opportunity to reflect on and draw from alternative processes and practices which they had developed in their past work. At the same time, Shayla and Amanda's professionalism, enthusiasm, creativity, leadership and just sheer hard work, and the impact that this has had on the organization, has been wonderful to observe and we are proud and grateful for their passionate commitment to CASE.

Once we had recruited our Joint Principal Solicitors, we then took the opportunity to identify the key issues facing the organisation in 2008. We knew that the need for CASE's services was constant and growing and that alternative service providers were not able to provide a comprehensive advocacy service for refugees, humanitarian entrants and their families. We knew that we were committed to finding ways to better address that need, and to address a growing waiting list of clients. Our strategic plan provided the point of reference for our activities: we needed more people, more sophisticated processes and procedures and more funding in order to provide a better service to the community.

The members of the Board and staff quickly set to work to identify alternative funding sources and options for longer term, recurrent funding. As there is no recurrent government funding for CASE's work, CASE pursued and successfully received grants from the Law Society's Public Purposes Trust, the United Nations



High Commissioner for Human Rights Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, Volunteering Australia's Comic Relief Grants, Allens Arthur Robinson, the Uniting Church in the City, Nido Petroleum Limited, and a range of other sources, resulting in a 50 percent increase in CASE's income for the financial year. Not only did we raise funds, but we forged new relationships with new donors which is so critical to our sustainability as an organisation. We would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank our donors, sponsors and members for their generous support of our organization over the past year.

With the funding obtained, we were able to increase our staffing levels from three part time staff to seven part time staff during the financial year – an amazing achievement in a challenging recruitment market. Shayla and Amanda's community contacts in this regard proved invaluable. On behalf of the Board, I would like to introduce you and welcome to the CASE family Kay Williams as Office Administrator and Marti Rinsma as Solicitor and Migration Agent, and congratulate Holly Greenwood on her new role as Client Liaison Officer.

With the assistance of a generous donation, CASE actively pursued long term volunteer Gwynneth Ife to undertake a migration agent's course and join the staff team. We were so pleased when Gwynneth agreed to join, and that this enabled our tireless Migration Agent, Bill Thomas, to job-share his role. Bill and Gwynneth have together contributed hundreds of volunteer hours in addition to their paid roles, and their expertise, passion and experience in working with CASE's clients are so important to the achievement of successful outcomes for our clients, for which we are most grateful.

And then there were seven. CASE's space challenges required creative solutions, and together with a newly formed Joint Subcommittee of the Boards of CASE and the Coalition Assisting Refugees and Detainees (CARAD) with whom CASE shares premises, we have initiated a process of dialogue with our landlord, the Uniting Church in the City, and Lotterywest, to undertake a feasibility study for the large scale refurbishment and extension of the office. While this process is ongoing, CASE identified the need for short term solutions. So, through the support of Nido Petroleum Limited and Quattro Homes Pty Ltd, CASE procured in mid-2008 and is currently in the process of installing storage units at the rear of the premises to increase the interview and meeting space available to CASE and its many clients. We greatly appreciate the support of these companies, and the assistance provided by volunteers, Board members and staff. We will continue to keep our members informed of the outcome of these efforts.

Our Joint Principal Solicitors led the charge on the improvement of processes and systems to increase our efficiency and effectiveness as an organisation. Key achievements during the year have included the purchase of the LEAP Migration Manager client database software, currently being implemented, the closure and off-site archiving of closed files, the purchase of additional filing cabinets for open client files, the launch of the CASE website at www.caseforrefugees.org.au and the comprehensive audit and review of all open client files.



Initiatives currently underway include funding applications (together with CARAD) for new telecommunications equipment and data lines, computers and office furniture. A phenomenal effort!

For the Board of CASE, the past financial year was also marked by change. We farewelled Lyn Levy, Katrina Williams, Julie Beus, Jo Atkinson, Peter Creighton and Kathy Wake during the year. It is difficult to express in words the enormous contribution made by these Board members to CASE and its work; we can only express our heartfelt thanks and wish them well in their future endeavours. Once again, CASE has attracted committed, passionate and highly qualified individuals to its Board in Brenda Robbins, Wendy Campbell, Jo Buontempo, Christine Knight, Merridi Parr and Mohammed Albadily. They complement our existing Board members, Rosemary Hudson-Miller, Sarah Kemp, Kevin De Souza and myself. To all Board members, past and present, I would personally like to express my sincere appreciation for your wisdom, creativity, professionalism and tenacity over the past year – you have made my experience of CASE truly rewarding.

It has been a year of many changes not only for CASE as an organization but critically for migration law and policy. CASE was founded in response to the needs of temporary protection visa holders. On 9 August 2008 the temporary protection visa system was formally abolished by the Federal government. This represents a significant victory for refugees and asylum seekers in Australia and could not have been achieved without the continued advocacy of organisations like CASE around Australia. Those whom CASE has assisted in the past in relation to their applications for temporary and permanent protection visas continue to represent a material part of CASE's ongoing clientele in respect of their subsequent applications to be reunited with their loved ones overseas.

Ongoing advocacy and engagement in debates and inquiries concerning CASE's clients is also a critical part of CASE's role. To this end, CASE's representatives attended a meeting in May 2008 with the new Minister for Immigration and Citizenship to voice key concerns affecting its clients together with affiliated organisations in May 2008. CASE also presented submissions, together with affiliated organizations, to the Joint Standing Committee on Immigration Detention in July 2008, and will be represented at hearings in Perth in October 2008.

CASE still urgently requires funds, in particular recurrent, long term funding, to continue to make progress in addressing the needs of its clients and its long waiting lists, an issue with which we are faced daily. This year we have creatively and effectively made progress towards this goal and I feel excited about CASE's future and our ability as an organization to meet the challenges that lie ahead. Despite our limited resources, we are so fortunate to work with a group of people who give generously of their time, energy and enthusiasm. CASE reminds me each day of what is possible when we work together to make a difference in the lives of people who need it most, and that we can be in turn enriched by that experience. For all those who have contributed to CASE's work in the past year, on behalf of the Board, I wish to extend my deepest thanks.



And for our clients who are at the centre of everything that we do, we hope that our efforts on their behalf and in partnership with them, has made their journey to Australia, and that of their families and loved ones, an easier and more welcoming one. It is their stories – of loss, of trauma, of survival, of courage, of dignity – that drive and motivate our work, and that enrich the lives of everyone at CASE.

They are the real heroes at the centre of CASE's story.

Maria Lamattina
Convenor
Board of Management



Joint Principal Solicitors' Report

We commenced work at CASE in October 2007 as Joint Principal Solicitors. The role is job shared between us. We have come from another community centre where we also job shared and so we were well versed in making such an arrangement work well.

We spent several months familiarising ourselves with CASE, its staff, volunteers and clients. We have both come from a Family Law background and so we faced a steep learning curve to quickly learn migration law and the specific refugee work that CASE specialises in. We have to say a huge thank you to the staff, Bill Thomas, Gwynneth Ife and Holly Greenwood, who nursed us through and were so generous with their time and knowledge.

Despite coming from another community legal centre, we were often overwhelmed at the volume of work that CASE does. The growth of CASE over the past several years has meant a huge increase in clients and also means that space is always an issue in the office – both for staff and clients. The volume of closed files was almost drowning us and we needed to find somewhere to store them. In November 2007, we were really pleased to forge a partnership with Allens Arthur Robinson (AAR) who now store all of our closed files off site. They very generously transported and catalogued all of the files and retrieve them for us when necessary. The removal of these files opened up a larger area for us to work in and made a big difference to the office. This relationship with AAR then led to an invitation from their Charity Committee to apply for a grant. With a view to trying to reduce the paperwork that we create, and the space then needed to store the paper, we decided to move towards a paperless office and completed a successful grant application to that end. Our partnership with AAR is very important and we look forward to new projects and support in the next year.

Our biggest achievement this year has been the purchase of a new file management system, 'LEAP Migration Manager'. LEAP is customized file management software for migration law work. It allows staff to keep track of files and clients with the click of a button, merge letters and forms and auto-fill long Department applications. However, there was much work involved in transferring our many clients' data across to the new system. We were very lucky to employ Marti Rinsma who has worked endlessly on this task and, although the work is continuing, we can already see the benefits. It is a valuable tool for CASE which will allow us to manage our workload more effectively and quickly, and will hopefully enable us to assist more clients. We originally purchased five licences, however the success of the system meant that we required more and so we were very pleased when the LEAP providers kindly donated to us an additional licence.

Early in 2008, as more funding became available through a Volunteering Australia Comic Relief grant, we were able to create the role of 'Client Liaison Officer'. This position was offered to our then Office Administrator, Holly Greenwood and we



were very pleased to employ Kay Williams as our new Office Administrator. Holly's role is invaluable as it gives the clients another point of contact when they have concerns or queries. They feel reassured as a result and it has also reduced the workload of the Migration Agents considerably, allowing them to focus on other matters. Kay has been fabulous in getting us all organized and making sure that everything is done correctly. Her cheery attitude is indispensable in what can often be a stressful environment. In a workplace which is so often completely involved in its clients and workload, Kay has injected a real sense of teamwork and camaraderie, and reminded us to take time to appreciate the hard work done by all the team, which has been wonderful.

We were also fortunate this year to convince Gwynneth Ife to become a member of our paid staff. Bill had wanted to semi-retire for a while and he was thrilled when Gwynneth said that she would job-share his position and allow him to take two days off per week. Gwynneth has been a tireless volunteer at CASE for many years and so it is lovely to be able pay her back in some way. Bill and Gwynneth make a formidable team and their knowledge of all things 'refugee' is astounding. We thank them both for their amazing work.

Our volunteers have been, as always, hardworking and invaluable as well. Pam Bryant, our volunteer 'volunteer coordinator' works hard to make sure that we have regular volunteers coming into CASE to help us each day. Sean and Barbara give a few days of their precious retirement time each week to make sure that clients' applications are finalised and sent off as completely and timely as possible. We also could not survive without the valuable work done by the volunteer migration agents and support teams who staff the Saturday morning clinics.

We are now expanding to offer Tuesday evening clinics and welcome offers of assistance from other migration agents who may wish to give a few hours of their time on a regular basis. We are also supported by a number of law students, too many to name individually, from the different universities, who give a few hours of their valuable time each week providing a range of assistance from administrative support to client work.

Overall, we feel as though our first year at CASE has been very busy but also very successful and we look forward to the next year.

Shayla Strapps and Amanda Goodier
Joint Principal Solicitors



Refugees and Asylum Seekers – An International Perspective

A refugee is someone who “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside. The country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that Country...”

1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

Refugees

The *1951 Refugee Convention* describes refugees as people who are outside their country of nationality or habitual residence, and have a well-founded fear of persecution because of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. People fleeing conflicts or generalized violence are also generally considered as refugees, although sometimes under legal mechanisms other than the 1951 Convention. At June 2008, there were 11.4 million refugees located around the world.

Refugees fleeing war or persecution are in a very vulnerable situation. They have no protection from their own state – indeed it is often their own government that is threatening to persecute them. If other countries do not let them in, and do not help them once they are in, then they may be condemning them to death – or to an intolerable life in the shadows, without sustenance and without rights.

ORIGIN OF MAJOR REFUGEE POPULATIONS – 1 JAN 2006		
[Ten largest groups]		
Origin	Main Countries of Asylum	Total ¹
Afghanistan	Pakistan / Iran / Germany / Netherlands / UK	1,908,100 ²
Sudan	Chad / Uganda / Kenya / Ethiopia / Central African Rep.	693,300
Burundi	Tanzania / DR Congo / Rwanda / South Africa / Zambia	438,700
DR Congo	Tanzania / Zambia / Congo / Rwanda / Uganda	430,600
Somalia	Kenya / Yemen / UK / USA / Ethiopia	394,800
Viet Nam	China / Germany / USA / France / Switzerland	358,200
Palestinians	Saudi Arabia / Egypt / Iraq / Libya / Algeria	349,700 ³
Iraq	Iran / Germany / Netherlands / Syria / UK	262,100
Azerbaijan	Armenia / Germany / USA / Netherlands / France	233,700
Liberia	Sierra Leone / Guinea / Côte d'Ivoire / Ghana / USA	231,100

Courtesy UNHCR, March 2008

Asylum Seekers



When people flee their own country and seek sanctuary in another state, they often have to apply for 'asylum' – the right to be recognized as bona fide refugees and receive legal protection and material assistance. An asylum seeker is someone who says he or she is a refugee, but whose claim has not yet been definitively evaluated, and is waiting for that claim to be accepted or rejected. National asylum systems are there to decide which asylum seekers actually qualify for international protection. Those judged through proper procedures not to be refugees, nor to be in need of any other form of international protection, can be sent back to their home countries.

At the beginning of 2006, there were some 773,500 asylum seekers whose individual claims had not yet been adjudicated, including some of the 668,400 people who made asylum applications during 2005. The largest numbers of claims were filed by nationals of Myanmar, Somalia and Serbia and Montenegro. In 2007, over 338,000 applications for asylum were received in industrialized countries, with the top ten recipients identified in the table below.

NEW ASYLUM APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED IN SELECTED INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES ¹ [in 2005]		
Country of Asylum	Asylum applications	Main Countries of Origin
France	49,700	Haiti / Serbia & Montenegro / Turkey / Russian Fed. / DR Congo
United States ²	39,200	China / Haiti / Colombia / El Salvador / Mexico
United Kingdom	30,500	Iran / Pakistan / Somalia / Eritrea / Afghanistan
Germany	28,900	Serbia & Montenegro / Turkey / Iraq / Russian Fed. / Viet Nam
Austria	22,500	Serbia & Montenegro / Russian Fed. / India / Moldova / Turkey
Canada	20,800	Mexico / China / Colombia / Sri Lanka / India
Sweden	17,500	Serbia & Montenegro / Iraq / Russian Fed. / Stateless people / Bulgaria
Belgium	16,000	Russian Fed. / DR Congo / Serbia & Montenegro / Iraq / Slovakia
Netherlands	12,300	Iraq / Somalia / Afghanistan / Iran / Burundi
Switzerland	10,100	Serbia & Montenegro / Turkey / Somalia / Iraq / Bulgaria

Courtesy UNHCR, June 2008.



Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Australia

Australia is a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Optional Protocol to the Refugee Convention. Australia ratified the Convention and Protocol through the enactment of the Migration Act 1958 (Cth) and its amendments. The Minister for Immigration and Citizenship is responsible for administering the Migration Act and thus receiving and assessing claims for protection made by asylum seekers. The Minister is also responsible for receiving and assessing claims for assistance by those in humanitarian need.

At the end of 2007, 3971 claims for asylum were received in Australia (UNHCR, June 2008), and a further 3020 claims were received by 31 August 2008 (UNHCR, September 2008). In 2007, asylum seekers in Australia came from countries including China, Sri Lanka, India, Iraq, Indonesia, Pakistan, Malaysia, Zimbabwe, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Korea.

On 9 August 2008, the Temporary Protection Visa system was abolished, meaning that those who apply for protection in Australia and are found to be refugees, will now receive a Permanent Protection visa from the Australian government.

Other material developments in the past year have included:

- the abolishment of many aspects of the so-called 'Pacific Solution' with the exception being that the Christmas Island facility is still in operation;
- the establishment of a Joint Standing Committee on Migration Inquiry into Immigration Detention to consider the conditions and duration of detention. CASE, along with affiliated organizations, made a written submission to the Inquiry and will be represented at hearings to be conducted in Perth in October 2008;
- consideration is being given by the Minister to establishing legislation concerning complementary protection for those who do not meet the definition of a refugee under international law;
- consideration is being given by the Minister to improving processes around applications for Ministerial intervention, mainly used in cases where all other avenues of appeal have failed; and
- consideration is being given by the Minister to prioritizing family reunion applications for those who have previously been on temporary protection visas.



Our Strategy

CASE's five-year strategic plan, finalised in June 2007, sets out our vision and mission which are based on our values as an organization, and which guide us in our work. The key result areas we have identified mirror these values. This Annual Report provides details in relation to each of these result areas.

Our Vision	A society characterised by equality, access to justice and a commitment to human rights
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Our Mission	To provide legal assistance to asylum seekers, refugees, humanitarian entrants, their families and education to our clients and the broader community.
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Our Values	
<i>Human Rights</i>	We believe in the right of any person to seek and obtain protection from persecution. We believe in the right to representation in pursuing that protection.
<i>Compassion</i>	We believe in affirming the dignity of each individual.
<i>Community</i>	We believe in an inclusive community.
<i>Professionalism</i>	We believe in attaining standards of excellence in all we do.

Key Result Areas	Goal Statements
1. People	We value the contribution our people make in helping to improve the lives of others and are committed to a creating safe, supportive and nurturing work environment.
2. Operations	We will strive to develop and maintain a harmonious, professional and efficient work place.
3. Community Development	Through targeted programs designed to complement our core legal services, we will educate the wider community about the refugee situation. We will create a more compassionate community for refugees.
4. Finance	We will achieve secure, broad-based, independent sources of funding sufficient to meet our objectives.



People

We value the contribution our people make in helping to improve the lives of others and are committed to creating a safe, supportive and nurturing work environment

Our Clients

CASE was founded in 2002 by a group of lawyers, academics and community agencies concerned with the treatment of people who had come to Australia seeking asylum from persecution in their homelands. CASE has since assisted people from many war-torn countries including Afghanistan, Iraq, Vietnam, Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Congo, Burma and Zimbabwe. Clients are assisted to prove their claims for continuing refugee status before the Australian legal system and to reunite families with loved ones separated through war, torture and persecution.

CASE is the only organisation in Western Australia that is:

- solely dedicated to providing legal assistance to refugees and humanitarian entrants; and
- in a position to provide comprehensive legal assistance in refugee and migration law.

This is made possible by the resources available to CASE, namely legal and other staff trained in the field of refugee and migration law and tremendous volunteer support.

Between 2002 and 2006, CASE assisted around 850 Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) holders to obtain Permanent Protection Visas (PPV). In many of these cases, this involved appealing against a negative DIAC decision and successfully arguing before the Refugee Review Tribunal for the original decision to be quashed.

With the decrease in PPV applications over the past two years and the recent announcement of the end of the TPV regime, and while CASE will continue to work on protection matters and assisting those seeking entry on other humanitarian grounds, the primary project for CASE is the Family Reunion Project.



Since its inception in January 2005, the Family Reunion Project has registered approximately 400 sponsors for assistance in sponsoring family members for Australian visas. We have an average of approximately nine new registrations per week.

A natural progression from the TPV Project, the Family Reunion Project was initially conceived to assist former TPV holders who had secured permanent residency after some years in Australia in bringing family members to Australia that they had left behind.

A resolution of the Board of CASE in December 2005, extended the project to encompass other refugee and humanitarian entrants who arrived in Australia with permanent visas from the outset. Former TPV holders account for about 75 percent of the clients the project has assisted to date, with the remainder being offshore humanitarian or refugee entrants.

As at June 2008, CASE had around 370 sponsors registered for assistance under the Family Reunion Project. All assistance by CASE to its clients is free of charge.

Country of Origin for Family Reunion and Protection Visa Clients (June 2008)

Afghanistan	476	Burma	12	Pakistan	2
Iraq	406	Burundi	16	Vietnam	32
Kuwait	6	Palestine	23	Nigeria	1
Iran	31	Sierra Leone	8	Guinea	1
Sudan	57	Liberia	20	Bangladesh	4
Ethiopia	45	Somalia	31	China	3
Congo	19	Liberia	10		

CASE has assisted clients to file applications for family reunion and represents them at the Migration Review Tribunal (MRT) in respect of review of decisions by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) to refuse family reunion to former Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) holders. Currently we have fifteen cases before the Migration Review Tribunal.

We have made important breakthroughs, particularly in respect of the recognition of Afghan customary adoption (often crucial to the success of orphan relative applications) and also in securing recognition of family relationships where no official documentary evidence is available. However given MRT decisions are not binding on the DIAC, it is only through continued and persistent on-the-record advocacy that these results will filter down to the DIAC level and effect the policy change necessary to secure a flexible and humanitarian approach to refugee family reunion applications in the first instance.



CASE has assisted clients to lodge many successful applications and many visas have been granted allowing them to be reunited with their families. Aside from its obvious immediate benefit to the sponsor and the applicant, reunification with family members has many positive flow-on effects. These include helping the sponsors to settle more effectively in Australia and relieving the emotional strain of separation and the knowledge of having left behind members of their family.

CASE also improves access to legal services to refugees and humanitarian entrants by being part of a network of organizations providing services to refugees in Western Australia. In addition, CASE also acts as a clearing house for legal issues presented by its clients, and refers refugees to the most appropriate community and other services that are available in Perth.



An Angolan refugee girl takes a break during school in Nangweshi camp, Zambia, photo courtesy UNHCR

Notwithstanding the decrease in PPV applications and the hard work of our volunteers and staff, CASE has lengthy waiting periods for clients to undergo their first interview for family reunion applications. Currently, the waiting period is approximately four months for an initial client assessment/registration appointment, followed by a further wait of up to three months for their first clinic interview, which can cause clients considerable distress.

It is a practical and psychological imperative that family members be reunited as far as possible, especially following traumatic displacement and dispersal of communities and families in refugee situations. Failure to meet Commonwealth government funding guidelines under its IAAAS scheme, which would entitle CASE to receive fees to fund the provision of assistance, does not mean that this need is any less acute. If CASE did not provide this service it would go unmet, leaving hundreds of the most vulnerable people in the community isolated and without the opportunity to receive legal help or closure on their traumatic pasts.



Ethiopian boy breaks down in tears after searching for his brother all night near the Gulf of Eden, photo courtesy UNHCR.

As word of the positive work of CASE makes its way through the refugee community, CASE finds that it has increasing numbers of protection visa and humanitarian entrants requesting assistance. The waiting list remains long and is expected to increase beyond six months if CASE is unable to secure long term funding for employment of additional staff and additional working space.

CASE has this year taken a multi-faceted approach to addressing this serious backlog of cases. This includes undertaking a full-scale audit of all existing files, establishing an early assessment procedure to inform clients if they have little chance of success, prioritizing files involving orphan relatives and women at risk, applying for additional funding to secure new staff positions, purchasing more efficient and sophisticated software to manage client files, and identifying creative solutions to the limited space available at the organisation's premises. Some of the measures undertaken are ongoing and involve considerable time and effort from staff, Board members and other volunteers, and increased funding is urgently needed to ensure that they can be realised.

A challenge we constantly face as an organization is being forced to turn away those who seek our help because we do not have the resources to assist, when CASE is for many their last or only option. While CASE has achieved much and is constantly improving and refining its work, the demand for assistance is constant, and a lack of sufficient resources to meet the needs of such a vulnerable part of the Australian community is fundamentally unjust.



The Hazara ethnic group, targeted by the Taliban in Afghanistan and forced to flee their homelands. Photo courtesy UNHCR.

Y is a Hazara in his late 30's from a small community in Afghanistan. He married young and had 3 children. Like many in his community, the family suffered because the area was not stable politically. After the Taliban took control of the area, violence increased towards Hazaras. The family suffered a tragedy when, in 1998, the local Wahdat Party headquarters was bombed by the Taliban. Many of his family were killed. As a result of the deaths he became responsible for his orphaned nephews as well as his younger brother. In 2000, Y was arrested by the Taliban. He was severely tortured and still bears the physical and psychological scars. After his release the family borrowed money to get him out of Afghanistan. He made it to Australia in 2000, and was granted a Temporary Protection Visa in 2001 and within 5 months was employed and has worked ever since.

Y registered with CASE and was assisted with his application for a Permanent Protection Visa (PPV). This was granted in late 2004. In this respect he was fortunate: he did not have to prolong the wait by going through the Refugee Review Tribunal. After gaining a PPV he started the process of sponsoring his wife and family. Several years after he arrived in Australia he located his family who had all fled to Iran. When he established contact, he immediately started to support them by sending money. With help from CASE his immediate family members were eventually granted visas. This year, his wife and sons arrived in Perth, followed by a younger nephew a few days later. But even this arrival was not without its problems because of difficulties with passports as they attempted to cross the Afghanistan border. With the assistance of CASE, contact was made with the Principal Migration Officer in Tehran. Within a few hours Tehran had responded, had contacted Y and assured him that the family could fly to Perth from Afghanistan.

The change in Y himself since his family arrived is remarkable. He is transformed. He looks younger, seems happy and relaxed, and despite the cost involved in new family sponsor applications for his other relatives, he is prepared to face the long slow process and the possible disappointments that it may bring for the sake of bringing all his family together again. Y's case is a work in progress. Thanks to CASE he has a PPV, family members have arrived and he has hope for the future.

A sample description of the experiences of a refugee drawn from a range of CASE clients without identifying names to preserve confidentiality



Our Staff

I came to CASE in April 2008 with extensive experience in other Community Law Centres and a strong social justice background however CASE has been a steep learning curve in all things refugee. I am fortunate to work with a group of people who 'just get on with the job'. While there are 'no frills' at CASE we work hard and get results for clients. I am impressed with members of the team, some of whom have been working with CASE for many years, who keep an equilibrium when the level of injustice to many clients and their families is so high.

***Kay Williams
Administration Officer***

CASE is fortunate to have a dedicated and passionate team of staff who often work beyond the call of duty to ensure a professional and compassionate service for clients in need. The legal appointments at CASE include a part-time Principal Solicitor position which is job shared between Shayla Strapps and Amanda Goodier, and a part-time migration agent position which is job shared between Bill Thomas and Gwynneth Ife. The staff has extensive experience in legal practice management, provision of legal services to vulnerable members of the community who would otherwise be denied access to justice, representation of matters in courts and tribunals including the Refugee Review Tribunal and Migration Review Tribunal and volunteer and staff management.

Kay Williams started her role as our new Administration Officer in April 2008. Kay has extensive experience in the community legal and human services sector, and is a welcome asset to the CASE staff team.

Additional funding has enabled CASE to employ an additional part time solicitor, Marti Rinsma, to assist with transfer of filing system to the new LEAP Migration Manager database, and to provide additional support to address the current demand for client services at CASE. Marti commenced with CASE in June 2008 working three days a week, and already has made a significant contribution to the working operations of the office and client management system.



My name is Marti Rinsma and I am the latest addition to the CASE family. My background is in family law and I previously worked as a solicitor at a community legal centre. Learning about the work that CASE undertakes for its clients and refugee law has been such a steep learning curve for me, that the curve it is practically vertical! While many of my family law clients had refugee backgrounds, working on the files at CASE has given me far greater insight and appreciation of the difficulties by those seeking to call Australia home. One particular aspect I know I will enjoy about CASE is helping to bring families together. I look forward to working with such a dedicated group of staff and volunteers.

Marti Rinsma
Solicitor



Creation of Client Liaison Officer Position

Many of CASE clients come from very different legal cultures. Many are survivors of torture and suffer associated after-effects. Hence, many do not fully understand the legal process and may have poor English skills. Telephone communication in English addressing complex information can be difficult for our clients to manage and so it is common for clients to come to the office without an appointment. Clients presenting at the office in this way are provided with as much assistance as is possible which may be referral to an information session, an interview clinic or an external service, assistance in reading a letter they may have received, assistance in completing forms, arranging an appointment with the migration agent or solicitor, or by providing a referral to another community or other organisation which may be able to assist them.

In recognition of the increasing demand for provision of information, initial assistance and referrals for clients presenting at the CASE office, the part time position of Client Liaison Officer was created and endorsed by the CASE Board of Management in April 2008, and the position was filled by Holly Greenwood, who made a smooth transition from her previous position of Office Administrator to her new role.

I have worked in the community legal sector for a number of years and have enjoyed every moment. I joined CASE as the joint Principal Solicitor about 12 months ago and it has been a steep learning curve for me in refugee and humanitarian law. I am amazed at the commitment and enthusiasm of the many volunteers without whom CASE would not be able to function. The dedication and passion of staff is also overwhelming with the extra time and skill they willingly give to CASE. I am continuing to enjoy my time with CASE and meeting and assisting the diverse range of people who come through our door.

***Amanda Goodier
Principal Solicitor***





(From left to right: Amanda Goodier, Gwynneth Ife, Bill Thomas, Holly Greenwood, Shayla Strapps, Kay Williams, Marti Rinsma)

Staff details

Principal Solicitors (Part-Time Job Share)	Amanda Goodier and Shayla Strapps
Solicitor (Part-Time)	Marti Rinsma
Migration Agent (Part-Time Job Share)	Bill Thomas and Gwynneth Ife
Office Administrator (Part-Time)	Kay Williams
Client Liaison Officer (Part-Time)	Holly Greenwood
Volunteer Coordinator (Unpaid)	Pam Bryant

Staff Profile: Shayla Strapps

Amanda and I commenced the role as Joint Principal Solicitor at CASE in October 2008. I have been practicing for just over five years and started my career in private practice before moving to Legal Aid and then subsequently another community law centre. When I started, I had just come from several years at another Community Legal Centre and so was well prepared for the hard work and challenges that come from working in a such an environment. What I was not prepared for was to be so overwhelmed by the tenacity and dedication of all the staff and the numerous volunteers. Our people give many hours each week to CASE so that we maximize the number of clients we help to reunite with their families or provide them with protection in Australia.

Both Amanda and I came from a centre that predominately practiced family law and so we have been working hard to get up to scratch on refugee and humanitarian law. Although only time will give us the amazing bank of knowledge which both Gwynneth and Bill have amassed over their years at CASE, we now feel well equipped to work together with staff and volunteers to help to assist as many refugees as possible.

Shayla Strapps
Joint Principal Solicitor



Our Volunteers

Direct legal services to clients of CASE are provided predominantly through pro bono and volunteer support. These services could not operate effectively or to the highest professional standards without the employment of solicitors to oversee practice management and training and supervision of volunteers. Over the 2007/2008 financial year, CASE has received volunteer support from over 80 law students, migration agents, lawyers and community members with an interest and passion for working with refugees and asylum seekers.

The result of the current structure, which is reliant on pro bono and volunteerism, is that any funds granted to the organisation have the capability of increasing the volume of service delivery over and above that which could be managed through individual solicitor positions providing only casework services.



CASE volunteers and clients at a Family fundraising day.

Volunteer Profile: Gwynneth Ife

In what now seems like a remote past life, I was a teacher, a job I loved. Then I became angry about the detention centres - and then came the Tampa. Someone told me about CASE and said that there was work for people like me. At the end of 2002 I attended a training session and assisted with a couple of PPV cases. I retired from teaching at the end of 2003 and turned the two half days into two full days of volunteering, while also doing Saturday PPV interviews. I loved the change, loved 'working' in the city after a life in schools, loved the work and found the clients' resilience inspiring. I loved the atmosphere at CASE – people are so good to work with. Now I'm a paid Migration Agent, thanks to the help of a generous donor, and job-sharing with Bill (well – we share the hours and the pay, but I depend on his wisdom a lot!).

People sometimes express amazement at the amount of time I spend at CASE. I DO have a lot of other things to do, such as Rottneest guiding, being 'Gran', choral singing and bushwalking and my involvement at St George's Cathedral, so I'm not a complete 'CASE tragic'. I know I get more out of the work than it takes out of me and that, of course, is what being a volunteer is all about.

Gwynneth Ife
CASE Volunteer and new Staff Migration Agent



CASE client, left, with Gwynneth Ife, right.

Our Board



(Top row from left to right): Wendy Campbell, Merridy Parr, Rosemary Hudson-Miller, Brenda Robbins, Christine Knight, Sarah Kemp, (Bottom row from left to right): Mohammed Albadily, Maria Lamattina, Kevin de Souza

The members of the Board of Management during the reporting period and currently are:

Convenor	Ms Maria Lamattina
Vice Convenor	Ms Rosemary Hudson-Miller
Treasurer	Ms Wendy Campbell ¹⁰
Secretary	Ms Sarah Kemp
Board Members	Mr Kevin de Souza Ms Jo Buontempo ¹¹ Ms Brenda Robbins Mr Peter Creighton ¹ Ms Kathy Wake ² Ms Christine Knight ³ Ms Merridy Parr ⁴ Mr Mohammed Albadily ⁵ Ms Joanne Atkinson ⁶ Ms Katrina Williams ⁷ Ms Julie Beus ⁸ Ms Lyn Levy ⁹

- Notes:
1. Mr Creighton resigned on 16 June 2008
 2. Ms Wake was appointed on 22 October 2007 to fill the casual vacancy of Ms Williams and resigned on 28 April 2008
 3. Ms Knight was appointed on 21 July 2008 to fill a casual vacancy made by Peter Creighton
 4. Ms Parr was appointed on 21 July 2008 to fill a casual vacancy made by Kathy Wake
 5. Mr Alhadily was appointed as a community representative on 21 July 2008
 6. Ms Atkinson resigned on 19 November 2007
 7. Ms Williams resigned on 22 October 2007
 8. Ms Beus resigned on 19 November 2007
 9. Ms Levy resigned on 22 October 2007
 10. Ms Campbell was appointed on 19 November 2007 as Treasurer to fill the vacancy of Ms Beus
 11. Ms Buontempo was appointed on 22 October 2007 to fill the casual vacancy of Ms Levy

CASE would like to extend its sincere thanks to those that served on the Board over the past year and those who have since left us. Their contributions have been critical to CASE's many achievements.



(From left to right): Maria Lamattina and Lyn Levy

Our Members

CASE relies on the tremendous ongoing support of its members, whose loyalty to the organization since its inception is greatly appreciated. The members of CASE as at 30 June 2008 are:

Olakemi Afuape	Julian Alban	Durga Arasu	Stephanie Beard
Julie Beus	Ishanee Biswas	Giacomo Boranga	Pam Bryant
Felicity Cain	Wendy Campbell	Diane Caruso	Graham Castledine
SanLing Chan	Maimbo Chilala	Kathryn Choules	Peter Creighton
Kevin de Souza	Jo Day	Catherine Deacon	Connor Deverell
Edmund Rice Centre	Lauren Enright	Susana Farate	Alexis Garnett
Peter Gaughwin	Hana Geha	Suzana Gligorov	Charles Gow-Gates
Sarah Groves	Geoffrey Hansen	Barbara Hewitt	Amy Hilhorst
Rosemary Hudson-Miller	Melissa Hurt	Gwynneth Ife	Alison Inglis
Mina Jafari	Nicole Joseph	Sarah Kemp	Liis Kirk
Maria Lamattina	Minori Lee	Helen Leeder	Lyn Levy
Robert Lindsay	Michele Lord	Michael Magazanike	Sarah Mateljan
Angus McLeod	Glen McLeod	Joanne McLeod	Louise McLeod
Rory McLeod	Lovena Misama	Vanessa Moss	Mphangela Mtonga
Amilee Myson	Bev Noakes	Caro Nye	Kathleen O'Brien
Pamela Panto	Sashi Perera	Margot Perling	Kiran Randhawa
Brenda Robbins	Melissa Ross	Jessica Rusden	Amanda Sapienza
Florence Seow	Katie Shea	Jennifer Solliss	Katherine Storey
Janaki Tampi	Ella Tchomarian	Bill Thomas	Su Sze Ting
Jacob To	Katrina Williams	Eden Winnacott	Rebecca Wringe
Pierre Yang			



Staff Profile: Bill Thomas

Bill Thomas joined CASE as our Migration Agent in January 2004, making Bill our longest serving staff member. With the many stresses and strains on the organization, Bill's skills and efforts have been critical in ensuring that our many clients receive continuity of services and support. In his past work, Bill has been a Member of Parliament, librarian, industrial advocate, Ministerial Officer, Deputy Chairman of the Joint Standing Committee on the Anti-Corruption Commission, a consultant and is still a Justice of the Peace. This eclectic background and a keen research interest in contemporary Muslim politics provide a broad and informed basis upon which to conduct his work.

Bill is well known and loved by staff, volunteers and clients alike and is seen as the heart of CASE. Without his continued and loyal service, and his hundreds of volunteer hours donated to CASE, CASE would not have been able to achieve all it has.



(From Left to Right) CASE Client, Bill Thomas

Community Development

Through targeted programs designed to complement our core legal services, we will educate the wider community about the refugee situation, and we will create a more compassionate community for refugees.

Community Education and Training

Community legal education, which aims to increase the capacity of the legal and migration advice profession and the community to assist refugees, is integral to the work of CASE. It is achieved by:

- training, mentoring and supervising pro bono lawyers and migration agents in the provision migration law services to refugees
- providing educational opportunities to law and other students
- developing expertise in refugee and migration law issues and transferring this knowledge to staff, volunteers, clients and the broader community.

CASE either hosts or participates in public education events each year so as to increase the awareness of the Australian community about refugee issues. This is important as it contributes to the development of community-based support for CASE and the clients it represents.

Over the past years, CASE has been involved in the following educational activities:

- In November 2005, CASE with ASeTTS, Edmund Rice Centre and the Women's Health Service launched a training manual for volunteers working with refugees. This manual is regularly updated (most recently in 2008) and includes an overview of the refugee and humanitarian visa classes, cultural awareness and self-care for volunteers.
- In conjunction with the above organisations, CASE participated in the creation of a DVD training program designed for the training of volunteers working with refugees and migrants. This project was completed in May 2008.
- In September 2007, as part of its AGM, CASE organised a talk on current refugee issues by Dr John Cameron, a prominent barrister involved in pro-bono refugee legal work.



- CASE ran information stalls on orientation days at both UWA and Murdoch University in January/February 2008. This allows CASE to engage students on legal issues facing refugees and provides a platform for the recruitment of potential student volunteers.

CASE' staff and volunteer members have also been involved in presenting to;

- church groups on working with refugees;
- high schools on refugee issues including legal issues and
- corporate and individual donors on refugee legal issues in Australia.

Additionally, CASE has many volunteers who undergo extensive education and training. CASE has developed an induction and training program for all new staff and volunteers. Law students and volunteer lawyers and migration agents must complete the training before having contact with clients. Training is offered approximately three to four times per year and covers:

1. An overview of the structure and services of CASE;
2. An overview of the legal framework of refugee claims including international conventions, treaties and protocols, relevant domestic legislation and pertinent case law;
3. Working with interpreters and cross cultural interview skills
4. Historical and cultural overview of Afghanistan and Iraq and relevant African cultures.



Photo courtesy Ohio University

Over the following year, CASE has conducted four general training sessions in conjunction with ASeTTS, the Edmund Rice Centre and the Women's Health Service. We have also conducted two specialised legal training sessions designed specifically for CASE volunteers.

In recognition of its work to strengthen volunteering in Western Australia, CASE was shortlisted as a finalist in the 2007 Community Service Industry Awards, sponsored by the Western Australian Department of Child Protection and Department of Communities. This is an outstanding achievement for CASE and is a testament to the quality of the training and support for volunteers that CASE provides.

Training for Law Students

Clinic Programme

For both protection visa and family reunion work, law students involved in direct work with clients are paired with an experienced volunteer (generally a lawyer/migration agent) and act as an observer and scribe for a number of interviews before taking on the interviewing role. This mentoring process is an important skills development and assurance for consistency of service standards. An experienced lawyer/migration agent supervises all interviewing pairs. This model gives law students the opportunity to develop their practice skills in a supportive and supervised setting. Law students have found CASE's training model particularly useful.

For me, volunteering at CASE is about helping to build a better community, both locally and internationally. The work that we do at CASE to assist refugees is of immense value to both those being helped and those helping. Giving up just a few hours every few weeks to help someone start a better life is a really good way to appreciate how lucky we are here in Australia.

Eden Winnacott
CASE Volunteer and Law Student



Website

In 2006 and 2007, CASE pursued the development of its website as the main portal to disseminate such information for use by CASE and the community generally. The website was launched in April 2008, and it is hoped that it will be used to integrate useful links, precedents and other resources for researching and preparing submissions on behalf of clients. This is particularly useful in supplementing training programs as, with the growing diversity of CASE's client base through its expanded mandate, keeping informed and current with country information relevant to clients presents a real challenge.

It is also hoped that the website will provide clients with general information in relation to the activities of the organization, the types of services it provides and any relevant cross referral information. Subject to appropriate funding, the website may also ultimately become the access point for an intranet for use by staff and volunteers. Finally, the website is an easy method through which to communicate with donors and the community generally about refugees, about volunteering with CASE and about CASE's work. An online donations facility is also included on the website which enables CASE to streamline its donations process.



www.caseforrefugees.org.au



I know that if it wasn't for your help, advice, guidance and understanding I wouldn't be here today and I just wanted to thank you from my heart and soul how much you have been able to change my life and future. I feel like I have been reborn and given a second chance at life and for this I am extremely grateful. It is so hard to fully express my gratitude, feeling and emotions, but it is truly a wonderful feeling and I wanted to share this with you and thank everyone at CASE so much.

From a CASE client

Community Advocacy

The new Minister for Immigration and Citizenship established a Joint Standing Committee on Migration Inquiry into Immigration Detention to consider the conditions and duration of detention. CASE, along with affiliated organizations, made a written submission to the Inquiry in July 2008 and will be represented at hearings to be conducted in Perth in October 2008. CASE also participated in a meeting with the Minister to voice the concerns of its clients together with affiliated organisations in May 2008.



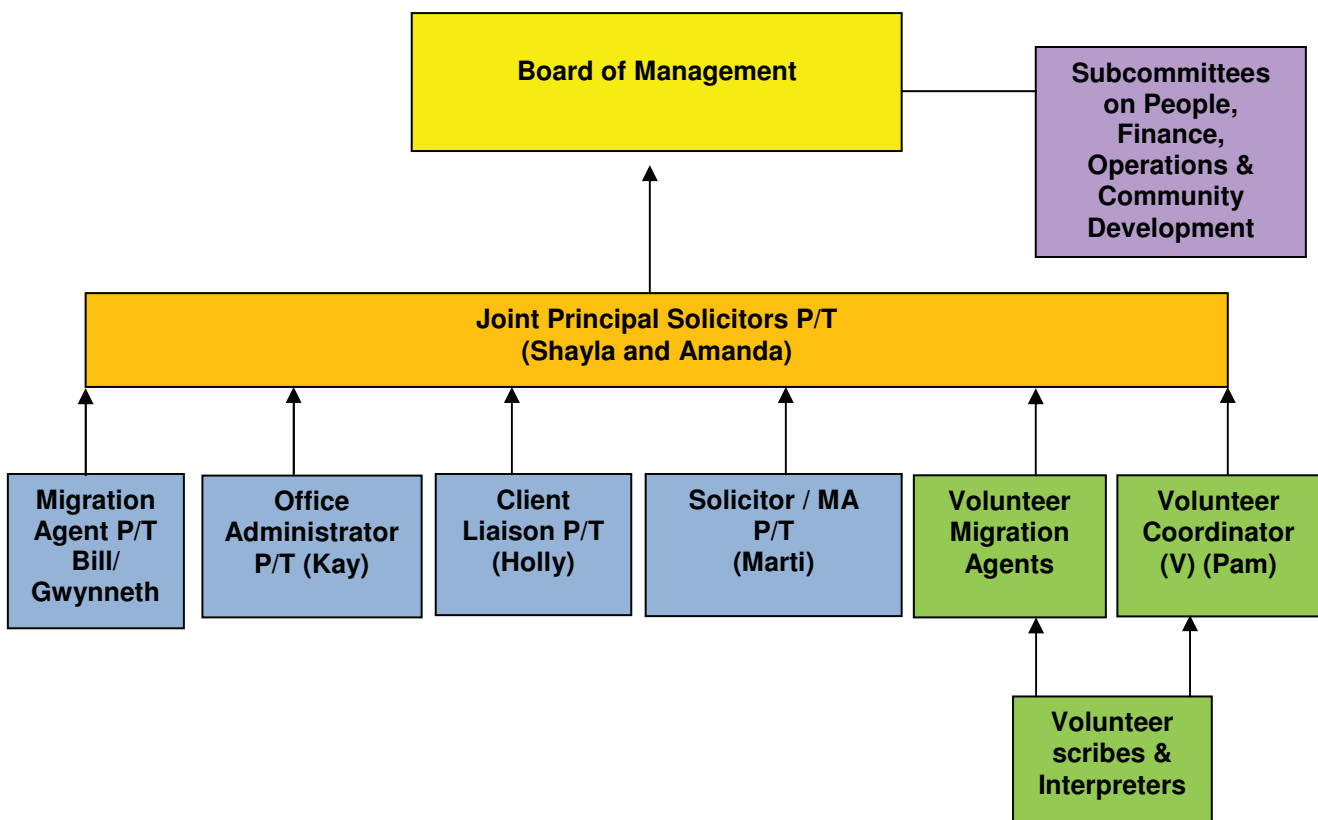
Vanessa Moss (former CASE Principal Solicitor) and her son.

Operations

We will strive to develop and maintain a harmonious, professional and efficient work place

Governance

CASE is committed to attaining high standards of governance, practice and risk management and accountability. In line with its strategic plan and key result areas discussed earlier in this report, a representation of the organisation's structure and reporting lines is provided below.



Board of Management

The organisation is governed by a qualified and committed Board of Management which collectively has skills and experience in governance, corporate, administrative and migration law, executive management in government, community and corporate sectors, financial administration and accounting, refugee advocacy and representation and social services.

The role of the Board is to determine and monitor the strategic direction for the organisation, ensure legal, financial, contractual and ethical obligations are met and provide support to and oversee the work of the Joint Principal Solicitors who report directly to the Board and present reports at each Board meeting. The subcommittees of the Board are designed to focus on the key result areas of the organization identified in the strategic plan.

Board members are required to be financial members of the organization and perform their duties on a voluntary basis. They receive no remuneration for their services. Upon appointment, Board members receive induction materials in relation to the structure and strategic plan of the organization, the Constitution and their responsibilities as Board members. An induction manual is maintained by the Secretary. Board members received governance training in 2007, and further training is being considered for new members.



(From Left to Right): Holly Greenwood, Kathy Wake, Kathryn Choules (former CASE Volunteer Coordinator).

Given the limited resources of the organization, many of the members of the Board volunteer additional time and effort to the work of the organization, including conducting training for volunteers, preparing funding applications, coordinating fundraising events and volunteering for Saturday clinics.

I have been a member of the CASE Board for 12 months. I am a barrister with many years experience on Boards and Committees. I joined the CASE Board in 2007 because of the tremendously important work it is engaged in - it changes people's lives by assisting them to obtain protection in Australia and re-uniting families who have been torn apart. It is personally rewarding to do this with the dedicated and professional people who make up the staff and board members of CASE.

Brenda Robbins
Board Member



(From Left to Right): Katrina Williams, Brenda Robbins, Julie Beus)



(From left to right): Wendy Campbell, Peter Creighton, Bill Thomas



(From Left to Right): Rosemary Hudson Miller, Jo Atkinson.

The qualifications of the current Board members are set out in the table below:

Name	Qualifications	Experience	Term
Maria Lamattina Convenor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Master of Laws - Current ▪ Bachelor of Laws ▪ Bachelor of Arts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Currently In-House Counsel and Company Secretary for Nido Petroleum Limited ▪ Vice President of the WA Branch of Amnesty International Australia 2003-2008 ▪ Pro bono representation of refugee cases in courts and tribunals for over 5 years 	2006
Rosemary Hudson- Miller Vice Convenor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Diploma of Nursing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social Justice Consultant for the Uniting Church WA Synod ▪ Extensive involvement in advocating for refugees ▪ Founding member of CASE for Refugees and the Coalition for Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Detainees 	2002
Sarah Kemp Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bachelor of Laws – Current ▪ Graduate Certificate in Law ▪ Bachelor of Social Work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 12 years experience in justice, mental health, counselling, training and social research and policy fields. ▪ Previously Committee member of the Australian Association of Social Workers WA branch. ▪ Currently working as a Project Officer with the Equal Opportunity Commission 	2006
Wendy Campbell Treasurer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Certified Practising Accountant 	15 years experience in public practice	2007
Kevin De Souza Member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bachelor of Laws ▪ Admitted to the Supreme Court of Singapore as an advocate and solicitor ▪ Admitted to the Supreme Court of Western Australia as a barrister and solicitor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appeals lawyer for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Hong Kong ▪ Legal consultant for UNHCR in Singapore ▪ Board member of the Criminal Legal Aid Scheme in Singapore ▪ Private Practice – Singapore and Australia 	2006

Name	Qualifications	Experience	Term
Brenda Robbins Member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Juris Doctor ▪ Postgraduate Certificate in Migration Law and Practice ▪ Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management ▪ Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors ▪ Bachelor of Arts ▪ Diploma of Company Director's Course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Currently practicing as a barrister at Sir Lawrence Jackson Chambers ▪ Held CEO and senior executive positions in a number of State Government agencies including Department of State Services, Office of Industrial Relations, Public Service Commission and the Subiaco Redevelopment Authority ▪ Board member of the Keystart Pty Ltd group of companies ▪ Previously member of the UWA Senate, President of Australian Institute of Management and Legal Aid Commissioner 	2007
Jo Buontempo Member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Master of Business Administration – Current ▪ Postgraduate Certificate in Migration Law and Practice ▪ Advanced Diploma in Leadership & Management - Advanced Management Program component ▪ Associate Diploma in Social Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Over 17 yrs senior and executive management experience in the social services, community law and government sectors. ▪ Currently working as migration agent in private practice. ▪ Member of the Independent Public Housing Review Panel ▪ Previously Board member of the Western Australian Council of Social Services, Executive member of the Community Legal Centres Association of WA 	2007
Christine Knight Member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Migration Agent, Deakin University ▪ CELTA English Teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Migration Agent since 1999 ▪ Established migration agent service, Meridien Migration Australia Pty Ltd, in 2000 ▪ Trains migration agents through the Migration Institute of Australia (MIA) ▪ Volunteer with Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre and CASE for several years ▪ State President, MIA 2005-6 ▪ Former Board member Migration Agents Registration Authority (MARA) ▪ Board Member Italian Chamber of Commerce 	2008



Name	Qualifications	Experience	Term
Merridi Parr Member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bachelor of Laws ▪ Bachelor of Arts ▪ Admitted to practise 2003 ▪ Migration Agent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Worked with Department of Immigration for 18 months ▪ 2005 Australian Youth Ambassador with AusAID ▪ 2006 Solicitor with Legal Aid ▪ Current solicitor and migration agent with Interstaff International Ltd, involved in complex applications and migration appellate work ▪ Volunteer with CASE since 2006 	2008
Mohammed Albhadiy Member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PhD Business Law –Current ▪ Masters Commerce (Business Law) ▪ Post Grad Dip Commercial Law ▪ Bachelor Legal Studies (Murdoch) ▪ Bachelor of Laws (Baghdad) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Practised four years in Iraq in civil, insurance, family and criminal law ▪ Came to Australia and recognized as a refugee in 1997 ▪ Volunteer at Sussex Street Community Legal Centre and at CASE ▪ Facilitator in Refugee Week Project ▪ Current doctoral student at Curtin University 	2008

In July 2008, I joined the Board of CASE. I am enjoying being part of such a positive and valuable organisation and am looking forward to furthering my contribution over the coming year.

Merridy Parr
Board Member

Practice Management

The Joint Principal Solicitors are primarily responsible for the management of the legal practice and the maintenance of quality practising standards, and are accountable to the Board in this regard. The Principal Solicitor reports to the Board monthly in relation to any matters relating to practice management, and is responsible for coordinating and complying with annual auditing requirements associated with the organization's participation in the National Community Legal Centres Professional Indemnity Insurance Scheme. The Principal Solicitors are responsible for the supervision of all legal services provided by the organization, and for the development and implementation of processes and procedures required to ensure compliance with professional standards.



CASE also maintains a Professional Indemnity Insurance Compliance Manual on its premises. The Principal Solicitors recently conducted a comprehensive audit of all files currently open, and have recently implemented an archiving process for closed files through funding provided by Allens Arthur Robinson. The introduction and current implementation of documentation and case management software noted below is also a key tool in ensuring more effective and efficient practice management.

People Management

Operational systems in place to facilitate people management include a staff and volunteer induction manual, a staff and volunteer training program and the preparation and review of job descriptions for each staff member. Each staff member undergoes an annual review in relation to their salary and performance. Each staff member also undertakes both compulsory training in relation to their professional accreditation requirements and additional training where funding permits, as part of their overall professional development plans. CASE is currently investigating options for the establishment of an employee assistance program to provide counseling and support to staff and volunteers, particularly in view of the often traumatic information discussed with clients.

Client Services

In order to better meet the needs of clients, CASE has established a Client Charter and associated service standards. CASE has recently appointed a new Community Representative to its Board of Management, Mohammed Albhadily, who is also a refugee. CASE prepares for its staff and volunteers client group profiles and country and cultural information to ensure that services provided to and communications with clients are undertaken on an informed, respectful and effective basis.

Clients are also encouraged to provide feedback to CASE staff and volunteers, some of which can be read in this report. Client numbers are monitored closely, particularly in view of the high rate of client enquiries received as noted earlier in this report. New database software will assist in generating regular and precise information in this regard for the consideration of staff and Board members in ongoing planning. Clients are also encouraged to take part in social and educational activities hosted by CASE so as to strengthen relationships and assist in their settlement in Australia. Finally, clients are given referrals as required to affiliated organisations and agencies in relation to any issues with which they require assistance that do not relate to migration law.



I decided to join the Board to work with other members to improve services and support that have been provided to refugees. My background - as a refugee - might help to highlight some important issues that need to be addressed.

Mohammed Albhady
Board Member



Young refugee girl trying to reach Shebele B Refugee Camp on the edge of Bossaso, Somalia, photo courtesy UNHCR

Operating Systems

CASE has established various procedures associated with the intake and processing of clients, and the management of client files, which are regularly reviewed by the Joint Principal Solicitors. This includes the Policy and Procedures Manual which has been drafted and is due to be finalized. With increasing recognition and need for an updated client management database to enable our operations to run more effectively, CASE purchased the LEAP Migration Manager database software in June 2008. Client information is currently being transferred to the new system, after which time staff will be trained in the use of the new software.



The LEAP Migration Manager is designed to improve client information and workflow management. As noted earlier in this report, CASE's website was launched in April 2008. Work will shortly commence on the integration of research materials and resources into the website, with a view to ultimately integrating electronic documents and client database information through an intranet.

Assets Management

CASE maintains an assets register and is in the process of reviewing and updating its information technology plan. CASE has identified and is in the process of securing funding to meet telecommunications, infrastructure and space requirements with reference to current and anticipated growth levels. In doing so, CASE recognized the need to coordinate its efforts with those of the Coalition Assisting Refugees and Detainees (CARAD) with whom CASE shares its premises. During the year, CASE and CARAD established a Joint Subcommittee of the Boards of CARAD and CASE to establish better methods of sharing the premises, working effectively together, and combining efforts with respect to the procurement of materials and equipment and application for funding, for the benefit of our common clientele. The Joint Subcommittee has met on several occasions since its establishment and has focused primarily on identifying and implementing plans to maximize the productive use of the space available in the premises, and seek funding for the creation of additional meeting spaces and storage areas, and the procurement of additional equipment.

Stakeholder Relationships

CASE maintains relationships with key stakeholders in order to improve the efficiency of its work and the outcomes achieved for clients. CASE maintains memberships and subscriptions to relevant organizations and services. CASE is represented in various industry networks and forums, and CASE engages in regular communication with stakeholders including direct engagement with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship in case management. CASE also engages in cross referrals among affiliated organizations working with similar client communities across the health, community and government sectors. CASE regularly communicates with members in relation to the activities of the organization, and maintains communications with key sponsors and donors.



Finance

We will achieve secure, broad-based, independent sources of funding sufficient to meet our objectives

Funding

Sourcing funds to both maintain and develop the services of the organisation is a constant activity of the staff and Board of CASE. At present the organisation does not receive core operating or recurrent funding from any source. Despite this, the organisation continues to grow and improve its financial position with the strong and extensive support of:

- the corporate sector
- established government and non government grants programs at state, federal and international levels
- the pro bono efforts of dedicated volunteers within the legal and migration advice professions
- volunteer law and social services students
- practicum and internships through Western Australian universities

CASE will continue to build on this support infrastructure and make submissions to ensure organisational longevity and self-reliance.

CASE actively sought to diversify its funding base by targeting a balanced group of corporate, governmental, international and local support. CASE also established an online donations facility through the launch of its website at www.caseforrefugees.org.au aimed at increasing individual and recurring donations to CASE.



During the year, CASE received funds from:

- The Law Society of Western Australia, Public Purposes Trust
- United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture
- Volunteering Australia, Comic Relief Grant
- Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Refugee and Humanitarian Program, Immigration Advice and Application Assistance Service (IAAAS)
- Allens Arthur Robinson Charity Committee, Transition to a Paperless Office
- Corporate and Individual donations, including Nido Petroleum Limited and the Uniting Church
- Individual donations
- Fundraising activities
- Memberships.



Further details in relation to some of these donations and grants appear below.

We are pleased to report that, since the last financial year, we have increased our income from these efforts by over 50 percent, raising \$242,110. This is a great achievement and testament to the ingenuity, efforts and persistence of the staff and members of the Board involved.

Pursuing core operating or recurrent funding, in particular to meet the ongoing running costs and staffing needs of the organization, remains a high priority for CASE and we are actively investigating options that may be available.

CASE is also investigating relationships with professional fundraisers to assist in better targeting its fundraising efforts and diversifying its funding base.



Comic Relief Funding

CASE has received a Comic Relief grant from Volunteering Australia for \$50,000 from 1 July 2008 for 12 months for the employment of a solicitor/migration agent for the establishment of a night legal service. As a result, CASE has been able to employ Marti Rinsma, and Bill Thomas has taken on the role of night legal service provider which now runs on Tuesday evenings. This was a new grant application for CASE. As this is a one-off grant, ongoing support is needed in relation to these new roles and to allow for the employment of administrative staff to support the new night service.

Allens Arthur Robinson Paperless Office Funding

In June 2008, CASE received a grant of over \$7,000 from the Allens Arthur Robinson Charity Committee in order to assist our office in its transition to paperless operations. This has enabled CASE to purchase equipment and commence the process of making documents and files electronic. Allens Arthur Robinson has also assisted in providing much needed storage for client files that have been closed. With the limited space available to CASE in its premises, these initiatives have assisted in streamlining and enabling more efficient access to documents while increasing working space available. We look forward to continuing to build our relationship with our new supporter.



(Left to right) Melanie Jasper, Lawyer, Allens Arthur Robinson, presenting the Allens Arthur Robinson Charity Committee cheque to Rosemary Hudson-Miller, Vice Chair, CASE Board of Management, and Shayla Strapps, Principal Solicitor.

Thank you very much for taking time out to attend our offices and providing us with valuable insight into the work of CASE. After the presentation I received a number of comments from staff members commending the Charity Committee for supporting such an important organisation. We are very proud to support the work you do, particularly on such a stretched budget.

Melanie Jasper
Lawyer, Allens Arthur Robinson

Financial Management

CASE has in place strong processes of financial management to ensure that the Board is kept informed of and able to take appropriate action in relation to the finances of the organization. Our Treasurer is a qualified certified practising accountant with 15 years' experience.

The Treasurer prepares an annual budget for approval by the Board. The Treasurer also reports to the Board monthly in relation to the organisation's financial position and performance against the budget, and the allocation of grant monies and donations received. Regular financial reporting to all major donors and funding bodies in relation to the acquittal of funds received also takes place. Finally, an annual independent audit is undertaken of the organization's financials.

This year's financial statements, audited by CASE's independent auditor, Dry Kirkness, are presented at the conclusion of this report.

I joined the CASE Board as Treasurer in 2007. One of the highlights for me of working with CASE is the team spirit that prevails. Having also always worked either in small business or with small businesses in my public accounting practice, the focus away from the profit motive is also very refreshing. The challenges that constantly face an organization like CASE are not dissimilar to ones facing small business. The methods of addresses these challenges are however different, and I look forward to working with the board on these issues over the next year.

Wendy Campbell
Treasurer



“Refugees are ordinary people living extraordinary lives: driven from their homes by fear, conflict and persecution, they have had to give up jobs, possessions, dreams, even families in their struggle to survive. They remain some of the most vulnerable people in our society. They need assistance and protection. And they need our understanding.”

Former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan



Drawing by young CASE client.

centre for advocacy, support and education for refugees



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