



Supporting Communities,
Strengthening Voices

East Web

PROJECT FACTS

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Catering Service

Since opening its doors in June 2001, the ASRC has become the largest provider of aid, advocacy and health services for asylum seekers in Australia. The ASRC seeks to promote and protect the human rights of asylum seekers living in the community, and in detention, through working at a grassroots level to meet their daily living needs and at the same time advocate and lobby at a structural level to create genuine social change

The Catering Service is a new and exciting part of the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre's Employment Program. The Catering Service employs asylum seekers who have the legal right to work but face significant barriers to finding rewarding, gainful employment. Despite having exceptionally well developed skills, years of training and an unparalleled drive to work to support themselves and their families, and to contribute to Australian society, asylum seekers often come up against many obstacles when looking for work. These include language barriers, unfamiliarity with Australian workplace cultures and practices, and a lack of employer recognition of their skills and prior experience.

The Catering Service acknowledges these barriers and aims to create a profitable undertaking whereby asylum seekers have an opportunity to engage in meaningful employment, learn new skills and develop an understanding of a new working culture.

Under the leadership of Pablo Gimenez, experienced chefs from all over the world create sensational banquets that are not only delicious, but 100% vegan and organic. The huge list of menu options comprises Middle Eastern, Asian and Mediterranean platters that can be prepared for large events such as conferences and weddings, or smaller events such as stalls at community festivals. Pablo happily announces, "Ultimately, we can cater events from 10 to 10,000 people."

Surplus funds raised by the Catering Service are used to support the work of the centre in supporting those who do not have the right or capacity to work, often due to restrictions placed upon them by conditions on their visas, which forbid them from working, accessing welfare benefits, educational facilities and even health care.

Since the launch of EastWeb in February, (catered by the ASRC Catering Service), and the initial \$2000 grant, the Service has embarked on numerous highly successful ventures. These include the Students for Sustainability Conference at Latrobe University, which realized a \$20,000 surplus, and the ongoing running of the Footscray Primary School canteen. They have also recently catered a conference for Greenpeace, and have a huge catering gig as part of the Melbourne Arts Festival this year.

For information regarding the Asylum Seekers Resource Centre Catering Service, or to enquire about what the service can provide at your next event, please contact the ASRC.

The EastWeb Fund

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