



20 March 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic calls on us to be calm, creative and practical in our response.

Clearly these are challenging times for everyone and our thoughts are with people seeking asylum, our supporters, partners, volunteers and community as we keep up with this unfolding reality.

The Asylum Seekers Centre will continue to provide welcome and practical services and support to thousands of people seeking asylum who live in our Sydney community. We do not know how long it will be safe to remain open in this way and we are working with other services and supporters on a plan to get services and support to people remotely.

More than ever, we need your support to mobilise the community of Sydney behind people seeking asylum.

Most people seeking asylum have no safety net to fall back on in times of crisis. Very few are entitled to any welfare support or Centrelink payments. There is currently nothing for people seeking asylum in the Federal Government's stimulus package.

People seeking asylum often struggle with the basics such as access to food and shelter, many have chronic health conditions and those in employment are often casuals in industries which will be hit hard.

This week's changes to services

- Our new **open-door hours are 10am-2pm, Monday to Friday** at 43 Bedford St, Newtown.
- Our phone line **02 9078 1900** will still be open from 9am - 4pm. Our staff will work regular hours and make appointments at other times, though many will be trialing how we can continue to provide services remotely.
- Appointments with our health clinic, casework team, legal team and employment service are continuing.
- Our foodbank is still open for normal business and daily lunches are still on with new processes to increase hygiene measures. Providing people with food is more important than ever.

What you can do

I know that you care about people seeking asylum and will want to continue your support. We are promoting the idea that kindness is viral this week.

- [To support us financially](#)
- [To donate food and groceries](#)

Now, more than ever, we need to work together to bring everyone with us through this crisis. I would appreciate you staying in touch via our [website](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to see what's happening every day and how you can support people seeking asylum.

Thank you as always,
Warm regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frances Rush".

Frances Rush OAM
Chief Executive Officer

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