



New Beginnings Project

Salvos refugee sponsorship

Guidebook





The world is facing an unprecedented global refugee crisis.

Millions of people are being forced to leave their homes because of war and persecution. And though we may not be able to help all refugees, God calls us all to help those we can.

Australia's new community sponsorship program is a unique opportunity to demonstrate the tangible love of Jesus by helping refugees find homes in local communities across Australia.

The New Beginnings Project provides a pathway for you and your corps to get involved.

This guidebook explains how.

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Section 1

Background

About community sponsorship

1. What is the New Beginnings Project (NBP)?

The NBP is The Salvation Army's community sponsorship program for refugees. You and your faith community now have an opportunity to put your love into action by welcoming refugee families from overseas to settle in Australia.

2. What is community sponsorship?

Australia's new community refugee sponsorship program allows groups of volunteers to sponsor and settle refugees in their community, providing 12 months of practical hands-on support to a refugee household from their date of arrival in Australia.

The Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot (CRISP) program was launched in mid-2022. The government partnered with Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia (CRSA) in the design and delivery of the program, which aims to support 1,500 refugees over four years. The pilot was set to continue to June 2026, however, given its success to date, the government has announced in February 2025 that it will be a permanent feature of Australia's humanitarian migration program in 2026.

CRSA are responsible for the program, including training and vetting supporter groups, and matching them with refugees. The Salvation Army (TSA) is partnering with CRSA in the delivery of the NBP.

3. Where does the idea come from?

Community refugee sponsorship was first started in Canada over 40 years ago, as the result of advocacy from faith groups. Since that time over 325,000 refugees have been settled through the program. Faith communities have continued to do the bulk of the heavy lifting, with 90 out of 120 community sponsorship organisations in Canada today being faith-based. It is now spreading around the world, with the program running in



various countries including New Zealand, United Kingdom, Ireland, the United States, Germany, Spain and Argentina.

4. Has TSA been involved in community sponsorship previously?

Yes. TSA Canada and TSA UK have taken part in this global movement since 2000 and 2016 respectively. TSA Canada has been participating in the community sponsorship program since 2000 and have sponsored at least 72 families. TSA UK has been involved since 2016, when it was first introduced in the country, and has welcomed 12 families so far. Raynes Park Salvation Army were the first corps to take part and, by sharing their experience, they have inspired other corps in the UK and Ireland to welcome refugees through this route.

Participation in the community sponsorship has brought a significant impact to the church and community:

"I think one of the biggest impacts on the church and community is a deep understanding of the reality of the refugee experience and what it truly means to have to move to and resettle in a new place, with all the difficulties and challenges this presents. This can lead to new mission opportunities as corps members become more aware of the needs of refugees and other newcomers. They may begin to identify gaps in local provision or seek to find ways to show hospitality and welcome in many small but significant ways."



(Ben Still, Refugee Response Manager, The Salvation Army UK & Ireland Territory)



5. Why is it important for Australian Salvos and corps to engage?

TSA Australia is part of TSA International's body of Christ. We support TSA International Positional Statement on Refugees and Asylum Seekers. We believe in God's hospitable loving concern for the stranger and foreigner, as evident in Scripture. God calls us to welcome foreigners and love them as our own (Leviticus 19:34). We have seen God's beautiful work through our fellow Salvos overseas. It is only right we offer the same availability and generosity to be God's partners in this mission here in Australia.

The new community sponsorship program is a unique opportunity to demonstrate love in action by helping refugees find a home in local communities across Australia. This is an opportunity for the lives of Salvos/Christians and refugees to be mutually enriched and transformed "by the love of Jesus".

6. How does The New Beginnings Project help corps/faith communities to engage?

The New Beginnings Project is a pathway for Salvos to engage with community sponsorship. It offers a series of tools and resources specifically designed for Salvos and corps to mobilise their communities across the country.





Understanding the acronyms

CRSA - [Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia](#) is the organisation responsible for community sponsorship in Australia. It runs the CRISP program.

NBP - New Beginnings Project is TSA's name for CRISP or community refugee sponsorship.

CRISP - [Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot](#) is the name of the community sponsorship program commissioned by the Australian government and run by CRSA.

NAYBA - [NAYBA](#) (pronounced "neighbour") is a global Christian network committed to resourcing local churches with resources to help transform local neighbourhoods.

CSG - Community Supporter Groups form the core of the CRISP model. These are the groups of people who have come together in their communities to sponsor, settle and support refugee households.

The legacy of faith communities in Canada

More than 325,000 refugees have been settled through Canada's community sponsorship program in their 40-year history, which has laid the blueprint for other nations to adopt the program. The popularity of community sponsorship in Canada has meant that more than half of the Syrian refugees resettled in Canada were through community sponsorship, and in 2022 the community resettled twice as many refugees as the government itself.

The current model was initiated by the [Mennonite Central Committee of Canada](#) (MCCC) in response to refugees fleeing from Indochina in the late 1970s. MCCC mobilised a coalition of 40 faith-based organisations to support the program. This led to the government matching sponsors one-for-one to resettle 60,000 refugees from the Indochina region. From 1979-1980, the Mennonite Church in Canada settled 4,000 refugees itself, with half of all Mennonite Churches at the time settling at least one family each. Faith communities have continued to play an important role for community sponsorship in Canada. Of the 120 organisations responsible for community sponsorship in Canada, 90 of them are faith-based. Faith-based organisations have been the driving force and the lifeblood of community



sponsorship in Canada. This history shows us what coordinated action by churches can achieve. It also shows that sustained commitment from Christians over time is important and effective. Faith communities were not just initiators of the concept, but have done a large proportion of the heavy lifting over the years. The Church in Canada has been a faithful witness to our God's heart for the "least of these" (Matt 25:40).

Now it is Australia's turn.

Theological Underpinning

TSA'S Positional Statement on Refugees and Asylum Seekers explains the Biblical grounds for our stance:

*The Salvation Army believes human life is created in the **image of God** and is a gift to be cherished, nurtured and redeemed (Genesis 1:27). The sanctity of human life means we treat all people with dignity. Dignity is neither conferred nor withheld by citizenship, human choice or plight; it is inherent in every person.*

*In Scripture, God is revealed as love and compassion - a love and compassion that extends to all people and includes special provision for the foreigner and those whose circumstances leave them in need of the care of strangers. God who was refuge, shelter, provider and comforter for the people of ancient Israel, makes it clear that his people are to remember their flight to freedom and safety and extend a welcome to others in their time of need: '[God] **defends the cause of the fatherless** and the **widow**, and loves the **foreigner** residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt' (Deuteronomy 10:18-19, NIV).*





Not only are foreigners to be the subject of compassion and special provision, they are to be welcomed as neighbours.

*The ancient nation of Israel was left in no doubt that divine law required them to **love their neighbour as one of their own**, even if their neighbour happened to come from a different background, culture or religion (see Leviticus 19:33-34). Jesus Christ taught we should love God and **love our neighbour** (see Matthew 22:34-40). The infant Jesus was a refugee fleeing a violent tyrant and throughout his life he sought to love and welcome all. He commended those who **welcome strangers** (Matthew 25:35-36). Obedient to the example and teaching of Jesus, the Church has called Christians to generous hospitality. It is a foundational principle of our shared life.*

“The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.”

Leviticus 19:34





This love and care for those seeking refuge is not just a repeated refrain throughout Scripture, but is core to our identity as Christians. Here are some key Biblical concepts related to this:

Imago Dei (the image of God) is the foundational belief that every human being is created in God's own image. Being created in his image is the basis for the inherent dignity and worth of all individuals, no matter who they are or what has happened to them. This includes those seeking refuge. Believing this compels believers to treat every person with respect, compassion and justice.

Love thy Neighbours was a repeated teaching that Jesus emphasised throughout his life and ministry. The commandment to love one's neighbour as oneself (Mark 12:31) is a love that extends to all people, regardless of their nationality or status. This command is encapsulated in what Jesus described as the greatest commandments, to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love our neighbour as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-39). Community refugee sponsorship is a unique opportunity to not only say we love our neighbour - but to know our neighbour and to tangibly demonstrate the love of Jesus to them.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan teaches that our neighbour is anyone in need, regardless of their background or ethnicity. The Samaritan, traditionally seen as an outsider, cared for a wounded traveller and exemplified the call to show mercy and practical assistance to those who suffer, including those seeking refuge (Luke 10:25-37). This means that no person professing to follow Jesus can deny this call to welcome and care for those seeking refuge.

Welcoming the Stranger is repeatedly emphasised throughout both the Old and New testaments. God's people are reminded of their own experiences of exile, as strangers in a foreign land, and are commanded to extend welcome, hospitality, care, compassion and inclusion to foreigners (Leviticus 19:34, Exodus 22:21, Matthew 25:35).

Justice and Mercy are core tenets of the Christian faith and define a Christian's attitude toward the marginalised and vulnerable, including those seeking refuge. These values are to be expressed in the very practical form of the provision of food and shelter, and care for widows, orphans and the oppressed (e.g. Isaiah 58:6-7; James 1:27). Justice for those seeking refuge includes advocating for fair treatment, protection of rights and providing



refuge for those fleeing persecution or seeking safety. Micah 6:8 highlights the call to “act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God.”

The Ministry of Jesus amplified his particular concern for those on the margins of society, including foreigners, outcasts and the oppressed. He welcomed and embraced those who were considered “the least of these” (Matthew 25:35-40), challenging his followers to do likewise. Jesus’ identification with the vulnerable must have shaped his response to those seeking refuge. A refugee as a child, fleeing to Egypt with his family to escape the persecution of Herod, Jesus himself identified with the marginalised, vulnerable and oppressed. When we care for those seeking refuge we imitate Christ, showing that we are his disciples. When we stand in solidarity with the marginalised, we follow Christ’s example of being moved by compassion to help the people who need it most. As his disciples, these are the attitudes and actions we want to reflect.

The Kingdom of God as taught by Jesus, envisions a realm where justice, peace and the restoration of all things are realised. Caring for those seeking refuge aligns with this vision, as it seeks to bring about the healing and restoration of individuals and refugee communities impacted by displacement and conflict.

These theological foundations affirm the importance of caring for refugees and inspire believers to actively engage in advocating for refugees’ rights, providing practical assistance and creating welcoming communities. They remind Christians of their ethical responsibility to extend compassion and justice to those who are displaced, marginalised and in need.





Section 2 **Getting Practical**

What a joy that we can follow Jesus by imitating His love and care for those seeking refuge. Participating in CRISP provides Christian communities with an opportunity to demonstrate the tangible love of Jesus. We do this by helping refugees find a home in local communities across Australia. In this section of the guide, we are getting more practical, and offering helpful tips and resources to get started.

CRSA are responsible for community sponsorship in Australia. *The **New Beginnings Project is simply a pathway for corps and Salvos to get involved.*** CRSA has a range of helpful resources, so in this section we include a range of links to them. This section also includes a **Local Mission Framework**, to help you understand how your whole congregation and community can provide support and go on this journey with you.





Local Mission Framework

Corps or churches are ideally suited and set up to welcome and provide compassionate care for those who need it the most. This section provides a framework to engage your whole local community in supporting a refugee household.

Salvos Community Supporter Groups (CSGs)

As demonstrated in this diagram, the **Salvos CSGs** are the core group, committed to providing settlement and integration support to the refugee household. The CSG - a group of at least five people, and up to around twenty - are directly responsible for the welcome and settlement of the refugee household. The responsibilities of a CSG are outlined in Table 1. This document aims to explore how the broader church community or whole congregation can come around the CSG and support them, as they support the new arrivals.



The Salvos CSGs will be linked to a **local corps**. The local corps will be the **host** for the CSG and the refugee family, and will act as a wider local community who welcome and support the family. The entire corps is encouraged to take part in welcoming the family and will contribute to supporting the family in various ways. The CSG is uniquely positioned to



take the whole of the congregation on this journey of welcome and hospitality.

The CSG can provide the corps with multiple opportunities to live out God's call on their lives to be a people of welcome, compassionately embracing the new arrivals into their community. They also give the church the opportunity to identify and use their particular God-given resources and gifts in the care and service of those seeking refuge. What an amazing thing to be able to be a small part of God's great story and his plans to build his kingdom here on earth!

Table 1 - Summary of responsibilities of a Community Supporter Group

1. Meet the Refugee Household at the airport upon their arrival in Australia and transport to on-arrival accommodation, including (if required) transit support and transit accommodation.
2. Provide safe and suitable temporary accommodation for the Refugee Household, from their date of arrival, until they secure appropriate long-term housing.
3. Provide the Refugee Household with essential items upon arrival in Australia, including at least one week's worth of food and groceries, seasonal clothing and at least one smartphone with a sim card and adequate data.
4. Provide the Refugee Household with weekly income support payments on a par with Commonwealth income support entitlements to enable the family to sustain themselves until they begin receiving income support via Services Australia.
5. Assist with registration for Services Australia income support and Medicare.
6. Assist the Refugee Household to open an Australian bank account.
7. Assist the Refugee Household to secure appropriate long-term housing.
8. Provide the Refugee Household with suitable and good quality furniture, appliances and other basic household goods for their long-term residence.
9. Connect the Refugee Household with a local GP and any other healthcare provider required to meet their physical and mental health needs.
10. Assist to enrol children in school and adults in English classes including the Adult Migrant English Program.
11. Provide settlement and integration support on an as-needs basis (including English language and employment support), to help the household achieve their goals and attain financial and general self-sufficiency for a period of 12 months from the household's arrival in Australia.



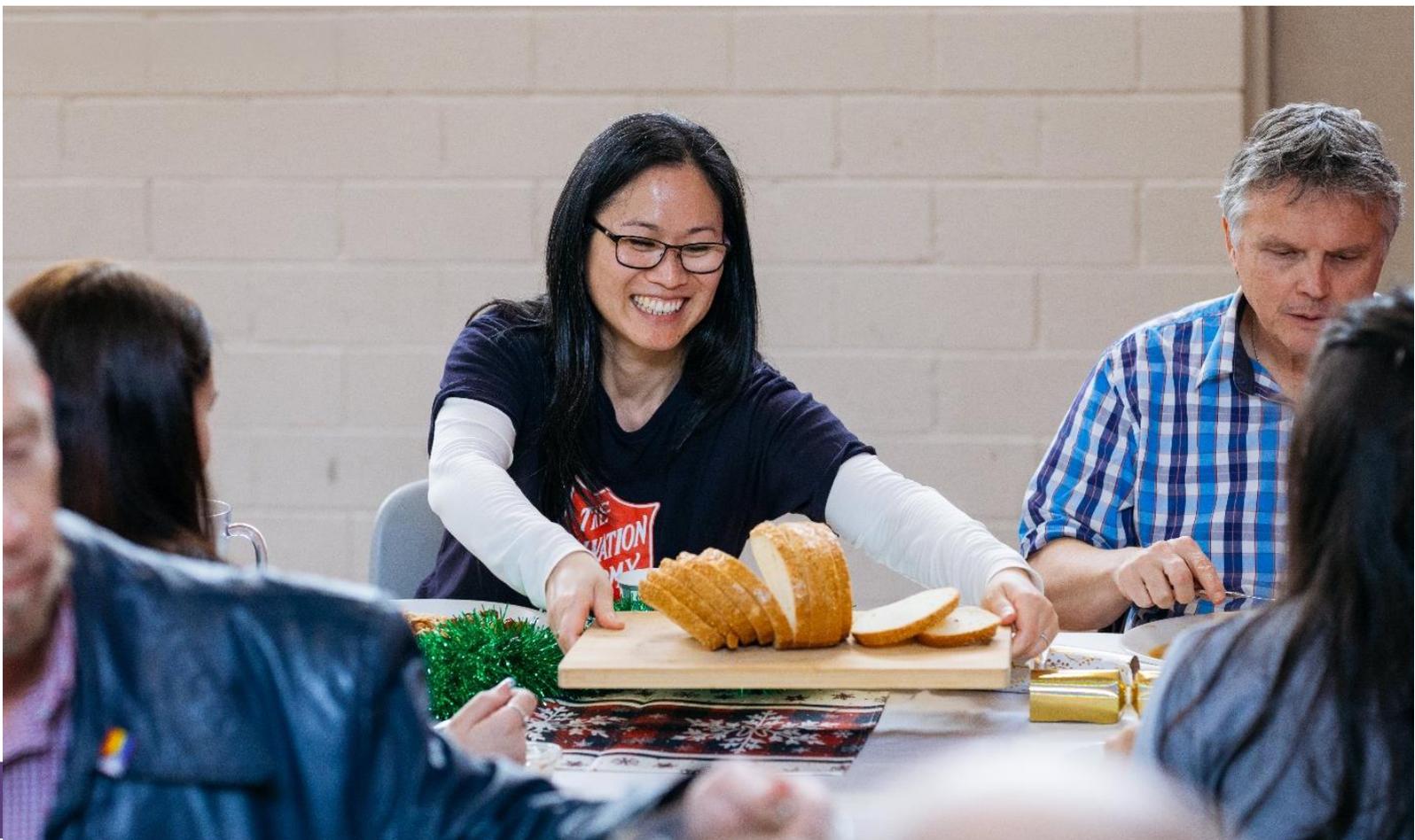
Whole congregation participation

There are many **practical ways the “whole congregation” can be part of this welcoming journey**. This is applicable whether it is **one corps**, or a **group of corps** working together.

1. Pray for the Community Support Group in your church. This is a great way to start bringing the whole congregation into the story. Pray for the family, before they arrive, and as they arrive and start settling.

2. Provide practical support. The church may assist the CSG in coordinating practical support for the family’s day-to-day needs. This can include assisting the CSG with finding and setting up a new home. They could be involved in organising a ‘housewarming’ event where congregation members contribute furniture, appliances, and other household items. They may also help the family navigate the resettlement process by providing information on local services, schools, healthcare facilities and transportation.

3. Provide orientation for the family. In the early months the church can also help the refugee household become familiar with grocery shopping, transportation, childcare, or accompanying them to appointments. They could offer guidance and administrative assistance in accessing healthcare services, registering children in schools, and navigating government paperwork.





4. Help navigating language barriers. Language barriers can be a significant challenge for refugee families. If the church has members that are proficient in the language of those seeking refuge, they could volunteer as language tutors or translators.

Additionally, the church can organise **cultural exchange activities**, such as meals where food from different cultures is shared. This allows for mutual learning. Those seeking refuge have an opportunity to learn the local language, culture and customs in a friendly environment, and they also have the opportunity to share something of their culture, customs and food with the host culture.

5. Supporting connection to employment. The networks and breadth of connections found in a local church provides an amazing resource to assist those seeking refuge. They can find employment through the church connecting them to different training opportunities and job openings, as well as connecting them with local businesses or job placement services.



6. Engaging in advocacy. Being close to the experiences and stories of those seeking refuge enables members of the broader congregation to engage in advocacy efforts. We have the power to make a difference by:

- **Urging action from governments** to enact and reform legislation that promotes the fair, just and humane treatment of refugees and asylum seekers.
- **Implementing changes in our community and workplaces** by fostering a culture of inclusion, diversity, and create and expand opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers in our workplaces.
- **Influencing in our personal lives** by staying informed about the challenges faced by refugees and asylum seekers, dispelling myths and misconceptions by educating friends, family, and colleagues.

7. Organising fundraising activities, such as charity events, bake sales, or crowdfunding campaigns. These can raise funds for the family's immediate needs, including housing, food, clothing and medical expenses, and are activities the whole church can be involved in and contribute to.

8. Education and supporting children and young people are other ways people can offer their skills. They can help refugee children integrate into the education system by providing tutoring, mentoring, or after-school programs. They can work with local schools to ensure that children and young people receive the necessary support for their educational journey.



9. Involve your kids church in making airport welcome signs. The CSG will welcome the refugee household at the airport when they arrive. This is a fantastic opportunity to lead your kids church in making welcome signs, giving your children and young people a chance to learn about refugees and be involved in saying, "Welcome home".

Area Leadership Team (ALT) collaboration

Finally, the CSGs and local corps hosts are encouraged to involve their **ALT**. Ideally, the NBP becomes that area's local mission. This way the corps and other **mission expressions** in the area collaborate to support the refugee family.

For **example**, in NSW a Salvos CSG is sponsoring a family in Auburn and has secured housing in the area. Auburn Corps is hosting the CSG and refugee family. This means the corps can invite the family to join their social/life skills (e.g. English conversation class, [Eplus humanitarian](#) employment support, welcome café, etc.) and worship activities. The family can choose which activities to attend. The whole Auburn congregation can welcome and contribute to the family's settlement support through the CSG. The family can also attend additional English classes at Parramatta Corps. The Salvos Stores in Lidcombe or Parramatta can supply household goods. Salvos Stores and Weeroona Aged Care Plus could offer



volunteering or work placement opportunities for family members looking for work, as their first Australian work experience for their CVs. This is the local mission and TSA's wrap around support at work.

Important Things to Note

There are specific points to note relating to churches engaging with the CRISP program. These include:

Confidentiality

When sharing prayer points or communicating about the new arrivals in any way it is important to respect privacy issues and maintain confidentiality. This is not only respectful practice, but is a legal and a safety issue. Sharing images or stories or information in communications or on social media without explicit written permission could have unintended harmful consequences for the arrivals and place them or their families at risk.

Mutual transformation

It is important the new arrivals are viewed and treated as individuals with their own agency and choice, not dependent on others to 'save' them and not just objects of charity. This is where the concept of mutual transformation comes into play. We recognise we are all made in God's image and have our own stories and experiences to share, with much to learn from one another.

Note on house setup

While the church can be involved in these initial stages of house set up and donating essential items, it is also important to consult with the family themselves. They must have agency to choose the goods and how they would like to fit out their home. They should not feel like the recipients of people's unwanted goods. It is important to note that every person seeking refuge is different, and will have different needs and expectations.

Respect for cultural backgrounds

The people arriving come from a myriad of different cultures, languages and faiths. At every step of this journey, it is important these new arrivals are welcomed and met on their own terms, with respect shown for their language, culture and religion. This will be a time of mutual learning and growing in understanding. The new arrivals will learn about the many cultures here; and the local church will learn about the culture, wisdom and experiences of the new arrivals.



Resources from The Salvation Army

TSA have developed some resources to help Salvos understand community sponsorship, or NBP, from our context, to inspire more Salvos to join this wonderful initiative. These resources are available on [mySalvos Toolkit](#) or you can email the Intercultural and Disability Inclusion (IDI) team at intercultural@salvationarmy.org.au to make a request.

New Beginnings Project information

- [NBP Information Session](#) recording
- [NBP Q&A](#) (including housing and fundraising) recording
- NBP PowerPoint presentation (If you want to host an information session to your corps/community members. Available after you attend an NBP Information Session or watch a recording.)

Red Shield Appeal Initiative (RSAI) proforma

Salvos CSGs can apply for unallocated Divisional Red Shield Appeal funding in their state/territory as part of their fundraising efforts. There is an RSAI proforma they can use to help complete the application form. You can email the IDI team at intercultural@salvationarmy.org.au to access the form.

Salvos Stores

Salvos Stores will support Salvos CSGs by supplying at least 50% of the required household goods and items for the refugee family they are supporting.

NBP media and promotional Toolkit

- [Message from Commissioner Miriam Gluyas](#)
- [Message from Refugee Response Manager TSA UK and Ireland](#), on impact to local corps and community
- [Social media tile](#)
- [Flyer](#) and [poster](#)

Raynes Park Corps (TSA UK) video

Raynes Park Salvation Army in London were the first corps to take part in community



Support a family with their new beginning in Australia

How can you put your love into action for refugees?

As Christians, we are called to love God and love our neighbours — including the “foreigners,” such as those from a refugee background.

You and your faith community have an opportunity to put your love into action by welcoming and supporting a refugee family as they build a new life in your local community.

Go to [mySalvos Toolkit](#) and type in “New Beginnings Project” OR ask your Corps Officer to find out more.



New Beginnings Project
Salvos refugee sponsorship



refugee sponsorship. TSA UK has been involved in community sponsorship since the program's introduction in the UK in 2016, with the first family arriving in March 2017. Raynes Park welcomed a Syrian family and got the whole congregation and community involved in supporting them. They inspired other corps in the UK and Ireland to welcome refugees through the community sponsorship pathway.

Watch their story [here](#) and be inspired.



Resources from NAYBA

Sermon Guide

NAYBA developed a **sermon guide** for church leaders to use as a sermon dedicated to this project and topic. It is available [here](#).

Welcome Home Project story

NAYBA has produced a [Welcome Home Project video](#). This video features a Syrian family who were settled through the CRISP program. They were sponsored, settled and supported by a group of Christians across a few churches in Goulburn. You can access the video [here](#).

Resources from Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia

CRSA have a range of carefully designed resources to train and support groups looking to sponsor and settle refugee households.

Key CRSA Resources, available [here](#), include:

- CRISP Group Preparation Guidebook
- Fundraising guide
- Risk Management and Insurance Information for CRSA Program Groups
- CRISP Settlement Guidebook
- Media & Promotions Toolkit

There is also:

- [Strategies to Secure Local Housing](#)

FAQs

If you have a question, there is a high possibility someone else has asked the same question. Start by looking in the CRSA [FAQs](#).

CRSA have a wonderful story of one of the first families resettled in Australia through community sponsorship. Watch the story [here](#).





Section 3 **Next Steps**

Information session

If you are interested and have more questions, you can watch a recording of the NBP Information Session available on Salvos Central or [mySalvos Toolkit](#) and check out information on the NBP page. Already have a group of at least five interested adults? You can request for an information session via Zoom to ask further questions. Learn more about the program and how it might work for you and your faith community. Please contact the IDI team by emailing intercultural@salvationarmy.org.au to request an information session.

Intention to apply

When you have formed a group and are looking to take the next step, please email intercultural@salvationarmy.org.au for support to submit an [Intention to Apply](#), and start the journey.



New Beginnings Project

Salvos refugee sponsorship

NBP Guidebook adapted Welcome Home Project Catalyst Guide from NAYBA Australia. NAYBA is a global network resourcing local churches with practical resources to help transform local neighbourhoods.