



Sanctuary Northern Rivers Inc

A community-based refugee support group

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Newsletter June 2009...

From the President's pen:

World Refugee Week: Freedom from Fear
Refugee Week this year (June 16 – June 21) again celebrates the presence of refugees in our community. The theme for this year focuses on the flight of refugees – seeking freedom from fear. All those refugees who have settled in our community have experienced fear – fear for their safety, fear for their future. In that refugee experience they did not lose hope, a hope that one day they may be free from that fear, hope that they may feel secure, hope that they may have a sense of future, hope that they may be re-united with their families.

This week we will celebrate these aspirations; we will celebrate the freedom from fear, that here in our community they have made their home, in the knowledge of security and of welcome. Over the past 12 months, we have welcomed 20 new refugees to the Lismore community. The majority of these have been reuniting families that were scattered by war. A young toddler was reunited with his mother, two families joined their siblings, a young orphan joined their sister. All stories of great joy, and a very gratifying outcome of the efforts of so many people in the community.

Integration of new cultures

Our journey in welcoming new cultural groups is often full of the human and cultural resources that they bring. Again and again, I hear of the benefits of these new populations for our community. We also hear of difficulties. Some of these difficulties stem from cultural concerns, others stem from the more deep-seated trauma that refugees have been exposed to. These difficulties are recognised by the new arrivals, and by those who have assisted in their settlement.

We must remain honest, positive and proactive about addressing any difficulties that arise. The arrivals in our community have held themselves in a most dignified manner. They are appreciative of the guiding hand of the Aussie mentors that have supported their own mentors. We must maintain this role – be the gentle presence of hope and support and encouragement that respects the courage and strength that have brought them here to grace our community.

Settlement Forum

The Settlement Forum (May 29) came about to address how we best respond to the continued high demand for support from refugees – mostly in Africa. There was unanimous support that we continue to support refugee settlement, although there was a more mixed view of the scope of this support. While mindful of the need to be settling at a pace that does not over-burden the community's capacity to support ongoing successful integration, establishing criteria to determine who is of highest priority and how many people can be absorbed were more difficult areas in which to reach a decisive position. There will be more discussion on this point in coming weeks.

The forum also highlighted the need to strengthen capacity in key areas – notably, housing, employment, health and education. Some creative and bright suggestions came forth (for example, community farms), providing ideas. We will continue to work actively on these matters, and again, seek your support – ongoing volunteer assistance, further ideas, funding – are all pre-requisites for the further success of the program.

... Refugees bring human and material assets and resources. They are people with tremendous courage, determination and potential to thrive – a potential demonstrated time and again by them. Refugee women, in particular have shown resilience and survival skills. When given the opportunity, refugees become progressively less reliant on State aid, or humanitarian assistance, attaining a growing degree of self reliance and becoming able to pursue sustainable livelihoods, equally contributing to the economic development of the host country. . . .
UNHCR, Framework for durable solutions for Refugees and persons of concern (2003)

As part of our contribution to wider advocacy, Sanctuary Northern Rivers will be making a submission to the "Community Partnerships for Human Rights program" We continue to work with the community to meet our obligations – local and global - and facilitate the successful integration of refugee populations to enrich the resources and fabric of our community. Thank you for your ongoing support in this process. *Michael*

Working With Refugees Worldwide



Adeyemi was disconnected from his wife and son when he came here 15 months ago. He spoke at the Public Forum and following is some of the things he said:



"I didn't find a Lismore community," the former journalist said, "I found my new Lismore family."

"The support I experienced from the public in the recent flood was amazing."

"My 15 months has been very enjoyable and I thank you for that. I have finished my course in Aged Care and now I have employment in that field right here in Lismore."

"It was easy to adapt to my new life here; we Africans want to be here."

Just two weeks ago, his wife and son were granted visas to come and reunite with him.

Working With Refugees Worldwide

Homework Centre News

The latest news is that Cherie Mamet, our very own Admin Officer, has been offered the position of Coordinator of the Community Connections Lismore African Youth access Program.

Sanctuary's Homework Centre will be incorporated into this program which will also provide African students with access to driver training and sporting equipment. While Cherie will bring to the position all of her coordination and teaching skills, it is the volunteer tutors that remain the backbone of the program and are the key to success. Be assured we are not letting Sue out of our sight and she will be remaining with the program as a most valued tutor and consultant.

A big thank-you to Sue and all who have been involved and continue to spend their time tutoring the students!



Sanctuary's Refugee Week Celebrations

Some 60 people attended Sanctuary's community morning tea at the Lismore City Hall on Wednesday 17th. We were treated to speeches of passion and songs of One-Love and Gratitude from our African community.

Michael Douglas and Jenny Dowell both thanked the refugees for their rich contribution to Lismore society and culture.

Corinne's famous cakes went down a treat, and there was much merriment and networking over cups of tea and coffee.

Thanks to all who attended and participated in our celebration of refugee settlement in Lismore.





DIVERSE AUSTRALIA PROGRAM – SANCTUARY APPLICATION

The Diverse Australia Program (DAP) Small Grants provide funds for community organisations to run activities and projects aimed at building stronger community relations locally. These are specifically aimed to promote:

the importance of all Australians respecting one another regardless of cultural, racial or religious differences; and

the fair treatment of all Australians, encouraging people to recognise that our interactions should be accepting of, and responsive to, each others' backgrounds, circumstances, needs and preferences.

Sanctuary NR has submitted an application for funds to run a weekend retreat for 18 local youths who will work together to look for common ground in how they can build bridges between their communities. These young people are leaders in their communities, representing 6 from refugee backgrounds, 6 indigenous youths and 6 non-indigenous locals. The weekend will also help them to develop an understanding of each other's past and present realities.

The proposal has wide community support from the African communities, the Lismore City Council's Aboriginal Worker, Community Connections and the Community Legal Centre – all of whom will be asked to play a part in the project if we receive funding.

The youth who participate will be asked to work in groups of six to identify a local initiative they can run that will help to unite their communities. They will be given six months to undertake their plan with support and then report back to the community at a public forum towards the middle of next year.

We will find out if we have been successful in July. Hopefully if the project gets some funding and proves productive we can run it every year with local support.

If you are interested in assisting with this project (if funded), please let us know via the info@sanctuary.asn.au email.

Russell Trebilcock – Vice President

This years' Gala Dinner will be held at the A and I Hall in Bangalow, on Saturday August 29th. A lot of the finer details have yet to

Annual Gala Dinner

be finalised, however, you can look forward to an entertaining evening with good food, drinks, music, and fundraising activities during the evening.

We see the dinner not only as a fundraiser, though that part of it is certainly useful...But more than just that, it is an opportunity to meet up with members old and new, or to introduce interested people to the work that Sanctuary does, in a relaxed and sociable atmosphere.

At this stage, the only help that we are requesting is that if you are involved in a business, or have close contact with one whom you think would be willing to donate a prize – large or small - then please contact Brian or Corinne Nash on 6629 1692, or bcnash@wwwires.com for a signed donation request letter which has our registered charity number on it etc.



Mark 29 August in your diaries, and watch this space for further details.

Corinne Nash



Volunteer committee news

Lismore Volunteer Expo 2009

On Thursday 14 May, Sanctuary took part in the Volunteer Expo at Lismore's city hall. 43 organisations were there, raising public awareness of their causes and their activities. We gathered a dozen or so names of people interested in volunteering, and we will follow them up to see where their strengths lie, and whether they would like to participate in the volunteer training in July.

Sue Darnell was presented with a certificate for being one of the 'Volunteers of the Year', for her constant and amazing work in the Homework Centre which runs from 3.30pm to 5.30pm on Mondays and Wednesdays. Sue was, like so many volunteers, shy of being recognised for her work, yet it needed to be said – she's fantastic!

Our table was one of the least impressive from an artistic point of view, so if anyone has a talent for signwriting/painting etc. and wants to make us some banners or similar for future public events, (like the gala dinner on August 29th) that would be great. Please call Cherie for ideas of what is needed. *Corinne Nash*

TAFE Course to Train Volunteers

Sanctuary Northern Rivers is partnering with TAFE Outreach to deliver a course for volunteers wishing to work with newly arrived refugees.

The evening course will run over 6 weeks commencing in late July and is tailored specifically towards the unique needs of refugees settling in our area.

The course combines the educational delivery expertise of TAFE with the real-life experience of Sanctuary.

Interested in Volunteering with Sanctuary?

Want more information about the TAFE course or other ways to become a valued Sanctuary volunteer?

Come to one of our two **information sessions**, scheduled for your convenience:

Thursday 2nd July

First Session: 3.30pm-5pm

Second Session: 7pm-8.30pm

Cedar Room, Lismore Neighbourhood Centre



Membership

Why become a member?

Sanctuary Northern Rivers welcomes anyone's involvement in its work, be it institutional support, volunteers support, donations, or just simply showing an interest or providing an encouraging word. However, it is also beneficial to formalise this support and interest through becoming a member.

Membership requires signing up and payment of an annual fee (July – June).

The benefits for the organisation of having signed-up members include:

- Having an accurate source of contacts of who are genuinely interested in Sanctuary;
- A vehicle for communication of the work of Sanctuary, and
- The fostering of a collaborative approach to policy and evolution of the organisation.

And most importantly, it makes a statement – that the work that we do is meaningful and worth supporting.

The benefits for the individual includes:

- Receiving reliable and regular communication (via the newsletter)
- The opportunity to contribute to policy and approach
- Eligibility for Board and Sub-committee positions
- Closer involvement with a group of thoughtful, dynamic individuals who have a strong commitment to social justice ideals

Of course, if you would rather not become a member, yet remain informed of our work, you are also most welcome. Please provide your contact details through the website. www.sanctuary.asn.au

Working With Refugees Worldwide

Target for 2009/10:

-100 members



Time to renew our memberships with Sanctuary

We had 33 members for 2008/2009.

We have 18 new or renewed members already for 2009/2010.

Our target is to have 100 members for 2009/2010 by the end of July.

If all current members could encourage another to join Sanctuary, our target will be easily reached.

Find a membership application forms at the end of this newsletter. More can be downloaded from www.sanctuary.asn.au

18 renewed members for 2009/10



Up-and-coming Events

Interested in volunteering with Sanctuary?

Information sessions for all interested persons. Thursday
2nd July. Session #1: 3.30pm-5pm
Session #2: 7pm-8.30pm Cedar Room Lismore
Neighbourhood Centre

Sanctuary Northern Rivers Ordinary Board Meeting

Wednesday 15th July 6.30pm
Lismore Workers Club
All members welcome

TAFE Volunteer Training

Commences 27th July.
Three hours per week over six weeks.



Gala Dinner

Sanctuary's major fundraiser.
29th August
A&I Hall Bangalow
\$60 per head

Sanctuary Northern Rivers Board Members 2008/09

Executive:

President - Michael Douglas

Treasurer - Brian Nash

Vice-President - Russell Trebilcock

Secretary - Dave Noble

General Board Members:

Sue Darnell

Katherine Morrison

Paul Morreti

Contact Sanctuary Northern Rivers:

Administrative Support Officer: Cherie Mamet
(02) 6621 7397 Ext 26 (Wed & Fri)

Address: Sanctuary Northern Rivers, P.O.Box 1146,
Lismore 2480

Email: info@sanctuary.asn.au

Website: www.sanctuary.asn.au

Office Address: Lismore Neighbourhood Centre

Working With Refugees Worldwide

Sanctuary Northern Rivers Inc

Incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act 1984



Membership Application

Surname: _____

First Name: _____ **Title:** _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Suburb/City: _____ **Postcode:** _____

Phone: _____ **Mobile:** _____

Email: _____

Membership Type (please tick)		
Individual \$30	<input type="checkbox"/>	Family/Institution \$45 <input type="checkbox"/>
Students/Concession Card Holders	\$15	<input type="checkbox"/>

Membership Declaration I/we, the undersigned, hereby apply to become a member/s of Sanctuary Northern Rivers Inc ("Sanctuary"). In the event of my/our admission as a member/s, I/we agree to be bound by and comply with the constitution, regulations, policies and directions of Sanctuary as amended from time to time. I acknowledge that Sanctuary reserves the right to cancel my/our membership at anytime if I/we fail to comply with the rules applying under the constitution, regulations, policies and directions of Sanctuary; or if my/our conduct is unbecoming a member of Sanctuary or brings Sanctuary into disrepute. Signed: _____ Date: _____

Payment Details		
I would also like to make a Donation of	\$	_____
Membership Fee:	\$	_____
Total Amount:	\$	_____
All donations are fully tax deductible.		
Please forward your cheque or money order to:		
Sanctuary Northern Rivers PO Box 1146 Lismore NSW 2480 www.sanctuary.asn.au info@sanctuary.asn.au		