



# Sanctuary Northern Rivers Inc

Working for Refugees Worldwide

[www.sanctuary.asn.au](http://www.sanctuary.asn.au)

[info@sanctuary.asn.au](mailto:info@sanctuary.asn.au)

## Newsletter March 2009

### **From little things . . .**

There was a poignant moment for me several years ago, that brought home the bitter joy of arriving on a new horizon of life. Mary, a beautiful and slightly reserved young Sudanese lady had arrived in our community just a few days beforehand. In her limited English, she communicated her great relief and gratitude that she had a place to call home. It had been a journey of 15 years. And yet, she was troubled. Troubled to the point that she shed tears, day and night; that she could not sleep; that she would not eat. I was to discover that the root of this paradox was her guilt. Her fear for her young brothers, orphaned just a few months beforehand, and now left in the care of an uncle. Mary's struggle is not atypical – for so many of the refugees that we welcome to our home, behind them there are many others, mothers, sisters and brothers, and even children, who yearn for the same glimpse of light, just a moment of security and hope for the intimate warmth of their own home.

Last week, after four years of determination, prayer, and gritty sense of hope, Mary wrapped her arms around her twelve year old twin brothers as they

walked up the ramp of Lismore airport. It was testimony to her love, and indeed her hope, that the broader community of Lismore continues to open its heart to those on the margins of the global community.

I must thank all who continue to show their faith in Sanctuary Northern Rivers. We are continued to be blessed with an abundance of goodwill and commitment from the community. This last year has not been an easy one. The demand from refugees from all corners of the world grows tremendously; the advocacy and support for these, in addition to the support and programs that grows for those settled with us already, exacts a demanding workload on all involved. The cost of this is frequently borne by those in the community, who quietly voice support, lend a hand, and yet hear little in return. We have not forgotten you! We have been busy building – an enthusiastic board and subcommittees, an office, a support worker, and a website . . . with still much more to do. The benefits of this work are already evident. However, we expect in the coming months to make up for the lack of communication, to present more visibly the toil that has been happening, and to grow into the eminent charity that so many have trusted us to be.

Michael Douglas  
President



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## Refugee arrivals:

We have been blessed during the last month with the arrival of one family from Eritrea joining their sister in Lismore, a young 6 year old, who showed his sheer delight in being re-united with his mother after two years separation; We welcomed Etienne, a young Congolese man, and of course, Nhial and Ngor, the 12 year old twin brothers of Mary.

There are many more aspiring refugees in the pipeline. This months, there have been five family units called up for interviews, all African. It is our hope that they are successful in the stage of their application – the door seems almost open for them, and they are all very excited. I received word from one:

*"We are really happy myself, my fiancée, my brother and my sister to get the result from the Australia interview which was on 17 March 2009, it was really okay and we received the Medical examination Letter. We really thank for your support in our life may God bless you and your family".*

We have about 70 others, who are at various stages in the application process, let us hope for some measure of success for these also.

## *What's New at Sanctuary? Exciting Stuff!*

We now have an Administration Support Officer working two days a week. Our office is in the Lismore Neighbourhood Centre, 76 Carrington St, Lismore

Cherie Mamet

(02) 66217397 Ext. 26

Wednesdays and Fridays

[info@sanctuary.asn.au](mailto:info@sanctuary.asn.au)

"If you believe, as we do, that we in the Northern Rivers should be sharing the wealth and opportunities of our community with those who found their place of birth offered neither security of person nor freedom from persecution, then Sanctuary Northern Rivers is for you." Russell Trebilcock Vice President



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## WHY BECOME A MEMBER OF SANCTUARY NORTHERN RIVERS?

Why should ANYONE want to join the Sanctuary Northern Rivers, given our record of infrequent contact with members and few, if any, events specifically for members?

The answer is: We ARE going to keep members more informed and offer greater opportunities for supporting the successful settlement of refugees in our community! We intend to make being a member of Sanctuary Northern Rivers so special that people will want to belong!

### Members of Sanctuary Northern Rivers can expect:

- Regular information about refugee settlement issues in the form of a bi-monthly newsletter, email alerts and updated information on the website  
[www.sanctuary.asn.au](http://www.sanctuary.asn.au)
- Access to the members' section of the website where we will post Minutes of past meetings and agendas of forthcoming meetings as well as the organisation's Strategic Plan and policy documents
- Invitations to Sanctuary sponsored and supported events as well as member specific events
- Opportunities to influence the goals and direction of the organisation through member forums
- Updated advice on Government refugee and immigration policy as well as notice of any reviews of these policies.

"We need people who know about the work of Sanctuary to stand with us in what we do. Together we can help to make this community a welcoming one for new settlers." Russell Trebilcock Vice President



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Surname: \_\_\_\_\_  
 First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Suburb/City: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Type (please tick)**

Individual \$30       Family/Institution \$45   
 Students/Concession Card Holders \$15

**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: \_\_\_\_\_

### 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



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## How Can You Support Sanctuary?

### **Help people when they first arrive**

You can assist our new arrivals in everyday aspects of Australia community living. We provide training and support to those who offer to volunteer in this way.

### **Tutor refugee students through the Homework Centre**

You do not need teaching experience – just have a little patience and a desire to help these high school students learn twice a week.

### **Sub-committees**

You may like to help on one of the many sub-committees that help ease the workload of Board members. Whether you can manage events, administer a web site or raise funds among other talents, there is a place for you here.

### **Financial contributions**

We can always use any that you may care to make to support our work and the various projects. In the past we have used most donated funds and membership fees to support the cost of transferring refugee families from their country of origin to Australia (as interest free loans). Our role in the community has expanded and we now run various other support programs. Donations to Sanctuary (not including membership fees) are tax-deductible.

### **Advocacy for refugee settlement in our community**

Speaking up about the benefits refugee settlement brings to our community. We are planning a number of public forums to discuss settlement issues. Your support in attending these and bringing other people who may be interested will also further our cause.



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## UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS PROJECT

*2008 saw the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights come and go – with minimal fanfare and with many Australians still very much unaware of what the Universal Declaration says and what rights it advocates.*

In 2008, group of local seniors instigated a project to donate a wall hanging depicting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to local schools. The hanging, over 1m x 1.6m would be permanently displayed in a public place within the school.

The Sanctuary Board endorsed the project last year, thereby giving it tax deductibility status. Several schools have taken up the offer of the hanging to date. We are keen to promote the offer to other schools across the region during 2009. Each wall hanging costs between \$120 and \$200.

If you would like more information on either how schools can access the offer or to contribute to the project please contact either Vice President Russell Trebilcock (6624 7458) or Cherie Mamet (Admin Officer 66217397 [info@sanctuary.asn.au](mailto:info@sanctuary.asn.au)).

## Strategic Plan for Sanctuary Northern Rivers 2009-2011

The Board of Sanctuary Northern Rivers has set some bold goals for the next three years; they are outlined in a [draft Strategic Plan](#) now posted on the members section of the Sanctuary NR website. We would welcome feedback on the Plan and any member who would like to see a copy can either do so via the members' website or contact Cherie: [info@sanctuary.asn.au](mailto:info@sanctuary.asn.au) and ask for a copy.



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## HOMEWORK CENTRE

We have ten high school students coming regularly on Monday and Wednesday afternoons.

Tutor numbers have increased, thanks to **Jeannette Tyler at Volunteering Northern Rivers!** However, we do *need more volunteers* for the one-on-one tutoring process.

The students are remarkably dedicated despite the harsh, hot weather conditions of late! They make the tutoring so worthwhile! A tutor donated her old printer so homework can now be printed on-site!

We also purchased a cabinet to keep all of our materials and new readers in. Thank-you to **Lismore Office Warehouse** for the special low price!

We are losing three students over the next two months as their family is leaving the area. Ajok, Aguot and Ashol will be missed at the Homework Centre and we wish them happiness and success in their move.

**Please contact us if you would like to become a Homework Tutor! [info@sanctuary.asn.au](mailto:info@sanctuary.asn.au)**

Sue Darnell



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## Up-And-Coming Events

**April Board meeting** – Tues 14<sup>th</sup> April - Lismore Workers' Club – 6.30 pm

[All Board meetings are open to Sanctuary Members]

**Public Forum on Settlement policy** and its impact on Lismore – May 2009

[Date & location and agenda to be confirmed next month]

### *Sanctuary Northern Rivers Board 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

***Administrative Support Officer:***

Cherie Mamet

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

***Email:*** [info@sanctuary.asn.au](mailto:info@sanctuary.asn.au)

***Website:*** [www.sanctuary.asn.au](http://www.sanctuary.asn.au)

***Office Address:*** c/- Lismore Neighbourhood Centre

76 Carrington St

Lismore, NSW 2480

(02) 6621 7397 Ext 26 (Wed & Fri)

This newsletter is available for download at <http://www.sanctuary.asn.au>

## **P.S...**

Lastly, for all those at the gala dinner last year, you will recall that although the focus was not to be a fund-raising function, your generosity contributed to just over \$5,000 for a small group of Karen (Burman) refugees in the north-west of Thailand. They have received the money, and are now using it to develop a health and sanitation program amongst the refugees of the area, expected to reach about 50 families. Saw Muang Muang, the inspiring gentleman who has initiated the program wishes to pass his thanks to all who have continued. We echo his words: THANK YOU!