



SANCTUARY

West Coast Refugee Sanctuary Group

Patrons - Angela and Fred Chaney

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2009

WCRSG Inc. has been involved in some great initiatives in the past year, some of which are highlighted below;

WCRSG Inc. re-affiliated with the Refugee Council of Australia and was involved in a well attended local forum on issues facing refugees settling in WA. The annual report of the RC of A highlighted many problems including the cost of housing and lack of employment as fundamental issues facing families when coming to WA. The continued affiliation with the other Sanctuary groups around Australia has also helped us to keep abreast of current trends and issues relating to refugees in Australia and we have had some positive input into current affairs, especially in the local press during Refugee Week.

We also ran our first film fundraiser with the showing of the new film "Australia" at Cinema Paradiso. This was great publicity for our group. We continued to provide presentations to various groups on our efforts assisting refugees and we were generally well received. Our support of the bi annual refugee picnics has also been bolstered with a grant from Celebrate WA for \$1,000 to assist us and St. Vincent de Paul in October.

Since our inception in Feb. 2005 up until October 2009 we have supported 44 families to reunite under UNHCR Humanitarian Visas, an achievement to be applauded. This means that 245 family members in less than five years have been able to be re-united in WA thanks to our efforts.

Loan repayments continue to be an issue for some families and accordingly a push to increase repayments will hopefully bear fruit with some of our struggling families.

I would like to thank everyone on the committee, our patrons Angela and Fred Chaney, all of our members and supporters for their contributions and support over the past twelve months.

Finally I would like to especially thank Br. Geoff for his great support and also Fr. Vin Conroy who is overseas on sabbatical. He was the catalyst for WCRSG Inc. and I thank the Greenwood parish for continuing with its great support of those less fortunate than ourselves.

Jim Benson
Chair WCRSG Inc.