



Caring for land, caring for people
making a safer world

Project SafeCom Inc.

Project SafeCom Inc.

2004 Annual Report

incorporating

Development and progress Report -
October 2001 - December 2004



November 2001 - The Tampa, Captain Arne Rinnan's Norwegian containership, stormed by SAS troops, while Howard unlawfully uses the Defence Signals Directorate spying to listen to Norwegian government communications and Australian lawyers



July 2003 - **No Kids Overboard** - With our super scoop of publishing 25 'leaked' photographs taken by NAVY personnel on HMAS Adelaide, we powerfully re-humanised the *children overboard* asylum seekers

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Justine Brosnan (Secretary)
Wendy Hudson (Treasurer)
Jack H Smit (Project Co-ordinator)
Ian Alexander
Paul Desmond
Peter Fern

Members (current)

Western Australia

Hugh Charlesworth
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Rae Cottam
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Nathalie Haymann
Lorraine Johnston
Roel Loopers
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Members (current)

South Australia

June Marks
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New South Wales

Peter Aitken
Tami Ebner
Bruce Haigh
Laurel Lloyd-Jones
Tony Simons
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Victoria

Brigit Arthur
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Sue Corby
Sara Haq
Brenda Hubber
Andrew McPhee
Barbara Rogalla
Erika Stahr

Australian Capital Territory

Rosemary Nairn
Maira Smith

Queensland

Ann Jarman
Ronald Webb

Tasmania

Helen Tait
Sara Ann Strong

Sweden

Helen Brooks

Supporters

Around 400 financial supporters, 1200 purchasing clients, 3000 general sympathisers, 5000 database contacts, 10,000 general "other e-list" readers.

I. Introduction	page 4
Note from the Chair	
II. Coordinator's Report	page 5
1. BACKGROUND	page 6
2. BUILDING: FROM THEN TO NOW	
a. Building credibility	page 7
b. Building the website as a resource	
c. Building relationships with refugee advocates	page 8
d. Building a daily newsletter - and the audience for it	page 9
e. Building relationships with the media	page 10
f. Building relationships with detainees	page 12
g. Building a membership base	page 13
h. Building income through donations and sales of products	page 14
i. Building presence and profile through local events	
j. Building influential relationships with Federal politicians	page 16
k. Ibrahim's story	page 18
III. FINANCIAL REPORT	
a. Expenditure 2001 - 2002	page 19
b. Income 2001 - 2002	
c. Expenditure 2002 - 2003	page 20
d. Income 2002 - 2003	
e. Expenditure 2003-2004	
f. Income 2003-2004	
d. Accounts from 01/07/04 to present	page 21

I. Introduction

Note from the Chair

It has been delightful to work with Project SafeCom and to play a small role among the dedicated activists who form a political movement for justice for refugees.

It has not been easy for any progressive movement in today's political climate. In a time of growing political conservatism, it is especially rewarding to be effective in bringing to light the darker side of Australia's policy of detention and denial of what we consider to be basic human rights.

For the past several months the interim committee has been growing from strength to strength and I am eagerly anticipating a successful new year as refugee advocates. The tireless work of Jack Smit as co-ordinator continues to be inspirational to the whole committee.

As this annual report will detail, our efforts have been consistent and we have had some success in raising both the media profile and the political significance of refugee issues. We have also provided an avenue of support for people who have grown tired and frustrated by more traditional efforts towards political change.

I hope this report will serve not only to inform but also to inspire our membership to continue to fight the good fight. While there are so many ways to say it, the musical phrase from *Sweet Honey in the Rock* sticks in my mind:

"We who believe in freedom shall not rest until it comes."

*Lynn MacLaren
Fremantle, Western Australia
3 February 2005*

II. Coordinator's Report

Below is what is intended as the *Project SafeCom 2004 Annual Report*, but because its contents span is longer than just one year, its subtitle indicates it is also a Development and Progress Report - which in fact makes it a report that includes a summary of developments since the humble but resolute start of Project SafeCom, during the "Tampa days" before the 2001 Federal election - these days often called "the Tampa election", a phrase I have used since those days, possibly as the first person to do so.

It has been a pleasure for me to bring Project SafeCom to this point, and the report below is also an instrument with which I continue to hand Project SafeCom back to its members and rightful owners through the steering committee.

While I look back on major achievements during this extended formation, development and establishment period, I'm also aware that Project SafeCom as an incorporated association spent some of its aspects during the initial years in its infancy: sometimes it was really acting just like a toddler in a pram who proudly holds a placard in the refugee rally - just as I spotted such a child at a protest - with the words: *'Mr Howard, how can you sleep at night?'* while a white balloon dances in the wind off its side, featuring a stick figure of a crying child, and the words: *'Kids don't belong in detention centres'* and all this while the toddler is still learning to walk.

Right from the start of Project SafeCom's life I wanted to "think big" because we were composing a civil response to a multi-million dollar spin machinery in a government that put its boot on international conventions, that was prepared for an unlawful use and control of information, and that manipulated the citizens' "right to know" in a well-orchestrated campaign that was entirely politically driven - and we did that through an organisation that was still in its infancy.

There have been times where seemingly we experienced setbacks in the development of Project SafeCom as an association, and sometimes they were hard to take, as they were knocks in addition to the relentless pressure on refugee advocates and organisations as a result of the constantly changing moves by the Australian government in relation to refugees and refugee policies, but this report is evidence we survived these setbacks.

With the presentation of this summary report I also am delighted to present our Steering Committee, which represents considerable maturity and a great deal of professional understanding, and a ripened outlook on Project SafeCom as an Association. The fact that I have started to use the term "NGO" to describe Project SafeCom is both an expression of my confidence in where we're at, and an acknowledgement of a sense of permanency in our presence in Australia.

*Jack H Smit
Narrogin/Fremantle, January 2005*

Development and progress Report - December 2004

1. BACKGROUND

Project SafeCom was incorporated in December 2001 after about four months of preparation of the website and background research of asylum seeker issues in the context of the 2001 Federal election, as well as explorations into the rapid formation of the many refugee action, support and lobby groups around Australia as a result of this election and the issues connected with it.

Initially an interim steering committee was formed with the help of some students at a southern Perth metropolitan TAFE College where I taught curriculum subjects in community work and community development. At the time I had presented a series of classes on refugees and asylum seekers amongst students (Certificate IV, Community Work) at this college. Most of the volunteers who helped Project SafeCom on its feet were from students from this course at the TAFE College.

Many of the people connected to and being co-instrumental in the foundation of Project SafeCom have moved on, but while may be so, I wish to express at this place how I treasure my fond memories of my Rockingham TAFE student Maxine Sines, one of the initial committee's founding members. Maxine passed on, too young, in 2004 after a battle with a terminal illness. Her confident knowing of how Australia was manipulated at the time of the 2001 Federal election stood quiet and tall.

The protection of incorporation safeguards the legality of Project SafeCom and creates accountability structures for the holding of assets, the keeping and building of funds, and the legal structure to attract funding from foundations, corporations, community bodies or government instrumentalities.

Also, under this structure it is possible to attract Project staff as 'employees', where several awards govern the salary for such employees. In addition, Project SafeCom's committee can support the writing of funding submissions - defined in the corporation's constitution is also inserted the clause *"that the Committee of Management has the power to act to further the Project's aims and purposes through the acquisition/disposal of equipment, property and/or income."* (4. Powers of Association)

Also, because Incorporation has the capacity to impart to the wider community a sense of trust and accountability, people often would feel inclined to donate money in a more trusting way in support of the goals or the work of the association.

And legally, an incorporated body is more protected against liability or court action against itself than a group that is not incorporated. Its structure also limits the liability of its agents and board members.

2. BUILDING: FROM THEN TO NOW

Under Western Australian corporations law, an incorporated body has 18 months the time to *"get itself together"*, also, it has that period of grace to form a Board of Management and to build its membership.

The initial steering committee agreed to concentrate the actions and directions of Project SafeCom for the year 2002/03, and subsequently for 2003/04, solely on refugee lobby action - as opposed to other activities or directions also ratifiable under the constitution, such as building a community open farming project as an alternative community initiative to replace mandatory detention - given the current context and the strength of determination by the Howard government as well as federal Labor to maintain mandatory detention as the cornerstone of its asylum seeker policy.

Knowing this, the following strategic steps were taken in the period since inception, and directed energy was spent building Project SafeCom in the following ways:

a. Building credibility

Most of the first six months of the life of Project SafeCom was spent building contents on the website, and joining in with the debate using a growing number of e-groups (hosted by for example Yahoo!Groups and topica.com) of the various loose affiliations or more formal bodies - the refugee action groups around Australia. We were able to do both at the same time by consistently including information leading people to our own material posted on the website. In this way the profile of Project SafeCom as a credible organisation could be built.

It was our experience that, generally speaking, people in all groups valued our contribution, and because many of the arguments were built around the basis as laid out in the papers and statutes of the UN Refugee Convention, we were able to garner respect for our contributions around Australia.

b. Building the website as a resource

By building also the *resource aspect* of the website through the inclusion of research papers, reviews and reports published by Human Rights groups, and by building cogent arguments about the issues and having a simple yet professional presentation as well as an easy layout and creating attractiveness, the Project SafeCom website has grown into a credible resource for those taking note of refugee issues within the context of Australian policies. At the end of 2002 the Western Australian State Library (*The Batty Library*) announced they would like to list the Project SafeCom website amongst its *Liswa Online Resource Collection*, as it was seen to be a "resource of cultural and historical significance in Western Australia". Project SafeCom is now also listed in the WA Multicultural Services and Resources Directory.

Daily traffic to the website has been consistently on the increase, and in September 2004 we shifted to a server space at Murdoch University. The website is now accessed via our 'generic domain name' of safecom.org as well as through our Australian domain name of safecom.org.au. Recently we were able to scrutinize the daily statistics for the first time: in November 2004 there were 32,797 page views, which translates into an average daily traffic of 1093 pages accessed or read. That is a massive achievement, and from the data we learnt that our resources are now used by not just Australians but by people all over the world.

From the statistics we learnt that 60% of the time Australians visit the site, but that the pages are also seen by visitors from Japan, the Netherlands, the UK, the USA, Canada,

New Zealand; closely followed by Sweden and Germany. Ranking below Germany about another 100 countries are listed whose residents visit our website.

We benefit from this massive increase in traffic: when the collection of letters from asylum seekers in detention centres was published in 2004 (*From Nothing to Zero*, Lonely Planet Publications) and the publisher asked us to offer the book to our supporters and offer the book for sale via the website, we were able to sell almost 70 copies within a five-week period.

In 2003 we discovered that two UNHCR documents, stored as PDF files on our website, had been used and cited as sourced from our website in an appeal in the USA by the US Lawyers Committee for Human Rights (for Haitian refugees) against (amongst others) Attorney-General John Ashcroft. The court case summary:

www.lchr.org/asylum/amicus/haitian_am_brief.pdf

Looking after our website must remain one of the main priorities for Project SafeCom. With the constant development of website technology, we also need to commit ourselves to updates in technology: the push for new technologies is partly driven by the Web Accessibility Initiative - a US based group that ensures that websites can be read and accessed by people with visual disabilities (there are web browsers that "read" or "speak" the contents of the internet into speech-synthesisers) - and this push is also driven by the desire to make websites function and look correctly on all current types of computers and operating systems.

c. Building relationships with refugee advocates

Within months we started also making personal contact with people "we met" through the many online discussion forums. We then started logging names, email addresses and other contact details of refugee advocates in a database, and the number of useful contacts, and with that, good relationships grew. Currently we have 5000 contacts in our database.

Contact with other groups, alliances and advocates as well as the more traditional organisations, statutory groups as well as state-based and national NGO's such as Amnesty International Australia, Oxfam CAA and the Refugee Council of Australia has developed well by now and we enjoy good relations with many of them. The same can be said for political parties and representatives with a clear partisan position for refugees and asylum seekers. This contact is actively developed and maintained through phone calls as well as by email.

Conversations with others around Australia are often about a report of an incident in detention centres, about sharing an alert about the Minister for Immigration's media statements and their implications for refugees as well as for refugee activists and advocates, or about collaborating for media work or a media release with other groups and activists, responding to a crisis in detention centres or to a policy announcement by the Minister.

More recently we're also more involved in case-work and lobbying for individuals, generating work around coordination, action-alerts and lobbying - for example when Mr Ardeshir Gholipour, an Iranian artist, found himself at the end of a long asylum process

and was told he was about to be deported back to Iran: with his lawyer and migration agent, close supporters and the PEN Writers in Prison Committee, we worked with some politicians and the media, reaching out to the wider networks to build a massive and sustained pressure-drive on the Immigration Department to review his case and grant him permanent protection.

In November 2002 Rural Australians for Refugees invited the Project SafeCom coordinator to their First Annual Conference in December 2002 in Mudgee, NSW. This trip was fully sponsored by refugee groups in Western Australia and the Eastern States.

Apart from connecting with about 130 refugee advocates attending the conference, our presence was extremely valuable from the point of view of Project SafeCom's presence in *the landscape of refugee advocates and supporters*. Contacts were made on which we could further build, and we became part of *RAR's National Steering group*, a collective of 10-12 representatives who would advise and coach the newly formed RAR National committee - the RAR National committee rotates every year to a new regional RAR group - in 2003 assigned to the Castlemaine RAR group; during 2004 a new coordinator in Bellingen, NSW, took on the job.

Again, in January 2004 we undertook a trip via Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast to Albury-Wodonga, after we were scheduled to conduct a workshop at the second RAR National Conference in Albury. We organised events (workshops, film evenings, speaking engagements, or public meetings) in collaboration with local groups, alliances and organisations. Throughout the tour proceeds from "the Project SafeCom stall" provided an income to partly offset the cost of the trip and a \$1000 grant was received from the Myer Foundation. Details of this trip are on our website at <http://www.safecom.org.au/ontheroad.htm>

d. Building a daily newsletter - and the audience for it

As time went on, the work resulted in the forming of our own announcement list, which was developed for the delivery of an '*almost daily*' e-newsletter, collating and summarizing all known online news from print press, and radio and TV broadcast transcripts about Australia's refugee and asylum seeker policies. The newsletter is now a highly valued source of daily information for reporters and journalists as well as refugee groups and human rights advocacy groups in Australia such as Amnesty International Australia, The National Council of Churches, the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, and also for migration agents, lawyers and legal representatives, as well as overseas parties: the US Bar Association Human Rights coordinator, journalists from the UK, Japan, Malaysia and Singapore.

The address online is: <http://www.topica.com/lists/safecom/read/>

We have received many spontaneous donations from subscribers to the (free) newsletter - which quotes several links to the website under every edition, and also the text:

At Project SafeCom, an Incorporated Association in Western Australia, we exist from donations and memberships. You can make a donation by transferring funds to our account at [bank details follow].

In this way, the newsletter *pays for itself*, and - apart from being an invaluable source of daily news about the politics, policies, local and national events, TV/Radio features and media news, comments and opinion, it is an important part of our promotional strategies. The newsletter is one of the integral aspects of Project SafeCom's work, which also overcomes the Australian tyranny of distance - and it is thoroughly appreciated by a growing number of people, about 360 subscribers (January 2005). From July 2004 this same newsletter is also sent to the Refugee Action Collective Victoria News subscribers by agreement with RAC Victoria, adding another 380 subscribers. In the past, when the Nauru detention centre was more populated than it is at the moment, the newsletter was printed out and sent to Nauru - as we discovered, independently, by two supporters - and pinned on the noticeboards and on the walls of the detention centre compounds. We also have been notified that this was the case in the Woomera and later the Baxter detention centre.

One of our needs is for another person to be trained to compile the newsletter so this job can be shared with another person.

e. Building relationships with the media

Since its inception, Project SafeCom issued more than 100 press releases. We were able to build a database of about 300 Australian media contacts, and increasingly we became part of the voice for asylum seekers and refugee issues in the National press. We worked together in joint media releases with refugee activists from other cities and states as well, most notably with RAC Sydney, RAC Canberra, RRAN Perth and The Greens refugee spokesperson for Victoria. Since Tampa we have been quoted in print about 250 times, we had about 40 radio interviews, and several televised interviews on current issues. Regrettably WA press coverage about asylum seeker and refugee issues is worse than in most other states around Australia; the Melbourne Age has usually been the best performer, especially until the 2004 federal election. One of the reporters of the West Australian "made up" for the lack of recognition of our work with a 2-page profile in the Saturday Weekend Extra of 17 July 2004: *Jack's long-range w.w.war*. The feature is reproduced on the website, see <http://www.safecom.org.au/wan-coverstory.htm>, while Yoko Iino, a reporter for the Japanese magazine 'Realiser' arranged an interview for its online edition in Japanese, after writing two feature articles about the Children Overboard incident, using resources from our website.

Increasingly we are asked for our views on emerging issues and emergencies in detention centres. One of the first examples of Project SafeCom being widely quoted in the Murdoch and Fairfax press, not just in Australia, but also in international media outlets, was when the story of a detainee in Woomera who lost his wife in the Bali terrorist bombings was left virtually untouched by the media until we went to work on the issue (see the separate item in this report).

In the period since Tampa until a few months before the 2004 election we learnt from this that often the media *actually really wants the opinion of refugee advocates*, but either that need is often satisfied by the more traditional agencies such as Amnesty International or the Refugee Council of Australia - or that opportunities are left untouched, because most refugee activists groups in the beginning year since "Tampa" did not concentrate on media work. Project SafeCom may well claim to have been a catalyst for giving attention to media work by many refugee action groups in Australia.

“ I'm delighted that it's burning and I hope it burns right to the ground ”
Refugee advocate Jack Smit

During the 2003 New Year's fires and "riots" in the various detention centres we went to work while *'everyone else was on holidays'*, and as a result Project SafeCom was quoted, in our count, in at least 48 newspapers and media outlets around the world. The quote about the Baxter detention centre fires, as inserted in the image from the BBC World website, became

famous, or infamous, depending on where you stood in the political landscape in Australian politics.

As a support for the 2003 Baxter protests, the skills learnt earlier could be applied: from Narrogin we kept in touch with about ten people throughout the weekend on location at Baxter, and we disseminated their statements to the press. We received a quote from the Perth



contingent from their vehicle just after they left Perth

on Ash Wednesday 2003. Even before they arrived at Port Augusta for the weekend events on Good Friday, the names of several West Australian activists and their quote: *"No distance is too far to travel against these policies"* was printed in 42 media reports - and probably

many more without our knowledge - around the world, via Australian Associated Press and Reuters wire reports.



In July 2003 we experienced one of our most celebrated moments, when an advocate who worked on Christmas Island sent us about 25 photos taken by the NAVY on board HMAS Adelaide at the time of the rescue of the passengers of *The Olong or SIEV 4*, the boat that has become known through the Children Overboard affair and subsequent Senate Inquiry. **The Unthrown Kids** story was widely reported, both by the Packer network, the Murdoch press and by Fairfax, and some of the photos appeared in the media. See the complete collection at <http://www.safecom.org.au/kids-overboard.htm>.

In November 2003 Perth-based advocate Ross Copeland, who has past connections with Amnesty, alerted us - and others - to the fact that the UK Press Complaints Commission had issued a directive to reporters in Britain about the use of the term "illegals" or "illegal immigrants" to denote asylum claimants. Using this as a backdrop, Ross suggested that we could start a campaign in Australia. Through the wide network of e-lists we were able to greatly amplify the call to action, which developed into the project **"Catching Illegals down-under"**, see the web page <http://www.safecom.org.au/illegals.htm>, where people sent complaints to Australian print media who used this term, with copies of their complaints to the Australian Press Council (APC). Within a few months APC came under sustained pressure to act and issue a ruling or directive, but they resisted issuing any statements until finally, eight months later, the Sydney Morning Herald refused to act on a complaint, and a member of the public took the complaint further, so the APC was forced to issue an adjudication and subsequent guidelines regardless of its own reluctance. A second complaint upheld against The Adelaide Advertiser by Mr Copeland resulted in another adjudication in October 2004.

See <http://www.presscouncil.org.au/pcsite/adj/1242.html>, <http://www.presscouncil.org.au/pcsite/adj/1260.html> and <http://www.presscouncil.org.au/pcsite/activities/guides/guide262.html>.

At the time of Tampa, the *Reportiers Sans Frontières* annual report card on the world's press freedom ranked Australia as number 12 compared to all other countries in the world. But in their 2004 Report that ranking had plummeted to 52nd, mainly as a result of the treatment of the media by the Howard government in relation to reporting of detained asylum seeker issues. Australia's Naval border protection project Operation Relex carries out its work under a top-secret code, which include prohibitions to reporters and reporting; the press is banned from detention centres, and reporter Nathalie Larkins was arrested while reporting during a refugee protest.

Since a few months before the 2004 election we observed a new and even more disturbing element: the refusal of *The West Australian* and *The Australian* to report on asylum seeker and refugee issues until they can no longer avoid it - a editorial position confirmed to us by their reporters. Since the election their editorial motivation seems to be: "*John Howard won this election with an even larger majority than in 2001, so those who criticise him should simply shut up and bugged off*", a deeply disturbing trend in Australian society, especially when the media take this line. During the hunger strike in Baxter by up to 25 Iranians in December 2004, The Australian phoned us for information only 30 minutes after the article based on our press release from Reuters came online at CNN - the first contact with The Australian since more than a year. Our "joke of the week" became: "*How do you get yourself quoted by The Australian on refugee issues? - get yourself quoted on CNN...*"

Meanwhile, Project SafeCom has an open invitation through its convenor Urs Wälterlin, International correspondent for the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, to make a presentation to the International Correspondents Association in Sydney, an invitation we should take up at our earliest opportunity. Apart from the openness, it is also a sign that international correspondents are well aware of both the restrictions and the disinterest in independent reporting on asylum policy and issues within Australia, an issue we see confirmed on many occasions in communication with International correspondents.

f. Building relationships with detainees

Project SafeCom has not supported the building of personal relationships with detainees "just for the sake of it". Our work developed through the use of strategies we were capable of carrying through into action with realistic and tangible outcomes on a limited budget. From the onset we have been conscious that building supportive relationships with detainees are time consuming and expensive, because of the methods available to us: through mobile phones, by letter, and especially through visits. Project SafeCom's location prevented us from embarking fully on this aspect of the work. We could in some ways "rest easy": this work is done with a great sense of purpose - and with great expense - by perhaps tens of thousands of dedicated people, in an organised way first becoming visible through the work of Rural Australians for Refugees with about 9000 members in (reportedly) more than 70 local groups; and secondly through the efforts of Julian Burnside QC and his partner, artist Kate Durham, who developed through "Spare Rooms for Refugees" an extensive letter writing campaign with asylum seekers on Nauru, growing at a later stage, more independently from Kate and Julian, also in other detention centres.

We have developed personal contact with detainees in the context of doing media work for and with them: the Woomera detainee who lost his wife at the Bali bombing, a Palestinian asylum seeker who alerted us to forced deportation plans to the middle east - where

DIMIA seemed to "fix them up" with false passports, and seemed to engage in lies and trickery about the travel visa arrangements, and more recently in the case of the Iranian reporter and artist Mr Ardeshir Gholipour. Aside from these projects, most detainees seem to be already fully aware of Project SafeCom: often refugee supporters take in a print version of our newsletter during a visit, and our first reply after we emailed a high profile asylum seeker in the Perth detention centre - who we had never met - stated: *"Dear Smit, I have heard your name a lot, I am glad to have received your e-mail..."* The same reaction came from the Ivory Coast journalist Cheikh Kone, who was detained in Port Hedland for years until, through the mediation of the PEN Writers in Detention Committee, received a permanent protection visa. I finally met him in New South Wales in January 2004, and he had heard as much about Project SafeCom as I had heard about him, without ever having spoken to each other.

g. Building a membership base

The size of Project SafeCom's database, with more than 5000 names, email addresses, and in many cases postal addresses and phone contacts, is indicative of our connections and support. When - in the week before Easter 2003, we embarked on a small donations appeal, we received within two weeks almost \$1500.00 in donations from people around Australia. When our phone was in danger of being cut off because we couldn't pay the bill and the accounts were seriously at a low ebb, about \$4000 came in within one month. These donations are often sent by "strangers", ie, by people who have quietly become visitors to our website, whose email addresses are in our database, or who subscribe to our newsletter. These people are "Project SafeCom supporters", but not necessarily registered financial Association members. On estimation, we have been financially supported since 2001 through donations from about 400 people, and that number extends to about 1200 people if we include those who purchase products through our website or from our stalls or who attended Project events.

Because of the coordinator's personal location and the location of the operations' office - in Narrogin, 185 kms from Perth - recruitment of a larger group of locally placed committed people who become financial association members has been a hurdle. During 2002 we held open Project SafeCom meetings in South Fremantle's community centre *The Meeting Place* every three weeks, but they were not very well attended, and they basically required financial outlays without returns.

In January 2005 Project SafeCom had 52 registered members, about half of these were living in Western Australia (some outside the Perth metropolitan area, in Bunbury, Geraldton, Narrogin) The remaining balance of our members at this time were located in other States of Australia (SA, Qld, Victoria, NSW, ACT and Tasmania), and one member lives overseas (Sweden) but is repatriating to South Australia in March 2005. Membership applications can also be completed online. We expect is that it is more likely that over time most of the membership will be placed outside Western Australia. This is an issue Project SafeCom will need to address in several ways: by adapting, so out-of-state members feel more involved with its work, and possibly also by lobbying more strongly for locally based memberships in Western Australia. There are plans in discussion for changes to the Constitution so out-of-state members have more input and so Project SafeCom can develop more flexible operations to reach people in other states.

h. Building income through donations and sales of products

Income and expenditure charts for the years 2001 - 2004, as well as for the current period of July to January 2005, are printed below. The two largest sources of income have generally come from donations, and sales & promotions, adding up to about 85% of our annual income.

Donations were received during public events; at stalls during rallies and events; spontaneously - mainly but not only from our daily newsletter subscribers - as well as after email appeals to those in our electronic database as well as through requests sent to about 60 e-lists we write to, both refugee group lists and peace movement lists, student activist lists, indigenous Australians' e-lists and a WA-based sustainability action lists.

Our first sale item in 2002 was our Promotional CD-Rom (sales now closed), fully produced by a volunteer in Albury-Wodonga and a refugee activist in Adelaide SA. All sales items can be ordered online via website order form pages.

Over time the number of people using such order/application forms has grown, and so have the number of items for sale via the website. Currently our sales items are:

1. Promotional CD-Rom (about 20 sales) - sales closing
2. *Refugee Ribbons* (about 12 roll sales)
3. *The Scattered People Choir* music CD (about 20 sales)
4. Winning Essays of the *Australia Is Refugees!* High Schools competition (about 5 sales)
5. Award-winning short film *The Cage House* (about 15 sales)
6. *From Nothing to Zero*, Burnside ed., *The Lonely Planet* (about 120 sales)
7. The film *Holiday Camp* (about 6 sales)
8. The Baxter Files CD (about 15 sales + 20 promotional presents to speakers etc.)
9. Eva Sallis: *Mahjar* (about 10 sales)
10. Brennan: *Tampering with Asylum* (about 20 sales)
11. *Dark Dreams: Australian Refugee Stories* (about 50 sales)
12. *News Overboard*, Iain Lygo (about 40 sales)
13. *Tony Kevin: A Certain Maritime Incident - the sinking of SIEV X* (about 35 sales)
14. Christmas cards for the *Iranians* (about 2800 sales)
15. Julian Burnside, *WORDWATCHING* (about 15 sales)

The sales numbers in brackets are from sales via the website as well as from orders during events and stalls, but they only reflect estimated sales.

The success of an initial 70 sales of *From Nothing to Zero*, just in the first 6 weeks since its publication, shows the effectiveness of our "e-advertising", also because we strongly encouraged people to purchase extra copies for asylum seekers living in detention centres. Our more recent sales success was the *Christmas Card for the Iranians*, a project running for just eight weeks in the lead-up to Christmas 2004.

i. Building presence and profile through local events

Apart from creating a powerful presence by participating in online forums and discussion groups, and establishing a unique relevance through the "Daily Refugee News and

Updates", we have celebrated our presence through a growing number of local events.

The first significant event was the start of our 2003 events in January with the film showing of the BBC Documentary "Australia's Pacific Solution" and The Cage House, with support of the Film and Television Institute in Fremantle, who hosted the evening. See our record on the website at: <http://www.safecom.org.au/fti-proceedings.htm>

For the event we were successful in recruiting Dr Carmen Lawrence and Senator Andrew Bartlett as the two keynote speakers. The event attracted 187 people, and many of those who attended, also those not directly associated with Project SafeCom still mention the event as a great evening.

We repeated the film screenings on World Refugee Day 2003 (20 June) in Bunbury, in a small auditorium at Edith Cowan University's Bunbury Campus with the support of the Bunbury Refugee Action Group. While a small event, the about 25 attendees were very involved, and the coffee and talks element afterwards saw all of them stay and chat for a full hour. See: <http://www.safecom.org.au/bunbury.htm>.

In September 2003 we hosted a Symposium "**The Cost, the Carnage and the Bill**". See the online record of the event at <http://www.safecom.org.au/symposium03.htm>. The event included a Forum (*The Bill: Restorative Justice post Howard* - a forum on the cost of Australia's asylum seeker policies) and a preceding day of film and documentaries. With generous assistance from The Institute of Advanced Studies the event was held at The University of WA - with participants Julian Burnside QC and Dr Louise Newman, and politicians Dr Carmen Lawrence, Andrew Bartlett and NSW Senator Kerry Nettle providing presentations. With help from the WA Greens we were also successful in bringing Hassan Ghulam, President of the Hazara Society over from Queensland - and secured the presence of former Woomera teacher and author Tom Mann.

At the event we could proudly state that *we had provided background information* and networked for contacts for both SBS television and the ABC, which greatly assisted the making of the films and documentaries shown during our Symposium. Although poorly attended (eg between 60-70 people at the Sunday Forum), we look back at the weekend as a great milestone in the life of Project SafeCom. We organised this event with support and sponsorships of The Greens of WA, West Australians for Racial Equality (WARE), the Australian Democrats in WA and UWA Institute of Advanced Studies. We funded the event entirely through pre-sales, donations and sponsorships.

During October and November 2003 the Fremantle Deckchair Company ran a production of the play **Citizen X** in their home premises in Victoria Hall, and our approach of the company to see how we could add to their production season was met with great generosity. As a result, we had an information and advice stall during the entire production season. See <http://www.safecom.org.au/citizenx.htm>.



In the beginning of 2004 we were again invited to attend the RAR Conference and conduct a workshop, this time in Albury-Wodonga. To create an income on the way to Albury, we lobbied groups and alliances in Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and the Sunshine Coast, and packed the Film library and the Stall in the luggage. Events were held at various locations during the trip. The catchy phrase "**On the Road to Gundagai**" did the

promotion; the documentaries did the rest, together with a \$1000 grant from the Myer Foundation, which also gave us a place in their 2004 Annual Report. See the website, also for feedback received about the tour and the workshop presented at Albury-Wodonga: <http://www.safecom.org.au/ontheroad.htm>.

Julian Burnside and Kate Durham, novelist and AAR president Dr Eva Sallis, South Australian MLC Kate Reynolds and the Democrats' refugee researcher Marianne Dickey were some of the folks present at the Perth Writers Festival, and we took them on "**The Refugee Defenders' Cruise**" along the Swan River on Friday 20 February 2004. This relaxed event where people could converse and mingle with them, was also valued by our high-profile guests as an unusual and great idea because they themselves could relax and enjoy something they would not have found the time to do. It was also an important afternoon for strengthening our links with some of these *refugee defenders*. See <http://www.safecom.org.au/thecruise.htm>.

For the annual commemoration of **World Refugee Day 2004** (19 June) we linked with Amnesty International Australia's WA Branch and Oxfam Community Aid Abroad. We organised the event with a stall outside Fremantle markets, also to promote the *Hearts for Refugees* project, organised a Cage so Amnesty could run its *Daybreak in Detention* event, and showed, again with the assistance of FTI, the film *The Deported* (Nick Danziger, Laura Ashton and Petra Graf), while Dr Carmen Lawrence provided the keynote address about forced deportations. The day reinforced our local presence and profile in positive ways. Details: <http://www.safecom.org.au/wrd2004.htm>

"**Dinner with Alanna**" was a fundraiser organised entirely to sponsor the work of CARAD, the Coalition Assisting Refugees and Detainees when ChilOut or the Sydney based lobby group Children Out of Detention's coordinator Alanna Sherry announced she was visiting Western Australia. It was planned as a fundraiser for outings for the children of families on Bridging-E Visas. CARAD raised more than \$1000 during the evening, and it established a tremendously positive working relationship between Project SafeCom and CARAD. See the page: <http://www.safecom.org.au/alannadinner.htm>

Project SafeCom also had an involvement in networking and news dissemination for the commemoration of **Tampa Day 2004** on 26 August and associated events in Perth on the request of Mary Crock at Sydney University: <http://www.safecom.org.au/tampaday04.htm> and in the organisation and news and press alerts for a **vigil for Peter Qasim**, held in detention for six years on Sept 9: <http://www.safecom.org.au/peter-qasim.htm>

Calls were issued for a national convergence on **Parliament House in Canberra** on 16 November 2004, and after calling for financial support for this trip with good replies and success, we were able to have a presence at the event. The trip was an opportunity to establish links in Canberra, and I took the opportunity to touch base with several reporters at the Canberra press gallery. Two documentaries were shown at Australian National University, and a new member joined. See <http://www.safecom.org.au/canberra04.htm>

j. Building influential relationships with Federal politicians

We were able to attract Dr Carmen Lawrence and Senator Andrew Bartlett as keynote speakers (January 2003 Film event in Fremantle), and again at our Symposium - as well

as Green's Senator Kerry Nettle. It was a good start to a developing relationship with a small but distinct number of federal politicians.

Because the debacle of Australian asylum seeker policies is closely linked to what we see as "complicity" by Federal Labor during the lead-up to the 2001 Federal election, we have been active in both "*hacking into Labor*" as well as lobbying selected politicians about the issues. Regularly Federal politicians received our media releases.

Regularly we write to Federal Labor MP's and Senators. Usually Federal Greens and Democrats get our mailouts, specific notes and urgent action messages, and often we follow that up by phoning the office of Andrew Bartlett and Carmen Lawrence. We know from outside sources as well as from the senator himself that Andrew Bartlett thinks very highly of Project SafeCom's contributions, and WA State Greens politicians also credit us a great deal - often our announcements appear in the Green's National e-list within days of our issuing of notices and bulletins.

In many instances, especially when Senator Andrew Bartlett was the Democrats' leader, his office followed with public statements about an issue shortly after our media releases about urgent issues in detention centres - and some of them have a very similar slant to our media releases, thus amplifying the issues we raise with the press.

Dr Carmen Lawrence usually acknowledges our communications, while many others within Federal Labor respond regularly. During his time as leader, Simon Crean and [former] Immigration spokesperson Julia Gillard have taken note of the material we put out - see also below under item (k). In 2003 an email about the proposed ASIO Bill was extensively quoted, almost read out in full until the time expiry, by former House member Michael Organ, the lower house MP for the Greens for Cunningham.

Carmen Lawrence and others, in deliberations in Labor Caucus, have used our comments about a Bill, presented by Ruddock (*Duration of Detention Bill*, readings in the last week of June 2003). Labor did not support the Bill, and Labor MP's reflected our references to the Al Masri Case in their speeches during the second reading of the Bill.

The result of our contact with selected Federal Labor representatives has been that they often take note of our writings as one of Australia's refugee groups, and appreciate the material we have presented to them - sometimes even regarding them as background briefing material.

Since the 2004 election we initiated contact with Andrea Mason, party leader for *Family First*, and issued calls to action across many e-lists especially with the view to force them to speak out about the deportation of Iranians. We could link this issue to the fact that a preacher of the Assemblies of God was arrested and imprisoned in Iran. The outcome of this lobbying was terrific: Family First's policy advisor phoned and asked us for a full policy briefing and later that day demanded from the Federal government a forum on asylum policies. The Age's Russell Skelton then reported about "a rift between Family First and the Howard government" over asylum policy, especially significant because with Victorian Senator-elect Steve Fielding set to hold the balance of power, Family First's dissent with the Federal government's refugee policies may prove significant from July 2005 onwards.

k. Ibrahim's story

During the October 2003 Bali bombing commemorations, PM John Howard met the two children of Iranian detainee Ibrahim Sammaki - who had lost their mother during the bombings - during the soccer match on Bali. We had previously been the first group to bring the shocking story of Mrs Sammaki's death into Australian mainstream media through a press release - also by bringing the press in direct contact with Mr Sammaki - with his permission.



This aspect of the PM's Bali visit had not received any media attention, and there were no Australian TV cameras at the encounter. Apparently the PM's office had refused permission for the children's presence at the main event in order to keep the story out of the mainstream press.

When we were told - immediately after the event - about this contact, we send an "alert to action" to all Australian refugee lists, urging people to write to their contacts in the media and/or Parliamentarians, asking for questions

to be put to the Prime Minister. We also notified the opposition leader Simon Crean and shadow immigration minister Nicola Roxon as well as several others in the opposition parties. Within 48 hours opposition MP's Simon Crean and Nicola Roxon issued a joint press release, asking the PM to account for his meeting and to review the government's consistent refusal on three occasions to allow the children into Australia to spend time with their father - and the issue was back in the spotlight, and widely reported by Australian media. Previously Democrats' leader Andrew Bartlett and Senator Natasha Stott Despoja had exerted pressure - on the face of it to no avail.

In the weeks that followed SA Magistrate Brian Deegan, who lost a son in the Bali bombings, had the opportunity to again pressure the Howard government over the refusal to grant visas to the children, and former Governor-General Sir William Dean once again weighed in to the debate. It now looks likely that the PM will urge his Immigration Minister Amanda Vanstone to review previous decisions and have the children come over to be with their dad.

***Note 6 November 2003, 3:00pm:** Immigration Minister Amanda Vanstone has just announced that Mr Sammaki has been granted a permanent protection visa, has been released from the Baxter detention centre, and that he is on his way to Adelaide to arrange sponsorship visas for his two children so they can join him in Australia as permanent residents.*

"In July 2004 I was in Melbourne for a week, and finally I was able to meet Ibrahim, who lives in a quiet street in Preston. The kids said hello, Ibrahim cooked me a meal, and it doesn't matter that he hardly remembers me from the phone conversations while he was in shock upon hearing that his wife had died. He's a permanent resident of Australia, and he finally can rebuild his life and complete the grieving over his wife, and heal the scars of his traumatisation by the Howard government."

III. FINANCIAL REPORT

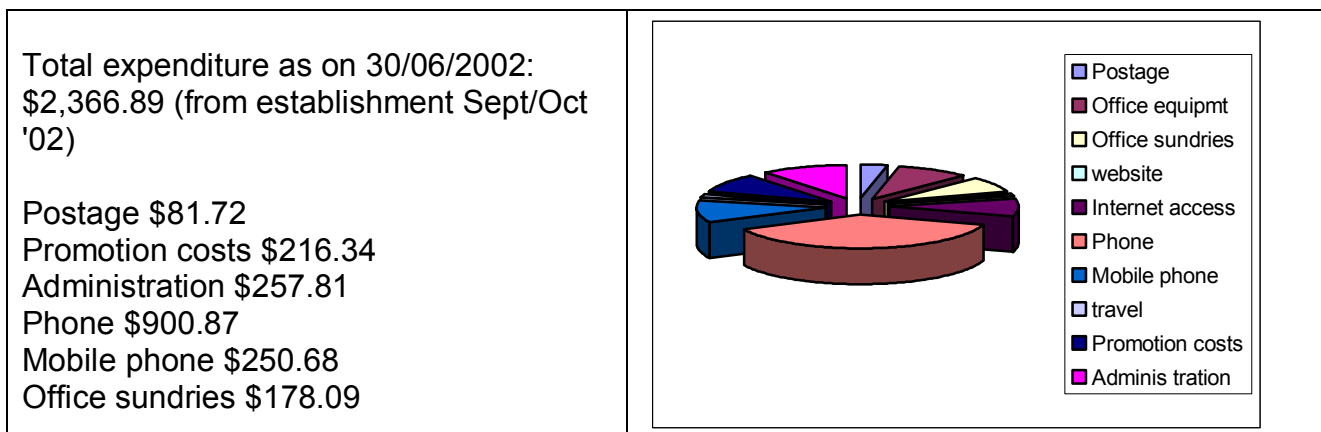
Establishment year: in the establishment year till 30/06/2002 as well as the following year until 30/06/2003, tax liability and therefore financial responsibility defaults to the coordinator's own business name. This is because income of Incorporated Associations since a few years ago can only occur under a current ABN. Project SafeCom's ABN was established on and operable from 1 July 2003.

Office needs includes the expenses of printing cartridges for the computer, paper, other stationery, the cost of padded bags and parcels for mailing of orders.

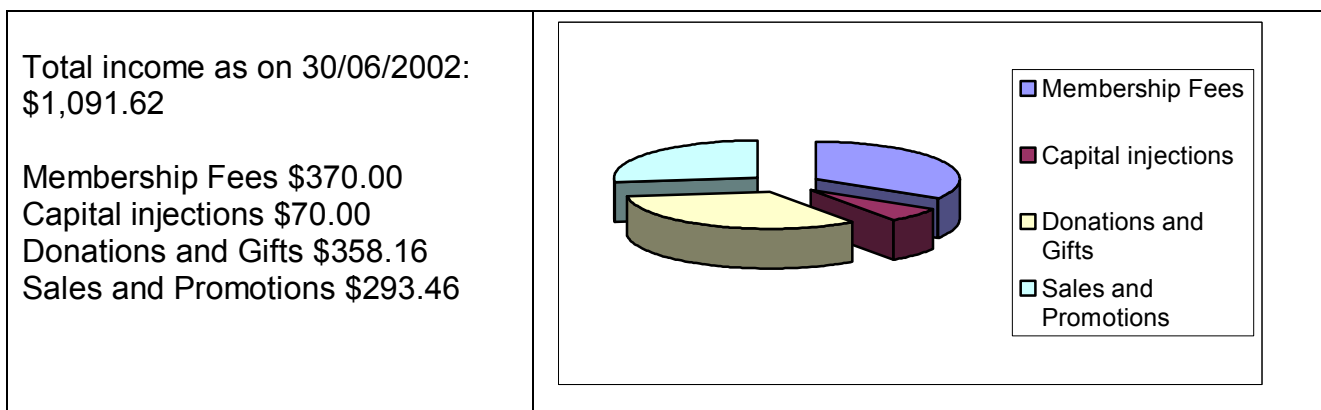
Administration costs initially included Internet access, the costs of the phone as well as the mobile phone, and costs of the website hosting. Most of these items have since been split into separate categories, reflecting the growth we are experiencing.

Promotion costs can include the costs of flyers, photocopies, sheet laminating, production of banners and logos for Project SafeCom, and purchase of items like a stall table and holders for information and the production of Refugee Ribbon jars placed in a few Fremantle locations. They also include the wholesale purchase of books, CD's and other sale items.

a. Expenditure 2001 - 2002



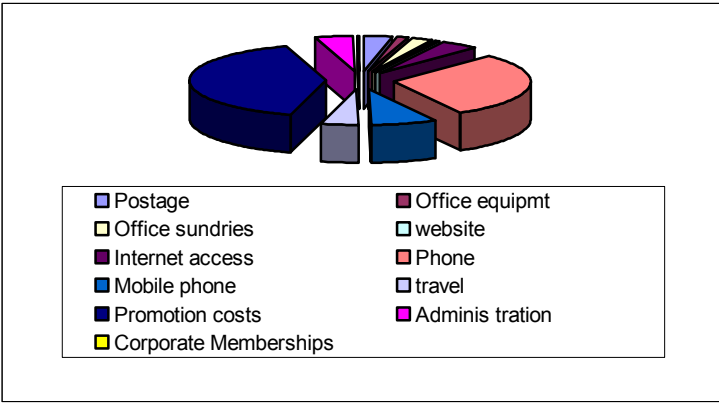
b. Income 2001 - 2002



c. Expenditure 2002 - 2003

Total expenditure as on 30/06/2003: \$9,222.67

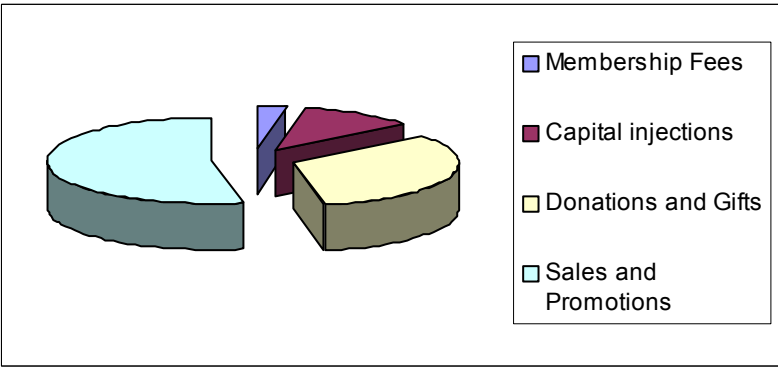
Phone \$2,739.44
 Internet access \$412.90
 Promotion costs \$3,796.14
 Travel \$410.09
 Administration \$412.93
 Postage \$305.73



d. Income 2002 - 2003

Total income as on 30/06/2003: \$8,084.16

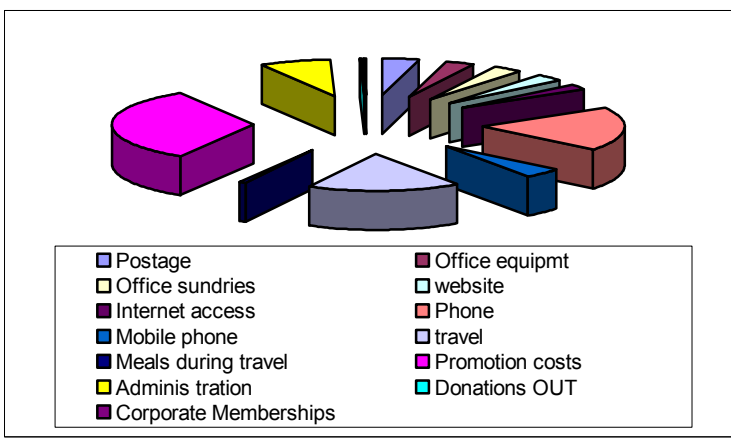
Membership Fees \$300.00
 Capital injections \$1,175.27
 Donations and Gifts \$3,417.50
 Sales and Promos \$5,541.93



e. Expenditure 2003-2004

Total expenditure as on 30/06/2004: \$20,015.18

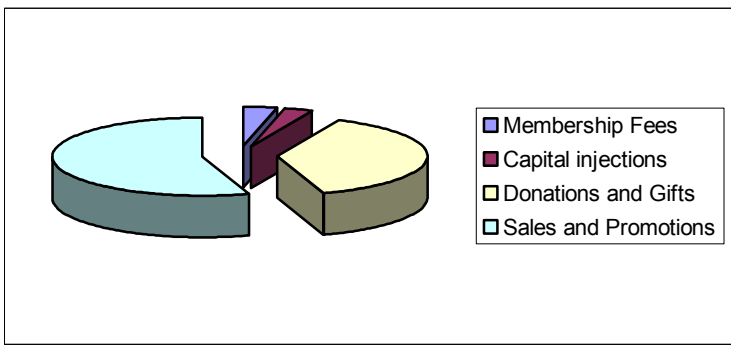
Phone \$3,913.57
 Mobile phone \$908.42
 Internet access \$431.20
 Promotion costs \$6,585.44
 Travel \$3,494.13
 Administration \$1,607.40
 Postage \$827.20



f. Income 2003-2004

Total income as on 30/06/2004: \$17,600.49

Membership Fees \$692.91
 Capital injections \$556.24
 Donations and Gifts \$7,191.59
 Sales and Promos \$10,272.23



d. Accounts from 01/07/04 to present

Proposals for the remainder of the current financial year are a conservative estimate of income and expenditure based on patterns established during previous years and the initial period of the current year. A few funding submissions have been drafted and submitted for approval. One of these (Screen Development Grant) has been confirmed.

item	2002 - 2003	2003 - 2004	Jul 04-Jan 05	Proposed 2004 - 2005
Postage	\$305	\$827	\$752	\$1,000.00
Office equipment	\$120	\$648	0	\$500.00
Office sundries	\$234	\$686	\$482	\$800.00
Website & domains	\$48	\$669	\$94	\$400.00
Internet access	\$412	\$431	\$304	\$600.00
Phone	\$2,739	\$3,913	\$1,876	\$3,000.00
Mobile phone	\$724	\$908	\$415	\$800.00
travel	\$410	\$3,494	\$1,626	\$2,500.00
Promotion costs	\$3,796	\$6,585	\$3,348	\$8,000.00
Administration	\$412	\$1,607	\$147	\$2,800.00
Donations out	0	0	\$168	\$168.00
Corporate Memberships	\$17	\$49	\$38	\$100.00
Coordinator fees	0	0	\$1,400	\$2,500.00
Totals outgoing	\$9,216	\$19,816	\$10,649	\$23,167.00
Membership Fees	\$300	\$692	\$776	\$800.00
Donations and Gifts	\$3,417	\$6,191	\$8,390	\$11,000.00
Sales and Promotions	\$5,541	\$10,272	\$5,492	\$8,500.00
External Grants		\$1,000		3,000.00
Totals Incoming	\$9,258	\$18,155	\$14,658	\$23,300.00

*Comments submitted in support of the 2004 Changemakers Innovation Award **

Jack Smit of Project SafeCom, has dedicated years of his life to the treatment of, and attitude to refugees. It is a humanitarian effort performed against the prejudice and indifference of many Australian people; as well as opposition from the highest levels of government and the media. His considerable skills as a communicator, and user of the internet have made it possible from a remote location. We all owe him a debt of gratitude.

- Hugh Charlesworth

Project SafeCom has kept me in touch with valuable & up-to-date information & opinion about the many complex issues of asylum seekers. It is an email network that has astonished me as a recent net user.

- Margaret Tonkin

I'd give my support to Project SafeCom for their work in publicising Australia's inhumane treatment of refugees. A great site (technically and visually) and one of the few that has managed to bridge the gulf between mainstream and alternative media, as a source of news on refugees that reaches all mediums. Project SafeCom has also been responsible for mounting (and publicising) campaigns to help refugees, as well as mobilising people to act on their behalf. A superb example of networking, that is both inclusive and innovative.

- Mick Lambe

Jack Smit and his team are making an extremely valuable contribution to exposing the cowardly, politically opportunistic and very costly policies by the Howard government in respect of asylum seekers.

- Klaas Woldring

I have been reading the Project SafeCom news from more or less its inception and consider it an extremely useful way of keeping in touch with what is happening in the world of the refugees in Australia. I could not possibly keep up with all the news reports as well as working with the refugees at the Romero Centre in Brisbane. I wish you the luck you deserve in competition and hope that you achieve your ambitious goals for the future. It would be marvellous to have an email service that up-dated one on all the social justice issues, and a great way of educating the general public. Media comment, as you say in your submission, is not always reliable because of ownership issues and staying onside with government. Best wishes for a successful outcome - it's a great service.

- Gwen Gorman

Thank you Project SafeCom and Jack Smit for your constant and remarkable efforts. We check our emails daily and up comes the latest information which we email on to others.

- Pat & Gordon

Project SafeCom tirelessly provides much-needed advocacy for asylum seekers in Australia and provides refugee rights activists and concerned Australians with regular updates, alerts and call to action. Thanks for your amazing work Jack!

- Bridget

Project SafeCom, and Jack Smit's work are invaluable for those of us involved in refugee advocacy in Australia. The information is consistently reliable, most timely and presented clearly - and that applies equally to the website, the refugee updates and the blog. As a resource it's invaluable - and as a mode of generating resources Project SafeCom is just essential. Resources are generated by knowledge, commitment and networking - all exemplified so well by Project SafeCom.

- Angela Dawes

Project SafeCom Inc has been an invaluable resource in my quest to do whatever I can to help change the attitudes and Government Policies towards refugees in this country. I am confident that I am up to date on information about refugee issues. I have had instant support communicating with Jack Smit, which has a human element rather than a technological approach. It makes me feel part of a positive social movement in this country.

- Dorothy Babb

Project SafeCom swims against a tide of denial in Australia today. The mainstream media uncritically reports government media releases without blinking at even the most obvious lies. Project SafeCom is unrelentingly honest, resourcing those journalists who still believe in an ethical profession and demanding that the stories, abuses and tragedies of the men, women and children hidden in desert camps are written and heard. In a bleak human rights landscape, Project SafeCom is a beacon of truth. They deserve to win for their honesty, creativity and dogged persistence.

- Pamela Curr

If it were not for Project SafeCom, I would not know all the lies that our Government continues to tell us especially about refugees. It is an organisation to inform and mobilise - all via the internet! Project SafeCom stands for truth and integrity - something sadly our Government and mainstream media severely lack. With Project SafeCom still fighting, it gives me hope that things will change.

- Justine Brosnan

* See <http://www.safecom.org.au/changemakers.htm>