



Project SafeCom Inc.

2005 Annual Report

November 2005



31 January 2005 - **The mystery of Anna** in Baxter's isolation compound is reported and a few days later resolved - and the Immigration Department's "policies" of cover-ups and lies start falling apart, piece by piece, day by day and case by case



30 May 2005 - **The Kooyong Breakout** - With the tabling of two Bills by liberal backbenchers Petro Georgiou and Judi Moylan MP, the Prime Minister is successfully wedged for the first time - since the Tampa standoff amassed him all the power and control he asserted with the resulting erosion of democracy, government accountability and the destruction of human rights as a key plank in Australia's fabric as a nation. Slowly the rigidity of the policies will vanish - or will they just prove to have been a test-run of the terrorist legislation?

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Steering Committee (as on November 1, 2005)

Cedric Beidatsch (Chair)
Paul Desmond (Vice-Chair)
Mandy Kiely (Secretary)
Rod Mitchell (Treasurer)
Jack H Smit (Executive Officer)
Ian Alexander
Justine Brosnan
Mick O'Loughlen

Members (current)

Western Australia

Cedric Beidatsch
Karen Bonte
Hugh Charlesworth
Liana Christensen
Suzanne Covich
Jo Darbyshire
Paul Desmond
Colin Edwards
Nathalie Haymann
Suzanne Ingelbrecht
Sheila Jessop
Lorraine Johnston
Mandy Kiely
Theo MacKaay
Lynn MacLaren
Marcelle Meyer
Loretta Martella
Rod Mitchell
Gavin Mooney
Mick O'Loughlen
Anne Parker
Shannon Pearce
Suresh Rajan
Larry Stringer
Diane Tavakoli

Members (current)

South Australia

Marie Boland
Alexander Marks
Chantalle Marks
June Marks
Richard Marks
Stan Potter
Helen Sage
Nayano Taylor-Neumann

New South Wales

Peter Aitken
Tami Ebner
Bruce Haigh
Laurel Lloyd-Jones
Tony Simons
Nura Wendy Tashiro

Victoria

Brigit Arthur
Neil Barrett
Sue Corby
Ardeshir Gholipour
Sara Haq
Brenda Hubber
Andrew McPhee
Barbara Rogalla
Erika Stahr
Margaret Tonkin

Australian Capital Territory

Jane Keogh
Rosemary Nairn
Moira Smith

Queensland

Anni Bliss
Kerri Browne
Ann Jarman
Ronald Webb

Tasmania

Helen Tait
Sara Ann Strong

Supporters

Around 400 financial supporters, 1200 purchasing clients, 3000 general sympathisers, 7000 database contacts, 10,000 general "other e-list" readers.

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From the Chairwoman

With the shift this year in public awareness of refugee rights, Project SafeCom has played an expanding role in the campaign for justice. After years of the refugee rights movement's sporadic success in igniting public concern, the well-publicized debacles of Cornelia Rau's detention and the deportation of Vivian Alvarez, fixed a spotlight on the shortcomings of Australia's immigration system. Then at long last, some consciences among Liberal backbenchers found voice.

While chairing the organization this year, I have also experienced major transitions from public servant to Greens Member of Parliament and then to WACOSS policy officer. During my term as Chair, I have just managed to keep up with our co-coordinator's pace, thanks to the support provided by our committee. Special thanks must go to Justine, who is retiring this year as Secretary. She did a fabulous job with good humour - and with her mum arranged the release of refugee detainee Mehran while she was at it! Thanks also to Ian Alexander, who in addition to his careful analysis of our direction, was always ready to chair a meeting or ferry the stall materials. Wendy's attention to detail improved our governance, not to mention the readability of our reports! And Peter and Paul each contributed their efforts and enthusiasm at meetings consistently.

While my brief Parliamentary "career" gave me few opportunities for refugee activism, I continued to support Project SafeCom in my role as Chair. It was always a delight to come together as a committee, and yet again, Jack was clearly the driving force. His dedication to Project SafeCom and to the refugee rights movement is awesome.

Like each of us, outside my committee role, I worked to bring refugee rights into all spheres of my rollercoaster career path. I also focused attention on the refugee rights movement in my inaugural speech as a Member of State Parliament. In the wake of the Baxter protests, I challenged our state legislators to abandon their indifference for refugees, quoting from George Bernard Shaw. But the priority legislation during my weeks in Parliament brought electoral reform. This delivered a harsh lesson in how democracy really functions - long hours of boring rhetorical speeches by Members who clearly haven't emerged from the Chamber long enough to mark the changing of the century. I now no longer question why stale men in expensive suits argue strongly for draconian laws such as the newly proposed Anti-Terrorism legislation.

Visiting the Perth Airport detention centre with Greens Senator Kerry Nettle (NSW) made a lasting impression and meeting Ardeshir Gholipour just after he was released was inspirational, as was meeting journalist blogger Margo Kingston in Fremantle at the Social Forum. We were all amazed by the generous support of the Indonesian puppeteers and their show at Kulcha.

I know it is becoming increasingly stressful for our co-ordinator as he strives to move from a volunteer to a funded position. His heart is rooted in this campaign, and it is in all our interests to see that Project SafeCom develops sustainably, to be in a financially secure situation for the next few years. Jack's efforts and the kind contributions of members may yet yield an affordable Fremantle campaign centre and computers - we will need people in the months to come.

It was Jack's vision, laid down in our Project SafeCom Constitution, for a wider scope of human rights campaigning, which will form the basis of our efforts over the next 12 months. The opportunities to be involved in working groups focused on specific outcomes will be exciting and we hope that more members will be drawn to become actively engaged. I will be stepping down as Chair but will remain involved in the Events Organizing Group. Grants acquisition and fund raising will be the focus of the Income Development Group, and we hope to attract experienced and enthusiastic members!

I look forward to supporting the new committee over the coming year. It has been a privilege to be involved.

Lynn MacLaren, Fremantle

See <http://www.safecom.org.au/mac-laren1.htm>

From the Secretary

It is great to report that after four years, Project SafeCom memberships are still increasing and is currently at a high of 67. This time last year, there were 52 members. This may be surprising as some members have not renewed in the past year due to a number of reasons - such as being burned out from the ongoing stress of it all. Many are happy that their particular friend is 'out' and the issue is now closed for them and the Government's 'softening' on detained asylum seekers' treatment has reduced the urgency of protest.

It seems that the wider movement of refugee activism has steadily declined over the past year and probably will continue to decline next year too but this does not mean that the issue has been solved. Bad policies are still in place and it is our responsibility as Australian citizens to continue informing our fellow humans of the injustices at many different levels that the Australian government has done and continues to do in our name. I'm happy to see that Project SafeCom gained more members than were lost and I do hope that next year will be the same.

I have enjoyed being Project SafeCom's secretary over the past year and many fine Project SafeCom events have taken place, as you will see as you read this report. The steering committee conducted six meetings in total for 2005. Our meetings were usually between an hour and two hours long and were concise and always full of participation.

It is with regret that I resign from the Secretary position but I hope to remain as a committee member as I feel that Project SafeCom has more to offer the community and Australia.

Justine Brosnan, Secretary 2004-05

Note: Thirty-five of our members live in Western Australia while thirty-two live in other States or territories around Australia.

Coordinator's Report

Perceptions and realities

An academic at Adelaide University ponders *'What have you done, Jack'* when the media begin reporting on the Private Members Bills birthed by the Petro Georgiou group in May this year. And staff in the office of a Federal politician from New South Wales who shall remain unnamed, chuckle when the name *Laurie Ferguson* comes up in connection with his being dumped from the shadow Immigration portfolio by the ALP opposition, and they comment in a phone conversation with me *'that took you eight months, Jack'*: eight months after the start of this period for the bombastic and soon caustic MP, he fell on his sword, even while I helped "welcoming" him to the portfolio by launching the massive *'Educating Laurie'* e-campaign.

While Project SafeCom initiated some fierce campaign work around these events - both have become important milestones in the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers since Tampa - both observers are factually wrong, and Project SafeCom cannot claim credit for having been organisers or central catalysts in either event.

But apart from acknowledging our contribution to both events, the remarks are significant because of what they say about Project SafeCom behind the erroneous observations. *We have gained an increasing degree of respect around Australia in 2005, and I'm proud of it.*

Consolidation and re-orientation

The past year, especially as a result of the 2004 Federal election, set new contexts in motion for the work of Project SafeCom in relation to refugee issues and response to Immigration policies.

First there was a need to re-assess the political alignment and the openings it presented for citizen groups such as us, addressing the question of where to invest political liaisons and asking *'who our friends were'*; secondly, there always was the question of whether or not to solely invest in a single issue when applying pressure on politicians for change, and during 2005 the question returned in a more urgent way than before - and we dealt with it, greatly assisted by Committee endorsement in April this year of my briefing paper on our mandate and future directions, touching on wider human rights and social justice issues as well as on issues of sustainability, also as a prelude to the issues surrounding climate refugees.

Then there was the push by liberal backbenchers led by Petro Georgiou, the Cornelia Rau and Vivian Alvarez debacles, and the coming apart of the Department of Immigration, and the unravelling of scandal after debacle after scandal. Pressure applied by tens of thousands of Australians since Tampa was bringing results to bear - but also amongst all groups the need to chose between being a "single-issue group" or a "refugee group" on the one hand, or to unfold as an organisation also speaking out and being vocal on wider issues was starting to announce itself.

Conform with the initial vision as laid out in our Constitution, I worked with the Steering Committee to affirm this broad platform and confirm an intent to engage on wider human rights issues, which were early on already identified as "Implications of Tampa". Overviews and tables are offered in this Annual Report as ATTACHMENT ONE.

New players, different openings

In the lead-up to the federal election I had approached Family First (FF) as a new player in Federal politics, especially because of the intersection between Iranians and Christian Iranians in detention, and the fact that FF has its origins in church-based environments, and I could use the arrest and imprisonment of an Assemblies of God lay preacher in Iran as an example that convinced Family First of the relevance to them of this issue. Success came

when FF defined its political position of difference with the government over the treatment of these asylum seekers. My action was followed by a report in *The Age*, where Russell Skelton exclaimed that "a serious rift" had developed between the party and the government over the treatment of Iranians seeking refuge in Australia.

As soon as he was appointed to the portfolio, a nationwide drama unfolded over ALP Immigration spokesman Laurie Ferguson. My *Educating Laurie* campaign surely contributed to Ferguson's dumping from the portfolio about eight months later, making place for the sixth ALP Immigration spokesman since Tampa (Con Sciacca, Nicola Roxon, Julia Gillard, Stephen Smith, Laurie Ferguson - replaced by Tony Burke), as this campaign was carried by thousands of '*activated Laurie educators*' who sent him emails during this period. See <http://www.safecom.org.au/2004/10/educating-laurie-letters.htm>

This year's events and key points

Changemakers Innovation Award

Our submission in December last year for The 2004 Changemakers Innovation Award was a useful tool to succinctly describe and declare in detail many of our electronic "*tactics*" and ways of working, and share this with many organisations on a global level. The public could submit a star rating to the hundreds of submissions and submit comments to those who vied for the Award. Although we didn't make it to the 12 finalists, many people provided feedback and expressed supportive comments to the online submission via the Changemakers website. See <http://www.safecom.org.au/changemakers.htm>

The Kooyong breakout

On February 9 came Petro Georgiou's landmark speech - bringing out some chaotic fury on the part of the PM - finally expressing his long-held dismay with 'indefinite detention' and incarceration of children, while publicly demanding an end to Temporary Protection Visas. I wrote a letter to Mr Georgiou and seven other backbenchers suggesting various democratic strategies for dissent from other western democracies and ended the letter with

"I ask you to consider the creation of a strong group in the coalition government that opposes, loudly and clearly, many of the issues I have touched on in this letter - perhaps a group under the broad banner of "parliamentarians for human rights". Perhaps even a private member's bill could be presented about a Bill of Rights." (<http://www.safecom.org.au/georgiou.htm>)

It took just a few weeks until we could read Paul Davey in *The Bulletin* (23/03/2005) who wrote about "a backbench revolt" and a looming Private Members' Bill coming from the group around the Member for Kooyong, but it had all been carefully planned for quite some time, and for the record, liberal backbenchers' dissent over the treatment of asylum seekers started when the Tampa Bills were rushed through in 2001, when West Australian MP Hon Judi Moylan - as the only MP from either of the major parties - declared herself absent from Parliament rather than have her vote be counted amongst the numbers in The House.

Around the time of the tabling of the two Private Members' Bills both Petro Georgiou MP and Judi Moylan MP established contact with me, keeping me informed about the progress of their behind-the-screens negotiations with the Prime Minister and asking for suggestions and feedback, so much so, that I at one point concluded in amazement that my working relationship with liberal MPs was better than with the ALP... A summary of both Bills, written by Mr Georgiou is at <http://www.safecom.org.au/georgiou-bills.htm>

Cornelia Rau

Then of course "Anna" - an Australian with a mental illness, lost in Baxter - was uncovered as Cornelia Rau - mainly through the work of long-term friend, Project SafeCom colleague and supporter Pamela Curr of Melbourne's Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, with the help of *The Age* reporter Andra Jackson (now shortlisted for a Walkley Award for this work), and Cornelia

Rau opened the doors we had all too often found tight shut, both in the living rooms of many Australians and in the newsrooms of the Murdoch and Packer media networks. Her sister, former Fairfax reporter Christine Rau, succinctly put it in a speech she sent me for publication after she asked whether I could help republish it: *"we essentially put a tripwire under the shield DIMIA so often erected in bungled immigration cases..."*

See <http://www.safecom.org.au/chris-rau-pilch.htm>

The Cornelia Rau story was the beginning of the end of the dictatorial regime of a government department, DIMIA, gone mad in fanatic self-serving arrogance, throwing away necessary bureaucratic and administrative oversight and checks and balances and trading this in for "political correctness" in sync with perhaps unwritten but assumed 'directives' by the Prime Minister - in this mirroring the inner circle of the Howard administration, which had hijacked media control, policy approvals and that saw spin replacing information outflow since the Tampa stand-off off Christmas Island in September 2001.

See <http://www.safecom.org.au/cornelia-rau.htm>

After the Rau revelations, it was only a matter of time, and I saw the spider web of collusion and cover-ups coming apart, slowly but surely, and strand by strand. Now we're waiting for the same unravelling to take place on macro-levels within a series of democratically unaccountable Howard administrative strongholds, but that may take longer, and it will not happen with the help of, but in spite of, the ALP - which is still trying to become an effective opposition, also since Tampa.

The Grab Your Granny protest

My work in composing and sending an emailed call for - assisting Kaye Bernard who asked for help - what became a lively and important protest outside the now closed Perth Detention Centre on 14 March this year is worth noting - because I organised it by phone and email and never left the office in Narrogin while the event took place: it is evidence of how effective electronic communication can work across distances. 55 people attended the protest, and it had a direct and effective impact on DIMIA's intent to return a 74-year old Vietnamese grandmother, *Thi Tu Nguyen*, after receiving medical treatment in Perth, back to detention on



Christmas Island, while her daughter just lived *"down the road"* in Perth. Worth noting also, is that Mrs Nguyen is the widow of a Vietnam veteran who was awarded for his service and who fought alongside "our boys" during the Vietnam War, and that the Migration Act provides for waiving of the detention of aged persons. See <http://www.safecom.org.au/news-1403-2005.htm>

Perth Social Forum

The Perth Social Forum, a weekend event offered by an alliance of the *"conscious but disenchanted left"* in WA, was held in Fremantle on 19/20 March, and the context of addressing the issues connected to neo-conservative governments provided a fine context for our Forum **DON'T MENTION THE REFUGEES**, with whistleblower *Andrew Wilkie* and political commentator and (now former-) *Fairfax* reporter *Margo Kingston*. The brief for the Forum was our first deliberate public attempt to place the issue of refugees in the context of neo-conservative government-controlled exclusion of refugees and displaced people from the notion of globalisation - and ponder whether globalisation is just for "credit-card holders". Although the discussion went its own spontaneous way, both Margo and Andrew reported back how much they enjoyed the forum, and with about 75 attendees, the event was one of the weekend's most successful program items. See <http://www.safecom.org.au/psf2005.htm> During the Forum we also premiered Dean Israelite's *Spell me Freedom*, a short but well-composed flashback movie of mandatory detention and its impact on the *"recipients"*.

See <http://www.safecom.org.au/spell-me-freedom.htm>

Independent Media/publications

The overview presented in this report as APPENDIX ONE shows that in a post-Tampa democratic environment support for independent media - and participation in the development of them - should be and also is a role for citizens' groups such as Project SafeCom.

Also this year the resolve that the mainstream media is failing Australia has been re-affirmed in my experiences, and while applause should go to *the ABC* for its relentless attention to the issues that count, the Murdoch press is now so hollowed out, or - as is the case with *The Australian* - so blatantly and continuously applauding the Howard government's refugee policies while sweeping the Australian civil rights movement into their bin of "loopy lefties", appropriate or not, that spending a great deal of energy on lobbying these outlets amounts to an actual waste of resources.

Even while the Cornelia Rau and Vivian Alvarez debacles opened doors by finally allowing not just a few but almost all reporters and editors-in-chief to acknowledge that within DIMIA and government one of Australia's major issues was worth reporting, outlets such as the Australian just registered some significant 'blips' on the radar, even showing some investigative reporting of considerable quality in the case of Vivian Alvarez, too soon the mainstream press reverted to old denials of major human rights failings and abuses undermining the fabric of Australian society under Howard.

I developed a greater role than before as an online writer this year, presenting articles about the Cornelia Rau debacle, the looming return of the National ID Card, international treatment of "out processed" asylum seekers, and about the Georgiou group - the dissenters in the Coalition government. One of the spin-offs of this work has been that material published in independent forums of repute is often noticed by Members of Parliament - in March ALP's Duncan Kerr MP noted in a speech in the House my material about Cornelia Rau written for New Matilda and recommended it for reading to all MP's and interested parties in Federal government, and this was of course also noted in The Hansard. See <http://www.safecom.org.au/cornelia-rau.htm#kerr>

The participation of Margo Kingston at our March forum in Fremantle also assisted in the development of my role as a participant and writer for Web Diary, initially at its *Sydney Morning Herald* location, and since she left *Fairfax*, now at *Margo Kingston's Independent Webdiary* at www.webdiary.com.au. This role as well as a welcome at the online New Matilda magazine at www.newmatilda.com.au made me nearly the only contributor who writes about refugee issues and immigration policies, a welcome introduction of Project SafeCom to new groups of people in Australia and a further establishment of our role in what *ABC Radio* recently called a "prominent human rights lobby group" when they introduced one of my interviews, recorded and broadcast nationally. New Matilda founder, academic, publisher and author Hilary McPhee recently named me one of New Matilda's best writers, and mentioned my work on Radio National.

Royal Commission petition

As soon as the Cornelia Rau scandal broke I was able to launch our petition demanding a Royal Commission into the treatment of asylum seekers, refugees and immigration detainees. The project was and is still a good success, and the number of signatures now passing the 15,000 mark. The first 4,200 were tabled by Dr Carmen Lawrence, while Tony Burke MP is about to launch in another one of his vigorous attacks and demands for a Royal Commission, when he tables the next 10,000 signatures I recently sent him.

See <http://www.safecom.org.au/royal-commission.htm>



World Refugee Day 2005

We celebrated this year's World Refugee Day event with our stall and the Hearts for Refugees project, as we did last year, outside the Fremantle Markets, in collaboration with Amnesty. Amnesty's WA group ran its Daybreak in Detention project using the detention cage partly made as a benefit to Project SafeCom three years ago. Courtesy visits by Hon Carmen Lawrence and Hon Fred Chaney provided media opportunities

- of the two TV interviews 3 seconds was left on the ABC evening news. Fremantle Herald reported the event thanks to support by free-lance photographer Marcus Whisson, who usually attends our events and once again sent his exquisite pictures to add to those made by Peter Fern.

See <http://www.safecom.org.au/wrd2005.htm>

Awakening of the Myth

As a gift from the gods came the offer from Brisbane-based Rina Sani and Omar Pumar of ORISHA INTERNATIONAL and offer a fundraising performance for Project SafeCom during their annual teaching tour of WA, followed by an equally generous offer from Kulcha Multicultural Arts WA to host the event for a nominal charge. Orisha's Indonesian and Balinese performing arts show, laced with themes around refugees and displaced people, with a spot of Forum Theatre, was both well attended and warmly accepted by us. The performance also marked the start of a promising and ongoing collaborative relationship between Project SafeCom and Kulcha. See <http://www.safecom.org.au/kulcha-orisha.htm>

WA Webdiary launch

In keeping with our resolve to support independent and alternative media forms in Australia, I was able to facilitate the launch of Margo Kingston's Webdiary and create a supporting role for Project SafeCom. It was an event where FTI also showed its best by offering the Cinema for use virtually free of charge, so we could hook up a laptop to the network as well as the screen to show the Webdiary website on the screen. For Margo, at her wishes, it was also a reconnecting with "the gumnut babies" - former Green Senators Dee Margetts and Christabel Chamarette, who held the balance of power when Margo was a Canberra reporter. With Dr Carmen Lawrence as a moderator, this small but personal event - 45 people attended - also served to confirm my role as a Webdiary writer in the months ahead.

See <http://www.safecom.org.au/club-chaos.htm>

Contacts database

Last year about 5,000 contacts were part of the database of members, 'shoppers', donors, supporters, colleagues and organisations who receive messages from Project SafeCom. By adding an optional column in the Royal Commission petition sheet for an email address, the opportunity has arisen to write to those who enter their email address, thanking them for their signature, providing a link back to the Royal Commission petition page on the website, and asking their permission to keep sending them material. About 3,600 new contacts have been added since last year as a result of this campaign in addition to adding new contacts who either ordered items from the shop, who sent queries or questions through the website, or who emailed me. Around 800 contacts were deleted because email addresses were found to be defunct. At present the database approaches 7,000 entries, including international contacts, and as a result of Project SafeCom's engagement with the wider issues surrounding the ever-narrowing democratic zone in Canberra, the contacts include 'others' such as Brigadier Adrian d'Hage, former liberal party president and initiator of the NOT HAPPY JOHN! Campaign John Valder and *election swinger* Professor Malcolm Mackerras.

Website and traffic

The website now has more than 400 pages with story, speeches, articles and research project result reports about Australian refugee issues and policies since Tampa, about the politics of neo-conservative governments, the Iraq invasion, peace and participatory democracy, and a growing section on environmental and sustainability issues, including Climate refugees. I added about 75 pages to the website this year, not counting the press releases of 2005. Over a period during October 2005 statistics were showing an average 1,352 visitors per day, accessing a total average of 8,837 pages per day - that's an average of 3.2 million pages per year - and I estimate the average is climbing by about 5% per month. About 245 of these daily readers are "unique visitors", meaning they have not visited before or not for quite some time. See <http://www.safecom.org.au/whatsnew.htm>

Collaborative networks

Building and maintaining collaborative networks in Western Australia and other states has been more complex and difficult than previously, because exhaustion has clearly set in amongst refugee advocates. Hundreds "jumped for joy" after the wedging of the PM by the Georgiou Bills, and clearly, the work by this independent thinker on the backbench together with Judi Moylan MP shifted the praxis and freed hundreds from living behind the razor wire. But after "their friends" had been released from detention, many advocates vanished - meanwhile 4,600 islands were quietly excised from the Migration zone - excluding the UN Convention's powers there - by the Governor-General, and work started on the building of two detention centres on islands off the Gove Peninsula. My troubled predictions and urging of groups such as Rural Australians for Refugees in 2004 that the issues of deeper concern since Tampa were not about refugees but about politicians and the hijacking of parliamentary accountability proved correct, and I wrote about it in New Matilda.

See <http://www.safecom.org.au/life-after-baxter.htm>

Networking in WA seems more difficult than nationally. More fences are put up as protective barriers around organisations and a tinge of *familiarity breeds contempt* seems to waft around some groups and alliances. In this context, building links with organisations with a wider agenda - both in WA and nationally - formulated by multiculturalism, sustainability or the call for a Bill of Rights proved both refreshing and successful. Examples are Muslim Community associations, Kulcha and Sustainability WA.

Climate refugees

Attention was first drawn to the issue of *environmental refugees* when the Sri Lankan asylum seekers - mostly rejected by the government and many at the time locked up in Baxter - suddenly found also their homelands in peril after the massive earthquake and subsequent tsunami after Christmas 2004 - known in Australia as the Aceh Tsunami. The issues surrounding the fate of climate refugees rapidly proves to become one of the world's major social shifts - involving massive displaced groups and entire populations as a result of climate change and its geological impact. FRIENDS OF THE EARTH AUSTRALIA contacted me and asked Project SafeCom to endorse its climate refugees campaign - which we did. This intersection between environmental issues and the platform of promoting sustainability and refugees/displaced people activated the clauses in the Project SafeCom Constitution, set up to cater precisely for this social and environmental shift. I expect this agenda to return at ever more frequent points over the next few years and beyond. See

<http://www.safecom.org.au/foe-climate-guide.htm>

Senate Inquiry into the Migration Act

The Senate's Legal and Constitutional Committee resolved before the 2004 election resulted in the July 1, 2005 "turn-over" of the Senate to convene an Inquiry into the Migration Act, providing an opportunity for the thousands of parties who had been involved in issues surrounding the treatment of refugees since Tampa, to send submissions - and news alerts

sent by members of the Committee inviting submissions to the Inquiry had a tremendous result: even as it is well underway at the moment, lifting the lid even more off the hundreds of cases of Australian citizens and residents unlawfully detained in Baxter and at other 'refugee jails' or deported without due case of grounding in the Migration Act warranting these extreme measures. The number of submissions listed publicly on the Parliament's website kept growing well beyond the due date; currently a total of 234 documents are recorded. I prepared two submissions on behalf of Project SafeCom, the second and more extensive one raises incisive and serious questions about the quality and validity of DIMIA's primary refugee assessment procedures. Recently one of Australia's most credited migration agents and advocates, Ms Marion Le, testified before the Committee, and to my delight her remarks correlated precisely with the points I had raised in our submissions.

See <http://www.safecom.org.au/senate-inquiry.htm>

Celebrating freedom

I should also note the success of getting Ardeshir Gholipour released from detention, after more than five years of incarceration. While this was clearly a collaborative effort, some of the groundwork was done by Justine Brosnan, who in collaboration with her mother, Marcelle Meyer, has done her own quiet background work supporting refugees. In collaboration with PEN Melbourne, many parliamentarians, reporters and even international PEN contacts of repute, Justine harangued high-profile Australians by phone and fax, and eventually the firewalls around DIMIA and the Minister had to crack through this sustained avalanche of too credible a campaign. Project SafeCom initiated a phone conference of lawyers, migration agents and supporters about Ardeshir's progress and our strategies - and the conference included a link-up with Ardeshir right inside the Baxter detention centre. We celebrated Ardeshir in Perth at a wine and cheese evening in Fremantle, while Justine and Marcelle at a later stage could claim credit for the release of Mehran S from Baxter and the South Australian psychiatric facility Glenside hospital.

Other events attended

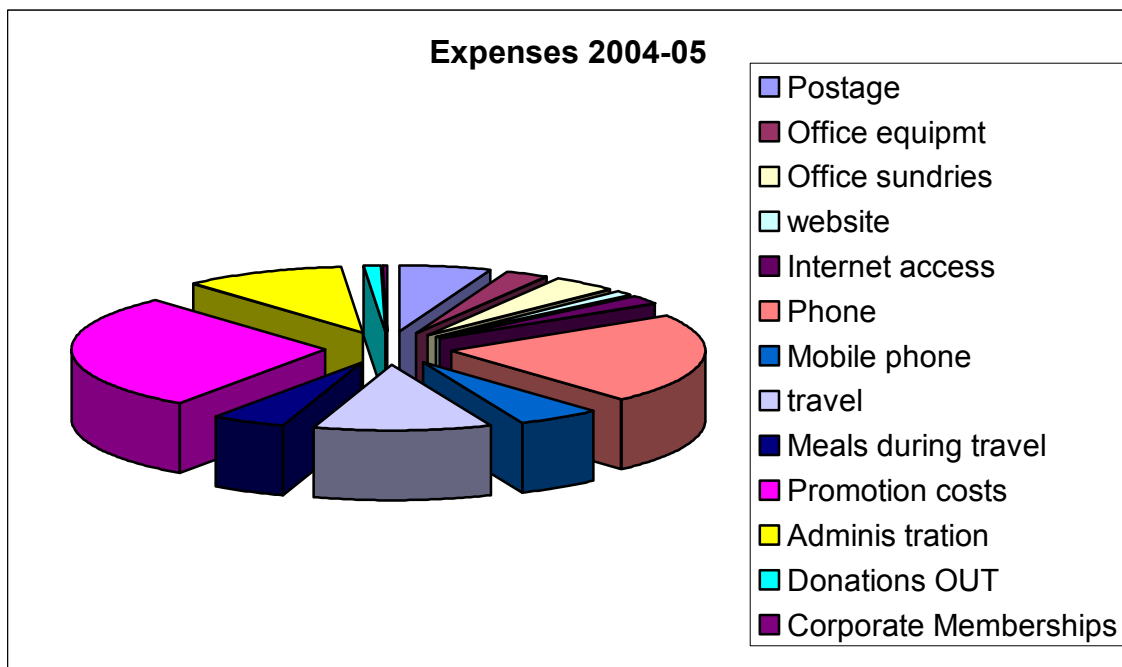
I attended many events and functions in Perth and Fremantle throughout the year relevant to our mandate, and booked meetings with stakeholders to enable our work to continue and grow, also to strengthen Project SafeCom's links within the social justice and human rights advocacy community. Examples are the Edmund Rice Centre forum on the *Deported to Danger* report, a good opportunity to reconnect with some remarkable academics from NSW, and the Perth New Matilda online magazine launch of their Human rights Act campaign, at the Janet Holmes a Court Gallery, an opportunity to connect with amongst the many participants, also the key people promoting this campaign, such as former Immigration Minister John Menadue, ACT Equity Commissioner Helen Watchirs, and the event's hostess Janet Holmes a Court.

Financial Report

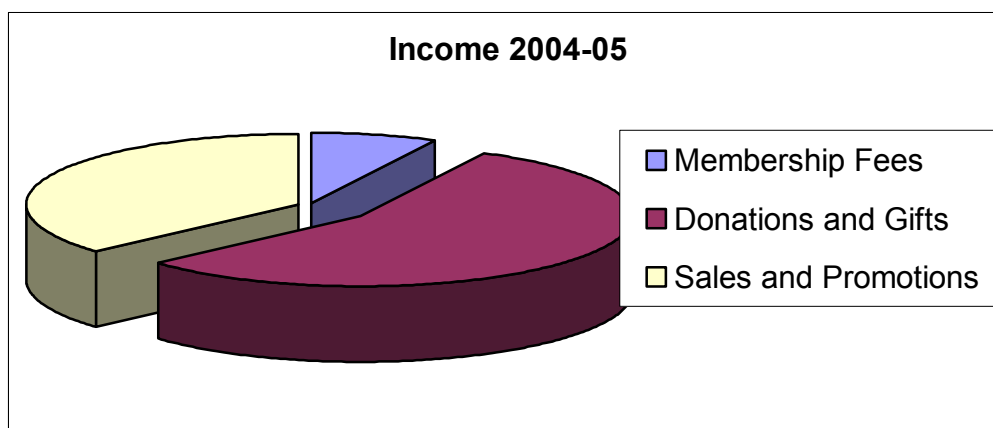
Total expenses during the 2004-05 financial year were kept within the limits of the set budget, and in some cases fell well below projected maxima, while total income was above total expenses. This was however offset by a negative balance of \$2,414.69 at year's end in 2004 which was carried through to July 1, 2004. By June 30, 2005 the balance sheet showed a small but positive \$799.74, but that was because the negative balance was fed back into Administration under the Expenses side of the ledger. This outstanding amount consists of some long-term loans to Project SafeCom supporters, not yet repaid.

The biggest expense items relate to promotion costs - this item includes the wholesale purchase of all books and items sold through the website - and the use of the phone - see also the notes under the Account Summary on the next page.

Expenses 2004-05



Income 2004-05



The level of donations increased during this year to \$11,312 from \$6,191 last year, but the income from sales and promotions declined considerably from last year's \$10,272 to \$7,433. This reflects a slowing of sales of books via the website - other groups have picked up the idea that this is a form of fundraising. Membership income is above expectations, but this is partly a result of many people renewing memberships for a two-year period.

Account Summary 2004-05

item	Budgeted 2004-05	Actual 2004-05	Budget 2005-06
Postage	\$1,000.00	\$986.80	\$900
Office equipment	\$500.00	\$471.69	\$500
Office sundries	\$800.00	\$716.62	\$800
Website & domains	\$400.00	\$204.84	\$950 ¹
Internet access	\$600.00	\$389.10	\$800 ²
Phone	\$3,000.00	\$3,784.92	\$2,400 ²
Mobile phone	\$800.00	\$891.16	\$800
travel	\$2,500.00	\$2,756.86	\$2,500 ³
Promotion costs	\$8,000.00	\$4,909.13	\$5,500
Administration	\$2,800.00	\$2,758.06	\$2,800
Donations out	\$168.00	\$188.95	\$10
Corporate Memberships	\$100.00	\$38.50	\$80
Coordinator fees	\$2,500.00	\$1,400.00	\$2,500
Totals outgoing	\$23,167.00	\$21,495.63	\$20,530
Membership Fees	\$800.00	\$1,549.96	\$500
Donations and Gifts	\$11,000.00	\$11,312.60	\$10,000
Sales and Promotions	\$8,500.00	\$7,433.40	\$7,500
External Grants	3,000.00	\$0.00	\$3,000
Totals Incoming	\$23,300.00	\$20,285.95	\$23,300.00

Notes to the Budget table

¹ Website expenses includes a margin for unexpected costs associated with the upgrade of the website to a Contents Management System (CMS) and the installation of a discussion board to conduct committee meetings and Members' meetings.

² One of our recent members has pledged the first annual payment for a transition from Dial-up to Broadband and annual costs for the Narrogin connection. Based on this, the budget prognosis shows a lower estimate for telephone costs by about \$25 per month and an increase of \$21 per month for internet access. A further phone cost reduction is achieved through an installation of the **SKYPE** internet phone software. **SKYPE** enables interstate phone calls for the cost of a local call under certain conditions, and free calls to a rapidly growing number of **SKYPE** users. The net results of "going broadband" are expected to be a significant cost reduction in these items.

³ Travel includes part of the cost of consumables while on business in the metropolitan area, also the cost of consumables during my many "cappuccino meetings" with colleagues, associates, volunteers and some members. Halfway this budget year my vehicle suffered age-related injuries and since that time personal fuel disbursements for trips to Perth and other places are replaced by bus, train and taxi expenses.

Overall, our income is below target compared to the budgeted totals, and we managed to keep expenses in check for a number of reasons. A significant factor is a decline in the number of detention emergencies as a result of the work of the Georgiou group, and as a result of this, a decline of activity amongst advocates nationally.

The fact that the proposed "external grants" did not eventuate is due to the fact that I have not found enough time to start concentrating on researching funding sources. Proposed alterations to the constitution will free up time and energy for committee members, who can spend some of this time to help the work of two proposed "working groups": the Funding and Income Development Group and the Events Development Group.

In the coming year it will become urgent that Project SafeCom makes considerable inroads to accessing a variety of funding sources for various reasons. The momentum in what up till now was a tight campaign community has slowed; a re-shaping of Project SafeCom directions will mean seeking new support inroads; and as an NGO that's come of age, we owe it to our standard of professionalism that we grow to an agency that funds also our own honorariums or remain small and in that, a slow decline into oblivion.

ATTACHMENT ONE - OVERVIEW OF TAMPA IMPLICATIONS, AND TABLE OF TASKS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Implications of TAMPA

Primary level: impacts areas in:

**Public
service**

Media

**Conventions and
courts**

**Dog whistle
politics**

Secondary level: ongoing government impact on these areas:

Operate *Refugee War Office* (Dept of PM and Cabinet)
unlawful use of spy facilities during TAMPA and beyond (DSD, ASIO)

Guarantee accountability immunity through detention centres' location on ARMY reserve land

out-place tainted staff after Senate Inquiries (Jane Halton, Reith retires, and several others)

stacking

subjugation

powered by Howard
secrecy, fear of dissent

information control by upper echelon

sublimation of non-accountable public service: DIMIA, ASIO, ONA, Indigenous Affairs (secrecy, ministerial control rests with Howard, party-political obedience)

- Set conditions: *replace information briefings with spin machine*
- stacking
- loss of critique
- powered by Murdoch, pro govt line
- intimidation (Alston, ABC, media watch)
- use selected journalists to re-write history (Nat'l Museum, Windshuttle, ATSIIC)
- fear of reporting
- Use govt agents amongst journalists to stack the ABC board (Janet Albrechtsen)
- fear of dissent in reporting
- editorial control

Leak asylum case file information and "massage reporters" for certain outcomes (Bakhtiari "investigations" - The Age/The Australian)
dogwhistling media: prepare aggressive policy changes through media leaks

breaches of:

- International covenant Of the High Seas
- United Nations Refugee Convention
- Covenant on Social & Political Rights
- Children's Rights Convention
- Torture and Degrading Treatment Convention
- International Declaration of Human Rights
- erode separation of powers: Australian courts - attempts at political control, undermining of decisions and judges, vilification through media
- erode HREOC powers, by design, with legislation planned for it
- erode Ombudsman independence
- dismiss UN Human Rights Commission reports
- dismiss Amnesty International, HRW reports
- manipulate legislation re People smuggling convention prosecutions
- manipulate "common law" and "natural justice" through Migration Act (Habeas Corpus etc.)

- Set conditions: *Parliamentary ALP running scared, unsure opposition tactics*
- Undermine Open Government
- Undermine Accountable Government
- Hijacking of Parliament (Dubya's visit) by Howard using the pretence of post-911 politics
- Refusal to comply with Senate convention statutes (tabling of documents), refusal to answer questions in parliament
- Manipulate parliamentary notion of "*in the public interest*"
- Present contentious Migration Act amendments to Parliament at ungodly hours to minimise scrutiny
- Table UN Reports critical on Australia's human rights record at unseen moments and during off-days in Parliament
- Postpone questions on notice by many months; use crafty and Orwellian word games to evade answers

Civil response implications

(note: estimate of the degree of achievement noted as per cent; italics are for projects not started but considered)

public service	media	conventions	politics
For Project SafeCom	For Project SafeCom	For Project SafeCom	For Project SafeCom
45% achievement rate	75% achievement rate	5% achievement rate	75% achievement rate
<p>Use press releases to expose govt scams and DIMIA / ministerial scheming</p> <p>Brief Parliamentarians, opposition & minor parties and Inquiry Committees</p> <p>Use journalists and reporters to check allegations issued through press releases by phoning ministers' offices</p> <p>Wedge minister against Department (DIMIA) using the media</p> <p>Work with other agencies and groups with press work, inquiries and exposing govt tactics</p> <p>Publish "unwanted and undesirable" news through press work</p> <p>Educate/inform new backbenchers, independents, minor parties (incl Family First) prior to July 1 2005</p> <p>Expose public service manipulations and misinformation through media work and lobbying</p> <p><i>Sydney presentation for Intern'l Correspondents' Ass'n, with invites for others and press conference</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch action to undo incorrect reporting (use of "illegal" re asylum seekers, see Press Council rulings) • Develop professional rapport with journalists and current affairs programs • Sustain strategy of media comment through press releases • Brief reporters on policies and detention crises • Positively assist current affairs and documentary makers in briefings and background provision • Support alternative media (SMH Web Diary, establish Project SafeCom Blog, explore future trends) • Ensure high level web news/background resource on our own website • Write articles for magazines (Znet, New Matilda, Online Opinion, Australian Policy Online) <p><i>Support establishment of Independent Newspaper in WA and/or Australia</i></p>	<p>Develop relationships with UN agents in Australia, UNAA reps and NGO's such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty</p> <p>Develop rapport with lawyers and legal bodies, support lawyers acting for asylum seekers, provide information for cases</p> <p>Provide briefings to refugee groups and politicians about convention breaches</p> <p>Formulate sustained reference to convention breaches in press releases</p> <p><i>Provide community education about conventions relating to human rights and social justice</i></p> <p><i>Develop schools curriculum package for State govt schools</i></p> <p><i>Support local and regional social justice and human rights in action projects</i></p> <p><i>Support Australian Bill of Rights movement</i></p>	<p>Use press releases to expose govt scams and scheming</p> <p>Brief Parliamentarians, opposition & minor parties and Inquiry Committees</p> <p>Use journalists and reporters to check allegations issued through press releases by phoning ministers' offices</p> <p>Send copies of all press releases to selected parliamentarians</p> <p>Work with other agencies and groups with press work, inquiries and exposing govt tactics</p> <p>Publish "unwanted and undesirable" news through press work</p> <p>Educate/inform new backbenchers, independents, minor parties (incl Family First) prior to July 1 2005</p> <p><i>Organise Canberra-based Project SafeCom human rights briefing lecture for parliamentarians during sitting week of House (with Canberra members' group)</i></p>
for Australians	for Australians	for Australians	for Australians
20% achievement rate	45% achievement rate	20% achievement rate	60% achievement rate
<p>Letters to the Editor and talk-back radio</p> <p>Refugee lobby: letters, faxes, appointments, phone calls, parliamentarians speak at conferences and seminars</p> <p>Read books published since Tampa, post-911 ASIO legislation and Iraq invasion</p> <p>TV Current affairs programs, Lateline, SBS Dateline, and ABC Radio National</p> <p>Voters vote with greater discernment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters to the Editor • Talk-back radio • Support ABC "<i>under siege</i>" • Pressure commercial media • Support Independent media • Form public interest groups, media groups • Contribute to/sponsor alternative media (blogs, SA Weekly Independent, Margo Kingston's initiatives and others (2004 election online initiatives and others formed since then) • www.crikey.com.au • www.webdiary.com.au • www.newmatilda.com.au 	<p>Public Lectures about Conventions and breaches (J Burnside, former G-G Sir William Dean, Frank Brennan, Mary Crock, Justice Michael Kirby, law seminars, conferences)</p> <p>Amnesty reports, Human Rights Watch, UN Human Rights Commission reports</p> <p>Investigative journalism report reviews</p> <p>Letters to the Editor and talk-back radio</p> <p>Bill of Rights (ACT) forums and conferences (Victoria, South Australia, NSW)</p>	<p>Refugee lobby: letters, faxes, appointments, phone calls, parliamentarians speak at conferences and seminars</p> <p>Successes: Liberal backbenchers, Family First; som independents; DEMS and GRNS are OK</p> <p>Letters to the Editor and talk-back radio</p>