



Caring for land, caring for people
making a safer world

Project SafeCom Inc.

Project SafeCom Inc.

2005 Annual Report

November 2006



10 August 2006 – **Rebels with good cause** – This picture dramatically captures what the citizens' movement Project SafeCom is a proud participant of, has achieved since the Tampa stand-off in 2001: dissenting Liberals Petro Georgiou, Judi Moylan and Russell Broadbent await the moment of the vote, sitting in the ALP opposition benches to join in a vote against their own government. With their choice they deliver democracy to Australia from within a rigid and manipulated conservative party-political system.

<http://www.safecom.org.au/dissenters2006.htm>



October 2006 – **Inconvenient Truths invading Parliament House** - It's highly symbolic that former US Vice-president Al Gore named his movie *Inconvenient Truth*, and that he followed the movie's long-planned and impeccably timed release with a trip not only to Australia, but also to China – the two countries that, joining with the USA, have refused to sign the Kyoto protocol. While 2005 showed the highest climate balance disturbance in known modern history, 2006 rapidly developed into the year that climate change became the common cause accepted by all – perhaps with the exception of John Howard.

<http://www.safecom.org.au/inconvenient.htm>

Project SafeCom Inc., P.O. Box 364 Narrogin, Western Australia 6312
Phone 0417 090 130 | email: jackhsmit@safecom.org.au | Web: <http://www.safecom.org.au/>

Project SafeCom Inc.

PO Box 364
Narrogin WA 6312
Phone 0417 090 130
Email: jackhsmit@safecom.org.au

Bank

Bendigo Bank
Fremantle Community Branch
PO Box 1469, Fremantle WA 6959
BSB Number 633000
Account name: Project SafeCom Inc.
Account 115643900
ABN: 22 801 694 259

Steering Committee (as on November 4, 2006)

Cedric Beidatsch (Chair)
Peter Swanson (Vice-Chair)
Lee Green (Minute Secretary)
Peter Swanson (Members' Secretary)
Rod Mitchell (Treasurer)
Jack H Smit (Executive Officer)
Trish Bevan (Stall Co-ordinator)
Justine Brosnan (Products Manager)

Members (current)

Western Australia

Janine Abbott	
Ian Alexander	
Veronica Anderson	
Cedric Beidatsch	
Karen Bonte	
John Carroll	
Hugh Charlesworth	
Liana Christensen	Pauline Masters
Suzanne Covich	Marcelle Meyer
Jo Darbyshire	Loretta Martella
Andy Dent	Rosalie Miles
Paul Desmond	Rod Mitchell
Colin Edwards	Gavin Mooney
Andrew Gill	Roel Loopers
Lee Green	Mick O'Loughlen
Nathalie Haymann	Anne Parker
Victor Hoisington	Shannon Pearce
Wendy Hudson	Suresh Rajan
Melissa Hurd	Jeanette Richards
Suzanne Ingelbrecht	Mary-Ann Spalding
Sheila Jessop	Jon Strachan
Lorraine Johnston	Larry Stringer
Mandy Kiely	Marta Szedlak
Joe Loss	Diane Tavakoli
Theo MacKaay	Tony Troughton-Smith
Lynn MacLaren	Maureen Yates

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
Marty Morrison
Bruce Robertson
Tony Simons
Nura Wendy Tashiro

Victoria

Brigid Arthur
Neil Barrett
Sue Corby
Christine Fabel
Ardeshir Gholipour
Joan Good
Sara Haq
Brenda Hubber
Ann El Khoury
Ben Leeman
Rosemary Nairn
Andrew McPhee
Barbara Rogalla
Erika Stahr
Margaret Tonkin

Australian Capital Territory

Jane Keogh
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, 7400 database contacts, 13,000 general "other e-list" readers.

Organisational details	page 2
Contents page	page 3
From the Chair	page 4
Coordinator's Report	page 5
Policy and politics	page 6
Radical versus conservative	page 7
The Year in Review	page 9
home of terror	
west papuans	
indonesian fury	
meanwhile at scott street	page 10
newsletter poll	
at the wacoss conference	page 11
ban the boatpeople bill	
world refugee day	
women in black on white man's business	page 12
orisha and sedition	
antony loewenstein	
inconvenient truth down under	
media	page 13
memberships	
database	
website	
Treasurer's Report	page 15
Analysis	
Recommendation	
Financial Statement 2005-06	page 16
Acknowledgements	page 17

From the Chair



It has, from my perspective as chairperson, being a successful year at Project SafeCom. When I was elected last year, I stressed that my role was to support Jack in his role as our full-time co-ordinator. What I meant by that was that we needed to develop processes that would enable to do all the brilliant work he does, while gradually liberating him from the burden of administration. I drew a (not always clear) distinction from the work of (or done by) Project SafeCom and the administrative work of running an incorporated body. My mental analogy came from my years in business – I saw Jack as the CEO who is empowered by the shareholders to do whatever the business does to achieve its purpose, and the committee as the board responsible for the sound administration of the business. Our CEO is simply too important, too good at doing the work of Project SafeCom to be used in administration.

Now the funny thing about admin is that each job is small and no big deal, but they all add up. And they particularly add up to a mental burden, they are always on your mind, and therefore distracting. So the task was to gradually work out how to, and then to implement a strategy, of freeing Jack from this 'small stuff'.

My first real concern was finance. Money is the lifeblood of organisations. Filthy lucre it might be, but without it we can't do anything. And in a capitalist world, where the dominant ethos is commercial values, then sound finances and sound financial management are touchstones of probity, reliability and honesty. As an incorporated body we are legally answerable to the Corporate Affairs people about our finances. Going to jail was never part of my life plan (one MAJOR reason why I came to Australia!), so when I discovered our accounts had never been audited and that the bookkeeping was all there but non-standard, and not in a position to be audited, I was concerned. So my thanks and appreciation to CEO Jack and Treasurer Rod, who were on the receiving end of a fair bit of nagging early in the year to sort this out. My understanding is that we now have a standardised, electronic bookkeeping system; that updates are prompt, that electronic data and record keeping now form the mainstay, and that this year's financial statements are nearing completion for auditing for the first time. A good process has been established which can go forward.

We also, after some initial timing hitches, had the constitutional amendments passed at the last AGM lodged with and approved by the WA Department for Employment and Consumer Relations. The key reform has been the ability to have 'e-meetings' rather than formal committee meetings. This has reduced the time required of committee members, but it does mean access to e-mail and some basic skills in those areas is now utterly essential for all committee positions. A number of issues have been resolved this year using e-meetings, and doubtless this is an aspect of the management work that will grow. It means that Project SafeCom is not only conducting itself as a hypermodern web-based campaign and project, but also is also equally up to date in its administrative techniques.

The other big step has been to shift certain tasks from Jack to appointed committee members. This was an outcome of the excellent members' 'hypothetical' with Tim Muirhead – held at Kulcha in August this year. As a result of this incredibly productive workshop, we identified a whole range of admin tasks that Jack could hand over to other people. To date we have succeeded in starting to transfer property maintenance at Scott Street to Paul Desmond, while we're identifying some membership liaison and development role for Peter Swanson, while product management has already been assigned to Justine Brosnan and stall co-ordination to Trish Bevan. My very special thanks to these people for volunteering, and taking on these tasks since then with enthusiasm and commitment. We could now also extend this model and gradually rename various committee positions to reflect these roles. Over the coming year a number of other tasks could be reallocated in this way, and if necessary new committee positions created. The role of the secretary has also been clarified and simplified to that of minutes' secretary (Lee Green), with membership communication moving to the membership officer. Perhaps a more complex issue under consideration, in the context that most communication happens by email, could be to develop a separate role for a correspondence secretary.

All these positions will ultimately have documentation attached to them, 'job descriptions' if you like, which specify what the role does and, importantly for a increasingly web-based organisation, how to do them. One of Jack's jobs in the handover process is to prepare this documentation, getting what is in his head on to paper, and these will all be collated into an Operations Manual.

So all in all a successful year on the admin front, with hopefully these strategies being both extended and bedded down next year. And remember, as a human rights organisation, we are here to build a better world, one, which allows all people to construct their own lives in a way that is meaningful to them. We need to be building that world in the spaces of our own lives and lived realities now. My best wishes to all of you in your personal and collective endeavours to build such a world.

Cedric Beidatsch, Doubleview WA

Coordinator's Report

I was rather ambivalent and hesitant when I was faced with writing this year's Annual Report because when I started writing, it felt as if this year had been short, too short on powerful *crises* in Australia that fell within Project SafeCom's immediate mandate and that we had been short on powerful events. So it seemed at the outset – but I took many things for granted, that, when I took some steps back, clearly show growth, development and a sense of permanency. And I wrote most of this Annual Report from the comfort of the Scott Street house, an environment so comfortable to work from, that it's easy to forget and take for granted – highly unjust, both to the owners Larry Stringer and Liana Christensen, and to Project SafeCom as an organization.

Between those initial considerations and today I also completed the administrative wind-up of the *Antony Loewenstein My Israel Question* book launch and Forum¹ at Kulcha on 11 October this year, and I'm settling into the notion of having completed the website migration to another much more professionally accountable organization at *networksolutions.com*, serving it all up to up to 1800 visitors per day who read up to 3500 pages each day, and the picture that has emerged to me in the last month or so, is very different from my rather gloomy outlook two months ago. Somehow my view as the full-time co-ordinator for Project SafeCom had clouded my view for a time... We actually will emerge at this year's Annual General Meeting as a still operative, and ever-growing, powerful social justice and human rights organization that survived the last five years, and that has also survived a marked decline in the civil movement in our country, so sorely needed in this our "Howard's Australia". After all, *ChilOut* announced its wind-up and *Rural Australians for Refugees'* National office seemed to vanish this year, while *A Just Australia* has gone into "dormancy" with overseas travel of its co-ordinator Kate Gauthier, and as others also reported, since the success of the coalition backbench revolt over mandatory detention, the email channels have gone silent, almost overnight, from some time in the beginning of this year. [1] <http://www.safecom.org.au/israel-question-forum.htm>

Policy and politics

Perhaps the decline in Australia's single-issue groups in the "*refugee movement*" needs to be understood in terms of its contrast with Project SafeCom – because many groups sprung up considered the *Tampa standoff* and its ensuing national drama in 2001 as *an issue about refugees* – which is an arguable position. As I wrote to Curtin University's Centre for Human Rights Education this year:

TAMPA was a defining moment not just for Australian politics, but also for the "minimum universal safety net of human rights" in Australia, for Australia's minimum treatment of social justice issues as well as our adherence to several international conventions. It can be argued that TAMPA was not at all about refugees, but about what politicians do in Australia with their social justice and human rights policies in order to set the context of a hoped-for, or expected, outcome.

While some of the issues were already well clear from traditional conservative liberal politics, which resists government intervention in what it sees as the free market, even extending this principle to social policy, one also needs to ask whether TAMPA also set a new context for opposition and cross-bench political parties; and whether the locus of implementation and responsibility for social policy issues shifted more away from government to the private sector and to NGOs, and whether as a result of the attitudes prevailing in Australia following TAMPA the private sector as well as NGOs changed their approach, or whether they took up their response at all to the issues at hand.

... within the context of media reporting, or "particular reporting and portrayals" of asylum issues since TAMPA (ie, the use of the label of "illegal immigrants") one can also ask how TAMPA influenced media attitudes to social justice and human rights issues in Australia, which also connects to the question whether or not journalists have ethical responsibilities to be partisan towards international conventions

signed by Australia, even, and perhaps especially, when politicians want to discard those in their political frameworks.

In the initial years I stressed to other groups and organizations around Australia, that they should fiercely *educate and train* their members with the view that they should not view their work as part of a *national amateur welfare network* but part of a political movement, but my push had only a very limited effect; I was even painted as "party-political" – i.e. as someone who fought Howard while promoting e.g. the ALP.

By the time many of the advocates' *friends* had left the Baxter and other detention centres,



where they had been holed up for years, receiving in many cases highly questionable visas, that gave them no financial or other freedoms at all, the Department of Immigration (DIMA) had also gone through the Palmer inquiry and the highly published report, and its internal "clean-up", renewing its commitment to spin and media control (and significantly increasing its budget and staff allocation for this new – and undeclared – *DIMA Spin Department*). Many advocates soon left the scene, seriously burnt-out, and unable to further extend energy maintaining their voice on a political level.

The point I tried to make in my conversations with people around the country, showed correct when Howard unveiled his plans during 2006 to introduce, in response to fury in Indonesia over the

West Papuans being granted protection visas by Australia, the *Migration Amendment Bill 2006* – an "indecent proposal" in the context of the Georgiou group wins during 2005: this Bill intended to make the government into legitimate people-smugglers by deporting any unannounced boat arrivals to Nauru for processing, outside Australian jurisdiction and without a role for the courts to review Immigration decisions. The issue was and is not over at all, because while Howard was wedged, no definitive or substantial policy changes have come about as a result of the backbenchers' push.

I remain committed to steering Project SafeCom – within the context of '*Howard's Australia*' - in a continued direction of active, creative and frank engagement with politics, politicians and the wider public as an organization that defends the highest human rights standards set on an international level, and that interacts with social policy in many areas that fall within our mandate. Our work this year, where we started to take on Indigenous issues and policies initiated by the Howard government in our support for *Women in Black* in their Canberra pilgrimage, the Israel-Palestine/Lebanon issue in our book launch and forum for Antony Loewenstein's *My Israel Question*, and the publication of our *Climate Justice* brochure – in line with our previous endorsement of the *Friends of the Earth's* Climate Refugees policy, shows we're successfully making the transition from a single issue group to one that takes the bull by the horns in various paddocks, and exposes the beast for what it is.

Radical versus conservative

"I intend to continue to call to the attention of the Australian people the extremely alarming, frightening similarities between the methods employed by contemporary green politics and the methods and the values of the Nazis."

This is Liberal senator George Brandis going on the record on 28 October 2003. Brandis' extraordinary attack is but one of the disturbing signs of the tactics employed by the Howard government – a government 'sponsored' by the biggest media mogul of all, Rupert Murdoch.

Responding to some comments made in October 2006 about his push to undo Keating's media diversity laws, Howard voiced his all too familiar underplaying reassurance media line by saying that his government is not extremist, just conservative.

Yet many policies implemented in haste, using the gagging of parliamentary debate, a deliberate series of Bills that passed this year that set out to undermine of Senate committee system – and its ensuing reporting and critique of government performance and policies, a deliberate ignoring of even Senate committee reports where a majority of government senators on these committees endorse these reports, keeps Howard – a prime minister who I call Australia's most extremist Prime Minister – firmly in control over his personal agenda.

Howard was elected by a barely held margin in his own seat, with about 49-52% of Australians voting for him, yet he raids the voices of dissent like no other government leader has been brazen enough to do. He supposedly 'governs for all', but like no other he carries a responsibility for undermining Australia's gains since the 1970s like no other PM. Some examples:

- the undermining of Australia's media diversity so it reverts back to the few who applaud him;
- the undermining of Labor's chief reason of existence – the Union movement;
- the attempts to implement Howard's own view of Australian history – especially in relation to the view of Australia's colonisation past and our attitude to its original inhabitants – by marginalizing those who he dislikes – such as the Henry Reynolds versus Keith Windshuttle history wars;
- the undermining of those aspects of independent self-governance of the First Australians through ATSIC followed by the onslaught on further Indigenous rights, an onslaught so carefully started with WIK 1 and 2 when Howard first came to government in 1996; and more recently,
- the attack on education and the grab for control of teaching and curriculum contents, where he, through the Education Minister Julie Bishop, sought to undermine the SIEVX schools kit education campaign, paired with her attacks on those seen as "from the left" are all too familiar and repeated patterns where this extremist government erodes democratic debate, using "reverse psychology-based" attacks on those who beg to differ with its agenda.
- A continuous attack on those who beg to differ by attempts to paint them in a "radical left" corner, or as having a "black armband view" of Aboriginal history – all of this enacted through a select number of opinion writers, reporters and journalists such as Andrew Bolt, Alan Jones, Gerard Henderson and others, who at the same time get treated "favourably" through unreported privileged access to information by certain sections of the Howard government.

...and I haven't even started on the attacks on Islam and Muslims by Howard, Costello and others in the lead-up to what's hoped to be a citizenship exam for *these extremists* in the coalition government.

It seems that the coalition MP's and Senators who were chosen as Howard's front-line army in this battle have all taken part in the training workshops of Ross Irvine, who makes, through his workshops, activists out of right-wing sections of business as well as corporate Australia, and who quietly seems to be supported by Howard as well as Gunns in Tasmania, who launched a legal attack on Bob Brown and others over their forest protests. See *Grassroots vs Astroturf: the tactics of 'Rambo' Ross Irvine:*

<http://www.safecom.org.au/counter-activism.htm>

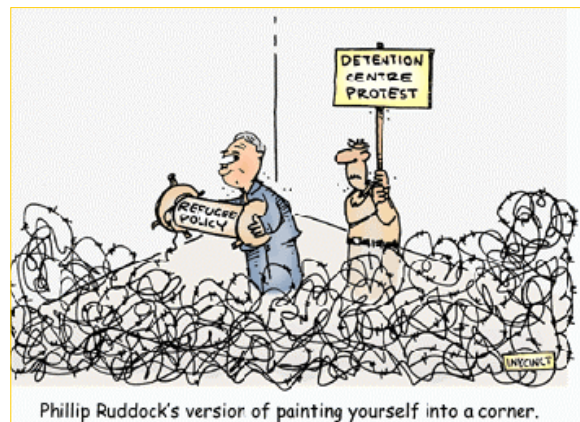
Within this extraordinary political and attitudinal context, I note that from various sections of the 'activist' and 'advocacy'



movement, different responses to Project SafeCom's identity have emerged, and some myths about who we are also persist – often by deliberate and politically convenient choice – amongst some. One of these is that we are a conservative organization. While I wholeheartedly reject that notion, and have a fierce aversion against even being seen as belonging to a conservative establishment, some remarks about deliberate strategies and 'tactics' I repeatedly support and implement, are in place, starting with how the website looks and how I like to attract people to our organization.

I deliberately designed the look and feel of the Project SafeCom website so as to express an element of "mainstreaming" in the Australian community as an organization. Now, after five years, the website is highly popular with secondary and tertiary students and researchers, also because it features many academic papers and reputable reports, conference speeches and responses to Australia's human rights legislation from human rights organizations, research groups and even judges.

This is a deliberate method of '*mainstreaming the issues*' through our website. After all, one of the main goals of the human rights movement that developed since Tampa was *to increase the number of people who learnt and became open to learn* about the true status of refugees, no matter how Australian politicians twisted the information and undermined the UN Convention. In my communication and promotional emails I have always tried to be professional to the highest level attainable – because of the tendency by several reporters and journalists to paint those in this movement as 'rabble'. In this process I *developed a fear and consequently a reluctance* to call myself an 'activist', and adapted my strategy accordingly: as Australian politics and most of the media swung to the right under Howard, the identity *perception* (not their self-professed positioning) of human rights activists also swung to the right. We are now often described (and this includes prominent advocates such as Julian Burnside QC) as belonging to a mob of protesters, latte-drinking or not) who are mostly aligned with some radical left-wing political groupings in Australia, and at times an almost audible groan, from Murdoch press reporters and even some sections of the ABC I speak to after press releases or during detention centre incidents where I am asked to comment, reveals that often-held perception at the forefront of the minds of these reporters.



Phillip Ruddock's version of painting yourself into a corner.

So, while our approach needs to be open, welcoming and accepting to 'mainstream Australia' – after all, to represent international conventions relating to human rights is not something extreme or radical or left-wing, some of our tactics – such as the *Educating Laurie* campaign, where we intervened to 'help' Mr Ferguson understand the situation of asylum detainees (to no avail) was perhaps an example of 'culture jamming', but employing conservative methods. It is also my contention that those seeking to be seen to belong to the 'radical left' have painted themselves into a corner by failing to consider that their audience is all of Australia. They have failed to '*mainstream themselves*' – and thus they have contributed to the keenly sought undermining (by sections of the coalition government) of activism as a respectable population expression in Australia, in response to governments when these undermine human rights.

In this context I am determined to maintain Project SafeCom's excellent relationship with coalition and some ALP backbenchers; independents such as Peter Andren MP; and those on the cross-benches who maintain unambiguous voices for human rights and accountable

democracy under Howard: we have a real message that deserves to be and become part of Australia's mainstream, and it remains essential that this continues to be part of our ways of working.

The year in review

After the 2005 AGM, as is usually the case, the Christmas recess provided much-needed time to start looking at the website, and I started drafting many versions of a categorisation model that would affirm how we could maintain a sense of separation of the areas of concern as displayed in the fast-growing website sections. After all, one could ask whether the Iraq war fitted more in a container of "Australian Foreign policy" or whether we should create a distinct section for a review and critique of neo-conservative policies as it affected Australia, while so many ideas for developing an NGO and maintaining civil independence could hardly fit cleanly into a "refugee section".

home of terror

Alas, my attention got soon diverted when the Anti-terrorism Bill 2005 saw the light of day and a new 'branch' of Australia's civil rights movement was formed – almost overnight, to my relief, and starting early November I created an entirely new orange section on the website, "*terror australis*", and this section grew within weeks to about 35 pages.

See <http://www.safecom.org.au/archives-terrorism.htm>

west papuans

Then, unexpectedly, 2006 started *with the bang* of the arrival of 43 West Papuans in a traditional outrigger canoe near Weipa, Queensland <http://www.safecom.org.au/merdeka.htm>



and the heat was on for a cleaned-out DIMA to show what it was made of. All was fine, the Papuans were assessed on Christmas Island, the independent lawyers sent by RILC worked amicably with the department, and within three months the whole affair was behind us. In this period we were also able to have the presence of Greens' Senator Kerry Nettle at a Forum at Kulcha (about 80 people) when she returned from visiting the West Papuans on Christmas Island, an event where the WA Greens joined as co-organisers:

<http://www.safecom.org.au/papuaforum.htm>

There was a good outpouring of support for the Papuans around Australia, giving support to the notion that vicinity had created stronger bonds with them than had been the case previously: <http://www.safecom.org.au/papua-rallies.htm>

indonesian fury

Surprisingly, lawyer David Manne from Melbourne's *Refugee & Immigration Legal Centre* (RILC) was permitted access to the Papuans within weeks of their arrival, and it seems that in a first since Tampa, an independent lawyer worked collaboratively with DIMA primary assessors to complete the caseload. Less surprising of course was the outcome, where within 90 days all bar one of the runaways were granted protection visas – as we now know, much to the dismay of several head-kickers in the Howard government: within a few months coalition government MP's such as the citizenship minister Andrew Robb tried in Parliament to undermine the credibility of this for once fair and open assessment procedure. More furious than any parliamentarian was the Indonesian government of course, and when the diplomatic storm gained momentum, Howard launched the above-mentioned *Migration Amendment Bill 2006*. <http://www.safecom.org.au/bill2006-asrc-reply.htm>

meanwhile at scott street

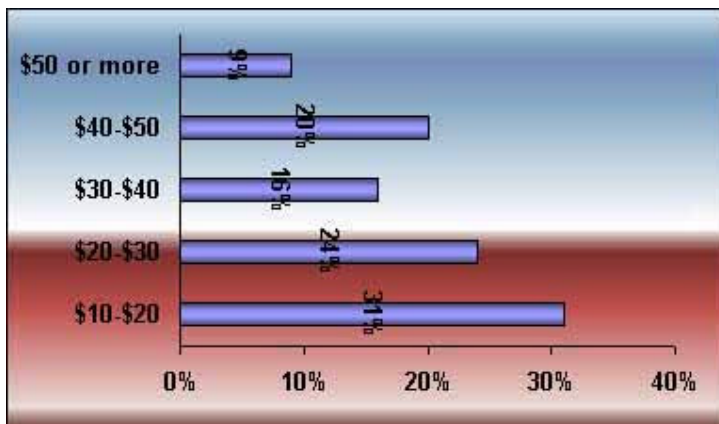
While the storm over this shocking Bill still grew, up to twenty people came together at a vacant house in South Fremantle, kindly signed over to Project SafeCom by members Larry Stringer and Liana Christensen. During our busy bee in February this year they wiped, scrubbed, cleaned, weeded and painted, and the end product is one of our most-treasured *temporary asset* items, from where we can operate inside the wider Perth metropolitan area. Now that the phone is connected, a wireless broadband modem is installed and 3 operating PC's donated by the Murdoch University Guild provide all the space needed to work online and off-line, I can comfortably "swap" *the original Project SafeCom brain centre* inside my home in Narrogin with Scott Street for about 40% of the time each month; we can have our committee meetings at Scott Street, and twice this year we had guest speakers from Sydney and Melbourne stay with us in "the guest room". *Thank you Liana, thank you Larry!*

In painting and decorating Scott Street I was once again confronted with a consumerist society where just by walking along the street I found a great many important items of furniture and fittings in and around bins and in front of houses. I have no doubt that my experiences are shadows cast ahead of times to come for society – but this is not the place to elaborate on that. Almost everything we need to operate from Scott Street is now there, and it's all working to standard....

newsletter & poll

Our newsletter, the *Daily News and Updates* – a summary of the Australian and international print- and other press – while a considerable project and a recurring load to my daily work – also functions as the backbone of our growing support and a hallmark of the issues that are of relevance to Project SafeCom as *a proponent of human rights and social justice issues within the context of a sustainable treatment of Australia as a landmass.*

While the newsletter in its first four years was dominated by Australian refugee policy, issues and crises, this has now shifted, in line with a marked decline in reporting of refugee and detention issues following the Georgiou-group's push and the revamp of DIMA in its post-Palmer period, to a newsletter that also covers many other areas within Project SafeCom's primary mandate and expressed endorsed issues. Remarkably, the number of subscribers has not declined but increased significantly since 2005. While around August 2005 I reported about 480 subscribers, the number at the moment stands on around 625, and that includes a "clean-up" where I deleted 56 subscriber email addresses that showed to be dead or no longer functioning in other ways. This means that within 16 months we've had an increase of *around 200 subscribers*, a great trend that also runs counter to declining trends in the refugee lobby around Australia. It's evidence that people generally are aware of the broader mandate we carry forward, even while we had concentrated for so long on refugee and detention issues.



In March this year I conducted an online poll of newsletter subscribers to see what the monetary value of the newsletter was to subscribers, to establish a base-line that could be published for subscribers and to receive some feedback about its usefulness.

The poll results showed that the newsletter, while it's a free product for subscribers who are expected to contribute financially to our work, can

potentially be re-translated into a paid subscription newsletter, where an annual fee is raised. One of the conclusions of the poll:

“... most subscribers choose a dollar amount up to \$13 away from the \$30 average: between \$43 and \$17”
See <http://www.safecom.org.au/poll-results.htm>

While the newsletter currently operates on a voluntary monetary contribution system, we may have to move to a subscription basis to keep the work viable. If that happens, the format will undergo significant changes and articles from news outlets can no longer be copied in full for copyright reasons. I'm working on templates and proposals to this end.

at the wacoss conference

In May 2006 I was asked to deliver two presentations at the WA Council of Social Services State Conference, which had an audience of about 160 delegates and visitors from West Australian NGO's. The presentations are both posted to our website under the titles “*Having a Finger in the Pie from the boondocks of Narrogin*” and “*Working with the issue of Fear and Public Policy*” at <http://www.safecom.org.au/wacoss-conf06.htm>

ban the boatpeople bill

So then the Migration Amendment Bill 2006, one I called the “*ban the boatpeople bill*” was tabled (11 May 2006) to immediately be suspended and sent to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee for scrutiny – one of the ways to minimize dissent expressed in The House. Of course, as we now know, the Bill was scuttled at the moment it was due for debate in the Senate, after Petro Georgiou, Judi Moylan and Russell Broadband threw their spanner in the works by voting with the opposition. But that was not after 137 submissions to the Inquiry all condemned the Bill – of course 137 submissions bar one – the one by the DIMA, acting as plaudits for Howard. *So much for the independence of Australia's public service.*

Perhaps the greatest achievement in this period was the further establishment of the notion of dissent itself within the coalition party system, where too many MP's and Senators have now so swallowed the notion of not speaking from conscience or honest conviction, that it has become a literal embodiment of Orwell's 1948. While during the first stirrings of dissent by Mr Georgiou in 2005 we counted five co-dissenters, media reports with the 2006 Bill repeatedly named a line-up of ten MP's and Senators in Coalition ranks; for the first time also, since the Tampa incident and its subsequent legislation, the Prime Minister was seriously put on notice that his support on this issue – as well as other issues – is flagging, and that those in the coalition with some sense of independence and conscience, will or may choose that rather than “the party line”. The failure of the Bill was a sign that there is a sense, although seriously damaged, of democracy and accountability in Australian politics. Our Call to Action on this Bill: <http://www.safecom.org.au/cta-warehousing.htm>

world refugee day

For World Refugee Day 2006 we were, for the first time, in the financial position to fly over from the Eastern States, a ‘keynote presenter’ in Pamela Curr from the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre in Melbourne. Pamela Curr is one of the central figures in my ‘*asylum policy reference group*’, and she is of course also the person who found Cornelia Rau who was locked away in the isolation block of the Baxter detention centre. That's why *the other first*, having Pamela stay at the Scott Street house ‘*guest room*’, was an extra bonus for me. For the event we asked the question whether anything had changed at all after the Cornelia Rau and Vivian Alvarez debacles. (Kulcha, about 70 people)
<http://www.safecom.org.au/wrd2006.htm>

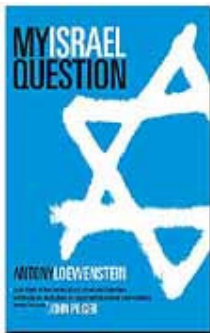
women in black on white man's business

It was pure delight to have a supporting role – in doing the media work and acting as the convenor of the farewell ceremony in front of their usual 'stall location' at the corner of Hay and Barrack Street (50 people, including Indigenous representatives) – in the walking pilgrimage to Parliament House of *Women in Black* Pam Morris, Jane Paterson and Kathryn Newmar. Not only was it lovely to receive so much appreciation from the women for so little work, but it was also terrific to see how the well-worn activists have maintained a sharp discernment throughout the ongoing ordeals for activists during the Howard years. The women reported that my media work resulted in dozens of radio and TV interviews, print news reports and press conferences. <http://www.safecom.org.au/women-in-black-walk.htm>

orisha and sedition

Once again Rina and Omar, theatre and puppet theatre artists from Brisbane's *Orisha International*, were in Perth, and like last year, they generously donated their time for a fundraiser for us. The wrapper of Forum Theatre, combined with themes reminiscent of the Anti-terrorism legislation and the sedition laws, gave light relief for about 45 people at Kulcha on 6 September. <http://www.safecom.org.au/orisha-sedition.htm>

antony loewenstein



Jewish blogger, journalist and author Antony Loewenstein just released his critique of Zionism, *My Israel Question*, and given the fact that I regularly communicate with him, my discovery that his publisher, Melbourne University Press, had no intention to organise a book launch in Western Australia, the opportunity arose for Project SafeCom to organise one. Antony proved keen, the subject material is, as a major social issue connected to the middle east and the seeming unresolvable conflict, where major world powers, including the Howard government and the international as well as Australian media are clearly partisan in a seriously biased way, in line with some of our purposes and intent – and the event could also give a healthy financial boost to us. My accepted invitation to *The Social Justice Network* to co-sponsor and broadcast the event was partially the reason that the book launch and Forum at Kulcha was attended by about 110-120 people. Linda Briskman (Curtin Human Rights), Gavin Mooney (Social Justice Network), Samina Yasmeen (UWA Social and Cultural Studies) were joined by moderator Giz Watson MLC in a forum attended by people from the Jewish, Lebanese, Palestinian and Muslim community. <http://www.safecom.org.au/israel-question-forum.htm>

inconvenient truth down under

Recently I argued in a discussion somewhere that the core concepts summarised in our Constitution say more about our climate crisis than about refugees. Perhaps that's an oppositional argument that's not really needed, but it has always been my intent – as one of its founders – that Project SafeCom would engage with policies that concern displaced people also in terms of *climatological, ecological and geological upheaval* (our constitutional formulation), so the 'launch' of our Climate Justice brochure had always been on the cards – and its 'birth', coinciding with the visit to Australia by former US vice-president Al Gore and the season's opening of *An Inconvenient Truth* was perfectly timed, and deliberately so.

<http://www.safecom.org.au/climate-change-cta.htm>

Logically following from this was my promotion of the Walk against Warming, when the climate crisis suddenly became 'common good' with several international reports being published: <http://www.safecom.org.au/walk-against-warming.htm>

media

The state of the media in Australia is deplorable, and the longer we have a conservative government in power, the worse it will be for citizens' groups critical of government policy to get a hearing. This year saw a deterioration of the take-up of Project SafeCom's press releases, and I do not see any relief in sight. The lack of take-up is a direct result of government pressures (*ABC*) and of attitudes amongst reporters where they believe that "the government is right" and where they lack any sufficient grounding and training in what constitutes true and independent journalism. *SBS Television* has great respect for Project SafeCom, and I have been able to give background briefings and research assistance for several episodes of *Dateline*. There is also good hope for the soon to start *English Al Jazeera* TV station. They called me for a briefing from Malaysia, and are hoping to cover the "pushed-back" asylum seekers on Lombok in one of their first broadcasts. Local coverage of our events through the *Fremantle Herald* has been exemplary – they have covered all our events, most of them including photos. I'm still developing my relationship with *Crikey* – recently Misha Ketchum, the Editor, was in Perth, and with Antony Loewenstein I was able to chat over dinner with him.

memberships

Last year we reported about 67 members in the Annual Report. Currently the numbers are at 85 – but fifteen of these are out-of-currency at the time of writing. Now that discounts for our products are almost in place for registered members, I expect the membership numbers to further grow.

database

While the 2005 report shows 7000 e-contacts in the database who we call on for action and who 'generally speaking' are our supporters in the truest sense, the current number shows only a slight increase to almost 7400. This is however not a true representation: in the beginning of 2006 I "cleaned out" the database, and about 1500 "dead contacts" were deleted. This means that the database increased by 1900 contacts in the last 12 months.

website

About 55 new pages were added to the website during this year. For our now 'vast' website, hosting about 550 pages, the issue of archiving and indexing, cross-referencing and creating links between pages with similar subject material is paramount – because every visitor will be *lost in web space* within seconds without it. Since last year November I archived and created archived list-pages, listing all material for 2001- 2005, the State of the media, the Iraq war and terrorism, and for Carmen Lawrence's contributions to the national debate.

I also created subcategories for distinct high-profile human rights issues such as the Bakhtiary family saga, the many Baxter (detention centre and various crises) pages, while I'm also starting to index research documents and reports, and material around the movement for a *Bill of Rights* in Australia.

The "language" in which websites are written are, given the fact that our 'commoners' world has only known the world-wide web since a little more than once decade, still very much developing. In 2001 I wrote the Project SafeCom website in the language that was "approved" by the World Consortium for websites (the W3C Consortium, a group of volunteering academic experts who meet regularly in the USA and around the world at conferences) in 1999-2000. This language version is called *HTML 4.01 transitional*. The last word – transitional – indicates that this language version was written as a stepping stone to a newer and much smarter language – a transition from HTML 4.01 to the first uniformly accepted "extensible HTML language", or *XHTML 1.0*.

Since 2001 I have progressed in my learning, and I can now write this language without errors. The little button showing here will also show on those pages that are without errors – you can click on them and the page “validation engine” of W3C issues within a few seconds a validation report which will show on your PC. I am now slowly starting to introduce new elements that prepare the way for the new XHTML language, because within less than a decade I expect newer computers to become less and less adapted to read the older languages and more and more geared towards compliance with XHTML



The relocation of the website to another server was partly planned well in advance, but the ‘find’ was a true stroke of luck – or perhaps divine guidance. The company’s servers (a subsidiary to networksolutions.com, one of the best credited companies in the US) are fast, offers services and technology of superior quality while being unbelievably cheap. This is our host for growth, preparing the way for the website’s development into an interactive, media-driven and shared input website, similar to the most modern of citizen-driven independent media websites.

Within days of shifting to the new server we saw a 35% increase in daily traffic. The table below is a sample of (a section of) the automatically generated daily statistics for October: the column under the yellow header shows the number of visitors per day, the column under the cyan-blue header shows the number of pages opened or read per day. As a taster: the last day of the month (31 October) shows the sudden increase in visitors and page views as a result of my emailed Christmas promotion, including the *People and Planet Diary*.

Daily Statistics for October 2006 for safecom.org.au												
Day	Hits		Files		Pages		Visits		Sites		KBytes	
1	14702	1.84%	12281	2.10%	2112	2.46%	1202	2.56%	1699	4.07%	195386	2.16%
2	19903	2.49%	16662	2.85%	2615	3.04%	1543	3.28%	2253	5.40%	242462	2.69%
3	24317	3.04%	20578	3.52%	2784	3.24%	1726	3.67%	2457	5.89%	279108	3.09%
4	23808	2.98%	19751	3.37%	3140	3.65%	1687	3.59%	2415	5.79%	296898	3.29%
5	21350	2.67%	17764	3.03%	2857	3.32%	1725	3.67%	2167	5.19%	272138	3.01%
6	21686	2.71%	17463	2.98%	3519	4.09%	1693	3.60%	2238	5.36%	306752	3.40%
7	14687	1.84%	12010	2.05%	2518	2.93%	1245	2.65%	1680	4.03%	209385	2.32%
16	29344	3.67%	24394	4.17%	3004	3.49%	1783	3.79%	2345	5.62%	333536	3.69%
17	26526	3.32%	21747	3.72%	3149	3.66%	1673	3.56%	2433	5.83%	350506	3.88%
18	27084	3.39%	22157	3.79%	3440	4.00%	1660	3.53%	2228	5.34%	362375	4.01%
19	30512	3.82%	24726	4.22%	3714	4.32%	1676	3.57%	2490	5.97%	435133	4.82%
20	22602	2.83%	18125	3.10%	2497	2.91%	1500	3.19%	2106	5.05%	345332	3.83%
21	18134	2.27%	13468	2.30%	1902	2.21%	1081	2.30%	1628	3.90%	249446	2.76%
22	19289	2.41%	14385	2.46%	1958	2.28%	1221	2.60%	1765	4.23%	240682	2.67%
23	24912	3.12%	20360	3.48%	2438	2.84%	1577	3.36%	2155	5.17%	302963	3.36%
24	30550	3.82%	22809	3.90%	2742	3.19%	1615	3.44%	2254	5.40%	303771	3.36%
25	26284	3.29%	21729	3.71%	2770	3.22%	1638	3.49%	2179	5.22%	304256	3.37%
26	25593	3.20%	20791	3.55%	2445	2.84%	1679	3.57%	2265	5.43%	296185	3.28%
27	32823	4.11%	19268	3.29%	2548	2.96%	1567	3.34%	2076	4.98%	283892	3.14%
28	34882	4.36%	25659	4.38%	4197	4.88%	1302	2.77%	1753	4.20%	406924	4.51%
29	38094	4.77%	16657	2.85%	2256	2.62%	1433	3.05%	1978	4.74%	265276	2.94%
30	72213	9.03%	21890	3.74%	2779	3.23%	1692	3.60%	2252	5.40%	327822	3.63%
31	42612	5.33%	28814	4.92%	3862	4.49%	1768	3.76%	2337	5.60%	407558	4.51%

Treasurer's Report – 2005-06

On assuming the Treasurer's role in October last year I naively assumed that the books were in good order and would require limited oversight from me. I soon discovered that no previous Treasurer had taken an active interest in Project SafeCom's accounts or given Jack the assistance and oversight that he required, and also requested. The accounts were meticulously maintained but were

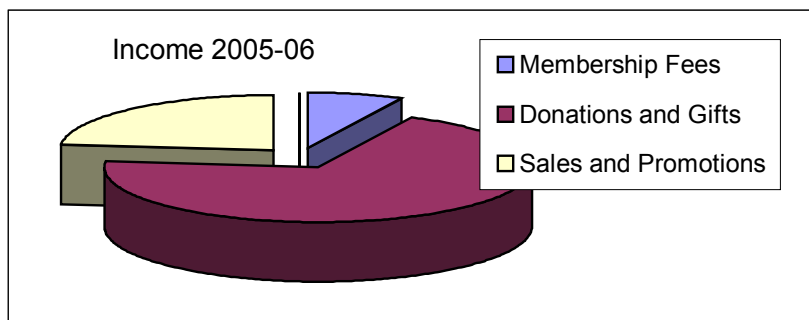
not being kept in a way that could be reconciled with the bank accounts or could easily be audited, two fundamental requirements of accounting. Hence Project SafeCom has never had an audit to date.

The accounting system has now been restructured in such a way that it continues to suit Jack's approach but also allows for reconciliation and auditing. It has also been simplified so that we are now running one instead of two accounts and monthly reconciliation is simple and quick. We also have a petty cash system that is flexible but easily accountable.

I have reconstructed the accounts for the past year as best I can considering some data was not captured by the old system. Some errors occurred that would have been picked up during monthly reconciliations but are now too long ago to be able to track and correct. However the accounts now give a reasonably accurate picture of Project SafeCom's financial activity for the year and can serve as a good guide to the Committee in future planning.

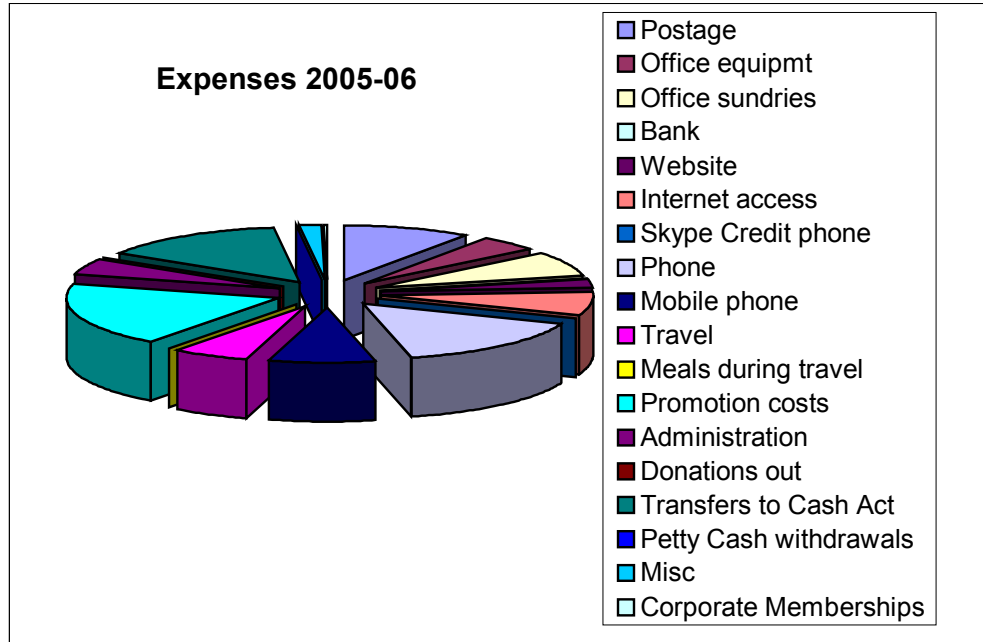
The accounts have not yet been audited as the ordering of the invoices for the cash payments is not yet complete, though they are now nearing completion. The books will then be ready for audit.

Analysis



Project SafeCom generated significant incomes from its promotional and fundraising activity and was therefore able to finish the year with a reasonable surplus. The website, stalls and book sales were the main generators of income. Expenditure occurred in maintaining the same three activities.

The accounts show that the monies passing through the Main Account and the Cash Account are properly accounted for, with the exception of a few missing receipts.



As there was no Petty Cash system set up the cash payments and receipts are not fully accounted for. Consequently it appears that Jack may have used some of his own money to pay some of his expenses. Also not all payments and receipts are fully backed by invoices.

The fact that Project SafeCom depends entirely on voluntary effort, particularly the tireless work of Jack remains an issue. The Committee made some effort during the year to find some grant monies but none of the grants could match the activities of Project SafeCom.

Recommendation

I recommend that this report be accepted subject to a final audit report being provided to the Committee at their next meeting.

Rod Mitchell
Treasurer

Financial Statement 2005-06

Project SafeCom Financial Statement 2005-06

		Main Account	Cash Account	Petty Cash	
Starting Balances		<u>\$930.91</u>	<u>-\$0.20</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	
					Totals
Income	Membership Fees	1,202.49		285.00	1,487.49
	Donations and Gifts	11,426.43		557.75	11,984.18
	Sales and Promotions	3,799.47		1,191.65	4,991.12
	Misc	15.26		0.00	15.26
Transfers	Transfers from Main Act		2,117.94		
	Transfers from Cash Acct			2,100.00	
		<u>16,443.65</u>	<u>2,117.94</u>	<u>4,134.40</u>	<u>18,478.05</u> Total Income
Expenditure	Postage	1,463.96		136.55	1,600.51
	Office equipmt	662.16		84.25	746.41
	Office sundries	1,068.30		431.16	1,499.46
	Bank	0.00	17.74		
	Website	372.99		16.00	388.99
	Internet access	1,010.95		20.80	1,031.75
	Skype Credit phone	16.45			16.45
	Phone	2,289.19			2,289.19
	Mobile phone	1,231.03			1,231.03
	Travel	844.66		764.20	1,608.86
	Meals during travel	7.45		2,347.62	2,355.07
	Promotion costs	2,802.71		255.78	3,058.49
	Administration	711.61		205.80	917.41
	Donations out	0.00		5.00	5.00
	Transfers to Cash Act	2117.94			
	Petty Cash withdrawals		2,100.00		
	Misc	227.00			227.00
	Corporate Memberships	49.50			49.50
		<u>14,875.90</u>	<u>2,117.74</u>	<u>4,267.16</u>	<u>17,025.12</u> Total expenditure
Closing Balances		<u>\$2,498.66</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>-\$132.76</u>	

Acknowledgments

I wish to acknowledge the many people who have supported Project SafeCom this year, from our members to our supporters to the visitors of the website. Many people donate to Project SafeCom or buy our products when I'm *promoting the wares*, some of them very regularly, and many of them I would not recognise if I saw them on the street – but I always recognise them by their email address; as was also the case last year, most of those who give so generously to us live in the Eastern States – and we have yet to meet face-to-face. They show me time and again that the notion of “community” has forever shifted with the coming of the internet, and they affirm my often stated notion that “*Project SafeCom exists because you want us to.*”

I wish to extend a *deeply felt thank-you* to our members Liana Christensen and Larry Stringer who had the courage to lend us the entire house at Scott Street, and who with that generous gesture provided an enormous springboard to another phase in the future for Project SafeCom, providing a local safe base inside the metro area for me to work from without any disturbances in addition to the work from my home in Narrogin.

I thank the folks at the Murdoch Guild for the hosting of the Project SafeCom website for a considerable period, and for the free computers that are now installed at Scott Street. In terms of PC hardware, Pierre Brescianini also deserves our thanks for his donated computer – but not only that: Pierre's *Bliss On Wray* accommodation bookings, promoted through our website, entirely on Pierre's initiative, was a source of income for us. *Thanks and bliss out, Pierre!*
<http://www.safecom.org.au/blissonwray.htm>

For events thanks should also go to Loretta, Sarah, Mal, Brooke and Pascale at Kulcha at www.kulcha.com.au. Kulcha has been our events host for the entire year, and they have been more than generous with providing the venue in many cases without any expectations. In addition, I'm looking at my computer screen at Scott Street here, thanks to the donated monitors from Kulcha.

Again, for events, thanks to the Social Justice Network's Gavin Mooney and Colin Penter for their support, and to those fighters for a better world Rina Sani and Omar Romay Pumar from Orisha International www.orishainternational.com

Also, especially in connection to our events I thank for their contributions the Greens' Senators Kerry Nettle and Rachel Siewert, my best friend and colleague Pamela Curr, the indomitable Antony Loewenstein, Linda Briskman from Curtin Uni, Samina Yasmeen from UWA, Greens MLC Giz Watson. Senator Rachel Siewert has been one of our 2006 sponsors, as is the anonymous person, probably a State or Federal politician, who one morning deposited \$5,000 in the Project SafeCom account. *Thank you, wherever and whoever you are!*

I thank the good people at the *Fremantle Herald*, including reporter Jenny D'Unger and photographer Marcus Whisson, who have treated Project SafeCom “as one of the Freo locals” since I told them of our *'semi-covert operations cell'*.

Finally, thanks to my committee, who this year once again helped to keep us in shape, and who advanced the cause, just by being a committee – so vitally important to keep us moving forward. The shift of issues this year to include our representations of the planet itself in her struggle to shake off the dust and dirt we dump on and around it, may yet prove to be the start of Project SafeCom more fully coming into its own.

Jack H Smit
Scott Street
South Fremantle
November 2006