



# SANCTUARY

Australia Foundation Newsletter 2016



## A family finally together again!

It was a joyous day at Coffs Harbour airport when Gasore was finally reunited with his family! The local Congolese community gave a loud and joyous welcome as they came through the doors!

Gasore has been separated for over 11 years from his wife, three sons, daughter and grand daughter. Stuck in squalid Kiziba refugee camp in Rwanda for years on end, the family endured ongoing insecurity, suffering and violence. Gasore constantly worried about his family, particularly the safety of his daughter and grand child. He went to many organisations over several years, struggling for assistance with his family's sponsorship and was finally successful with Sanctuary's help.

Later there was a big 'Welcome to Australia' party for the family, and all of those involved, including Sanctuary donors, were thanked for their life changing support.

## Syrian family reunited at last

Thanks to all those who have supported us in assisting a Syrian family (Mum, Dad and 3 kids) leaving from Lebanon to be reunited with their family in Sydney.

It has been a very traumatic experience for them and they are all so happy to finally be here.



## Burmese brothers reunited

Reng and his brother Ting, originally from Chin State, Burma, have been apart for many years. Both were part of the LND party in Burma and persecuted for it. Ting escaped to India, where he stayed for 10 years.

Reng remained in Burma where he was forced to do unpaid hard labour by the Burmese military against his will, without pay, during which time he was abused mentally and physically and was beaten so many times that he could not continue to do forced labour. He was threatened and informed that if he did not continue the work, he would be arrested, tortured and imprisoned for disobeying military orders. Reng managed to escape to Yangon, where an agent helped him to get to Malaysia by boat.

Reng was put in detention in Malaysia for a year (despite having refugee status) for  
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being in Malaysia illegally. After spending 5 years there, Reng was finally accepted to come to Australia and was resettled in Coffs Harbour, where he successfully sponsored his brother Ting, in India. Sanctuary, provided an interest-free travel loan, which allowed him to be reunited with his brother again!

## **Syrian cases**

We are sponsoring large numbers of applications on behalf of Syrian refugees stuck in Turkey and Lebanon, and now have three families referred to the Australian Embassy for interviews in Lebanon. We have received assistance from Migration Law Matters in submitting forms to confirm the identity of the applicants for security purposes, and they now await approval to go ahead to the next stage in their application.

**“I cannot describe the pain and suffering that my sister and her family have been through. It came to me as a great relief that there are still people in this world who care. Thank you.”**

~ Rasha, recently assisted by Sanctuary to be re-united with her family from Syria.

## **A mother longing for her children**

Since 2013, we have been assisting a mother from Sierra Leone to try and reunite her with her three children. Isolated and alone in Australia, she was overjoyed when she managed to track down her lost children now in Lagos. Since then, she has continued to send money every month to support them, despite being unemployed herself. She suffers depression and anxiety and is constantly worrying about her children.



We have been dismayed at how long it has taken the Department of Immigration to process their application, leaving them in limbo for over three years, endlessly waiting. Sanctuary has provided \$1,700 in upfront loans for the required health checks and DNA testing has now been completed and confirmed. Once they receive their visa approval, SAF will provide interest-free travel loans to get them here. It is a long, complicated and expensive process, but bringing a mother and her children back together after war is a priceless endeavour and we sincerely thank all those wonderful donors who make this vital work possible. We are fundraising to provide an interest-free travel loan for her children. Please help if you can.

## **Sanctuary Refugee Advice and Support Program**

Neema, a Congolese mother was homeless after moving to Coffs Harbour from Brisbane, to be close to her brother. This was due mainly to a lack of housing availability (and possibly landlord prejudice in the tenant selection process). Neema and her family attended several house openings and submitted rental applications, but were not successful. Unfortunately some newcomers are not fully aware that rents can be higher than 38% of their total income, which makes them ineligible for many suitable properties. Sanctuary partnered with New Horizons, a local support agency, and together we assisted Neema and her two children to find a very nice home close to the city centre, and to source some essential furnishings. They are now feeling secure and settling in well!

We need your continued support to ensure that our Sanctuary Advice and Support Program can continue to provide essential help to people like Nima and her children. Please help if you can.

## A big THANK YOU to our new patrons

for their support and encouragement for Sanctuary's vital work for refugees. We are very fortunate to have several leading Australian figures as patrons including:

**Prof. Gillian Triggs**, President of the Australian Human Rights Commission (below left),

**Associate Prof. Munjed Al Muderis**, pioneering orthopaedic surgeon and a clinical lecturer (centre)

**David Manne**, leading human rights lawyer (right).



## Rose Bay High Students take action to help refugees!

Students at Rose Bay High School are concerned about the difficulties faced by refugees and have decided to take action! Benni Haupt and fellow students have taken the initiative to organise a fundraiser for Sanctuary's work with refugees. They are also collecting used eyeglasses to be sent directly to refugees in DRC Congo. They are lightweight, easy to collect and send, and are truly appreciated by many refugees with poor eyesight who do not have access to glasses. **Can your school help?**

## Horror stories raise money to help refugees.

A group of artists and writers have generously decided to donate the profits from their ebooks and printed books towards Sanctuary's work with refugees. We are very appreciative of their support, which has raised over \$1,315. To learn more about their work visit:  
<http://refugecollection.com/the-cause/>

For more information about "The Refuge Collection" or to download previews and buy copies, please go here:

<http://www.smashwords.com/books/byseries/22669>  
and please do remember to leave reviews and share links on social media.



*Steve Dillon, Project Founder*

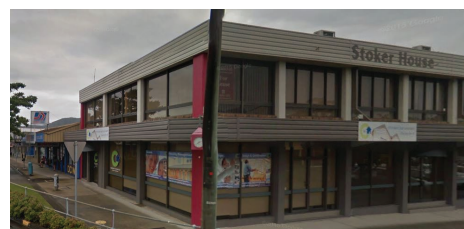
## Burmese Housing Co-operative

The local Chin Burmese community are working together with Sanctuary to establish a community housing co-operative, to enable them to access affordable housing and start small acreage farming. It is a very complex registration and set-up process but with Peter Hallam as their mentor, they are working together towards their dream!



## Computer donations

Sanctuary was contacted by SORT Multimedia Hub Coffs Harbour asking if we have refugees who would like to have refurbished computers. Working together, Sanctuary provided a list and assisted individuals and families to get to their premises. Together we have provided more than 30 ex-refugees with free refurbished computers.



## New Sanctuary Centre

Sanctuary has been successful in attaining private grant funding to rent a new office centre opening this month in Coffs Harbour, at Suite 1/19 Park Avenue.



**YOUR DONATION WILL MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE.**

**MAKE AN ONLINE DONATION** to support Sanctuary's vital work please visit Give Now's secure online giving facility: [www.givenow.com.au/sanctuaryrefugeefoundation](http://www.givenow.com.au/sanctuaryrefugeefoundation)

I would like to give a tax deductible donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_ (all donations over \$2 are tax deductible)

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**I WOULD LIKE TO DONATE BY:**

☐ **Direct Deposit:** Bendigo Bank, Coffs Harbour, Sanctuary Australia Foundation  
BSB: 633-000, Account: 125199711 \*Make sure to use your name as a bank reference and email us for a receipt on [safoundation@westnet.com.au](mailto:safoundation@westnet.com.au).

☐ **Cheque or money order** enclosed OR

**Debit my card:** ☐ VISA ☐ MASTERCARD

CREDIT CARD NUMBER:\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

EXPIRY DATE \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

NAME ON CARD\_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE OF CARDHOLDER\_\_\_\_\_

☐ Please send me information about including Sanctuary in my will, so that my legacy can continue to save refugee lives

☐ Send me Sanctuary's regular newsletter.

PLEASE RETURN THIS COMPLETED FORM TO:

SANCTUARY AUSTRALIA FOUNDATION,  
PO BOX 6295, COFFS HARBOUR,  
NSW 2450 AUSTRALIA

Email: [safoundation@westnet.com.au](mailto:safoundation@westnet.com.au)

Phone : (02) 6652 2127

Please visit: [www.sanctuaryaustraliafoundation.org.au](http://www.sanctuaryaustraliafoundation.org.au)

Your donation will be handled securely and responsibly by Sanctuary, and we will let you know who has been directly assisted by your generous support.

**THANK YOU!**