



## *Anglican Diocese of Newcastle*

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

**16 June 2014**

### **Refugee Connections at Southlakes Anglican Church**

Southlakes Anglican parish connects with teenage refugees throughout the year through their ongoing partnership with SICRYS (Sydney Indo-Chinese Refugee Youth Support).

Established in 1984, SICRYS is a mental health early intervention program for newly arrived young people experiencing psychological stress based in Sydney.

One aspect of the support program involves groups of refugee teenagers attending weekend camps in the Tea Gardens area, north of Newcastle.

Kelvin and Julie Ward, parishioners of the Southlakes Anglican Church, have been involved in the program for 18 years, providing the catering requirements for the camps and, at times, assisting with transport.

For the past eight years, the community of All Saints' Church, Morisset, has become involved by providing Sunday lunch for the refugee teenagers, as they travel back to Sydney.

"The lunches provide our community with an opportunity to welcome, accept and care for people from all nationalities, faiths and cultures" said Father Glen Pope, the Rector of Southlakes parish.

"For the parishioners themselves these lunches provide an opportunity to connect with refugees in a very personal way."

"Although there are limitations of language we find that these opportunities provide for mutual enrichment and understanding."

In recent times, through the Samaritans, the parish has been contacted by an agency in the hope that they might be able to provide for the material needs of two refugee families who have been located in this area.

The Parish has been happy to provide much needed furniture and utensils to help make life more comfortable for these people.

"This support will be on-going and we are constantly in touch with Rotary and the Uniting Church to ascertain particular needs" Father Glen concluded.

If you can offer support to the Southlakes parish, please contact Father Glen Pope on 49731204.

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