



ed with renting space for the purpose was extraordinarily high. After meeting with artists of various media we found that community-based and affordable facilities for aspiring artists were virtually non-existent in Brisbane. ACRO decided to convert its shopfront to a Gallery as an affordable option for talented artists who otherwise would be unable to show their work. The end result is ACRO Gallery, located on Sandgate Road – with some 100,000 cars passing each day – a perfect way to showcase art. With the tag “The Art of Community”, ACRO has branched out into the visual arts as part of its community development agenda. Gallery details are at [www.acrogallery.com.au](http://www.acrogallery.com.au)

**KNOWING ME KNOWING YOU**

This Project, which was generously funded by the Brisbane City Council through its Creative Sparks grant program, provided a creative opportunity for young people from refugee backgrounds, resettled in Brisbane, to express themselves through the medium of photography. Photographer Melly Niotakis and psychologist Ally Wakefield facilitated eight full day workshops to provide photographic knowledge and a supportive environment for the young people to explore their personal experience including war, poverty and oppression. ACRO is grateful for the support of Griffith University, QPASTST, QCP, The Edge, RGB Digital and Jetblaq Design in the realisation of this Project.

The artwork has been (and will continue to be) displayed at BCC Libraries throughout Queensland. One of the young artists involved subsequently won the Premier’s Award for Young Photographer of the Year.

**STAFFORD COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

This collective of which ACRO forms a part continues to provide important community development work on the north-side of Brisbane.

**ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

As reported in previous Annual Reports, ACRO has established an income stream independent of government funding through its shareholding in a construction company ([www.acrobp.com.au](http://www.acrobp.com.au)). These linkages were reinforced this year. In addition to this engagement and the creation of ACRO Gallery, ACRO will con-

tinue to seek out opportunity to self-fund its endeavours.

What has been discussed thus far is a sampling of the community work that ACRO has pursued during 2010 and to which it commits itself during 2011. As always I am indebted to the wide ranging talent that forms this organisation including our Volunteers, our Executive Committee and our Staff and I thank you all sincerely for your support, encouragement and imagination. I also acknowledge Australian taxpayers whose contributions have assisted ACRO through various government departments, both state and federal. In particular I acknowledge the Queensland Department of Communities and the Federal Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

**Clive Begg,  
Executive Director.**



**ANNUAL GENERAL REPORT 2010**

The wide-ranging work commenced, continued and completed by ACRO during the year demonstrate its dynamism as a community-centred benevolent organisation. Fundamental to our evolution is the belief that changing community expectations and values must be embraced and met provided they are fair and equitable and in the interest of all citizens. This is why, after 46



years of service to the community, our work retains relevance. Our progression from a prisoner-based focus through to victims-based and then crime prevention initiatives provide a holistic canvas for its present and future face. At the core of our mission is the safety of our community. We will continue to chart a direction for the organisation that ensures relevance in the present and an infrastructure for the future. The work of our Executive Committee, under the leadership of Ian Stewart, his Executive colleagues and Staff has provided both. There is no scope for complacency as we work through existing, and evolving, challenges.



*To make social justice real, it demands a cultural change and the same call to action for all people.*

What we at ACRO have come to understand about our community is that social cohesion is not only an ideal but a *mechanism* that we must actively subscribe to in order to achieve social justice; that social justice, which embraces the principles of fairness, equity, and tolerance is *the* core value for all communities. Our mantra of “Achieving Social Justice” is neither a glib nor gratuitous pronouncement but rather an action in progress. To make social justice real, it demands a cultural change and the same call for action for all people. It is not enough, therefore, to merely subscribe to religious or philosophical customs in an ad hoc manner - we must all act out the principles on a daily basis as part of a deliberative change process. Regrettably there will always be detractors seeking to divert us from this mission for political, economic or personal reasons. It is not helpful that governments and the media promote the antithesis to social justice from time to time by demonising groups of people (“boat people” as an example). All this achieves is a polarised and fractured community that lives in fear—one that is encouraged not to let go of prejudice and one that is left to wallow in the dark recesses of intolerance. We, as a community, have

apologised to indigenous Australia and the stolen generation. The reviled “White Australia Policy” of the 1960s is now a distant memory. Future generations of Australians should not have to apologise for our actions against others in the present. Yet I fear this will be the case unless there is a living cultural change that engages all citizens. The fact that ill-informed extremists can still tout their vitriol without our leaders stepping into the breach to intervene is deeply troublesome. The presumption that negative statements against individuals or groups based upon race, religion, sexual orientation or other differences is acceptable to the community must always be challenged through actions that encourage those differences not condemn them. Australians have a huge capacity for care and concern which has been demonstrated during times of great social crisis. The actions during these times should not be confined to such events but must become normal daily behaviour. For our part, ACRO has specifically targeted groups that are amongst the most marginalised in the country for support and assistance. Amongst these this past year have been aspiring new Australians and refugees; young people for

**Highlights for 2010**

- DayTripper Program for older citizens
- ACRO Gallery Opening
- Knowing Me Knowing You Exhibition
- Logo Rebranding
- Revitalized Web Presence
- 10th Year: School Holiday Youth Camps
- Working with Refugees
- Expanded Housing for homeless people
- 10000th Home Assist Secure Client
- Enhanced Community Development
- Technology Innovations to improve services
- Expansion of entrepreneurship



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## ACRO STAFF MILESTONES

ACRO has benefited from the skills and compassion of many talented Staff and Volunteers during its 46 years of operation. There is a core of personnel who have dedicated their entire professional career to the social justice agenda pursued by the organization. During the year two Staff members completed 20 years of service—Fiona Begg and Ashley Reid. Both Ashley and Fiona commenced employment with ACRO in 1990 and both have engaged in the entire spectrum of organizational activity. Ashley, who retired this year, progressed through Housing Services to Program Management and for the past decade has been our Accounts Manager. Fiona came to ACRO on a part-time basis initially and her educational skills have been utilized across a wide range of Projects. She is currently our Programs Manager. On behalf of the membership and those they have assisted over the years, we congratulate and thank Fiona and Ashley for their work with us.



Fiona Begg was presented an award by Chairperson Ian Stewart.



Ashley Reid pictured here with Fiona Begg and Jennifer Abdur-Rahman on his last day of work.

# Executive Director's Annual Report 2010

*"I am pleased to report that we continue to make a difference."*

## "SOCIAL JUSTICE ... IS A CORE VALUE FOR A HEALTHY SOCIETY"

whom access to opportunity has been limited; older people, many of whom are socially isolated; our homeless citizens who continue to suffer the impacts of reduced government support; the families of offenders and victims of crime; the unemployed and socially disadvantaged; and, those who have disabilities. We apply strategies of community development and, with the support of federal and state governments and our own entrepreneurial engagements, provide a range of services that seek to address disadvantage. I am pleased to report that we continue to make a difference.

### IMAGE REBRANDING

The relocation of ACRO services to its first permanent location in Clayfield some years ago provided the impetus for us to revitalise our image. With the creative assistance of Sean Bates from Jetblaq, new logos were designed and our webpage re-crafted. The rationale behind the new primary logo centres on the impact of open quotation marks. Quotation marks or inverted commas (informally referred to as quotes and speech marks) are punctuation marks used in pairs to set off speech, a quotation, a phrase, or a word. Normally they come as a pair, but for ACRO the conversation never stops so the closing pair is missing. When talking to government agencies a particular case may close, or even the battle won but with all social change there is always a

battle to fight so conversation continues. Good communication is vital for achieving social justice; the quotation marks represent ACRO's voice - providing a voice for those who don't always have one. The secondary logo, the smiling face that utilises the inverted commas as eyes, will be used for merchandising and more informal programs or those that involve younger people. The rebranding of the organisation now distinguishes it and is used on our premises at Clayfield, publications, letterhead and in all other appropriate circumstances. Both are currently in the process of trade marking.

### PROGRAM REVIEW HOUSING

We all like to think that homelessness in Australia is a non-event. Unfortunately that is not the case. Steadily increasing migration to Queensland by those hoping to find a new start has placed new pressures on rental accommodation in this State, a problem exacerbated by the phenomenon of middle-class homelessness. The development of "affordable housing" is primarily targeting homelessness for this latter group who are working but whose income is not in alignment with the rental market. Decision-making by successive administrations has meant that the homelessness pool has widened as a result with insufficient housing stocks being enabled to meet the need for neither those who are working in relatively low-



Dr Clive Begg, Executive Director

paid positions nor those who are unemployed or unemployable. Our homelessness is still comparatively inconspicuous when placed beside the problems for the UK, US and throughout Asia but this will, over time, change. ACRO has a long involvement with emergency housing and has been funded by federal governments since the 1970s to provide supported accommodation. Whilst the stocks haven't increased from this source, the organisation has been proactive in securing housing stock and will continue to do so. This year our housing stock increased to 11. This is not a huge number but it has impacted on many families who otherwise would be in dire circumstances. Some 8,877 bed-nights of accommodation were provided by ACRO this past year across our government provided houses.

### MAINTENANCE SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

The ACRO Home Assist Secure Program and its Home and Community Care Program which are funded by state and federal agencies have been operating in the Stafford / Wavell Heights region of Brisbane for many years. These are Programs that provide vital services for our older citizens and both are designed to enable these citizens to stay in their own homes as long as they feel they want to. 2010 saw these programs reach the milestone of 10,000 clients with many of these receiving multiple subsidised services. This year saw the projects provide 7,292 new services for our clients which



represents an almost 10% growth over the previous year. In addition, the program processed 572 Occupational Therapy referrals. The growth of these programs over the years has developed significantly as "baby-boomers" age. There is no indication that this trend will reverse anytime soon and further growth is anticipated. With this in mind ACRO determined, with the support of the funding agencies, to streamline its technology in such a way as to increase the ability of contractors and Staff to more efficiently reach out to the client group and provide services with a reduced waiting period. Remote access by workers to our server to worksheets has achieved this goal.

### EMERGENCY RELIEF AND WELFARE SUPPORT

As you would expect in times of global economic crisis, there have been increases in the



number of people presenting for financial assistance. Whilst others have argued that the GEC has not impacted greatly on Australians, the almost 11% increase in requests for support would not maintain such a contention. Requests for advice, information, emergency financial support, transport assistance, Accommodation support and other community development initiatives have all been processed by ACRO this past

year. What needs to be said is that there is a wider cross-section of the community now requiring assistance than has previously been the case. In other words, more people from the general community are presenting for assistance indicating that hard times are being experienced by a broader group of citizens.

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Some time ago ACRO determined to expand its community development portfolio beyond its traditional Family Centre at Wacol. As a result the organization moved into new community development arenas targeting high needs groups both existing and emergent. This refocus acknowledges our ongoing concern, in particular, for the safety of our older and younger citizens. We have also become increasingly troubled about the social isolation of older people and we have actively set about to increase the portfolio of opportunity for these people.

### DAYTRIPPER PROGRAM

The Daytripper Program had humble beginnings with a small group of our clients being taken on day excursions across South-



KnowingMEKnowingYOU

East Queensland in our Hi-Ace "bus". Since then the project has grown dramatically and it is not unusual for two full charter buses to depart for the monthly adventures. The program is becoming known throughout Brisbane and we are anticipating that the project will expand as more people become aware of it. We certainly can't keep up with demand even at this point. It is gratifying to be able to assist these isolated people to reconnect with the community. Social isolation is endemic throughout the older constituency and ACRO is committed to expand its programs in future years to accommodate this need.

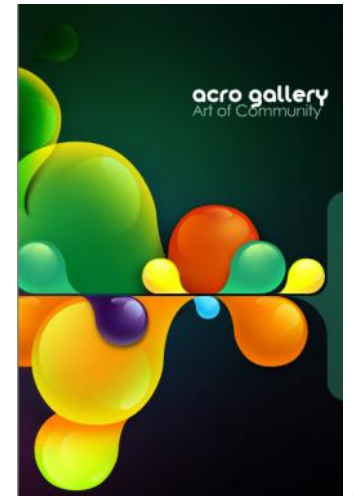
### SCHOOL HOLIDAYS YOUTH CAMPS

At the other end of the spectrum are our young people. ACRO has provided a range of services for young people for almost 20 years. Its School Holidays Youth Camp Project, like Daytripper, had a very humble beginning ten years ago, and has, with very few exceptions, provided camps for disadvantaged young people during all school holidays from its beginnings. Over the past few years the composition of these camps has changed with many more refugee children being supported.

### THE CONVERGENCE

As 2010 marked ten years of operating our Youth Camps and we had reached our 10,000<sup>th</sup> older client under the HAS/HACC Programs, we wanted to celebrate both events. ACRO decided to publish a book of photographs of our older and younger clients both separately and together. The end result is "One to One", an outstanding collection of photographs which

were skilfully captured by Melly Niotakis. Melly is one of our Camp facilitators and also an outstanding photographer and we are grateful for her contributions at many levels to the work of this organisation. "One to One" was launched on 10.10.10 by Local Member of Parliament and Opposition Treasurer Tim Nichols and on a very wet and windy Sunday afternoon some 120 people attended. What we found through the experience of publication preparation is what we had already established from previous research ("Crime of Fear" [1994] and "Creating Perspective" [1998]) and that is that older and younger people have a natural



rapport and empathy for each other. In coming years we hope to continue to create programs that integrate both groups. If we are to give life to our ambition of social cohesion, we need to draw together apparently disparate groups such as these.

### THE SURPRISE ELEMENT: ACRO GALLERY

When we were searching out a venue to launch the book we were astounded to find that the costs associat-