

Friday 2 August 2013



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Homelessness Service sees increased number of refugees**

**Monday 5 to Sunday 11 August is Homeless Persons' Week 2013 and homelessness services around Australia collaborate to raise awareness around homelessness in Australia.**

**In recent years UnitingCare West's Homeless Accommodation Support Service in South Fremantle has come across a growing group of refugees in need of support. Refugees who have received no adequate support to access employment and housing; they fall between the cracks and end up homeless.**

"One of our clients was a 28 year old man who came from Sudan where had lived in refugee camps all by himself since he was six years old. He didn't even know if his parents were alive. After arriving in Australia the young man went through a couple of accommodation services and eventually came to UCW. While living in Wilf Sargent House he enrolled in a chemistry degree at University. He completed his studies and is now working in a chemical laboratory in Perth."

"Refugees usually present with a complex set of problems. They might have escaped persecution, experienced torture, suffer from trauma or deal with survivor's guilt because they left their parents, brothers and sisters behind at risk of being killed while they now reside in a safe place" according to Support Worker Michael McCarthy.

UnitingCare West's Homeless Accommodation Support Service in South Fremantle offers a homeless person medium term supported accommodation. After a person's immediate needs such as a bed, food and clothing are taken care of; the staff will address the secondary issues a homeless person might have with such as unemployment, mental illness and language difficulties.

Residents are mainly men over the age of 25 and consist of two groups presenting with specific challenges and needs; the local service user and refugees. The local homeless person might have additional problems such as substance abuse, mental illness or a history of domestic violence that has led to homelessness.

UnitingCare West Homeless Accommodation Support Service operates is known in the local community as Wilf Sargent House. This service was previously was run by Fremantle Wesley Mission and its heritage and support in the Fremantle area dates back to 1830.

----- **end of media release** -----

For further information contact Nienke Rozendaal, Marketing & Advancement Officer on 9355 9023 or email: [nienke.rozendaal@unitingcarewest.org.au](mailto:nienke.rozendaal@unitingcarewest.org.au).

For quote or comment contact Sue Ash, Chief Executive Officer on 0411 723 394 or email [sue.ash@unitingcarewest.org.au](mailto:sue.ash@unitingcarewest.org.au).