

Minutes of Buddies Meeting: 23 April 2017

Chairperson: Bronwyn Bell

Note-taker: Neroli Dobson

Apologies: Stephanie Akers, Grant Allen, Darcy Buick, Leslie Christian, Pat Isaacs, Mitra Khakbaz, Sheila Merriman, Libby Morrison, Margaret Norris, Penny Rivlin, Kayla Szumer

Introduction: Bronwyn

- Reflection on problems faced by refugees
- Reflection on Peter Dutton's claim regarding sexual assault/paedophilia on Manus Island ... sharing of witness report from Manus asylum seeker, Benham Satah on child asking for money/food, in full view of CCTV cameras, child escorted out by security, PNG police reports also conflicting with PD's narrative
- No guest speaker this month – open discussion in regards to ongoing concerns within Buddies

Learn English Holiday 2-7 April: Kendall Snowden

- The best LEH ever! (full report in Bulletin)
- 27 refugees – 19 adults, 9 children – from Syria, Iraq, Somalia; age range 5-75
- St John's College facilities provided free, as well as bus, fuel and bus driver Athol Dobson for Brisbane pickup and excursion to beach and Big Pineapple zoo
- Fiona and Kerry (school staff) there every day to facilitate the program
- Approx. 40 volunteers – almost 1:1 help in the classroom, Lucy Bliss – ran program for young children
- Fundraised beforehand through selling fruit, eggs, flowers – \$800 raised, \$795 spent on LEH program
- Booklets of participants' recipes were compiled – available for purchase at \$2
- Next group 17-22 September ... waiting to see whether the same facilities will be open to us again

Finance Report: Fergus FitzGerald (full report in Bulletin)

- \$2750 received for the month – Eumundi Market car parking \$770 (Thank you Kendall)
- \$250 donated from Harmony Day at Maleny SS (Thank you Lou Walsh)
- LEH \$800 budget balanced expenses – Fergus considers this our flagship event – hospitality and friendship, building bridge between refugees and the community
- Outgoings – \$5000 to Salvo's Legal Asylum Seeker Clinic
- \$3166 currently in account
- End of March requested \$2000 payment to lawyer, Ehsan Azadi for preparation of visa application for Abdul – finance group has made initial payment of \$500.
- Approval to pay remaining \$2000 was passed by show of hands (Abdul has already repaid Buddies \$500 and intends three more repayments of \$500)
- Approval to make \$500 donation to Abdul (by not requiring a fifth repayment of \$500) was also passed by show of hands
- McGrath Real Estate Caloundra has donated \$500 to Buddies

FUTURE EVENTS:

'Before the Flood' – today 4 + 6 pm

Denis not here – Environmental Group – 50 tickets donated to Buddies, \$8 for each ticket donated to Buddies
Screening in Lecture Theatre 4 SCU, Carmel Dobson has map and leaflets

Classical Concert – Sun 30 April: Kendall

Margaret Landbeck in charge of food – helpers welcome

Raffle prizes donated e.g. Painting from refugee, weekend for 2 @ Anna's resort Lake Cooroibah, jams, pickles etc

15 Year Celebration – Sat 6 May: Carmel

Informal anniversary dinner – so far only 2 have let Carmel know they're attending, need to know this week for hotel booking or possible cancellation, email RSVP to Carmel – address in Bulletin

BSO Concert – Sun 21 May: Kendall

200 musicians coming to Lake Kawana, 2 orchestras combining and Brisbane Chorale, help with finger food needed

MDA Luminous Parade – Fri 9 June: Bronwyn

Amazing spectacle, thousands of people, starts at 5pm, walk through Southbank, culminating in free concert. Buddies

banner provided by MDA. Government led attack on multiculturalism – good opportunity to be there and promote

Fergus: MDA has asked if we would be interested in sponsoring parade \$1000 – our own lantern, promoted in flyers etc. Since we are no longer donating money to MDA it was suggested this one-off contribution would be appropriate ... to be revisited at the end of the meeting.

Refugee Week Open Forum –

end of June, watch Bulletin for details

Bunnings Sausage Sizzles –

still trying to secure dates, details will appear in Bulletin

Volunteers are invited to join the fundraising group and/or groups involved in planning individual events, the fundraising group meets prior to Buddies monthly meetings

Update on Nazar's situation: Bronwyn

2 daughters in Sudan after wife's death, Salvo's Legal has taken on case in pro bono capacity, looking at adoption/ sponsorship as first course of action (Nazar's Sudanese cousins in Woodridge are possible adoptees), second course of action would be a public campaign

Mobile phone has been given to family for communication with children. Film night suggested as a stand-alone fundraiser for Nazar.

News of other asylum seeker friends:

Gabby Sutherland: Senate Inquiry report – a child on Nauru

- issue of medical transfer raised
- Mr Woodford Smith claims cases are not urgent
- Child on Nauru waiting for tests – bleeding from bowel, multiple lumps/masses, migraines – given Panadol and antidepressants, no ongoing script for antidepressants – suicide ideation has increased to suicide attempts/plans, self-harm. Dr on Nauru has put her on the list that Mr WS calls 'non urgent'.
- Sense of hopelessness on Nauru has increased

Next Meeting:

Sun 28 May, Guest speakers: Charlotte Yellowlees from Salvos Legal and Nazar, Chairperson: Margie Cosgrove, Note-taker: Thorsten Kels

Open Discussion

Bronwyn opened the discussion into ongoing concerns within Buddies which at this point remain unresolved. Some of the issues raised included:

- The involvement of community group Silver Fox in last October's Welcome Walk Together
- Lack of clarity surrounding some decisions concerning large outgoing donations
- Importance of accountability, legal protection and corporate governance to be balanced against long-standing Buddies ethos which has historically been informal and non-hierarchical
- Pressures placed on volunteers in regard to accountability measures
- September 2016 LEH – query in regards to a cash amount collected and some of the itemising in two related finance reports
- Small group formed by one director, query made about the transparency of this group
- Miscommunication between finance group and immigration support group, ran out of time to discuss fully, may be discussed at another meeting

Letters were tabled from Kayla Szumer and Margaret Norris.

Invite to AGM: Fergus – Sun 28 May