

MINUTES OF BUDDIES MEETING, 27 SEPTEMBER 2015

Chairperson: Margaret Landbeck, note-taker: Jenny Hughes

Apologies: Scott Grimmatt, Fergus FitzGerald, Libby Morrison, Yokki Rother, Lindel Greggery, Penny Rivlin, Terry Boyce, Brenda Smith, Sue Ennis, Gary Bates, Sheila Merriman, Stephanie Akers, Kay Spiering

Guest speakers

Margaret Norman and Rada Van Der Werff: Both are special visitors at both BITA and Darwin Detention Centres. They reported on their recent visit to the Darwin Centre (DC) near Palmerston. For the benefit of new members and visitors they first provided an overview of BITA and then spoke in more detail about DC. Twenty four hours notice is required to visit and a detainee's number, not name, is required for a booking to be made. Only the nominated person may be spoken to. The compound houses over 400 single men, some of whom are criminals attempting to avoid deportation to their home countries. Many refuse their opportunities to contact family members as they wish to avoid them knowing about their hopeless situations. Depression is the most common ailment experienced by most detainees with physical illness and untreated injuries being common. Shocking examples were provided by our speakers who urged us to write and phone the relevant Government authorities to express our deep concerns.

General meeting

A number of new members were made welcome.

Learn English Holiday, 25-30 October

Kayla reported on the smaller demand in recent months, but is confident of Buddies hosting another successful week. Several new hosts are volunteering.

Film night fundraiser – Tangerines

Kendall reported on the coming film night fundraiser on Wednesday 21 October and urged us all to encourage friends and family to fill the 264 seat cinema. Flyers were sent out in a Bulletin Extra on Monday. Marnie Greer is organising catering and urged us all to offer food, mainly savoury, by email.

New one-off donation

John Ennis requested Buddies to agree to send \$1000.00 to the organisation Gifts for Manus Asylum Seekers. This was agreed to after some discussion.

Finance Group report

This was presented by Audrey. The current funds available are \$9391.00. The report from the period 19 August – 26 September can be accessed from the link in the Bulletin.

Lobby Group report

The main message is for all Buddies to engage in lobbying. People were encouraged to sign the many petitions that appear in the Bulletin and on our Facebook page. Margaret also provided a copy of an open letter she sent to Malcolm Turnbull (cc to many other politicians) for people to make use of if they wish.

National Walk Together

Marnie spoke on the National Walk together which will include the Sunshine Coast for the first time this Saturday 31 October. Support has been growing for the past several years and over 20,000 marched across Australia in 2014. The most likely venues are Cotton Tree Park or Mooloolaba Esplanade. We will be advised soon. It is expected to be a wide community-based event. There will be a rally and a short walk.

Global Living Libraries

Shine Jang from Nambour Community Centre spoke on this and distributed flyers. Speakers from Buddies who come from diverse cultural backgrounds are urged to contribute to one or more of these sessions across all the Coast Libraries during Oct and November. Full details from the Centre or email Shine. Shine also spoke about the 2015 Multicultural Excellence Awards.

Give Them a Home

Val reported that over 100 Councils, including Sunshine Coast are welcoming refugees. We are urged to encourage our Councillors to act towards this aim. Many churches, including Catholic, Anglican and Uniting Churches are urging their parishioners to take up the refugee cause as part of their Christian duties. Val also suggested Buddies ring the PM and urge him to shut down Manus and Nauru. She urged us to call often and relay this message to his staff at (02) 6277 7700.

Other business

We have been invited to attend local State member Steve Dickson's public meeting 21 October, 10–11.30am.

A concert in Montville Community Hall is being given by Sweet Chilli and The Nightingays on Sunday 11 October from 2–4.30pm. Sweet Chilli have decided to donate some of the proceeds to Buddies.

Quinn asked us to contribute men's jackets as (on her move to Melbourne after next month's meeting) she will transport all donations. Contact Quinn for details.

Margaret gave a brief update from Terry Boyce on Nadir whose case is still unclear.

Next meeting

Sunday 25 October, Chairperson: Quinn Kerr, note-taker: Joyce Tozer