

## Minutes of Buddies meeting, 22 October 2017

Chairperson: Angela Mercuri, note-taker: Scott Grimmett

Apologies: Kristi Nageli, Kendall Snowden & Joachim Rother, Penny Rivlin, Grant Allen, Darcy & Patrick Buick

### Guest Speaker

**Davina Wardley - Human rights lawyer and independent consultant on statelessness and forced migration**

"Statelessness" not always meaning lacking a passport. A government can refuse to accept minorities as citizens. This can mean excluding people from hospitals, schools, banking and other services. The Myanmar constitution does not exclude Rohingya but in day-to-day practice Myanmar government departments refuse to grant citizenship documentation to this cultural/religious minority. Without these documents they cannot access services. For decades now Rohingya have been excluded from education with the result that they now lack the skills to engage with bureaucratic processes. In Australia adult Rohingya refugees have tended to continue this disengagement. Davina wants to find ways to re-engage these adult refugees with Australian civic life, learning English and finding productive and rewarding ways to apply their agricultural skills.

### Fundraising

- Carmel Dobson reported that the Walk Together event at Tickle Park was cancelled due to rain. Carmel expects Council will return our deposit.
- Gillian Duffy reported that Noosa Welcomes Refugees are planning a fundraising event for 8 November, at this point a wine-tasting quiz.
- Bronwyn Bell reported that the recent screening of Victoria & Abdul at Nambour Majestic Cinemas raised \$1630 after costs. She requested that \$1500 from these funds be given to Nazar to fund his family reunion. Nazar is not permitted to travel to Sudan and he plans to meet his daughters in Ethiopia. Bronwyn confirmed Nazar has obtained written permission from the Australian Government to make this trip. Moved by Kayla Szumer and Maggie Coad and carried that the funds raised from the screening be earmarked for Nazar's trip.

### Hospitality

Kayla reported that Learn English Holiday participant Pascal is able to make use of one of the secondhand laptops which had been donated to Buddies.

The Reunion Picnic for all Learn English Holiday participants is planned for the Roma Street Parklands on 9 December.

### Legal support

- Terry Boyce introduced a Hazara asylum seeker currently living on the Sunshine Coast. The Australian Government has determined it is safe for him to return to Afghanistan so long as he returns to an area where nobody knows him. Terry requested that Buddies consider contributing \$2000 towards his Federal Court appeal. Terry also requested that Buddies consider contributing \$2000 to the Safe Haven Enterprise Visa application costs for Hazara asylum seeker, Nadir, for whom Buddies ran a national campaign to prevent his deportation in 2015. Formal applications for both requests are to be submitted to the finance group.
- Bronwyn reported on the situation in regards to Sudanese asylum seeker, Marwan, who is facing deportation. Assistance from Buddies might soon be required if Red Cross withdraws their current food voucher assistance of \$200 per month. If this occurs, the meeting agreed that emergency funding could be accessed before the November meeting.

### Next meeting

Sunday 26 November, Chairperson: Gail Price, note-taker: Mitra Khakbaz