



BUDDIES REFUGEE SUPPORT GROUP LTD
ABN 40 606 820 302

Monthly meeting

Held on 25 November, 2019

At USC Sippy Downs, E Block, Room 14

MINUTES

1. Opening and Welcome

Paul McKinlay opened the Meeting at 11.05am. The director welcomed Members and Guests.

2. Attendance and apologies

Apologies were received from: Scott Grimmett, Lesley Willcoxson, Gaynore Stoessel, Ilona Peet, Diana Woolley, Glyni Cumming

3. Recognising Volunteers

Paul thanked all the volunteers who have worked throughout 2019. A special mention was made to Penny Rivlin. Dee Williams and Tricia Reade for their ongoing volunteer work at the Eumundi parking and sausage sizzles.

4. Volunteering opportunities.

There is still a need for volunteers to assist in the Eumundi car parking fund raiser, (1st Saturday and Wednesday of the month) More details are available in the Bulletin or contact Penny Rivlin (penny_rivlin@hotmail.com)

One more volunteer is needed for the sausage sizzle at Bunnings Noosaville December 4 .
Contact Penny Rivlin (penny_rivlin@hotmail.com)

A reminder was given of the opportunity to raise funds through 'cans for cash' recycling. Details are provided in the Bulletin

5. Holiday celebrations

Buddies members and friends picnic 11.30am Saturday 30 November Cotton Tree park. Come along and meet fellow Buddies

LEH reunion picnic for home stay hosts and volunteers, 11am Saturday 7 December, Roma St Parklands Brisbane

SCRAN 2019 celebration Maroochy Bushland Botanic Gardens, Sunday 15 December, 3-6pm

See the Bulletin for more information about all these events.

6. Board News

Mo Darbas has tendered his resignation from the board of directors. Buddies constitution allows the company to continue with three to five directors. One or two new directors will be sought.

Mo was thanked for his contribution and will still be a part of Buddies and available to assist where he can.

Currently the board of directors is meeting twice a month and working at Buddies strategy for the coming months and into the future.

Following a member's suggestion at the AGM a Patron or Sponsor is being sort for Buddies. Members' suggestions or recommendations for either are welcome.

The issue of the need for Buddies LEH volunteers and home stay hosts to have a Blue Card was discussed. This is being explored by Lesley Willcoxon and Len Mangan is looking into a Risk Management Plan for Buddies. Help from any member with risk management experience would be welcome.

Paul highlighted the increased level of working together with other groups on the Sunshine Coast, such as the Multi Cultural Centre, and via SCRAN- Noosa Welcomes Refugees, Welcome to Maleny and Amnesty. It is recognised that strengthening these ties will only enhance our effectiveness in increasing awareness and helping refugees.

7. Monthly Meetings

There will be no monthly meeting in December and as the January meeting falls on Australia Day there will be no meeting in January.

The next meeting will be held February 23rd 2020. Our speaker will be Kagi Kowa the Brisbane representative of Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC). Kagi will also be running a workshop on Breakthrough Communication, the time and date for this will be communicated early in the new year.

A survey will be sent to members about the monthly meetings and the current venue to gain some understanding of why members don't attend the meetings and what members are looking for in the meetings.

8. Other Items

Wendy Oakley has requested the Bulletin become a fortnightly publication rather than weekly. This was accepted by the members present.

Gabby Sutherland mentioned the Film festival planned for Refugee Week in June and the need for the participating groups to plan for this event.

9. Finance report

October began with cash at bank of \$5,881.42

- Income was \$1,357.80 - boosted by an additional \$429 from extra shifts at Eumundi car parking.
- Memberships - 8 New and 11 Renewals

Outgoings were \$3,794 which included

- \$2,398.84 for LEH
- The final payments to Romero, MDA and Communitify. \$1,050 in total.

The month ended with a balance of \$3,445.11

November - progress so far with six days left to go.

The month began with a balance of \$3,445.11

Income - overall \$609.50

- Eumundi Car parking of \$462
- Standing donations of \$130 with a donation of \$30 due by end of month.
- \$17.50 container exchange - anon.
- Memberships. Nil new members or renewals

Outlays - overall \$790.00 so far

- LEH final expense of \$690 for Wildlife HQ was paid and all items previously accounted for.
- Routine rent top up of \$100 with one further payment of \$25 this month. Mr. Pourbara has just been employed as a car cleaner. The job was sourced for him by Red Cross.
- No known upcoming items for the rest of the month

The bank balance is \$3,264.61 as at c.o.b. Friday 22nd November and by month's end should be \$3,269.61

10. Guest Speaker: Gabby Sutherland

Gabby shared with the members her experience as a teacher on Nauru. The experience of joy while working with the children and despair at inhumane conditions that the refugees were subjected to.

Gabby taught Design Technology, lessons that gave the children the opportunity to create. This included woodwork, metalwork, sewing, cooking, painting and anything that allowed the children to create something they could be proud of. They were able to make gifts for their parents, the first time for many years they were able to give their parents a present. Creating something also gave the children a sense of achievement and pride, something being stripped away from them by their inhumane conditions.

Whilst on Nauru for 5 months Gabby risked her own freedom by filming the facilities in the high security area and the living conditions of those being held on the island. Penalty for this would have been 2 years in jail.

That film footage has been partly responsible for many media exposures about Nauru, including the Nauru Files in the Guardian, the largest set of leaked documents published from inside Australia's immigration detention system. In 2018 Gabby questioned the ABC Q&A panel about the remaining children on Nauru, her photo of the remaining children on the island sparked reaction by the World Vision Australia CEO and generated many more media articles that exposed the truth about Nauru.

Gabby presented a small part of a longer presentation about her experience on Nauru and her ongoing activities to create awareness of the plight of seekers of asylum and how she is helping the resettled children. She certainly whetted the appetite of the members to see the full version of her presentation and Buddies will work with Gabby to organise an event to do this in 2020.

In March 2020 Gabby will be exhibiting her photos and art at the J in Noosa. Buddies will put more information about this in the Bulletin closer to the event.

At the meeting Gabby was wearing a beautiful silk scarf from her Designer Freedom project, a not for profit project where the artists receive 100% of the profits, after costs.

The artists involved in this project are female artists, who have been detained by the Australian Government on Nauru indefinitely. Creating art is an important avenue of self-expression for these women. They are able to convey personal and private stories that are often difficult to verbalise. Visit the website designerfreedom.com to view the beautiful scarfs.

Next members meeting will be held Sunday February 23 2020 11am at the SCU Room 14 Block E

Meeting closed at 12.35pm.