

Buddies meeting minutes

Location: 24 King St Buderim
Date: 26 May 2019
Time: 11am -1pm
Chair Scott Grimmett

Agenda items

1. Welcome and apologies.

This is our last meeting at St Mary's Church in Buderim. From next month we will meet at Sunshine Coast University, E Block Room 14.

Apologies from Andrea Douglas, Paul McKinlay, Mitra Khakbaz, Penny Rivlin, Lesley Willcoxson and Sheila Merriman.

2. Acknowledging volunteer activities.

Janine de La Begassiere for revitalizing the Food Drive to the Romero Centre. A bumper supply donated in May and a letter of thanks received listing their aid to refugees e.g. housing, food, rent assistance and help with finding employment.

Today is the last day of National Volunteering Week and all volunteers within the Buddies group are to be sincerely thanked for their work over the last 12 months.

3. Volunteering opportunities.

- One of our members, Kendall Snowden, needs help setting up Crowd-Funding on-line. If you or someone you know can help, contact Kendall at snogs@tpg.com.au
- Buddies will be holding a film night in Buderim on Monday 17th June at St Marks Anglican Church from 6-9pm.

Volunteers are needed to assist with the catering / bring a plate/make tea etc. Contact **Paul McKinlay 0439 679 588** who is coordinating this.

- Eumundi car parking, (1st Saturday and Wednesday of the month) volunteers always welcome. Contact Penny Rivlin (penny_rivlin@hotmail.com)

4. Forthcoming events.

- 12th annual LUMINOUS Lantern Parade

Friday 7 June, 5pm-9pm at Southbank Parklands, Brisbane, organized by M.D.A. For more detail visit their website at <https://mdaltd.org.au/luminous/>. If any members are interested to share-drive to the event, call Margaret Landbeck 0402 851 422. Plan is to set off at 4pm.

- Refugee week

Buddies will be holding a free film night Monday 17th June at St Marks Anglican Church 6-9pm. See Buddies Bulletin for booking details. The film will be *Constance on the Edge* followed by a chat with Elijah Buol who was the recipient of the 2019 Qld local hero award. Elijah is a Criminologist, former refugee, father of four and Director of Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland, he has been a tireless advocate for the young and disadvantaged. His advocacy work was instrumental in removing children under 18 from adult prisons in Queensland.

- Act for Peace - the Ration Challenge

Go to www.actforpeace.org.au/ for details about taking the Ration Challenge. To gain better understanding of how refugees eat, see the details on the web-site.

5. Finance report

The final April figures showed the month ended with a balance that exceeded the opening balance by over \$300.

The current balance at bank is \$8,604 and was helped by further sales of Scott Grimmett's avocados.

Monthly donations to Communitify (Asylum Circle), Romero and MDA (Multicultural Development Australia) were increased by \$100 per month. Recently there was a further cut-back of Government funding of Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) payments to 8,000 refugees placing further strain on these organisations and others like them.

Buddies is in good shape financially to meet its liabilities and obligations over the coming months.

6. Guest Speaker: Aleem Ali, C.E.O. of Welcoming Australia

Aleem gave a very fluent and clear presentation of the current work of *Welcoming Australia*.

Some of the key points made were

- His desire to help refugees was finally triggered by seeing a young girl attending a protest holding a sign saying "Sink The Boats". An awful image.
- "Welcome dinners", held to enable everyday people meet refugees face-to-face have proved enormously successful starting in Adelaide and spreading nation-wide.
- The "Walk Together" concept was born about 7 years ago and has also spread across the country with great success.
- The initiative "Open Mosques" was begun and achieved success also. The clear message from these initiatives is that if we can meet refugees/immigrants close up then fear of the unknown is dissipated and we can see scare campaigns for what they are - propaganda.
- In addition, a scheme called "Asylum Sneakers" was set up using crowd funding. As a result, \$50,000 was raised enabling the purchase of 4,000 pairs of running shoes which were distributed to selected refugees/immigrants.

- Aleem confirmed the added pressure brought to bear on all organisation helping refugees by the cut-back of Government funding of Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) payments.
- The organisation also run various initiatives like *Aqua English* where newly arrived refugees/migrants learn how to safely swim and enjoy our beaches and improve their English language skills at the same time.
- The organisation is working with local councils and communities to spread the “Welcoming Cities” concept.
- For more information about “Welcoming Australia” go to <https://welcoming.org.au/author/admin/>

7. Next meeting 11am Sunday 23 June 2019 at the University of the Sunshine Coast, Building E, Room 14.