

9 April 2019

Noosa Welcomes Refugees dinner, Raj Indian Restaurant, Noosaville



Report by Gillian Duffy

Noosa Welcomes Refugees hosted a dinner at the Raj Indian Restaurant in Noosaville on Tuesday evening with guest speaker Jason Scanes. Almost 40 people packed the restaurant to hear Jason, a former army captain, who since retiring from the defence force, has established the first Australian charity for veterans and interpreters assisting Australia in combat.

Jason has guest lectured at UNSW on the human rights of combat interpreters and spoke passionately on the theme of courage, mateship and compassion - core Australian military values. He shared the story of his own interpreter in Afghanistan who, having risked his life to assist Australian forces, is now being denied asylum in Australia. Jason felt compelled to assist him because “you don’t leave your mates behind”, thus becoming an accidental human rights activist, lobbying the Minister for Immigration to grant him a visa.

Now the ALP candidate for Wide Bay, Jason spoke about his desire to bring those values that have shaped his military service and his advocacy for veterans and interpreters to inform his contribution to public service. Dr Harriot Beazley from the University of the Sunshine Coast facilitated a Q&A session with questions from the audience on a range of refugee and related issues.

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Gabby Sutherland of Noosa Welcomes Refugees said afterwards “There were so many important issues discussed during the evening. It’s refreshing to discuss global displacement with calmness, respect and intelligence. It doesn’t matter if we agree with each other or not. What matters is that we are prepared to find humane, compassionate solutions together”.

Noosa Welcomes Refugees, as a member of the Sunshine Coast Refugee Action Network, will use funds raised from the evening for advocacy and support for refugees and people seeking asylum.

Noosa Welcomes Refugees can be contacted on noosawelcomesrefugees@gmail.com

NWR is a member of Rural Australians for Refugees (RAR) and a member of Sunshine Coast Refugee Action Network (SCRAN)

www.ruralaustraliansforrefugees.org.au/rar-groups/queensland/sunshine-coast-refugee-action-network-scran