

Minutes - General Members Meeting - Buddies Refugee Support Group Sunshine Coast

Date: 24th April 2022

Venue: Connections on King, 2 – 10 Gloucester St Buderim 4556

Chairperson: Scott Grimmatt

Minutes: taken by Gaynore Stoessel

Attendance: 20 people

Meeting began: 11.05 am

1. First People's Acknowledgement

Apologies: Len Mangan (Covid), Lua Bruckhoff (unwell), Sam McGill, Kayla Szumer, Robin Jones, Tarah Puller, Diana Woolley, Florence Teillet, Paul McKinlay, Rebecca Lim (Covid)

The biggest apology is from Rebecca Lim, our guest speaker from the Refugee Hub at the Indooroopilly Uniting Church. Rebecca tested positive to Covid this morning so could not attend the meeting.

A big thank you to Scott Grimmatt, a former Buddies Director, who stepped in as Chairperson to replace Len Mangan, who also tested positive to Covid.

2. Previous Meeting's Minutes

Lynda moved that the last minutes are correct. Kendall seconded the motion. Show of hands to accept Minutes. Minutes accepted.

3. New Appointments

Sam McGill is a new Director and also the new Facebook Coordinator.
Tarah Puller is the new Refugee Engagement Coordinator

4. Volunteer Acknowledgement

Annaliese (Anna) Broadway, our long serving Facebook Coordinator has just stepped down from this role. (Sam has now taken over these duties.) To acknowledge Anna's dedication and hard work, we will present her with a gift (indoor plant in decorative pot) and card. (These will be given to Anna later, as she was unable to attend today.)

Penny Rivlin gave an update on volunteer activities, and a brief overview of what Rebecca Lim would have talked about.

Most of the money Buddies raises comes through volunteers working at Eumundi Markets' parking, and the picking and donation of avocados from Scott's farm.

Eumundi car parking - (ECCO - Eumundi Combined Community Organisation Ltd car parking.) Usually, Buddies does 33 hours of parking each month. In April, 67 hours were completed, with David Walters and Vinoth deserving special mention for the many extra shifts they did. Buddies raised \$1,600 for the month of April.

Yoki and Kendall were acknowledged for alerting Buddies to the opportunity of doing volunteer car parking at Eumundi markets.

Brief overview of Rebecca's proposed talk via Penny

- Rebecca Lim is a migration and community engagement practitioner, based at the Indooroopilly Uniting Church (IUC) Refugee Hub.
- She has just published a book, *Does Australia Love its Neighbour?* – and wanted to share about some of the people and stories in the book. A review of this book and how to order a copy is in the Buddies Bulletin.
- The Refugee Hub runs two clinics a week, Thursdays and Saturdays, helping people to fill in their visa applications. Food and other groceries are available on these days as well.
- Rebecca has also helped set up the Brisbane On Arrival Support Group (BOASG), essentially those coming to Australia through Medivac. Many ended up in Brisbane Immigration Transit Accommodation (BITA) – detention. When Covid hit, many were sent to hotel accommodation - detention, and many did not receive the medical help they needed.
- All these people have now been released. The following are some now being assisted by IUC Refugee Hub.

- 12 have been given bridging visas with work rights and 3 weeks accommodation. (They have been locked up for 9 years. How can they just find work and look after themselves after 3 weeks?)
- 5/6 are in community detention. They have no work rights and have limited Government support.
- 1 has found a job, 2 days a week, cleaning
- 2 have gone to Melbourne. (Some can go to family already here.)
- 5 definitely cannot work at all, as they have serious mental and physical issues due to the length and neglect of detention.
- Rebecca wants to raise money to go to housing for these people. To house them all for 6 months would cost \$80,000. . Buddies will be able to donate to this project. (The Protest Group from outside Kangaroo Point Hotel has been raising money for this cause as well.)
- With the election coming up, it will be helpful to look at all the candidates in your area, and see what their policy is on refugees.

5. Reviews – Report by Lynda Utting on each of the following four events

- 1. Kristina Keneally Meeting** – On 18th March at the Nambour Community Centre, Len and Sam, together with representatives from the Sunshine Coast multicultural community, met with Kristina Keneally, the Shadow Minister for Immigration. Ms. Keneally was seeking feedback from the community about her portfolio. Concerns brought up were the length of time to ascertain refugee status, and the citizenship test. Labor is committed to getting rid of TPVs (Temporary Protection Visas). The full report on this meeting and Ms. Keneally's responses are in the Buddies Bulletin. Lynda will arrange to put up the six key recommendations and responses in our Bulletin and on our FB account.
- 2. Harmony Day Event** – was held on Sunday 20th March 2022, 2pm, at Connections on King. Featured a one act stage play, directed by Lua Bruckhoff, called 'Ali', about a refugee. 40 people attended. A Q&A followed the play.

- 3. Partner visits** – The Directors plan to visit the organisations in Brisbane that Buddies supports financially (IUC Refugee Hub, Communify, Romero). Want to engage with our partners by seeing first hand the work they do. This trip has been delayed due to Covid, but will happen in the near future.
- 4. Freedom St** – a film shown at the Majestic Theatre, Pomona, on Friday April 22nd. Over 50 people attended. A very confronting film which followed the life of three refugees in detention in Indonesia. (\$14,000 such people are languishing in detention there due to Australia's inhumane border policies and Indonesia's indifference.) Alfred Pek, Director of the film, was present and spoke through a time of Q&A. If you missed this film, you can look it up online to see times and places for further screenings.

6. Refugee Week - mid June 2022 – report from Penny Rivlin

SCRAN Project

Umbrella group made up of Amnesty, Noosa Refugees and Welcome to Maleny. Buddies will be partnering with them in their letter project – Sam will be coordinating our involvement in this activity. We will be decorating a letter ('S') which is to form part of a banner – on which the words will spell out a slogan (eg. Welcome Refugees.)

Kawana Markets

SCRAN will have an information stall Sat April 30th at the Kawana Markets. We are invited to support this stall either by volunteering to man stall, or visit.

Note: Buddies hopes to host our own event to celebrate Refugee Week.

Reports – given by Lynda Utting

Constitution Review – Four people have put in an EOI for this and the plan is that the Board will meet with them in due course to help them get started.

Action Points Flyer – put out by Australian Refugee Network – available here at the meeting. Very useful to pick up and read what actions you can take (such as petitions to sign), and websites to visit for more information.

Major Parties' Refugee Policies – a table listing these has been put on our FB page

7. General Business

LEH (Learn English Holiday) – update by Margaret Norris and Lesley Willcoxson

- Usually 2 sessions a year, in April and September school holidays. Refugees are hosted on the Sunshine Coast and attend English lessons.
- Unfortunately, due to Covid, the April program was cancelled.
- However, on track to run September program which will be held 18 – 23 Sept 2022 at Matthew Flinders School.
- Information will be sent out in the next couple of weeks via the Buddies Bulletin.
- Home Stay hosts will be needed.
- A grant was received, but very limited – basically this money can only be spent on training.
- Possibly grant money will be used to host ASRC's 'Breakthrough Conversations' training sessions. (Follow on from the very successful 'Words that Work' training program.)
- Noted that some parents of Matthew Flinders students may also want to come to the 'Breakthrough Conversations' training sessions, as students there investigate refugee issues and seek to help in practical ways.

Ukrainian refugees – the question was asked if any of these people had arrived on the Sunshine Coast.

- Lynda Utting heard that 80 Ukrainians had arrived in Brisbane.
- Buddies FB page has more information.

- Helpful websites including one for Ukrainian Community of Qld are <https://ukrainians.org.au/> and <https://www.ukrqld.com.au/>
- Will be talking with Multiculture Australia on Sunshine Coast, who will be working with any Ukrainian refugees who come up here. (Presently they are working with thousands of refugees from places like Afghanistan, Tibet and Eritrea.)
- Bronwyn Jackson heard that some Ukrainian students were starting school this week at the Milpera State High School in Brisbane. (They have come here on tourist visas.)

Relevant ABC programs to be posted to Buddies FB page – Bronwyn Jackson alerted us to pertinent ABC programs that could be shared on our fb page – keeping people informed on refugee issues –

From refugees to refugee advocates - Life Matters - ABC Radio National
<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/lifematters/from-refugees-to-refugee-advocates/13835232>

Book Trolley – A book trolley has been set up by Margaret Norris – it is to operate like an informal book exchange where books can be simply picked up and dropped off. This is going to run on a trial basis. Margaret will be responsible for the storage of the trolley (and books) and for bringing it to meetings.

This will be a separate arrangement to the official Buddies library (once set up) which will have a range of resources for loan (eg. Books, DVDs) and will operate under normal library conditions re: borrowing and returns.

8. Financial Report – Clare Arico

Explained our current insurance policies and costs, the Public Liability policy and the Voluntary Workers Insurance policy. Total cost for both per year is \$1415.

Current Insurance Summary – see page 6

Also gave an overview of our account and bank balance.

Summary of Accounts March 2022 – see page 7

Of note are our donations to BOARSSG of \$600 for two sewing machines, and to the family from Burundi. One of the boys, showing much sporting ability, was able to attend the Track and Field Nationals in Sydney for the first time. His letter of thanks was read out.

Net disposable funds are \$2,325

Chris Simpson – attended the meeting. He is a candidate in the upcoming federal election, running for a seat in the Senate, representing the Australian Democrats. Originally a refugee from Burma, Chris came to Australia as a child. Chris said that Australia has given him much; he wants to give back.

He is impressed with the work Buddies and other similar groups are doing. He said due to the National narrative on refugees, we can all too easily hang our heads. Then he added that we should hold our heads high, as we (Buddies and similar organisations) are doing much good. (Chris has now joined Buddies.)

Meeting closed: 12.03 pm

Next f2f General Buddies Members' Meeting: Sunday 26th June 2022

Current insurance summary

Public Liability

With Community Underwriting

\$20,000,000

Cost \$845

Voluntary Workers

With Chubb Insurance

Sums Insured:

1. Capital Benefits \$ 300,000
2. Weekly Injury Benefits \$ 1,250

Benefit Period – 104 Weeks

3. Weekly Sickness Benefits Not Insured

4. Broken Bones Benefit \$ 5,000

Cost \$570

Total cost \$1415

Buddies Refugee Support Group Ltd.
Summary of Accounts Mar 2022

Opening Balance At Bank as at 1 MAR 22	\$ 7,150	
Income		
Membership Fees	\$ 10	0%
Donations and other receipts		
Donations ad hoc	\$ 1,314	
Donations regular	\$ 487	
	\$ 1,811	61%
Fund Raising		
Eumundi Car Parking	\$ 504	
Container recycling	\$ 44	
Sale of jam and lychees	\$ 200	
Goodwill Wine		
Harmony Week Presentation –One act play 'ALI'	\$ 430	
	\$ 1,178	39%
Total Income	\$ 2,989	100%
Expenditure		
Operating costs		
PO box renewal	\$ 144	
Gift for departing refugee support volunteer	\$ 50	
	\$ 194	7%
Direct Support for Asylum Seekers & Refugees		
Ongoing support for local asylum seeker with no income support or work rights	\$ 360	
Burundi family	\$ 250	
	\$ 610	22%
Community Awareness		
Harmony Week Presentation –One act play 'ALI'	\$ 357	
Donations to Refugee Support & Advocacy Groups		
Community	\$ 250	
The Romero Centre	\$ 250	
Indooroopilly Uniting Church (Asylum Seeker assistance)	\$ 500	
BOARSSG for purchase of sewing machines	\$ 600	
	\$ 1,600	58%
Total Expenditure	\$ 2,761	87%
Cash at Bank c.o.b. 31.3.22	\$ 7,378	
Less Accruals	\$ 1,709	
Less grant money	\$ 3,344	
Nett disposable funds	\$ 2,325	