

Buddies Incorporation Update

Introduction

This document has been prepared for Buddies members and supporters to provide an update on the current status of the incorporation of the Buddies Refugee Support Group and associated formal instruments.

Company Limited

On 6 July 2015, Buddies Refugee Support Group Ltd ("**Buddies Ltd**") was registered as a public company limited by guarantee; ACN 606 820 302.

Buddies Ltd is operating under a constitution, a copy of which is attached for your information. The objectives of **Buddies Ltd**, as set out in the constitution, are:

1. To provide material and emotional support to asylum seekers and refugees in Australian communities and beyond, including education and training;
2. To provide asylum seekers and refugees with advice, and where appropriate, assistance to access professional services and advice, such as legal, medical and allied health services;
3. To advocate for the just and compassionate treatment of asylum seekers and refugees, consistent with the human rights standards developed under the international refugee convention, and endorsed by Australia; and
4. To support policies towards asylum seekers and refugees that reflect respect, decency and traditional Australian generosity to those in need, while advancing Australia's international standing and national interests in such matters.

Initial directors of **Buddies Ltd** are: Audrey Raymond, Garry Bates and Fergus FitzGerald. The initial company secretary is Margaret Landbeck. The initial **member** is John Ennis.

It is proposed to call a general meeting within the next few months to enable "**members**" (see below) to elect new directors and a company secretary (the corporate "**governance group**").

Membership

The constitution requires formal membership of **Buddies Ltd** to provide the guarantee of \$10 each, if **Buddies Ltd** is wound up. This maximum contribution would only be required to pay for any debts or liabilities, or costs of winding up. Membership of **Buddies Ltd** also ensures that the **governance group** is accountable to the broader membership of Buddies by being eligible to vote on matters governing **Buddies Ltd**, including voting for **governance group** members.

A membership application form is attached, with details to be recorded in a membership register. Completed forms can be submitted to the company secretary:

1. In person: at a regular Buddies meeting; or
2. By mail to: Margaret Landbeck, 2/242 Parklands Boulevard, Meridian Plains, Qld 4551; or
3. By email, as scanned copy to: refugeebuddies@outlook.com

A nominal annual membership fee of \$5 is payable, with the fee being used to cover administrative costs of **Buddies Ltd**, such as insurance premiums, audit and bank fees. The fee may be paid in cash at regular Buddies meetings, or by direct credit to the **Buddies Ltd** bank account (see below).

The current informal membership of Buddies will continue unchanged, i.e. as recipients of the weekly Bulletin. To avoid confusion, current members who have not submitted a membership form will be referred to as "**supporters**". **Supporters** will enjoy all of the same current rights and opportunities to participate any Buddies activity, including:

1. Attending Buddies meetings (e.g. monthly meetings) or other events
2. Voting on matters presented at a Buddies monthly meeting
3. Participating in any of the working groups or ad hoc committees established by **supporters**, except the **governance group** or finance group.

This is somewhat different to that previously discussed by the incorporation group, and is in response to concerns raised by some **supporters**. All current **supporters** of Buddies are encouraged to become **members** of **Buddies Ltd** to be directly involved in the development and evolution of Buddies to respond to changing external factors.

Insurance

Buddies Ltd has a public liability insurance policy of up to \$20 million, provided by Community Underwriting Agency P/L; policy number COM011271. Further details on the policy can be provided on request.

This insurance policy provides all **members** and **supporters** involved in any authorised Buddies activity with general cover from third party claims of personal injury or property damage. It also enables **Buddies Ltd** to use commercial or public venues and to participate in community and other events that require participants to hold public liability insurance.

Bank account

Buddies Ltd will establish a new business bank account to manage the company's finances, once a business tax file number has been issued. You will be notified of the new account details as soon as this is established. In the mean time the existing bank account may be used to pay your \$5 membership fee by direct credit. Please include your name in the reference box. Details of the account are:

Bank: Suncorp Bank, Nambour
Account name: Buddies Refugee Support Group
BSB: 484-799
Account number: 605927994

Signatories to the account are members of the finance group, currently: Fergus FitzGerald, Audrey Raymond, Dee Williams and Anneliese Broadaway. All withdrawals require two signatories.

Fergus FitzGerald
On behalf of the Buddies Ltd governance group
7 August 2015