



## Annual General Meeting.

Held on 6th September 2020

At: Connections on King, 2-10 Gloucester Rd, Buderim

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All Covid-19 safe procedures were adhered to. A Covid-19 safe plan was submitted to Connections on King when the venue was booked. Attendees were registered on arrival by Scott Grimmatt. Sanitiser was used on arrival and seating adhered to the safe distancing. At the end of the meeting beverages and food were prepared and distributed by 2 members, Lesley Wilcoxson and Dee Williams, only.

### MINUTES

Minutes recorded by Andrea Douglas, Buddies Refugee Support Group Ltd, Secretary.

#### 1.0 Opening and Welcome

Paul McKinlay, Director opened the meeting at 11.15am. The director welcomed members and introduced current directors, himself, Andrea Douglas and Len Mangan who was unable to attend but linked in by phone.

Paul detailed the reason for the change in directors. When elected directors Mo Darbas and Lynne Johnson stepped down from their roles in November 2019, to be constitutionally valid there needed to be 3 directors. As is permitted in the constitution when a casual director vacancy becomes available, Andrea Douglas was appointed as a temporary director by the remaining two directors.

The finance team James Fowler, Penny Rivlin, Dee Williams and Tricia Reade (who was unable to attend the AGM), were introduced to the attendees.

#### 2.0 Attendance and apologies

Apologies from 8 members were accepted by the Chair.

15 members attended the AGM, 2 members phoned in. Two proxy votes had been received these were from Len Mangan and Debra Mangan.

A full list of apologies and attendees is appended.

Buddies currently has 66 financial members therefore a quorum was confirmed.

#### 3.0 Adoption of the Minutes of 2018/19 AGM

Notification of the availability of the Minutes of the last AGM on the Buddies Web were sent out with the notice of the AGM and printed copies were available at the meeting. There were no issues raised about the 2018/19 AGM minutes. A motion to accept the minutes was forwarded.

Moved : Scott Grimmatt

Seconded: Penny Rivlin

The motion was carried

#### **4.0 Directors' report**

Paul gave an overview of the year and the difficulty the Covid-19 pandemic presented to Buddies. No members meetings have been possible since February 2020 and fund raising was severely curtailed, however Buddies was able to continue to function providing support for refugee groups.

Paul directed the members to the Annual Report on the Buddies web site, the link had been sent to them prior to the meeting.

The overall summary of the year which has been taken from highlights and reports in the Bulletin is detailed in the Annual Report which indicates that despite the pandemic restriction Buddies had in 2019/20 met their stated objectives.

No objections to the Annual Report were raised at the meeting.

A motion to accept the Annual Report was put forward

**Moved : Scott Grimmatt                      Seconded: Mitra Khakbaz                      The motion was carried**

#### **5.0 Financial Report**

The financial report was presented by James Fowler, Bookkeeper.

James presented the dashboard report as is given in the Annual Report and then went into more depth on the income and expenditure, stating that members can request a copy of the detailed summary from him if required.

He discussed the loss of some revenue due to Covid-19 restrictions, but mentioned the increase of other income streams such as donations and avocado sales. The annual finance report is appended.

A motion to adopt the financial report was put forward.

**Moved : Wendy Oakley                      Seconded: Dee Williams                      The motion was carried**

Members were notified of a decision to not have an audit this financial year in the AGM notice.

#### **6.0 Election of New Directors**

Paul McKinlay and Len Mangan are remaining as a directors for 2020/2021. Andrea Douglas stepped down from her temporary director status.

Two nominations were submitted:

- Gaynore Stoessel, nominated by Len Mangan and seconded by Scott Grimmatt.
- Lynda Utting, nominated by Len Mangan and seconded by Scott Grimmatt.

Paul explained the two nominations could if no objections be voted on as one. None were raised.

Motion to accept of two nominated members as directors for the next two years was put forward.

**Moved: Scott Grimmatt                      Seconded: Margaret Landbeck                      The motion was carried**

Gaynore Stoessel gave a short overview of her background and vision of how she can help Buddies. Lynda Utting was unable to attend the AGM. Their Bio's are appended.

## **7.0 Thanks to Volunteers**

Paul McKinlay thanked Andrea Douglas, Wendy Oakley and the finance team, James Fowler, Penny Rivlin, Dee Williams and Tricia Reade for their hard work and presented each with a thank you gift.

Dee Williams thanked Penny Rivlin for her work organising the car parking and the team and Penny acknowledged the work of the dedicated parking team.

Kayla Szumer moved a vote of thanks to Wendy Oakley for her work on the Bulletin, her ideas and her energy. Andrea Douglas pointed out Wendy has also now taken over the role of Web Master. The floor applauded Wendy for her excellent dedicated work.

Scott Grimmett thanked all the volunteer pickers, sorters and sellers that made the successful avocado sales this year possible. He also thanked the volunteers who helped the clearing and pruning of the trees at the end of the season which will make picking somewhat easier next season.

## **8.0 Other Business**

### **Members monthly meeting**

The members' monthly meetings were discussed. Numbers to the meetings pre Covid-19 19 were diminishing, and the general agreement was that meetings could be reduced to quarterly rather than monthly. Zoom meetings are also seen as a potential that would allow more people to join in the meetings, however the value of face to face meetings allowing members to get together was also recognised. A combination of both may be the future of Buddies meetings. The outcome was to trial a Zoom meeting and survey members about their views on quarterly face to face meetings and Zoom meetings. Florence Teillet offered to assist in setting up the Zoom meeting. A date and content for this will be explored at the next directors meeting.

It was also proposed we invite formally Noosa Welcome Refugees and Welcome to Maleny to our meetings and Buddies attendees should be encouraged to 'bring a friend'.

### **Hosting refugees**

Kayla Szumer discussed the opportunity for weekend hosting of refugees. Members approved the idea and Kayla said she would act as coordinator and work with the case managers. She will follow up and keep Buddies informed of progress.

### **Membership**

Financial membership numbers at the time of the AGM are 66, slightly lower than this time last year (70). It was noted that while membership is lower more of these members (13 vs 8 last year) are now regular monthly donors.

A discussion on membership revolved around how to communicate with members (financial and other) about how their contribution to Buddies can mean an extra bag of rice or food etc for refugees and how to encourage more regular donors which would take pressure of the need for constant fundraising. A motion to form a committee comprising of the directors and Wendy Oakley was forwarded to determine how to communicate this need to Buddies supporters. This was approved by all attendees.

**Moved: Scott Grimmett      Seconded: Andrea Douglas      The motion was carried**

Note: In 2019/20 AGM a motion was forwarded and carried that the annual membership fee be increased up to a maximum of \$20 in the financial year, 2019/210 at the discretion of the new directors. As the Covid-19 restrictions have put many Buddies activities on hold this increase was not exercised and membership is still \$10.

**Meeting closed at 12.28pm.**

## Appendices

1. Apologies and Attendees
2. Financial report and comments
3. Directors Bio's

### Appendix 1: Apologies and Attendees

<b>17 Attendees</b>		<b>8 Apologies</b>	
Andrea	Douglas	Bob	Cullen
James	Fowler	Mandy	Daws
Scott	Grimmett	Margaret	Norris
Mitra	Khakbaz	Tricia	Reade
Margaret	Landbeck	Lena	Robinson
Len	Mangan (by Phone)	Kendall	Snowden
Debra	Mangan (by Phone)	Yokki	Snowden
Paul	McKinlay	Lynda	Utting
Wendy	Oakley		
Penny	Rivlin		
Jamie	Seymour		
Gaynore	Stoessel		
Kayla	Szumer		
Florence	Teillet		
Lesley	Willcoxson		
Dee	Williams		
Diana	Woolley		

## Appendix 2: Financial Report and Comments

### **Buddies Refugee Support Group Ltd.**

Summary Statement of Accounts 1 July 2019 - 30 June 2020

#### **Income**

Membership Fees	1,040.00	6%
Donations	5,330.81	29%
Fund Raising	11,458.51	62%
SCRAN raffle tickets sales	785.00	4%
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>18,614.32</b>	100%

#### **Expenditure**

Operating costs	1,938.09	9%
Community Awareness	522.00	3%
Fundraising Costs	-	0%
Direct Support for Asylum Seekers & Refugees	5,302.35	26%
Donations to Refugee Support & Advocacy Groups	12,103.83	59%
SCRAN Raffle ticket proceeds transferred to NWR	795.00	4%
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>20,661.27</b>	100%

#### **Cash at Bank**

As at 1 July 2019	8,288.64
As at 30 June 2020	6,241.69

- The Bank Balance on 1 July 2019 was \$8,288.64
- Total income for 2019 - 20 was \$18,614.32
- Total expenditure for 2019 - 20 was \$20,661.27
- Cash at bank at close of business on 30 June 2020 was \$6,241.69

## Income

Income, at \$18,614, was down \$2,400 against the previous year. The major falls were

- donations at monthly meetings, down \$489; fewer meetings due to Covid-19
- There were no films shown (last year they generated \$623)
- Sausage sizzles curtailed - down \$3,203
- No \$1,000 government grant for the "Walk Together" function.

On the positive side -

- Regular monthly donations increased by \$500
- One-off donations increased by \$1,305.
- Avocado sales increased by \$1,785 representing almost 20% of funds raised.

## Expenses

Total expenditure of \$20,661 is up by \$1,215.

Donations made to nine Refugee and Support Groups with daily face-to-face involvement with refugees, mainly in Brisbane, totaled \$12,103.

Operating Costs comprised 9% of total expenses at \$1,933 the major item being insurance (\$1,310).

26% of expenditure was spent on Direct Support through the Learn English Holiday Program and direct payment of refugee travel expenses and rent.

Community Awareness expenses were down from \$3,831 to \$522 because fewer public events were able to be conducted.

## Conclusions

A challenging year, as it was for all organizations dependent on donations and fund-raising.

Despite losing some avenues of income, Buddies experienced a significant rise in regular monthly donations from \$170 to \$300 per month and a significant rise in one-off donations.

So the good news is that Buddies Refugee Support Group Ltd truly lived up to its name - Supporting Refugees

## Appendix 3: Directors Bio's

### Paul McKinlay (Returning Director)

Paul lives in Buderim with his wife Anna and two teenage boys Gideon and Isaac. As a social planner with Sunshine Coast Council, he is passionate about people's rights and strives to make our community more 'liveable'.

A brief stint many years ago volunteering to assist temporary visa applicants opened his eyes to the plight of refugees and people seeking asylum in Australia. 'Once you see something is wrong, you can't ignore it.' He joined Buddies in 2016 and became a director in 2018.

When not working or getting involved in refugee issues, he likes to write, sing with the New World Rhythm choir, taxi family members around the coast, and spend precious time with his friends and family.

### Len Mangan (Returning Director)

Len is retired & married with four adult sons. He currently lives with his wife, daughter-in-law, two grandkids, a son & his partner (who have been displaced because of Covid-19).

He has been performing volunteer roles throughout his life including;

- Decades of formal and informal roles within the Catholic Church.
- Three and a half years as a full time volunteer in PNG and 5 years part time in Fiji.
- Honorary roles (local, state & national) within the union movement.
- He is still a volunteer Evaluator for the Australian Business Excellence Awards.

Len has completed the Australian Institute of Company Directors course.

Len chose to be a Buddies Director so that he could use his extensive volunteering, business and life experiences in a decision making role. He believes the crisis that Refugee and Asylum Seekers are enduring throughout the world, particularly in Australia, is having a devastating effect on their lives and on the lives of all Australians. When we dehumanise people and take away their hope, through the actions of our government, it diminishes our collective psyche; we are a more inhumane and cruel nation as a result.

Len believes he can build on the lessons learned in the past year as a director especially those learned during the Covid-19 restrictions. Buddies way of doing things has had to change significantly and it will have to continue to change in the foreseeable future.

His hope is that Buddies can continue to do the good things they have done in the past in a better way (e.g. LEH) but also look for new and improved ways to get better outcomes for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (e.g. change Australians' minds).

Len is passionate about supporting refugees and asylum seekers.

### Lynda Utting

I can't remember when exactly I became a member of Buddies, but for several years or more, my heart passion has been for the refugees and for the plight of their survival.

Three years ago, I went to Lebanon to work with the Syrian refugees there in the camps. I raised over \$10K which went towards their living expenses, education, health and community development needs.

Since this visit, I have become a grass-roots Refugee Activist - I am involved in fundraising, advocacy, campaigning and lobbying, petitions, ringing and writing to local MPs (and the Minister of Immigration and Home Affairs (Mr. David Coleman)), street marches, ESOL, helping on the LEH (Learn English Holiday) program (Buddies), food donations (Buddies), home visits to former refugees, and being a homestay mother (to refugees and international homestay students).

Last year, I took the Ration Challenge (Act for Peace) - and lived on rations like the refugees for one week - and raised just over \$3K for the cause.

And in January this year, I spent three weeks back in the Middle East - this time, Jordan, again working with and supporting the Syrian refugees: food & clothing distribution; home visits; and teaching English (ESOL).

I'm also a member of the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC) - and recently attended their all-day online Breakthrough Conversation workshop.

As a Buddies Director, my goal is to continue in the work I am already doing as well as aiming to raise the banner for the cause of the refugees, especially re: those detained on Australia's watch - in various forms of on-shore and off-shore detention; and to use social media (Facebook) and other existing networks to develop a clear, personal narrative - focusing on solutions and shared values.

### **Gaynore Stoessel**

Hello everyone. I am Gaynore Stoessel, one of the Buddies Directors voted in for 2020-2021.

My husband Dave and I retired to Landsborough five years ago, and I became a member of Buddies shortly afterwards.

My working career consisted of various jobs, the most notable being Library Assistant at the Queensland Museum, and Manager of a Zelows Handbag & Travelgoods store at Forest Lake in Brisbane. In my spare time (what's that?) I enjoy ice skating (not as much opportunity here on the Sunny Coast), photography, and solving family mysteries via Ancestry.com.au. Before Covid-19, overseas travel was always on the agenda.

By attending Buddies meetings, I learnt so much about what was really happening with refugees and people seeking asylum in Australia. Being a driver for a Learn English Holiday Program, I met many migrants and refugees and began to understand more of the vital work Buddies does. When I realized how important financial support was for many of these people, I started to volunteer helping out at the Bunnings sausage sizzles and the Eumundi Markets car parking.

As a Director, I want to keep members updated on the refugee and asylum seeker situation in Australia, but most importantly, ensure Buddies continues giving meaningful support to these people in our corner of the world, and perhaps investigate new ways to do that.