

Buddies Refugee Support Group

Annual Report 2015–16



Buddies
Supporting refugees

introduction

This report has been prepared for the inaugural general meeting (IGM) of Buddies Refugee Support Group Ltd (Buddies Ltd) on 26 June 2016. It provides a summary of important achievements and activities of Buddies Ltd since its incorporation in July 2015.

The decision for Buddies to become incorporated was made by a clear majority of those who participated in an on-line poll in April 2015, following an extensive period of discussion amongst Buddies supporters over the preceding 4-6 months.



*Cover image: From the Light the dark vigil:
Australia says welcome to refugees –
held at Cottontree, September 2015*

corporate information

The initial directors of Buddies Ltd came from the 'incorporation working group' that was established at the Buddies meeting on 26 April 2015, and are: Audrey Raymond, Garry Bates and Fergus FitzGerald. The initial company secretary is Margaret Landbeck and the initial member is John Ennis. These formal positions were required to establish Buddies Ltd as a corporate entity.

Key milestones in the formation and operation of Buddies Ltd during 2015-16 are summarised below:

- Registered in Queensland as a non-listed public company limited by guarantee by ASIC on 6 July 2015; ACN 606 820 302
- Public liability insurance cover (\$20 million) issued by Community Underwriting Agency on 27 July 2015 for 12 months; policy number COM011271
- Tax file number issued by ATO on 5 August 2015; TFN 966 495 582
- Corporate bank account opened with Suncorp Bank, Maroochydore on 27 October 2015; BSB 484-799, account number 123508960, account name Buddies Refugee Support Group Ltd; members (4) of the Finance Group signatories
- Registered as an Australian business in Queensland on 1 February 2016; ABN 40 606 820 302
- Registration as a not-for-profit charity by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission still pending
- Registration as a deductible gift recipient by the ATO still pending
- Executed an MOU with the Multicultural Development Association Ltd (MDA) on 7 March 2016, under which MDA became a corporate member of Buddies Ltd and MDA agreed to stand for a position of director of Buddies Ltd at the IGM and subsequent AGMs.

Directors' meetings by this initial governance group were held on 28 July and 17 November 2015, and 8 April 2016. Minutes of these meetings are available to members on request.

membership & finances

A total of 148 people and one corporation (MDA) have become members of Buddies Ltd since its formation. Membership is for the financial year and is renewable on 1 July.

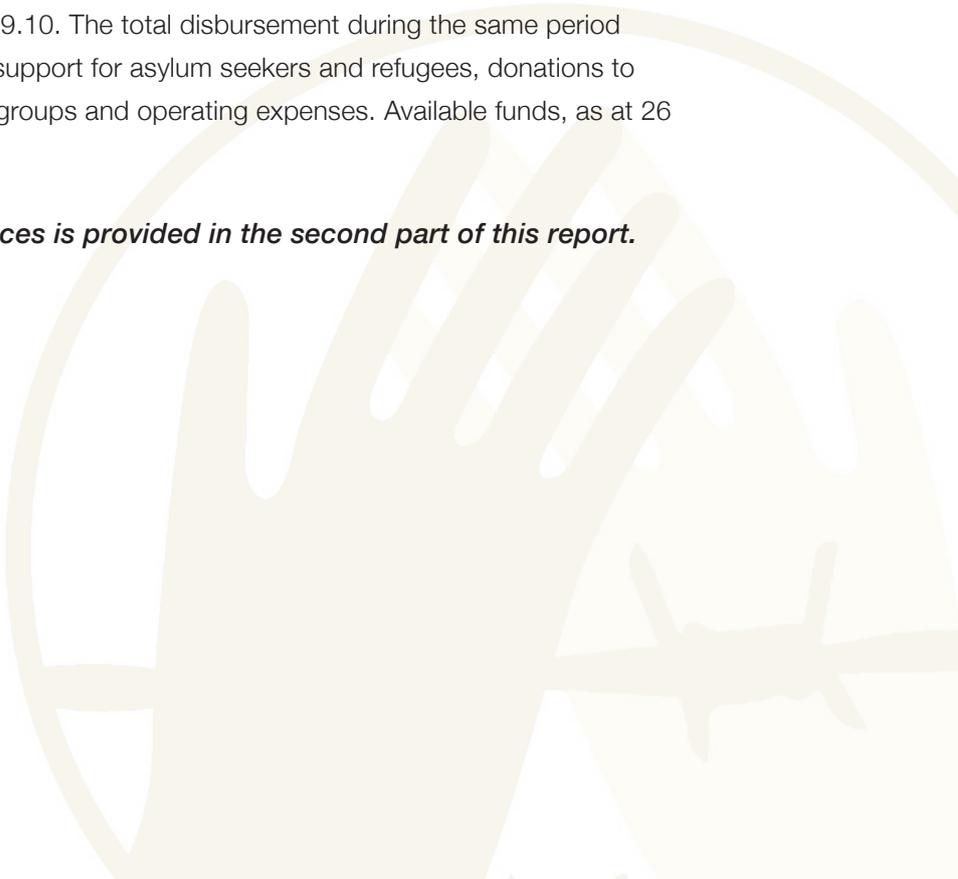
Given the significant number of people joining Buddies Ltd late in the financial year, it was decided at the directors meeting on 8 April 2016 to allow the membership of those who joined Buddies Ltd after 31 March to remain current until 30 June of the following year.

In order to avoid confusion in terminology, the incorporation working group decided to distinguish those people, previously considered members of Buddies prior to incorporation and who receive the weekly e-Bulletin, but have not joined Buddies Ltd, as 'supporters'. There are currently 1059 such 'supporters'.

FINANCES

The total revenue for the 12 months July 2015 – June 2016 from donations, fundraising and membership fees is \$22,529.10. The total disbursement during the same period is \$25,907.37, including direct support for asylum seekers and refugees, donations to refugee support and advocacy groups and operating expenses. Available funds, as at 26 June 2016, are \$7,197.73.

A detailed summary of finances is provided in the second part of this report.



activities

Key events and activities undertaken by Buddies during 2015-16 are summarised below:

FUNDRAISING EVENTS

- Eumundi market car parking attendants – monthly on Wednesday & Saturday
- Film night at Nambour cinema – “Tangerines”
- Concert at Caloundra Uniting Church – “Medieval music and beyond”
- Afternoon teas at Brisbane Symphony Orchestra concerts – four times
- Sale of fruit and other produce; garage sales etc – Kendall & Yokki

COMMUNITY AWARENESS EVENTS

- Save Nadir vigil – St John’s Cathedral, Brisbane, July
- Light the dark vigil: Australia says welcome to refugees – Cottontree, September
- Diversity celebration: walk together – Cottontree, October
- Buderim War Memorial Community Association: Expo/mega weekend – Buderim, November
- Refugee Welcome Zone proposal to Sunshine Coast Council, including associated media publicity – Nambour, February
- Meet LNP & ALP candidates for federal seats of Fisher, Fairfax & Wide Bay: asylum seeker and refugee issues – Buderim, February
- Harmony Day Fest: celebration of multicultural diversity – Cottontree, February

activities (continued)

ASYLUM SEEKER SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

- Save Nadir campaign: to prevent his deportation to Afghanistan – national media campaign (print, radio & TV), Change.org petition (over 65,000 supporters), as well as material and emotional support
- Learn English Holiday (LEH) and home-stay programs – week-long programs in July, October and April
- LEH reunion picnic – Roma Street Parklands, December
- Buddies Immigration Support Group – direct support for 14 ‘asylum seeker friends’ through the legal process in their claims for protection.

OTHER KEY ACTIVITIES

- The weekly e-Bulletin has continued to provide an excellent quality news source for Buddies members, supporters and others with an interest in our cause. Key topics include: notice of relevant forthcoming events on the Coast and in Brisbane; highlights from current asylum seeker and refugee news coverage, often not found in the mainstream media; links to other organizations to support on-line action; as well as Buddies news and information. The new format Bulletin has enhanced the functionality of this highly regarded publication.
- The Buddies’ website and Facebook page have continued to provide relevant and current online information, and forum for sharing ideas, and have been used as a source of information for students and researchers nationally and internationally.
- Monthly meetings at 24 King Street, Buderim have continued to be a pivotal part of Buddies activities. Guest speakers have included: asylum seekers and refugees (e.g. the Bangladeshi boys of Kilcoy); those who have frontline experience working with these people (e.g. Lisa McDonald and Gabby Sutherland, formerly Save the Children, Nauru); and those who might directly influence policy change (e.g. candidates for federal election). The meetings are open to anyone with an interest in Buddies’ cause. New attendees have been consistently turning up at the rate of 6-12 or more each meeting, which is a clear indication of the growing level of interest and concern for asylum seeker and refugees issues in our community.

outlook

Buddies Ltd is in a strong position to continue to provide emotional and material support to asylum seekers and refugees in the greater Sunshine Coast region and beyond through assistance, advice, advocacy, lobbying decision makers and community education for a more compassionate and just treatment for those seeking our nation's protection from persecution.

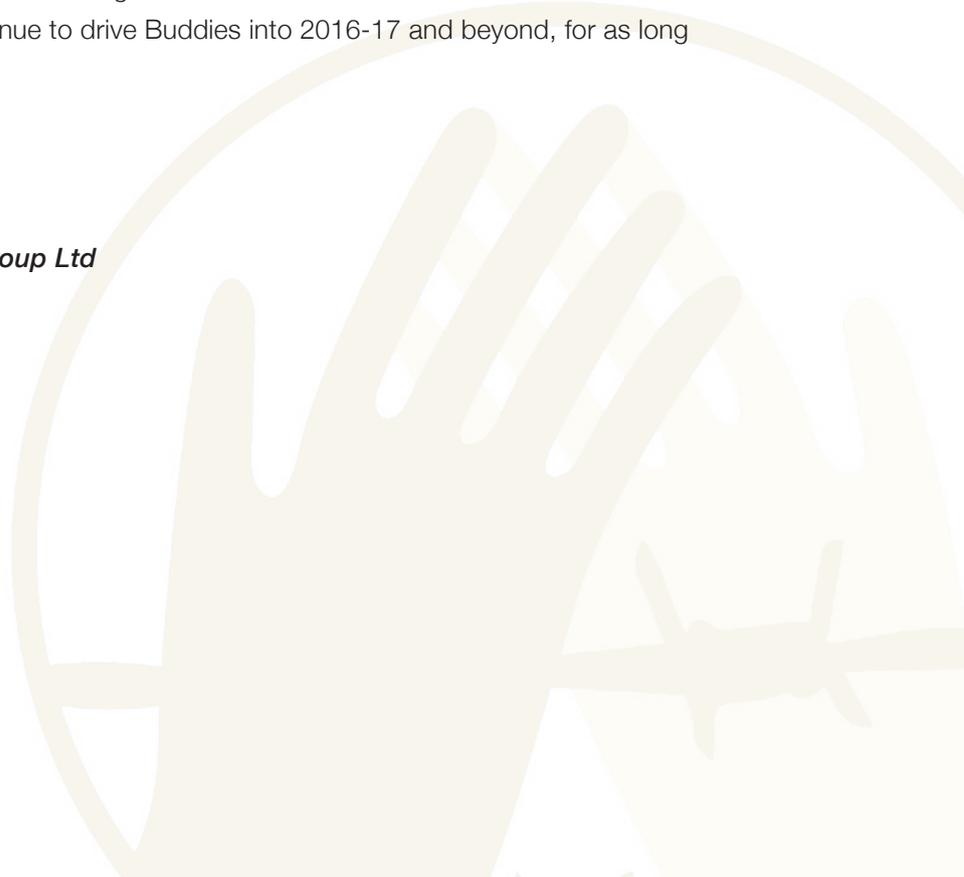
Membership and supporter numbers continue to grow strongly each month, which reflects rising concern amongst the community about the government's harsh and inhumane treatment of those who seek our protection and who travel by boat to reach Australia.

The level of fundraising and donations also continues to grow strongly, which reflects the compassion and generosity growing numbers in the community feel towards those in need. There is scope to substantially increase the funding available, by seeking grants or sponsorship, now that Buddies exists as a corporate entity.

With the growing number of members and supporters, there is also scope to increase the nature and scale of Buddies activities by any who have the desire and drive to initiate and lead such activities. This is something that has been a hallmark of Buddies since its inception in 2002 and will continue to drive Buddies into 2016-17 and beyond, for as long as there is a need.

Fergus FitzGerald
Initial Director
Buddies Refugee Support Group Ltd

26 June 2016



finance summary

July 2015 – June 2016



This unaudited financial report summarises the revenue and disbursements for the 2015/16 financial year.

INCOME

Donations

'The Box' at monthly meetings	1928.30
Regular monthly donations – direct to bank account	2160.00
Other general donations	812.10
Maleny & River primary schools donations – Harmony Day	430.00
U3A opera group	179.30
Women OutFront, Maleny – concert	564.00
Caloundra Uniting Church – Save Nadir campaign	90.00
Film night Nambour donations	190.00
BWMCA Expo/Mega weekend donations	82.20
Sub-total	6395.90

Fundraising

Car parking volunteering – Eumundi market	5888.00
Sale of Buddies badges	29.00
Brisbane Symphony Orchestra concerts – afternoon teas	1045.00
Buddies concert, Caloundra Uniting Church & afternoon tea	1637.20
Young Buddies crowd funding – Save Nadir campaign	588.00
Buddies film night & raffle – Nambour	3328.00
Garage sales – Kendall & Yokki	700.00
Sales of fruit & produce – Kendall & Yokki	1638.00
Sub-total	14853.20

Other

Regular membership of Buddies Ltd – 148	740.00
Gold membership – MDA	500.00
Sub-total	1,240.00

TOTAL INCOME

\$22,529.10

OUTLAYS

Operating expenses

Guest speakers' travel costs – to attend Buddies meetings	140.00
Contribution to cost of venues for Learn English Holiday programs	708.00
Public liability insurance premium	680.00
St Mary's Church, Buderim donation – use of amenities for meetings	250.00
Buderim War Memorial Community Association – affiliate membership 2015 & 2016	80.00
Capital purchases – two roving microphone set & DVD film	125.00
Farewell gift to Quinn Kerr – Young Buddies work	50.00
Buddies information material – printing, laminating, stationery etc.	367.95
Bank fees – old Suncorp account	10.00

Sub-total **2410.95**

Direct support for asylum seekers & refugees

Fees to registered migration agents to represent asylum seeker claims for protection visas	4537.00
Fees to accredited translation services – asylum seeker protection visa applications	206.00
Learn English Holiday programs – students travel costs (3 events)	1450.00
Medical costs for Tamil asylum seeker PV claim	220.83
Public transport donations to Eritrean, South African & Tamil asylum seekers	100.00
Gifts for asylum seekers on Manus Island	1000.00
Gifts for asylum seekers on Nauru	300.00
Sports equipment & registration (x2) for Afghan refugee volleyball team, Brisbane	1350.00
University fees – Tamil refugee, Nambour	300.00
Driver's licence support – Sudanese & Afghan asylum seekers	370.00
Cost of living donation – Bangladeshi asylum seekers	50.00
Cost of living support – Afghan asylum seeker	588.00
Emergency accommodation support – Tamil asylum seeker & Egyptian refugee	740.00
Donation towards legal fees for Bangladeshi asylum seekers	500.00

Sub-total **11711.83**

Donations to refugee support & advocacy groups

MDA monthly payments – auspice agreement, for asylum seekers	6000.00
MDA asylum seeker training scholarship program	3600.00
Harmony Day event, Maroochydore	500.00
Refugee Action Collective – legal challenge in PNG to Manus Island	500.00
Red Cross Canada for refugees – via Robert Graham songwriter	220.00
Deb Rays to support Rohingya asylum seekers	500.00
Donation to funeral fund for Tamil asylum seekers, Darwin	250.00
Donation towards “I came by boat” campaign, including fee	214.59
Sub-total	11784.59

TOTAL OUTLAYS**\$25,907.37****Available funds, as at 28 June 2015 – \$10,596.00****Available funds, as at 26 June 2016 – \$7,197.73***Fergus FitzGerald**Finance Group*

26 June 2016





Buddies
Supporting refugees

BUDDIES REFUGEE SUPPORT GROUP LTD

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