

June 2019

Refugee Week Community Film Festival a Success



One of the main objectives of Refugee Week and the SCRAN Film Festival was to raise awareness in the community of refugee issues and the existence of refugee advocacy organisations on the Sunshine Coast. With over 400 people attending the eight screenings, over 260 petition signatures, 26 Bulletin sign ups and 16 new members, not to mention at least 7 newspaper articles so far, the Film Festival has been a huge success in terms of raising awareness. It has also raised over \$1,200 for the Cisarua Learning Centre, the Refugee Council of Australia and the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre.

Border Politics, Maleny

The stand out event was Maleny which had an audience of about 90 people for an evening which included music and guest speaker Grace Samuel from MDA, joining Lisa McDonald, Rosemary Bower and Chad Oliver, all from Welcome to Maleny, for a panel discussion after the film. W2M donated \$200 to Cisarua and \$200 to ASRC from the proceeds of the event.

Constance on the Edge, Buderim

The event at St Mark's Anglican Church had 64 bookings. Elijah Buol, Australian of the Year (2019 Qld Local Hero). Elijah spoke from his experience arriving from South Sudan in 2002 as an unaccompanied minor refugee.

The Merger, Caloundra Community Centre

Caloundra hosted a packed out screening of The Merger, thanks to some extra promotion by Bob Cullen from the Caloundra Catholic Community Social Justice Network. Bob also did a great job manning the bar selling Goodwill Wine. The Community Centre provided a very good buffet and Buddies stalwarts, Dee and Margaret (Norman) provided the raffle prizes and sold a record number of raffle tickets. The \$200 profit was split between Cisarua and RCOA. After the film a short Q&A was hosted by Gillian and Nina from Amnesty.

"I enjoyed the film night at the Community Centre in Caloundra. It was well organised and the film was entertaining as well as informative. It was a good example of how refugees can be accepted into society." Patricia Wood

Mary meets Mohammad, The J Noosa

The Noosa venue was fully booked more than a week before the event, due to very good coverage in the local media. Cheese and biscuits was provided by Noosa Welcomes Refugees members and Goodwill Wine was for sale by the glass. The president of the NOOSA alive! Festival attended the event and donated tickets for a performance of “The Migrant’s Story” as a raffle prize. Funds raised (\$170) went towards Cisarua and RCOA. 18 people signed up for the Buddies Bulletin.

After the film Gabby and Yas, a young refugee, hosted a Q&A with an obviously emotional audience. Mayor Wellington and his wife Judy Ditter were also in the audience. Yas presented Judy with a scarf designed by a refugee still on Nauru.

“Thanks for organising an excellent evening in Noosa. The film was a good mix of personal stories and facts. The humour offset the hard realities of what refugees go through and how badly many Australians view them. We came away resolved to speak out more openly to friends and acquaintances about the issue and now have some more facts to back us up.” Fran & Bruce Bate

“My husband & daughter saw the Constance film at Buderim & really enjoyed it. The message was very powerful & gave an excellent portrayal of how challenging life can be as a refugee even after they have been resettled in a ‘safe’ country. Having the guest speaker was valuable to give some information & answer questions.” Lindy Chan

“The film was simply charming and evocative. The cruelty and the alarming consequences of such a state sponsored system depicted, and the presence of your observer, helped it become more real for us. The initiative of your film festival underscores the incredible work and commitment of your group, and others like it. Unsung heroes.” Terry Walton and Clare Murphy

Border Politics, Berkelouw Books, Eumundi

Eumundi was another booked out event, with 45 people squeezed between the bookshelves in Berkelouw’s. Alain from Starry Nights Outdoor Movies set up the big screen and took charge of the technical side. David from Buddies sold Goodwill Wine by the glass and Angela and Gillian provided light refreshments and also hosted the Q&A. Raffle prizes were donated by Angela and the Hum Drum café in Eumundi and the evening raised over \$180 for Cisarua and RCOA. Thanks to Jason, Brendan and David for setting up and putting away all the chairs and Kylie for the use of the shop.

The Merger, USC

The small audience of just under 40 was rewarded with large quantities of free pizza to enjoy with the film. Amnesty donated \$100 to the overall funds raised during the week.

Constance on the Edge, Nambour Community Centre

The turn out at Nambour Community Centre was small, but included several people who had attended previous films during the Festival. The audience was engaged and interested, with the exception of Sammy the assistance dog, who slept through the whole thing. Lisa and Rosemary came from Maleny to host the Q&A, there were a number of petition signatures and a small profit of \$72 from the raffle, which was put towards the RCOA donation.

The Staging Post, USC

The highlight of the Festival was the finale at USC, with The Staging Post director Jolyon Hoff and star and Refugee Week Ambassador Muzfar Ali, who attended with his wife Nagina, mother Sheir, daughter Natiqa and baby Soghra. The foyer outside the theatre was transformed into the Red Rose Café, using decorations made by children on Nauru when Save the Children were running the school there. Gabby and Yas created beautiful cupcakes and SCRAN members brought savoury snacks. The audience was able to mingle and chat with Muzafar and Jolyon both before and after the film.

Jolyon donated a DVD to add to the raffle, which raised \$125. At the end of the evening giant “cheques” were presented to Jolyon and Muzafar for \$500 each for Cisarua Learning Centre (featured in the Staging Post) and RCOA, which runs Refugee Week. (ASRC will receive the remaining funds).

“My husband and I were not aware that there were organisations to support refugees on the Sunshine Coast, so it was an eye opener for us to see the film ‘The Staging post’, and to hear of the groups involved in this issue and with the Film Festival. It was uplifting to see an example of what could be done to make the lives of these refugees a little better, and to see some positive initiatives.”
Gaynor Day

Thanks to all the individuals and organisations who supported this Film Festival. A big thank you to all SCRAN members who worked hard make the Festival a success, but in particular Nina, Mandula, Lisa, Rosemary, Gabby, Tammy, Yas, Thorsten, Len, David, Bob, Diana, Angela and Paul.

Gillian Duffy Film Festival Coordinator Sunshine Coast Refugee Action Network