

MINUTES OF MEETING 24 OCTOBER 2015

Chairperson

Patrick Buick welcomed 10 new members; held a moment of silence to reflect on why we are gathered, particularly with reference to Khodayar Aminin, an Hazara asylum seeker who took his own life last week.

Apologies

Jude and Mike, Sue Ennis, Margaret Landbeck, Lindel Gregger, Bronwyn Bell, Val Ross, Penny Rivlin, Joyce Tozer

Guest speakers

Linda Dennis and Shine Jang, Sunshine Coast Settlement Program spoke about their work with migrants and refugees who have settled on the Coast. They welcomed Buddies role in supporting asylum seekers and refugees and our involvement with some of their programs. Buddies members were invited to join: the Global Picnic Day on 28/10/15 at Cottontree Park; a learn-to-swim program for refugees; a refugee learner driver training program.

Finance report

Audrey Raymond presented a summary of finances for the month; total available funds \$8781 (see separate report).

Lobby Group

Audrey Raymond informed of the intention for the group to embrace social media, rather than just letter writing, to advocate on behalf of asylum seekers and refugees.

Hospitality

Kayla Szumer spoke about the current Learn English Holiday program (25-30/10/15), which has 12 asylum seekers from 7 different nations staying with 10 host families; the associated multicultural dinner will be in the Nambour Cultural Centre.

Film night

Kendall Snowden informed the meeting that this fundraising event at Nambour cinema on 21/10/15 was very successful; 190 people attended; cinema staff worked for free; \$500 raised from raffle; final amount from film yet to be determined (approximately \$2000); a number of new Buddies members joined.

Walk Together

Young Buddies member, Lola Raymond is coordinating the first Sunshine Coast "Walk Together" at Cottontree Park on 31/10/15 at 11am, as part a national Welcome to Australia event. Seeking: volunteers for 2 marshalls; hi-vis vests; to run a Buddies information stall; all requests were met.

Buderim War Memorial Community Association

Patrick Buick said Buddies has been invited to set up a stall at the BWMCA 70th anniversary weekend (27-28/11/15). He made a request to provide a roster of volunteers to man the stall between 10am and 4pm each day.

Off-shore detention

Dianne Baumann (new member of Buddies), who has just relocated from WA to Sunshine Coast and is very involved with refugees support groups, including "Mums for Refugees" and "Gifts for Nauru Group", shared very disturbing, current first hand information on the inhumane treatment of asylum seekers on Nauru and Manus Island. She suggested all refugee support groups in Australia unite for a large national rally to call for an immediate end to off-shore detention.

General business

Garry Bates informed the meeting of Anton Rajendram's recent success in obtaining a temporary protection visa (TPV) for 3 years, with work rights, and being invited to apply for a Safe Haven enterprise Visa (SHEV). At present SHEV's only available in regional NSW and Tasmania. Opportunity for Sunshine Coast to seek recognition for SHEV recipients, possibly as part of moves to establish a Refugee Welcome Zone for potential re-settled Syrian refugees.

Next meeting – Sunday 22 November

No one volunteered to chair next month's meeting or be the note-taker.