

REPORT: Harmony Week Refugee Week event

Len Mangan, director

The Harmony Week Refugee Stories (You Can't Ask That) event was held on Monday 15 March and I've been receiving very positive feedback from those who attended. By all accounts it's been a very successful event.

There were 54 people in attendance on a wet Monday night, six of whom signed up to receive the Bulletin and one signed up as a new member.

We raised a total of \$520.00 (donations \$350, raffle \$160 & membership \$10) to be donated for the support for those recently released from detention at Kangaroo Point. It was great to hear real refugee stories from personal experience. Some hadn't seen the ABC 'You Can't Ask That' episode and they were impressed. Others were very impressed with the work Buddies is doing.

As the event was so successful some have suggested we should hold another event but try to target people who don't necessarily agree with our stance or approach to dealing with refugee and asylum seeker issues. Getting those people to attend will be a challenge.

I was disappointed that the ABC didn't have some involvement. Both their Brisbane & Sunshine Coast offices were contacted & followed up but they didn't respond. I suppose they'd say that they've had a few busy news weeks.

Buddies are extremely grateful for assistance from the people who helped with planning, coordinating and running the event on the night. We are especially grateful for the professional and personal telling of Refugee Stories by our panellists.

A follow-up email from panellist Robin Jones

"A special thank you to my fellow panelists who are doing such wonderful work and help for refugees. It was a pleasure to be part of such a team of speakers. Also a pleasure to be a member of an association of such committed workers. I am so impressed by you all. I suspect you don't fully realise just what a great group you are.

"Yes, an opportunity to speak with those who have some negative, actually erroneous, ideas about refugees would be great but alas I doubt if that will happen. However in the meantime just passing on more information and opening discussions as happened at the event was beneficial for us all. Thanks Len."

Regards, Robin

