

# MINUTES OF MEETING 17 JANUARY 2016

**Chairperson:** Fergus FitzGerald

**Note-taker:** Scott Grimmett

**Apologies:** Margaret Landbeck, Penny Rivlin, Lindel Greggery, Kayla Szumer, Libby Morrison  
Thirteen first time attendees welcomed.

## REPORTS

### Immigration support

Brenda Smith reported the immigration support group is currently assisting approximately 15 applicants for TPVs.

### Refugee Welcome Zone

Garry Bates reported progress on making Sunshine Coast Regional Council a Refugee Welcome Zone. Buddies is part of a coalition of community groups leading this proposal. The first presentation to Council has been well received. A second meeting with Council staff will take place on 19/1/16 to prepare this proposal for presentation to Councillors. Local Council elections are scheduled in March. It is hoped Council will endorse the RWZ before the election and that newly elected Councillors will launch the RWZ in time for the arrival of Syrian refugees the Federal Government has committed to accept. 125 local councils around Australia have already signed up as Refugee Welcome Zones, a project of the Refugee Council of Australia.

### Finance

Fergus reported that Buddies raised approximately \$22,000 in 2015. Monthly summary covering December and January: \$2.5k income; \$5.5k expenses; \$8.8k bank balance (details in accompanying report). The Federal Government has begun processing its "legacy case-load" which will increase our legal expenses in coming months. No proposals for additional expenditure presented to the meeting.

### Learn English Holiday

Kendall Snowden reported we are still hoping to continue our Learn English Holidays (LEH) in 2016, the first one likely to be held in March. Application forms will soon be sent out to Brisbane case managers. Asylum seekers now on work visas are loathe to commit to a week's "holiday" when there is the chance of employment. Buddies interested in becoming a host family should contact Kayla Szumer akszumer@optusnet.com.au 5476 8910.

### Eumundi car parking

Kendall reported Buddies has committed to the first Wednesday and the first Saturday of each month in 2016. This brings in \$462 monthly. More volunteers are needed to ensure we have enough people to cover for others who can't attend. Asylum seekers Anton and Nadir have both worked at the car park, which is good for both Buddies and them.

### "Rising Tide"

Fergus reported a fundraiser has been organised by Natalie Brown at the Upfront Club, Maleny for the evening of 21 January. Proceeds to children in detention. John Ennis volunteered to represent Buddies.

### Engaging with local federal candidates

Alan Spierings has organised local candidates in the 2016 Federal election to speak at our February monthly meeting: Bill Gissane, ALP/Fisher; Scott Anderson, ALP/Fairfax; and Ted O'Brien, LNP/Fairfax.

The meeting favoured a "Q&A" style forum for this meeting, with prepared questions from members and a moderator. The meeting endorsed Alan as moderator. Questions are invited from members and should be sent to Alan. The general scope of questions will be provided to candidates ahead of time so they may be well briefed. The meeting agreed to invite media to attend this meeting.

### Harmony Day

There will be a Buddies stall at Cotton Tree Park on Sunday 20 March from 10am to 2pm. Contact Jane Giles janegiles@live.com.au 0466 650 816 to be involved. On the afternoon of Monday 21 March there will be a film screening at the Big Screen Cinema in Caloundra. Buddies is running the afternoon tea as a fundraiser.

### Other business

Proposal from Eliza Minto: Eliza has volunteered for seven months support work in one of the refugee camps on Lesbos, a stopping point in the current refugee migration from the Middle East into Europe. Eumundi Hotel have arranged a fundraiser to allow Eliza to buy supplies for refugees once she has landed in Lesbos. The Imperial Hotel Eumundi is not able to write a donation to a private individual and Eliza asked if Buddies would be prepared to accept the funds on her behalf. The meeting agreed, and John Ennis will liaise with Eliza.

Buderim War Memorial Community Association: Val Ross has resigned her liaison role due to illness. The meeting appointed Zanette Perinoni (a new member) to be our new liaison with BWMCA.

Multicultural Conversations Project: The Sunshine Coast Regional Council is planning a project, in conjunction with community groups, to understand and address barriers to participation and inclusion within the multicultural community. Buddies is invited to participate in the project, which could have linkages to the RWZ proposal.

### Next meeting

Sunday 28 February, chairperson: Garry Bates, note-taker: Scott Grimmett