



## Monthly meeting

Held on 27 October, 2019

At USC Sippy Downs, E Block, Room 14

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### MINUTES

#### 1. Opening and Welcome

Paul McKinlay opened the Meeting at 11.05am. The director welcomed Members and Guests.

#### 2. Attendance and apologies

Apologies were received from: Scott Grimmett, Lesley Willcoxson, Sheila Merriman

#### 3. Recognising Volunteers

The many volunteers of the September Learn English Holiday were recognised and thanked for their hard work. Special thanks went to Lesley Willcoxson, Kayla Szumer and Margaret Landbeck. Lynne Johnson and Mo Darbas were thanked for helping make the 'Against our Oath' film night a success. Florence Teillet was thanked for her work for LEH and her help on the film night.

#### 4. Volunteering opportunities.

There is still a need for volunteers to assist in the Eumundi car parking fund raiser, (1st Saturday and Wednesday of the month) More details are available in the Bulletin or contact Penny Rivlin ([penny\\_rivlin@hotmail.com](mailto:penny_rivlin@hotmail.com))

Buddies will be running a second sausage sizzle at Bunnings Noosaville December 4 and volunteers are definitely needed as some of the regular volunteers are unavailable. Contact Penny Rivlin ([penny\\_rivlin@hotmail.com](mailto:penny_rivlin@hotmail.com))

A reminder was given of the opportunity to raise funds through 'cans for cash' recycling. Details are provided in the Bulletin

#### 5. Against our Oath

The film 'Against our Oath' shown in Noosa and Nambour was a great success. Lynne Johnson worked with the SCRAN team to make the Nambour screening possible. The Nambour evening was attended by around 120 people, with a Q&A with the director Heather Kirkpatrick following the film. Mo Darbas prepared a wonderful supper which along with the raffle raised \$540 that will go towards the fee the Canadian Government is asking to resettle an off shore refugee. '

#### 6. Finance report

The financial report was presented by James Fowler, Bookkeeper.

### Last month - September - final wrap

Cash at bank 1 September \$5,170.54

Income \$2,551.96 boosted by

- the Sausage sizzle at Noosa Civic: \$1,068.90
- Memberships - 8 New; 11 Renewals

Outgoings \$1,841.08

Closing balance \$5,881.42

### October: current as at c.o.b. 25th

Income - \$1,136

Buddies received an additional \$198 this month for Eumundi Car Parking on the 5th Saturday of September. Four times a year, there is a fifth Saturday in the month and Penny Rivlin has been able to secure those days for us. This will total \$792 over a full 12 months.

Good news but it places additional pressure on the stalwarts who attend.

- More volunteers are needed to help Penny and the team.

A donation of \$90 was received from a Mr and Mrs Hooley when they renewed their memberships.

October Memberships. 3 new and 2 renewals, raising financial memberships to 94.

Outlays - \$3,769.11

The bank balance \$3,248.31 as at c.o.b. Friday 25 October 2019.

### Highlights

LEH attendees exceeded expectations by 20 or so, requiring \$3,188.19 to fully fund. Of this, \$432 was covered by a private donation reducing the burden on Buddies accounts to \$2,756.19.

Although expenditure is well above the norm, there will be no LEH in March/April 2020. The total annual expenditure therefore will be similar to previous years.

Mr. Pourbara's rental top-up of \$25 per week was extended by the Directors to 31 January 2020. In the interim, an update of Mr. Pourbara's circumstances will be obtained by a Buddies member.

The Directors met on 14 October and decided not to renew the standing monthly orders to Romero and MDA (re-named Multicultural Development Australia) and Communify which lapse on 31 October. Reducing outlays \$1,050 p.c.m. The directors are reviewing the financial processes, procedures, fundraising options and allocation of funds to be determined post-review.

Upcoming items for the rest of the month - Nil

At 31 October we expect approx. \$3,250 at bank with no known accounts outstanding.

### Six monthly forecast

March 31<sup>st</sup> 2020, if all of the current proposed outlays and fund-raising occur, the bank account should be \$6,600.

## 7. Guest Speaker: Freddie Steen

Freddie is a long term 'warrior' for fairness and refugee/asylum seeker advocacy and supporter of Buddies. Formerly a public servant in the Immigration Department, she now volunteers with Indooroopilly Uniting Church refugee support group, which helps people link with legal advice regarding visa problems, health and trauma counselling, as well as more basic food and friendship needs.

Freddie talked of her despair that over the past 20 years there has been deterioration in the treatment of refugees in Australia. The international treaty relating to the status of refugees was drafted after the Second World War and today the Refugee Convention applies to refugees all over the world. However, Australian law relating to refugees no longer comply with the International Treaty. Australia is breaching the law. She spoke of Australia having no Human Rights Charter; therefore there is no framework for redress of injustices.

A glimmer of hope is the recent Queensland move to introduce a Human Rights Act that will form part of the administrative law obligations and oversight mechanisms that hold government to account.

Despite evidence of abuse, mental suffering and human damage we have a hostile media spreading mis-information and deception. Freddie believes Australian attitudes towards refugees and asylum seekers are being fuelled by negative political rhetoric and media scare campaigns and it is the responsibility of us all to hold politicians and media to account.

The Queensland government has provided total funding of \$3.568m to Communitiy Queensland to lead 7 agencies to support people seeking asylum. The Asylum Seeker and Refugee Assistance Program (ASRA) the agencies include, Australian Red Cross, RAILS, QPSATT, MDA, Romero and World Wellness Group.

Freddie's own involvement is with the Indooroopilly United Church. For over 5 years the Church has been providing, among other things, pro-bono lawyers, migration agents and councillors to refugees.

These agencies are all doing amazing work but there are never enough funds. The long delays in processing asylum applications, the ever-changing visa rules, government cost-cutting to make up for budget overruns, such as Christmas Island, have resulted in more and more refugees struggling to survive. There is an epidemic of suicide and people on the edge.

Freddie discussed the many current issues relating to refugees including Medivac, the Biloela family, Bomana prison in Port Moresby and our need to continue lobbying government keeping our voices heard. She wants students to be more vocal and universities to provide scholarships for refugees who currently are classed as international students and therefore have to pay prohibitively large fees.

Finally Freddie thanked Buddies for the work they do and commented on the quality of the Bulletin as an educational information publication. She encouraged all the members at the meeting to continue being vocal and call for change in Australia's treatment of refugees. She also had copies of the book "Refugee Rights and Policy Wrongs" for sale and Buddies bought one for our fledgling library.

Paul McKinlay thanked Freddie for her inspirational and passionate talk.

Next members meeting will be held Sunday November 24<sup>th</sup> 11am at the SCU Room 14 Block E  
Meeting closed at 12.40pm.