

MINUTES OF BUDDIES MONTHLY MEETING – 22 APRIL 2018

The meeting opened at 11:00am at 24 King Street, Buderim.

Chair: Scott Grimmett, *Minutes:* Angela Mercuri

Welcome: Scott extended a warm welcome to new attendees and invited a moment of reflection.

Apologies: Margaret Norris, Frances Hill, Sheila Merriman, Lesley Willcoxson, and Mitra Khakbaz.

Finance Report

Gillian Duffy presented the Finance Report (attached).

Learning English Holiday (LEH)

Kayla Szumer gave an update of the very successful LEH program at Matthew Flinders Anglican College, Buderim (8-13 April 2018). 26 participants, predominantly from Syria but also from Iraq, Palestine and Eritrea and ranging from 6 -76 years of age, took part. Kayla noted that this group was drawn from the Government's humanitarian program and made up of people who have been granted permission to settle in Australia. This group presented a particular challenge as many participants had limited English language skills (a more detailed report, prepared by Lesley Willcoxson, who together with Margaret Norris prepared the learning program and led the teaching activities, is attached). Kayla thanked the many volunteers who contributed in so many ways to the success of the program. She extended an invitation to others to become involved. Mark led a vote of thanks to Kayla, Lesley and Margaret for their unstinting work in the lead up to and during the week to ensure its success. John Innes seconded it.

Correction: In the March 25 2018 Meeting Minutes the LEH was incorrectly referred to as Learning English Program (LEP).

Update on Iman Safari

Margaret Norman introduced Iman Safari to the meeting, noting she'd met him in 2014 through the LEH program. Margaret and Iman spoke of the challenges he'd faced since his arrival by boat in Australia and his determination and drive to make a new life in Australia and lead a productive and independent life. He expressed thanks to Margaret and Buddies for the support he'd received in obtaining his temporary SHEV (Safe Haven Enterprise) Visa that enables him to work in regional Australia. He has since trained as a painter and established his own small business, repaid funds Buddies had provided to cover his legal fees and been able to have a reunion with his family in a third country last year. Iman has demonstrated enormous resilience, determination and resourcefulness in trying to establish himself in Australia despite the fact his visa remains a temporary one.

Iman expressed a desire to tender for some government work and sought assistance in tender preparation. A new Buddies member offered to assist him with this. The meeting undertook to advertise his painting business in the Bulletin.

Dee provided an update on Chanelle who came to Australia from South Africa some years ago on a family reunion visa but whose marriage subsequently broke down. Chanelle is seeking asylum in Australia and has a visa hearing in May, which if unsuccessful will see her being deported. Buddies has previously provided Chanelle some emergency financial support.

Fundraiser Sausage Sizzle @ Bunnings Kawana

Dee sought a few more volunteers for this fundraiser to be held on 13 May.

Nambour Community Centre Collaboration

Angela informed the meeting that on occasion there are people seeking asylum and refugees that approach the NCC for assistance. The two groups are exploring ways for Buddies where possible and appropriate to provide some support to them, particularly as they live on the Coast.

Words that Work Workshop

Angela said that following the recent survey of Buddies members' priorities it was realised that to have maximum impact in the community, the words we use to share our message are as important as the message itself. The ASRC (Asylum Seeker Resource Centre) is offering us the workshop Words that Work on 27 May 2018, free of charge, provided at least 20 participants commit to take part. Those interested must contact Angela Mercuri (0439 137 243 or am760598@bigpond.net.au) by May 11. If the workshop does go ahead on that date, it will take the place of the May monthly meeting and run from 11:00am-1:00pm.

Petition

Scott encouraged Buddies to sign a petition to the Labor Party National Conference from Rural Australians for Refugees.

The business meeting closed at 11:30 am.

Guest speaker

This was followed by Mark Lingard who gave an outline of preparatory work for a schools outreach program seeking to target both teachers and students to raise awareness about people seeking asylum and refugee issues. Mark is working with Shaye Yuill, a student at USC who is currently doing an internship with Buddies. The program will build on existing experience and materials and, where possible, will seek to build on/leverage relationships established through the LEH program being hosted by various senior schools in the region.