



buddies bulletin

FRIDAY 3 JULY 2015

A disappointing response from MP Mal Brough

The Buddies Save Nadir Campaign
3 July 2015



Buddies members are doing all they can to support Nadir's fight to prevent his deportation. Here are some, but by no means all, of this week's developments.

Buddies has formally requested that the Federal Member for Fisher Mal Brough make some time to meet Nadir and one or two Buddies members briefly at his electorate office in July (July being a non-sitting period of parliament). We have received a reply this week from his office stating that "a meeting with Mal at this time will not change any outcome and he has not asked me to schedule a meeting at this time."

Buddies has not given up. Some excerpts from the reply sent to Mr Brough include:

"You are wrong. Meeting Nadir would have changed a lot. It would have made it much harder for you to be complicit in your government's decision to return Nadir to persecution and death. If you had met Nadir, his face and his story would have been on your conscience. Is this what you're afraid of?"

"Buddies membership reached 1000 this week. In all probability, roughly around half of that number reside in the Fisher electorate. That's a lot of people to be disappointed in their representative's response."

Buddies members each have their own networks, many of them traversing this local region and beyond. Members are working those networks very efficiently at the moment in our Save Nadir campaign. This is evidenced by the fact we've collected 3000 online signatures within a week. That petition and many others are continuing to build.

I'm reporting to members on the progress of our campaign every week. This week I will be telling them that you have refused to meet Nadir."

Buddies member Al Spierings, who has an appointment with minister Peter Dutton regarding the plight of another asylum seeker family, is to hand him a written plea on Nadir's behalf at the end of his visit.

Another Buddies member, Margaret Landbeck, has organized a hard copy petition at her church, which attracted 60 signatures and a lot of interest. If anyone would like a copy for use at their own church or community group, please contact Margaret mlandbeck@ozemail.com.au 5438 2789. If you do generate such a petition and send it to the immigration minister, please send a copy to Buddies member, Terry Boyce terry.b3@bigpond.com 0408 150 588. Buddies needs to have a central file of all petitions collected.

ABOUT BUDDIES

The **Buddies Refugee Support Group** is a Sunshine Coast group which advocates for just and compassionate treatment of refugees, consistent with the human rights standards which Australia has developed and endorsed.

We support policies towards refugees and asylum seekers that reflect respect, decency and traditional

Australian generosity to those in need, while advancing Australia's international standing and national interests.

We are an independent community group and meet on the 4th Sunday of each month at 11am, 24 King Street Buderim.

Confidentiality

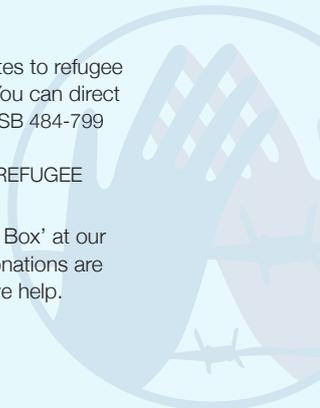
Your email address is completely confidential. The Bulletin is sent Bcc [Blind carbon copy] and no-one else sees your email address.

To contribute to Buddies

Buddies' fundraising contributes to refugee and asylum seeker support. You can direct debit to: **SUNCORP BANK**, BSB 484-799 **ACCOUNT NO:** 605927994 **ACCOUNT NAME:** BUDDIES REFUGEE SUPPORT GROUP

Or you can contribute to 'The Box' at our meetings and events. Your donations are much appreciated by those we help.

www.refugeebuddies.org.au





For your **DIARY...**

■ **Sunday 19 – Friday 24 July**
Learn English Holiday program
kaylaszumer@gmail.com 5476 8910

Sunday 26 July, 11am

Buddies meeting, 24 King St, Buderim
Guest speaker: Chilemwa Nkowane-Poole
Solicitor and migration agent assisting Buddies

Sunday 23 August, 11am

Buddies meeting, 24 King St, Buderim



■ **HOMESTAY HOSTS FOR NEXT LEARN ENGLISH HOLIDAY**

Sunday 19 – Friday 24 July

If you would like to host an asylum seeker from Brisbane, please contact Kayla Szumer on kaylaszumer@gamil.com 5476 8910, 0427 380 235.

■ **WORK OPPORTUNITY**

Our Sri Lankan asylum seeker friend Abdul has recently had his bridging visa extended for another twelve months and has now been granted work rights. Abdul was a practising accountant in Sri Lanka but he is prepared to work in any field and is actively seeking work. He is young, fit and hardworking. He has very good English and has his own transport.

If you know of someone who might be able to assist Abdul in his quest for work, please contact him at aahasbullah@yahoo.com 0405 030 825.

■ **MORE NAMES FOR OUR 'BUDDIES FOR BUDDIES' LIST**

Buddies maintains a B4Bs spreadsheet which lists any Buddies members who are happy to have their contact details included. This greatly assists in facilitating easier communication between members. This list is opt-in only. If you would like to be added to our B4Bs list, please contact Nettie Knox nb.knox1@bigpond.com 5445 8425.

■ **WORK OPPORTUNITY**

Dear Buddies, We are interested to discover if you have skilled migrants who might intern with our small Noosa based company. We are a web design, graphic design and marketing company. We understand there are skilled migrants who need support in building their local experience and opportunities to work here.

Please get in touch if our request is of interest. Many thanks, Helen Zelinski, Helen@dmsg.com.au

WEB

<http://digitalmarketingstrategygroup.com.au>



HELP PREVENT NADIR'S DEPORTATION!



Let our government know that we don't want our country sending people back to persecution and risk of death.



■ **AFGHAN REFUGEE FACES UNCERTAIN FUTURE**

Annie Gaffney
Radio 90.3 ABC, 23 June 2015

Nadir Sadiqi is a Hazara man from Afghanistan who fled his home country after persecution by the Taliban. Nadir is seeking asylum in Australia, but the Government has refused his application and wants to return Nadir to Kabul in Afghanistan by August 6.

Nadir says that if he is sent back it is likely that he will be tortured and killed. Nadir and Terry Boyce from the Buddies Refugees Support Group joined Annie Gaffney to discuss the case.

WEB

<http://blogs.abc.net.au/queensland/2015/06/afghan-refugee-faces-uncertain-future.html>

■ **PETITION TO SAVE COAST REFUGEE GAINING MOMENTUM**

Kathy Sundstrom
The Sunshine Coast Daily, 24 June 2015

The campaign to help stop Nadir's deportation and almost certainly save his life is escalating.

WEB

<http://www.sunshinecoastdaily.com.au/news/petition-to-save-refugee/2683842>

■ **PETITION TO SIGN: PETER DUTTON: NADIR STOOD UP TO THE TALIBAN – DON'T SEND HIM BACK TO BE MURDERED!**



If you haven't already done so, please sign this petition to immigration minister, Peter Dutton. Forward it on through your networks and post it on your Facebook page.

WEB

<https://www.change.org/p/the-taliban-want-to-kill-this-man-save-him-from-deportation>

■ **A NOTE ON REFOULEMENT**

Australia signed the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention in 1954. We are still a signatory to this day. The convention clearly states that no contracting nation is to "expel or return ("refouler") a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion".

PETITION TO SIGN: ABBOTT, PROTECT ASYLUM SEEKERS FROM UNSCRUPULOUS BORDER CONTROL TACTICS



Lynn Hamilton, Care2 Petitions

Tony Abbott thinks it's okay to pay human traffickers to turn their boats around when they're carrying starving would-be immigrants to the coast of Australia. A UN investigation confirms that an Australian official bribed an Australia-bound smuggler to turn his boat around. The smuggler was ferrying sixty-five asylum seekers to Australia in May of this year.

Even more appalling is that the PM has not denied the allegation or even suggested that Australia also investigate the matter. Abbot's cavalier attitude toward some of the world's most desperate and vulnerable people is simply unacceptable.

WEB

<http://www.thepetitionsite.com/takeaction/885/373/681/?z00m=24805934&redirectID=1720968372>

Contributed by Penny Rivlin

LETTER TO SEND: PETER DUTTON, YOUR RECENT BOAST FAILS TO IMPRESS



Attached is a letter to send to immigration minister Peter Dutton. You may send it as is, or adapt it to suit. It's better, if possible, to personalize it through making a few additions and/or changes here and there. But a copied letter is still better than NO letter! You may like to send a copy to Tony Abbott as well.

Peter.Dutton.MP@aph.gov.au

The Hon. Tony Abbott MP, Prime Minister,
Parliament House, Canberra, ACT 2600

WEB

<https://www.pm.gov.au/contact-your-pm>

– Thanking you, Audrey and the Lobby Group



THIS WEEK'S ATTACHMENTS

- Letter to Peter Dutton
- Incorporation update

YOU'RE A STAR!



Our 1000th Buddies member is Sam McWaters. Congratulations Sam! Sorry, there are no prizes – your reward is the honour of being the member who reached that milestone for us!



The refugees who revived Nhill

Waleed Aly

The Project, 19 May 2015

With young people moving to big cities, many towns in outback Australia are struggling to survive, but the rural town of Nhill has been rejuvenated after a group of refugees began calling it home.

WEB

<http://tenplay.com.au/channel-ten/the-project-extra/season-6/the-refugees-of-nhill>



Laxmi Dahal picks oranges from his front yard in Adelaide's northern suburbs.

Bhutanese refugees continue to buy homes in Adelaide

Candice Marcus

ABC News Online, 16 June 2015

Seven years after hundreds of Bhutanese refugees started resettling in Adelaide, the population has become the largest single migrant group to obtain homes through statutory corporation lender Homestart this financial year.

There are now 169 families in total that have borrowed through the lender.

Bhutanese refugees started resettling in Australia from 2008 and Adelaide is now home to more than 2,000 refugees from the Asian nation.

WEB

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-06-16/number-of-bhutanese-refugees-buying-homes-continues-to-grow/6547318>

Burnside dares government to prosecute whistleblower doctors

Felicity Nelson
Lawyers Weekly, 24 June 2015



Julian Burnside QC says he will be among the many lawyers “falling over themselves” to defend doctors and health care workers accused of breaching new secrecy laws.

The controversial *Australian Border Force Bill 2015*, which came into effect this week, imposes a two-year jail sentence on health professionals who make unauthorised disclosures about the

conditions in detention centres.

There is a narrow loophole to these gag laws, under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act*, whereby whistleblowing is permitted if there is a reasonable belief that disclosure is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the life or health of a person.”

WEB

<http://www.lawyersweekly.com.au/wig-chamber/news/16722-burnside-dares-gov-to-prosecute-whistleblower-doctors>

Contributed by *Chilemwa Nkowane-Poole*

NSW gives asylum seekers travel concessions



Gabrielle Chan
The Guardian, 26 June 2015

NSW premier Mike Baird has outlined the most generous travel concessions to asylum seekers of any state government, declaring there is little point in having a strong economy unless it is used to help the vulnerable. He has described asylum seekers as “one of the most vulnerable in our society, often

living below the poverty line” and said it was important to provide concessions because services for them are dispersed, increasing social isolation.

His move, coming two days after the state budget, is a clear contrast to the Coalition’s stance towards asylum seekers at a federal level, which has centred on Tony Abbott’s “stop the boats” campaign to ensure those at sea do not reach Australia.

WEB

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/jun/26/nsw-gives-asylum-seekers-travel-concessions-to-help-the-vulnerable>

Contributed by *Stephanie Akers, Val Ross and Diana Woolley*



Christmas Island detention centre

Time to tell the truth before I’m gagged: these centres ruin lives

Ryan Essex
The Guardian, 30 June 2015

Having worked as a counsellor in immigration detention for several years, for contractor International Health and Medical Services (IHMS), any discussions surrounding my former place of employment could very well be illegal after Wednesday. This is because of the secrecy provision in the Border Force Act, a disturbing piece of legislation which is about to become law and is likely to have far-reaching consequences.

Under this legislation it is a criminal offence, punishable by up to two years’ imprisonment, for anyone who works in, or has previously worked in immigration detention to “make a record of or disclose” information regarding their employment. There are a number of things that need to be said before this somewhat modest piece of dissent could put me in front of a judge.

So now, fortunately, I can still discuss the damage that I have seen first-hand in immigration detention. The damage that has been done to men, women and children. The families I have seen arbitrarily separated. Asylum seekers whose healthcare needs have been subverted and neglected, as they did not align with the immigration department’s goals.

WEB

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jun/30/time-to-tell-the-truth-before-im-gagged-australias-detention-centres-ruin-lives>

New Department website

The Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) launched a new website on 1 July. The new site will be located at <http://www.border.gov.au> and replaces current sites immigration.gov.au and customs.gov.au. At the same time the Department’s email domain will change. From 1 July onwards, emails from DIBP staff will be sent from the @border.gov.au domain.

Contributed by *Chilemwa Nkowane-Poole*



Andrew Wilkie: Australia’s refugee policy is “A crime against humanity”

**Alex McKinnon
Junkee, 25 June 2015**

Last week the government, with the support of the Opposition, rushed a bill through Parliament’s House of Representatives specifically designed to fend off an impending High Court challenge that could have ruled Australia’s offshore processing regime illegal.

The Human Rights Law Centre is challenging offshore processing in court on the basis that Australia doesn’t have the authority to detain people in other countries, or to put money towards that purpose. In response, the government has drafted up laws that explicitly legalise the funding of detention centres on Nauru and Manus Island, and made them retrospective to cover their tracks up to now.

Parliament is due to start its six-week mid-winter break, meaning that the government would have had a difficult time avoiding the court challenge if legislation were not passed this week. The only member of the House of Representatives to vote against the bill was Tasmanian independent Andrew Wilkie (Greens MP for Melbourne Adam Bandt is on paternity leave), who railed passionately against the asylum policies of successive governments and called offshore processing “a crime against humanity”. It’s worth a watch.

In October last year Wilkie referred the Australian cabinet to the International Criminal Court asking that they be charged with crimes against humanity over their treatment of asylum seekers.

WEB

<http://junkee.com/andrew-wilkie-blasts-the-liberal-and-labor-parties-calls-australias-refugee-policy-a-crime-against-humanity/60062>

Contributed by Diana Woolley



Non-refoulement: why is this principle absent from Labor’s platform?

**James Massola
Sydney Morning Herald, 30 June 2015**

Labor has dropped any reference to non-refoulement – the principle which protects refugees from being returned to a country where they face harm – from its draft national platform.

The move has drawn sharp criticism from lawyer Julian Burnside and Senator Sarah Hanson-Young, but Labor’s immigration spokesman Richard Marles and Labor for Refugees spokesman Shane Prince point to a replacement clause they argue covers Australia’s obligations under the UN Refugee Convention.



The change is one of a slew of amendments contained in the ALP’s draft national platform and is part of a shake-up of the ALP’s approach to refugee policy.

WEB

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/its-the-principle-that-stops-refugees-from-facing-harm-so-why-is-it-absent-from-labors-platform-20150630-gi12py.html>

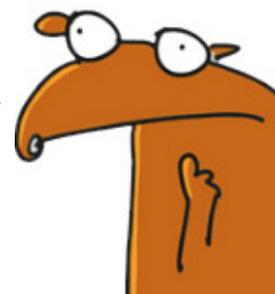
GO HOME LABOR, YOU’RE DRUNK. AND BASICALLY EVIL

First dog on the moon, 27 June 2015

Does Labor serve any purpose other than to rubber stamp the Abbott government’s decisions and wait for their turn to be in power?

WEB

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jun/27/go-home-labor-youre-drunk-and-basically-evil>





Children on Nauru now identify more with boat number than names

Max Chalmers
New Matilda, 29 June 2015

A number of children in the Nauru detention centre have started to identify more readily with their boat identification number than their name, signing off school tasks and artworks with the six-digit code as guards decline to refer to them and other asylum seekers by name. That's just one of the observations made in newly published submissions to a Senate Inquiry by staff who formerly worked in the centre.

WEB

<https://newmatilda.com/2015/06/29/detention-nauru-children-now-identify-more-boat-number-names-says-former-worker>

Contributed by Diana Woolley



Photos from Nauru

Shane Bazzi, 25 June 2015

I have obtained photos taken inside the Nauru detention centre which reveal the harsh conditions in the detention centre: gravel, no air-conditioning, rusty fans, no privacy, no doors, and mould in the tents.

An asylum seeker in Nauru has told me: "there is mosquito net but we are in tent and cockroach, lizard, crab and another animal come in our tent easily."

WEB

<https://medium.com/@shanebazzi/photos-from-nauru-detention-centre-8ffa71570aa>

Contributed by Freddie Steen

Statement from an asylum seeker transferred to Nauru

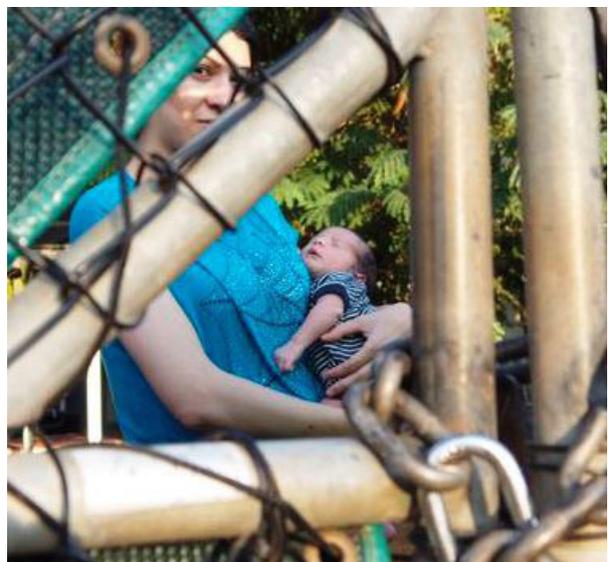
Pamela Curr
Workers Bush Telegraph, 30 June 2015

The following is a firsthand account of the transfer which occurred from Wickham Point detention centre near Darwin to Nauru on Wednesday 24 June.

We could hardly believe this so have waited for a definite report. Here it is. This is what is done to force frightened people back to the hell of Nauru.

WEB

<http://workersbushtelegraph.com.au/2015/06/30/statement-from-an-asylum-seeker-who-was-transferred-from-wickham-point-to-nauru>



Deaths and injuries at detention centres revealed

Sarah Whyte
The Age, 30 June 2015

Nine deaths, spewing raw sewage and snake bites are some of the workplace and safety incidents faced by Department of Immigration and Border Protection workers and asylum seekers over a year.

There were 449 incidents recorded for asylum seekers between July 2013 and June 2014, according to documents obtained under FOI laws from the federal government's health and safety authority, Comcare.

Greg Barnes, a lawyer with the Australian Lawyers Alliance, said the number of incidents was "extremely high" given the nature of the work carried out.

WEB

<http://www.theage.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/deaths-and-injuries-at-immigration-detention-centres-revealed-20150630-ghvfxv.html>