

MINUTES OF BUDDIES MEETING, 23 AUGUST 2015

Chairperson: Val Ross

Note-taker: Carolyn Bates

Apologies: Audrey Raymond, Nettie Knox, Libby Morrison, Fergus FitzGerald, Sheila Merriman, Al and Kaye Spierings

Lobby group

Lindel gave an in depth report on the group using a more multi layered approach using social media as a tool to spread the word. This included Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, petitions and our Website. Introduced Marnie Greer, a University intern involved with protecting the safety of women and children in detention.

A letter was sent to Hockey/Abbott about the financial and emotional costs of asylum seekers in Australia, but an open letter to a national newspaper would be more effective but very expensive. A crowd funding platform could be raised to finance this.

Margaret is going to a BRASS workshop on Friday where all agencies can discuss better ways to collaborate in supporting asylum seekers.

Quinn spoke about Nadir and her crowd funding efforts for him. She raised \$880 for food etc. for him. \$250 was left over and we voted to send this money to his family. She wants to encourage him to move to the Sunshine Coast.

LEH

Kayla spoke about reduced numbers recently and suggested the possibility of including places for the Settlement Program. Some disagreed about this. A refresher for previous referrals was suggested.

BITA

Rada and Margaret gave a wonderful talk about their experiences as volunteers and visitors to the detainees at BITA. There is a Buddies roster for those interested. However there are fewer asylum seekers there now as medical cases are being sent to a private hospital at Port Moresby instead and the BITA facility is being used to detain those with expired or invalid work visas.

Refugee welcome zones: 100 local councils in Australia have signed up. We tried unsuccessfully in 2012 but will try again with our current mayor. John Ennis, Garry Bates and Diana Woolley volunteered to make an appointment.

Incorporation

An explanation of a few facts was given by Val and it was mentioned that a tax deduction would be available now for those making regular donations as we are a Not-for Profit. [Note: This is yet to be enacted as Buddies has received its TFN and must now seek an ABN and register as a charity.] Val noted that the incorporation update and the constitution were sent out separately to our readership. Only 50% of those present indicated that they had read the documents. It was agreed by show of hands that the documents are to be sent out again, this time as attachments to the Bulletin.

Other business

John Ennis read out 2 letters, one regarding initial assessments process in PNG, the other about an Iranian refugee who travelled to Indonesia, then Manus Island and has passed away. It was a traumatic exposé of conditions that asylum seekers were subjected to under forceful security guards with little independent oversight or regard to due process.

Finance report, July 2015

Please access via the link in the Bulletin

Next meeting

Sunday 27 September, chairperson: Margaret Landbeck, no note-taker as yet.