

Newsletter

No.19 June, 2004

Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group

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A PROJECT OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS FAMILY
SUPPORT SERVICE ABN 48 765 203 957

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Education

Direct Help

Lobbying

Fundraising

Education

Fr. Frank Brennan's talk

What a crowd!

Some points he made

- Politicians see the policies as a firebreak - some property has to go to save the neighbourhood.
- Every political party and every citizen has an interest in ensuring that the human rights of children and adults are not undermined by the actions of the state or its private contractors
- Despite ten years of detention there is no proof that it operates as a deterrent.
- We have now started excising our Aboriginal communities from our migration zone!
- Australians should co-operate with other countries seeking international solutions to these problems.
- We should permit proven refugees to remain in Australia if still proved to be refugees after an initial period of up to three years temporary detention.
- We should not force people home unless security and access to justice is at an acceptable level.
- 50 - 60% of adults in detention suffer from a mental illness and 100% of children.

Politics in the Pub

John Valder and Sally Mc Manus both made the point that Australia should respect the 1954 Human Rights Treaty and find better ways of dealing with Asylum seekers and refugees. They too, condemned the present government policies, including the "Pacific solution" and argued for the release into the community of all those proved to be refugees.

Lobbying

Speakers for Community Groups

Gil Appleton and Therese Wachter spoke to the new group of Amnesty International at Katoomba. Several joined us and offered help. This emphasises the need to spread the word. Please use your influence. Talk to any groups to which you belong and twist their arms. If you have success contact Therese 47592065 or Eugene 47591818 and they will see to the rest.

Double Page Community Feature in the Blue Mountains Gazette. (26 May)

This has been an outstanding success and has sparked at great deal of interest in the community. Thanks to all who sought the advertisers, and a special thank you to Annette who put it all together. We were also fortunate to have the Gazette's support.

Blue Mountains City: a Refugee Welcome Zone.

The newly elected councillor Pippa McInnes introduced the motion at a Council Meeting. This was enthusiastically received by most. The Blue Mountains City now joins with 45 other local governments to welcome refugees to live, work and enjoy their communities.

Good on you Blue Mountains Council.

World Refugee Day

2.00 pm 20 June, 2004

Carrington Town Square Katoomba

Eugene Stockton, Peggy Goldsmith and Jim Tulip are organising a function to remember refugees around the world. The certificate recognising the Blue Mountains City as a Refugee Welcome Zone will be presented to the Council. There will be participation by the Trade Union Choir, school children, and representatives of our group.

Come along and show that Blue Mountains people have a generous heart. The more the merrier.

Direct Help

Refugee Families- our main focus

- Three families have settled in locally very well. The men are mostly working part-time. The children are attending school and getting extra help from neighbours.
- The big news is that the women and two of the men have attended a meeting with TAFE and from next week will be having regular English classes plus continuing English sessions with volunteers.
- The women have discovered all the best places to shop including the \$2 box at Todarello's.
- The young men are playing soccer for Wentworth Falls Under 16's. They haven't won a game yet!! - But are enjoying themselves.
- Designated support people have been great; visiting weekly and helping with problems.
- Rosie Smith, the multicultural worker has been allocated a few hours per week to help with the families. This is wonderful. Her main focus has been arranging English classes and looking for ongoing funding.
- Thanks for the continuing support which has included computers, lounges, blankets, and sewing machines etc. All have been put to good use.

Thanks to Wendy and Michael for their energy and compassion

Work Needed for a young man who has been working as a builder's labourer. He is keen, pleasant, and needs little direction.
Ring Michael 4782 3880

Accommodation Register

We are still building up this register. If you have suitable accommodation for **respite holidays** please give your name, address, number/email the number who can be accommodated and when available - week, weekend, school holidays etc. Some financial assistance available.
Contact Therese Wachter, 475582065.

Direct Action

Please write to politicians and the newspapers

As the election approaches, keep writing to the politicians and the papers especially the local papers and the Telegraph. Focus on one point at a time; keep it short and you will have more chance of success. Do not mention any one specific person or situation. Need help? contact Ken Goodlet 47586591.

Fundraising

Open Gardens Mount Wilson 8-9 May

Mt Wilson wore its best dress that weekend and it was such a pleasure to be there and drink in the beauty of the whole mountain. There was lots of co-operation a wonderful atmosphere of good will.

Pat Drummond Concert

2.00 pm 4 September, 2004

Springwood Civil Centre

Pat Drummond, the well known country folk singer has offered his services, so George is busy again. If you can help with any of these jobs, please contact George 47827866

- Design handbill, programme and tickets
- Sew 4 large banners & sign write them
- Find retail outlets to sell tickets
- Rubber stamp raffle tickets and keep records of raffle volunteers and raffle books.
- Raffle ticket sellers
- Helpers on the day: 3 Ushers 2 Ticket collectors
2 Stall attendants 2 Cleaners

For Your Diary

20 June 2004 World Refugee Day

4 September Pat Drummond Concert

Next Monthly Meeting

Monday 7 June 7.00 pm Parish Meeting Room, Our Lady of the Nativity, Great Western Highway, Lawson. Ample off street parking.

All Welcome.

Committee

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