

Newsletter

No.26 June, 2005

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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“You can judge politicians by how they treat refugees; they do to them what they would do to everyone else if they could get away with it.”

Ken Livingstone, Mayor of London

• Education • Direct Help • Direct Action • Fund Raising

Boundary Setting: Supernanny sends Naomi to the Naughty Corner indefinitely.



Direct Action

Friday June 10 – Rally noon – 2pm

Martin Place Amphitheatre, Sydney.

Sydney Speakers include: Sister Susan Connolly, Dianne Hiles, Dr Louise Newman, ChilOut Ambassadors and Christine Rau.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!

One year on from the deadline set by the Human Rights Commissioner for all children to be released from detention centres, we are still allowing children to be locked up and damaged **IN OUR NAMES**

Children still in detention

Villawood - 28 children from Tonga, China, & Indonesia

Port Augusta - 19 children from China, Tonga, & Iran

Christmas Island - 8 children from Vietnam

Nauru - 6 children from Afghanistan

Baxter - 2 children origin unknown

Hotel/house detention 1 child origin unknown

Harbour detention 1 child origin unknown

Total: 68 children in detention

Source: Department of Immigration 11 May 2005

Naomi was not the Only One Villawood's Baby Naomi and her mother have been released on a bridging visa. But- she was not alone. There is another 3 year old girl at Port Augusta detention centre, who has been in detention slightly longer. This toddler is currently the longest-serving child detainee in Australia. In Nauru, there are 6 children who have been in Nauru for well over 3 and a half years. For more details check the Chilout site - www.chilout.org

Change in the Air?

Keep up letters to the editor. Perhaps, at last, our efforts have not been in vain. We continue to pressure the government to reform its Immigration policy. Encourage Petro Georgiou, Bruce Baird, Judi Moylan and Russell Broadbent to maintain their stand. Write and congratulate them and send a copy of your letter to both state and federal members.

Education

Playback Theatre at Wentworth Falls School of Arts, 2.00 pm 12 November, 2005. Playback Theatre will perform the story of a refugee. As well, a high profile speaker will tell us the real story. More details soon.

Direct Help

Villawood Visitors

The dedicated band of members is visiting Villawood each fortnight on a Thursday. Join them for a sobering experience. The inmates are fed and clothed satisfactorily and some are going to English lessons but there is nothing for them to do. Boredom over months and years feeds their despair. It is pathetic to see a woman's face light up when given a bunch of flowers. Judy Gaskin is seeking National Geographics and other such material which the detainees can use as reading matter. Contact Judy on 4758 6228.

Our families

One year on and the Mountain families are settling into the community, especially the women, one of whom is learning to drive! The Support Group is continuing to pay the Pre School fees for the 4 year old toddler and will assist the two new babies when they need such help. This has proved a wonderful way for 'N' to learn to play with other children of her age and learn English.

Next monthly meeting

Monday 6 June February 7.00 pm at 31 Wigram Road Faulconbridge

For Your Diary

June 10 – Rally 'ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!'

June 25 - Jonathan Drew poetry reading

August 20 - Old Fashioned Bush Dance with the Gang-Gang Bush Band.

12 November, Playback Theatre

Please note new email address:

bmrsg@bigpond.net.au

Thanks to Cathy Wilcox and the Sydney Morning Herald for use of the cartoon.

Nauru

Citizenship Minister Peter McGauran said \$19 million was spent in the six months to December last year to maintain the prison on the Pacific island, while the estimated full-year cost was about \$28 million. All this taxpayers' money to detain 54 asylum seekers!

Fundraising

Old Fashioned Bush Dance with the Gang-Gang Bush Band

Saturday, 20 August 2005, 6 to 10pm
Civic Centre, Macquarie Rd, Springwood
Admission: \$15/\$12. Family (Parents & 2 children under 15) \$24, children under 5 free.
Back, by popular demand, so if you missed the last one here is your chance to join the fun.

Tickets available at the door Or send a cheque to BMRSG, P.O. Box 197, Katoomba NSW 2780

Help needed: People to sell raffle tickets, Distribute of flyers and posters, Donate raffle prizes (this is urgent as it has to appear on the raffle books). Organise stalls, Participate in street stalls to sell tickets a week before the event.

On the day: Serve tea, coffee and cakes, Sell soft drinks, Clean, Sell tickets, Staff the doors and information desk

Please respond to George on 4782 7866 or bmrsg@bigpond.net.au or write to P.O. Box 197, Katoomba 2780.

Poetry Reading

Jonathan Drew will hold a poetry reading on 25 June and donate the proceeds to BMRSG. Telephone Jonathan for details 4739 5147.

Gardens Without Borders

Chris Stanton of the Bridges for Asylum Seekers Foundation writes. 'Thank you all, every single one of you, for your wonderful - and cheerful -teamwork over the weekend despite the "moist" start on Saturday! We did the impossible - raised funds and spread the message.

Please pass this newsletter to a friend or neighbour.