

# Newsletter

No.24 November, 2004

## Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group

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

Ph 4751 2120 or 47827866

***“There can be no real peace without justice. And without resistance there will be no justice.”***

***Arundhati Roy winner of the Sydney Peace Prize 2004***

## • Education • Direct Help • Direct Action • Fund Raising

### Direct Help

**CHRISTMAS IN THE PARK Saturday, December 11th for a BYO picnic lunch at 12 noon. Wilson Park, Lawson, next to the Lawson swimming pool.**

Share the Christmas spirit with refugees, friends, and like-minded people, after a year full of ups and downs. The park is ten minutes from the railway station, five minutes from beautiful bush-walks, with toilets, grass and tree areas, water features and a children's play area.

Please bring a small gift of Christmas treats, dates chocolates, sweets, nuts etc. for the Christmas Tree. These will be taken to the people still in detention in Villawood.

Bring games to play - cricket, soccer, volley ball etc. and a chair or rug to sit on.

Watch for the appearance of the lollie man!

In the event of rain we will adjourn to the Santa Maria Centre along the highway at Lawson

Contacts: Marie 47512120, Michael 4782 3880, Therese 4759 2055, Judy 4739 5312. Included is an Invitation you can copy and pass to your friends.

### Fundraising

**A Russian Between the Poles - A Recital Sunday 12th December, 2.00 pm**

10 Ada St, Katoomba

All Proceeds to The Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group Admission \$15

Pianist Stephanie Hamlet will present a program of etudes, showcasing the development from Chopin to Szymanowski.

Feel free to join us for light refreshments after the recital. Seating is limited so please book early.

For all enquiries contact: Simon Clough

**Ph 4782-7556**

### Fundraising

Would you like to work with George on communication or organising fundraising events?

George writes:

“I enjoy both tasks but would like a partner for either or both. If you are interested in exploring this opportunity, please phone me on 47872 7866. Both tasks can be a source of great satisfaction.”

### Direct Action

The re-election of the Coalition Government poses an enormous challenge for refugee groups.

Refugees were the issue that neither major party wanted to talk about during the election. Now we must make sure the issue is not swept under the carpet by the new Parliament.

### Blue Mountains people attend Canberra protest

Thanks to the efforts of Kathie Herbert, 56 Blue Mountains residents joined the national protest ‘Stand Up for Refugees’, at the Opening of Parliament on Tuesday, 16 November. Greens Senator Bob Brown, former diplomat Tony Kevin, and Merlin Luck spoke passionately urging the Government to act with justice and compassion towards asylum seekers in detention and refugees in the community.

The peaceful crowd found itself surrounded by a large contingent of police and shunted onto a lawn at the side of Parliament House where it was hidden from politicians and visiting guests. As a visual gesture of support for the asylum seekers and refugees hundreds of heart-shaped cut-outs were planted on the lawn.



Thanks to Gil Appleton for pics

## Direct Action cont.

**Get out your pen and paper, typewriter, or computer and bombard with letters, faxes, e-mails to tell how it really is.**

***“ 90% of asylum seekers have been found to be genuine refugees.”***

From 'The Age' by Meaghan Shaw October 28, 2004, **Laurie Ferguson sounds harsh note on refugees.**

“Labor's new immigration spokesman has clashed with refugee advocates, claiming they would have a more realistic view if they lived in areas where most refugees resided.

Laurie Ferguson said some advocates failed to understand that "a sizeable proportion" of asylum seekers had fraudulent cases and manipulated the legal system to stay in Australia.

"I get a bit sick of being lectured to by people," Mr Ferguson said. "What I do question is that people who don't want any rules, don't want any controls, don't want any checking (of refugee claims) are usually people whose contact is limited to a few niche cases that they get very emotionally involved in. These people lack knowledge, quite frankly, of the broader issues."

Mr Ferguson's Sydney electorate of Reid has 25 per cent of Australia's temporary protection visa holders living there. Mr Ferguson supported Labor's immigration policy, including mandatory detention, but used more hardline language than predecessors Stephen Smith and Julia Gillard.

Some of Mr Ferguson's responses echoed the Government's line on refugees, including its suggestion that some asylum seekers were "queue-jumpers" taking the place of genuine refugees. Mr Ferguson said Labor would consider any Government legislation that expedited the processing system, but not laws that would cut people's rights.

He also said asylum seekers could not be released into society while their claims were being processed without "genuine guaranteed solutions" from refugee advocates that they would turn up to court cases.

"All international experience shows that if people have not got a strong case, they have no real wish to remain part of the system and basically disappear into society," he said.

**Email him now:**

[http://www.alp.org.au/people/nsw/ferguson\\_laurie.php](http://www.alp.org.au/people/nsw/ferguson_laurie.php)

## House of Welcome News.

Sister Lorraine, who has worked so tirelessly for refugees is taking a well needed break. While she has been assisting us we have learned so much and will miss her cheery wisdom and sensible practical help. However Sister Judy is taking her place and Jim Carty will also be available for help. Operating with the House of Welcome has been very valuable, as they are so knowledgeable. Without their help and advice we could not have achieved so much. Have a great rest Sister Lorraine .

## For Your Diary

**Noon, Saturday, 11 December, 2004,**  
Christmas Party on in the park adjacent to the swimming pool at Lawson.

**Sunday 12th December, 2.00 pm**

A Russian Between the Poles - A Recital  
10 Ada St, Katoomba

## Next Monthly Meeting 2005.

## Committee

- Chairperson: Marie , 47512120 mstanden@pnc.com.au
- Diane Pope, 4739 3445 poped@det.nsw.edu.au
- Fr. Eugene, 47591818
- George, 47827866 jege@bigpond.com
- Jim 47588104 jimtulip@bigpond.com
- Jim 4739 2450 fitzent@pnc.com.au
- Ken, 4758 6591 kgoodlet@tpg.com.au
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- Liz, 4751 5785 liznwong@yahoo.com.au
- Michael, 47823880 cartman@pnc.com.au,
- Peggy, 47588104 peggygoldsmith@bigpond.com
- Therese, 47592065 therese@unitingcarespringwood.org.au

Please pass this newsletter onto a neighbour or friend.



## Christmas Party

12 Noon Saturday 11 December, 2004  
Lawson Park opposite the Pool  
BYO lunch and a small gift to place on the  
Christmas Tree  
These gifts will be given to detainees.



Everyone welcome  
Bring a friend