

# Newsletter

No.15 October, 2003

## Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group

P.O. Box 197 KATOOMBA NSW 2780

Ph 4751 2120 or 47827866

e-mail: [bluemountainsrefugeesupport@bigpond.com](mailto:bluemountainsrefugeesupport@bigpond.com)

[www.bluemountainsrefugeesupport.net](http://www.bluemountainsrefugeesupport.net)

A PROJECT OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE

ABN 48 765 203 957

### Direct Help

We cannot emphasise enough the distress and mental agony which the uncertainty and frequent interrogations which the people we are assisting on Bridging E Visas have to bear.

You may think you are powerless but the spoken word is a great means of spreading the truth.

Talk to your friends neighbours, work mates and keep the message alive in the minds of the community. Remember, next year is an election year.

If you have a **washing machine** in good order please contact Michael on 47823880.

### Donations

Many people are very busy - show support by making a tax deductible donation. Make cheques to BMRRefugee Support Group.

### Refugee Sunday, 31 August

As a result of our involvement in a few church services phone cards and money are being sent to the House of Welcome.

### For Your Diary

**7.00 pm on Monday 3 November, 2003**

**Next meeting in the Mid Mountains Centre, New Street, Lawson.**

**Speaker:** David Morrow, a pro bono solicitor at Villawood will speak about the plight of Iraqi asylum seekers.

### Contact with Community Groups

Do you know of a group e.g. Lions, who would welcome a speaker? Please let us know.

### Get Involved - We Need You

Do you want to become more involved in our Group? Then come along **to the meeting and bring a friend.**

### Public Education

**Pam West from Blaxland Amnesty** group sends her thanks to all who supported and helped to make that function a success. Thanks to Therese Wachter and Jamila Hussain for looking after our stall.

### 'Molly and Mubarek', a film by Tom Zubrycki

Over 100 people gathered to see the film in the Mid Mountains Centre on Friday, 10 September.

As a result Marie Clugson of the Springwood Amnesty group was able to send \$400 to Tom Zubrycki to help with his expenses and \$250 each to Amnesty and ourselves.

It was a heart-warming, at times funny, and poignant story about the Afghan asylum seekers working in Young. Above all it emphasised the resilience of the refugees and their efforts to become part of the local society.

### Marie's Welcome to Concert

"When in 2001 a tiny group of us called a public meeting to draw attention to the plight of asylum seekers, little did we imagine that two years on we would have 300 supporters - but sadly little did we expect that the task ahead of us would remain much the same, As long as innocent children awake to the dawn behind barbed wire all Australians are diminished; as long as desperate, frightened people are lawfully imprisoned indefinitely then justice is shamed; as long as our leaders feel free to lie to us truth is mocked. It is up to everyone of us to use our power to change our immigration laws - and we do have power; the power to speak out fearlessly to friends, work mates, neighbours, to newspapers, and to politicians of all parties. If our children are to inherit a respected, free, peaceful democratic country we must act now."

## Annual Report

### 30 July, 2002 - 30 June 2003

The Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group is a diverse non-partisan group of all ages from the Blue Mountains area and a few who just visit us occasionally. It was formed in December 2001 with the object of

- Providing assistance to asylum seekers and refugees
- Assisting a refugee family/ies to settle in the Mountains
- raising public awareness of the plight of asylum seekers and refugees
- Fundraising to finance our activities

As the needs of Asylum seekers are continually changing the groups revises its objectives to meet the current needs.

### Membership

Membership has grown to over 300

A Steering Committee co-ordinates the **direct help** we provide, networks information about **direct action**, facilitates and encourages **public education** and organises **fundraising** events.

We publish regular newsletters and manage a website:

[www.bluemountainsrefugeesupport.net](http://www.bluemountainsrefugeesupport.net)

### Activities

- We have worked with the **House of Welcome** in Canley Vale to provide practical support to refugees released from detention.
- Held regular meetings of the Steering Committee and general meetings to which all are invited.

At our most recent meeting members voted unanimously to pass two resolutions -

#### **Resolution 1**

'To allow the steering committee to commit resources on behalf of the Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group to sponsor asylum seeker/s on Bridging E Visas as requested by the House of Welcome'

#### **Resolution 2**

'To support the work of the House of Welcome on a regular financial basis.'

- We have continued to liaise with like-minded people who are providing similar assistance for those still in detention and those recently released.

- Enlisted the support of the Mayor of Blue Mountains City Council, Clr Jim Angel as our patron.

- Liaised with local churches.

- Supported 'Free the Refugees' and 'No War' marches.

- Written and lobbied politicians.

- Written to and visited with detainees.

- Organised financially successful fundraising concert in August 2002 and an art and book sale in 2003.

- Held a picnic in Blackheath for 100 refugees from the Fairfield area.

- Held 2 Writing & Speaking Workshops.

- Supported three asylum seekers on Bridging E Visas

- Sponsored a Public Speaking Challenge among the local schools

### Activities for 2003 - 2004

- fundraising concert on 10 August, 2003

- Picnic for refugees

- Lobbying Workshop

- Letters to politicians

- Letters to the media

**Supporting** asylum seekers on Bridging E Visas and Temporary Visas as the need arises.

<b>FINANCIAL STATEMENT</b>		<b>Communications</b>
<b>BLUE MTNS REFUGEE SUPPORT GROUP</b>		<b>Do you receive our newsletters and other information by e mail? Then you are more fortunate than those who receive the Newsletter only by Australia Post. Could you pass on to 1 - 5 members who live close to you the additional information which you receive apart from the Newsletter. This would be a great way of connecting with others and sharing ideas.</b>
<b>YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2003</b>		
<b>INCOME</b>		<b>Ideas Ideas Ideas</b> Send us your ideas - it doesn't matter how wacky they are - just put your brain into fast drive and let your imagination fly. We have to come up with original and even funny ways to reach politicians and the voting public. How About this One? Young members form a drama group to take a play into schools and youth groups, senior citizen centres and push the message in their own way. Any takers? Or This Take a Co op double page in the Gazette; give the Gazette the names of 40 supporters who would place ads for between \$103 and \$300. We would supply the editorial material and buy one ad. We could do it for Refugee Week if we hurried as the paper needs 4-6 weeks notice . Let Marie know what you think about these ideas and more of your own.
Donation	4,841	
GST Reimbursement	222	
Reversal of bank fees	88	
Raffle	2,080	
Refund of bond	300	
Concert tickets	2,915	
Stall sales	824	
Other Sales	677	
<b>TOTAL Income</b>	<b>11,947</b>	
<b>EXPENSES</b>		<b>Our Brochure is available for distribution:</b> Download from the Website in PDF format or contact Marie Standen.
Advertising	-141	
Bank Charges	-56	
Bond	- 600	
Purchases	-367	
Website Domain Nam	-69	
Donations	-200	
GST	-297	
Musicians' fees	-400	
Website annual hosting	-55	
Prizes for Speaking Challenge	-320	
Office expenses	-23	
Postage & Stationery	-1,199	
Refugee Support	-2,414	
Rent of premises for events	-495	
Transport	-37	
Vehicle Hire	-1,030	
<b>TOTAL Expenses</b>	<b>-7,703</b>	
<b>TOTAL INCOME - EXPENSES</b>	<b>4,244</b>	
<b>Balance Sheet as of 30/6/03</b>		
<b>ASSETS</b>		
BMRC Credit Union	-2.85	
CBA	6,783.70	
<b>TOTAL Assets</b>	<b>6,780.85</b>	
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>		
<b>LIABILITIES</b>	<b>0</b>	

**Steering Committee next meeting: Guest Speaker: David Morrow.**

**Monday Nov 3. 7pm Mid Mountain Community Centre.Lawson. Bring a friend.**

Marie Standen (Chair) 31 Wigram Road, Faulconbridge 2776. 47512120 [mstanden@pnc.com.au](mailto:mstanden@pnc.com.au)

George Winston 7 Mission St, Katoomba, 2780.47827866 [geow@bigpond.com](mailto:geow@bigpond.com)

Fr. Eugene Stockton, 22 Somers St, Lawson. 2783. 47591818

Peggy Goldsmith, Jim Tulip, Woodford, 2778. 47588104 [peggygoldsmith@bigpond.com](mailto:peggygoldsmith@bigpond.com)

Michael Farrell-Whelan 7 Govett St, Katoomba, 2780. 47823880 [cartman@pnc.com.au](mailto:cartman@pnc.com.au)

Liz Wong Springwood 47515785 [liznwong@yahoo.com](mailto:liznwong@yahoo.com)

Therese Wachter Lawson. Ph 47592065(H) [wachert@wahs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:wachert@wahs.nsw.gov.au)

Leoni Hubbard 4775514739 [hubbardmob@pnc.com.au](mailto:hubbardmob@pnc.com.au)

Lee Andrews 47512900 [pratl@bigpond.com](mailto:pratl@bigpond.com)

Ken Goodlet 47586591 [kgoodlet@yowieenterprises.com](mailto:kgoodlet@yowieenterprises.com)

**All contact with The House of Welcome is through Therese Wachter 47592065**

