



BMRSB Confidentiality and Privacy Policy

Preamble: This policy covers all BMRSB members who are involved in activities that give them knowledge of personal, confidential details of refugees and people seeking asylum and other members and donors. The Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group (BMRSB) recognises that refugees and people seeking asylum are particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged in Australia. Care needs to be taken in regard to their confidentiality and privacy to avoid compromising their safety and those of their families abroad.

As a charitable organisation BMRSB is answerable to the Charities Commission. The Charities Commission defines what is and isn't ok for an organisation such as BMRSB to do.

To receive a temporary protection visa refugees and people seeking asylum must sign an agreement that they will not speak to the media (People have been put back into detention for breaking this agreement). The questions we should ask ourselves are

- Who needs to know?
- Will I put anyone at risk by my actions?

The guidelines outlined in this policy apply to e-mails and all other communications, written or verbal about BMRSB and its members.

Sharing Information

1. Community and Detention Centre Visitors and other BMRSB members need to exchange general information about people we are befriending and supporting so that relationships can be sensitive and respectful. In most instances general information about families –can be shared between a visitor team. Before committing anything to writing, consider whether it is necessary, whose interests it serves and how you will keep this information confidential. Confidential BMRSB documents should be marked “Confidential” in some way.
2. Personal private information about refugees and people seeking asylum supported by BMRSB however must be treated with great care and considered strictly confidential. Refugees need to know that they are safe to talk about these personal matters and that it will not be shared without their express permission. ¹
3. A refugee or person seeking asylum's private confidential information will only be provided to third parties and organisations where informed consent is gained, using

consent forms such as the Consent to Exchange Information form. (APPENDIX FORMS 1 &2)

4. Members and donors' names, contact details and ticketing sales information for BMRSNG events, will not be given to third parties.
5. There may be other information gained by a member in a confidential context, that should not be disclosed even with other members. This includes any grievances or disputes in progress between a member and BMRSNG and/or legal proceedings.

Meetings

6. Should a refugee or person-seeking asylum need a BMRSNG member to speak or act on their behalf, BMRSNG has specific consent forms for this purpose. (See Appendix FORMS 1&2)
7. Management Committee members must treat as strictly confidential information about people supported by BMRSNG, including individual names and details around;
 - Requests for financial support for particular families and/or individuals
 - Requests for contribution to legal fees for visa applications
 - Complaints
8. Information relating to Villawood and Community Visitor meetings must be handled with respect and sensitivity. Minutes should follow a process of de-identification and anonymity of asylum seekers.
9. While decisions made at management committee are of course public knowledge, management committee deliberations and discussions are confidential and should be marked as such.
10. Full names and addresses of individual refugees/or asylum seekers will not be used in committee meetings discussions and reports. Pseudonyms, initials or first names will be used, and care taken in raising details of personal circumstances.

BMRSNG Media Use

11. BMRSNG media statements on mainstream and social media need to reflect our confidentiality and *privacy principles*, as do statements by members on their personal social media including personal FB pages .

Politics

12. BMRSNG is an independent, secular and politically neutral organisation. We campaign on issues; we do not support individual parties. Australia has had many changes of government in recent years. To be effective, BMRSNG must be friends with all parties.
13. BMRSNG can advance public debate and lobby for changes in policy or oppose policies the organisation disagrees with. A charity can lose its charitable status for promoting or opposing a political party or candidate for public office.

Protecting Asylum Seekers and Refugees in the Media: personal stories and photos/videos

14. BMRSNG does not share names and personal details of a person seeking asylum on any social media or in any publication without their express permission, ensuring that they understand how widely social media can travel.
15. An individual's story is a great way to get public attention and increase understanding. However, if the person's visa status is insecure, stories need to be de-identified i.e. the names, the location and other identifying details need to be changed. When we use stories that are already in the media we should use **only** the information that is already in the public domain.(For example if the subject of the story did not mention his/her time on Christmas Island but we know he was there we have no right to add it to the story).
16. Care needs to be taken with the use of identifiable photos of adult individuals, especially those who are on temporary protection and other visas, to avoid placing further visa applications at risk. The exception would be unless the person asks for this to happen and feels it will help their situation or their images are already in the media.
17. In any event photos either of asylum seekers or refugees will not be published without informed consent. Details of the informed consent process (using forms appended) will be documented and records kept by the secretary. *
18. In the case of children, because of the additional complexity of negotiating informed consent, Identifiable photos of children of refugees or children of people seeking asylum will be not be published. If identifiable photos of children are needed for fundraising or other purposes then stock images can be used. There may be

19. occasions where exceptions can be made to this policy. Exceptions will be considered by the committee executive and reasons for their decision documented.

ME

20. BMRSNG members need to be conscious of what they say on their own social media: Members of BMRSNG are advocating for vulnerable people in a hostile environment. They need to be careful of using the actual name or other identifying information about a refugee or asylum seeker on a personal face book post or anything that could go public.
21. Exceptions to all of the above are where law requires “disclosure of information” or where duty of care considerations may override confidentiality provisions. This can happen when:
 - There is an obligation not to conceal an actual or intended crime including child abuse, theft or fraud
 - There is a need to warn a third party who may be in danger
 - Disclosure is in the person’s interests to avoid harm (e.g. suicide)

BMRSNG Inc will comply with relevant state and federal legislation in regard to confidentiality and privacy.

22. This policy will be reviewed by the Committee as required.

* if for some reason it is not practical to use these forms BMRSNG Inc requires a dated written undertaking by the person supplying that they have obtained informed consent for its use.

Ratified Nov 18, 2019



FORM 1

BLUE MOUNTAINS REFUGEE SUPPORT GROUP Inc

Consent to Act & Exchange Information

I (*print name here*) _____

Of (*print address here*) _____

Born On (*print Date of birth*) _____ in (*print Country of Birth*) _____

Authorise (*name of Visitor or advocate*) _____ to act, negotiate, acquire and exchange information and documentation about me on my behalf with:

- Federal & State government departments
- Non-government agencies and organizations
- Private & Commercial Businesses & their Sub Contractors
- Legal Services
- Medical Services
- Financial Services
- Any other organization that holds personal information, records or reports about me

I understand that: if I do not give consent I will still be able to receive support from BMRSG. I also understand that I can change my mind and withdraw my consent. This form is valid until it is revoked by me.

Signature of person consenting.....

Date _____

Signature of Witness

Name of Witness (*please print*) _____

Revised Feb 22, 2018.



Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group

A project of the Blue Mountains Family Support Service Inc.
ABN 48 765 203 957

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Email: bmrsg@aapt.net.au
Website: www.bmrsg.org.au
Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/
BlueMountainsRefugeeSupportGroup
Chairman: Joy Connor
chair@bmrsg.org.au
Secretary: Brendan Doyle

FORM 2

Villawood Detention Centre Consent Form

To whom it may concern

I..... of Villawood Detention Centre, Villawood NSW 2163 give

authority to.....of the Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group to act,

negotiate and acquire information and documentation on my behalf in relation to my

Australian immigration issues.

Date_____

Signature_____



FORM 3

**BLUE MOUNTAINS REFUGEE SUPPORT GROUP Inc
Publication of Photographs, Video, Audio
Consent Form – Adult (A) Version for English readers.**

I, the undersigned person agree to and give permission for the use of photographic, video, audio or any other form of recording of me .

I authorise the use or reproduction of any image/recording/text referred to below for the purposes of publication on social media, BMRSG website or other media.
I understand that there may be some consequences of my being identified in this material and I accept the risk of those consequences. I understand that if I had refused consent any services and assistance I receive from BMRSG would continue as usual.

Signature.....

Print name _____

DOB _____

Contact number _____

.....

Details of Publication:

Date and location of photo or video shoot, or audio recording (brief description) OR

Details of text.

Revised July 15, 2019



**BLUE MOUNTAINS REFUGEE
SUPPORT GROUP Inc**

**Publication of Photographs, Video, Audio
Consent Form – Adult (B) Non English Readers**

For use where the person is not able to read and write in English, but who can speak and understand English. This form is completed and signed by the person negotiating consent.

I _____ (print your
name & role/position)

have discussed the use a photo/video or audio recording of him/her

and I believe he/she understood the meaning of the terms below and the proposed
uses.

_____ (insert name of
person in the photo /video/audio

I have explained that:

1. Once in the public domain the photo/audio/video/audio could be used by anyone, anywhere in the world
2. He/she should consider any risks that could arise from such use.
3. If he/she refuses consent then any services and assistance from BMRSB would continue as usual

Signature _____

Date _____

July 15, 2019.



BLUE MOUNTAINS REFUGEE

SUPPORT GROUP Inc

**Publication of Photographs, Video, Audio
Consent Form – Children (A) Version for English readers.**

I, the undersigned person agree to and give permission for the use of photographic, video, audio or any other form of recording my child/children, including information about my child/children by or on behalf of Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group (BMRSG).

I authorise the use or reproduction of any image/recording/text referred to below for the purposes of publication on social media, BMRSG website or other media.
I understand that there may be some consequences of my child being identified in this material and I accept the risk of those consequences. I understand that if I had refused consent any services and assistance I receive from BMRSG would continue as usual.

Print name of Child (under 18)

DOB _____

Signature of parent/guardian (if person is under 18)

.....

Print name _____

Parent Contact number _____

Details of Publication:

Date and location of photo or video shoot, or audio recording (brief description) OR

Details of text.

Revised July 15, 2019