

Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group

A PROJECT OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE

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Annual Report 2009

With the election of the Rudd Government many of the draconian policies of the previous government have been changed. As a result, some of our support and enthusiasm has been lost. In spite of this the committee has continued to meet bimonthly, produce newsletters, write to the Minister, Sen. Chris Evans, lobby Hon Bob Debus and encourage our members to do likewise.

With the reduction in public support we have not held any fund raising functions this financial year. However, the appeal for funds from our members replenished our coffers and we feel we can continue to provide financial support until the end of 2009 to the Villawood visitors for petrol, The House of Welcome, Bridges for Asylum Seekers and Mamre house.

Direct Help

- Our dedicated band of visitors has continued to visit the Villawood Detention Centre and to provide friendship and some needed extras to the detainees.
- We have continued to support individual refugees, by providing emotional support and some legal assistance.
- We held a delightful Christmas picnic which was attended by our refugee friends from The House of Welcome, refugees now living in the community and even some released for the day from Villawood. It was a children friendly, cheerful and truly multicultural event. Our special thanks go to the Blue Mountains City Council and Lawson Pool for providing additional lifeguards and arranging for the children to have return passes. We are anticipating repeating this picnic in December 2009.

Action

In the several productive meetings we have had with Hon. Bob Debus and also in our letters to him and Minister Chris Evans, we have continued to express our concerns on these matters:

- Delays in processing refugees' claims
- Mandatory detention
- Contracting out of services to private enterprise, especially Serco
- Community detention conditions for families and children
- Release of detainees without adequate immediate assistance
- Difficulties faced by refugees, who have been deported or have returned home
- Access to education after leaving school
- Greater access to English classes
- Review of resettlement procedures to include housing, employment, and cultural needs
- Review of work rights for bridging visa holders
- The urgent need for the Government to prepare for future climate change refugees from the Pacific.

We shall continue to function as a lobby and support group as long as we are able.

I must thank all the members of the Committee for their hard work and support. We sincerely thank the Blue Mountains Family Support Service for its continued support and encouragement.

Marie Standen,
Chairperson
September 2009

BLUE MOUNTAINS REFUGEE SUPPORT GROUP
(A Project of Blue Mountains Family Support Service Inc.)
INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT
YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2009

Balance Brought Forward 1/7/08 –

Term Deposit Account	12,902.46	
Cheque Account	6,049.89	

		18,952.35

ADD: INCOME

Donations	8,347.00	
Stall Sales	53.00	
Bank Interest	552.55	
Bond Refunds	3,300.00	
Other (GST reimbursement/hall hire refund)	474.57	

		12,727.12

		31,679.47

EXPENSES

Donations / Refugee Support	20,453.18	
Postage, Printing & Stationery	396.14	
Bank Fees (Netbank)	80.00	
Bonds	300.00	
Hall Hire	142.73	
Sundry	49.43	

		21,421.48

BALANCE REMAINING AT 30 TH JUNE 2009		\$10,257.99
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C. Williams
14.7.09