

Ballina Region for Refugees



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AGENDA

3pm, 5th December 2021, 3 Grandview Apartments, East Ballina

RSVP to admin@br4r.org.au

*The meeting will be followed by a light Christmas supper.
Please bring a plate to share.*

- Acknowledgment to Country
 - BR4R vision and goals
 - 2020 Annual General Meeting minutes (Draft)
 - 2021 Reports
 - President's report
 - Treasurer's Report 2020-2021
 - Publicity Report
 - Report on Volunteer Activity
 - Membership Report
 - Homestay Report
 - Letter Writing Report
 - Markets
 - Rallies
 - Reports from partner organisations
 - POSITIONS FOR ELECTION
 - COMMITTEE MEMBER NOMINATIONS
 - Guest Speaker, Dawn Barrington and friend (by Zoom from WA)
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2020 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

Venue: Meeting Room, Grandview Apartments, East Ballina

Date: December 5th, 2020. Meeting commenced at 2pm

Welcome

Acknowledgement of country and BR4R Vision and goals

Welcome to Dawn Barrington (on Zoom) who we will hear from later in our general meeting.

Present

Ruth Henderson, Bill Boyd, M. Loong, Margaret Pickup, Lisa Dillon, Rik Dillon, Sandra Mondange, Gunela Astbrink, P. Antoniacomi, Bayla Nerden, Gillian Welstead, Marilyn Leeks, Anita Mansfield, Michelle Lacey, Rachel Welstead, Diana Bruce, Stanley Yeo, Christine McNeil, Deb Goodge, Jane Elliott, Ann Hickey, Clare Hickey, Cheryl Malloy, Lesley Wilkins

Apologies

Anne Shay, Penny Chapman, Anne Marchment, Alison Crook, Julia Hall, Mary O'Brien, Sue Williams, Teresa, Kia Trainer, Tre Rawsthorne

Moved by Meg Pickup, seconded by Jane Elliott, that the **apologies be accepted.**

Quorum Achieved: Yes

Minutes of previous (2019) AGM (previously circulated)

Any amendments/discussion on those? None received

Moved by Cheryl Malloy, seconded by Bayla Nerden, that the **minutes of the BR4R 2019 AGM be accepted.**

Reports

Reports were previously circulated to all members and lodged on the BR4R website. Hard copy reports were available on the day.

President – Ruth Henderson

Moved by Ruth Henderson, seconded by Lisa Dillon, that the **President's report for 2019/2020 be accepted.**

Treasurer – Rik Dillon

Moved by Richard Dillon, seconded by Leslie Wilkins, that the **Treasurer's report for 2019/2020 be accepted.**

All other reports noted and accepted as read:

- Fundraising – Trish Antoniacomi
- Events – Meg Pickup
- Administration – Cheryl Malloy

- Publicity – Lisa Dillon
- Membership – Bayla Nerden
- Homestay Program – Gunela Astbrink,
- Settlement Programme – Stanley Yeo
- Manus Lives Matter – Jane Keogh
- Brisbane On-Arrival Support Group – Janet Wilson/Rebecca Lim
- Dawn Barrington Project – Dawn Barrington

The President called for any questions or comments about any other report. None were received.

Election of office bearers – The Election was conducted by returning officer Bill Boyd.

The Treasurer (Rik Dillon) and one Ordinary member (Lisa Dillon) are remaining for the second part of their tenure.

The following positions are declared open.

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Two Ordinary members
- Public Officer

President. Nominations are called for the position of President.

- Nomination 1: Ruth Henderson
 - Moved: Cheryl Malloy
 - Seconded: Meg Pickup
 - Nominee confirmed they are happy to stand
- Voting:
 - One nominee: Declared to be elected by popular acclamation

Vice President. Nominations are called for the position of Vice President.

- Nomination 1: Stanley Yeo
 - Moved: Ruth Henderson
 - Seconded: Rik Dillon
 - Nominee confirmed they are happy to stand

- Voting:
 - One nominee: Declared to be elected by popular acclamation

Secretary. Nominations are called for the position of Secretary.

Note: Sandra Mondange was co-opted to the position of Secretary in August 2020.

- Nomination 1: Sandra Mondange
 - Moved: Ruth Henderson
 - Seconded: Meg Pickup
 - Nominee confirmed they are happy to stand

- Voting:
 - One nominee: Declared to be elected by popular acclamation

Ordinary (non-executive) member (1 of 2). Nominations are called for the position of Ordinary (non-executive) member.

- Nomination 1: Jane Lewis
 - Moved: Ruth Henderson
 - Seconded: Jane Elliott
 - Nominee confirmed they are happy to stand

- Voting:
 - One nominee: Declared to be elected by popular acclamation

Ordinary (non-executive) member (2 of 2). Nominations are called for the position of Ordinary (non-executive) member.

- Nomination 1: Marilyn Leeks
 - Moved: Meg Pickup
 - Seconded: Cheryl Malloy
 - Nominee confirmed they are happy to stand

- Voting:
 - One nominee: Declared to be elected by popular acclamation

Public Officer. Nominations are called for the position of Public Office

- Nomination 1: Cheryl Malloy
 - Moved: Ruth Henderson
 - Seconded: Jane Elliott
 - Nominee confirmed they are happy to stand

- Voting:
 - One nominee: Declared to be elected by popular acclamation

The incoming President offered congratulations to the incoming Committee – Stanley Yeo, Sandra Mondange, Jane Lewis, Marilyn Leeks and Cheryl Malloy – and thanks to continuing members, Richard Dillon and Lisa Dillon.

General Business

Confirmation of Public Officer (Special resolution requiring approval by 75% of members at meeting)

Motion: that Cheryl Malloy become the Public Officer of Ballina Region for Refugees Inc., as required by NSW Fair Trading.

Moved by Bill Boyd, seconded by Leslie Wilkins. **Carried unanimously.**

Thanks to Sue Williams for previously holding this position.

Confirmation of the official address of Ballina Region for Refugees.

Motion: that the official address of Ballina Region for Refugees be the **residential address of the Public Officer.**

Moved by Gillian Welstead, seconded by Meg Pickup. **Carried unanimously.**

Change financial institutions

Motion: that the accounts held at the Ballina branch of SUNCORP be closed and new accounts be opened at the Ballina branch of Southern Cross Credit Union.

Moved by Leslie Wilkins, seconded by Lisa Dillon. **Carried unanimously.**

Confirmation of signatories and any one to sign for the Ballina Region for Refugees Inc. working account until next Annual General Meeting.

Motion: that a **working account** be opened at the Ballina branch of Southern Cross Credit Union and that until the next Annual General Meeting that Ruth Henderson (President), Stanley Yeo (Vice President), Richard Dillon (Treasurer), and Gunela Astbrink (member of the Homestay Program Committee) be signatories on this. Any one signatory will have the authority to use the account and to make changes to this account either in person at the bank or via Internet banking as set out in the next motion

Moved by Cheryl Malloy, seconded Jane Elliott. **Carried unanimously.**

Management of two signatory working account

Motion: that the working account be used solely for the following purposes: (1) Paying for any expenses as necessary for the running of BR4R or any other item approved of by the BR4R Committee including expenditure occurred in line with the BR4R expenses policy and procedures.

Motion: Moved by Gillian Welstead, seconded by Bayla Nerden. **Carried unanimously.**

Confirmation of signatories and any two to sign for the Ballina Region for Refugees Inc. savings account until the next Annual General Meeting

Motion: that a savings account be opened at the Ballina branch of Southern Cross Credit Union and that until the next Annual General Meeting Ruth Henderson (President), Stanley Yeo (Vice President), and Richard Dillon (Treasurer) be signatories on this account, and that two of these signatories are required to operate and make changes to the accounts either in person at the bank or via Internet banking.

Moved by Leslie Wilkins, seconded by Bill Boyd. **Carried unanimously.**

Confirmation of authorised signatories

Motion: that Cheryl Malloy (Public Officer), Ruth Henderson (President) and Richard Dillon (Treasurer) be confirmed as the authorised signatories for Ballina Region for Refugees Inc., **as required by NSW Office of Fair Trading.**

Moved by Bill Boyd, seconded by Bayla Discussion. **Carried unanimously.**

Confirmation of Ballina Region for Refugees Inc. Committee Authority

Motion: that until the next Annual General Meeting of Ballina Region for Refugees Inc. the duly elected Committee has the authority within the framework of the Constitution to:

- (1) Change any signatories on accounts and authorised signatories required by NSW Office of Fair Trading
- (2) Make any other changes deemed necessary for the effective operation of Ballina Region for Refugees Inc.
- (3) The said Committee shall notify financial members of any changes within two business days of making them.

Moved Meg Pickup, seconded Rik Dillon Discussion. **Carried unanimously.**

To conclude the Annual General meeting, the Committee of BR4R awarded the following **Certificates of Appreciation:**

- Cheryl Malley, past BR4R Administrative Coordinator and Facebook and Newsletter Coordinator
- Sue Williams, immediate past BR4R Public Officer
- Lee Mathers and Alice Kurien of the Northern Rivers Community Gallery
- Emma Aspden of Anglicare Up North
- Dr Emma Doolan of Southern Cross University
- Dr Mandy Hughes of Southern Cross University
- Lesley Wilkins, BR4R volunteer
- Rosemary Schibli, BR4R volunteer

The Annual General Meeting concluded at 3pm.

A **General Meeting** followed the AGM where WA-based refugee advocate, activist and folk singer Dawn Barrington addressed the meeting by Zoom.

Reports 2020-2021

President's Report — Ruth Henderson, President

In a further year of uncertainty across the globe, the goal of BR4R to think globally and act locally has been tested once again.

As restrictions in Australia continued, and many of our usual trusted sources of revenue dried up, it would have been easy, like many other organisations did, just to go into recess, to take a break and resume activities at a later date. As the President of this small active band, I am very proud to report that once again in 2020-2021 we did nothing of the sort. We again worked on. Despite everything, we have had another remarkable year, raising more than \$28,000 up to June 2021, with more events held, as restrictions eased, from July to December 2021. We continued regular payments to a number of partner organisations* and gave significant sums to larger refugee organisations, especially to support legal costs.

Highlights of our year 2020/2021 at BR4R include the following:

- The forming of a partnership with the distributors and producers of the film *Scattered People*, allowing us to show the film at both Star Court and Byron Theatres. Not only did these showings raise significant funds, but they introduced BR4R to new audiences, especially in Byron Shire. We are following this up with a showing of *JIRGA* in Byron directed by Benjamin Gilmour on December 1st. The showing of both films has given us opportunities for a greater media presence.
- We held two open meetings for members. One meeting focused on the experiences of one of our members in settlement work and on our own BR4R Settlement Support activities. We held a further open meeting by Zoom with Dr John Parker, a Ballina based medic who worked with refugees across many parts of the world.
- We sponsored two Afghan families who are anxiously awaiting the outcome of their visa applications. We expanded settlement membership with a group from Ocean Shores who, like us, had also completed the Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia training (CRSA). We became a coordinating group for CRSA. It is hoped that when international borders open, the Australian government will adopt a community sponsorship program similar to the one in Canada and NZ and we will see more requests for settlement here.
- We held our third annual BR4R second annual poetry competition with an increased number of entries, including receiving more poems where the writers identified themselves as refugees. A number of the poems will be published in the literary journal ***Social Alternatives***. Prize-winning poems can be found on our BR4R website. Our competition was promoted in a number of places, including through the inaugural national *Red Room*. In exciting news, the winning poem will be read at the Charter of Compassion global gala in early December, putting us on the world stage. We have already attracted interest for next year's competition

from a national journal. We acknowledge here the legacy left by the family of Louise Griffiths which made the monetary prizes possible.

- We have held, when possible, fortnightly roadside rallies and monthly markets. We held possibly our most successful Palm Sunday Rally in Lennox. We were invited to be the charity of the night on the return of Tintenbar Upfront. And as our Treasurer has mentioned, we received several large financial donations from individuals, for which we are very grateful.
- We donated several more books to the Richmond Tweed library.
- In 2020 we moved to a quarterly newsletter and to more regular short bulletins. We kept our Facebook page live and saw a significant increase in our print media profile.
- We participated for the first time in a Kilometres of Compassion event coordinated by the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre. We had over 40 walkers and raised almost \$8000 for ASRC.
- Based on the work of the Uki Refugee Project, in November 2020, we launched the BallinaByron Declaration with the aim to get 1000 signatures.
- We are holding a lunch on 30th November in Lennox to focus on the situation in Afghanistan and we have been seeking out volunteers to support a further 50 Afghans seeking humanitarian visas.
- We have applied for a grant from the Northern Rivers Community Foundation to support our settlement work. The outcome should be known by the AGM.

None of the above, of course, would have been possible without effort, time and commitment from the BR4R 2020/21 Committee, Stanley, Rik, Sandra, Lisa and Marilyn. Thank you all, you are an amazing team. Heartfelt thanks especially go to Sandra Mondange who is stepping down from the Committee this year. Sandra, our amazing administrative coordinator, will be really missed as a committee member but thankfully will remain with us in another capacity. Cheryl Malloy last year stepped into the role of Public Officer but with an exciting move in place, Cheryl will relinquish this role. On behalf of the BR4R Committee, I would like to thank Cheryl for all her contributions to BR4R over a number of years, in a number of ways.

There are many others who have contributed to this year's work for BR4R: Trish, and Meg our market leads, ably assisted by Rosemarie and a team of other volunteers; Gunela maintained contacts as our Homestay Coordinator despite state border closures; Bayla continued as our efficient Membership Coordinator and Christine carried on as our letter writing coordinator. Meg coordinated a merry band for the fortnightly rallies. Bill enthusiastically took on the role of Poetry Coordinator and Rose Fox's work on the film showings has been invaluable. Members will be aware that most of the Committee wear more than one hat/carry more than one job. Marilyn took over from Jane Lewis as Volunteer Coordinator, Lisa took on the publicity role and Rik managed the website, lately ably assisted by John Pursey. Our settlement group volunteers, led by Stanley, continued to meet across the year. Stanley continued this year to generously offer us these premises for our meetings. Thank you again, one and all.

Finally, I would like to you, our members, for your continued support of our efforts. I look forward to another successful year ahead as together we think globally but act locally.

**Direct payments again this year went monthly to the Brigidine Sisters (work on Manus), the Refugee Medical Transfer Group (renamed Brisbane On-arrival Support Group) supporting those currently being moved off community detention onto final departure bridging visas, and Dawn Barrington, WA based activist supporting those detained in hotel and other detention centres*

Treasurer's Report — Rik Dillon, Treasurer

Unfortunately, due to covid restrictions, I'm unable to attend this AGM.

However, be assured your Treasurer has not absconded with your funds!!

Another year has passed and refugees and those seeking asylum have spent another year in inhumane detention.

We, BR4R and all our supporters, have done all we can to change this through financial support and advocacy.

Remember that **this report is for the financial year 2020-2021 that ended in June.**

We managed to raise more money than I had anticipated.

The main difficulty we have had has been the restrictions imposed due to Covid. Several markets just did not happen and almost all of our other fund-raising events were cancelled.

When the Ballina markets were on, our volunteers did an exceptional job.

Over the 12 months the market brought in over \$8,700 – more than 3 times what was raised

in the previous financial year. These thousands of dollars were the result of hundreds of small transactions – testament to the efforts by the volunteers who moved all the goods from the container to the market, set it all up, traded all morning and then did it all in reverse. I must make special mention of Meg, Trish and Rosemary.

We did also have a reasonably successful Lismore Car Boot Market, but not as good as last year.

Again, it appears Covid may have been responsible for lower numbers.

We only had one Bunnings BBQ fundraising and that was at the smaller Byron store. We're very thankful for this support and look forward to having more in the coming year.

Unfortunately, no other fundraising events were held during the 2019-2020 financial year.

Fortunately, our funds were supplemented by many generous donations. Special mention to Betty Weiler, Luke Robinson, Meg Pickup and Mike Corbett for very generous donations.

Extra special mention to Kate Doyle for a wonderful donation of \$10,000. Kate was so impressed by what we are doing and the huge need, she later gave another \$5,000.

Despite the limitations due to Covid, with the support of our volunteers and donors we managed to raise over \$ 32,000 -an increase of nearly 20%.

Throughout the year we've managed to continue our support of various front-line workers and other agencies. *The Brisbane Onshore Arrivals Support Group, the Brigidine*

Presentation Sisters and WA advocate, *Dawn Barrington* all continue to do wonderful and urgent work and we'll continue to support them for as long as we're able and as long as necessary. We've also contributed funds this year to ASRC (Asylum Seekers Resource Centre), RACS (Refugee Advice and Casework Services) and RCoA (Refugee Council of Australia).

We increased our cash at the bank during the year a little more than we intended as our usual aim is to disperse it all. However, with the uncertainty of our fundraising abilities we needed to keep a little more in reserve. As the Covid restrictions reduce, we look forward to a more successful fundraising in the future.

A complete copy of this report is available on-line and there are some copies at the AGM.

Some of the figures that may be of interest ...as of the end of June we had over \$13,000 in our bank account

We have dispersed nearly **\$28,000** to those directly supporting refugees.

And our only other costs were insurance (\$1,900), Poetry Prize (\$500), Web hosting (\$126) and financial fees (\$ 44).

As I have said before, a very good effort for a relatively small group.

I sincerely hope that in the near future BR4R will be redundant.

2020-2021

Income		Outgoings		
Donations	\$ 19,805.35	Donation (RMTG)	\$ 11,250.00	
Memberships	\$ 1,800.00	Donation (Brigitine)	\$ 2,200.00	
BBQs	\$ 529.85	Donation (Dawn B.)	\$ 5,900.00	
Markets	\$ 10,108.15	Donation (Solmaz)	\$ 598.80	
Book & Shirt sales	\$ 215.00	Donation (RCoA)	\$ 500.00	
Interest	\$ 19.88	Donation (RaCS)	\$ 2,000.00	
		Donation (ASRC)	\$ 5,000.00	
		Homestay	\$ 351.00	
		Shirts & Books	\$ 330.00	
		Poetry prize	\$ 500.00	
		Web costs	\$ 126.50	
		Insurance	\$ 1,876.94	
		Fees on donations in	\$ 44.30	movement
Total income	<u>\$ 32,478.23</u>	Total outgoings	<u>\$ 30,677.54</u>	<u>\$ 1,800.69</u>
				<i>increase in funds</i>

Cash at bank

as of start of 2020-2021		as of end of 2020-2021		
Business Everyday Account	\$1,104.84	Business Working Account	\$5,362.56	
Business Saver Account	10723.42	Business Saver Account	\$8,266.39	movement
total	<u>\$ 11,828.26</u>	total	<u>\$13,628.95</u>	<u>\$ 1,800.69</u>
				<i>increase in funds</i>

Refugee Settlement Support Group — Stanley Yeo, Vice President

August 2020 to June 2021

The origins of BR4R's Refugee Settlement Support Group (henceforth the "Group") can be traced to BR4R successfully applying to participate in a pilot program run by Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia (CRSA). CRSA has been advocating since 2019 for the introduction of a community refugee sponsorship program in Australia, which would enable ordinary Australians to sponsor refugees from overseas. CRSA's program involves sponsor groups committing to provide 12 months of practical settlement support to a refugee individual/family as well as cover their basic financial needs during that period.

The Group had a full day of training by CRSA staff in October 2020, and members participate in ongoing Peer to Peer forums, special Zoom training sessions and chat groups initiated by CRSA. The Group comprises of 12 members of different ages and backgrounds, possessing a rich and diverse pool of talents, work and professional experience. In further preparation for supporting a refugee/family settle in our region, the Group has produced a resource kit (with much help from Rachel Welstead, a SCU Master of Social Work student) to assist refugees in the areas of social and health services, social inclusion, employment, education and accommodation.

The Group has encountered a number of refugees and people seeking asylum who expressed interest in settling in our region. They include a person who had applied for a horticultural traineeship offered by Ballina Council; another who had considered taking up an apprenticeship in hospitality at a local restaurant; and a third who was considering purchasing a local house cleaning business. For various good reasons, none of these people eventually decided to come.

In March 2021, the BR4R Management Committee decided to set aside \$500 each month, to build up the fund required for settling a refugee/family in our region. CRSA estimates that the amount required for an individual is \$18k; and a family between \$24k to \$31k.

Future plans and developments since July 2021

- The Group will continue to be on the lookout for refugees and people seeking asylum who are interested in settling in our region. We will rely on CRSA and other refugee support groups to refer these people to us.
- In August 2021, BR4R sponsored two Afghan families to settle in Australia through the special humanitarian visa program of the Australian government. The Group works closely with the Uki Refugee Project on this initiative.
- BR4R will consider having more settlement support groups to be trained by CRSA, should the demand for them arise. In this regard, a second settlement support group, based in Ocean Shores, was recently formed in October 2021 and is now part of BR4R.
- In November 2021, a young Iranian refugee who has been in Australia since his teens, will be settling in our region and staying with a member of our Group.

- Various Awareness and Fund-raising events are planned throughout the year to highlight and support BR4R's refugee settlement support initiative.

Volunteers Coordinator Report — Marilyn Leeks, Ordinary Member

Ballina Region for Refugees at the time of writing this report in November 2021, had 102 volunteers. Volunteers participate in a range of awareness and fundraising activities to advocate and support refugees living in Australia and those who remain in offshore detention on Nauru or continue to live in limbo in Port Moresby.

- Volunteers participate in the following activities and events
- Poetry competition (annual)
- Tintenbar Up Front (TUF) (annual)
- Ballina Players (annual)
- Bunnings BBQs in Ballina and Byron Bay (approx. twice a year)
- Art Exhibition (annual)
- Homestay program (ongoing)
- Advocacy to local and federal politicians (ongoing)
- Ballina markets (monthly)
- Refugee settlement (ongoing)
- Roadside Rallies (fortnightly)
- Car Boot market Lismore (annual)
- Palm Sunday rally (annual)
- Film events
- Ocean Shores refugee settlement group (ongoing)

A smaller group of volunteers are elected at the AGM or invited to carry out specific roles within BR4R.

- Management Committee executive and members
- Membership Coordinator
- Public Officer
- Volunteer Coordinator

Many of our events are successful due to the contributions of musicians, speakers and businesses who voluntarily give their time, talents or funds to support refugees and increase community awareness.

My thanks to the volunteers who responded to my requests and contributed to the many activities. I look forward to working with you again next year.

Publicity Report — Lisa Dillon, Ordinary Member

Despite lockdowns and cancellations, BR4R has had a busy year with activities: an art exhibition, a poetry competition, Palm Sunday Rally, Lismore Car Boot Market, Bunnings BBQs, the screening of *Scattered People*, *Tintenbar Up Front* and more.

All these activities have been either publicised beforehand, reported on afterwards, or both.

Print Media

Articles and media releases have been sent to all local print publications at different times, with varying success. The standout supporter of BR4R has been *The Echo*, with one well-placed article bringing in many donations.

Social Media

Regular Facebook posts have helped to publicise activities, as well as the creation of Facebook Events. Some others have been designed to raise awareness of BR4R and our involvement in campaigns such as *Time for a Home*. At other times I have re-posted items from other refugee support groups.

Twitter has been used to a lesser extent, but my aim in the next few months, is to find out more about how best to use it to our advantage – with the help of our young intern, Selena Whittaker. Instagram is another area with great potential.

Radio

ABC North Coast has been very responsive, as has Bay FM. Several interviews with Ruth and Stanley have resulted. Paradise FM have been helpful too.

Library

Mark Isaac's book, *The Kabul Peace House*, was donated to the Richmond Tweed Library, with our name plate in it.

The future: It's very encouraging that several new volunteers, such as **Rose Fox**, are putting their hands up to help organise and promote events: these are younger people with knowledge, experience and contacts in media. This bodes well for the future of BR4R.

Membership Report — Bayla Nerden

Activity November 2020 to November 2021

- Processing new memberships and renewals
- Updating membership register
- Checking and adding new names to the MailChimp mailing list
- Coordinated Members Open Meeting, held on 10th June to spotlight the work of BR4R Refugee Mentor Group attended by approximately 25 members and guests.

Membership History

At incorporation 26.11.2016	17
AGM 2017	41
AGM 2018	63
AGM 2019	56
AGM 2020	60
AGM 2021	73

Source of new members during current period (Reported online since April 2021)

Markets (Ballina & Lismore)	
Events (talks, workshops, rallies, films, shows)	
Publicity (press, social media, broadcast interviews)	3
Newsletter	1
Personal friend / word of mouth	3
Other / unknown	6

Current Membership Profile

Ballina Shire	49
Byron Shire	15
Lismore Shire	5
Other (Gold Coast and Maclean)	3
Full	52
Concession / student	21

Homestay Program — Gunela Astbrink

Our Homestay Program has been operating since 2015. It gives refugees and persons seeking asylum a chance to get away for a short time from their stressful lives and stay with friendly welcoming people in our region.

Often contact is maintained and sometimes friendships are formed. This year for example, one former host is providing moral support for a woman facing domestic violence. Another host, after a visit by the family of a young man, is preparing for his settlement in this area. This will be an opportunity for BR4R's Refugee Settlement Group

to provide much practical support. The Homestay Committee works closely with the Refugee Settlement Group.

Because of Covid border closures and travel restrictions, we have not been able to offer more than one homestay visit this year. But we expect 2022 to be better!

Letter Writing (online letters) Report — Christine McNeil

Activity:

- Three letters sent from the group in 2021, to local MPs and Karen Andrews
- Received monthly information on letter writing campaign from Airey's Inlet RAR

Issues arising:

- Recipient list for online letter writing needs updating
- Unclear if anyone is actioning emails from Airey's Inlet as limited feedback received

Markets — Meg Pickup

There were six markets held over this year at the monthly East Ballina Lions markets. The market volunteers contend to accept donations across the year and to sort items and manage the BR4R storage shed.

Rallies — Meg Pickup

We had a stop-start year with the rallies, only able to hold 13 throughout the year. COVID-19 was responsible for most rallies being cancelled. The weather also had an impact. Support at each rally has been overwhelmingly positive. We averaged at least 100 positive responses — tooting, waving, nodding, smiling, thumbs up — compared with less than 10 negative responses — thumps down, cutting action across throat, head shaking, comments.

Meg thanks Lesley, Kia and Christine for their continued involvement with this activity.

Reports from partner organisations — submitted June 2020

BR4R has partnered with three organisations that we feel do incredible work, directly supporting refugees. We have committed to sending each of those organisations funding every month and when funds allow, offering additional one-off payments to support their work. We have asked each of these partners to send us a brief history and outline of their work.

Manus Lives Matter (MLM), Support for Manus and Ex-Manus and Nauru refugees — Sister Jane Keogh

With over 100 refugees in each of Port Moresby and Nauru and many others either still detained in Australian Detention. MLM has been busy as usual reaching out and responding with support.

MLM grew out of visits to Manus Island by a few Canberra refugee advocates beginning in 2015 when needs and contacts were established. With the help of a small number of grassroots church

people in Canberra a system of sending phone credit and parcels regularly to Manus was set up. Today we continue to support about 20 of the remaining refugees on PNG with regular \$45 phone credit each month or emergency credit when there is need to contact families more regularly.

When PNG added administration and tax costs to parcels, we changed and now send only an occasional parcel to meet needs not available in Moresby. MLM continue critical work supporting those remaining on PNG. We have about a dozen regular donors giving amounts from \$35 to the generous BR4R monthly donation of \$200. These funds continue to serve mostly the men in Moresby with one-off support and are also used to meet exceptional needs of a few who are in the US now.

BR4R is a significant donor for MLM and with your support there are fewer requests we have to say NO to.

This year with Covid, combined with an upsurge in violence with the breaking-in of a group of bandits armed with guns and bush knives, and an increase in food costs and accommodation, all added to the number of requests we receive. About half our money goes to regular payments and the other half goes in responding to individual requests.

MLM are in touch with the church group providing a minimum of support especially to the men who have wives and children in Moresby. This makes us aware of priority needs so that we do not double up. We also keep in mind Anne Moon's and GFMAN's (Global Forum on Maintenance & Asset Management) support for the men and have at times diverted offers of support to them where appropriate. Our knowledge of the men through visits and regular contact allows us to discern and prioritise needs.

This year we have supported families a little especially the wife of one refugee for the birth of her baby. The public hospital had 100% of the expectant mothers testing positive to Covid. MLM helped get the mother to the private hospital. The family was kept healthy and welcomed a new baby. One of the men accepted to the US tested positive for leukemia, and while AdsUp helped him, face to face contact was not possible and parcels and arrangements to get him to doctors' appointments had to be arranged by phone. MLM contributed a little to this refugee and to another who needed hearing aids. Both of these supports are examples of our one-off supports as our main focus is on those still detained.

Our group also supported the mother of one refugee when she needed to have lifesaving surgery in hospital in Afghanistan. We seem to find ourselves giving support where there is a gap in other support. In all these instances the generosity of individuals who had developed ties with the refugees involved, added to our smaller MLM support.

Mental health is the major factor for us in deciding which needs and requests to respond to. Replacing lost or stolen phones and extra phone credit are still regular needs. We have sent parcels with specific ointments, food, shoes and clothes to meet health needs not met in PNG. The most recent goal for us is to pay to help those whose mental health is very strained to join a gym and therefore give them something worthwhile to do in a safe place. This is a long-term goal as gym membership is up to \$380 and we cannot do this for everyone who asks. We are looking at the possibility of monthly memberships.

Thanks so much to the generous people of BR4R who make this work possible. I truly believe we save lives.

The Brisbane on-arrival refugee and asylum seekers support group —
Rebecca Lim and Janet Wilson

This group was formally established in December 2019 to respond to the needs of people being transferred from Nauru and PNG to Australia for medical treatment. We also initially provided SIM

cards, phones, clothing, along with advice and support on how to manage in an Australian environment.

We provide financial, practical and emotional assistance to people in locked detention, Community Detention and people on Bridging Visas.

The structure of our group is very simple and requires good will and communication between people in the small group. It is about keeping strong networks so that everyone can share information that may be useful for others. We aim to respond quickly and efficiently to the needs as they arise and to try to demonstrate to those seeking our support that we are respectful of their privacy and needs. It is this approach that has resulted in a great deal of trust from the men who continue to contact us after they leave detention and indeed, are in other countries. Our volunteers come from backgrounds in government, public health, settlement support, migration, education and other key professions.

Over time the group has refocused as the needs changed. People now contact us for:

- Information and advice on visas, employment, training, help with daily issues as they arise. Here we work closely with Indooroopilly Uniting church.
- We are still focused on the men who continue in locked detention. Their health is often much worse now than when they arrived. This necessitates some negotiation with Immigration, ABF (Australian Border Force), IHMS (International Health & Medical Services) and SERCO (contractor for all sorts of government services). These men also need material aid and practical things to relieve boredom and stress.
- We give practical assistance to people trying to settle. Often this involves networking and connections to other groups and people who can help. A common task is helping to get drivers' licenses.
- The group continues to lobby through the RCoA (Refugee Council of Australia) and other organisations for the release of the remaining men.

Some of the ways the funding from BR4R has helped:

- replacing old mobile phones for men in held detention.
- phone credit top-up for people in held detention and community detention.
- clothing for men in held detention.
- medication.
- optometry.
- postage for items to BITA (Brisbane Immigration Transit Accommodation) during lockdowns.
- cost of blue cards and police checks.
- rent for 2-3 families released from Community Detention to a Final Departure Bridging Visa.
- rent and bond for new housing for two men released from Kangaroo Point

Dawn Barrington

Dawn is a well-regarded WA based singer/songwriter and independent music professional. She is also a tireless, strong advocate for refugees, especially for those held in detention, both in hotels and in detention centres across Australia. Dawn is well known to many individual refugees

and is trusted by them. Through her we have learnt of the stories of many of those who have been treated so cruelly by the Australian government. BR4R sends Dawn a monthly contribution towards her work and each month we receive a detailed account of how funds have been allocated. Dawn will send a request out when there is a need for one-off funding, such as, driving licences, dental care, clothes etc and she is often overwhelmed with responses. We at BR4R have supported Dawn's requests through, for example, the provision of clothes and practical items for men in hotel detention in Melbourne or Darwin. We have also met requests by individual refugees endorsed by Dawn.

POSITIONS FOR ELECTION 2020-21

Secretary

General information: Anyone who holds this position will be regarded as a full Committee member of BR4R. The Secretary will be expected to share in the decision making and responsibilities of the BR4R Committee. Additionally, the Secretary will be expected to act in accordance with the BR4R Code of Conduct, as well as all and any other BR4R guidelines, policies and procedures.

All Committee positions are voluntary positions with no position holder receiving any remuneration for their time. The position is a two-year appointment after which it is declared vacant. Holders of the position can renominate. The Secretary may hold other non-Committee posts within BR4R such as Coordinators' positions.

What does this position do? BR4R operates within the Incorporations Act 2009 (NSW). The role of Secretary is partly defined by the requirements of the BR4R Constitution. The BR4R Constitution meets the requirements under the Incorporation Act.

Specific tasks required by anyone holding this position are as follows:

- Actively and fully participates in the work of the Committee and BR4R generally
- Remains a financial member BR4R whilst serving on the Committee
- Is likely to hold a Coordinator role within BR4R Meetings
- Regularly attends committee meetings and important related meetings

Who is eligible to stand for this position? Any current member of BR4R may nominate for the position or anyone intending to become a member.

Treasurer (position holder renominating)

General information: Anyone who holds this position will be regarded as a full Committee member of BR4R. The Treasurer will be expected to share in the decision making and responsibilities of the BR4R Committee. Additionally, the Treasurer will be expected to act in accordance with the BR4R Code of Conduct, as well as all and any other BR4R guidelines, policies and procedures.

All Committee positions are voluntary positions with no position holder receiving any remuneration for their time. The position is a two-year appointment after which it is

declared vacant. Holders of the position can renominate. The Secretary may hold other non-Committee posts within BR4R such as Coordinators' positions.

What does this position do? BR4R operates within the Incorporations Act 2009 (NSW). The role of Treasurer is partly defined by the requirements of the BR4R Constitution. The BR4R Constitution meets the requirements under the Incorporation Act.

Specific tasks required by anyone holding this position are as follows

- Actively and fully participates in the work of the Committee and BR4R generally
- Remains a financial member BR4R whilst serving on the Committee
- Is likely to hold a Coordinator role within BR4R Meetings
- Regularly attends committee meetings and important related meetings

Who is eligible to stand for this position? Any current member of BR4R may nominate for the position or anyone intending to become a member.

Ordinary Member (2 positions declared vacant. 1 position renominating)

General information:

Anyone who holds this position will be regarded as a full Committee member of BR4R. The Ordinary Member will also be expected to share in the decision making and responsibilities of the BR4R Committee. Additionally, the Ordinary Member will be expected to act in accordance with the BR4R Code of Conduct, as well as all and any other BR4R guidelines, policies and procedures. All Committee positions are voluntary positions with no position holder receiving any remuneration for their time. The position is a two-year appointment after which it is declared vacant. Holders of the position can renominate.

The Ordinary Member may hold other non-Committee posts within BR4R such as Coordinators' positions. There is provision within the BR4R Constitution for 3 Ordinary members.

What does this position do? BR4R operates within the Incorporations Act 2009 (NSW). The role of Ordinary Member is partly defined by the requirements of the BR4R Constitution. The BR4R Constitution meets the requirements under the Incorporation Act.

Specific tasks required by anyone holding this position are as follows:

- Actively and fully participates in the work of the Committee and BR4R generally
- Remains a financial member BR4R whilst serving on the Committee
- Is likely to hold a Coordinator role within BR4R Meetings
- Regularly attends committee meetings and important related meetings

Who is eligible to stand for this position?

Any current member of BR4R may nominate for the position or anyone intending to become a member

2021 COMMITTEE MEMBER NOMINATION

I, hereby nominate for the position (please tick one) of:

- Secretary
- Vice President
- Ordinary Member
- Ordinary Member

Nominated by: _____

Signature of Nominator _____

Seconded by: _____

Signature of Seconder _____

Date _____

I hereby accept the above nomination

Signature of Nominee _____

Date _____

NOTE: Nominations to be delivered to Ruth Henderson, president@br4r.org.au by Dec 3rd 2021.