

## **BUILDING BRIDGES Benefit Concert - 23 March 2006**

Bridge For Asylum Seekers Foundation's (BASF) biggest awareness and fund raiser for the year took place on March 23rd.

ONE THOUSAND PEOPLE came to the "Building Bridges" Benefit Concert in the Sydney Town Hall. Julian Burnside was interviewed by Julie McCrossin; Marion Le outlined the current climate and Cheikh Kone spoke on behalf of refugees about the difference WE can all make in the lives of asylum seekers. Throughout the evening the audience learned of the work carried out by BASF providing financial and holistic support to hundreds of asylum seekers and refugees.

John Doyle ('Rampaging Roy Slaven') conducted the Live Auction in characteristically dry fashion. On the sidelines, many engaged in lively bidding wars at the Silent Auction tables.

Then there was the entertainment - from the poignant messages delivered with songs and guitars by Pat Drummond & Mick Hamilton - to the wild and wonderful evocation of Australia by Didjeridu Dingo and the Celtic folk-rock of Hat Trick, capped off by the exciting talents of Irish Dancing champions Sacha & Mikhailae Kaless.

The Governor of New South Wales, Professor Marie Bashir, delighted us all with her presence, and honoured BASF by drawing our gala raffle. Lord Mayor of Sydney, Clover Moore MP, hosted pre-event drinks in her Mayoral Reception rooms for eighty of our supporters.

The 1,000 who attended have expressed loud thanks for being informed of our country's treatment of asylum seekers. Many are volunteering their help. Proceeds from the evening were a mighty \$40,000 which will help support the 97 families and single asylum seekers whom BASF currently supports. All are on Bridging VisaE whilst they await the processing of their refugee claims. They are not permitted to work or to access Medicare or any government benefits. Four of our clients have just received permanent visas after the trauma & anxiety of six long years waiting!

YOU HELPED TO MAKE THIS EVENT SUCH A RESOUNDING SUCCESS! On behalf of the committee of Bridge For Asylum Seekers Foundation, we thank you most sincerely for your help and support and generosity...to all of those who bought raffle tickets, donated wonderful goods for the auction and came along on the night. We thank you on behalf of those refugees who are not yet free to speak for themselves, but who are dependent on BASF for their survival.

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