

Establishing and building activist groups

Rural Australians for Refugees

Starting a group

- ▶ Why?

- ▶ Purpose / Aim

- ▶ Need?

- ▶ Is there a need for a NEW group?

- ▶ Are there other groups nearby or online

- ▶ Type of membership

- ▶ Who will you hope to recruit to your group?

If you decide to start a **NEW** group

- ▶ You will need a friend or two



Most of us need friends involved to:

- ▶ Enhance our vision for the group
- ▶ Help with organising the initial stages
- ▶ Provide contacts
- ▶ To bring their friends



Outline your aims

▶ Purpose of the Group

- ▶ This only needs to be a general aim ... when the group has more members they will most likely reset the aims and goals

▶ Initial event

- ▶ This is probably the **BEST** way to grow your membership quickly
- ▶ Dream a little about the type of event
- ▶ **Then ...**
 - ▶ Decide on type of event that is within your means in practical terms
 - ▶ Financially & Organisationally

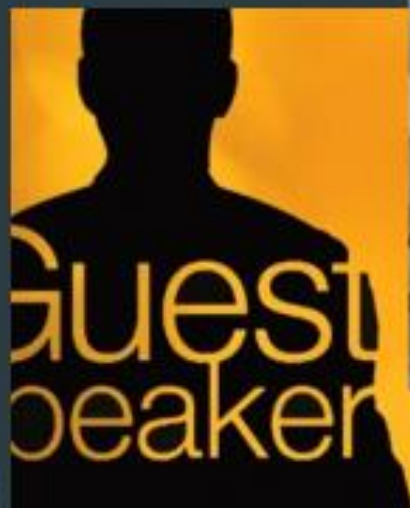
Hold a Public Event

- ▶ Purpose of the Public Event is to:
 - Draw a crowd of open-minded people
 - Gather names, emails and phone numbers of interested people in your community.
 - Raise some seed-funding for the group.

Public event with a *well-known* **GUEST SPEAKER**

Think about the audience ...
your community, your future members

NB - Provide time for Q & A



If you can't organise a
guest speaker who will draw a crowd

consider ...



FILM NIGHT

Concert

Dinner



Hold your **first** meeting

- ▶ Do this within a week or two of your initial event
 - ❖ Outline your aims
 - ❖ Give opportunity for diversity of opinion ... but don't be entirely derailed or diverted ... this group is being formed for a purpose.
- **Interest Sub-Groups**
- These are an excellent way of accommodating various skills and interests

Ideas for interest Sub-Groups

- ▶ Letter writing
- ▶ Fund raising
- ▶ Media
- ▶ Facebook posts and other social media
- ▶ Campaigning
- ▶ Grandmothers' group
- ▶ Political lobbying, Local, State & Federal
- ▶ Detention = Onshore and Offshore - Manus and Nauru contact
- ▶ Direct refugee support for refugees living in community
- ▶ ASRC contact
- ▶ Hosting weekend co-ordination
- ▶ English language support/teaching



- ▶ Keep **GENERAL MEETINGS** to as few as possible
 - maybe every 2 months
 - with **SMALL INTEREST GROUP MEETINGS** in between.
- ▶ Need at least **one person steering the group** initially with the strong support of a couple more.
- ▶ Be prepared for the long haul and disappointments.
- ▶ **Establish the goals of the group** early as it is easy to lose sight of this and become disillusioned by all the negativity.

Don't be *afraid* to start a new group

- ▶ **Rural Australians for Refugees (RAR)** is a national organisation of over **90 groups** with an average of 200 members per group
- ▶ RAR was established by **3** women sitting around a kitchen table

Points to remember

- Form a core group to help you get started
- Note the name, email and phone number of every interested person
- Holding a public event will give a major boost to membership
- Call your first meeting quickly to keep momentum
- Allow for various interests, skills, time, personalities, etc.
- Look for leaders within your group
- **Establish the goals of your group early**

For more information

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Check out **Rural Australians for Refugees**

- Website
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram