

MEDIA RELEASE

09/11/15

Guest Speaker to focus on off-shore processing at Illawarra Forum AGM

The Illawarra Forum is pleased to announce a special guest speaker at the Annual General meeting to be held this week.

This year's guest speaker is Mark Isaacs - the original 'whistle-blower' from the Nauru off-shore detention centre and author of *The Undesirables* - a book described on ABC's Big Ideas as "a gobsmacking eyewitness account of the shambles and the shame that is Australia's offshore processing policy".

CEO of the Illawarra Forum, Nicky Sloan said "Given recent events on Christmas Island and on Nauru, this is an excellent opportunity to gain a greater understanding the impact of Government policy and of off-shore processing".

Mark will speak about his time working in Nauru from 2012.

In October 2012, Mark was employed by the Salvation Army to work at the Nauru Regional Processing Centre. He eventually resigned from the Salvation Army in June 2013 and spoke out publicly against the government's No Advantage policy.

Mark's book, *The Undesirables*, accounts for his time inside one of Australia's most infamous detention centres. Since leaving Nauru, Mark continued his passion for humanitarian work and was employed for two years as a social worker at an asylum seekers settlement agency in Sydney. He is now travelling the world as a freelance writer.

Details of the Illawarra Forum AGM are as follows:

Time: 10am – 1pm
Date: Wednesday 11th November 2015
Location: SYFS Shellharbour Hub,
25 Lake Entrance Rd, Warilla

Media welcome from 11am

Media Contact: Nicky Sloan 0407 933 279
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About the Illawarra Forum

The Illawarra Forum is the peak body working for community services and organisations in the Illawarra and the Shoalhaven. It supports community organisations, promotes expertise and innovation in community development, fosters industry development and provides advocacy for social justice. The Illawarra Forum is an independent organisation governed by a committee of management elected annually by the membership.

The Forum represents the non-government community services industry in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven, which consists of approximately 300 organisations. The Illawarra Forum works closely with numerous organisations which provide support to vulnerable people across the region including:

- Social housing providers;
- Homelessness services;
- Home and community care services;
- People with disability;
- Individuals and families with multiple layers of social and financial disadvantage;
- Victims of domestic violence and sexual assault ;
- Youth work programs;
- Community health services, including mental health and drug/alcohol services;
- Community legal centre services; and
- Community development and community capacity building.