



Project Vietnam Inc.

Newsletter: Spring: 2018

Editor's Deck

In this 2018 Spring Newsletter you will find the following,

- In recognition of the invaluable work and commitment to PVI, Life Membership was awarded to Eleanor and Paul at the AGM. See David William's summary of some of their achievements and contributions.
- Outgoing president. After six years of service in the top job Jim is stepping down as president. But don't panic he has taken up the roles of vice president and treasurer. Having held dual roles of treasurer and president last year a smooth transition is assured. Jim's final President's report tabled at the AGM is included in the newsletter.
- Following the recent AGM, the committee for the following year has been elected. Apart from Brendan and Jim swapping presidential roles most positions have remained the same. See the full committee list below.
- With the Vietnam and Cambodian projects quickly approaching, our project coordinators, Ian and Peter, have tabled preliminary reports outlining the probable works to be attempted by the two teams.

Cheers

Jan and John

New Committee Members

President: Brendan McKenna

Vice President: Jim O'Shannessy

Treasurer: Jim O'Shannessy

Secretary: David Williams

Management Committee Members:

Ian Bath Vietnam Project Coordinator and Membership

Ron Toohey Vietnam Project Coordinator

Peter Angel Cambodia Project Coordinator and Manager

Jan & John Miller Newsletter Editors

In Country representatives

Ken Dinham & Fran Sivertson

Terry Kerr

Mary Dare

Anne-Maree Donoghue

President's Report

PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE 2018 AGM

As the curtain closes on yet another year, it is my pleasure to present my annual report to the 2018 AGM.

Once again, it's been a very busy year for our little organisation. PVI's membership base is continuing to be maintained around the eighty mark which is very encouraging. Our membership base forms our financial foundation to provide funds to cover all our running costs within Australia. A plea for all our members to continue their financial support and not just re-join to partake in an overseas project.

Our achievements for the year are quite impressive and well worth the extra funding required to complete them.

The small town of Thanh Binh now has a new two storey kindergarten for the generations to come. The new building stands very proud towering well above the high flood levels handed out by the nearby river. Undoubtedly our largest project yet and it is very significant that Tony Van Boxmeer's name is proudly embedded on the gold plaque mounted in pride of place.

Thirty-four members travelled to Phong Nha in March and were kept very busy to complete the task of finishing off a bare shell ready for students to occupy. A recent trip, by Ian, to the area shows that the school is well kept and enjoyed by the teachers and students.

Looking forward, we hope to continue our work in the same region for many years to come.

2019's project is in the planning stage with a new toilet block for a nearby high school being high on our list. It amazes us that up to 450 high school students can attend school with no appropriate toilet facilities. We can't solve this problem for the whole region but it is our plan to chew away at it.

Next year's list of volunteers is again above thirty and management is feeling the pressure to find work for such a large team whilst still keeping it within our budget. Maybe next year we can plan on some days off. Sounds good to an old bloke like me.

A highlight this year was the visit of Ian and Murray's sons' to the jobsite for a couple of days.

Murray's boys were impressed to see what their dad got up to every year. The kindergarten now boasts some special paint tint made of Murray's ashes.

Peter Angell has had another successful project season in Cambodia.

Through our connection with the All Kids organisation the team was split up to cater for the needs of three schools. Skilled hands were kept busy with the refurbishment of 80 classroom desks and major repairs to doors and shutters.

Toilet blocks saw some much-needed fresh paint as well as some creative art.



Maintenance was carried out on the water filtration system at the Smach Deng Primary School along with the replacement of the roof on the main classroom building.

The nearby Champkapich School received a new pipeline to supply fresh water to their storage tanks along with some new push button plumbing.

Busy, busy, busy!

Now Pete has the task to find appropriate work for the numbers who wish to join next year's team.

I have long hinted that this will be my final year as President. With the conflict of being President and Treasurer of the same organisation having to be solved, I have decided to stand for Treasurer in the coming year.

In stepping down I would like to recognise all the help I have received over the past six years.

As a small organisation with our numbers spread all over Australia, it is just a fact of geography that most of the workload falls into the hands of SE Queensland's members.

Thanks to those who keep the show running by:

1. Travelling up to 100ks to attend our meetings every month.
2. Sorting through the endless pile of emails and producing the appropriate responses.
3. Trying to organise a feelgood work experience for a project team in a foreign country whilst running your own life back in Aus.
4. Overcoming technology ignorance to keep a website up and running.
5. Producing a first-class newsletter so we can all read about ourselves and our achievements.
6. Continuing to monitor our cash reserves and when dwindling come up with inventive ideas to fundraise.

These are the obvious tasks and don't include the personal efforts of trying to bring some sort of dental hygiene to children in remote areas, as well as push to introduce the supply of sanitary needs for females attending high school.

Hats off to you all.

I hope I have not upset too many people with my 'non- confrontational procrastination' style.

I look forward to giving my full support to my replacement.

Jim O'Shannessy

Life Memberships

In recognition and appreciation of the invaluable work and commitment to PVI that two long standing members have given, Eleanor Robertson and Paul Brown, it was decided that they be awarded our first life membership positions.

They were invited along to the AGM to be presented with their awards.



Eleanor Robertson

Eleanor joined PVI 14 years ago in 2004. She was elected to the position of Secretary and Treasurer in 2007 and carried out the duties outstandingly and continuously for 9 years. This was a very active period of fund raising to support our expanding aid work and increased administrative requirements for external certification. During Eleanor's period as Secretary and Treasurer we expanded our aid work considerably. We successfully raised funds to enable us to spend more than \$30,000 directly each year on building materials and medical scholarships which was a 50% increase on the first decade of our work. We expanded our aid work into Cambodia and the average number of volunteers each year more than doubled. The total value of our aid work in Vietnam and Cambodia for the period was \$2.3 million. Eleanor oversaw the review of our constitution and the considerable work to improve our governance and transparency procedures required to gain membership of Australian Council for International Development (ACFID). This was a golden period for PVI and Eleanor's contribution contributed significantly to our success.

Paul Brown

Paul is our longest serving current member having joined PVI 18 years ago. He was a member of 7 project teams travelling to Vietnam for project work initially in 2000 and on 5 subsequent occasions.

Paul was the leader of the team in 2005 that renovated a health clinic at Quang Huc village (50 km north of Hanoi). He joined with 8 others to form the first project team in Cambodia in 2009 which constructed a building for a library and computer centre at the Krousar Thmey orphanage at Takhmao (just out of Phnom Penh).

Paul was involved in coordinating our involvement in shipping and distributing wheelchairs supplied by Wheelchairs for Kids to needy rural communities in Vietnam from the early 2000's. The wheelchair program, including the early years prior to our association with Wheelchairs for Kids was a great achievement. More than 3,000 wheelchairs were distributed over a 16-year period from 2000. Paul has been a mentor and a friendly guiding voice to many PVI members over a long period.

His outstanding involvement demonstrates an extraordinary contribution over many years.

David Williams

Team Reports

Vietnam

Hi Members and of course to our loyal supporters as well.

Just a quick report on my recent trip back to Vietnam about 5 weeks ago.

I started off in Cambodia flying into Phnom Penh and then bussed it down south to Sihanoukville, where we sometime ventured for a bit of R n R after our project duties were over, to spread our little mate Murray's ashes into the ocean.

Back to Phnom Penh a few days later and then bussed it over to Saigon and caught up with a few old friends and also called to see Alistair Sawyer the CEO of TLC constructions. Alistair has supported us for a number of years now so I felt that it would be good to catch up and give him the details of our next 2019 March project in Phong Nha.

After a short flight into Dong Hoi I was met by Tony Agnew from the Lake House Resort in Phong Nha and then transferred back to Phong Nha to inspect further project facilities for consideration, time and funds permitting, for next March. www.phongnhalakehouse.com
The next few days were spent inspecting the potential maintenance of a few of the schools and kindergartens in the immediate areas, and I'm pleased to say that we have successfully negotiated to build a new toilet block at the Hung Trach High School. This high school has about 420 plus students in attendance and they haven't had toilet facilities for well over a decade. Subsequently it is one project that is at the top of the list.

(Please take note Mr Treasurer, I conceded straight away and said yes to their request.)

I'd just like to add that the construction of the new toilet block commenced almost immediately after our negotiations concluded.

While in Phong Nha I took the opportunity to inspect the new kindergarten that we completed last March. It was certainly a very moving experience. As you are most probably aware we completed the new two storey kindergarten over a period of two years, and the way the staff and locals have commissioned the new facility is second to none.



There are four new large rooms for the children complete with toilets and other ancillary features that enhance the new kindergarten. I have to say that upon arrival all the children were asleep on their mats on the floor and one of the senior staff members very quickly pointed out to me that they badly need blinds on the windows so the children can may sleep a lot better during their midday sleeps.



I also had a guest from Sydney a Mr Geoff Grimish, like myself Geoff is an ex veteran of the Vietnam conflict, who accompanied me along with two other aid minded young girls that saw first- hand the aid work that we do in Vietnam.

Geoff has played a large role in the area of aid work within Vietnam for over fifteen years now and is fully conversant with the criteria of dealing with the various Vietnamese departments. He is currently involved in working with the Hoc Mai Foundation that supports doctors in Hanoi on behalf of Sydney University with the view of advanced training back here in Australia at the Royal North Shore Hospital.



Geoff Grimich and friends at the kindergarten.

I'd also like to add that this year Project Vietnam is entering into the area of English lessons and we are fortunate to have two Vietnamese ladies, that naturally are very conversant with the Vietnamese language, who will be assisting us to get this new exciting venture off the ground.

Ok, that's it from me for the time being and I'll be in touch with you all as we progress towards our departure date to Vietnam for our work next March 2019.

Ian Bath Vietnam Project Coordinator and Membership

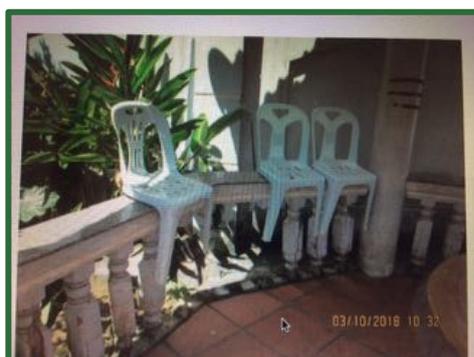
Cambodia

The 2019 project focussed on plans to assist Allkids Learning Centre's relocation to Sunrise 2. Unfortunately, the relocation will not be proceeding, as the lease of the premises to Allkids is being delayed by the authorities.

As a consequence, Paul Otto has been forced to re-sign his current lease on the villa that houses Allkids Learning Centre at Ream for a further 2.5 years. The premises require some maintenance to make it more practical for the staff and students particularly during the long, wet season. Paul has asked for our assistance to make some repairs to the building and to carry out this maintenance work.

Potential repairs and maintenance include:

- Water blasting and painting of the building
- Construction of a frame for a new Allkids sign above the entrance gates
- Replace uprights that support the handrails on the balconies
- Improve the cooking and drinking water area by building a steel cooking bench with a melamine coated plywood top incorporating a windguard on the cooktop, adding steel shelving which will replace the wicker shelves, construct two portable shelters to protect students and staff from the weather and upgrade the electricals to a 32amp supply
- Service the submersible pump and solar pump at Smach Deng Primary School
- Check and service solar pump system at Battrang and Smach Deng Schools



Replace uprights



Improve cooking area

There is still the possibility of taking on some more work up Battenbong way if required. For the 2019 project I have a small keen team of 10 on the books.

Peter Angel- Cambodia Project Coordinator and Manager

KNGO Library

In the April newsletter we reported on the commencement of the construction of the library in the village of Bospo. The library was to provide a space where the children of the village could practice English conversation and participate in activities such as reading, drawing and colouring. Teaching resources were also to be made available to the teachers.

The construction of the building is now complete and the next phase of stocking and fitting out the library is underway.

We are very fortunate that Jan, one of our Australian directors and a retired school principal, through her teaching contacts, has been able to arrange to have many wonderful books donated.

Between Peter and Jan they managed to transport 60kgs of donated books in their luggage when they travelled to Cambodia in September. Peter looked quite a sight, wearing layers of clothing so he could fit more books in his backpack. More Khmer/English books were purchased by Jan and Saveth when Jan arrived in Phnom Penh.

We would like to extend our thanks to Komatsu, PVI, Rotary Noosa Daybreak and Dr Rajeev for their generosity in making this facility a reality and to continue to advance KNGO's mission of improving the education of the children of Bospo Village.

PVI provided \$2,500 towards the library. The bulk of the cost was donated by Komatsu.



On-Going Initiatives

In 2018 Ann-Maree Donohue introduced a dental hygiene program to the students at Phong Nha Kindergarten which included a demonstration of how to brush your teeth and a dental pack. Each pack included kid's toothbrushes and Milk Baby Toothpaste suitable for 4-6 year olds. A 'How to brush your teeth' cartoon diagram in Vietnamese, a few cartoon stickers, a small toy and a cup to spit in. In addition to the kits the children received Disney character stamped toothbrushes that were supplied by 'Ki Works' which is a Japanese company.

Ki Works has also offered us toothbrushes for the 2019 project.

Ann Maree will continue this program in 2019.

Great work Ann-Maree!



In 2018 Ros Organ introduced the world -wide program 'Day's For Girls' to the girls and teachers at Ream. Days For Girls is an organisation that increases access to menstrual care and education for girls. Ros organised 100 sanitary kits to be made up which contained sanitary shields, pads, girl's briefs, handtowels and soap. She demonstrated how to make the packs to the women of the community. She also educated the girls on how to use the contents of the packs.

Since then Ros has been busy sewing 450 pads from all the donated fabric and about 20 kit bags in readiness for the project next year.

Great work Ros!



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