



# Project Vietnam Inc.

## Newsletter: November 2022

### *Editor's Desk*

We are pleased to present the November 2022 newsletter.

Looking back on the previous newsletter it is clear that with the lifting of travel restrictions brought on by the pandemic there is a definite feeling of optimism and excitement expressed in the following pages.

Some of our members have completed or about to undertake reconnaissance visits to both Vietnam and Cambodia with a view to identifying projects our team members can become involved in 2023 and 2024. Their reports are included.

Brendan's President's report is again a great summary of the groups achievements throughout the year as well as outlining the groups future aims. Thanks Brendan and congratulations on accepting the President's role for another year. (It was a close vote but you came through in the end ???)

Ian's report highlights some of the fantastic work we have been involved in in Vietnam both previously and currently. As you will realise reading his report Ian was quite emotionally invested in this trip and he is to be congratulated on some wonderful outcomes.

The great news is that a work team will be travelling to Cambodia in February 2023. David Williams and David Findlater have been to Cambodia and identified jobs that a crew of around 20 volunteers can undertake. Bring it on.

The newsletter will again highlight the generosity of all our sponsors and supporters as well as recognizing the fundraising efforts of our members and friends. Our work and support of underprivileged peoples in Vietnam and Cambodia rely on this fund raising and the newsletter mentions where some of these monies are spent.

Enjoy reading.

Jan and John Miller

## President's Annual Report 2022

This year continued to be impacted by the fallout of Covid 19 and as a consequence, no work teams were able to participate in any projects in either Vietnam or Cambodia. However, with travel restrictions easing in the latter part of the year, we were grateful two of our members, David Williams and David Findlater were able to visit Cambodia and touch base with our collaborating NGO's, visit the families we had previously assisted with housing and assess the general condition of the homes we had constructed. They were able to identify new areas of investment and lay the groundwork and identify needs, for our PVI volunteer building team for 2023. This was a very worthwhile reconnaissance trip and we thank them for their time and effort.

Ian Bath also took the opportunity to visit Vietnam and connect with members of our collaborating NGO and one of our sponsors, Geoff Goss from Chem.Supply. It is recognised how important ongoing communication is with our partners and sponsors and we thank Ian for fostering these relationships.

Looking back over the year, even with varying ongoing Covid restrictions, we have continued to invest in our project commitments and meet our goals. This is thanks to our memberships remaining strong, enthusiastic fundraising support and donations from our sponsors. Once again, fundraising has been very solid with the ongoing participation in the sporting events organised by Jan and John Miller and Eumundi carparking organised by Sandra Robinson. These events have provided a strong and steady supply of reliable income not experienced in the past and we must acknowledge and thank the organisers, all our members (and non-members) who consistently help at these events.

2022 saw financial investment in:

- Housing funding
- Water filtration systems
- Laos Permaculture project
- Microfinancing facilities
- Female welfare needs
- Education via school support and sponsorship of individuals

Looking to the future we must in 2023 primarily address:

- recruitment of new members into the PVI organisation
- identification of worthy participants and community focused projects where our money can be best distributed for the maximum benefit
- fostering our collaboration with NGO's operating effectively in both Vietnam and Cambodia.

I want to conclude by thanking our members, sponsors and committee who generously support PVI with both time and money. We all recognise our task is made far easier by your

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contributions and acknowledge the financial donations we receive from our sponsors are vital to the ongoing success of our projects. Therefore, I'd like to express our extreme gratitude to the June Canavan Foundation, Geoff Goss from Chem-Supply in South Australia and Nathan & Rose Kemp in Western Australia who make it possible for us to extend our efforts further into worthwhile community projects. Thank you all for standing strong with us in 2022.

It has been a productive and enjoyable year, with our team continuing to work collectively to achieve effective outcomes. It will be exciting to see our first team of volunteers in three years visit Vietnam and Cambodia and the size of the team, twenty-six, indicates our members are excited to be a part of the PVI story.

### **2022 Committee Members**

<i>President</i>	<i>Brendan McKenna</i>
<i>Vice President</i>	<i>Sandra Robinson</i>
<i>Secretary</i>	<i>David Williams</i>
<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Jim O'Shannessy</i>
<b>Management Committee</b>	
<i>Membership and Vietnam Team Coordinator</i>	<i>Ian Bath</i>
<i>Vietnam Project Manager</i>	<i>Ron Toohey</i>
<i>Cambodia Project Coordinator</i>	<i>David Williams</i>
<i>Cambodia Project Manager</i>	<i>David Findlater</i>
<i>Newsletter and Triathlon Coordinators</i>	<i>John and Jan Miller</i>
<i>Car Parking Coordinator</i>	<i>Sandra Robinson</i>
	<i>Terry Kerr</i>
	<i>Jackie McKay</i>
	<i>Peter McDonald</i>
	<i>Florence Teillet</i>

## Vietnam 2023

There have been no identified projects in Vietnam for 2023 but a reconnaissance team of 5 members have plans to visit Vietnam in March.

The team will investigate prospects for a 2024 project in Phong Nha.

## **Ian's Amazing Trip to Vietnam**

I visited Vietnam last month hoping to achieve two main goals.

The first part of the visit was a five hour trip down to the Mekong Delta to inspect the activities of the Vietnamese based NGO - Anh Duong, Community Development and Support

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Centre that specialises in building domestic abodes out of recyclable materials (plastic materials, containers, bottles etc). I was accompanied by Mr Geoff Goss and his wife Fiona, the CEO of Chem-Supply, a large Adelaide based chemical company,

Project Vietnam has been supporting Anh Duong over the past two years with financial donations to assist with their Microfinance Project, medical insurance and building homes for the needy families in the surrounding areas of the district of Long My.

There's no doubt that the work carried out by Anh Duong and their loyal staff is certainly to be commended.

The second goal on this whistle stop tour of Vietnam was visiting Lucy's house in the highlands of Vietnam.

About eleven years ago one of the Chem-Supply staff was seen to be sending money out of her wages to help support a girls' shelter based in the highlands of Vietnam. When senior management became aware of her donations they decided to assist. Enquiries were made with PVI hoping that we could assist with an upgrade, of the shelter as the accommodation

facilities for thirty young teenage girls was completely inadequate.

The girls that reside at the centre come in from the surrounding villages on a Sunday evening to attend the local schools, they sleep there through the week returning to their respective villages on the Friday evening. After an inspection by two of Project Vietnam's



members, myself and Murray Templeton, it was decided that logistically and geographically the work was definitely beyond our capabilities.

With hats in our hands we then approached a large construction company in Ho Chi Minh City called TLC, and met with the owner Mr Alistair Sawyer, who listened to our story and instantly agreed to assist in a rebuild of the existing girls shelter. So along with the original donation from Chem-Supply and a massive contribution of materials and labour from TLC the girls' shelter was completed about 18 months later.

As we were leaving the building site one afternoon one of the site engineers asked me what I would like to call the construction, subsequently I said Lucy's House after my granddaughter.

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So after our rushed two day trip down to the Delta we all boarded a 6am flight out of Ho Chi Minh City to Lucy's House in Plaiku in the Central Highlands. We were met at the airport by Sister Anna who also came up from Ho Chi Minh the previous night and volunteered to be our much needed interpreter. Mr Geoff Goss and his wife Fiona, my daughter Justine



and granddaughter Lucy, were welcomed with a very warm emotional greeting both from the staff and the students - certainly one that I'll never forget.

My daughter Justine prepared a video lesson depicting daily high school life and of the students here in Australia and it was received and enjoyed by the staff and students in "pin dropping" silence.

At the completion of the day we returned to Ho Chi Minh City and the following day, Justine, Lucy and I commenced our journey north towards Hanoi, stopping off at Hoi An and Hue along the way. Prior to going to Hanoi we stopped at Phong Nha where Project Vietnam has been very active over the past years prior to Covid. On our last project trip to Phong Nha we refurbished one of the rural schools, repainting and replacing ceilings along with some general maintenance.

Justine, to the delight of the school's Head Mistress, gave a couple of repeat lessons depicting school life back here in Australia and once again it was received in "pin dropping" silence. We engaged a translator to assist us with the lessons and she was so impressed with the lessons that she refused payment for her services.

Also on a personal note, myself and my family dined out one evening at one the remaining restaurants in Phong Nha. At the completion of our meal the owner, a lovely lady by the name of Vang, came and sat with us and talked about how the town of Phong Nha has been affected by Covid along with other topics. On calling for the account, she was adamant that the evening meal was on her. I insisted that I would pay, however she placed her hand on her heart and tears came to her eyes, saying that she deeply wanted to pay for the evening. This wasn't a gesture to myself and my family it was a definite recognition of Project Vietnam's contribution to the Phong Nha community.

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In closing my report I'd personally like to thank Geoff and Fiona for their generous and completely unprompted personal donation of \$10,000 to Project Vietnam. Mr Goss asked for us to disperse this donation to Anh Duong's housing program in the Delta region, to the administration of Lucy's House and a donation to Project Vietnam's funds for us to use as we see fit.

Ian Bath

**\$5000 to Anh Duong**  
**\$2000 to Sister Anna's organisation**  
**at Phu Nhon**  
**\$3000 to PVI general funds (to be**  
**used as you see fit)**



## Cambodia Project 2023

In February 2023 twenty-six members (which is our biggest team since our first Cambodia project in 2009) will be travelling to our project base in Bospo Cambodia to continue with the housing project which PVI became involved in in 2020.

Our aim is to build 8 more houses for poor families who are in desperate need of adequate and secure accommodation. The housing program was originally started by KNGO (Khmer New Generation Organisation) and is managed by a local Director, Saveth.

The school is supported and directed by Judy Malzard and Peter McDonald who live on the Sunshine Coast and are members of PVI.

Housing is a major challenge for many poor families and hence the origin of KNGO's housing program. More than 80 houses have been built to date for local families.

PVI joined the program by building 10 houses in 2020 and we have funded houses built by locals over the last two years. PVI has funded and/or built around a quarter of the houses.



While the housing project is our top priority in Bospo some team members will be involved in other work:

- Following our 2020 project Ken Dinham was keen to raise funds and organise for the installation of a solar light in the new houses. Ken and a small team will install the lights in houses we have previously constructed and the houses to be built next year.
- As with any home, maintenance is an issue so a few members will be given the task of making repairs and alterations to previously constructed houses.
- As well as the above two projects, members will have the opportunity to interact with the children at the Bospo School by joining in with their classroom activities and perhaps teaching some music, art and craft as well as reading to the students and taking small group local excursions.
- While at Bospo School we will take the opportunity to do a few improvements which have yet to be identified.

While the work is going on in Bospo a small team will travel to Prek Trabaek (located in the Southeast corner of the Ream National Park) for a few days to complete the installation of the water supply to the AllKids new Learning Centre. The school will accommodate 90 students when completed.

As well as the above project in Prek Trabaek a small team will go to Ream for a few days to replace a solar bore pump for the water supply systems we previously installed at schools in and near the town.

### Help Needed to Transport Computers to Cambodia

KNGO Australia has recently acquired 19 desktop computers for use at their school in Bospo Village. The cost of freighting these items is extremely high so we are seeking help from PVI volunteers living on the Sunshine Coast, and joining the team going to Cambodia in February, to assist with transporting one or more of the following items in their check-in luggage:

	<b>Weight</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>
Computer towers	5.5-6 kg	38cm x 33cm x 10cm
Monitors	4.5-5 kg	39cm x 33cm x 4cm (approx.)
Keyboards	1-1.5 kg	45cm x 17cm (approx.)

Note: Size of monitors and keyboards varies depending on brand). All items are bubble wrapped.

Presently, IT classes at KNGO have been suspended due to the lack of properly functioning computers. The government schools do not provide computer classes to students and we believe Information Technology is an important subject to ensure students are computer literate for further study and/or work ready when finishing school.

We are currently working towards KNGO Cambodia's Education Program becoming self-sustainable by 2025. As well as providing free IT tuition to impoverished children, IT classes will be part of the Self-Sustainability Program.

If you can carry any of the above items in your check-in luggage, please let Peter know on: 0459 429 991 or email Judy at: [kngoaus@gmail.com](mailto:kngoaus@gmail.com).

Peter and Judy

### Sai Tin – Medical Funding

When we visited Sai Tin earlier this year it seemed she was in remission and her future looked much brighter than what was imagined previously. She was visiting the hospital in Siem Reap monthly for blood transfusions but recently was unwell and returned to the hospital for an unscheduled visit. Unfortunately, she has again been told by doctors that they are unable to treat her anymore and we understand that once she leaves the hospital there will be nothing more to be done for her. She has also been told that if she experiences pain there is no need to come to the hospital.

This is very distressing, particularly when I have read reports on the internet that state most children with leukemia can be cured. One such site states: "With the proper treatment, the outlook for kids and teens with leukemia is quite good. Most childhood leukemias have very high remission rates, with some up to 90%. Remission means that doctors see no cancer cells in the body. Most kids are cured of the disease.

Sai Tin was being cared for by her mother who has returned to Thailand where she has another family, and she is now being cared for by her sister who has a young baby.



Sai Tin in Hospital

Without financial assistance from PVI Sai Tin would not have had any medical assistance. Sai Tin and her family have expressed their heartfelt gratitude for the funding received from PVI.

Peter and Judy

## *Other Initiatives*

### **Dental Trainees**

There are currently 3 young women from Bospo training at CFW (Cambodia World Family) dental clinic in Phnom Penh – Yura, Sovanna and Sophaphak. PVI directly sponsors Sovanna, a private sponsor supports Yura through PVI and Sophaphak is sponsored through another third party. These young women commenced their training at the start of 2020 and the training will be extended until the end of this year because of time lost with covid shut downs. Another young woman from Bospo, Sareoury is in her final year of university studies as a Dental Nurse having completed her CWF training more than 4 years ago. PVI supports Sareoury with a living allowance and her fees are paid by a private supporter through PVI. All live together at CFW (above the clinic) away from home and manage their own food, living quarters and personal life.

All are doing well – enjoying the training, meeting expectations and have benefitted tremendously from personal development and increased self-confidence. The three CWF trainees will move on to paid work at CWF for half a day each day (CWF operates only in the mornings) once they have completed training at the end of the year. They may be able to find other work as well to supplement their income. Sareoury is just starting her final semester at university. She is doing very well and is an exceptional young woman. She is just starting her final semester of a 3 year Dental Nursing degree. She lives with the other girls at CWF. Once she has completed her course, she will be able to establish a private practice and charge for most dental procedures. She plans to work at CWF for a period to pay back for the assistance she has received. She will also work at another clinic during this time to gain skills in administrating and financially managing a dental clinic in preparation for her opening her own clinic. Then she would like to move back to Battambang and establish a private practice once she has saved enough for the set up. CWF is considering the possibility of establishing a clinic at Battambang to provide free dentistry for poor children in the area. Sareoury would head up the CWF clinic if one is established and split her time between CWF clinic and her private practice.

A great outcome for these girls and PVI.

### What's been happening behind the scenes

#### Microfinance Project in the Delta region of Vietnam

Over the last 2 years we have been working with a local NGO -Anh Duong to assist very low-income families to develop small businesses.

Anh Duong operates poverty reduction and community development programs in poor and remote areas Hau Giang province in Vietnam.

Our support has enabled loans to 18 families ranging from A\$125 - A\$185 (conversion is A\$1 = ~16,200 VND).

The business activities included raising chickens, ducks, pigs, eels and turtles, and supporting a small trading business.

Anh Duong works closely with recipient families through a stringent selection process, joint preparation of realistic business plans, support with the implementation of the business plan and monitoring of progress.

Their very thorough involvement results in very high success rates.

**Many thanks go to the June Canavan Foundation for their grant of A\$5,000 to also support this program.**

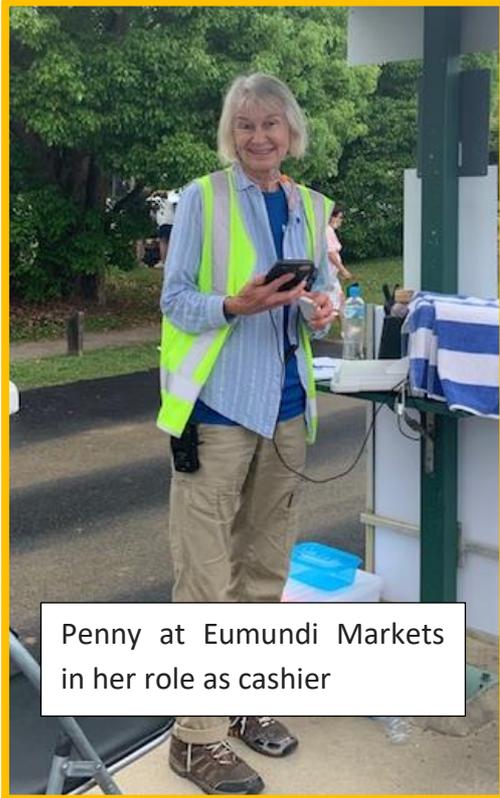
**As mentioned earlier Geoff Goss CEO Chem.Supply, has also directed \$5000 of his generous donation to the Microfinance Program.**

### Fundraising

An enormous thank you goes out to all our PVI members that give up their time to raise funds for the projects we undertake. Without the monies contributed by our sponsors and our two fundraising activities we would not be able to do the work we do.

The role of carpark attendants at Eumundi





Penny at Eumundi Markets  
in her role as cashier

markets is our largest and most constant source of revenue and thanks go out again to Sandra Robinson for her role in organising the monthly roster for the volunteers. Every Wednesday and Saturday of each month our volunteers are allocated a three-hour shift to either direct drivers to a parking space or as cashier. If you would like to help out Sandra would be more than happy to hear from you.

Another source of revenue is volunteering as Check-in assistants and sometimes course marshals at Sunshine Coast running events.

This year we have supplied volunteers for four Sunshine Coast sporting events and we have two more events before the end of the year. Once again, our members and a wonderful group of non-members work as a team to register

athletes for their event. The days are long but it's an enjoyable day mixing with the athletes and our volunteers.

## ***Focus on Sophea Nhan***

Some of you may have come across this bright young inspiring woman

Sophea met Judy and Peter through KNGO where she was teaching in Battambang, Cambodia.

In 2017, recognising her dedication and determination, Peter nominated Sophea to attend the Rotary Youth Leadership Award course in Coolum.

It was the very first time Sophea had travelled out of Cambodia, and her family was a bit concerned. However, she embraced the challenge and stayed in Australia for 3 months, while here she did a presentation in Melbourne, for a KNGO sponsor and in different Sunshine Coast Rotary clubs, while discovering the Australian way of life.

When she returned to Cambodia, Sophea became involved in Rotary clubs in her home town: Battambang

In 2019, she came back to Australia to attend a Rotary Youth Leadership Award course as a Team Leader Assistant.

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On her return to Cambodia, Sophea started a Rotaract Club in Battambang, acting as youth mentor and treasurer of the Rotary club. Sangke. She was also working as a teacher for PTD (Ptea Teuk Dong) <https://ptdcambodia.org/> in Battambang

In 2020, Sophea had a desire to return to Australia and complete her Early Childhood and Care course but Covid hit hard.

She patiently waited and finally, thanks to Peter and Judy, she made back in 2022.

She is now enrolled in Early Childhood Education and Care, with TAFE Mooloolaba for 2 years (Cert 3 and diploma) sponsored by Peter and Judy. Sophea is also doing her placement at Peregian Community Kindergarten one day a week and loving it.

Sophea has always been passionate about education, she believes in the power of higher education as a tool to empower ourselves.



### Our Sponsors

Once again, we would like to acknowledge and thank our generous benefactors whose continued support enable us to fund our projects

**June Canavan Foundation**

**Rose & Nathan Kemp**

**Chem-Supply**

thank you!