



Project Vietnam Inc.

Newsletter: Spring 2017

Editor's Desk

Our final newsletter for 2017 contains

- President, Jim O'Shannessy's, report to the AGM,
- a roundup compiled by David Williams of the year's achievements highlighting the work done by our aid teams in Vietnam and Cambodia,
- an introduction to the two Cambodian girls selected to receive the inaugural John Robertson and Tony van Boxmeer bursaries,
- details of a dental health initiative proposed by Ann Marie Donoghue,
- Ian Bath's tribute to his old mate and PVI stalwart Murray Templeton who sadly passed away in September.

An eventful year.

PVI survives on the hard work and generosity of its members and friends. There are many individuals who have devoted much time and effort, which extends over many years, to the running and success of the organisation.

For a variety of reasons, however, people move on and focus on other things in their lives. Your editors would not be involved with PVI if it wasn't for the contributions of two such people. David and Clare Simpson worked successfully on promoting and fund raising for PVI over the years but have decided to seek other challenges. We recognise and thank them for their service.

On the other hand, some have returned to the fold after taking a break and we are pleased to welcome Eleanor Robertson back to the committee, a great friend of PVI. She has volunteered to help maintain and update PVI's web site.

The committee for 2017/2018, remains unchanged from last year's committee. This devoted and hard- working group are to be congratulated and thanked for putting their hands up for another year of hard work.

President: Jim O'Shannessy

Vic-President: Brendan McKenna

Secretary: David Williams

Treasurer: Jim O'Shannessy

Management Committee Members:

Glenn Arundell Immediate Past President

Ian Bath Membership & Vietnam Team Coordinator

Ron Toohey Vietnam Project Coordinator

Peter Angel Cambodia Project Coordinator

Ken Dinham & Fran Sivertson In-Country Coordinator, Vietnam

Jan & John Miller Newsletter Editors

Mary Dare

Brian & Ros Organ

Anne-Maree Donoghue

President's report

President's Report to the 2017 AGM

It is with pleasure that I present my annual report to the 2017 AGM. It seems barely months since our last AGM but I'm assured our planet has done a complete trip around the sun since.

There has been a mixed bag for our organisation this year with many great achievements but also the loss of one of our much loved and key stone members. We were all devastated with the news of Tony van Boxmeer's untimely death just before Xmas.

Tony was the Building Supervisor for the Vietnam Team over the past ten years. His love for the work and the Vietnamese people was very obvious. He was highly respected by all who knew him and will be missed enormously. Thank you for what you brought to our organisation Tony.

Picking up the pieces and making sure this year's project continued was a shared effort and we can be very proud of our results.

Speaking of efforts.....our building teams again ventured into Cambodia during February and into Vietnam during March. Not surprising the results have been amazing.

Peter Angel, with only a team of 11 volunteers, again travelled to the south of Cambodia into the Sihanoukville region. Here in two weeks they carried out the refurbishment of three classrooms and major concrete structural repairs at the Smach Deng School.

The real 'feather in the cap' was the very creative project to supply drinking water to the school. An ingenious filter system coupled with a solar powered pump will make a remarkable difference to the school population, something we all take for granted at home.

Seeing the need for wheelchairs in the hospitals of Cambodia, and the difficulty of shipping small numbers of them from Australia, PVI purchased 15 new chairs in Phnom Penh. Twelve were very well received in the Sihanouk Hospital in Phnom Penh while the remainder were given to special needs in the local area of Ream and Tannup.

A special mention to Paul Otto and the Allkids organisation who work 'hand in hand' with PVI at the Smach Deng Primary School.

A large team of thirty-four made up the project team for Vietnam this year, there were many new members and I'm sure they had a very positive experience. Most have volunteered again for next year so something must be going right.

With the loss of Tony during the important planning phase of the project, Ron Toohey has taken on the big task of building supervisor. A brave move considering we were heading into new geography and a long list of unknowns.

The site for the construction of a new kindergarten was Phong Nha. A rural community of the Central Highlands now best known for the very large caves only recently discovered. A very scenic part of Vietnam. The existing building was overcrowded and suffered from major flooding from the nearby river.

With the help of local resort owners, Tony and Tham Agnew, we managed to come up with a suitable plan to use local builders to construct the shell of the new school, expecting to be able to work on fitting it out on our arrival in March. Bad weather and the sheer size of the building saw plan 'B' kick in. It was decided to spread the major construction over two or three years and refurbish the existing kindergarten.

To keep the large team active over the next two weeks we had no trouble finding more local schools that required some TLC. In all, 8 classrooms were transformed and the whole team should be proud of the results.

A big unexpected bonus of the small village of Phong Nha was the after work social life. Young backpackers are attracted to the adventure side of cave tourism and with them come the good food of many nationalities and the night life. We had no trouble fitting in!

Monthly meetings have been very well attended with regulars coming from as far as Brisbane and Gympie. The social gathering after the meeting is a highlight.

2017 has been a good year for new members, 12 in all have joined PVI. As with all organisations, good members come and go as life presents new challenges. Welcome to all our new members and thanks to all those that may return. There is nothing like some young people on our teams to stir up the old folk.

Our busy core of committee members has again kept the show on the road. In particular Ian Bath and David Williams who do a real lot of work behind the scenes and their dedication is well recognised and much appreciated.

This year we have rekindled the granting of Education Bursaries to needy and worthy students in Cambodia and Vietnam. We have set up two bursaries in honour of John Robertson and Tony van Boxmeer. Current intentions are to assist two dental trainees doing their training in Phnom Penh.

Our newsletter has hit the press again thanks to our new editors Jan and John Miller.

Well done and a plea for all members to be active in supplying interesting content.

Those who frequent our website will have noticed it being a little stagnant. A new website is currently being constructed with the help of Trish Simpson and should be ready to go online soon. Thanks Trish, tech savvy members are hard to find.

One thing that I notice every year is that no one travels to our Projects empty handed. Boxes of prescription glasses, handmade quilts, clothing and toys, tooth brushes and paste, donated power tools and even bags of rags and paint brushes all somehow end up on the job. A huge thank you to those who donate all these items and those who lug it all over the world. Our latest newsletter is full of stories and pictures of happy donors and recipients.

Thanks to the generosity of our members, business employees and the occasional grant, PVI is in a good position to take on our future planned Projects.

As all donations and fund raising goes only to the Projects it is vital we keep our financial membership base active. Our membership fees are used to cover the costs of our insurances and administration. So, thanks to all our members who can't travel on our Project Teams, your support is a big part of our survival.

In closing I would like to acknowledge the support I have received throughout the year and thank all those hard workers who are always ready to do that extra bit.

Jim O'Shannessy

President/Treasurer PVI

Vale Murray Templeton



Ian Bath's tribute to Murray

Hi PVI Members. Without sounding melodramatic, it's with a heavy heart that I convey to you that our all-round good friend Murray Templeton sadly passed away peacefully in his sleep on Friday evening 1st September. Murray had attended PVI projects for the past 12 years. Murray had that ability to have an instant rapport with all those that he came in contact with.

We all loved his infectious personality along with his great sense of humour. Yes, he could give it hard and he revelled in taking it hard as our President Jim stated, 'Loud on the outside along with a heart of gold on the inside'.

An extremely hard worker throughout his life, building up one of the most respected and well known smash repair shops in Perth from scratch and which still flourishes today under the watchful eye of his eldest son Darren.

Murray is survived by his wife Kay, 3 Sons and 6 grandchildren of whom he cherished deeply. Murray you'll be sadly missed but definitely not forgotten.

Education Bursaries

It was resolved at our July meeting that 2 scholarships would be offered to KNGO (Khmer New Generation Organization) students to undertake dental training in Phnom Penh. Two girls from KNGO have completed this training and have successfully moved to jobs as dental assistants thus establishing what seems to be an effective pathway from school to training to employment.

It was decided that these scholarships would be named ***The John Robertson Scholarship*** and ***The Tony van Boxmeer Scholarship*** in memory of these valued members.

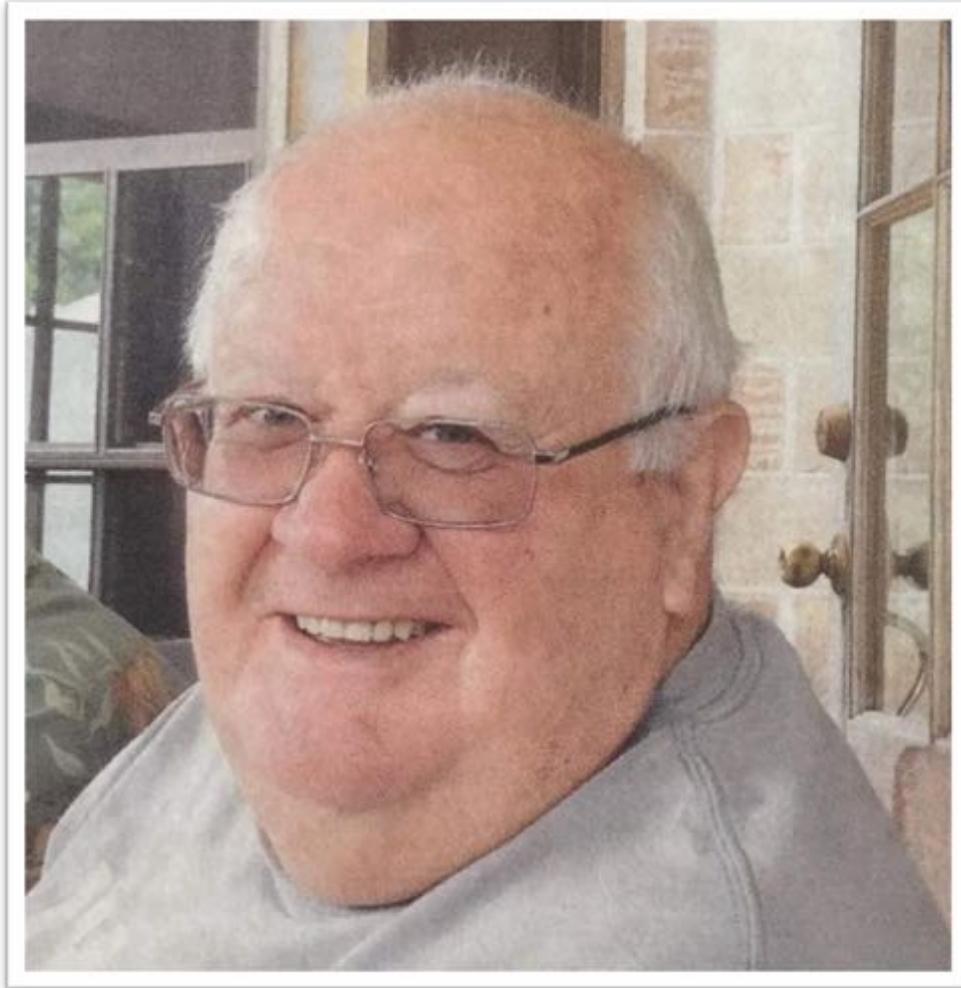
John and Tony both strongly held the view that improved education and training, leading to worthwhile jobs for poor young Vietnamese and Cambodians, is an effective way of improving the life opportunities for these young people and their families.

The purpose of the Scholarships are as follows:

- Provide education and training opportunities with the aim of improving the prospects for the scholarship recipients obtaining sustainable and fulfilling employment.
- The Scholarship provides financial assistance and other support of an amount and over a period that is considered appropriate by Project Vietnam Inc.
- The Scholarship will be awarded periodically as determined by Project Vietnam Inc.
- The Scholarship will be awarded to deserving young Vietnamese and Cambodians who are considered highly capable of applying themselves and successfully completing the education or training course, and highly likely to obtain appropriate employment in due course.
- Recipients will usually be from poorer family circumstances where the opportunities would not be available without the scholarship assistance.

Project Vietnam Inc will decide recipients using firsthand assessments where this is possible and/or recommendations from other well regarded third parties.

The John Robertson Scholarship



John Robertson was a valued and active member of Project Vietnam Inc. for 8 years until his untimely passing. He was also a committed and active member of other community organisations in the Valdora/Nambour area including The Men's Shed and the Rural Fire Service. Additional to his involvement in assisting disadvantaged Vietnamese and Cambodians through Project Vietnam Inc., he and his family have been directly involved and materially assisted poor Cambodian families. John strongly believed that education and training opportunities for young Vietnamese and Cambodians is the most effective means of providing improved life opportunities for these young people and their families. Accordingly, the John Robertson Scholarship is a most appropriate way to honour John Robertson's memory.

The John Robertson Scholarship has been awarded to 20 year old Ran Sachem. Sachem has 5 siblings, three brothers and two sisters.

She was born into a poor family in Bospo village, Odambang I commune. Her father is a construction worker and her mother works each morning selling pickled cabbage for someone in the local market in exchange for food and in the afternoon she works in the KNGO sewing program.

Sachem finished year 12 at the government school in 2016 but because of her family situation she couldn't go to university so during the day she stays at home to help her parents and in the evening she goes to study English at KNGO School.

Four of her brothers and sister are still at school (her younger sister also works in the KNGO sewing program with her mother and learns English at KNGO School).

Sachem is still learning English in the KNGO program and is interested in becoming a nurse assistant in KNGO project like her (sister Saroeuy) who is still working at Cambodia World Family (CWF). She said she really wants to have a good job in her life.



Ran Sachem receiving John Robertson Scholarship certificate from Saveth, Director KNGO, Bospo, Cambodia October 2017.

The Tony van Boxmeer Scholarship



Tony van Boxmeer was a valued member of Project Vietnam Inc. for 12 years until his untimely passing. He was a very active and passionate member of the project teams working in Vietnam on 11 occasions, being the Project Manager for 9 consecutive years prior to his passing. Tony particularly loved the contacts and relationships with the local communities where the projects were undertaken. He had many Vietnamese friends and was much loved by many in these communities. Tony strongly believed that education and training opportunities for young Vietnamese and Cambodians is the most effective means of providing improved life opportunities for these young people and their families. Accordingly, the Tony van Boxmeer Scholarship is a most appropriate way to honour Tony van Boxmeer's memory.

The Tony van Boxmeer scholarship has been awarded to 25 years old Chhoup Saory. Saory has 9 siblings, five brothers and four sisters.

Saory was born into a poor family in Bospo village, Odambang I commune. Her father is a farmer and her mother makes cakes to sell in the local market. Saory finished her year twelve at the government school in 2011 but because of her family situation she couldn't go to university so she stayed at home to help her parents sell cakes in the local market to support her family. Saory is the seventh child in her family.

Saory's four older brothers finished school to work as construction workers to make money to support their family, her younger brother has a job with a small salary and her sisters work as tailors in KNGO sewing program of an afternoon and in the morning, they also sell cakes in the local market.

Saory has been learning English in the KNGO program since it started in 2008 but because she was busy at home she decided to stop and help her mother work at home. She is very interested in becoming a nurse assistant in the KNGO Project. She says she really wants to have a good job in her life.

She wants to continue to study English at school and to become a dental nurse.



Chhoup Saory – receiving Tony van Boxmeer Scholarship certificate with Saveth, Director KNGO, Bospo October 2017.

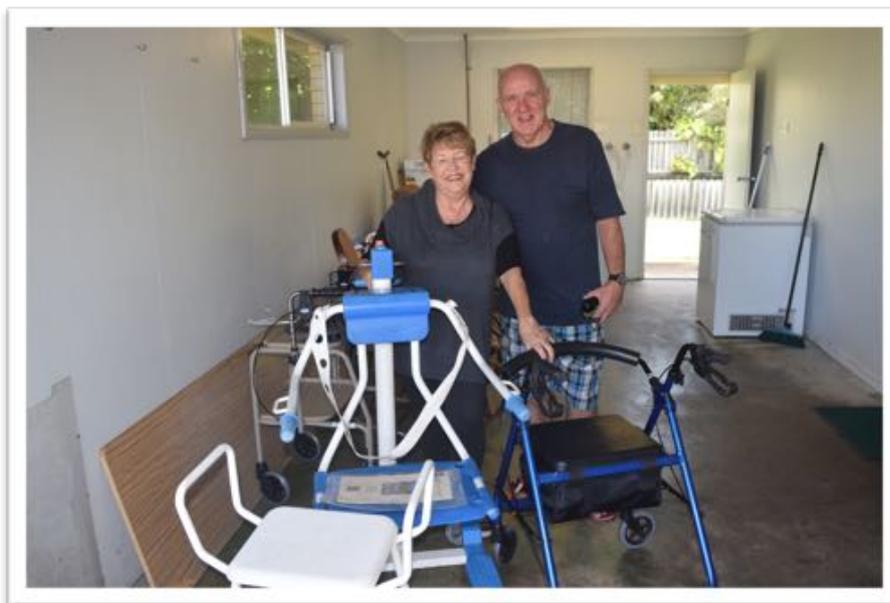
Helping hand

We received an offer of aids for disabled adults from Louise Andrews – the aids were used by her mother who had recently moved into a nursing home and her disabled brother, both of whom no longer needed them.

After some discussion at our May meeting Judy Malzard and Trish Simpson suggested that we consider donating the aids to Katie Rose Cottage which was about to open a permanent hospice in Doonan. David Williams and Louise met Sue Storey from Katie Rose Cottage to take a look at the aids to see if they would be useful in the new hospice.

Sue was overwhelmed by the generosity of the donation from Louise and Archie Andrews. All items except a hospital bed were gratefully received and would find a home in the new Katie Rose Cottage.

We were happy to be able to assist Louise and Archie Andrews find a needy home for the aids which will go towards making someone's life a little easier.



David with a happy Sue Storey from Katie Rose Cottage.

Looking ahead

Dental Health initiative

Ann-Maree Donoghue who is a new PVI member and was a part of the Vietnam Team in 2017 has put a proposal forward to improve the dental health of kindergarten children in Phong Nha. Ann Marie presented her proposal to the July meeting. The following is her proposal.

Whilst working on the project at Phong Nha earlier in the year we noticed that the level of tooth decay in children was extremely high. This was obvious in both the kindy kids' baby teeth and then continuing on to the adult teeth of the Junior School.

Main reasons for the dental decay

- Area has a lower per household income than the rest of Vietnam. Access to dental care in the rural area and cost would be prohibitive.
- No dairy industry in Vietnam, kids are brought up on condensed milk. We did not see any fresh milk, cheese and yoghurt was a rare commodity.
- Too many sweets and sugary drinks.

Whilst we cannot control any of the above, we can try to help in other ways.

Contact for assistance was made to all the Australian charities that send dental teams to Vietnam. Unfortunately, the charities only practice in the city areas of Hanoi, Ho Chi Min City and Long Tan. They are restricted to the area they are given Government approval in. It is also too far to travel to Phong Nha as the teams are only there for short blocks of time.

Contact was also made to a large dental practice in Long Tan which has a humanitarian side to their company. The high costings they gave to send a team to teach the kids how to brush their teeth, or have ongoing treatment has prohibited us from using them.

A Japanese company (Ki Works) that has a dental manufacturing plant in Vietnam were contacted. This resulted in a generous donation of 300 toothbrushes that are being stored at the Phong Nha Lake House Resort for us.

We have also been able to acquire another 150 toothbrushes and a small amount of toothpaste from charity shops around Brisbane. PVI members have also donated both these items. If there is a shortfall of toothpaste, it can be purchased in Ho Chi Min City or Hanoi on the way over to the project.

How can we help stop the decayed baby teeth developing into decaying adult teeth?

- We have almost secured the services of a semi-retired dentist who has been on a previous PVI project. We are seeking Government permission for him to work on the dental needs of the Kindergarten children.

- One of our PVI members is in the process of obtaining help from a lady in Ho Chi Min City to assist as a hygienist. Her dentist has offered to train her, so she can help our project.
- The very minimum we can do for the children is to give them a dental pack containing toothbrushes, toothpaste and a laminated leaflet on 'How to brush your teeth' in Vietnamese. We hope to get the Kindergarten teachers on board to remind the children to continue brushing regularly. Hopefully they can show them an alternative to the sweets and sugary drinks.

Since putting forward her proposal Ann Maree has organised around 100 dental kits which will be put together once in Vietnam and the retired dentist will accompany the Vietnam Team in 2018 as a volunteer to find out how he can best help the children, and then implement his program in 2019. Unfortunately, the dental hygienist is unavailable to assist.

Thanks Ann Maree for your efforts.

PVI Website

Keep an eye out for the revamped PVI website.

Looking back

2017 PVI AID WORK

Our secretary, David, has put together a summary of our aid work in 2017.

Cambodia Project

Clean Drinking Water for Schools – Ream, South East Cambodia

Clean drinking water & access to hygienic toilets are pre-requisites for improving health and education outcomes for children in poor rural communities in Cambodia. The unfortunate reality is that the majority of Cambodian children in rural communities still don't enjoy ready access to hygienic toilets and clean drinking water with obvious consequences for their health. This situation has underpinned PVI's work in the Ream area for the last 4 years. The "*Water for Toilets for School Children program*" has provided access to hygienic toilets for 2,800 children in the 3 large schools in the area, representing 90% of the school children in the area. The toilet water systems PVI has installed continue to function effectively. In 2017 the program was expanded to include "*Clean Drinking Water for School Children*" in the Ream area. We installed an advanced, reliable and low maintenance filter system to provide clean drinking water for the children at Smach Deng School – they are the first in rural Cambodia to enjoy clean drinking water & hygienic toilets. Extensive repairs & maintenance were also completed at the school.



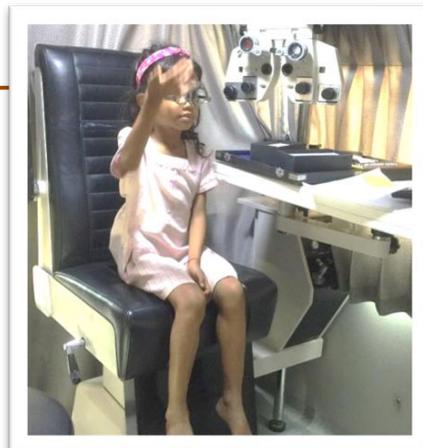
Wheel chairs to Cambodia

Being aware of the work by Sihanouk Hospital Center for Hope for many poor families in Phnom Penh, we wanted to assist in an appropriate way. With advice from hospital we purchased 15 wheelchairs locally at the low cost of US\$62 per chair and donated most of these to the hospital. The donation was greatly appreciated and the chairs are now being well used by patients as needed while they are at the hospital.



Distributing recycled eye glasses in Vietnam & Cambodia

We distributed recycled eye glasses to needy people again in 2017 as part of our ongoing annual program. The glasses are collected by Radcliffe Lions Club as part of Lions International worldwide 'Recycle 4 Sight' program. The glasses are provided through our local networks to appropriate parties who then ensure they are properly prescribed and allocated through our local network.



Total value of Vietnam & Cambodia Projects

The total value of PVI on-ground projects in Vietnam & Cambodia includes direct costs (materials & supplies, and payment to local skilled contractors when they are engaged), travel costs of PVI volunteers and in-kind value of PVI labour.

PVI volunteers meet their own travel costs and contribute approximately 20% of the direct costs. The balance of the direct costs is met by generous benefactors & other fund raising activities.

The direct cost for our 2017 projects was \$41,000 for the materials and supplies, and payments to local contractors. Our teams provided 2,800 hours of labour and met their own costs of \$80,000. The total value of our work was \$225,000.

John Robertson & Tony van Boxmeer Scholarships

The scholarships were established to honour the memory of 2 esteemed past PVI members. The scholarships to the value of US\$1,100 each per year for 2 years were awarded in 2017 to outstanding young students who have completed schooling at Khmer New Generation Organisation's Centre in Battambang, North West Cambodia.

The students will undertake Dental Assistant training with Cambodia World Family in Phnom Penh.

There are good opportunities for fulfilling & sustainable employment on completion of the training.

Good jobs provide obvious benefits to the young scholarship holders and their families as well as providing positive role models for other young people in the community.

New members

PVI would like to welcome the following new members to the team and wish them a rewarding and happy association with PVI.

Carol Zschoke and Ian Garth from Tasmania to join the Vietnam team.

Bria Andrew

Don't forget, if you have any information or an article that you would like to see included in the next newsletter send it through to us. At jojanmiller@gmail.com

John and Jan

We apologise for the last blank page. Despite hours of trying unable to delete it. Any help appreciated.

