

## Friends of Vellore, NSW Branch

Supporting the work at

*Christian Medical College & Hospital, S. India*

**May 2012**



Dear Friends,

During the past year, we had one occasion to meet as a group at a dinner held in Sydney to coincide with the visit of Drs Lionel and Jessie Gnanaraj, from Vellore for the AGM. We had a very positive response to our annual donation drive and I wish to thank you for your continuing support. Some of us from NSW are very much involved with the activities of Australian Vellore Board and thus we have a close contact with CMC and the administration.

### **The AGM of the Vellore Board.**

The Annual General Meeting of the Board was held on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2011 at the Gap Uniting Church in Brisbane. Dr Lionel Gnanaraj, the medical superintendent of CMC and professor of Urology was the official Vellore Visitor. He was accompanied by his wife Dr. Jessie, professor of Obst. & gynaecology. From NSW 3 of us attended - Alison Vickery, Ian Olver and I.

In his report, Prof. Ian Olver, the President of the Board emphasised the growing interest of the alumni in the activities of the Friends of Vellore. He also mentioned that the web site is in the process of being revamped and there will be facilities for online donations in the near future. The periodic teleconferences of the executive and state representatives also have become a regular feature and this facilitates dealing with issues as they are presented instead of at the AGM.



Lionel gave an update of the happenings in CMC campus. To summarise his presentation:

1. After many years of being static, the number of medical undergraduate students was increased from 60 to 100. This will ease the need for graduates to go and work in the various mission hospitals after the completion of training. Similar increase was also taking place in nursing and other allied health courses.

2. As CMC needs more space to meet the increases in services, new campuses are being developed at a short distance from the present one. eg. College of Nursing, Nursing student hostel, new OPD.

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|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|
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3. The new hospital campus at a place called Chittoor, in the adjacent state AP, about 45 minutes from Vellore, is in its early stages. At present there are out patient facilities, but other departments will follow suite in the near future.

4. CMC is very much involved in it's out reach programmes – CHAD, RHUSA, Distant Education programme in Family Medicine, to name a few. There is a designated Director of Missions to help the various mission hospitals around the country where the CMC graduates are working. It has been a long standing complaint from the alumni about the lack of support they have.

Richard Caitens presented his report about his visit to the CMC Council meetings at Vellore in January. The various state representatives also presented their annual reports on their activities and financial balance sheets. Richard Caitens presented the treasurers report. During the year 2010/11, the Board sent a total of \$120,635.00 to CMC Vellore. The executive was reelected for another year. The next AGM will be held in Hobart, Tasmania on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> of August 2012.

### **Dinner to welcome Vellore Visitors – Drs. Lionel & Jessie Gnanaraj**

The friends of Vellore in NSW met on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2011 at Taj Indian Masala restaurant in Home bush for a very sumptuous banquet. About 30 people attended the function. Lionel and Jessie gave talks after the dinner. Lionel reiterated the topics he touched upon at the AGM. Jessie gave a very touching account of the caring and high quality Obstetric services given in CMC. It was a very enjoyable evening catching up with friends. We especially welcomed Robin and (Dr.) Robyn Bradley who reestablished their ties with FOV. We look forward to seeing more of them in the near future.

### **CMC Alumni Association Gathering in Sydney – October 7<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011**



The 7<sup>th</sup> annual CMC Australian alumni gathering was held at the Sir Stamford Hotel at Circular Quay. Vineet and Roshini Nayyar organised a very enjoyable week end. About 50 alumni and their spouses from all over Australia and New Zealand attended. On Friday evening, after the welcome cocktail party many of us had the pleasure of seeing the hilarious farce 'Loot' at the drama theatre, Sydney Opera House. On Saturday we had two scientific sessions. The quality of presentations was very high, informative as well as entertaining. In the evening, the

conference dinner was held in Matilda 111, a Captain Cook cruise liner. The 4 hour cruise was very enjoyable as we cruised around the Sydney Harbour. The Chief Guest was Prof, Ian Olver, the president of FOV. On Sunday morning, we had a thanksgiving service conducted by Gordon Thomas. Geoff Shead gave a very inspiring sermon. This was followed by presentations by many about their experience as student, staff, off spring of alumni (!) and elective student at Vellore. The key note speaker for the session was Dr, Geoff Allen, who belongs to the first batch of men alumni at CMC. It was followed by the AGM. Nitin Verma was elected as the President and Vineet Nayyar as the Secretary / treasurer for the



next 3 years. It was a very enjoyable occasion for the alumni to once again meet together. Next gathering is planned for Griffith, NSW in October 2012.



### **Newly Appointed Director of CMC Dr. Sunil Thomas Chandy**

Dr. Chandy, the Director of Cardiology, will take over as the Director of CMC in September 2012. Sunil and his wife Gigi spent quite a few years in Adelaide during their post graduate training. We wish him the very best and hope that he will be able to attend our AGM in 2013.

### **Council Meeting in January 2011**

The council meetings at CMC Vellore took place during the month of January 2012. Ian Olver attended the proceedings on behalf of the Australian Board.

The main discussion at the Council was regarding CMC's position in relation to the other Mission Hospitals. Many such Hospitals are under pressure and badly resourced. Much depends on the associated church and how far they have been able to provide not only support but leadership and vision. At the moment, CMC looks to students and graduates to work in Mission Hospitals; however, these hospitals are seen as professional backwater. Various means of encouraging the CMC staff to engage with them was discussed. CMC is increasingly using distance learning and E-medicine to support staff in the Mission Hospitals in an attempt to address professional isolation.

A big question raised was regarding CMC's position as a hub of the Christian Healing Ministry. Many argued that CMC as a major influence could not stand alone while the Mission Hospitals were declining. There is an attempt to encourage establishing a network with the Mission Hospitals of certain standard, formally recognizing such hospitals as partners and extending the same ethos which has made CMC a trusted name throughout India. If this succeeds, the Mission Hospitals could take the pressure off CMC as they could potentially address many patients who travel to CMC while only requiring relatively straight forward treatments.

Chittoor campus project is progressing but not as fast as planned because of a few hitches with the building work.

The initiative to create CMC as an Institute of National Importance and obtain a much greater degree of academic freedom is also advancing with discussions at the national ministerial level.

(Contents of this section has been taken from UK FOV site)

### **Our Web Site**

The FOV web site has gone through a major transformation. You will find it easier on the eye, user friendly and up to date, to a large extent, Please visit the site and you will find very useful information on it. [www.australianfov.net.au](http://www.australianfov.net.au)



## **My Experience at Vellore as an Elective Student**

**Dr. Andrew Emerson, Intern Medical Officer,  
Westmead Hospital, Sydney**

In January 2010, during my final year in medicine I had the pleasure of undertaking a medical elective at the Christian Medical College, Vellore. CMC was founded by Dr. Ida Scudder in 1902; it was built as one of the first women's medical colleges in India.

During my stay I undertook rotations in General Surgery, Haematology and Community Health and Development. Whilst the types of patients that presented to the hospital and the quality of teaching received were things that I will always remember, what amazed me was the focus on Christ in the everyday lives of the doctors and nurses who worked there. From the morning devotions held by the team at the start of the week to the hymns sung by the nurses, it was refreshing to see how the focus on God was at the heart of the hospital's mission. I recall seeing Bible verses on wall plaques in the campus library. One of these, Proverbs 1:7 "The fear of the Lord Is the beginning of wisdom" is something I'm still reminded of to this day. It's motto "Not to be served, but to serve" was certainly something I saw in the lives of the staff who often worked tirelessly from 8am to well past midnight on many days of the week.

Whilst many patients who came to CMC were not from affluent backgrounds, it was interesting to see the strategies that the hospital implemented to ensure medical care was provided to those who needed it the most. From the creation of the A-ward which provided additional funding for the general surgical and medical wards, and the financial support from patient's who would often be willing to pay for others who were less able, it was inspirational to see the generosity amongst the people of Vellore.

I will always remember my experiences at CMC. The lessons learned and the friendships made will always be cherished, and I would highly recommend it to anyone who's interested in undertaking a medical elective overseas.

### **Our Annual Donation Appeal**

Unfortunately, we have not organised any fund raising activities during this year as the other state branches do, to collect funds to be sent to Vellore. Our only source is from the end of the financial year appeal. We are very fortunate to have a group of friends who have been supporting us over the years.

Thank you all for your continuing concern for the work done at CMC Vellore. Last year, we received \$13,815.00 towards the Support fund. We also received \$11,500.00 donated in memory of the late Reg Walker which was sent to Vellore to establish a scholarship for a deserving medical student at CMC.