

study materials, but are also required to participate in online seminars and discussions, and attend contact programmes in a centre near them, where the focus is more on the practical skills that they need.

CMC's Distance Education team now offer 5 different courses for qualified health professionals and also to health volunteers with no prior formal medical training. There are currently 650 people enrolled on Distance Education courses, adding to the 3000 already trained.

The quality and effectiveness of these programmes has been recognised with national awards including one in August 2015 from the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), for the impact of their programmes on primary health services in rural India.

Admission to Vellore Medical College

The Medical Council of India (MCI) decided in 2010 that admission to the MBBS and BDS courses from 2013 would be through the National Eligibility Cum Entrance Test (NEET). The exams will be conducted by Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE).

As you are aware, CMC has been conducting their own selection programme to choose future doctors who will serve the various mission hospitals around India and other neighbouring countries. Thus with this new process, CMC would have lost their ability to select their own students.

CMC and other private Colleges appealed against this ruling and so far they have managed to get a stay order from it being implemented, on an annual basis. But a recent verdict by the Supreme court has overturned the stay order starting from 1st July 2016.

It is a great blow to the autonomy CMC has had since it's inception. What would be the outcome to CMC? It is hard to know. At least it will lose control for half the number of intake (50 students). There is a remote possibility it could be even worse.

The Administration and the Council at CMC are actively looking into how best to preserve the interests of CMC in the light of this judgement. This is a trying time for all of us and we request that you continue to uphold this issue in your prayers.

For your Diary - FOV Dinner : Saturday August 20th
More details will be available soon

Email: seyan@bigpond.net.au
Postal Address P O Box 3040 Valentine NSW 2280
Web Site: <http://australianfov.net.au>

NSW Branch

Friends of Vellore



*Supporting the work at
Christian Medical
College & Hospital,
Vellore, S. India*

May 2016

Office Bearers

President	Dr. Robyn Bradley	0402 224752
Vice President:	Dr. Liza Jacob	02 96595290
Secretary:	Dr. Gordon Thomas	0419 238064
Treasurer / News Editor	Dr. Stephen Aseervatham	02 49467882

Dear Friends,

It is almost an year since we wrote to you. Nothing much has happened at the state level of the FOV but the Board and the other states have been quite active during the year.

We are very excited about Robyn taking over the mantle of the NSW FOV. She does not need much introduction to most of us. Her late father Dr, Reg Walker was a stalwart of the FOV at both national and state level for many decades. She kindly wrote a short résumé about herself for the newsletter -

‘I was introduced to Vellore of course by my wonderful father, who had been a Friend of Vellore since his university days. I first went to Vellore in 1971 for an elective term as a medical student with a friend, caught up with John and Sally Rothwell and loved staying

in the students quarters. Have been passionate about India since. Visited my parents and siblings there in 1974 when they were living and working there on my way to the UK, and took a heap of my friends to stay also at that time.

I graduated in Medicine at Sydney in 1972, worked in Sydney, London and then in Edinburgh for a number of years where I met and married Robin. Studied psychiatry after our 4 children had started school, and now work in general adult psychiatry in Sydney with Outreach work in Coffs Harbour, including the Aboriginal medical service.'

We welcome Robyn to the executive and we trust that she will lead us in the coming years for our branch to become more active in spreading the good news of Vellore to others in NSW. We also like to take this opportunity to thank Alison Vickery for the tireless job she has done over the years in keeping the FOV in NSW alive in various capacities.

The AGM of the Australian Board

The AGM of the Australian Board of Vellore Christian Medical College & Hospital was held on Saturday 22nd August 2015 at Queens College, Melbourne

Drs. Robyn Bradley and Stephen Aseervatham from NSW were in attendance. Dr. Sunil Chandy, the Director of CMC addressed the meeting and mentioned about the concern regarding political interference for continuing survival of CMCH. The Hospital was recognized by receiving nine Awards and the number of patients coming through the gates confirms the reason for its existence. Patients prefer CMCH because they get an honest opinion and treatment and the perceived lack of reliability at other hospitals. The medical Staff work approximately ten to twelve hours every day, six days a week, to meet the demands.

He outlined some of the current issues, which includes a new building in Kannigapuram which will reduce the congestion in the main hospital. Some of the hospital buildings are 78 years old and they need refurbishing. The biggest killer in Tamil Nadu is road accidents so in the new hospital in

Kannigapuram, a modern Trauma Unit is being planned. Five Ambulances are needed, as mobile hospitals, given the roads are difficult to manage.

There was a discussion about how should we be disbursing our donations.

Traditionally vast majority of our donations went towards the Endowment Fund at CMCH, which provides high technology care for patients who couldn't afford to pay for them, when required.

It was suggested that we should probably be a bit more proactive in deciding whether we should be supporting any designated project in CMC. There was a fair amount of enthusiasm for buying an ambulance, mentioned above. It will be discussed at a forthcoming teleconference.

We have replicated 1000 copies of the new DVD – our Story, Our CMC, and it has been sent to all the state branches.

Secretary Liz Guiver gave notice that she is unable to continue in that role. The position of the publicity officer has also been vacant for the past year. Other office bearers agreed to continue in their positions.

After the AGM, the Board members attended the annual dinner of the Victorian FOV.

Post Script: Since the AGM the vacant positions have been filled. Evelyn Lehmann, who was the past co-treasurer of the Victorian FOV agreed to become the Secretary and Dr. Chellam Kirubakaran, the former Head of the Department of Child Health at CMC Vellore took over the Publicity Officer position. We welcome them both; they bring vast amount of experience and talents to the Board.

Next AGM will be held on Saturday 20th August this year at Carrington Avenue Uniting Church Hall, Strathfield. We are also hoping to have a FOV dinner in the evening at a nearby Restaurant to meet with the Board members. Please keep that date free. We will inform you of more details in due course.

News From Vellore

Distance Education Department

The government of India has identified a severe shortage of trained medical professionals in various categories. Furthermore many existing doctors in India have not been able to keep up to date with the latest advances in medical care and best practice.

To help address this issue, CMC started a Distance Education Department in 2005. This uses a "blended learning" approach. Students are provided with high quality