

Friends of Vellore, Victoria

A division of Australian Board of Vellore Christian Medical College & Hospital Support Fund ABN 65 125 097 974



October 2019 NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends,

Please enjoy reading our latest newsletter.

Invitation – FOVV Annual General Meeting 9 November

The 2019 FOVV annual general meeting will be held in the Stafford room at Queen's College on Saturday 9 November 2019 from 2pm to 4pm. Afternoon tea will be served. Everyone is welcome. To conclude the meeting, Rev John Connan will reflect on CMCH and FOVV. John first visited CMCH in 1962.

To help estimate numbers for catering purposes, please RSVP to the secretary: FOVVsecretary@gmail.com .

The Australian Vellore Board AGM

Saturday, August 24th was a busy day for the Victorian branch of the Friends of Vellore. First we hosted the Annual General meeting of the Australia Vellore Board, the body that runs the activities in support of the CMCH in Australia. The meeting took place in the Stafford room of Queen's College. It was presided by Dr Stephen Aseervatham, President of the board.

The highlight of meeting was the online hook-up with Dr J V Peter, Director of the CMCH, who was even able to present a long-distance slide show. As we have come to expect from Dr Peter, it was most informative and described to us in detail the developments and challenges faced by the College and Hospital.

With the ascendancy of the Modi government, times are difficult for institutions of non-Hindu religions. The CMCH is determined to retain control over who it admits to its courses, with the assistance of the state government of Tamil Nadu, although some compromises have to be made in the post-graduate area. Excellent progress is being made in the completion of the first stage of the new hospital at Kannigapuram. It will be functioning in July 2020. The Chitoor campus is also expanding, and now provides an important backup for surgical operations when the main hospital is overstretched. Dr Peter continues to emphasise strongly the role of service to the whole community, including the marginalised.

In his report, Dr Aseervatham outlined the various forms of support that the AVB is giving to activities in Vellore, working together with the state branches. The Alison Vickery bequest program is now operational and will grant \$4000 each to two Allied health staff to come to Australia for education and training.

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The AVB is also working to combine resources with other international FOVs in order to fund some expensive projects. USA, UK and Australia are sharing the cost of a mobile diagnostic unit for the Diabetic Retinopathy Screening Program. Changes found in the patient's eyes can be treated to prevent loss of vision. Having a vehicle fitted with the equipment needed means it can travel to Chittoor and the Jawadhi Hills and other outlying areas, to screen patients regularly. Australia has committed to provide \$18,000 annually for 3 years for this project.

The executive of the board was re-elected and will continue its work under the inspiring leadership of the President, Dr Aseervatham.

FOVV Annual Dinner



AVB president Dr Stephen Aseervatham (left) and dinner guests including speaker Dr Chellam Kirubakaran (centre).

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The FOVV annual fund-raising dinner was well attended this year, with 75 participants enjoying excellent food and company in the Junior Common Room (old dining room) at Queen's College, which has been a regular venue in recent years. Members of the Australian Vellore Board, which met on the same day, were able to attend and the President of the Board, Dr Stephen Aseervatham, took the opportunity to give a brief presentation of the responsibilities and activities of the AVB.

The main guest speaker was also a member of the AVB executive, Dr Chellam Kirubakaran. She presented an excellent and interesting talk entitled *Paediatrics at CMC, Past, Present and Future*. She outlined the development of paediatrics from the earliest days when Dr Ida Scudder began treating children and the giant strides over the years, a process in which she herself played a leading role.

A Department of Child Health was begun in 1928, and later a special ward became the Paediatrics ward at CMCH. Post graduate training in Paediatrics began in 1958, and sub specialities have developed since 1982. Dr Chellam was the Director of the Paediatric unit when Intensive Care was begun, after she had done 3 years post graduate training in Adelaide. Following that, other doctors did extra training in Haematology, Endocrinology, and, more recently, in Respiratory Medicine and Oncology. Special units for these conditions have now been established. Many of these doctors spent some time in Adelaide and a few came to Melbourne, to develop expertise in these specialist areas. Dr Chellam envisages a bright future for this very important area of the hospital's mission. There is a new hospital being developed as a Children's Hospital – the first in India.

Dr Chellam did not train at CMC initially, but did a Post Graduate course there and stayed for the next 35 years until she retired. She and her husband, a Nephrology specialist at CMCH, retired to Mildura, and Dr Chellam has been working there.

It was most pleasing that the University of Melbourne was well represented at the dinner, with the recently appointed Professor of Paediatrics, Prof Sarath Ranganathan, heading a table of nine guests. Among them was Dr Nathan Grills, who joined us directly from the airport, where he had just returned from a trip to Vellore. At the end of the evening he was able to give us a report on how the University was working with CMCH in research on global health issues. It is very exciting that the University of Melbourne is planning a more substantive engagement with CMC in the near future. As a fund-raiser, the dinner was successful, with \$5300 raised in donations and \$431 via the customary raffle. The members of the organising group, kindly assisted by Evelyn Lehmann and Frances Bhathal, were most pleased that their efforts had been rewarded though the success of the evening.

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CMC Pulse

In a tragic accident, Ayesha*, an innocent passenger on a bus, lost her right arm. She was turned away by *three* hospitals before she could get treatment...

Ayesha was travelling with her family by bus. The 35-year old leaned against the window and fell asleep. Within the next few seconds her life took a shocking turn as the speeding bus collided with a lorry. *"With my face and arm bleeding profusely, my family rushed me to four hospitals,"* she recalls. *"The first three hospitals refused to admit me. They said I should go to a bigger hospital."* The fourth hospital was able to stitch the wounds on her face but the doctors told her family to take her to a bigger hospital in Chennai or Vellore.

The next day, Ayesha's family brought her to CMC Vellore. It was too late to save her arm and our doctors had to amputate. She is slowly recovering from this traumatic loss and has started occupational therapy to learn how to use her left hand for day-to-day activities. In future, she hopes to get a prosthetic right arm. Though Ayesha has lost a limb, she has not lost her courage and positive spirit. *"I want to get back to my job and my normal life,"* she says proudly. *"My husband is my biggest support. He will always be my right hand."*

You can sign up to receive a weekly update from CMC Pulse at <https://givecmcv.org/>

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Louise Joy Memoir Launch

You are invited to the Launch by Professor Geoffrey Blainey of a Memoir by Louise Joy "Memories of a Missionary Kid: Growing up in British India".



Saturday 16 November 3pm - 5pm
in the Meeting Room of St. Paul's Lutheran
Church, 711 Station Street Box Hill

Hot and cold drinks will be provided. You are
invited to bring nibbles for afternoon tea.

To organise a copy of the Memoir, please
contact

Louise Joy

Tel: (03) 54 333 631

Email: louisejoy1935@gmail.com

10/93 Ebdon Street

Heathcote 3523

Victoria

Australia

Louise Joy (née Gault) aged 12 with her
parents Ted and Edna, and brother John.

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For donations to work at Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore:

Post Cheque or money order to: Treasurer Friends of Vellore, Victoria 3 Fallon Street BRUNSWICK VIC 3056	Direct transfer or deposit to: Friends of Vellore Victoria Bendigo Bank BSB: 633000 Account: 139185151 Please email details of any deposits to FOVVTreasurer@gmail.com
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For the Annual Giving Campaign, please select the program/s you wish to fund:

- Development Department Emergency Fund
- Funding sight-preserving eye surgery
- Endowment Fund for Allied Health Scholarships
- General support fund Australian Vellore Board

For further information on this campaign, contact the Secretary 0429 933 780.

FOVV COMMITTEE 2018–2019

Patron: Mr. David Price OAM

President: Professor David Runia

FOVVPresident@gmail.com

Vice President: Rev. Colin Honey

Secretary: Mrs Viviane Harangozo

FOVVSecretary@gmail.com

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General committee member: Mr. Jim Richardson

General committee member: Mr. Neil Champion

General committee member: Professor Lynette Joubert

Alumni Liaison: Dr Sunil Datta