

# Friends of Vellore, Victoria

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



## March 2019 NEWSLETTER

### *From the President's pen*

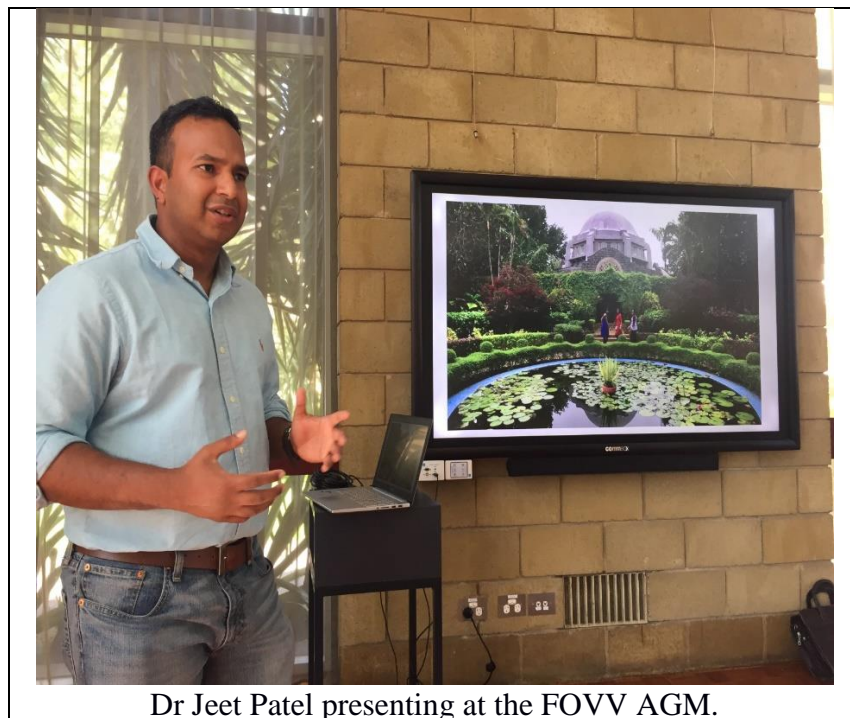
Dear Friends,

It is time for another newsletter from us. Please take a few minutes of your time to read our news. It brings you up to date with our plans for the year. The highlight will be our annual fundraising dinner. I would encourage you to place the date of Saturday 24 August on your calendars.

You can also read about the experiences of a Vellore graduate which ultimately brought him to Australia. When he applied for a place, he did not know that his training would change his life. And there is also some news about how our donations are being used to help extend medical services to the poor and disadvantaged in southern India.

I wish you happy reading and hope to see many of you during the year.

*David Runia*



Dr Jeet Patel presenting at the FOVV AGM.

### *Save the date -FOVV Annual Dinner - 24 August 2019*

The Victorian chapter of Friends of Vellore will be hosting the Australian Vellore Board conference this year and a number of the delegates will be attending our dinner on the evening of Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> of August. We hope you will be able to attend the dinner too. The dinner will return to the gracious Queen's College. We have a wonderful speaker for the evening, the eminent paediatrician Professor Chellam Kirubakaran, who is also a member of the AVB board. Invitations will be sent out closer to the date.

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### *Report on the 2018 FOVV AGM*

The Friends of Vellore Victoria branch held its annual meeting on December 1st 2018 at Queen's College, University of Melbourne. This was later in the year than usual because of the extended absence overseas of the President, Prof. Runia. There was a modest turnout, with 11 people attending and 14 apologies. The main event of the meeting was a most stimulating talk presented by Dr Jeet Patel, an alumnus of the CMC. See the separate report below. But first the usual formalities took place.

Prof. Runia presented his presidential report, in which he outlined the activities of the year, with as its highlight the fund-raising dinner attended by the Director of the CMCH, Dr J. V. Peter and his wife Dr Jayanthi Peter. He reported on the success of the Annual Giving Programme and the excellent collaboration with the Australian Vellore Board. 2018 was also a landmark year because Mrs Louise Joy, who has been the life and soul of FOVV for many decades, decided it was time to end her formal participation in the committee. She was honoured with the award of life membership. Prof. Runia also formulated goals for the coming years. This gave rise to discussion on the need to widen and rejuvenate the membership base of FOVV.

The treasurer Ms Viviane Harangozo reported that \$20,000 had been transferred to the Australian Vellore Board to be transferred on to CMC. This included \$10,000 for Community Lay-Leaders Health Training Certificate, \$2000 for nursing scholarships, \$3000 for CMC Development Emergency Fund, and \$5000 for paramedical scholarships.

Prof Runia was re-elected as president. After the resignation of Mrs Heidi Winnen as treasurer in March, her role was taken over by Ms Viviane Harangozo. Ms Evelyn Lehmann did not wish to continue on FOVV committee as she is now secretary of AVB. Other committee members were re-elected. Mr Neil Champion was elected as a new member.

### *Dr Jeet Patel the 2018 FOVV AGM guest speaker*

Dr Jeet Afzal Patel MBBS, MRCGP, FRACGP, DRCOG was the guest speaker at the AGM. He was born in Mumbai, India. His father, a Moslem, was away for long periods in his job as an engineer on ships. His mother was a nurse and a Roman Catholic. During the riots in 1992, their house was nearly burned, and, concerned for her children's safety, his mother shifted the children to boarding school in the Tamil Nadu hills. After graduating from school Jeet applied to CMC to do Medicine. At the time he knew nothing about CMC except that it was the best medical college in India. He began the course in 2002. At that time there were equal numbers of male and female medical students. Following the 4.5 year course he did an internship with extra training in surgery, obstetrics and medicine. He spent his 2 years' service obligation working with patients with HIV, and was able to establish new and up to date practices in the small and decrepit mission hospital.

Following this he obtained a position at St Mary's Hospital on the Isle of Wight and went on to complete his general practice training in 2014. (His mother had shifted to the UK). He missed the camaraderie of the Men's Hostel at CMC and decided to join the British Army, where he assimilated rather easily. In 2015 he spent time in Kabul, Afghanistan, providing primary medical care to NATO troops. Here he met people from many different countries, and was introduced to Australians and the Anzac tradition.

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He decided to come to Australia. He helped with training final year medical students of Monash University for which he received an Excellence Award. Jeet has been working in a general practice in Carrum, and was about to visit a country practice in St George in Queensland, soon after speaking to us. (He has since gone to work there for 3 years).

Jeet suggested 6 points of difference of CMC compared with other medical colleges:  
1. Values and ethos; 2. The admission process; 3. The fee structure; 4. The camaraderie among the medical students; 5. The high standard of teaching; 6. The positive Christian culture of service.

Jeet was accompanied by his wife, a lawyer whose family live in Bangalore. She is unable to work here until she has completed a significant amount of studying of our different legal system.

Dr Nancy Nicholas thanked Jeet for a most stimulating and informative talk. She presented him with some Australian gifts, as can be seen in the photo.



Dr Nancy Nicholas and Dr Jeet Patel

### *News from Vellore – the CLHTC training course*

Through the generosity of a FOVV member we have during the past years been able to send significant donations to support the Community Lay-Leaders Health Training Certificate Course (CLHTC). This course is a wonderful opportunity for Christian field workers who are working in remote parts of the country where the health facilities available are either very primitive or non-existent. Most diseases don't need a health professional to prevent them or treat them in the early stages. The course gives them the confidence and competence to deal with many of the health problems at the village level, reducing pain and suffering and also health costs.

The donations that FOVV sends are used to substantially subsidise the cost of the course for all participants (almost all of whom have very little money). On top of this some participants can get individual bursaries. There is also a pooling of travel costs which is subsidised.

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A trainee assisting with a bandage for an eye infection.

### *The Annual Giving Program*

The fundraising program initiated last year during the organ concert at Queen's College has received generous responses from our members. So far it has raised over \$10,000 for the three causes: (1) the Development Department Emergency Fund, (2) the Person to Person assistance scheme, and (3) the Allied Health Scholarships Endowment fund. We hope to provide further details about recipients of these scholarships in a future newsletter. For details on how you can donate to these projects, see the final page of the Newsletter.

### *National Christian Medical Educators Conference*

This conference was held at CMC on 18–19 January 2019. Its aim was to support and encourage doctors to see medical education as a calling, with a strong focus on compassion and preventing burnout. Teaching equity and justice were the main subjects of discussion on the second day.

Doctors from the PRIME organisation had travelled to Vellore to train CMC faculty for a few days before the beginning of the conference. PRIME is Partnerships in International Medical Education, an organisation begun in England by Christian doctors who are keen to promote whole person care. Several of the doctors who have done PRIME training assist with the Distance Education Courses run by CMC. They visit hospitals around India and run two week contact programs on three occasions as part of the two year Distance Education course for General Practitioners. Doctors in India have not had to do continuing education as they do here in Australia, and the course was developed to encourage the doctors to think of medical education as a life long activity. Doctors are also encouraged to think of the impact of the patient's physical illness on the emotional, and spiritual well-being of the patient, as well as on the family and its financial situation. Because there is no system like Medicare in India, huge numbers of people are unable to afford medical care or even the expense of travelling to a doctor or a hospital.

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

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

- Development Department Emergency Fund
- Person to Person Scheme
- Endowment Fund for Allied Health Scholarships
- General support fund Australian Vellore Board

For further information on this campaign, please contact the Secretary.

If you are interested in leaving a bequest to the CMCH via the Australian Vellore Board, please get in touch with the Secretary/Treasurer.

### **FOVV COMMITTEE 2018–2019**

Patron: Mr. David Price OAM

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General committee member: Mr. Jim Richardson

General committee member: Professor Lynette Joubert

General committee member: Mr Neil Champion

Alumni Liaison: Dr Sunil Datta