



VELLORE NEWSLETTER

FRIENDS OF VELLORE CHRISTIAN MEDICAL COLLEGE & HOSPITAL (QLD)

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(Qld FOV is a branch of the Australian Board of the Vellore Christian Medical College and Hospital)

Dear Friends,

Most of you would know that our Qld Friends of Vellore join with similar groups in NSW, Vic, Tas. and SA to form the Australian Board. The Annual Meeting of this Board is held in rotation at the various state capitals. This year the Board met in Brisbane in August. This letter has some news from the Board meeting.

Through the Board, \$750,000 was channelled to the Christian Medical College at Vellore during the last financial year. This represents the generosity of donors, fund raisers and bequests. It's a significant contribution to the great work of CMC as it continues and expands its teaching, healing and research work.

You are all welcome at the Qld Friends Annual Meeting.

We invite you and your friends to join us at:

The 2017 ANNUAL MEETING of the Qld Friends of Vellore

at the Nazareth Lutheran Church, 12 Hawthorne St
Woolloongabba

2 pm Sunday 12 November

Speaker: Dr Bella George (Aust Board President 2014 - 17)

Your RSVP would be helpful. Kindly contact:

Sharon 0401 919 664 (sharonkoshy@yahoo.co.uk)

or Brian 3351 3272 (jblee19@bigpond.net.au)

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE AUSTRALIAN BOARD

It was Qld's turn to welcome the local and interstate members of the Board for this year's annual meeting. Special visitors were CMC Vellore staff members Hugh Skein (Development Office) and Dr Debbie Skein (Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation).

- **CHANGE OF PRESIDENT:** Dr Stephen Aseervatham, a CMC graduate from Newcastle, NSW, is the new President on the retirement of Dr Bella George.
- Other members of the Board of Directors are Vice President David Runia, recently retired Master of Queens College, Melbourne, Secretary Evelyn Lehmann, Treasurer Richard Cattiens and Publicity Officer Dr Chellam Kirubakaran. Dr Bella George, as the retiring President will remain on the Board for 3 years.

AUSTRALIAN BOARD FUNDING FOCUS 2017-18

- Ida Scudder Centenary Endowment Fund (primarily for support for needy patients)
- Senior Training Fellowship
- Person-to-Person (one of the special funds for needy patients).
- Aim to transfer at least \$262,000 to CMC by 30 June.
- Minimal administration expenses. (For the year ending 30.6.17 over \$700,000 was sent to CMC Vellore while local expenses were just over \$7,000, approximately 1%)

Queensland Friends continue to be major contributors to the budget of the Australian Vellore Board.

MAJOR PRESENTATION TO THE ANNUAL BOARD MEETING

Hugh Skeil, representing CMC Vellore at the meeting spoke of the present work, programs, developments and plans at Vellore. These include:

- Appointment of the new Director. From 23 September the Director will be Dr J V Peter whose vision for CMC is the delivery of compassionate, Christ-centred, holistic, cost-effective quality healthcare, enabled by technology.
- Mission Hospitals will be one focus since many of these hospitals serve those known to be “the poorest of the poor”.
- Research. Already AU\$4 million is the research budget, but this needs to increase, staff need to be released to do research as part of their ordinary programs and all this needs to be relevant for India.
- Education: There is a strong emphasis on continuing education programs and the expansion of Distance Education.
- Mission Hospitals: These face many challenges and there is a need for a united voice from the many Christian Hospitals throughout India. CMC is looking for new ways to support small Christian Hospitals which are seen as a kind of extra Campus.
- The new campuses at Chittoor and Kannigapuram.

CHITTOOR: Though the present buildings on this campus, over the State border in Andhra Pradesh 40km north of the CMC Hospital, are temporary, both outpatient and inpatient facilities are working well and this year Chittoor has become self-supporting and is taking pressure off the main Hospital.

KANNIGAPURAM: Building work is proceeding apace and there are hopes for an early starting date for this new enterprise.



SERIOUS PROBLEMS ABOUT STUDENT ENTRANCE

For the first time since CMC began receiving medical students, it has been found necessary to cancel this year's intake of students.

This action had to be taken because the authorities insisted on CMC changing its long-standing policy on the admission of students for medical courses through which a significant proportion of the admitted students each year were from Church of South India Dioceses and from other Indian Churches, that is, members of the CMC Council. The Central Government authorities are now insisting that the results of the undergraduate medical entrance examination (NEET), conducted by the Central Board of Secondary Education, be regarded as the single medical entrance examination in India.

It is important for us in Australia to note that institutions like CMC are not heavily funded by the Government as they are here. They are supported by their own generated income together with money from member churches and organisations.

CMC has been appealing to the Supreme Court (the Indian equivalent to the Australian High Court) in a case which has been going on for some time. The Supreme Court has now said it will give a decision on 11 October. *(This letter was delayed hoping **there would be news of the Court's decision. When news comes we will pass it on to as many as we can.**)*

MORE ABOUT STUDENT ADMISSIONS

From Hugh Skeil (Head of CMC;s Promotion Office): “I attended the Council Meeting on 2 Sept which was called to discuss the latest developments in the student selections issue. I attended this, so I thought you might like to have a report. As well as the Director's speech we had a presentation by Mr. Krishna Srinivasan, who has been our lawyer at the centre of CMC's legal battles about admissions over recent decades.”

After hearing detailed accounts of the historical background to the NEET and Common Counseling issue, and discussing various options available, the Council decided not to accept Common Counseling for either undergraduate MBBS admissions or post graduate superspeciality admissions. The principle of common counseling is not a minor issue or academic diversion: it strikes at the heart of the values and objectives of the Christian Medical College Vellore and will have a significant negative impact on Christian healthcare ministry in India.

*CMC has not lost the case; in fact, the Supreme Court judgment in 2012 rejecting NEET has still not been overturned, just sidestepped and ignored. A long series of **judgments down the years have been favourable to CMC's selection process and minority rights, but these have been ignored. There are grounds for optimism, but it is likely to take some time for CMC's position to be vindicated.***

*No admissions would take place until the existing cases had been decided by the Supreme Court and while the admissions **process was “sub judice”.***

CMC'S SUPPORT FOR MISSION HOSPITALS

There are hundreds of what are generally known as "Mission Hospitals" throughout India. These were started – quite a few long before Indian Independence – by Churches or other Christian bodies. Many can be found in smaller towns or rural areas. In a nation where there is still much poverty, Christian Mission hospitals play a central role in administering the best care to the poor and marginalised.

In 2007 CMC set up a Mission's Office to strengthen its links with Mission hospitals and especially the many CMC graduates who worked in them. Much has developed over the last 10 years so earlier this year the office was upgraded to become one of CMC's Departments, a significant move considering the present scenario where CMC is focusing on reviving, rebuilding and restoring Mission Hospitals.

The wonders of networking technology enable much to be done for even the most distant hospitals.

TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS BY BANK TRANSFER

People wishing to donate to CMC Vellore may find it more convenient to pay by Bank transfer rather than by cheque. Our Treasurer, Richard Caitens, has provided the following information: Full Name of Account: Friends of Vellore Christian Medical College & Hospital Queensland Group Support Fund. (You can enter just: Friends of Vellore Support Fund)

BSB no.: 633000 Account no.: 131073413

Reference: Your surname and suburb (or as much as space allows)

After making the transfer, please send an email regarding your deposit to the Treasurer at this email address: cmcvellore@optusnet.com.au so a receipt can be sent to you.

AUSTRALASIAN CMC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

This organisation links many CMC graduate doctors in Australia, New Zealand and a number of East Asian and Pacific countries. The annual scientific session of the conference in 2016 in Mildura was approved by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons as a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) program.

This scientific conference will be held this year in Hobart on 20-27 October.

When it began this Association was limited to medical graduates of CMC. It has been decided to open the membership to all those admitted to CMC as students of various courses including medical, nursing and paramedical courses. In addition, those who have spent time at CMC as elective students, visitor observers, teachers and administrators are now eligible to become Association members.

If you qualify and wish to join you could email the Association Secretary, Dr Meshach Kirubakaran (meshachk@yahoo.com).

CMC'S LINKS WITH SRI LANKA

The Northern Province of Sri Lanka, with its high proportion of Tamil speakers and connections with India through the Jaffna Diocese of the Church of South India and in many other ways, has always had significant links with CMC.

An interesting historical note is that the one regarded as “the first missionary doctor in the world”, Dr John Scudder, grandfather of Dr Ida Scudder, the Founder of CMC in 1900, established a medical clinic in a Jaffna village in the 1800s.

A CMC team of three doctors and a senior nurse from the Department of Endocrinology conducted symposiums and training on Diabetes Management for consultants, doctors, nurses and primary care physicians from the Teaching Hospital in the Jaffna district and provincial hospitals.

Getting your newsletter

It saves a lot of postage money and you get the Vellore Newsletter earlier when you are listed to receive it by email. Thanks to the nearly 100 of you who get your Newsletter this way. Do encourage your family members and friends to join the subscription list by contacting fovqld@hotmail.com

WEB SITES

www.australianfov.net.au

Vellore and USA sites: www.cmch-vellore.edu & www.vellorecmc.org

STREET STALL NEWS

Many thanks to those wonderful people who continue their many years of stall work and to those who have joined them recently.

The Tank Street stall happens once a month. New helpers are always welcome. Continuing needs include:

- Suitable items for sale, especially cakes and biscuits
- Help with transporting the goods
- Workers at the stalls - regularly or now and again as you are able.

We do not have volunteers to successfully run the the Toowong stall. We need a group of 5 to 7 people who would be able to turn up monthly to work on the stall. It does start early (6 am) and goes till about 10. People to bake for the stall would be great too.

If you, or someone you know, can help in this, kindly contact Mrs Claire Mainstone (3371 1332).

Thanks to "Vellore Newsline" for some of the material in this Newsletter.
Regards, Brian (*Newsletter Editor*).

QLD FRIENDS OF VELLORE OFFICE BEARERS

Chairman: Mrs Cathy Chandani, 24 Mathews St, Bethania 4205 (0412391353)
 Vice Chairman: Rev John Hooper, 18 Leah Av Salisbury Q 4107 (32772883)
 Hon. Secretary: Dr Sharon George, 27 McAuley Pde Pacific Pines Q 4211
 Ph. 0401919664
 Hon. Treasurer: Mr Richard Caitens, 107 Northgate Rd, Northgate 4013 (3266 1962)
 Stalls Co-ordinator: Mrs Claire Mainstone, 37 Fifth Av, St Lucia, 4067 (3371 1332)
 Publicity Officer &
 Newsletter Editor: Rev Brian Lee, 19 Glencloy Street, Ferny Grove 4055 (3351 3272)