

Friends of Vellore

NSW branch of the Australian Board of Vellore Christian Medical College & Hospital

Office Bearers

President:	Dr. Robyn Bradley
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Secretary:	Dr. Gordon Thomas
Treasurer / News Editor	Dr. Stephen Aseervatham



May 2020

Dear All,

It is just under a year since we contacted you. Those of you who have access to email would have received a copy of the Newsletter from the Board in January. I will enclose it with the printed copy of this letter.

Hope you all are keeping well during this COVID pandemic period. We are thankful to God for our leaders and the medical personnel who have done a great job in managing the task and we hope to see the light at the end of the tunnel, soon.

Lots have happened at the Board and at Vellore. I have covered most of it in the attached report.

Council Meetings:

I attended the biannual meetings at Vellore in January in my capacity as the president of the Board. Prof. David Runia, the vice president and Prof. Chellam Kirubakaran, the publicity officer also attended. On the first night we had the opportunity to meet the representatives of international FOVs at a dinner where the Director and senior staff joined us. It was a very productive evening, sharing the news about the contributions by individual FOV groups during the year and getting feedback from the staff on the projects we have been supporting over the years.

The two days of the council were full on. Lots of matters were covered. Reports from the Director, Principal, the associate Directors of Kannigapuram building project and Chittoor hospital.

Regarding student admissions, we learnt that CMC has accepted the results of NEET exam as the first step and was able to negotiate with the Tamil Nadu state government to get their preferred candidates from various churches for the undergraduate and post graduate admissions, but not for the super specialities. A long-standing appeal against the NEET recently went to the supreme court and the court has decided once and for all that it is there to stay.

A New Constitution was proposed to accommodate the recent additions of campuses to the complex and thus Chittoor, CHAD, RUHSA, Vellore and Kannigapuram were acknowledged administratively as self-standing units under the broader umbrella of CMC. It is believed that this will have positive ramifications in the future growth of these campuses.

Paediatric Centre at Kannigapuram:

It was exciting to learn that a private corporation from Canada – Quess / Fairfax, which has subsidiaries in India, has approached CMC with the proposal to build a paediatric centre in the Kannigapuram campus. This group is involved with Toronto Children’s Hospital and the capital expenditure for the centre will be provided by them. CMC appointed a task force to investigate the offer and after extensive research and deliberations it is happy with the proposal. Once the current Kannigapuram building project is completed, the negotiations will commence. It is envisaged the hospital will have about 352 beds. There will be still paediatric presence at the Vellore Campus.

Visits to Chittoor and Kannigapuram:

David and I had the opportunity to visit the Chittoor and Kannigapuram campuses with the other international FOV delegates.

Chittoor - In the two years since I visited last, it has really grown in status and size. It was bustling with activities with two theatres running round the clock. They admitted the first batch of students to the newly establish nursing school.

Some Facts & Figures: Total Beds – 120; Outpatients – 420 per day; Operations – 65 per week; Deliveries - 30 per week.



Kannigapuram campus is huge and bigger than I ever imagined when I first saw last. The building work was going on 18 hours a day trying to complete it for the planned opening. I was very much impressed by the facilities available. I realised that the whole complex is planned to cater for the current demography of the Indian population. It is expected that there

will be a great demand for private patients which in turn will make it possible to treat more non-paying patients, all under the same roof. When completed there will be 1560 Beds. The newly constructed Residential campus was dedicated on March 12th, 2020. It has 534 houses to cater for staff at various level of seniority.

Because of the COVID crisis there has been a delay with the building work and thus it is expected that the opening is not going to be in June or July, as was planned.

CMC and COVID

As you are all aware, India is facing a mammoth task of the potential of dealing with the pandemic. The college was approached by the government as one the 3 centres to prepare for the influx of patients. Thus, CMC renovated the now unused 'old' student nurses quarters in the Vellore campus and converted it into a purpose built 500 bed ward with 14 bed ICU.

They had to suddenly find extra funds to deal with expenses while they were trying their best



to pay off the building cost at Kannigapuram. There was an urgent appeal by CMC to friends at large to come to their rescue. The Board contributed towards one ICU bed and with further donations we have received, we will be able to pay for the cost of a second one.

We have started receiving donations from alumni and some friends towards the 'COVOD – 19 Preparedness Fund'. Some of you have already sent your generous donations and CMC thankfully expresses its gratitude for your kind thoughts. We would like to appeal to those who haven't had the opportunity to share in this cause to sincerely give your prayerful consideration. Thank you.

AGM – October 2020

We were planning to hold the AGM of the Board in Sydney this year. On the advice of the auditors, who wanted some extra time to complete their work, instead of the month of August when we traditionally met, it was decided to hold it on October 17th.

With the COVID lockdown, we are not certain at this stage whether things will be back to normal by then. If we go ahead, we will plan to have a dinner on the same evening. We will keep you posted.

Annual Fund-Raising Appeal

Many of you have already sent your kind donations in the past few weeks in response to the appeal you received from CMC Directorate as well as Australasian Alumni Association.

Thank you for your generosity.

CMC has asked for help with two projects which are in urgent need of funds.

1. Kannigapuram – The bank has put conditions on the Institution to raise certain amount of money as a condition for further loan to complete the buildings. We usually do not get involved with capital expenditure, but this is an exceptional situation and thus something for your kind consideration.
2. COVID 19 Preparedness – As I mentioned earlier, CMC needs donations to fulfill what they have been asked to provide to deal with the effects of the pandemic. There are two components – one for the general expenditure (testing, consumables etc) and secondly for procuring ICU equipment which at the end of the crisis could be transferred to Kannigapuram campus and thus would be put to good use.

If you wish to donate by cheques, please make it payable to 'Australian Board CMCH Support Fund' and post it to P O Box 3040, Valentine NSW 2280.

You also have the option of making a direct bank debit:

Friends of Vellore NSW

BSB 062 827

Ac.No. 1011 9987

Please keep safe and God willing we will be out of this pandemic in the near future.

Thank you again for your continuing interest in supporting the work done at CMC, Vellore.

God's Blessings

Stephen Aseervatham

On behalf of the Executive of the NSW Branch of FOV.

If you wish to receive any future correspondence from us by email, kindly let us know.

Thank you. seyan@bigpond.net.au