

October 2023

Vellore News

CMCH Vellore Web site:

<http://www.cmch-vellore.edu>

Australian FOV web site:

<http://www.australianfov.net.au>

SA FOV email:

safriendsofvellore@gmail.com

SA FOV Facebook:

[SA FOV on Facebook](#)

SA Friends of Vellore AGM

7pm Friday 3rd November, 2023

Rosefield Uniting Church

2 Carlton St, Highgate

Speaker: Dr Renu John

Dr John is a GP from Perth who will be sharing her experiences of a mission hospital in northern India where she spends 3 months every year.

Supper will be provided - supporters and friends of CMC Vellore are all invited!

Upcoming
SA FOV
AGM

An update from
the President
of SA FOV

CMC
Campuses

An update from the SA Friends of Vellore President

SA is resuming its face to face activities after a hiatus driven by the COVID 19 pandemic. As an organisation, we remain grateful to all of you who held CMC and the rest of the country in prayer as it grappled with the dreaded delta wave of the pandemic which led to shortages in oxygen and high mortality across all ages. SA FOV participated in the national drive to raise funds to help CMC to deal with this crisis. The Australian chapter of CMC Alumni association partnered with Health Serve Australia to contribute towards Mission Hospitals in India.

An informal Meet & Greet dinner event was held on February 11th 2023. Dr J V Peter who was visiting Adelaide at the time spoke at the meeting. The meeting was attended by over 70 people. SA FOV held its second clinical meeting after the COVID 19 restrictions were lifted in May 2021, on the 23rd of June 2023 at the Rosefield Uniting Church. Dr Kingsly Robert Gnanadurai, physician and Dr V J Chandy, orthopaedic surgeon gave inspiring talks describing their experiences in Mission hospitals, CMC and finally in Adelaide. V Seth, 6th year medical student and president of the Adelaide University Medical School Students Association who had just returned from CMC, gave an account of his experience in CMC.

SA FOV and Adelaide university signed an MOU in August 2021. This will provide bilateral opportunities for research and teaching collaboration. Associate Professor Philippa Rasmussen, Deputy Dean International at the University of Adelaide, travelled to CMC, Vellore as part of a contingent to India led by the Vice Chancellor. She spent a productive two and a half days touring the campuses and meeting a number of people.

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Upcoming Events At A Glance

7pm, Fri 3rd Nov 2023

SA FOV AGM

Rosefield Uniting Church

To be confirmed:

Fri 24th May 2024

SA FOV Clinical Meeting

Rosefield Uniting Church

To be confirmed:

Sat 24th Aug 2024

SA FOV Annual Dinner

Location TBC

A reminder that if you wish to receive this newsletter by email and no longer require the paper form, please email: safriendsofvellore@gmail.com
Remember to let us know if you change your email address.

South Australian Friends of Vellore Committee

President: Dr Renjy Nelson, Vice President: Kumar Arpudasmamy

Secretary: Luisa Mozzi, Treasurer: Tijo Thomas, Editor: Gary Fielke, safriendsofvellore@gmail.com

The Australian Vellore Board General Body meeting was held on August 26th in Adelaide. The Director, Dr Vikram Mathews addressed the Board from Vellore and gave an update on CMC's activities since he took over. He placed much emphasis on the continuing need for mission and outreach, both to the mission hospitals throughout India, and to the work being done locally. For this work of outreach the Jawahdi Hills project funded by the Australian FOV could be seen as a model. CMC remains strongly committed to charity work for the disadvantaged, with the **goal that no one needing help will be turned away**. Research remains a priority, with some outstanding researchers receiving national and international recognition. It was emphasised that research has to be context-sensitive.

The AGM was followed by an informal dinner and meet and greet evening at the Burnside Family Church Hall at which Dr Vikram Mathews gave a virtual presentation and interactive session with the guests.

Where else has FOV Australia helped so far?

One example is Siloam! India is set to emerge as the diabetic capital of the world. In 2000 there were 31.7 million diabetics in India and this number is estimated to rise to 79.4 million by 2030 – the largest number in any nation. Diabetic retinopathy can be blinding, and is a complication of uncontrolled diabetes mellitus, but can be prevented by strict blood sugar control, regular screening, and timely intervention.



Dr Vikram Mathews online at the dinner following the Australian FOV AGM

CMC Vellore's Department of Ophthalmology is dedicated to the screening, prevention, and treatment of diabetic retinopathy. Their outreach team reaches out to rural areas surrounding Vellore, screening those with diabetes who present for eye care, either using a fundus camera and tele-ophthalmology or by fundus examination. However, even though trained paramedics and optometrists can offer this service along with the ophthalmologist, the numbers they can screen by this method are low and confined to those presenting themselves. Completion of treatment may require several visits including referrals to CMC's base hospital (Schell Eye Hospital). Friends of Vellore Australia partnered with Friends of Vellore UK and the Vellore CMC Foundation (Friends of Vellore in the USA) to raise funds to buy a mobile ophthalmic unit. This unit, named "Siloam", will address both issues of poor access, and follow up. It will make screening accessible to much larger numbers and enable laser treatment in the field for those requiring it. The mobile ophthalmic unit is seen not just serving the peripheral clinics but travelling to cover populations with poor access within Vellore and the neighbouring districts as well. Apart from diabetic retinopathy screening and treatment, the mobile unit will be used for screening for all eye disease in children and adults in areas with poor access. The first outreach clinic was held on September the 9, 2022, after a planning meeting with community stakeholders. So far, the clinic has picked up patients with sight threatening diabetic retinopathy and undiagnosed glaucoma, some of whom received laser treatment on site. The ongoing need for this department arises when needy patients with diabetic retinopathy need extensive surgery in the base hospital: this can cost up to \$1900.00 per patient. This procedure is often needed for young diabetic patients who have lost their jobs from blindness. The cost includes rehabilitating them. While CBM provides some funding, most of the funding needs come from donors.

What current opportunities are there to help?

One area of need is Palliative Care. CMC Vellore was determined that the healing ministry should extend to terminally ill people, beyond medical support yet needing compassionate care and love at the end of the end of their lives. So, with the help of FOV's from different countries, they established a Palliative Care Centre in 2004. The department sees between 400-450 patients each month in outpatients and runs a Home Care Programme (started in 2003), making approximately 150 home visits a year. Patients are provided with necessary treatment, whilst their family and community are guided in how best to support them, including supporting the psychosocial and spiritual needs of the patient and family. Many of the patients are very poor, and the nature of their illness often causes prejudice.

A contribution to Palliative Care will ensure that a terminally ill patient and their family are supported, including social rehabilitation for the family and small grants for income generating schemes. The department is looking to promote palliative care practice and knowledge in Vellore and the surrounds.

The Australia Vellore Board has recently contributed \$7500 each for drug subsidy and social rehabilitation.

SA FOV has a new facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100086705256294>

The SA FOV AGM 2023 will be held on November 3rd 2023 this year.

Plans have started to host the traditional SA Friends of Vellore Dinner in August next year.

Dr Renjy Nelson, President of SA Friends of Vellore



Nurturing hope in the warmth of Chatram

When you are a stranger in a new town with a severe illness that takes a toll on your health, Chatram becomes a supporter in uncertainty. For the residents at Chatram from all walks of life, it is a circle of strength and love. It's more than just a roof over their heads.

Chatram, located just 400 metres from CMC's town campus, was established in 1906 to provide accommodation to poor patients from faraway places at a highly subsidised rate of less than \$1 per day.

Thanks to the generosity of the MBBS batch of 1970, residents of Chatham get to start their day with a wholesome breakfast. With the support of other donors, lunch or dinner is provided, averaging 30-35 meals daily.

The evenings at Chatham offer a much-needed respite. The residents test their culinary skills, cook various dishes for dinner, and share their creations while gathering for spiritual connection through Bible reading, hymns, and prayers. These moments provide comfort and hope to the residents.

In 2022-2023, a total of 282 individuals were housed at Chatram; 280 from nine states in India and two from Bangladesh.

A family finds home at Chatram

As Dayamaipal and Amnipal walk around Chatram, Amnipal's eyes tear up. Her heart aches with worry about her husband's cancer treatment and the uncertain future awaiting her four-year-old daughter Khushi.

Dayamaipal reaches for his wife's hand, giving it a reassuring squeeze. "She's feeling apprehensive, and I'm trying to be the strong one," he smiles. "She was overwhelmed by the uncertainty of navigating cancer treatment. But CMC and Chatram have stood by us every step of the way. When we walked in after a tiring trip from West Bengal, Chatram enveloped us in a warm, comforting embrace that felt like our home. The doctors provided exceptional care, and my health has significantly improved. Let's leave the rest to the Almighty," Dayamaipal signs off philosophically.



from the CMC Vellore Year Book 2022-2023

CMC Campuses

The Christian Medical College Vellore located in Tamil Nadu, is an unaided, not-for-profit, minority educational institution established in the year 1900. Today, CMC Vellore's network of primary, secondary, tertiary and quaternary care teaching hospitals are spread across seven campuses in Vellore, Ranipet and Chittoor, Andhra Pradesh. Together, CMC Vellore is a 3005 bedded multi- speciality medical institution of international repute.

The CMC Vellore Hospital Campus or the Town Campus located at the centre of Vellore City is the parent node of CMC. It began as the Cole Dispensary in 1923. The CMC hospital offers a large range of medical specialties, with advanced diagnostic and therapeutic services, alongside primary and secondary level care for local communities, catering to 101152 inpatients and 1835916 outpatients in 2021 - 2022.

Other Services: The Schell Eye Hospital is located in a separate campus around 2 kilometers from the Main Campus and has active community services. The Rehabilitation Unit and the Mental Health Centre are located in Bagayam and provide specialized services rehabilitation and mental health.

The Rural Unit for Health and Social Affairs (RUHSA) is CMC's comprehensive rural site, serving critical needs such as primary and secondary care for families, fieldwork and education for doctors, nurses and allied health professionals, clinical research and numerous family support programmes for local residents.

In 1944, a model-training centre for rural health care at Kavanur village was proposed. Later on this was renamed as RUHSA. The expansion of its outpatient department has created new spaces for programmes that will benefit the residents of the K.V. Kuppam block.

CMC's Community Health and Development programme (CHAD) was established in 1955. It is the epicentre of CMC's community health programme. It has its own training centre, outpatient clinic, secondary care hospital and provides training to medical, nursing, paramedical students, postgraduates and staff. It is a world-renowned centre for epidemiological and translational research. CHAD serves rural communities of the Kaniyambadi block and the tribal hamlets of Jawadhi hills. Apart from basic medical services, CHAD helps in occupational therapy, health education, nutritional education and overall community service.

The Low Cost Effective Care Unit (LCECU) began in 1982. It caters to the needs of those living in the urban slums of Vellore. LCECU works holistically to bring not only healing to the body but also takes care of familial and community relationships.



CMC Vellore Chittoor Campus



Ranipet Campus ICU

The CMC Vellore Chittoor Campus, in southern Andhra Pradesh has been offering medical services since 2011. The campus is now a rapidly growing broad-speciality hospital and has four state-of-the-art operation theatres, a good diagnostic laboratory that can handle clinical pathology, biochemistry, microbiology and virology. It also runs outreach programmes for primary health centres and schools.

The CMC Vellore Ranipet Campus is a Level 1 trauma care and multi-speciality and the biggest expansion of CMC. This centre is all set to provide the best quality health care. When the pandemic broke out the newly built Ranipet Campus was transformed into a COVID facility. The sprawling new campus responded immediately to the need of the hour and re-calibrated its wards as COVID wards. New ICU's were opened just in time when the second wave was engulfing the nation.

from the CMC Vellore Year Book 2021-2022

The CMC Vellore Town Campus

The Town Campus has experienced remarkable growth and expansion since its humble beginnings as the Cole Dispensary in 1923. Over the years, it has evolved into a medical hub that caters to diverse healthcare needs.

With a comprehensive array of medical specialities and cutting-edge diagnostic and therapeutic technologies, the Town Campus stands at the forefront of healthcare innovation. As the Town Campus grows and expands, it remains dedicated to providing exceptional healthcare to the community.

The day in numbers:

7,761	1,813	92	2,254	35	24,786	69.06%
Outpatients	Inpatients	Operations	Radiological tests	Births	Lab tests	Bed occupancy

from the CMC Vellore Year Book 2022-2023

The SA Friends of Vellore Annual Dinner will be back in 2024!

After a long hiatus we are planning to hold the next annual dinner on 24th August 2024. The location and other details are yet to be confirmed. This dinner may have a slightly different form than we're familiar with but it will be exciting and wonderful to come together again after so long.

More details will be forthcoming in future newsletters.



Tax deductible donations to CMCH can be made online at the following link:

<http://australianfov.net.au/donations/online-donations>

Simply and easily make a donation to the work of the Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore.