



Kampuchea  
House

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT KAMPUCHEA HOUSE (AUSTRALIA) INC AGM 2020**

I sit here writing my second President's report for Kampuchea House and look back over the 13 years we have now been operating. During these years we have had almost 50 children in our care, now with some married with families and others working in career paths following the education we provided for them. Unfortunately, this year with COVID-19 it has meant for the first time Belinda and myself were unable to travel to Cambodia to see the children and staff at Kampuchea House.

Westbourne Grammar School, our major sponsor had to cancel both planned trips to Siem Reap. Despite this, and despite facing their own difficulties and challenges with school closures and E learning, the wonderful Westbourne prefects and students maintained their strong enthusiasm and support for our work and continued to raise funds on our behalf throughout these difficult times. Our children were disappointed not to see the students as some wonderful friendships have developed over the years. The relationship between KH and the Westbourne students just continues to grow stronger each year with the Westbourne students providing a fabulous role model for our children. We are so grateful to have Westbourne Grammar School as our major sponsor with their continued financial support for our children in Cambodia. We certainly hope that Westbourne will be able to visit the children at Kampuchea House next year.

Our Director, Leng has led our children and staff through the troubled times this year with love and compassion. Her excellent organisational skills are seen with forward thinking plans to acquire more food supplies when the borders closed, educational processes put in place with the safety of our children being paramount. Cambodia was in lockdown for over 4 months from March until June, and still most of children have not yet returned to school. Schools and colleges still remain closed and some of the non-government schools have conducted end of year exams and graduation ceremonies already! We hope they will commence their schooling this November, at the commencement of the new academic year.

During the 4 month lockdown period the children were all extremely well behaved so once this had finished Leng and the staff organised special outings for the kids.

We would like to thank the supporters who very kindly covered the cost of these outings. They enjoyed going for picnics eating pizza and ice-creams! A visit to the Angkor Eye and playing mini golf were highlights. The children were fascinated by their visit to the Kulen Elephant Sanctuary and then an evening was spent watching the performance of the acrobatics at the Phare Circus. On another occasion the day was spent riding bicycles around Angkor Wat and the temples.

Our exceptional boys, Chinh, now entering 6<sup>th</sup> year of his medicine course and his brother Minea, going into his 4<sup>th</sup> year of medicine course at the university in Phnom Penh returned home during the lockdown to be with all the kids. It was terrific to have everyone together as the boys could teach all the strict sanitisation processes required. There was very little E learning supplied from the schools so having Yim, now going into her 3<sup>rd</sup> year of her English university course and Noch, in her 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Accountancy along with the boys really assisted with the children's school studies. The boys had to return back to Phnom Penh to recommence with their medical classes at the university in early June.

Mrs Chris, as she is fondly known by the children organised a wonderful questionnaire on various topics for the children to tackle during lockdown. It was great, as it kept the kids busy and amused and also provided time for different thoughts and activities to complete.

The Covid-19 pandemic has decimated tourism in Cambodia and in particular Siem Reap. For those employed in the tourism industry this means they have lost their jobs and income. Volunteer organisations providing supplies for desperate families have been set up. Our girls, Net, Rea, Chayna, Noch and Yim worked over several days packaging food parcels for those in need. The girls found this a very rewarding experience and we are so proud of them.

After 9 years working at Kampuchea House, our house mother Hak left us due to the reduced number of children in our care. Over many years Hak became a huge part of the Kampuchea House family, especially working with the older children. We wish her well and certainly hope that, in the future, she will return to work with us as required.

I would like to thank our hard-working committee here in Melbourne – Lyn Laister, our Treasurer, Chris Phillips, our Secretary, Ann Darwent, our Media and Communications Officer and in particular Belinda Lightfoot, our Vice President. Belinda and Leng have worked together this year addressing all the many different issues that we have been confronted with during this difficult time. Leng continues to maintain excellent relationships with the authorities in Cambodia. Special thanks to both Belinda and Leng for all the wonderful work they do for our children and staff at KH. Special thanks go to all our staff working with our children Hom, Sreymom and Hak.

We are delighted that many of our supporters have continued to provide funds for the education of our children and especially those at university. It has obviously been a difficult year with no fundraising activities held and we certainly appreciate your ongoing financial support for the children.

Our financial position for the year ended 30 June 2020 shows reserves of \$294,732 with an operating deficit of \$27,253. Our total remittances to Kampuchea House, Cambodia during the past financial year totalled \$110,329. The funds provided by KH Australia cover all facets of our children's requirements, including their well-being and personal expenses, food, medical, education, rent and staff payments. Our mission has always been to provide a caring family environment with the best possible education that will allow our children to have an independent lifestyle in the future. The education costs continue to be a significant factor in our budgeting for the running of Kampuchea House.

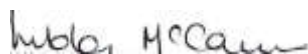
As mentioned in the past reports we now operate under a Cambodian government regulatory system that prevents us from taking any more children into our care. We are presently responsible for 9 young adults including 5 who are still attending school and 4 others studying in various tertiary environments.

We have Chayna in Year 10, with Net and Rea both in Year 9. Our younger boys, Ban is in Year 6 and Somnang, who was our baby, is now in Year 3. It is pleasing that the 4 older kids are doing so well at university, excelling with their results.

During the year many of our past kids from the KH family visited our children during lockdown. There was much excitement with everyone thrilled to see each other.

Rina who qualified last year in her hospitality course continues to live with us as her working hours in the hotel industry are very limited due to the extreme lack of tourism in Siem Reap. This sector of course has been badly affected by the coronavirus pandemic and the associated restrictions on travel. Having Rina still reside with us means she is helping out with the house duties and cooking.

I would like to thank all of our supporters over the years and I hope that you remain with us on our journey during the gradual wind down of our organisation, which will take place over forthcoming years. We are in a healthy position to continue to provide a caring and learning environment for those children that are still with us.

  
President

12 October 2020