

## **GROWING CAMBODIA – REPORT 2014/2015**

The purpose of Growing Cambodia is the relief of poverty and disadvantage in rural Cambodian communities by encouraging a better and more sustainable quality of life through education and the enhancement of their health and well-being.

Growing Cambodia has continued to experience substantial growth during the 2014/15 year. This growth is again directly attributable to the very generous contributions of time and/or donations from many supporters. As at 30 June 2015, 72 volunteers had helped at the three schools in Cambodia with a few volunteers having returned for a second or third time – thank you to every one of you - the benefits both the students and teachers derive from your presence is invaluable.

Highlights for the year included the organisation's registration as a charity together with the granting of Deductible Gift Recipient status. The DGR status may help attract more sponsors in the longer term but more importantly it is also recognition of our growing status. More exciting news came in December 2014 when a partnership was entered into between the Ministry of Education, the primary and secondary schools at Koy Meng in the Banteay Meanchey Province and Growing Cambodia Inc. Over 580 primary and secondary students attend these government schools. With the infrastructure already in place our organisation contributes funds to help improve the quality of education through the provision of art materials, stationery, pens, library books, a computer as well as other items.

The year also saw another successful Cotham Private Trivia Night held at the Kew Sports Club – thanks Kate, Amelia and Annette. The first Phillip Island Trivia Night was held at the Cowes Golf Club with over 250 attending – thanks Lisa, Lois, Lorraine and Judith. Another popular and fantastic fundraising dinner was hosted by Trevor and Adrienne Ware – very generous supporters of Growing Cambodia. The funds raised from these dinners support three students at Buildbright University. A "Fill the Bag" campaign was launched to help poorer students attend or stay at school at Koy Meng. With the help of Year 8 students at St Margarets, Berwick school bags were made and important funds raised – thank you Nola and Deb and Natasha, Keely and Malisha..

We cannot go much further without thanking our three local Cambodian managers whom look after the three schools – Sopheak Phay at Oroluos, Sovann Kay at Kok Beng and Vattey Ouch at Koy Meng – the loyal and hard work of these three wonderful people has allowed Growing Cambodia to achieve so much in just two and a half years. Our sponsors have allowed us to continue to fund and support English teaching programs at the schools in Kok Beng and Oroluos. There continues to be approximately 100 students at Kok Beng and 320 at Oroluos – these numbers vary at different times during the year when families may need their children to work. In addition to our three managers five other teachers are employed to teach English at the schools.

In the next year Growing Cambodia will continue to support the English programs at Oroluos and Kok Beng and assist with improving the quality of education at Koy Meng. Four students will continue to be supported at University. Clean drinking water and scholarships for poorer students are other priorities for the coming year.

Financially we ended the 2014/15 year in a strong position due to the very successful Phillip Island Trivia Night where approximately \$ 12000 was raised. However the decline in the Australian dollar has unfortunately had a significant impact on the funding of our various activities in Cambodia – we continue to scrutinise where funds are best spent with the help of our managers.

Finally thank you to the Committee for all your work and good luck to our new committee !