

GROWING CAMBODIA – REPORT 2016

It is with much pleasure that I present the third Annual Report for Growing Cambodia Inc. The purpose of our registered Australian charity is the relief of poverty and assisting those that are disadvantaged 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 deliver on its goals this year whilst expanding the areas in which it has assisted the rural communities it supports. The scope of activities embarked on is only made possible through the very generous monetary contributions from donors and the voluntary time devoted to Growing Cambodia by many supporters. As at 30 June 2016 nearly 100 volunteers had helped at the four schools in Cambodia with a few volunteers having returned for a second or third or fourth time – thank you to every one of you. As the volunteers know, the looks on the students' faces and their enthusiasm when learning English stays with you forever.

Wells were constructed at Oroluos and Kok Beng Primary School during the 2016 year thereby providing hundreds of students with access to clean water. Water filters were also purchased to ensure the water was of a high quality.

A food relief program was started in two villages where the most disadvantaged and needy are provided with food each month.

Another exciting development came with the opening of further English classes at Beng Village – located near Dom Dek and our school at Oroluos. This takes to three the number of English teaching schools Growing Cambodia supports – the others being at Kok Beng and Oroluos. Close to 280 students attend Beng, 330 at Oroluos and 160 at Kok Beng. Together with the Government primary and secondary schools at Koy Meng in the Banteay Meanchey Province, where over 580 students attend, Growing Cambodia now supports in various ways over 1300 students.

The “Fill the Bag” campaign, launched to help poorer students attend or stay at government schools near the four villages, continued on very successfully this year with over 40 students being provided with scholarships.

We must again give tremendous thanks to our local Cambodian managers who look after the four schools – Sopheak Phay at Oroluos and Beng, Sovann Kay and Mr So at Kok Beng and Vattey Ouch at Koy Meng – the efforts of these fabulous four have allowed Growing Cambodia to realise its goals in very efficient and cost effective ways. Our sponsors have allowed us to continue to fund and support English teaching programs at the schools where ten young Cambodians are now employed to teach English. The wages - \$18832 for the 2016 year - are then spent locally which supports local business and the local economy.

In the next year Growing Cambodia will continue to support the English programs at Oroluos, Beng and Kok Beng and assist with the teaching of English at Koy Meng by funding a specialist teacher. Select students will continue to be supported at University with scholarships for poorer students again a priority.

Financially we ended the 2016 year in a strong position due to the very successful Phillip Island Trivia Night where approximately \$ 15000 was raised. However the \$ 36000 in the various bank accounts at 30 June 2016 has been budgeted to be spent in the next 12 months and we will again look to the Trivia Night to help to contribute to our ongoing costs for the following year. The weaker Australian dollar still affects our funding of the various activities in Cambodia – the fact there are no administration costs involved means every dollar raised is spent in Cambodia.

Finally thank you to the Committee for all your hard work – in particular to our Secretaries Nola Kemp and Lisa Howard and our Treasurer Lois Green. This year four sub committees were formed – Health Initiatives including Clean Water Projects, Education and Scholarships, Volunteer Program and Fundraising . This has proved to be a great way of sharing the workload and thanks to all those who have assisted on these sub committees.

A special thank you must go to Kate Hussey and Amelia Barnes who resigned during the year for personal reasons but have been part of Growing Cambodia from the very beginning. Their efforts at the Cotham Private Trivia Nights provided the foundation for the ongoing success of Growing Cambodia.

If there is anyone that has been missed, thank you, and good luck to our new committee !