



**AUSTRALIA VIETNAM VETERANS
RESOURCE GROUP INC**



Contact editor via email: secretary@avvrg.org.au or via post: PO Box 754, Freshwater, NSW 2096

President's Report

The 2021 fiscal year has come to an end and in some ways it had both negative and positive outcomes for the organisation.

For the bulk of the year overseas activities were curtailed because of border closures and travel restrictions.

However, we have not been idle during that time, taking the opportunity to address some of the items identified in our organisation review which commenced in December 2019.

Major highlights have been:

- Appointment of Mr Paul Murphy, who founded AVVRG in 1994, as our Patron replacing His Excellency the Honourable Heiu Van Le AC, who stood down upon the termination of his appointment as Governor of South Australia.
- The amalgamation of Australia Vietnam Charity (AVC) group with the NSW Education Team. More detail of AVC are included in this newsletter.
- In response to a request from the Vietnamese Government for assistance to combat the impacts of COVID and climatic disasters our Victorian Education Team, provided emergency financial support to the Centre of Social Protection of Children - orphanages in Hai Hoa, Long Hai and Long Dien, all orphanages in the Ba Ria-Vung Tau district.
- The newly amalgamated Aid and Education Team responded by providing a months supply of 70 Kilograms of Rice to each of 175 families in Thon Chay and Cau Mai villages.
- Setting up an Education Grant for one of the orphans in Thon Chay to enable her to continue with her education over the next 3 years.
- With the opening of Vietnam's borders and easing of travel restrictions, Dave White has visited and re-established face-to-face contact with the Vietnamese Provisional Union (Union of Friendship) for the Ba Ria—Vung Tau region.
- The former AVC group will be in Vietnam on the 15th July for a week to re-establish contact with the communities and groups that they have been supporting over the years.
- The Victorian Health Education Team who had their planned visit cancelled by the Vietnamese partners at the last Minute in February 2020 are now in the planning process to make a visit in 2023.

What's on:

Education & Community Aid Team.
Team Visit to Vietnam
Friday 15th—22nd July

In this issue:

Page 2 - Patron Appointment

Page 3 - NSW Education Team and AVC Merger

Page 4 - Thon Chay Village

Page 5 - Community Aid July Trip to Vietnam

Page 6 - Membership Renewal

Page 7 - Annual General Meeting



Patron Appointment

Following the conclusion of his term as Governor of South Australia In August 2021, His Excellency the Honourable Heiu Van Le AC, advised that his term as our Patron would come to an end. He thanked us for the opportunity to serve as Patron of AVVRG, since April 2015, stating that:

"It has been a privilege to have served as your patron, and I wish your organisation continued success in its important work in the community".

It is with great pleasure, that Mr. Paul Murphy, founder of AVVRG,, agreed to become the organisation's Patron.

Paul was born in Manly (Sydney) spending hours from a very young age surfing at Queenscliff.

A family relocation to Canberra saw him attend State high schools where he was a keen rugby player and in his final year, elected School Captain.

In 1966 he volunteered for National Service. He was only 19.

After basic training at Kapooka (Wagga Wagga, NSW) and further training at Enoggera (Queensland), he was posted to the 2nd Battalion RAR and served as an infantry rifleman with service in Vietnam starting in May 1967. Early combat was horrific with his D Company taking many casualties.

Paul and his fellow National Servicemen were recalled to Australia in September 1997 and then discharged in February 1968.

Several years later Paul entered the newspaper industry which enabled him to obtain a press pass and returned, purely out of curiosity, to Vietnam in 1990.

The visit was a turning point in his life. The destruction, the homeless, the hunger and the absolute breakdown of infrastructure left him emotionally drained.

A promise was made to the Vietnamese in 1990 to provide aid to Vietnam.

The AVVRG was born in 1994.

The first project, the rebuild of the Hoa Long Primary School was completed on the 13th December 1994 and officiated by Paul and the Australian Consul-General from HCMC Mr Peter Baxter.

Hoa Long was rebuilt by volunteers from Australia,(including Paul) all self-funded and all proud of just what can and was achieved..... 'individuals CAN make a difference'

A second project was approved, the AVVRG Orphanage at Go Cat Hoa Long.

The intervening years have seen hundreds of volunteers impart their knowledge hands-on, or via tutoring, to thousands of eager and appreciative Vietnamese.

Paul lived and worked in Vietnam 1995 -2000 and again 2004-2007 planning future projects, overseeing current projects, hosting visiting medical and R&M teams., hosting politicians, school groups, annual Australian naval ship visits and tours of projects. Anzac and Vietnam Veterans Day were planned, approvals sought and obtained and officiated over by the AVVRG.

Honours.

In 2000 Paul was awarded the Centenary of Federation Medal for service to the Veteran Community.

In 2007 The Vietnamese Government awarded Paul the 'International Friendship Medal' for service to Vietnam.



**Mr. Paul Murphy
Founder of AVVRG**

Though beginning in 1990, AVVRG was formally incorporated as a community association in 1994.

Since humble beginnings, AVVRG has raised funds for:

- the construction of orphanages, child care centres, a medical and dental centre
- the provision of humanitarian aid in areas of poverty alleviation and environmental solutions.
- Provision of medical education to major hospitals in Ho Chi Minh City and has contributed to the development of medical education within rural hospitals in the Ba Ria/Vung Tau Province.

Australian Vietnam Charity Amalgamation

Following initial discussions and further consultation between AVVRG Education Team and the NSW based (AVC) Australia Vietnam Charity group, it became evident that there was a synergy and if merged would provide new opportunities and organizational benefits to both. A proposal to do so was put to the National Committee, who in January sanctioned a merger. The newly created group was renamed as AVVRG Community Aid and Education Team.

The Australian Vietnam Charity has been actively involved in providing humanitarian aid in Vietnam for about 10 years for very deserving causes such as:

Support for Victims of Agent



Food Parcels for Families



Sponsoring Cataract



Support for Orphans



Thon Chay Hamlet - Rice Project

Ha Tinh Diocese
Hoa Ninh Deanery
Dien Truong Parish

Dien Truong, September 27th 2021

A Letter of Thanks

Dear benefactors-Madi Gillespie and AVVRG,

I am Joseph Nguyen Van Hao, the parish priest of Dien Truong, Ha Tinh diocese, Vietnam. First, I wish all of you with good health, peace and abundant blessings from God.

On the 15th and 23rd of September 2021, through Madi, I received a total of 147.000.000 VND (one hundred and forty-seven million VND) equal to \$6,500. I spent the money on buying 1.750 kgs of rice – the price of one rice bag is 120.000Vnd- and then distributed to 175 families of Chay village (please find the attached receipts, photos, and videos). Each family received 7 bags of rice (70kgs), and they can live on this for around 3 months.

On the behalf of Chay people, I sincerely thank you for the generous support you have provided for the poor and vulnerable living in the mountainous area in the middle of Vietnam. Particularly, during the Covid-19 crisis, they must self-quarantine at home. Your rice has absolutely warmed their hearts. We were really touched and will never forget your love and kindness. Chay people and I will always remember all of you in our prayers.

May God bless you abundantly and repay you with his generosity and kindness!

Yours sincerely,

Joseph Nguyen Van Hao
The Parish Priest of Dien Truong

TH

Peter Hoang Van Thong
The Representative of Chay village

The Vietnamese Government communicated that they would appreciate Response Assistance or Financial Support for the impact of COVID.

The COVID pandemic, its restrictions on movement and trade, combined with serve torrential rain and flooding had a significant effect on a very remote Hamlet in central Vietnam.

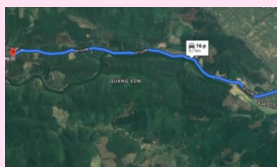
The newly formed Education and Community Aid Team identified that this was an opportunity to continue with is life-changing work, despite the travel restrictions and country lockdowns.

Anna Tran Thi Bihn, one of our members, was born and raised in Vietnam and still has family who live there and she and the Team reached out to see if we could provide assistance.

We were put in touch with the parish priest of Dien Truong, Ha Tinh Diocese, who suggested we consider providing assistance to the families of a very remote hamlet who were in difficulty due to COVID, torrential rainfall and government restrictions. After some research is was agreed that the Team would support the village by providing rice to the hamlet families.



THÔN CHAY



Located at the top of a mountain with no arable land to plant crops or do some agriculture. The hamlet families obtained their income from cutting timber from trees in the surrounding forests. However the government banned this trade and does not allow them to cut trees down, so life there has become really hard for them.

To obtain food and rice they need to travel 10 km down the mountain or some supplier will travel up by motorbike to them every Sunday. The hamlet consists of around 180 families in total. There they have only 1 small kindergarten and 1 elementary school. The kindergarten has 3 classes with around 70 students. The elementary school has 5 classes with around 88 students.

Teachers travel from the main school daily to teach them. For junior high school and high school they need to travel around 10km 1 way to go to junior high school and around 15km to go to high school. Most of them have a very hard life and are poor so they can't afford to pay for school that is why the children stay home after junior high school instead of continuing with their study. Each year they are only about 5 people who are able to go to high school.

Acknowledgement to the Donors who helped make this project possible:

Jane Bailey; Bradley Bauer; Jane Buckley; Liam Dunshea; Peter Freudenstein; Madi Gillespie; Judith Greer; Nikki Henderson; Graham Jensen; Lynda Dyer; Fraser McDonald; Roger Montgomery; Ronald Osborn; Bruno Perosin; Robert Scott; Anna Tran Thi, Binh; David White; William Wilson; Stanley Wood.



**The Community
Aid Team**

Community Aid - July Trip to Vietnam

The Community Aid Team (formerly AVC), after a 2 year COVID hiatus, has been very quick off the mark, in organising a one-week visit to reconnect with the vulnerable communities and groups i.e. the Agent Orange affected; the orphans and blind families with whom they had no direct contact since COVID restrictions came into effect.

The ladies during their one-week visit commencing July 15th will have a hectic schedule. On the agenda are:

- Sponsoring a full days Cataract surgeries session for around 120 people at a hospital clinic in Ho Chi Minh City.
- Visit the amazing, courageous and resilient sponsored Agent Orange Children.
- The distribution of Food parcels to a number of needy communities.
- Check on the building of water wells requested earlier in the year for 6 families.
- Investigate, a new village, where the residents are all going blind apparently due to onions ???

The group held a very successful Dinner and Auction event in order to raise funds for the upcoming visit.

Just under **\$10,000 was raised** on the night through ticket sales and auctions and a further **\$2,000 was donated** by supporters.



If you missed out on the chance to support the team, donations can still be made and however small really can change a life.

- \$20 provides food for an orphan
- \$50 Feeds a large family for a week
- \$75 restores someone's eyesight
- \$100 buys a wheelchair
- \$200 gives a child a chance to go to school for a year
- \$500 builds a well in a village that has to walk miles for water
- \$1000 builds a home for someone on the street.

FYI donations can be made via <https://www.avvrg.org.au/donate/> Card or Paypal accepted. Please select NSW Community Team at the payment page or reference AVC

Membership Renewal

Our membership numbers each year correlate with the visitation activity level of our teams.

It is very pleasing to report that our membership levels remained at around 35 for each of the inactive 2020 and 2021 periods, however, the numbers were well over a 50% reduction to previous years.

Membership fees are the primary source of funds needed to run the organisation. Our overall administration fees amount to around \$5,000 per annum and with our annual membership fee set at \$40, we have to rely on goodwill contributions to get by, especially with such low membership numbers.

We urge all current members to consider renewing and recruiting by word of mouth additional supporters or donors.

Membership subscription for the 2022-2023 financial year are due. If you have not already renewed now is the time to do so.

Membership and membership renewals can now be done either:

- **On-line on our website www.avvrg.org.au. (via Paypal facility)**
- **Direct debit into the AVVRG bank account. (BSB 012-403 A/C 281325011)**
- **Forwarding a membership form (which can be downloaded from the website), together with payment or credit card details, to PO Box 754 Freshwater NSW 2087.**

Donations

AVVRG is registered by the Australian Not-for-profits Commission as a Public Benevolent Institution and endorsed as a Deductable Gift Recipient by the Australian Taxation Office.

Donations received are directed to the AVVRG teams to support and fund the delivery of humanitarian aid undertaken in Vietnam.

Donations can be made via the same channels as detailed above in the Membership renewals note.



Annual General Meeting

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of Australia Vietnam Volunteers Resource Group Inc. will be held toward the end of October 2022. Details will be circulated closer to the day.

At the meeting apart from presenting the various reports, of team activities, financials and addressing any resolutions, members have to chance to nominate for election to office bearers and ordinary committee positions.

It is good practice to introduce new candidates into these positions, as it provides freshness of ideas and ensures that the organisation stays relevant and up to date with the changing times and environment within it exists. All members are encouraged to consider making a contribution to the management of AVVRG.

Under the terms of our Constitution and Articles of Association:

"Office-bearers of AVVRG being Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer and at least three (3) and maximum of seven, ordinary committee members are to be elected at the annual general meeting.

Nomination of candidates for election as office bearers of AVVRG or as ordinary committee members must be made in writing, signed by 2 members of AVVRG and accompanied by the written consent of the candidate (which may be endorsed on the form of the nomination), and must be delivered to the secretary of AVVRG at least 7 days before the date fixed for the holding of the annual general meeting at which the election is to take place.

Members who wish to submit a Motion for consideration at the Meeting should forward a written notice of the Motion to the secretary of AVVRG at least 7 days before the date fixed for the holding of the annual general meeting."





JULY 2022
NEWSLETTER

AUSTRALIA VIETNAM VETERANS
RESOURCE GROUP INC

Contact editor via email: secretary@avvr.org.au or via post: PO Box 754, Freshwater, NSW 2096