

**FRIENDS OF VELLORE QUEENSLAND  
NEWSLETTER MAY 2022**

As we aim to put much of the two years behind us, I hope this newsletter finds you all in good health and optimism.

Live most conversations, we must mention covid in this newsletter. CMC saw two distinct Covid waves with the second more dire with 1150 general and 200 ICU beds being occupied at its peak, from March to August 2021. Donations to CMC were generous and much needed at this time with many donations from corporates within India that reached out with oxygen concentrators, beds, and kind. Friends and supporters in Australia also contributed generously and we were able to transfer the money expeditiously to be put to many uses, particularly care of the needy. Currently more than 95% of CMC staff are vaccinated. At present there are 35–50 beds allocated for COVID treatment. Between 70 and 90 patients are admitted each week.

On recent trips to India by our Secretary, Shoma Baidya and our Publicity Officer, Neeta Wilfred, both were very grateful to visit Vellore and CMC. Although the presence of Omicron is well felt, patient numbers for non-Covid related admissions including outpatients have been promising and encouraging. Vellore is buzzing and lively like previous.

**Australian and QLD update**

Most of FOV Qld activities and those of other states had to be curtailed and limited due to the pandemic. Some had to be shifted to an online platform. One of these was the 150-year birth anniversary of Dr Ida Scudder, founder of Christian Medical College. FOV Qld is grateful to members of FOV Qld who participated and contributed to this event, including Ruth Schneider, Gwen Mullins, and Janet Evans. The FOV Qld AGM was a blended event, with Friends attending in person and online via Zoom. Our speaker was Dr Shantidani Minz, from RHUSA, the rural branch of CMC. She spoke about the innovative work RUHSA did about covid patient care and support of the local community, many of whose means of earning a living were suddenly non-existent.

Many QLD branch meetings have had to be via teleconference or zoom; some have been blended. We are grateful to Nazareth Lutheran Church for the generous use of their premises for almost all our activities. FOV Qld has updated our constitution. Office bearers are currently Sharon Thomas, Chairperson, Bella George, vice-Chairperson, Shoma Baidya, Secretary, Richard Caitens, Treasurer, and Neeta Wilfred, Publicity Officer, and Newsletter Editor. They are supported by an efficient and enthusiastic committee. We are lucky to have Richard as our treasurer; he has consistently played a pivotal role in maintaining our finances and providing timely and accurate reports. Many of you will know Rev Brian Lee. He has decided to “retire” from the committee. He will be missed, and we thank him for his years of dedicated services, including the production of the newsletters for years.

Many of you will also recall Rec Ian Kerr who used to MC our fundraising dinners. Sadly, Rev Kerr passed away in May 2022. He will be sadly missed.

Unfortunately, we were unable to hold our **annual fundraising dinners** in 2020 and 2021 which we now look forward to holding this year in September. We will provide more information regarding this in the coming months, but it is likely to be on

**September 3, 2022.** It would be great to see good numbers at this meeting; please consider inviting friends and family who may not have much to do with CMC as this would be a great opportunity to introduce them to this institution and its unique and pioneering work in India.

The last Annual General Meeting of the Australian Vellore Board held 23rd October 2021 by Zoom where Dr J. V. Peter was the guest speaker. Discussions were regarding the first and second waves of Covid and the changes in hospital structuring CMCH had to adopt to cater for the pandemic which included conversion of many wards to Covid wards. We also heard about CMC's role in Vaccinate Vellore which was independent of the Government initiative. Thank you to all our supporters who also donated to this effort.

The CMC Alumni Association in Australia also played a large role in supporting Mission Hospitals in India. The funds raised for these were independent of FOV efforts. Donations were once again generous and forthcoming; many alumni and their contacts were able to make contributions towards this fund, which raised about A\$42,000. The money was distributed via the Christian Medical Association, India.

Much thanks and sincere gratitude to all our members for your commitment to CMC and for work in raising funds during recent years. CMC and India have seen more stress in the past two years than imaginable, and it is with your support and prayers that it has bounced back.

Compiled by Neeta Wilfred  
Honorary Publicity Officer, FOV Qld

Donation enquiries: Treasurer Richard Caitens: [caitens@optusnet.com.au](mailto:caitens@optusnet.com.au)  
For tax deductible donations in Queensland, or Australia, please use the following details of Friends of Vellore, Queensland:

**Account name: Vellore Support Fund (Bendigo Bank) BSB: 633000**  
**Account number: 131073413**



CMC Kannigapuram Campus, now nearing completion.



Gandhi Road, opposite CMC Hospital, bustling with activity



College Chapel with the "sunken garden" in the foreground, CMC College Campus



College Store, CMC College Campus, a favourite hangout of medical students