From the Chairperson
WELCOME MESSAGE

WELCOME TO THE SECOND issue of Cambodia Vision’s ForeSight Magazine. Inside you gain some insight into the life of co-founder, Dr Peter Wong AM, and also share in the memories of three Cambodia Vision volunteers as they recount their recent experiences with the team. I believe it is these life experiences and challenges that help to strengthen us all, whilst teaching us more ways to share our love and kindness.

The trip to Kratie has been the most challenging for the team so far. The road trip from Phnom Penh was long and uncomfortable due to damage caused by flood. And the hospital was very run down, with little facilities. Unfortunately, many volunteers became ill with gastroenteritis and other flu-like viruses. This may have been due to the long working hours, climate and lack of general hygiene.

Despite these challenges, the team achieved amazing outcomes to approximately 3,000 people from Kratie and other parts of Cambodia, including countless donations and improvements to the Kratie hospital and its infrastructure. The team even went beyond its mandate, reaching out to patients who were in dire need. I thank Dr Tung Bui, Dr Peter Wong and Thida Yang for their care and Dr Hong Keang for his kind assistance in providing care to these patients. We are lucky to have such a dedicated team. The success could not happen without the hard work of Dr Hong Keang, the Hospital Director, and his team. I would also like to thank Dr Sokhan Heng and Dr Thaly Poch for their assistance.

As demand grows, so does the expense of running the organisation. Thank you to our major sponsors, donors and volunteers, for their continued support to help the underprivileged. Our thanks go to The Eye Surgery in Perth, Alphapharm Pty Ltd and Vitaco Health for their tremendous support in 2014 in donating much needed medication and supplements. We hope to have your ongoing support.

I would especially like to thank Richard Lim and Than Thong for raising $40,000 at a function in October while the team was still in Cambodia. My thanks also goes to Hong Lim MP for his support in printing the pamphlets for distribution at the function.

I thank Ken Lee, Sokhara Say and Patrick Ly for their efforts in Queensland. If you are interested in sponsoring us, please put your hand up as we need more support in Queensland. Thank you to Photoline who helped this year to design a banner.

We were very honoured to have The Honourable Dame Marie Bashir AD CVO, the then Governor of NSW, attend our 2014 Sydney fundraiser dinner as guest of honour. I thank her for her work in helping the Cambodian community in NSW and Cambodian refugees in her early days. I wish her the very best in her retirement.

2014 saw three very special occasions for Cambodia Vision. I congratulate our volunteers who have recently tied the knot: Francoise Nawyaert and Joel Perry, Dr Lyndon Chee and Vicki Vu, and Nina Jacobson and Andrew Addinsell. I wish all three couples a loving, happy and long lasting life together.

May I take the opportunity to wish everyone a happy lunar new year. May the year of the goat bring you and your loved ones happiness, health and prosperity.

Chek Ming Ly
Chairperson
THE 2014 TRIP TO KRATIE province was a tremendous success that far exceeded our expectations. In a nutshell, this is what we achieved:

- Treatment of 2,916 men, women and children, from 17 provinces
- 433 cataract operations
- The provision of 247 prescription glasses, cut on site
- The provision of almost 3 pallets of vitamins and supplements
- Training of 28 medical students from Phnom Penh and Kratie province
- Installation of 9 air conditioning units to Kratie Referral Hospital, courtesy of Cambodia Vision
- Upgrade of electrical work at Kratie Referral Hospital to allow support of medical/surgical equipment and air conditioning

Cambodia Vision and its volunteers also generously donated:

- 1,703 ready-made reading glasses and 2,000+ sunglasses
- 250 hearing aids
- Toys to the local children
- 20 hospital beds to Kratie and Sihanouk Hospital Centre of Hope
- General medication to Kratie Referral Hospital

Our team was also involved in the treatment of some non-eye related medical cases. Thankfully, it was a happy ending to all of these cases, and the condition of many patients improved after our time in Kratie. The locals were evidently pleased we could assist, with thanks to our skilled medical staff and extra resources we were able to provide.

The mission attracted much national media coverage both on TV and radio, which included Radio Free Asia, CTN, Hang Meas, DAP News and Bayon. Social media went wild updating each day’s events as they unfolded, and Facebook reached record ‘Likes’.

Many volunteers were affected by what they saw. They were exhausted physically and mentally and became ill as a result of working long hours in the heat, humidity and perhaps not used to the local food, putting our own health at risk to save others. Some were hospitalised in Phnom Penh and in Australia.

Cambodia Vision would like to wholeheartedly thank the volunteers for the sacrifices they made. The self-funded volunteers generously gave their time and effort to help change the lives of the people of Cambodia, whilst sacrificing their own time with their own loved ones. Some even gave their own funds to patients to help their situation. They helped to spread love and kindness, and empowered the Cambodian locals to help others - the true meaning of human existence.
"COME TO CAMBODIA," SHE said. "We are going to give eyesight back to the Khmer people." Wow, I thought. What an awesome opportunity to give something back. My nursing skills were going to be put to good use and I was going to make a real difference in the lives of others. I was excited!

Lee from Abbot Medical Optics (AMO) made a special trip to Bundaberg to give Jenny and I the low down on the AMO sovereign phaco machine, which we would be using in Kratie to assist with cataract surgery.

Time flew quickly and before I knew it I was packing my bags for the adventure of a lifetime.

I flew from Brisbane to Singapore. In Singapore I met with other Cambodia Vision volunteer members from all around Australia. After a short stopover in Singapore, we all took a commercial flight to Phnom Penh, Cambodia’s capital city.

Phnom Penh was an assault on my senses, motorbikes, Tuk Tuks and cars whizzed in all directions; road rules appeared non-existent; the smells were so different to home. It was dusty, dirty and clearly poverty stricken.

The poverty and desperate nature of the state of the country was clearly evident. It was overwhelming and certainly something I definitely had not prepared myself for. I was completely shell shocked by the extreme hopelessness of the people’s situation. I just couldn’t dismiss the sight. I just wanted to cry. What kept me going was the fact that I knew we were going to make a huge difference in so many people’s lives and I felt privileged and proud to be a part of this mission.

We arrived at Kratie Referral Hospital and I thought, really? This is the hospital? Surely not. The buildings were run down, the grounds were filthy and it was so hot and humid. But the people were welcoming and beautiful. They were grateful to have us there. I thought if they can endure living like this I can toughen up and get the job done. It was like nothing I had ever experienced before. Touring the hospital grounds just left me speechless. The toilets were virtually holes in the ground. The patient beds were wooden with a grass mat on them and the grass was long and left to grow wild.

Patients were tended to by their families. They bathed outside in the open and the water was cold. Meals were cooked on a campfire and washing was done by hand and left outside to dry. The whole place looked like a bomb had gone off. Nothing was maintained and everything was overgrown. It was just soul destroying - seeing these humble people having to endure this pain and suffering under such terrible circumstances.
Three days were spent cleaning the theatre and CSSD area, setting up equipment and organising supplies in readiness for our patients. The pungent smell of the operating theatre prior to cleaning was a vivid memory that I recalled from cleaning the many mud and sludge filled houses after the Bundaberg flood.

On the first operating day, hundreds of people arrived at Kratie Referral Hospital to be seen by the team of professionals who were all volunteers from Cambodia Vision Australia. The whole place was buzzing from excitement and anticipation.

I assisted a lady who had a C-Section. This was her fifth child and first C-Section. She was in extreme pain following her procedure. I arranged for her to have pain relief administered. I was shocked that this had not been done. I was also shocked that she was lying in a pool of blood and had not been cleaned up following surgery. It was now about 4 hours post op. She was very grateful and we formed a lovely bond. I would have to say this was the highlight of my stay in Cambodia. She gave birth to a healthy 6kg baby boy.

We said our goodbyes on the last day. We operated on two more patients and then packed up and left for Phnom Penh. We were all exhausted both emotionally and physically by what we had achieved. Many of the team had been ill, including myself and we were relieved to have some time to rest and recuperate. We had endured hot and long days and we were all very tired and in need of a well deserved rest.

Cambodia and the Khmer people have left a lasting impression on me and this trip has made me realise just how lucky we have things in Australia.

I want to acknowledge all of the volunteers from Cambodia Vision who travelled with me on this mission. Thank you for making my experience enjoyable and rewarding. Many of these volunteers once lived in Cambodia. They shared stories of their time growing up during the Khmer Rouge Regime. These stories were unbelievable and brought tears to my eyes. It was hard to imagine what they must have had to endure. I know many of their family members lost their lives under this leadership due to execution, famine and disease.

Cambodia Vision is truly doing a wonderful thing for the people of Cambodia. It was a true honour to be part of this team and to be able to use my nursing skills to improve someone’s quality of life.
Optometrist Views

Optometrists Mitchell Walker and Kuong Chang share their experiences during their trip to Kratie.

"Normally an optometrist sees around 15 patients a day in an orderly fashion, sitting in air-conditioning with the pleasant scent of Ambi pur's Bamboo Forest wafting through the practice. To say the trip to Kratie was a different experience is an understatement.

On this trip the optometrists had the privilege of being involved with the surgeons at the assessment of the patients the day after their cataract surgery. One of the highlights was being able to follow up with those patients I had seen the day before. Being able to pull down the eye patch off an eye that was blind just yesterday, and hearing from the patient, "I can see, thank you, thank you," made those long hot days all the worth while. Knowing that person will now be able to work, live, see their children and care for their partner just added to the smile.

Would I do it again?... Absolutely, I don't like the smell of Ambi pur anyway."

Mitchell Walker

"Cambodia Vision's trip to Kratie was simultaneously rewarding and enjoyable. The best part of the trip was being part of a team that provided primary eye care to almost 3000 Cambodians, who would not have received this care otherwise.

Although the days were long, the work itself was rewarding and outweighed the fatigue I felt at times. The team was committed to supporting each other to make sure we weren't overwhelmed by both the work and hot environment. Despite these obstacles we able to have a laugh and appreciated the opportunity to work in such a unique situation where we were able to improve the ocular health of so many Cambodian people.

Would I do future trips? Most definitely, looking forward to the next one."

Kuong Chang
THE 2014 TRIP SAW AN exciting new beginning of a partly digitised patient process. Paper registration forms and clinical records had been used in past years, however we wanted to reduce the risk of form mix ups by the patient and volunteer, and also reduce form damage during the long queuing process.

These issues were eliminated by the introduction of a customised online form that enables patient information to be safely and efficiently stored online. Consequently, these records could be accessed anywhere on site during the trip, whilst also reducing the risk of misplacement of patient records, and improving legibility of information. The system also allows statistics to be easily generated from the stored data, to help improve the logistics and outcome of future trips.

In 2013 we incorporated patient photographs for each record, and incorporated these into the online form to further reduce the risk of mismatched records.

Unknown factors included the strength of the hospital WiFi and the capacity of the electricity supply to adequately support laptops and printers, in addition to the hospital equipment.

Unfortunately, the hospital walls were made of concrete, limiting Internet strength in some areas. To overcome this we strengthened the connection by creating a local area network and connected the laptops with cables. A UPS backup system was also obtained to prevent interruption if there was a power failure.

Other challenges included different socket systems requiring the use of adapters, and limited local supply of electrical commodities like printer ink.

In future we look to further improve the system and to eventually have all departments go online.
2014 was my fifth mission with Cambodia Vision. As an anaesthetist we provide the nerve block to the eye so that the surgeons can perform the cataract operation. We have a team of three anaesthetists to ensure that we have some flexibility in an unforeseen event.

Some years we may have a dedicated room to do our work but most often we are located in the corridors outside the theatres. We would have at least a half dozen beds so that we can run a production line. Patients would get their blocks and move into theatre when the time comes and then another patient would come to replace them. In Kratie this year we were offered the use of the recovery beds outside of theatres. There were a dozen beds but the smell when we came in was like that of a butcher’s yard. It emanated from the garbage bins which certainly had cuttings from the day’s surgery. We proceeded to get rid of the bins, clean the floor and wipe down the beds. There were already two patients when we first got there. One was an obstetric patient and the other was someone who might have had an appendix out. The monitoring was put on the patients but there was no nursing staff around to supervise them!

In the next few days, we would perform our job and watch as the local doctors and nurses would perform emergency surgery. The trauma and obstetrics patients would be brought in by several young men on a stretcher and pass by us to get to theatre. One obstetric case was a young lady with post birth bleeding. When they transferred her across the stretcher the blood spilt all over the floor. The facilities the doctors have are positively antique.

One of the reasons our mission is so successful is because we are focused on doing only one tangible thing and doing it well. We are only there for a week and we do nothing else except cataracts and primary eye care. On this mission we performed over 400 cases in one week. We don’t try to teach people how to “fish” if you like as it is not our business. We don’t have the time or ability to do grand things and the local people have their own agendas and would not appreciate being told how to improve themselves. I did not get involved with any of the surgical cases as it was not under my mandate. However there was one particular case where this young girl had...
fallen out of a tree and needed emergency surgery to remove her spleen. It was so serious that she required blood during the operation. After the operation she was left in the recovery area and was hooked up to a monitor. Again no nursing staff to supervise her. We carried on with our mission but since she was right in front of us we had no choice but to watch as she deteriorated and had to be taken back to theatre again to control the bleeding.

I went to check on her after being brought back from theatre the second time and again with nobody to supervise her. She had a fever, her heart was running really fast and she looked really uncomfortable. Amazingly she kept quiet and did not complain. Across the room we had a lady who was wailing for hours and not really answering our questions as to whether she had pain or some other problem we could help with. It was difficult to intervene for the little girl as I was not her doctor and did not know how to procure the things I wanted to treat her with. So we tip toed and asked where the extra fluids were kept so that we could give her some more as she seemed really dehydrated from the blood loss. I also asked for extra painkillers for the girl which in the end I did not give as I was not able to monitor her after we left. I got some antibiotics from our store and gave her a shot to treat her fever.

The next day she was still looking precarious. Her vitals had not settled and she still looked unwell. We spoke to the surgeon who agreed to change the antibiotics. A man at the same ward had a large boil on his face and I winced when I found out he had it lanced with no anaesthesia. Thida, one of our volunteers gave him some antibiotics too. We spoke at length to the surgeon about the difficulties he had in obtaining the drugs and the staff he needed. I felt humble at what he had achieved with so little. He had saved the girls life by stopping the bleeding.

The day after she looked fantastic. They were changing her dressings when we were there and again she never cried or complained even though it was clearly uncomfortable for her. I admire those people who can accept the circumstances that life tosses at them without complaint and without recourse to blaming others.

Her parents were also sitting quietly by her side throughout this ordeal. I asked Thida if we could get some vaccines for her now that she did not have a spleen to protect her against certain infections. If she were to get these infections at any point in her life she would have a high chance of dying.

When we returned to Australia we still could not obtain the vaccines. No chemist stocked it in Phnom Penh and the hospital did not have it. Finally I searched online and found an outfit called SOS which is a private organisation in Phnom Penh who kindly obtained the vaccines for us at a discount.

Cambodia Vision paid for her transport and I paid for the vaccine. It would have been a shame to save her life and then not ensure her ongoing good health with the vaccines. She has since gone back to school and hopefully would soon get a second dose of the vaccine schedule.

It is easier to not get involved in the affairs of the hospital that we were at and in the past we never did. It simply would not work and dilute the missions goals. However it was hard to do nothing when it occurs right in front of your eyes so in this particular case we did intervene in a small way.
VOLUNTEER PROFILE
DR PETER WONG, AM

A General Practitioner, a former leader of Unity Party and NSW Member of Parliament, Dr Peter Wong was awarded the Australian Medal (A.M.) in 1996 for his various community work. Amongst other charity programs, Dr Wong co-founded Cambodia Vision in 2006 which he has found to be rewarding and is very passionate about.

DR PETER WONG WAS BORN in China in 1942. His family fled from the communist regime when he was eight. His family was called ‘Stateless People’ - as what we here would commonly call refugees.

His family settled in West Borneo, Indonesia for the next ten years. Peter’s father, who was a medical doctor (educated in China and later in Germany), could not practice medicine legally in Indonesia as he was a foreigner, but later he was sent to a small town to manage a local hospital, and that was where he began providing free medical care for the poor.

With very limited prospects and opportunity for a foreigner to attain tertiary education in Indonesia, Peter moved to Sydney through sponsorship by the Catholic Church. He began studying Electrical Engineering at Sydney University but later found passion in medicine, and so he completed a Pharmacy degree. After working in a pharmacy for a year Peter pursued his passion further and studied a degree in Medicine/ surgery, going into private practice thereafter.

Peter married his beloved wife, Cathy, on his graduation day in 1971. They have a daughter and three sons.

Like his father, Peter continued the family’s legacy in reaching out and helping those in need and less fortunate. He has been involved in numerous community works: During the 70s he was active in re-settling refugees in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. He founded the Chinese Catholic Community, the Australian Chinese Charity Foundation, the Welfare Committee for Chinese students in 1990, chaired the Chinese Migrant Welfare Association, and liaised with the federal government to help protect the students in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square Massacre. He was appointed as a member of the Ethnic Affairs Commission from 1991 to 1997 and was a member of Medical Board of NSW for six years from 1998. Later he co-founded China Vision and in 2006 Cambodia Vision with Henry Ngai.

In recognition of his many community works and his devotion, Peter was awarded the Australian Medal, AM., in 1996.

Peter was an active member of the Liberal Party of Australia for many years but had to resign due to the rise and threat of One Nation’s policy against Asian immigration (the major political parties did not show their opposition, which presented extraordinary circumstances that were in conflict with Peter’s principles and commitment for social justice and humanity). But against all odds, Peter and his friends founded and led the Unity Party in the 1998-1999 election to fight...
Peter founded and led the Unity Party in the fight for multiculturalism between 1998 and 1999. He represented the party in the NSW Legislative Council from 1999 to 2007.

From the outside, Peter is a very humble and friendly man with a great sense of humour and a very generous nature. But on the inside, he is also a man who from the early days, possesses a long term vision and devotion to reaching out to those in need and less fortunate. With the astonishing number of community work and humanitarian projects he has been involved with, Peter is indeed a man of many achievements and no doubt a hero to many people. His dedication and devotion towards community and humanitarian work earned him the full support of his family who are proud and grateful. He says his wife has been “a pillar of strength and a source of inspiration.”

Amongst the involvement of many projects, he saw Cambodia as a continuing challenge for which he is very passionate about. But before this project, he has already assisted in the re-settlement of Cambodian Boat People under immigration minister Nick Boulkus. Since 2007 Cambodia Vision has continued its annual mission to help perform cataract surgeries and provide medical care for thousands of people in remote villages and towns. For these people there are no other choices as they cannot afford medical service.

Peter is very pleased with the many achievements accomplished by Cambodia Vision. He is very proud of the dedication and devotion of the volunteers and he is very grateful for the financial support from sponsors and donors.

Peter is especially proud of the selfless dedication, devotion and the tremendous work performed by Ming Ly and Thida Yang, for without them, Cambodia Vision would not be where it is today.

As the development of cataracts can be slowed, Peter has always aimed to find strategies in continuing to promote education and awareness, such as the importance of wearing sunglasses, and ways to improve other health issues and lifestyle.

Peter is hoping to provide more education to the local volunteer medical students so they can be inspired to pass on the message. His passion, enthusiasm and willingness to learn from our volunteers in Cambodia Vision has impressed the community greatly.

In future Peter hopes to recruit more general practitioners so that Cambodia Vison can expand its current medical services.
in 2014 cambodia vision had a number of successful fundraising events. one of particular note was a telethon on chinese radio 2CR, whereby radio host Anthony Lee raised $26,000. a very big thank you to him and the listeners of 2CR for their generosity and donations in the name of helping the people of Cambodia. we value and appreciate your support tremendously.

each year, fundraising dinners are held in victoria, queensland and new south wales by the state representatives for the Cambodian communities.

last February, the Brisbane fundraiser dinner was held at Michael’s Oriental Restaurant and Function Centre in Padstow. cambodia vision would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the organisers who made it possible, and to all of the guests who attended to help raise over $12,000. also this year Photoline were very generous to donate a floor banner to the night.

the Melbourne fundraiser dinner held last October at the Anabelle Reception in Clayton, was also a huge success, with around $40,000 raised. a big thank you to Richard Lim, Than Thong and Hong Lim MP who helped organise the event and also to the people who attended to help support our cause.

there was an enormous team spirit at the sydney dinner in June, at Iron Chef restaurant, Cabramatta. over 600 business and community members of diverse cultural
backgrounds attended, in the presence of Her Excellency Professor The Honorable Dame Marie Bashir AD CVO, Governor of New South Wales, and other dignitaries. The evening raised over $84,000. This is a tremendous outcome for Cambodia Vision and the people of Cambodia. The 2015 Sydney Fundraiser Dinner will be held on the 7th of June at Crystal Jade Seafood Restaurant, The Marconi Club: 121-133 Prairie Vale Road, Bossley Park. Be sure to get your tickets early as they sell out fast. Please check the Cambodia Vision website and Facebook for more details.

In future we are interested to branch out into other states of Australia for more fundraising possibilities.

Cambodia Vision was also at the Cabramatta Moon Festival in September. Thank you to all who visited the stand and to Oriental Merchant, ABC Tissue Products and Amy Tse for their support and generosity.

2014 saw new fundraising events, and annual ones continue to grow successfully. We are grateful for this growth and hope to see continued support for future trips to Cambodia. Any type of donation is highly appreciated. Donations over $2 are tax deductible. Cheques can be sent to:

CAMBODIA VISION INC
PO BOX 6798
Wetherill Park DC NSW 2164

Bank transfers are also welcome.
Bank: NAB
BSB No: 082057
A/C No: 871975065
Cambodia Vision wishes to thank the volunteers who travelled to serve the people of Kratie province, Cambodia. We are most grateful for your time, energy and generosity to participate and make a difference:

Ms Susan Ang
Ms Angela Baker
Ms Eileen Betts
Dr Chris Brown
Dr Tung Bui
Mr Maxwell Cottam Bunter
Mr Joseph Cauchi
Mr Kuong Chang
Ms Elizabeth Chu
Mr David Dale
Mr Allan Davis
Ms Lyn Davis
Ms Tracey Davis
Ms Amanda Dinh
Mrs Narelle Hillman
Mr Hocku Huynh
Ms Sophia Jallal
Mrs Betty Katsogiannis
Mr Tim Lavelle
Ms Melanie Li
Ms Cameal Liu
Mr Chek Ming Ly
Ms Judy Ly
Mr Ngann Ly
Ms Sharon Ly
Ms Siv Lang Ly
Mr Les Luxford
Mr Ian Mayes
Ms Marie McAneney
Mr Campbell McKellar
Mr Glenn Moorely
Dr Audrey Murugesan
Dr Michael Newman
Mrs Amy Ng
Dr David Ng
Ms Mally Nun
Ms Kim Sean Pal
Mr William Robertson
Dr Neil Rowe
Mr James William Rudling
Dr Giles Sampson
Ms Lavy Sayumborn
Ms Molika Sirr
Ms Jenny Smith
Ms Gina Storey
Mr Chhong Heng Taing
Dr Clement Tiong
Ms Sanna Tormanen
Dr Michael Tse
Ms Shaney Ung
Mr Mitchell Walker
Dr Peter Wong
Mrs Stephanie Wong
Ms Thida Yang
Mr Russell Zahn

PHOTOS BY DR TUNG BUI, LES LUXFORD, MARIE McAENLEY AND CHHONG TAI NG
Cambodia Vision would like to thank the following sponsors for their ongoing support:

SPECIAL THANKS TO INTERSTATE REPRESENTATIVES:

Richard (Sour) Lim - Cambodia Vision representative of Victoria
Than Thong - Cambodia Vision representative of Victoria
Ken Lee - Cambodia Vision representative of Queensland
Sokhara (Tom) Say - Cambodia Vision representative of Queensland

AND ADVISORS:

Mr & Mrs Ngai
Mr Ly
Richard Lim

Rob Clifton-Steele
Murthai
Anthony Lee

Printed by Liverpool Printing Services Pty Ltd. 323 Newbridge Road, Moorebank NSW 2170