

Update – Choice Cambodia International Project - November, 2018

Project progress

1. Photographs of the school construction to date show that the floor and walls are in place. The main building roof structure is underway.
2. There have been a few challenges. Mr Mon (contractor) has been away and his employees have fallen behind schedule. There was a holiday period and labourers returned late. 50% of wage money has been paid but half of the work is not complete. Fortnightly payments have been reduced from \$US1200 to \$US900 in agreement with the workers. Another staged point is December with expectation of 75% work completed and equivalent payments made.
3. The wet season is now over and the following hot months may impede some progress.
4. The RAWCS account still has funds and the Euroa RC funds are yet to be called upon. Euroa will forward funds to Choice Cambodia rather than lose 2.5% to DWWRC RAWCS account for administration. We expect the \$A15000 to be needed shortly.
5. Ross, as project manager, and Vanny (School Principal & treasurer) continue to provide reports to demonstrate that everything is competently organised and managed.

Work party

6. Proposed dates for the visit to Cambodia are March 6-17.
7. Expressions of interest at this stage include: Sally Sykes (Benalla RC); Peter Morley, Michael Bell, Rob Morphet, Bob Irving, Des Nicel, Simon Edwards (Euroa RC); Marie Gerrard (Southern Mitchell RC);
8. Peter and I are speaking at Essendon North RC on November 21.
We will close expressions of interest after that date and consolidate the team.
9. Ross has given us the task of building a 3m X 15m bike shed with a gravel base. \$US1000 has been set aside. There is a good deal of landscaping to be done.
10. The exact work demands will depend on the skills and size of the group.
11. A **possible** itinerary is
Tuesday 5 - travel to Melbourne for early morning flight on Wednesday (0040am)
Wednesday 6 - arrive PP (0950 am) - rest after flight - catch up with Lavinia Page (PPRC) - remain overnight in PP.
Thursday 7 - Could include Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, Royal Palace and Wat Phnom. Travel to Chou Tearl. Settle into accommodation.
Friday 8 is International Women's Day and a public holiday in Cambodia.
Tour the environment of the local community; allows locals to learn about visitors in their community; visit the old school/villages from which the children come to school & bike ride of island. Briefing about new school - work completed/to be completed. Job to be done by our work party. Plan of action/time/breaks. Materials/tools/expertise/OH&S. Bike shed and landscaping designated at this stage. Get started.
Saturday 9 - Wednesday 13 - work on site
Thursday 14 rest day - visit school - water run to villages - Tuk Tuk ride to Takhmao for dinner
Friday 15 work on site
Saturday 16 clean up; depart Chou Tearl for Phnom Penh. Stay overnight in PP.
Sunday 17 Depart PP (1110 am) fly home
Monday 18 Arrive Melbourne (0845 am)

Trip details

12. These are yet to be determined by the participants. We consulted Amelia at Benalla Travel and she has provided options.
13. Insurance for Rotarians is covered. Insurance for volunteers is under discussion. Dennis Rebbeck is the District Insurance Officer and stationed at DPR Insurance Brokers in Euroa.
14. If we go travelling outside of the work party then Rotary Insurance will not apply.
15. All costs will be met by volunteers. Roughly air flight (\$600-\$1100); visa \$100, injections (if any) malaria tablets \$80; and accommodation in June was \$US20/night. We also chip in to buy food. The money helps Choice Cambodia.

We will need a tourist visa (best to get beforehand) and a trip to a travel doctor - malaria, Japanese encephalitis, or boosters to tetanus, polio, hep A & B and typhoid may be required.

16. March is a good month to visit Cambodia. The days are dry and sunny with little or no rainfall, temperatures average around 30°C across the country. Unfortunately there is high humidity.
17. Currency is American dollars or Cambodian Riel (\$A1=3000 Riel)
18. An electrical adapter is required – types A & C. A universal adapter is fine.
19. A Cambodian driver's licence is required to drive a vehicle in Cambodia.

Accommodation

20. Choice Cambodia has four units on the property with air conditioning. There is an additional new dormitory which is nice and comfortable but has no private bathroom. Don Rosenfeldt also offered accommodation (2 guest rooms) at his new house. We have travel to the school if there is a need to book accommodation in Phnom Penh (about 1 hour away). Peter and I have previously travelled on the school minibus. The accommodation is in hand.

Other

21. Marie applied for a District 9790 grant (\$2500) and she was successful.
22. Ross (Vanny) has provided a financial statement of all spending and another tranche of \$A10000 was forwarded through a RAWCS account. The financial statement and photographs were a component of the MOU.

The following series of photographs record the stages of construction:



Figure 1 June 2018



Figure 2 August 2018



Figure 3 September 2018



Figure 4 October 2018



Figure 5 November 2018

Flight estimates return p/p March 6 - March 17, 2019

Peter and I visited Amelia at Benalla Travel on Tuesday to obtain some estimates about **flight costs** and associated items.

JQ (Jetstar/Qantas) \$746.10

MH (Malaysian Airlines) \$645.05

(depart 0040 Melb. arrive 0600 KUL; depart KUL 0900 arrive 0950 PNH)

(depart PP 1110 arrive KUL 1400; depart KUL 2150 arrive 0845 Melb.)

SQ (Singapore Airlines) \$956.68

CX (Cathay Pacific) \$855.25

Visa \$125

Administration \$80

Another development - uniforms for Choice Cambodia school

Funny how things evolve. Sheree and Anna, friends that I had previously met in Nepal and again in Fiji participating in a Habitat for Humanity Australia overseas home building program have children attending a private school in Sydney. The school is changing its sports uniform, effective March, 2019 (much to the displeasure of the parents) and the friends have written to the school leaders seeking permission to collect all of the out of date uniforms to donate to our Choice Cambodia school. They sent me photographs of the uniforms which I forwarded to Ross (CEO) and Vanny (Principal) and they match the uniform supplied to the children in Cambodia. Ross and Vanny really welcome the donation. If everything goes to plan the team in Sydney could be supplying up to 200 uniforms for distribution in Cambodia. The children in Cambodia might have to put up with the Sydney Church of England Grammar School logo but that should not be a great obstacle. Sheree and Anna have just arrived home from Cambodia following another HFHA building project north west of Phnom Penh.