



Annual Report 2016

Generous supporters helped us raise income of \$36,000 (2015: \$45, 187) that enabled us to not only continue our scholarship programme for 200 young scholars in 2 provinces in Vietnam but to maintain our foreign currency grants despite a continued weak Australian dollar. This programme cost \$28,960, (2015 \$29,892). Reducing the grants would have caused difficulties among the impoverished families we help.

We funded \$4,100 in micro-banking by lending to 13 families in Ha Giang Province to enable them to commence small-scale pig farming, as noted in our 2015 report. All the clients are doing well and some show impressive entrepreneurial skill. 3 of 4 of our trial clients of 2014 have repaid their loans, which have been passed on to other families, with the 4th being granted an extension to buy a half-share in a cow, a major investment for a poor family. The loans are now interest-free, but with the government offering similar loans we may concentrate on other means of combating poverty.

Our 2015 Pass the Pig launch of \$3,300 was increased by \$1,252 and has proved most successful as a gift of 27 piglets has so far seen some 60 families commence small scale pig farming and several success stories have emerged already. We hope to provide a further 100 pigs in the coming year, in the scheme now known as Piggy Bank by our clientele. Others have joined in, using our model, and it is making a difference. We will work on a “whole commune” scheme in future, with an educational element included as it clearly brings results.

As part of our “Random acts of kindness” Platypus provided a floor for a Hmong hillside kindergarten at a cost \$1,030, and a kitchen (\$1,743) for a social refuge in Hoa Binh that caters for ages 4-84 years. We provided university assistance for 2 students at a cost of \$1,780. One student is obtaining high marks at a prestigious university in HCM City, with the other student in Danang struggling a little, but we proudly support battlers too.

Our core activity is supporting education and we support community development in other ways when a suitable opportunity arises and funds permit, hence micro-banking and Piggy Bank. We travel without blinkers and occasionally good causes come to our attention that deserve our consideration.

2 Han girls in Ha Giang, now in year 12, expressed a dream of becoming “great cooks” and we are working at placing them at Koto Restaurant in Hanoi on a 2-year course, but there are cultural issues involved and it is not straightforward. A young man in Quang Ba is paraplegic and confined to his home, but with the help of Wheelchairs for Kids in Perth we hope to have him zooming about his village in the next few months.

The young man with eye problems mentioned in our 2015 report has had further tests and a new pair of spectacles, so he now appears to be doing much better.

The gifted girl who lives under extremely difficult circumstances in Hoa Binh, mentioned in our 2015 report, continues to excel at school. She is now in year 11 and will in 2018 enter university. Her wish at present is to teach in her home village, and given her life experiences at such a young age, she will no doubt excel at that.

The motorcycle fundraisers we run in Vietnam are proving successful and we have 3 rides planned in 2017, 1 of which is sold out already.

Our cash resources are currently \$9,000, but we have plans to restore that to a healthier level despite undertaking a higher level of activity during the next year. Our small charity continues to enjoy tremendous support. Our growing network of friends and supporters both in WA and Vietnam enables us to constantly search for ways to support communities we operate in.

We are excited at the prospect of members of our Vietnamese community more actively supporting us, and will shortly welcome a very dynamic and talented lady to our membership who will spearhead that drive. This extra support could enable us to dramatically improve what we do, but we have not factored in any financial miracles in 2017.

We thank our supporters for once again making the year a memorable one for really good and deserving people. And of course, for all of us at Platypus.

Bob Greer
Chairman
23 October 2016