

Australian Vietnamese Women's Association Hội Phụ Nữ Việt Úc

Annual Report 2010-2011



AVA 28 Years

28 years of serving the community

AUSTRALIAN VIETNAMESE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Activity Chart as at June 30th, 2011

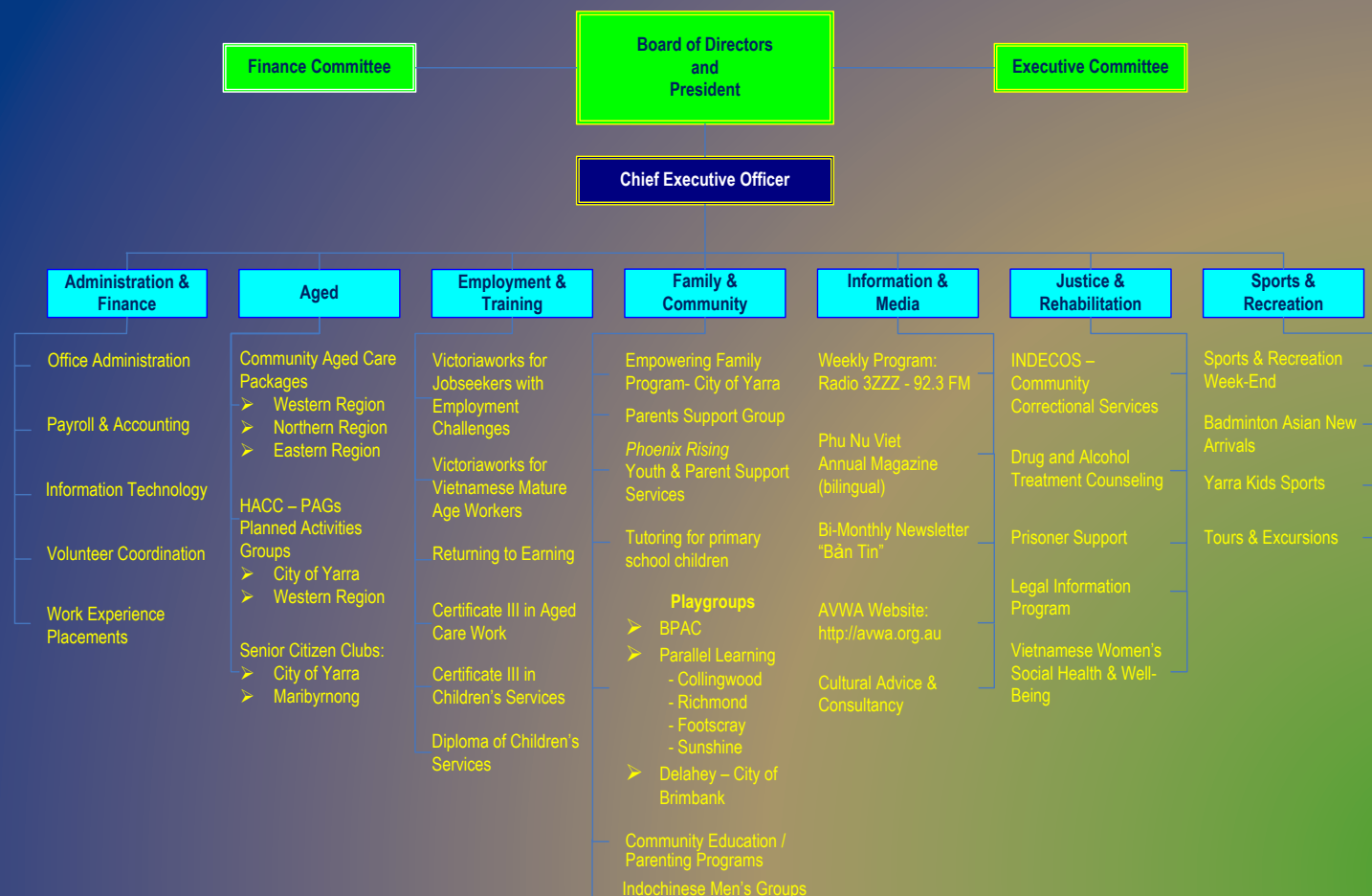


Photo: 2010-2011 Board & CEO

TABLE OF CONTENTS

President's Report	1	Sports & Recreation Program	12
Honorary Treasurer's Report	1	Phoenix Rising Youth Services	13
Message from The Premier	2	Employment	14
Chief Executive Officer's Report	3	Training	15
Community Aged Care Packages - Northern Region	4	Illicit Drug & Alcohol Treatment Counselling Program	16
Community Aged Care Packages - Eastern Region	4	INDECOS	17
Community Aged Care Packages - Western Region	5	Vietnamese Prisoner Support Program	18
Family Support Services - City of Yarra	6	Legal Information Program	18
Indochinese Men's Support Groups	7	Media & Information Technology	19
Parallel Learning Playgroups In The North	8	3ZZZ 92.3 FM, Vietnamese Language Radio Program	19
Parallel Learning, Playgroups In The West	9	Acknowledgement	20
Planned Activities Groups (PAG)	10	Volunteers & Student Placements	20
PAGs Volunteer Coordination	11		

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I am pleased to present, on behalf of the Board of Directors, the 2010 -2011 Annual Report of the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association (AVWA).

Along with a number of important projects, our aim this year has been to implement the tasks and vision that we developed during the Board's annual "Planning Weekend" in March the year before.

To celebrate the *Centenary of International Women's Day*, we put together a collection of events which included the anniversary of the "Trung Sisters", heroines who, in the 5th century A.D. famously rode to victory on elephant backs. We also organised an international writing competition and an "Ao Dai" mother and child parade, with much success.

We are also pleased to report that our CACP services have been extended to the Eastern Metropolitan Region. All allocated packages have been taken up and many people are on the waiting list. AVWA is the only Vietnamese organization to provide this much needed service for the Vietnamese community. We will report to the Government in due course on the high uptake of this service, in the hope that more funding will be made available next year.

Regarding our infrastructure, we are seriously considering the option of establishing an additional AVWA office in Sunshine. We chose Sunshine because a high number of our members and clients live in the City of Brimbank. Solar panels have been ordered for our Richmond office as an expression of our continuing commitment to the protection of the environment. During our *March 2011 Planning Weekend*, we reviewed our performance for the past year and developed strategic directions for AVWA's future. One of our concerns, this year, was the lack of young professional members on the Board, an issue which hopefully could be addressed soon. With the assistance of an experienced consultant, we also looked at ways to improve the scope and quality of Board members' contribution.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our members and volunteers for their enthusiastic support, our CEO and Staff for their dedication and hard work, and, in particular, I would like to extend my thanks to our Board members, each of whom has generously given her time and energy to contribute to the ongoing success of AVWA.



Vinh Nguyen

HONORARY TREASURER'S REPORT

I have pleasure in presenting the financial report of the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association for the year ended 30 June 2011.

Overall, we finished the financial year with a Surplus of \$180,722 which is a 16.8% improvement compared to last year. Our income increased by 8.9%. Total Project Grant income was lower this year compared to last year. However, Brokerage activities improved by over 100% to offset the lower Project Grant income. These key activities were the main drivers for maintaining our Total Income to approximately \$2.8M.

As expected, our major expense is salary and wages which account for 80% of all expenses. Overall, expenses increased by 6.5% which is in line with our revenue growth.

On behalf of the Association, I would like to extend my appreciation and gratitude to the Board of Directors, all of our dedicated staff, members and supporters in the community for their contributions during the year.



Yen Bui



Premier of Victoria



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MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER

It is with great pleasure that I extend my best wishes to the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association Inc. on the occasion of its 28th Annual General Meeting.

The Association has a long and proud history of supporting and empowering Vietnamese people in Victoria, through many enterprising programs and initiatives on a range of social issues. This work helps to build a resilient and strong Vietnamese community in Victoria and helps people of Vietnamese background to engage and participate to their fullest potential as citizens of our State.

As well as supporting Vietnamese women and celebrating their many important contributions, the Association also helps to build understanding and friendship between people of Vietnamese background and the broader Victorian community. In this way, the Association helps to promote co-operation and harmony in our vibrant multicultural State.

On behalf of the Victorian Government, I commend and congratulate the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association Inc. on its many admirable achievements. I send my best wishes to the executive and members of the Association for a most productive Annual General Meeting, and I wish the organisation every success in its future endeavours.



Ted Baillieu MLA
Premier



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT



Excellence is one of AVWA core values. Indeed, over the 28 years since its establishment, AVWA has relied on quality as the main driver for its growth. This year is no exception. Some departments and funding bodies are very good at monitoring and auditing the quality of the services they fund.

At one end of the spectrum, the state department in charge of employment, under different names and governments, in the last 10 years, has always been outstanding in that respect. I remember that for one of the first projects, the software used allowed department staff to check providers' program files at any time of the day or night. This year, our employment services had the great honour of receiving a perfect audit score of 5 out of 5 for all its three programs. Congratulations to all our employment staff and, in particular, Hai Nguyen, the program co-ordinator.

At the other end of the spectrum, Corrections Victoria has never sent any auditors to check the quality of their funded services and therefore, would not have either objective evaluation of the quality of AVWA services or an evidence based appreciation of our organisation as a provider. It is regrettable that it should be so as there are a lot of vulnerable men and women of Vietnamese background needing effective and culturally sensitive support in the justice system.

Being a grassroot organisation, AVWA gets much feedback from clients and members concerning both its staff and services. I am pleased to say that, although we have a well established complaints procedure, complaints per year can be counted on the fingers of one hand and are always settled at the first stage, while expressions of gratitude and appreciation are many and often very movingly expressed..

Thanks to the high staff morale and good OHS practice, this year as in the last 12 years, there was no WorkCover claim and only two staff members, out of the 70+ on the payroll, resigned for higher paid jobs. Towards the end of the year, arrangements are in place to trial new formal processes of evaluation of staff by senior management and evaluation of the CEO by staff.

I would like to thank the AVWA board and staff for their support and enthusiasm, and all our partners and stakeholders for their support and collaboration during the year.

Cam Nguyen

COMMUNITY AGED CARE PACKAGES - NORTHERN REGION

Thuy Tien Nhan, CACP Coordinator; Quynh Huong Nguyen, Care Manager;

Bao Hiep Ly, Care Manager; Lien Huong Nguyen, Care Manager;

Toan Thi Nguyen, Administrative Support Officer;

Care Workers: Dung Nguyen, Dien Nguyen, Hoa Nguyen, Thanh Tuyet Nguyen, Thuy Hoang, Thuy Duong Nguyen, Anh Dao Duong, Tiffany Nhu Thuy Pham, Diem Thuan Nguyen, My Tien Tran, Wendy Huynh, Ngoc Mai Truong, Thu Trang Ly;

The program has 25 packages which are fully occupied, currently there has been a rather long waitlist of 12. Our brokerage service hours have steadily increased to respond to the needs of other agencies for Vietnamese care workers.

In the last financial years, two lovable clients had passed away, our staff still think of them, particularly their courage and sensitivity. The program staff is proud of their achievements and The special close but professional relationship between them and CACP clients, which has been expressed in writing by clients' children and grandchildren to us as follows: *"In addition to the ability to speak Vietnamese, the management from CACP team and AVWA makes regular visits to my parents and shows concern for the needs of my parents. The AVWA carers are warm, friendly and enthusiastic in providing the service to my parents. The service and assistance from AVWA has relieved me morally and physically of caring for my frail parents so that I can go to work every day and look after my own family. It has also tremendously helped my parents in their day to day necessary activities"* (sic) and quite moving is another letter from a grandson to us: *"My grandfather has talked enthusiastically about the care he has received from AVWA and about how he has someone to talk to. My grandfather's condition has made him continually withdrawn and he rarely speaks but he adores visitors in his home and you can just see that he lights up (sic) when someone visits. My grandmother has also spoken highly regarding the help she has received to care for my grandfather from AVWA and is thankful that she can have a little bit of a rest when a care worker is present. She also appreciates that she gets to go out to get some fresh air with my grandfather with the help of a care worker as she is usually stuck in her home because of my grandfather's dementia"*.



COMMUNITY AGED CARE PACKAGES - EASTERN REGION

AVWA commenced CACP service to residents of Melbourne Eastern suburbs in March 2011, with ten packages which were fully allocated within 5 months.

During the process of referring clients for aged care assessments, it was realised that a number of Vietnamese aged persons in the Eastern suburbs had lacked knowledge of the aged care system and services, hence had not gained access to these services previously when the only providers were mainstream. When referring some of them for assessment, we were shocked by the complexity of their unmet care needs and their families' hardship struggling to cope with their difficulties without any aged care support until AVWA started its CACP program in the region.

Our service now is caring for a group of frail elderly Vietnamese, very isolated due to the location of their homes far from shops and services. Requests for transportation, and the need for social, cultural and emotional support are in high demand. Although the program only began in March, currently there are three persons on the wait list for CACP and another three persons are assessed as EACH clients.

COMMUNITY AGED CARE PACKAGES - WESTERN REGION

**Qui Ma, CACP Coordinator; Hue Van, Care Manager; Thao Ha, Care Manager;
Thuy Nguyen, Care Manager; Tai Mai, Care Manager; Van Ha, Care Manager;
Van Ha, Administrative Support Officer; Trinh Phan, Administrative Support Officer;
Care Workers: Bac Nguyen, Dat Le, Duc Nguyen, Hong Nguyen, Huong Thai, Khanh Tran, Khuyen
Nguyen, Loan Tran, Nguyet Thoi, Thanh Luong, Thanh Trinh, Thao Nguyen, Thu Nguyen, Ngoc Thu
Nguyen, Tuan Pham Nguyen;**



Our program of 50 Community Aged Care Packages for frail older Vietnamese people in the Western Region is operating at full capacity. Currently, we have 32 people on the waiting list and 21 people have nominated AVWA as their only preferred service provider. This indicates the high demand for culturally and linguistically appropriate aged care services in the Vietnamese community.

In response to the needs of the community, we are applying for additional Community Aged Care Packages. If successful, the submission will help the frail elderly who are on the waiting list.

20% of our clients are living alone independently in their home, some without a family carer. A 74 year old lady gave feedback that she was able to live independently in her home thanks to the support she was receiving from our CACP program.

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES - CITY OF YARRA

Nam Nguyen, Project Officer; Trang Do, Tutoring Assistant;



The “Empowering Vietnamese Men and Women to Become Better Parents and Community Members” program funded by City of Yarra Council is in the last year of its funding round. In the last twelve months (from 9/2010 to 8/2011) the project provided ongoing support to 65 families and one-off support to 95 families on various issues.

Concerning group activities, our *Richmond Tutoring Program* (RTP) continues to be run every Tuesday afternoon to support primary school children (prep to year five) with learning difficulties, and guide parents who face linguistic challenges in helping their children do homework. The program has been engaging with a range of partners who bring different skills and expertise: AVWA has a great community network and a good understanding of community needs, *The Smith Family* has experience in facilitating homework programs and promoting educational opportunities, *Australian Catholic University* is well placed to provide and support tutors for these kinds of programs, and *Melbourne Grammar School* is an outstanding source of young and enthusiastic volunteer tutors who are great role-models for RTP students. Together with the support from the local *Smiggle* stationary store and parental involvement, the program is a true community partnership.

Three parenting programs were organized for parents, this year. One of them was organized in the evening. The “*Tuning in to Kids*” program which is focused on preschool children, showed parents how to better understand their children’s emotions and not to be dismissive. A single mother says that her children are more engaged in the family negotiation process and less aggressive to one another. She also realises that she has become calmer with her children and feels more relaxed and happier when the children are at home with her.



INDOCHINESE MEN'S SUPPORT GROUPS

Minh Bui, Project Officer



This year the program, *Lifeskills for Indochinese Men's Groups*, has continued to offer social support and provide relevant information sessions for men at both Footscray and Richmond locations. The bulk of the project remains very much similar to last year:

- Providing men with community based social support,
- Informing them about health, finance, Centrelink related issues relevant to their age groups,
- Challenging men to take proactive role in family life through attending parenting and domestic violence workshops,
- Diverting men from unhealthy activities such as gambling, binge drinking at the weekends towards social and educational activities.

Providing them with the opportunity to share experiences, feelings and ideas with peers under the leadership of a trained and experienced community development worker, to clarify such issues as rights, responsibilities and identity.

Some highlights include the Richmond Men's Group participating in the *AVWA Trung Queens' Celebration* which took place at Fitzroy Town Hall, on the *Centenary of International Women's Day* in March 2011. The Footscray Men's Group offered social support for men from the *AVWA Drug & Alcohol* project, and local lawyers' clients. Also the wives of some men have started cooking for the Footscray Men's Group which makes the group more dynamic and inclusive in relationship building.



PARALLEL LEARNING PLAYGROUPS IN THE NORTH

**Hai Nguyen, Playgroup Coordinator; Thuy Pham, Facilitator;
Phuong Pham, Support Worker; An Le, Support Worker;**



Richmond and Collingwood Playgroups

During 2010-2011 many of our playgroup workers, volunteers and family members attended Playgroup training workshops covering many topics relating to running a successful playgroup. The outcome from the workshops meant more families and volunteers are taking part in playgroup activities in a more effective way. Also, the training helps families to enhance their parenting and communication skills with their children.

Enjoyable and successful activities include:

During *Aboriginal Family Week*, the families enjoyed a visit to the *Collingwood Children's Farm* where they experienced the Aboriginal traditional dancing, painting their own boomerangs, making beaded bracelets and hair accessories.

In autumn, the families gathered together for *Family Awareness Week* in the Fitzroy Gardens on two occasions. We had various craft displays and traditional Vietnamese food demonstrations.

Dancing and singing to British and Vietnamese tunes are a fun and educational part of playgroup activities together with story reading. All activities are designed to help both parents and children form better relationships and become more creative in work and play.

The ongoing parenting skills workshops organized by AVWA and *Mary of the Cross* are well attended.

A high number of volunteers support our Playgroups on an everyday basis in all our community activities.

A total of 38 families and 52 children are involved during the year.



PARALLEL LEARNING PLAYGROUPS IN THE WEST

**Hai Nguyen, Playgroup Coordinator; Thuy Pham, Facilitator; Uyen Do, Facilitator;
Trang Do, Support Worker; Nganh Ha, Support Worker;
An Le, Support Worker; Nu Phan, Support Worker;**



Footscray, Sunshine and Delahey Playgroups

The programs include activities for all the family and encourage parents and children to work and play together in a new environment. For instance, annual visits to the *Science Works Museum* are much enjoyed by both parents and children. Activities and demonstrations allow families to take part in a science activity where they can experience and explore how simple things in their everyday life work. They also receive a show-bag with a science activity which can be tried out at home. *Science Works Museum* continues to be a regular part of the playgroup program.

Other highlights include:

- The *Centenary of International Women's Day Celebration* with "Mother and Child Ao Dai" competition. First prize was won by a mother and child from Delahey Playgroup.
- Reading time has become very popular with children volunteering to bring their favourite books from home or the library. This activity has been enhanced by a bi-monthly visit from the library story teller.
- Guest speakers visits throughout the year including: Maternity Health Nurse, Dental Therapist, Rubella, Nutritionist and general health care.
- Yarraville Gardens outdoor activity "Poppet and Puppets in the Park" with parents and children joining in the fun which included face painting and various entertainment with Australian artists.
- Myer Christmas window visit meant that some families were visiting the City for the first time. The children were fascinated when they saw an entire fairy tale demonstrated with life size puppets and music. They were able to experience an Australian tradition which they now associate with Christmas.

A total of 57 families and 68 children are involved during the year.



PLANNED ACTIVITIES GROUPS (PAG)

**Thuy-Tien Nhan, PAGs Coordinator; Toan-Thi Nguyen, PAGs Team Leader;
Khanh Tran, Personal Care Worker; Xuan Doan, Personal Care Worker;**



AVWA has been providing culturally appropriate services and support to Vietnamese born aged clients in the City of Yarra and Western suburbs for a number of years. Throughout the year, the services have also helped in providing opportunities for the clients to maintain existing relationships, reduce isolation and increase social networks. We have developed and provided innovative, culturally sensitive and appropriate services responding to the emotional, mental and physical health needs of the Vietnamese aged persons. The delivery of those services has ensured the ongoing success and expansion of the program.

This year, we noticed that many PAGs clients have become much frailer. The majority of them have now reached "high" PAG category and half of those have required Community Aged Care Packages (CACPs). A few of the clients are unable to attend group activities on a regular basis.

We have worked in partnership with many health and welfare organisations to deliver community and health education to Vietnamese aged on a number of project and issues such as: safe and wise use of medicine, managing pain (NPS), incontinence, asthma etc. Especially, the "Elder Abuse Prevention Forum" provided clients with the opportunity for group discussion and sharing of ideas on how the community might better support older Vietnamese-Victorians. Furthermore, with the support of Aged Care Department from Yarra City Council, we in collaboration with Active Service Model (ASM) have successfully set up at new activities group to better service and assist our clients. This group is based at Collingwood Senior Citizens Centre.

During the time, we have noticed the increase of the aging population in Western and Northern Suburbs. AVWA has been considering how to set up additional PAGs services to address the community needs and expectations in these areas. This will require extra support and assistance from the Department and local councils.



PAGs VOLUNTEER COORDINATION

Cam Sau Le, PAGs Volunteer Coordinator



Volunteers continue to contribute to AVWA services in many respects throughout the year.

In May, AVWA and three AVWA volunteers were acknowledged by the City of Yarra: two from Richmond PAG and one from Richmond Playgroup. In the future, we intend to recruit more volunteers, including young students who would have the opportunity to practice what they had learnt from TAFE or schools and get valuable work experience with us.

Older staff might also be able to learn a thing or two from them from English slang to new ways of doing things.



SPORTS & RECREATION PROGRAM

Jimmy Hung Ly, Sports & Recreation Coordinator



Throughout the year, the program has continued to provide opportunities for Vietnamese and other CALD background people to engage in sports and healthy recreational activities. Several programs were offered including: *Badminton, Yarra Kids Sports, Weekend Bike Riding and Gia- Long Soccer Tournament*.

The Badminton Project was conducted in partnership with *Badminton Victoria* which had received a *VicHealth* grant. The project offered free training in badminton to Vietnamese and CALD participants, with the aim to promote badminton in Victoria.

The *Yarra Kids Sports Project* was funded by the *City of Yarra* in partnership with *Richmond West Primary School* and *Badminton Victoria*, to run a badminton training program for primary school children. *Badminton Victoria* gave scholarships to 9 children from the training program to continue their training in badminton after the end of the project.

The *Gia-Long Soccer Tournament* comprised 8 teams of Vietnamese and CALD background participants. A total of 35 matches was played before the Grand Final. The Grand Final, ending with a BBQ, was held at Henry Turner Reserve, Footscray.

Finally, my thanks go to AVWA board of directors and staff and our team of dedicated volunteers for their assistance and commitment in ensuring the success of the program.



PHOENIX RISING YOUTH SERVICES

Tania Huynh, Youth Officer



Throughout the year, Phoenix Rising Youth Services continue to provide support for young people of Vietnamese background and their parents and to visit on a regular basis high schools within the western suburbs.

School visits enable us to build strong relationships with students and staff, contribute ideas to extracurricular activities and bring awareness of the services we offer.

To provide accessible information and referrals for young people, Phoenix Rising joined the social network *Facebook* to stay in contact with people whom either we had met or who had participated in AVWA projects/events. The page also contains blogs about concerns common to young people and often not discussed within Vietnamese families, such as: physical health, mental health, identity, sex, dealing with stress, career choices etc...

Not only do we support youths through their transition towards adulthood, we meet with parents who seek help in understanding their adolescent children. Through consultations and referrals, we encourage parents to listen and allow their children to express themselves and to address the discipline issue through example and reinforcement rather than punishment.

Every year, as a capacity building project funded through the Youth Participation and Access program, we organise events/activities for youths. For the past couple of months, AVWA has been planning a '*High Challenge*' youth camp in partnership with Victoria Police, which will take place this September.

Phoenix Rising strongly support and believe in engaging young people to play sports. We offer badminton which is organised through AVWA Sports and Recreation coordinator. There is also an all girls soccer team, the *Commandos* who welcome new players, and for the third year running, have won the *All Nations Cup* in the state Futsal League.



EMPLOYMENT

Hai Nguyen, Employment Coordinator;

Jimmy Hung Ly, Employment Consultant; Thu Ho, Employment Consultant;

Minh Bui, Employment Consultant; Lien Huong Nguyen, Employment Consultant



Over the past 12 months, our various employment programs achieved great success in helping different types of job seekers. The range of programs include: a general program for all Vietnamese job seekers, one for mature aged who are 55 and over get back to workforce and, another one called “*Returning to earning*” to support and assist parents to further study or re-enter the workforce. Also for the first time, a philanthropic organisation, the *Inner North Foundation*, gave us a small grant to assist young Vietnamese involved with the justice system get a job and get back to a normal life.

Altogether, the employment programs helped more than 200 people to find work or learn new skills.

Unfortunately, from July 2011, like many other community employment services funded by the Victorian government, our employment program is now in limbo as the state government budget has not made any allocation for employment services. After 15 years of non-stop and tireless operation to serve the community and perfect audit scores in our quality of services, the employment program must seek new funding to continue to assist Vietnamese job seekers.

Case Study:

Ms. T migrated to Australia in the mid 90's aged 20. Upon arrival in Australia, she completed year 11; however, due to family and financial difficulties, she had to quit school and enter the workforce. After about two years of paid employment, she got married and became a stay-at-home mom. Domestic life gradually became problematic and Ms. T's husband soon left the family. Ms. T fell into a state of depression, often feeling worthless because she did not have the confidence to re-enter the workforce.

Instead of finding a job or studying to gain new skills, she joined a group of friends who often went to the casino. The casino gave her a false sense of cheer and happiness – a place where she could escape from her troubles and sadness. She gambled away the little savings she had and unable to stop chasing her losses, she borrowed from loan sharks. Unable to pay back her debt, she had to do what the loan sharks told her to do i.e. traffic heroin from Vietnam to Australia. Reluctantly, she agreed as she could not see any way out of her predicament. She was subsequently apprehended at Melbourne Airport and is currently on remand until trial. It was at this point that she decided to quit gambling and get help.

In January 2011, Ms T was referred by Gambler's Help Northern to AWWA Employment program. The employment staff supported her by paying the training fees for her English and Hospitality courses as well as materials and equipment. She was also helped to write her resume and was referred to a commercial cleaning company for a job as casual cleaner. Now, she is studying commercial cooking and working part time to support her family. She feels happy and more confident with a feeling of self worth as she is able to contribute to her family and the community.

TRAINING

Phuong Ngo, Officer-In-Charge



DIVERSITY OF LEARNING CHOICES FOR STUDENTS

In 2011, the Government has opened the education market to all registered training organisations (RTOs). It means that learners have more opportunities to choose their courses from various training providers at a much cheaper rate, and that RTOs must compete in the open market. As a local training provider, the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association (AVWA) has been innovating and diversifying training programs to meet learners' needs. Therefore, we have collaborated with many other RTOs to deliver a wide range of vocational courses such as childcare, aged care, cleaning, retail, business, cookery, patisserie, fabrication and automotive trade, mechanical technology, English, computer etc... Besides, AVWA also provides courses in various locations such as Footscray, Richmond, Springvale, Broadmeadows, Moonee Ponds, Heidelberg and Melbourne CBD.

AVWA has received funding from Adult, Community and Further Education to deliver pre-accredited courses particularly in basic computer, how to use internet and email targeted at local learners. The pre-accredited program aims to build a solid foundation for people without qualification so that they are able to further study to certificate and diploma levels. For instance, a client without IT background can start with a basic computer course and then continues to study certificate I, II, III, IV as well as Diploma in Information Technology. It is a great opportunity for clients without any qualifications to be able to obtain vocational qualifications for a future career.



ILLICIT DRUG & ALCOHOL TREATMENT COUNSELLING PROGRAM

Tuong Nguyen, Illicit Drug & Alcohol Treatment Counselling Coordinator, Counsellor

Kim Vu, Counsellor

Layla Vu, Counsellor

The Drug and Alcohol Treatment Counselling Project is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing, under the National Illicitly Drug Strategy.

Within the scope of the report, the project provided 104 episodes of counselling, consultancy and continuing care, across Melbourne metropolitan regions. Many of them have come to AVWA's A & D program for counselling and support services on themselves or referrals from their solicitors, Court, DHS (due to family violence) etc. An example of a successful case is brief noted as follow:

A client used heroin many years since he was 16 years of age. He attended the counseling sessions at the AVWA's A & D program nearly 3 months. During that time, harm minimisation, treatment strategies and psychological supports were developed of which employment and training were also emphasised. He has followed buprenorphine treatment within 8mg per day and has maintained heroin free state for over five months. He has done casual full-time job as a plumbing support worker during that time and would like to attend a short course of Pre-plumbing at TAFF college. He was referred to AVWA's Employment Program for assessment/support, after that he registered at TAFF and was provided the course fee by this program. He attended the course and current is very happy with his work and heroin free state.



From left to right: Nhan Huynh, Layla Vu, Kim Vu, Tuong Nguyen, Huy Luu & Trinh Phan

COUNSELLING PROGRAM FOR INDO-CHINESE PEOPLE ENTERING COMMUNITY CORRECTIONAL SERVICES (INDECOS)

Kim Vu, INDECOS Coordinator, Counsellor (Springvale Office);

Tuong Nguyen, Counsellor (Footscray Office); Huy Luu, Counsellor (Footscray Office);

Layla Vu, Counsellor (Footscray Office); Nhan Huynh, Counsellor (Richmond Office);

The INDECOS project funded by the Department of Justice was in its eleventh year. It provides counseling for clients of Indo-Chinese background entering Community Correctional services in the Western, Northern and Southern catchment areas of Victoria. Our bilingual service aims to reduce the breach rate amongst Indo-Chinese clients on court based orders. In this financial year which includes 9 months of funded operations, 96 clients were referred by Community Correctional Services and the Drug Court to our care. The main features of the program are:

Culturally sensitive counseling sessions to enhance clients' rehabilitation and reintegration into society, focusing on key underlying issues which contribute to their past offending.

Practical assistance and support services to help clients access community resources, build up their knowledge and support networks.

The Australian Vietnamese Women's Association is the only Vietnamese organization which has worked with the Department of Justice helping people who had problems with legal issues due to their offending. During the past eleven years, an INDECOS team of 5 staff had dedicated their time to support and assist Indo-Chinese offenders meet all legal requirements and comply with their Order. As a result of our hard work, the rate of breaching has reduced from 67% in 1998 when we first started the program to 8% in 2011. The Australian Vietnamese Women's Association is proud of the quality of service thanks to the devotion of our staff who spared no effort to the rehabilitation and changing of offenders' lives. Unfortunately, Corrections Victoria decided to give the new contract to mainstream organizations, notwithstanding the very real cultural & linguistic barriers facing our clients. It is very disappointing to us that we are not able to continue to provide our invaluable support and services to Indo-Chinese offenders.

We thank the Project Manager of Corrections, the Officers from the Community Corrections Centres in the Western, Northern and South East Regions for their support and collaboration. In particular, we gratefully acknowledge the Sunshine Community Corrections, Dandenong Community Corrections and Dandenong Drug Court for their great appreciation of our INDECOS program. We hope that we will have other opportunities to serve our people in the Justice system.

Finally, we quote an expression of appreciation about our program written by Eugene Docherty, the Case Manager at the Dandenong Drug Court:

"The service provided by INDECOS program has proven to be invaluable, especially for clients whose first language is not English. Indo-Chinese people who learn English, learn a minimum vocabulary for everyday needs, but when it comes to descriptions of emotions, thoughts and feelings, essential in dealing with drug and alcohol issues, they often have difficulty communicating in these concepts. To be able to discuss such issues in one's first language is unique and highly therapeutic in the recovery of the drug user.

Notwithstanding the language issues, the counseling provided by INDECOS is culturally based, especially the Vietnamese culture from which most Indo-Chinese clients originate. This means incorporating family issues and relationships into the counselling and sometimes involves the actual family of clients. It is not possible or at least not as effective, when attempted by a counsellor from an Anglo background, who may not have a cultural understanding of the stigma attached to the drug using offender in the Asian family. The INDECOS counsellor is essential in dealing with the barriers associated with clients who have families overseas, especially where the client is a young male.

The INDECOS program and specifically the work done by Kim Vu, has become an integral part of the treatment aspect of the Drug treatment Order for clients from an Indo-Chinese background. The feed back from these clients is very encouraging and it is almost essential that they are able to receive counselling from a person who fully understands their cultural influences.

The Case Managers, the Clinical Advisers and the Magistrate at Dandenong Drug Court fully support the INDECOS program and hope to be able to work with the program well into the future." Date: 03/05/2011

VIETNAMESE PRISONER SUPPORT PROGRAM

Huy Luu, Prisoner Support Project Officer

While in prison, Vietnamese Victorians are assisted to maintain, establish or re-establish links with family, friends and community and then, helped to reintegrate into the community after their release.

This program has been refunded till the end of June 2013 to deliver the services to the Asian prisoners and their relative.

- Significant achievements of the Program from July 2010 to June 2011 are:
- Visiting 3 prisons on a regular basis and supporting 194 prisoners;
- Organising 6 Full Moon Festival events and 6 Vietnamese New Year Celebration events in 6 prisons around Melbourne and Geelong;
- Organising 2 sport events in Metropolitan Remand Centre;

CASE STUDY: Innocent until proven guilty?

"Tam" is a prisoner in a remand centre in Victoria whose parents are in Vietnam. His family is a decent family, and his mother stated that in her knowledge, there has been no "offender" in her extended family in generations. She also claimed that Tam has always been a good boy, and with his up-bringing, he could never harm an ant, let alone committing a crime. Her claim has been in lined with that of her son.

The support worker counseled him, provided him with the information about the justice system. The same services were provided to his mother via telephone, days and nights. His mother relied heavily on the worker to learn about her son's well-being, as the international phone calls made from prison are very expensive, and the tears over the conversations are even more expensive to bear!

Guilty or not ... so guilty, Tam would still be locked up for ten months before his case be heard in Court.

Lady Justice is blindfolded. The blindfold represents objectivity, in that justice is or should be meted out objectively, without fear or favor, regardless of identity, money, power, or weakness; blind justice and impartiality. Regardless of the reasoning behind the blindfold, to Tam and his mother, justice is blind not to see that he is innocent.

With the counseling and support given by the worker, Tam and his mother calm down and patiently wait for the day where justice would unveil.

LEGAL INFORMATION PROGRAM

Trinh Phan, Project Officer

This program, funded by the Legal Services Board, ran for one year. Information packs produced include helpful information in Vietnamese regarding : intervention order, driving and alcohol, Australian legal system, Australian Court system, what you need to know about Customs or when & where to go fishing, legal aid – where to get help with legal difficulties...

Lots of questions were raised by participants during information sessions. Participants greatly appreciated the opportunities for questions and answers. They stated that their knowledge had been increased and that, now they knew where to get help or advise their family and friends where to seek advice when needed.

There are lots of issues which seem simple but really are new to the Vietnamese community such as : why they get penalties when they just go fishing but did not catch any fish, or their answers to customs officers are not always right...

The Vietnamese community is encouraged to access the available legal support services. Our legal information program targeted people of different generations. The program was also welcome by other organisations viz. Western Region Health Centre. Now the information packs are still available at both AVWA offices and local libraries.

The *Australian Vietnamese Women's Association* hopes to be able to continue the program in the future since there is a huge difference between the legal system and practices of Vietnam and Australia and further community education is greatly needed.

MEDIA & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Xuan-Dung Huynh, Media & Information Technology Coordinator

Tram Ly, I.T Support Officer; Trung Nguy, Software Developer; Tung Nguyen, Software Developer

Following the installation of the data server for the Community Aged Care Packages in 2010, 2011 saw another data server implemented, this time for the Finance and Accounting team. The new data server allows each team exclusive use of computer resources for faster work capacity. In addition to the data server, other I.T equipment were purchased and upgraded including laptops, desktop projectors and ergonomically designed monitors.

In April, Tung Nguyen was welcome to the MIT team to assist in the development of new administration and finance support software such as Membership Management, Petty Cash Management, and Receipt Issuing and so on. Tung brings with him a solid background in software development having worked in this area in Germany, for over 10 years.

Another exciting project that the MIT team undertook this year was to bring the AVWA annual magazine *Phu Nu Viet* into the on-line world. The magazine is currently not only available in hardcopy but also downloadable from the AVWA website. We envisage that having the online version of the magazine will increase accessibility and visibility of the magazine to newer demographics, in Australia and overseas. We would especially like to thank Trung Nguy for all his hard work in making *Phu Nu Viet* available as an online reality.

Media wise, the team also continued to support and promote community and local media events such as the AVWA *Trung Queens' Celebration* and the theatre production of *Phi and Me*.

In the future, the team will continue to update AVWA IT infrastructure and provide I.T and technical support to the organisation as well as ensure that all staff have adequate and necessary I.T and media tools to carry out their duties.

Looking forward to another challenging and successful year keeping AVWA up to date in an ever changing I.T landscape.



3ZZZ 92.3 FM, VIETNAMESE LANGUAGE RADIO PROGRAM

Hong Nguyen, Coordinator; Tiet Thu, Co-Presenter; Dinh Hung, Co-Presenter

Huu Nguyen, Sound Technician

Our 3ZZZ program every Tuesday from 10.00 am to 11.00am, is as strong and popular as ever



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Australian Vietnamese Women's Association wishes to thank the following organisations and agencies for their continuing support:

97.4 FM Radio - Vietnamese Program
 ABC Vietnamese Program
 Aberdeen Aged Care facility
 ACAS teams (St George & Bundoora)
 ACFE North Western Metropolitan Region
 Action on Disability within Ethnic Communities (ADEC)
 Aged & Disability services, City of Boroondara
 Aged & Disability services, City of Kingston
 Aged & Disability services, City of Maribyrnong
 Aged & Disability services, City of Yarra
 Aged care - Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre
 Alzheimer's Australia Vic
 Anglicare
 Annecto
 ACSO
 Attorney General's Department
 Australian Polish Community services
 Australian Catholic University
 Badminton Victoria
 Baptcare - Western Metropolitan Community Packages
 Benetas
 Berwick Community Correction Centre
 Braybrook Secondary College
 Brimbank City Council
 Bupa Sunshine
 Carerlinks North
 Carers Victoria - Respite Connections, Carer@Work
 Carlton Community Correctional Services Centre
 Carlton Family Resource Centre - City of Melbourne
 Centacare
 Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare Inc.
 Child Protection Services (Western Region)
 Child Safety Commissioner
 Collingwood Neighbourhood Justice Centre
 Commonwealth Respite & carerlinks Centre
 Community Offenders Advice and Treatment Service (COATS)
 Consumer Affairs Victoria
 Corrections Victoria
 Court Integrated Services Program
 Dandenong Community Correctional Services Centre
 Dandenong Drug Court
 Dental Health Victoria

Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
 Department of Health and Ageing
 Department of Human Services (DHS)
 Department of Innovation, Industrial and Regional Development (DIIRD) Workforce Victoria
 Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC)
 Department of Justice
 Djerrirwarr Employment & Education Services
 Dousta Galla Community Health Centre
 Duke St Community House
 Early Beginners Childcare Centre
 Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV)
 Family Support & Counselling Services - City of Greater Dandenong
 Family Support Service - City of Yarra
 Footscray City College
 Footscray Community Legal Centre
 Footscray Primary School
 Great Connections
 Greater Dandenong City Council
 Heidelberg Community Correctional Services
 Hobsons Bay City Council
 HomeGround Housing Services
 Horn of Africa Community Network
 Immigrant & Refugee Women's Coalition
 Immigrant Women's Domestic Violence Services
 IMPAC Inner Melbourne
 ISIS Primary Care
 Jesuit Social Services
 JobWatch Centre
 John H Kerr Centre
 Magistrates Court of Victoria
 Marian College - Sunshine West
 Maribyrnong City Council
 Mary of the Cross Centre
 Melbourne City Council
 Melbourne City Mission
 Melbourne Grammar School
 Metro West Housing Services
 Metropolitan Fire Brigade
 Moonee Valley City Council
 Mount Saint Josephs Girls College
 Nhan Quyen - Vietnamese Newspaper
 North Richmond Community Health Centre
 North West Aged Care Assessment Service
 Oakleigh Community Correction Centre

Office for Youth - Department of Planning and Community Development
 Office of Women's Affairs
 Our Community
 Quang Minh Temple
 Reservoir Community Correctional Services Centre
 Richmond Toy Library
 Royal Melbourne Hospital-Transition Care
 Salvation Army Social Housing Services
 SBS Radio - Vietnamese Program
 Southern Access Care.
 Springvale Aid and Advice Bureau
 St Vincent Hospital - Transition Care
 Start Over Program - Brosnan Centre
 Sunshine College - West Campus
 Sunshine Community Correctional Services Centre
 Sunshine Community Legal Centre
 Sunshine North Primary School
 Taylors Lakes Secondary College
 The Smith Family - Communities for Children Brimbank Project
 The Smith Family - Learning for Life Program
 TiVi Tuan San - Vietnamese Newspaper
 TiVi Victoria - Vietnamese Newspaper
 Uniting Aged Care - North West Community Programs
 Van Nghe Tuan Bao - Vietnamese Newspaper
 VicHealth
 Victoria Legal Aid
 Victoria Police
 Victoria University
 Victorian Elderly Chinese Welfare Society
 Victorian Multicultural Commission
 Vien Xu - 88.9 FM Radio
 Viet Luan - Vietnamese Newspaper
 Viet News - Vietnamese Newspaper
 Viet Times - Vietnamese Newspaper
 Vietnamese Uniting Church, West Footscray
 Vietnamese Welfare Resource Centre - Flemington
 VNTV - Vietnamese Television
 Western & General Hospital - Post Acute Care
 Western Aged Care Assessment Service
 Western Community Health Centre
 Western Region Health Centre
 Western Region Outreach Service
 Westpac
 Women's Health West Footscray
 Yarra City Council

VOLUNTEERS & STUDENT PLACEMENTS

Student placements

Ha Thu Nguyen, Ly Vo, Phuc Ngoc Ly
 (Australia Catholic University)
 Ngoc Lan Ly (Council of Adult Education)
 Tam Le, Zizi, Thao (Holmesglen)
 Anh Thu Nguyen, Cindy Ngoc (NMIT)
 Ruth Nguyen, Minh Judy Nguyen (RMIT)
 Giang Huong Vu (Stott College)
 Tai Anh Mai (Swinburne TAFE)
 Emalie Ho, Judy Ma, Kim Thi Nguyen,
 Rebecca Lu, An Thu Ho (Wesley College)

Volunteers

Mrs. Hong Nguyen (3ZZZ Program Coordinator)
 Nhu Nguyen (3ZZZ)
 Tiet Thu (3ZZZ)
 Dinh Hung (3ZZZ)
 Ms. Anh Nguyet Nguyen (Admin)
 Ms. Phung Tram Phan (Admin)
 Mr. Chau Anh Khong (Account)
 Mr. Andrew Tran (Account)
 Ms. Lien Boc (Account)
 Ms. Nhu Ngoc Nhan (Account)

Volunteers

Ms. Cam Nhung Le (HACC/PAG)
 Ms. Cam Phan (HACC/PAG)
 Ms. Dong Huynh (HACC/PAG)
 Ms. Dung Do (HACC/PAG)
 Ms. Hai Nguyen (HACC/PAG)
 Ms. Hien Tran (HACC/PAG)
 Ms. Hoa Huynh (HACC/PAG)
 Ms. Huu Truong (HACC/PAG)
 Ms. My Dang (HACC/PAG)
 Ms. My-Huong Truong (HACC/PAG)
 Ms. Ngoc-Mai Nguyen (HACC/PAG)
 Ms. Phuong Le (HACC/PAG)

Volunteers

Ms. Thuy Truong (HACC/PAG)
 Ms. Vi Trinh (HACC/PAG)
 Mr. The Ly (Media & I.T)
 Mr. Thai Bui (Media & I.T)
 Ms Samantha Statton (Playgroup N & W)
 Ms Uc Huynh (Playgroup North)
 Ms Hanh Pham (Playgroup North)
 Ms Thao Nguyen (Playgroup North)
 Ms Nga Luu (Playgroup West)
 Ms Hong Tran (Playgroup West)



Photo: Board, CEO & Staff dressed in Ao Dai - Centenary of International Women's Day - Fitzroy Town Hall

Objectives

- ☞ To operate as a non-profit Association to assist the settlement of Vietnamese speaking refugees and migrants in Victoria.
- ☞ To provide material aid, practical assistance, emotional support and counselling to the above for the relief of distress, poverty, sickness, ignorance and helplessness.
- ☞ To operate as learning and family support centre which will focus on the most disadvantaged sections of the community including: women, the unemployed and the educationally disadvantaged.
- ☞ To assist the harmonious integration of the Vietnamese community in Australia by providing information on life in Australia to Vietnamese and providing information about Vietnamese culture and concerns to official bodies and the general public.
- ☞ To do all such things as are lawful and conducive to the objectives of the Association.



Photo: Staff Professional Development Day at Melbourne's Living Museum of the West - Maribyrnong

Our Values: INTEGRITY, RESPECT, INCLUSION, COMPASSION & EXCELLENCE

Our Vision: A harmonious society in which everyone, irrespective of age, gender, skills, abilities, ethnicity and religion, feels valued, is motivated and empowered to contribute.

Our Mission: To help individuals and families

Know their rights, responsibilities, options and opportunities

Realise their full potential

Improve their health, happiness and well-being



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