



Australian Vietnamese Women's Association  
HỘI PHỤ NỮ VIỆT ÚC

# ANNUAL REPORT 2008-2009



# AUSTRALIAN VIETNAMESE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

## Activity Chart as at June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009

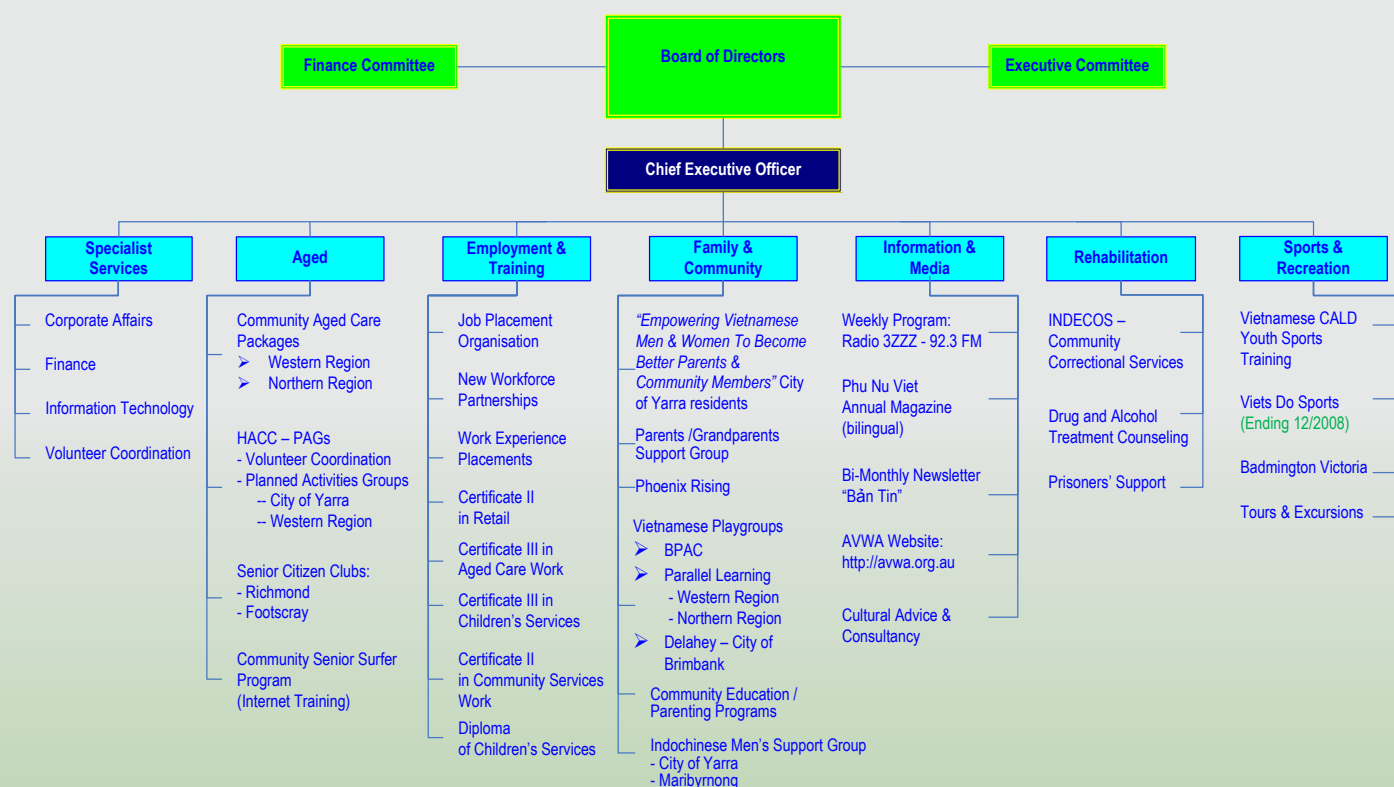


Photo: 2008-2009 Board & CEO



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PRIME MINISTER  
CANBERRA



## **MESSAGE: THE ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE AUSTRALIAN VIETNAMESE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION**

The Vietnamese Australian community has made a significant contribution to Australia's social and cultural landscape. By sharing its unique customs with the wider community, it continues to maintain its vibrant traditions in the spirit of friendship and harmony. With nearly 160,000 members, the Vietnamese Australian community was the fifth largest country of birth group in Australia in 2006, and one of the largest Vietnamese speaking populations outside Vietnam.

Vietnamese Australians have a proud and distinguished history of involvement and achievement in a wide range of welfare, business, recreation and social activities. The Vietnamese Australian community is one of the defining elements of our modern Australian society. It has made, and I am sure will continue to make, an enormous contribution both to the life of our nation and to relations between our two countries.

I congratulate the organisers and wish all members of the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association a fruitful 26<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Rudd'.

The Honourable Kevin Rudd MP  
Prime Minister of Australia



**CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE  
FROM  
LINDSAY TANNER MP**



It is with great pleasure that I send my best wishes to the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association (AVWA) as it moves into its twenty- seventh year of operation.

The Vietnamese community is the largest overseas – born community in the Melbourne electorate and the third largest in Victoria. Since arriving in 1975 the community has made a significant contribution to the social, economic and intellectual fabric of Australian society. Despite their significant achievements over the years, many members of the community still require significant support fully participate.

I have had a long association with the AVWA as it plays a vital role in my electorate of Melbourne. The Association has been providing vibrant integrated services meeting the complex needs of the Vietnamese and other residents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in the Melbourne electorate since 1983.

I commend the Association's ongoing contributions to the community and I congratulate all those involved with the Association for their hard work and dedication.

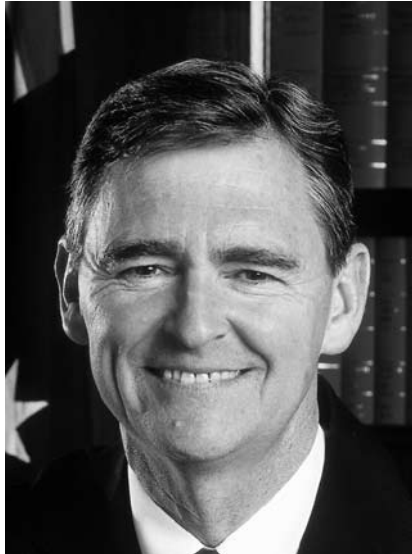
I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the President Mrs Vinh Nguyen and the Board of Directors for their vision and leadership of the AVWA. I wish to pay tribute to Cam Nguyen, CEO and founder of the AVWA for her tireless dedication and advocacy for the Vietnamese community.

I also wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge the many dedicated staff and volunteers who contribute to the vibrancy and warmth of the Richmond Office of the AVWA which is a significant social welfare contributor in my electorate. I wish to particularly highlight the work of Hai Nguyen who has been with the AVWA since 1999 and has shown great professionalism and dedication towards the social welfare needs of all of the Vietnamese community over the past ten years.

I wish the AVWA and the Australian-Vietnamese community continued success in the future.

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Lindsay Tanner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lindsay" and last name "Tanner" clearly distinguishable.

Lindsay Tanner  
Federal Member for Melbourne  
Minister for Finance and Deregulation



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### MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER

On behalf of the Victorian Government, it gives me great pleasure to extend my best wishes to the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association on the occasion of your 2009 Annual General Meeting.

Since your establishment in 1983, the AVWA has been a vital source of information, help and support for the State's Vietnamese community, and I commend all those involved with the Association, both past and present, for your hard work and dedication.

The Victorian Government acknowledges your continuing work in promoting the welfare and interests of your members, as well as your significant contribution to maintaining a harmonious society, inclusive of all.

My Government recognises the importance of cross-cultural understanding and respect which are essential elements of our multicultural society. We are proud to support our many culturally and linguistically diverse communities to maintain and express their rich heritage and history.

Congratulations on the year's achievements and I look forward to hearing of your future endeavours.

**HON JOHN BRUMBY MP**  
Premier of Victoria



# Richard Wynne MP

State Member for Richmond



As the State Member for Richmond it gives me great pleasure to lend my voice in support of the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association on the occasion of their 26<sup>th</sup> AGM.

Through their important activities assisting people in the Vietnamese and other ethnic communities the AVWA make a remarkable contribution to my electorate of Richmond and more broadly in the Victorian community.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of the staff and volunteers for their dedication and hard work.

Regards,

Richard Wynne.

A handwritten signature of Richard Wynne in blue ink.

**Richard Wynne**  
State Member for Richmond

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am honored and delighted to present the 2008-2009 Annual Report of the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association (AVWA). Following last year's eventful 25th Anniversary celebrations, we have had less media exposure but it has still been a very busy year for all our staff, volunteers and Board of Directors.

Most of our projects have been successfully renewed, especially our core project **Community Aged Care Packages (CACP)**. CACP is an ongoing funded project which has received a large number of new packages and thereby has contributed significantly to the Association's \$2 million plus income. Our results confirm AVWA's high standing among Australian ethnic welfare associations.

AVWA's excellent community services have been widely recognized by the community and the government. Several organizations have acknowledged our work, especially the City of Yarra which presented us with the award for **Best Organization For Community Services Of The Year**. In April, Hon. Lindsay Tanner, the Federal Finance Minister, visited AVWA and was very impressed and expressed surprise at the association's variety and depth of activities.

In view of the complex problems facing our Vietnamese community, I and other members of the Board of Directors gave our full support to Mrs Cam Nguyen, our CEO to establish the **Vietnamese Community Action Group (VCAG)**. Her enthusiasm has attracted many well known leaders in the community and we are beginning to see signs of action in this area. Another success story that we are very proud of is our intervention to stop the closure of the Vietnamese Program at Victoria University.

Finally, I want to share with everyone the good news that we have just purchased a property. It is situated in Paisley Street, in the centre of Footscray. This location is very convenient to our members, clients, and staff. We hope that we will be able to hold next year's AGM there once all the renovation & extension works have been completed.

We are very pleased to see that our membership numbers are increasing. Following AVWA's tradition, we had a planning weekend in April of this year to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of our organization & establish a 3-year strategic plan. Looking back at the success of this year, we are very proud of our achievements and strongly believe that next year will be another excellent year for our organization.

On behalf of AVWA, I would like to thank all the members and volunteers for their tireless support, and our CEO and staff for their dedication & hard work. And last but not least, I extend my thanks to all Board Directors, who have sacrificed their precious time and energy to help achieve the goals of our organization.



**Vinh Nguyen**

## HONORARY TREASURER'S REPORT

The total income for the year was in excess of \$2.2m representing an increase of 19% over the year before, primarily driven by project grants.

The total expense for the year was less than \$2.1m, in line with expectations resulting in a healthy surplus of Net Income/Expenditures of nearly \$0.2m. This has more than doubled compared to the last financial year and is a very good result for our Association despite the "Global Financial Crisis" condition.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our former auditor, Abraham Lester for all his hard work and dedication over the past 20 years and welcome Vivien Wang our new Auditor.



**Yen Bui**



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

3ZZZ - Melbourne Ethnic Community Radio - Vietnamese Program  
 97.4 FM Radio - 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  
 Attorney General's Department  
 Australian Polish Community services  
 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 Immigration and Citizenship  
 Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC)  
 Department of Justice  
 Djerriwarrh Employment & Education Services  
 Doutta 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  
 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  
 Metro West Housing Services  
 Metropolitan Fire Brigade  
 Moonee Valley City Council  
 Mount Saint Josephs Girls College  
 Neighbourhood Justice Centre  
 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  
 Supported Housing Limited - Kew East  
 Taylors Lakes Secondary College  
 The Smith Family - Communities for Children Brimbank Project  
 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  
 West Richmond Primary School  
 Western & General Hospital - Post Acute Care  
 Western Aged Care Assessment Service  
 Western Community Health Centre  
 Western Region Health Centre  
 Western Region Outreach Service  
 Westpac  
 WISE Employment Richmond - Working Out Program  
 Women's Health West Footscray  
 Yarra City Council

## VOLUNTEERS & STUDENT PLACEMENTS

### Volunteers

Mrs. Hong Nguyen (3ZZZ Program Coordinator)  
 Nhu Nguyen (3ZZZ)  
 Tiet Thu (3ZZZ)  
 Dinh Hung (3ZZZ)  
 Mr Thanh Liem Le (Account Assistant)  
 Ms. Nu Phan (Cookery)  
 Ms Quyen My Boc (General Admin)  
 Ms Cam Nhung Le (HACC/PAG)  
 Ms. Thuy Truong (HACC/PAG)  
 Mrs. Dung Do (HACC/PAG)  
 Ms. Huu Truong (HACC/PAG)

### Volunteers

Mrs. An Tran (HACC/PAG)  
 Ms Layla Thu Ha Vu (IT Support)  
 Ms. Tram Ly (IT Support)  
 Mr Le Phan Thien An (IT Support)  
 Mr Ngoc Cuong Nguyen (IT Support)  
 Ms Samantha Satatton (Playgroup North)  
 Ms Lan Huynh & Kim Thanh Tran (Delahey Playgroup)  
 Ms Huong Thi Nguyen (Receptionist)  
 Ms Dao Truong (Tax Helper/ATO)  
 Ms Ni Huynh (Tax Return/ATO)

### Student placements

Academy of Mary Immaculate  
 Ms. Rachel Tran, Tien Nguyen & Diana Le  
 Cambridge International College  
 Ms Trinh Phan & Ms Phuong Pham  
 Stott's Colleges  
 Ms Thuy Duong Trinh, Mr Nguyen Khoi Tran Le, Ms Que Anh Nguyen, Ms Trang Do, Mr Thanh Truong & Ms Ton Nu Kim Ngan.  
 NMIT Preston  
 Ms Ngat Ho  
 Victoria University  
 Ms Hoai An Hoang



# CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT



It was only at our 2005 AGM that the then local member for Footscray, Bruce Mildenhall, congratulated the AVWA for joining the millionaires' club as, after 22 years of operation, our income passed the million dollar mark, a significant milestone. Little did we then expect that only four years later, our income would more than double to over 2 million.

As our President, Mrs Vinh Nguyen, had already pointed out some of AVWA achievements in the past year, I would like to focus on what still needs to be done for the Vietnamese community in Victoria. Although the first Vietnamese refugees arrived in 1975 or 34 years ago & as a community, we are no longer considered an emerging community, and I agree, rightly so, there are still many unresolved issues. On the one hand, the Vietnamese community rate of participation in tertiary studies is among the top rates by ethnic background, indeed only second to the Korean, while, on the other hand, its rate of unemployment is also top & equal to the Victorian Aboriginal one.

If we look at another important index of disadvantage, the rate of incarceration, it is unacceptably high. In a letter to me, the Attorney General Rob Hulls wrote that *"according to Corrections Victoria from 1 to 20 June 2009, there was a daily average of 210 Vietnamese born males & 38 females in prison, representing 5.2 % (male) and 13.7 % (female) respectively of the prison population"*. As the Vietnamese born represent only 1.4% of the Victorian population, the male incarceration rate is therefore nearly 4 times and the female rate, close to 10 times, the Victorian rate.

It was those shocking figures which motivated me to start the **Vietnamese Community Action Group** (VCAG) in April this year. We have had two meetings already to discuss these complex issues which would need a multi-pronged approach by the Vietnamese community as well as a holistic approach by all three levels of government. We need research to look into the causes but we also need action, resources and commitment from not only government services but from our own community, its members, its media, its community and religious leaders. The longer is action delayed, the more dire the consequences: the greater the number of individuals and families affected and damaged by both unemployment and criminality.

In the past year, AVWA has either started or strengthened a close working relationship with a number of organisations including: *Health West, IWDVS, Collingwood Neighbourhood Justice Centre, the Cities of Boroondara, Brimbank, Kingston, Maribyrnong, Melbourne and Yarra*. We greatly appreciate all our partners, old and new, Vietnamese and mainstream and hope that our relationships will strengthen as the years go by.

As the new mission which our organisation adopted last year, included health and well being, I thought that, as a CEO, I should start with looking after the health and well being of our staff, first. Therefore, from March 2009, free gym membership was offered to our permanent staff. This pilot project was a big success with a very high rate of uptake. The example set by the staff was followed by some 30 members of our City of Yarra Parents Support Group who have also taken up community gym membership. Although there is still a long way before Vietnamese Victorians catch up with mainstream Victorians concerning sports participation, we are very proud to have with us today a number of representatives from the various teams and individuals who have competed in the various AVWA tournaments organised this year – and a number of volunteers who helped in training, running and organising a wide range of programs and activities. Please give them a hand.

Finally, I would like to thank all our members, partners and supporters for their continued support, our staff and volunteers for their enthusiasm, dedication and terrific work, and, last but not least, the President and Board of Directors for their trust and commitment to AVWA vision, mission and objectives.

**Cam Nguyen**

## COMMUNITY AGED CARE PACKAGES - NORTHERN REGION

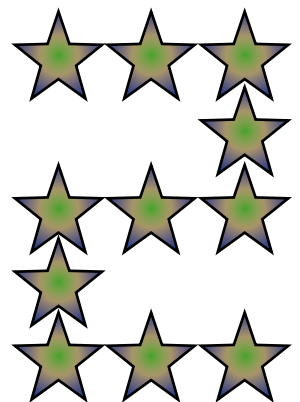
**Thuy Tien Nhan, CACP Coordinator**

**Quynh Huong Nguyen, Case Manager**



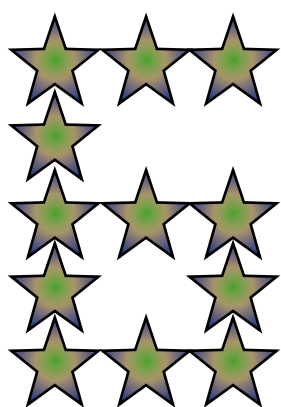
It is almost two years since we started this program with 15 packages, in early 2008. All the packages were filled within 6 months, and now, we are in the process of assessing applicants for the 10 additional packages funded this year. We also provide Vietnamese care workers for a number of agencies such as local governments in the Eastern and Southern Regions and acute care and transition care programs so that they might better service their Vietnamese background clients.

Our CACP team members feel their hard work has been rewarded not only because of the excellent result of the quality auditing by the Department of Health and Ageing in mid 2009, but also because they could see the positive changes in their clients' and their family carers' health and well being. In particular, this was the case for a woman in her 90's looking after her son in his late 60's and two women in their late 60's caring for their parents in their 90's. Thanks to the support & assistance of our workers, the carers' mental physical health has improved hence, they have been able to continue their duty of care so that our clients can remain in the community as long as possible.



## COMMUNITY AGED CARE PACKAGES - WESTERN REGION

**Qui Ma, CACP Coordinator; Thao Ha, Case Manager; Thuy Nguyen, Case Manager;  
Phong Nguyen, Case Manager; Hue Van, Case Manager; Van Ha, Administrative Support Officer**



In the 2009 funding round, 5 additional Community Aged Care Packages were allocated to the program making a total of 50. All packages for frail older Vietnamese people in the Western Region have been filled and currently, there are 25 people on the waiting list.

Clients' survey in 2008 indicated that over 90% were happy with the service; we also received many positive feedback through letters & emails from clients and their carers. Having heard through word of mouth in the community about the benefit of the program, people ring up to inquire about CACPs for themselves, relatives or friends. The support from the program has made a difference for many clients and their families, particularly when clients are either depressed or dementia affected. For instance, before joining AVWA CACP program, a housebound 67 y.o lady who was recovering from a spinal operation was very depressed. Now, five years on, she is an active and happy lady who is going to hydrotherapy & social activities weekly; she even went on a pilgrimage to Buddhist sites in India in 2007. She warmly recommends AVWA CACPs to other Vietnamese elders in the community.

Our brokerage service also provides Vietnamese care workers for Vietnamese clients from BaptCare, Benetas, Annecto, ISIS Primary Care and Carers Victoria. There are many positive feedbacks from the service providers' survey in 2008.





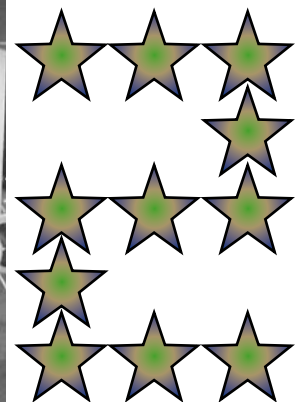
## FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES - CITY OF YARRA

### Nam Nguyen, Family Support Worker

In January 2009, the City of Yarra refunded this program for a three year period (2009 – 2011). The program which is named “Empowering Vietnamese Men and Women to Become Better Parents and Community Members” has changed into a new direction, that is more empowering than supporting.

In the last 8 months (from January to August), the project has provided on going services to 41 families from crisis intervention to counselling and intensive support, and one-off support to 70 families. Two of these related to child abuse and parenting issues. On first contact with the project worker, these clients knew only one way to parenting their children, that was beating and shouting at them, even though they were aware that this form of discipline was not accepted in Australia. After attending a few sessions of parenting program, these clients realised that teaching children by constantly encouraging and praising them is a better & more effective method. They became also aware that the violence and verbal abuse just put their children down. Now these two parents feel very confident to practise the new parenting skills they have learnt.

The 4 year old established Vietnamese Parents and Grandparents Support Group is still operating every two weeks at Richmond West Primary School. Group activities include parenting education programs and varied information sessions, low-cost outings for families, celebrating events, whilst learning or improving skills such as cooking and flower decoration. To encourage the group members to participate in sport activities, the project worker invited a community development worker of the Yarra Leisure Centre to the group to talk about how sport can support women's health physically, mentally, and also how sport can assist women to have good health in their old age. The project worker also arranged with the centre to make available some cheap gym community memberships for our group members who have healthcare cards. The outcome was very positive. After one and half month, 30 Vietnamese men and women are enrolled in the Yarra Leisure centres, now.





## PHOENIX RISING YOUTH SERVICES

**Hoai Anh Nguyen, Youth Officer & Drug and Alcohol Counsellor**

**Yvonne Tran, Parents Support Officer**

The Australian Vietnamese Women's Association's CANVAS Youth Services funding came to an end at the beginning of 2009. Fortunately though, especially in a time of the global financial crisis, the Office for Youth "Youth Participation and Access Program" decided to refund the service for a further 3 years. Although still providing family support, youth focused art and recreational activities, CANVAS is now called PHOENIX RISING and incorporates elements of capacity building and leadership as part of its primary activities. In addition to this re-branding, Phoenix Rising also welcomed a new team member – Julie Dai, Health Officer – who is in charge of all things teen health related, both on the web and in face to face activities.

In 2007/2008, CANVAS sought to take on the challenge of developing budding young female soccer stars – even going so far as to dream that eventually they would take on the amateur/professional soccer circuit. In 2008/2009 Phoenix Rising saw the partial realisation of this dream through the success of its team called "Commandos". In late September of last year, Commandos Team Captain – Kim Nguyen – trialed and was subsequently selected to partake in the National Futsal Championships held in Canberra and hosted by Capitol Football in conjunction with Football Federation Australia as part of the Victorian State Squad. Out of the 40 or so girls who trialed for the 12 spots available on the team, Kim was the only Vietnamese girl and in fact the only Asian girl there. It goes without saying that she was also the only Vietnamese girl to be on the State Squad. Says Kim of her experience of playing for Victoria: 'It was a great opportunity for me. I learnt a lot from the experience not just in terms of skills development but also in terms of personal development. I was quite nervous and a bit apprehensive at the trials but I learnt how far I could push myself and what I am capable of achieving if I just give it a go! From being on the State Squad, I also began to think more seriously about opportunities to play for a team and so I joined an amateur team – Keilor Park FC'.

In other youth news, the Commandos have gone from strength to strength winning various tournaments throughout the year and forging strong bonds not only between themselves but also between them and other teams. Tournaments include:

- Action Indoor Sports – Ladies Division 1
- Aussie Indoor Sports – Mixed Division 1
- Women's All Nations Tournament (SPECTRUM MRC)
- League of Their Own Women's Sports Tournament (Center for Multicultural Youth)
- Exhibition match with students from the Academy of Sport Health and Education (ASHE)

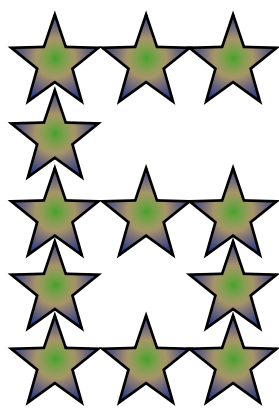
In addition to these, Phoenix Rising has also organised various social outings throughout the year from rock climbing to karaoke nights to social BBQ's, luncheons and dinners.

Looking to next year, I hope that the soccer dream continues to grow and that it will be an even better year than this!

### Family Support

The Phoenix Rising Youth Service includes Family Support as a component. We liaise between schools and parents and aims at strengthening relationships between parents and adolescent children.

This project helps parents and grand parents find appropriate solutions to inter-generational conflict, advised parents on the various implications of physical disciplining of children: long term as well as short term, legal as well as personal. We encourage parents to share, learn & discuss Western and Vietnamese values in order to understand better their children's behaviour. We promote the benefits of sports to parents and the Vietnamese community so that they support sport activities & help young people to have a healthy life



## PARALLEL LEARNING PLAYGROUPS IN THE NORTH

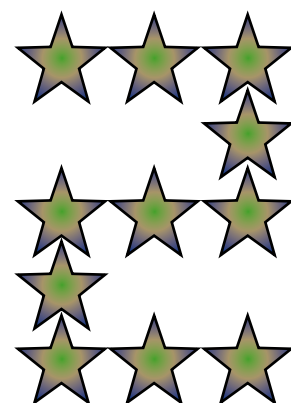
**Hai Nguyen, Playgroup Coordinator; Thuy Pham, Facilitator;  
An Le, Support Worker & Cuong Nguyen, Support Worker**



In December 2007, the AVWA Parallel Learning Vietnamese playgroups started operating in Collingwood and Richmond, with parents and children playing and learning together. Today, there are over 80 families in the playgroups enjoying activities which contribute significantly to the self-development of both children and parents, strengthening their family bond.

Highly popular and successful activities include:

- Computer and internet skills which help parents to maintain communication with families and friends overseas, obtain information for every day life and help their children with homework, later on,
- Behavior management for parents through organized parenting workshops addressing various aspects of their parental role
- Singing and dancing in Vietnamese and English for both parents and children
- Health and safety in the home i.e. visits from Melbourne Fire Brigade, nutrition and food demonstrations, the creative use of toys and games from the Richmond Toy Library
- Outdoor activities i.e. visits to various places of interest i.e. Abbotsford Convent, Fun Field Park, Gumbuya Park, Richmond Toy Library and nature parks
- Participating in community and festive celebrations i.e. Lunar New Year Festival, Easter/Christmas, National Families Week, Variety-The Children's Charity
- Volunteering: An English speaking volunteer assisting parents with learning English for everyday life and giving them savoir faire tips to help them fit in with the Australian way of life. Parents are also trained so that they might be able to volunteer to form future playgroups within their community, in the future.





## PARALLEL LEARNING, PLAY AND LEARN PLAYGROUPS IN THE WEST

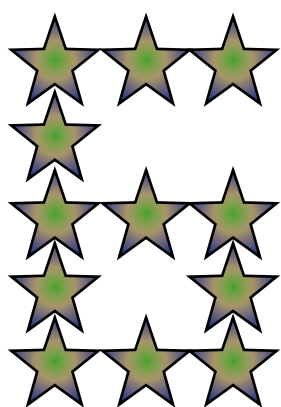
**Thao Ha, Playgroup Coordinator; Nganh Ha, Facilitator & Huy Luu, Teacher**



It was another successful year for our playgroups in the West. Fun activities such as: singing and dancing, reading, story telling, drafting won the enthusiastic participation of the children of our playgroups. By coming to the groups, the parents were able to learn and share their parenting experiences, learn to read and speak English with their children. Guest speakers were invited to present information to the parents about home fire safety, breast feeding, breast cancer, how to teach children at home.....

Participants have found the playgroups not only useful and interesting for their children but also for themselves. ***"I wish I knew this playgroup earlier. It is so wonderful as now I can meet and share parenting experience with other Vietnamese parents"*** are some of many good feedback from the parents.

Outings and trips to interesting places in Victoria are also good occasions for playgroup participants and their family members to enjoy time together and feel that they are part of the community.



## PLANNED ACTIVITIES GROUPS (PAG)

**Thuy Tien Nhan, PAGs Coordinator**

**Toan-Thi Nguyen, PAGs Support Officer**



AVWA provides PAG services to Vietnamese frail elderly people who live in the City of Yarra and the Western Suburbs, both groups are funded by the Department of Human Services.

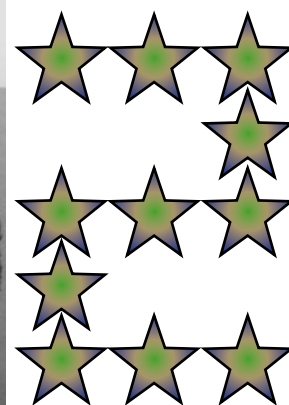
Throughout the year, many planned and enjoyable activities have been provided for our PAG members. Two senior citizen groups: (Yarra and Maribyrnong) also come along to participate and contribute to our activities with the help and support of a volunteer team, managed by our volunteer coordinator. This creates a great opportunity for PAGs members to connect with their community in a lively, interactive environment.

Activities we offer are as follows:

- Gentle exercise, Tai Chi;
- A traditional nutritious Vietnamese lunch;
- Reading, singing, listening to music;
- Playing cards, games;

- Talks & discussions on health, social, cultural issues;
- Attending community forums/festivals;
- Day Excursions;
- In house events;
- Celebrating participants' birthdays;
- Visiting churches and temples;
- Advocacy and referrals;
- Personal care assistance on the day to attend our program;
- Transport from home to centre (where appropriate);

During the financial year 2008 – 2009, AVWA has gained more funding from the Government to provide more services for our rapidly ageing population. However, the numbers of elderly people are quite overwhelming.





## VOLUNTEER COORDINATION

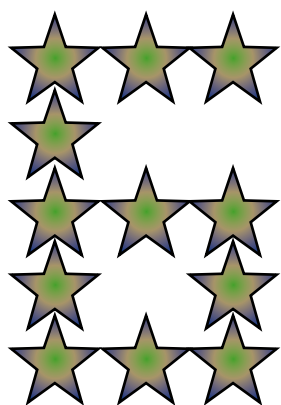
**Cam Sau Le, PAGs Volunteer Coordinator**



My job is coordinating PAG volunteer workers. I enjoy my work although sometimes it is hard work especially on days when we organize birthday parties for our elderly clients. On those days, we have more than forty participants; there is not even enough space to stand to practice Tai Chi.

I organize volunteers to assist PAG groups. The tasks done by volunteers are varied and include cooking tasty and nutritious meals, helping to organize excursions, assisting at meetings including greeting new clients, chatting with participants and visiting clients at home, entertaining, chatting to and sometimes visiting to our frail participants. Our elderly clients enjoy their meals and activities tremendously. We have five volunteers at the moment and I continue to recruit more volunteers to help PAG clients. The volunteer team has quarterly meetings with myself & the PAG worker with the support from the Director of Corporate Affairs to discuss the needs of clients and volunteers. We plan rosters according to the PAG work plan. The volunteers are invaluable assets for AVWA and their contributions are acknowledged often and in various ways including presentation of certificates of recognition and invitation to AVWA celebratory events.

I am very proud of the PAG volunteers' achievements throughout the year. However, it should be noted that apart from PAG volunteers, AVWA has a lot more volunteers doing various jobs ranging from helping in playgroups, sports training, Vietnamese radio broadcasting 3ZZZ to administrative and reception work. There are arrangements in place for the support of all volunteers.



## SPORTS & RECREATION PROGRAM

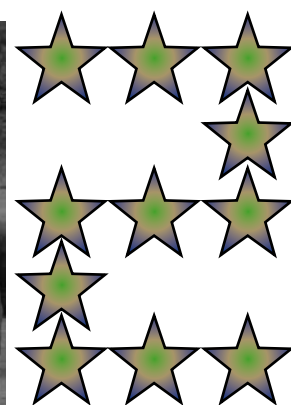
**Jimmy Hung Ly, Sports & Recreation Coordinator**



Like last year, this year's program has continued to live up to its mottos **"Get Moving"** and **"Get Fit"**. It has continued to deliver a range of sports and recreation activities to Vietnamese & CALD children, youth and adults.

Activities include:

- After School Sports training for Vietnamese & other CALD young people at Braybrook Secondary College and Footscray City College on a weekly basis,
- After school sports training for Vietnamese & other CALD primary aged children at Richmond West Primary School on a weekly basis,
- Table tennis training for Vietnamese & other CALD young people at St Albans Scout Hall every Friday,
- Weekend sports training in indoor soccer, badminton & volleyball for Vietnamese young men/ women at Braybrook Secondary College gym.
- Soccer training for Vietnamese/CALD junior and senior groups at Footscray Park every Sunday.
- Bike riding for Vietnamese families every Sunday morning.
- Sports tournaments including Table Tennis, Volleyball & Gia-Long Soccer.
- Fitness, Tai Chi & Pilates workshops for the elderly in AVWA's Senior Group





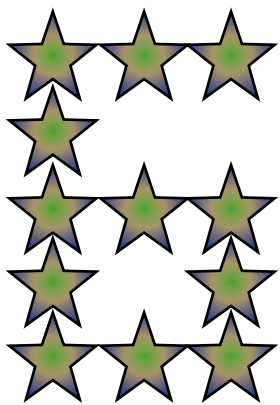


In addition to running sports & recreation activities, the program coordinator has actively promoted the benefit of sports to the Vietnamese community via articles published in AVWA's newsletters and magazine to increase community participation in sports & recreational activities. This has been proven successful in the dramatic increase not only in the number of participants in our activities but also in the number of volunteers. The program has quite a number of volunteers who are actively committed to help sustain our sports activities despite the fact that funding has ceased for our two main projects (1) Viets Do Sports Project (ending in Dec 2008) and (2) Vietnamese/CALD Sports Training Project (ending in May 2009). Without volunteers, it would not have been possible to continue running some of our sports activities. Activities which have continued thanks to the help of volunteers include:

- Table tennis training group 1 (volunteer coach) every Friday
- Table tennis training group 2 (volunteer coach) every Friday
- Badminton training group 1 (supported by Badminton Victoria and volunteer helper) every Sunday
- Badminton training group 2 (supported by Badminton Victoria and volunteer helper) every Sunday
- Volleyball training (volunteer helper) every Sunday
- Social bike ride (volunteer helper) every Sunday

However, AVWA has to continue funding most other activities from its own resources, and it is uncertain how long it can continue doing this. We are actively seeking funding to continue the good work.

Last, but not least we want to express our deepest appreciation to our volunteers for their energy, good will and commitment. Without them, it would not have been possible to sustain our sports activities as above.



## EMPLOYMENT

**Hai Nguyen, Employment Coordinator;**

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

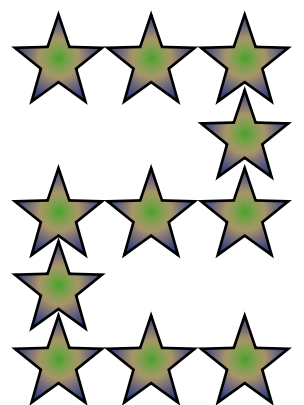


The global financial crisis has affected all countries around the world, including Australia. Although the Australian economy has fared better than expected, unemployment has surged to its highest level for the last five years, with Victoria suffering a 5.8% rate, higher than other States. The unemployment rate of Vietnamese is 3 times the state average, due to the large number Vietnamese working in the manufacturing industries.

In July 2009, the Rudd government abolished the Job Network introduced by the Howard government, twelve years earlier and replaced it with a new employment scheme called "Job Services Australia". Therefore, the AVWA Job Placement Organisation (JPO) funding which was part of Job Network was terminated at the end of June 2009 after 6 years of operation.

However, a new employment program, called New Workforce Partnerships (NWP) funded by the Victorian Department of Innovation, Industry & Regional Development (DIIRD) to assist Vietnamese and CALD job seekers find work in the Childcare, Aged care and hospitality industries, started in April 2009.

In addition, the DIIRD is providing funds to help 25 Vietnamese parents returning to work through increased employment and training opportunities.





## TRAINING

**Noriko Bui, Training Coordinator**

**Phuong Ngo, Training Assistant**

*"Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime."*

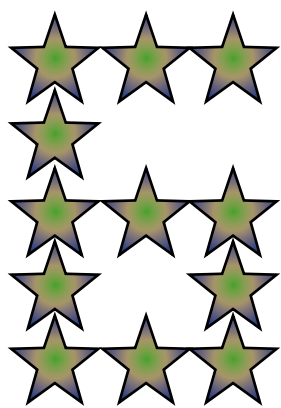
This wise Chinese proverb was more poignant than ever in the face of the global financial crisis since the Great Depression. The Rudd government had recognized the important link between training and employment. In its latest budget, 1.9 billion dollars was allocated to improve skills by delivering up to 630,000 additional training places. AVWA has not only received increased funding from the Adult Community and Further Education (ACFE) but it has also participated in the mainstream Productivity Places Program administered by the Australian federal government from April 2008 to 30 June 2009.

As a result, 60 additional free training places were taken up by eager jobseekers, many of whom had become redundant on account of companies going bankrupt or factories closing. A majority of graduates came from our popular training courses in skills shortage areas like Retail, Children's Services and Aged Care from certificate level II & III to Diploma level. Many sincere



thanks to John H Kerr, Ivanhoe, Early Beginners Childcare Centre who has not only provided essential on the job training opportunities to our graduates but also offered a number of them jobs at the end of their placement. Some of our aged care graduates were recruited as carers in our AVWA Community Aged Care Package (CACP) programs in the Western & Northern Regions which offer culturally specific services to frail & elderly Vietnamese to remain in the community. The Maribyrnong Council has continually recruited many of our aged care graduates as their home care workers able to service Vietnamese clients as well as the general Australian community.

From 2011 onward, with the innovative establishment of the Skills Reform "Securing Jobs for Your Future", government subsidized training places will be available to every eligible Victorian wanting to move up the skill qualification scale. Every Australian permanent resident, under the age of 20, will be entitled to Diploma and above training qualification. Australian permanent residents who are over 20 are entitled to government subsidized training places to obtain a higher qualification than the one they currently hold. In effect, our training program will not be restricted to the western region any more. We will be able to extend our training delivery to wherever our learners are. I am receiving increasing interest from learners and employment placement agencies to deliver training in the Southern region. Yes, we are ready to enter the market when the time comes!.



## VIETNAMESE PRISONER SUPPORT PROGRAM

**Huy Luu, Prisoner Support Project Officer**

The aims of the project are to provide practical support and assistance to Vietnamese prisoners to maintain links with family, friends and community during their detention, and help them to reintegrate into the community after their release.

After twelve years of supporting Vietnamese prisoners, this project is still greatly needed in almost all prisons in Victoria. The project helps about one hundred to one hundred and fifty Vietnamese prisoners each year. In this financial year, the majority of clients are either in Melbourne Assessment Prison or Metropolitan Remand Centre. Apart from the face-to-face visits to provide emotional support & counselling to assist inmates to cope with life in prison, this project also helps organising cultural events such as the **Vietnamese New Year** and the **Full Moon Festival**.

Significant achievements in the Prisoner Support Program from July 2008 to July 2009 are:

- Helping one hundred and fifty prisoners to get in touch with their friends and loved ones, and cope with their serving time, etc.;
- Organising 4 Full Moon Festival events and 6 Vietnamese New Year events in the following prisons: Barwon Prison, Dame Phyllis Frost Centre (women's prison), Marngoneet Correctional Centre, Melbourne Assessment Prison, Metropolitan Remand Centre, and Port Phillip Prison;
- Organising one sport event in Metropolitan Remand Centre;
- Delivering 4 Vietnamese cultural awareness workshops for DOJ staff and new recruits;
- Helping the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to inform the Vietnamese community in Australia about the heavy penalties, including the death penalty for drug trafficking and possession in Vietnam.

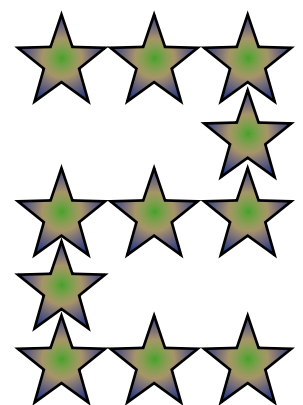
### **CASE STUDY: Small Help Makes Big Difference**

*"An" is a prisoner with mental health issues. He has been isolated and avoided by other prisoners for being "weird". The prison staff do not pay attention to him, as he does not communicate with them due to his low English proficiency.*

*He has told his wife that there are people out there wanting to take revenge on him and they would harm her; he has even told her that the prison staff are after her too.*

*Through regular prison visits and family contacts, the Prisoner Support Worker has discovered the changes in his mental state and noticed that what he has been telling his wife is not true, as he has also told the Worker similar stories with different versions at each visit.*

*Thanks to the Worker alerting them, the health team speeded up the admission process to the mental health unit (facilities). An was helped promptly, and, now, his loved ones feel safe to get on with their lives again.*



## ILLICIT DRUG & ALCOHOL TREATMENT COUNSELLING PROGRAM

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

**Kim Vu, Counsellor**

**Hoai-Anh Nguyen, Counsellor**

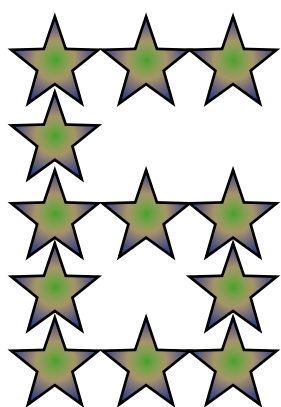
The Illicit Drug & Alcohol Treatment Counselling Project is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing, under the National Illicitly Drug Strategy. The project provides, for the general Vietnamese community, culturally and linguistically appropriate counselling, support, drug education and referrals which are consistent with the philosophy of harm minimisation.

During this financial year, the project provided 114 episodes of counselling, consultancy and continuing care, across Melbourne metropolitan regions as the number of clients with alcohol related offences has been increasing. Many of them have come to AVWA A & D program for counselling and support services on referral from their solicitors, Court, DHS (due to family violence) etc...

An example of a successful case is as follows:

- Mr. N was referred to our program by the Magistrates' Court. He is over 40 years of age, commenced alcohol use from his teenage years with his friends in Vietnam. This trend continued when he came to Australia but did not turn serious until 2002/2003 when Mr. N began to drink 'more' due to marital troubles and un-employment. Actually he indulged in binge drinking with his friends, at week-ends. His driving license was suspended due to alcohol level over the legal limit in 2008.
- Mr. N was encouraged to map out his life goals in a treatment plan and the psychological support during the first counseling sessions helped him to increase his self confidence and get back to a normal family life. He tried to reconcile with his family in particular his wife, he apologized for what he had done, for the trouble he had made for his family through his past drinking behaviour. Mr. N was also encouraged to search for an appropriate job. He was introduced to an AVWA employment officer to help him improve his job seeking skills. Since coming to this counselling program, Mr. N has achieved positive change and significant improvement in the level of connectedness with his family. Mr. N currently has a happy family life and is working hard to change his drinking behaviour in particular binge drinking that used to affect him & his family so much.

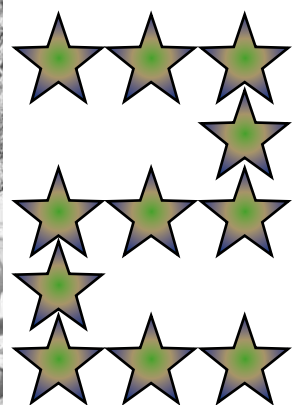
**Note:** *The family situation is an important part in the alcohol user's likelihood to change his drinking behaviour as culturally appropriate family counselling is crucial for the client's progress.*







## INDOCHINESE MEN'S SUPPORT GROUPS





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

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

**Tuong Nguyen, Counsellor (Footscray Office)**

**Layla Vu, Counsellor (Footscray Office)**

**Catherine Ly, Counsellor, Psychologist Registrar (Footscray Office)**

**Minh Bui, Counsellor (Richmond Office)**

The INDECOS project which is funded by the Department of Justice provides counseling and support programs to people of Indo-Chinese background entering Community Correctional Services in the Western, Northern and Southern catchments areas. The services aim to reduce the rate of Indo-Chinese people who breach Court & parole orders. This is the 3rd year of the funding which is finishing in October 2009. In this financial year from 1-11-08 to 30-10-09, 132 clients were referred to us from the Community Correctional Services Centres and Drug Court.

- All clients were provided with individual culturally sensitive counseling which is an important part in their rehabilitation and healing.
- Practical assistance and support services also have been provided to help clients access other welfare services. Many clients were helped to apply for & access housing, employment & training; 36 clients have been working either full-time or part-time; 6 clients have been pursuing their studies at TAFE.
- This year, the INDECOS staff welcomed Layla Vu to our team to meet the needs of young clients. Kim Vu received a certificate of recognition and appreciation from Corrections Victoria for her devotion to her work. Minh Bui has been very much appreciated by the Neighborhood Justice Centre for his efficient work with the clients in the City of Yarra.
- As a result of our hard work & effective support, the rate of breaching has been reduced: only 7 clients out of 132 breached order during this financial year (2008-2009), a ratio of only 5.3% compared with 7.5% last year.

### CASE STUDY:

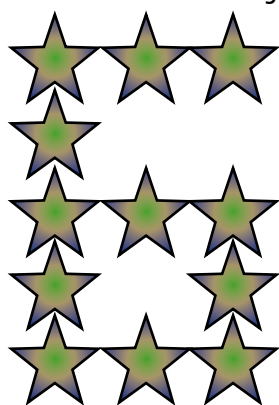
*David\* is a 28 year old male who is currently on parole from a lengthy prison sentence after offences relating to drug trafficking, possession and breaches from previous parole conditions. David was born overseas and arrived in Australia at a young age. From childhood, he faced linguistic and social difficulties at school and experienced loneliness and anxiety. David's parents also had very low English proficiency and worked long hours at various menial jobs.*

*David studied hard in school and tried to do well. Towards the end of secondary school, David made new friends and had a wider social circle. He was fascinated and excited about the world. As with most people of his age, David started risk taking with friends. The risks started small, but with increasing pressure from studies, new strict parental controls and the shift and changes in self-identity, David started turning to various substances to relieve his problems. The substances numbed the pain and David increased the dosages when things got rough.*

*The offences started small. But they were obvious indicators that David needed help. David left school in year 10 and continued serious risk taking. Within a year David was convicted within the juvenile justice court system. The offences and arrests followed one after the other until as an adult offender, David found himself incarcerated alone inside a maximum security prison. When David returned to the community, he again found himself alone and marginalized from the community. With no employment experience, David did what he could to survive: he accumulated a*

*lengthy record of drug trafficking and possession. After more than five years in prison, David began to clearly realize his grave situation and changes are needed to be made. David took part in the INDECOS program as part of his parole conditions. He first appeared apprehensive and distraught. It had only been 6 days since his release from prison. From a series of counseling sessions exploring underlying causes and contributing factors to his past offences, David realized that he must make some positive changes in his life. With stable accommodation and support from home, David acknowledged his past experience and made a commitment to comply with his parole in order to stay in the community. The case worker worked very closely with David and monitored his progress, community work and other parole requirements to ensure David fully understands his legal responsibilities and what is required of him. Using a harm minimization approach, the worker encouraged David to engage with the community. Strong rapport and communication was maintained between David, his community corrections officer and the case worker to ensure David is being supported in his goals. David's primary issue was employment. The case worker advocated on David's behalf and referred him to the most specialized employment program in Victoria. David's application for the program was successful and he is currently receiving intensive employment assistance through the program. David is also very keen to undertake a short course to improve his employment prospects in the current workforce. David has shown immense maturity and appreciation for the program and the level of support he has received.*

\* David is a random name, not the real name of a client.



# 3ZZZ 92.3 FM, VIETNAMESE LANGUAGE RADIO PROGRAM

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



Over the past 12 years, the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association has been broadcasting a one hour Vietnamese language radio program on *Melbourne Ethnic Community Radio Channel 3ZZZ, 92.3FM*.

With numerous topics on offer from health and beauty, travel, arts to parenting tips and family relationships, the program prides itself on presenting well researched features that are practical, beneficial and relevant to the community. In addition, the program also hosts Radiothons to raise funds for various causes such as the **2009 Black Saturday Victorian bushfire**.

Our broadcasting team including myself, Hong Nguyen, my co-presenters Tiet Thu and Dinh Hung along with our sound technician would like to thank the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association for its strong support over the years which has made this program possible. I would like to also thank all the other volunteers who donate their own time to help the program come to life.

I look forward to a new and exciting year and hope that you will be able to catch us on the airwaves!

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & MEDIA

**Xuan-Dung Huynh, I.T Coordinator**

**Liem Le, I.T Designer**

This financial year, the Information Technology and Media (I.T. & M) team oversaw many changes in the I.T. infrastructure at the AVWA. Major changes and upgrades include the creation of a data link between the Richmond and Footscray offices, the refurbishment of a classroom to set up a new computer Lab, the implementation of a new Syslog server as well as the complete reconstruction of the AVWA website.

Along with these upgrades, the I.T. & M team has been working hard to increase the frequency of the "**Bản Tin**" newsletter as well as promote the organisation through other means. This includes the distribution of environmentally friendly carry bags as well as an improved listing in Google.

Over the coming financial year, we will assist the training program to deliver a new "*Certificate II in Information Technology*". We will also oversee a new computer exchange program where old computers are recycled to give away to disadvantaged families.

The I.T. & M team actively looks to reduce costs wherever possible; we openly promote the use of open source software as well as maintain a good relationship with a variety of suppliers and publishers. We look forward to continuing to deliver technology solutions efficiently and effectively.

## Values

INTEGRITY RESPECT INCLUSION COMPASSION EXCELLENCE



Australian Vietnamese  
Women's Association  
Hội Phụ Nữ Việt Úc



### Vision

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

### Mission

To help individuals and families  
Know their rights, responsibilities, options and opportunities  
Realise their full potential Improve their health, happiness and well being

### 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.





26 years of serving the community

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