HELP+CAMBODIA

A Wagga Wagga initiative supporting Education in Cambodia



2026 Annual Report

Another busy, productive year has gone by.

Last year's visit to Cambodia in November saw 15 participants enjoying a great combination of tourism and connecting meaningfully with in-country NGOs and social enterprises. This included visits to The Mother House project (an elderly care initiative by Building Community Cambodia), Cambodian Clean Water and Sanitation project, Heartprint, and of course our DCC school. The visiting team donated new school uniforms, backpacks, and school supplies for each student of DCC and facilitated a new house build for a grateful family in the Heartprint community. Full details of the 2025 trip can be found in a report on the HELP Cambodia Wagga website.

Fundraising for 2026 included a movie night screening of Power Ballad, a Wagga Wagga Country Club Golden Hole competition, and a trivia night coordinated by Mary Ellen Taylor with assistance from committee members. All were successful events that helped raise significant funds for our programs.

Due to continuing border tensions with Thailand resulting in the displacement of many Cambodians, we sent donations to Heartprint and Cambodian Clean Water and Sanitation to assist with their support for people displaced by the conflict.

A long overdue review of our Student Sponsorship handbook was undertaken by our newest committee member, Cath McDonald. This was a huge undertaking and we sincerely thank Cath for her efforts in completing this onerous task.

A huge thank you to Kath Wallace who has competently managed and audited the sponsorship program for many years. This task has now been taken over by Darren Wallace.

Guidelines for our University Scholarship Program and the corresponding Student Application Form were also reviewed and updated. I was ably assisted in this task by Cath McDonald and Margie Schirmer. A big thank you to Cath and Margie for their help with this. We now have a document which clearly outlines expectations and requirements for students of DCC in applying for a HELP Cambodia University Scholarship.

Promotional speaking engagements at The Wollundry Club, U3A, South Wagga Rotary and to The Presentation Sisters of Wagga Wagga were undertaken by various committee members throughout the year. These awareness raising opportunities are invaluable for us to engender public interest and often result in valuable support for our organisation.

We received donations from Inner Wheel, Coolamon Rotary, and a substantial donation from the Presentation Sisters of Wagga Wagga. The latter went to DCC for the purchase of a motorbike to assist senior students with transport to university classes.

In May, we hosted Wendy O'Brien and Bor Srey Pheap, visitors from Heartprint in Siem Reap, as they travelled through Wagga on a flying promotional visit to Australia. We helped arrange speaking engagements and radio interviews for them, and they were warmly welcomed by the Wagga community.

As of June, we were supporting 89 students at DCC, 80 of whom have sponsors. Additionally, through our University Scholarship Program, we supported seven students at university and have three more commencing in 2027. Like elsewhere around the world, the global economic downturn has hit Cambodians hard. Facing financial difficulties, many families have opted to return to their hometowns. As a result, Bophal has had to manage student dropouts, which in turn requires us to adjust sponsorships—a trend that has been particularly noticeable over the past year.

Now, as always, I must thank our hardworking committee for all that has been achieved throughout the year. A big thank you also goes to our fantastic and generous sponsors and supporters. The achievements and inroads into improving the lives of our Cambodian friends would not be possible without your valuable support.

Cheryl Roberts
President