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Vietnam Today

Newsletter of the Australia-Vietnam Friendship Society

Message from the President



It is with great pleasure that I launch the first edition of our online version of the AVFS newsletter "Vietnam Today". It has been a busy few months with many meetings and events, highlighted by a visit to the AVFS office in Melbourne by Luong Thanh Nghi, the Vietnamese Ambassador to Australia, and then me reciprocating the gesture with a visit to Canberra for the celebration of the National Day of Independence of Vietnam.

The Victorian Chapter of the AVFS was launched in August with a wonderful presentation and performance by Vinh Giang, and the recruitment of nine new members. In this edition we also congratulate the new Governor of South Australia Hieu Van Le, with a link to a very good press article. There is also an excellent article on the visit to Vietnam by a delegation of Cuban women, as well as an interesting look at museums in Vietnam. Last, and by no means least, we pay tribute to Peter Nichols, one of the earliest members of the Vietnam Friendship Society.

National Day Celebration



National Day is a national holiday in Vietnam observed on September 2, commemorating the Vietnam Declaration of Independence from France on September 2, 1945. The Vietnamese Ambassador to Australia, Mr Luong Thanh Nghi, held a reception at old Parliament House in Canberra on Monday 1st September in recognition of this important day. AVFS President Kim Sampson attended as a guest, where he was able to join the Ambassador, along with Hugh Borrowman, the Australian Ambassador for Vietnam, to celebrate this auspicious event. Happy National Day!

AVFS congratulates Hieu Van Le as new SA Governor

Former Vietnam refugee Hieu Van Le AO is the Governor of South Australia. His remarkable journey to Australia is the stuff of legend and his achievements within Australia almost as extraordinary.

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The AVFS would like to congratulate Thieu Van LC and wish him every success in his new position.

[Full story](#)

AVFS President meets with Vietnamese Ambassador

Mr Luong Thanh Nghi, the Vietnamese Ambassador to Australia, made a special visit to the offices of the AVFS in Melbourne, where he met with Kim Sampson (AVFS President), to discuss current and planned activities on the AVFS. The Ambassador expressed his gratitude for our commitment to Vietnam, and for our support of charities, such as the Vietnam Childrens' Fund, the Thien Phuc Charity Centre, and Victims of Agent Orange. He also thanked the AVFS for supporting the Vietnamese position on China's encroachment of their exclusive economic zone in the South China Sea.

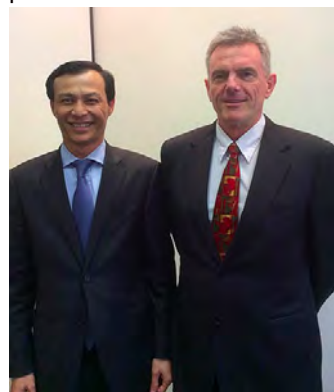


Photo: Mr Luong Thanh Nghi (Viet Nam Ambassador) and Mr Kim Sampson (AVFS President)

AVFS Launch in Victoria

A small group of locals braved the cold winter evening to attend the launch of the Victorian Chapter of the AVFS in Melbourne on August 21st. While the final numbers were disappointing, it was an excellent evening. Sincere thanks goes to Vinh Giang for his insightful presentation and magical prowess. Thanks also goes to Kevin Bracken and the Maritime Union of Australia for providing their facilities.

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**THE AUSTRALIA
VIETNAM FRIENDSHIP
SOCIETY**

LAUNCH EVENT

book your
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Featuring speaker entrepreneur
and **MAGICIAN**

Vinh Giang

Thursday 21st August 6.30 - 8 PM
**MARITIME UNION
OF AUSTRALIA**
45 Ireland St, West Melbourne
(just a short walk from North Melbourne train station)

AUSTRALIA VIETNAM FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY

The Australia Vietnam Friendship Society aims to foster good relations and develop friendship and understanding between the Vietnamese and Australian people.

"I believe that the mere fact that we are alive is a miracle, all the serendipitous events that had to have happened in order for us to exist since the beginning of time is just phenomenal! For this reason I believe that we should do what we are passionate about and love in the short time that we are here. When I speak I draw knowledge and inspiration from entrepreneurship, my mentors, books and from my own experiences. Magic is my method of delivery and source of passion when on stage. I believe in "making the medicine taste good!" *Vinh Giang*

Building bridges to help students on their return to Vietnam



The AVFS President, Kim Sampson recently met with Phil Johns, Executive Director of the Australian Chamber of Commerce Vietnam (AusCham Vietnam). The meeting was about finding areas of common interest, and to this end it became clear that both the AVFS and AusCham could help Vietnamese students in a complementary way. The AVFS is very interested in engaging with Vietnamese students, to not only support them while they are being educated in Australia, but to also gain an understanding from them about the needs of Vietnam, from their perspective. By linking with AusCham in Vietnam, we may be able to help students gain appropriate

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employment on their return. AusCham supports Australian businesses in Vietnam, and Vietnamese students who have studied in Australia will be in strong demand by these enterprises. This initiative has the strong support of Government officials within Vietnam.

Photo: Kim Sampson and Phil Johns of the Australian Chamber of Commerce Vietnam

Australia Vietnam Business Council (AVBC)

'Make friends first, then do business' is a cross-cultural ethic understood and practiced by the Australian Vietnam Business Council (AVBC)

This was the underlying message to the attendees at the AVBC meeting that I attended.

Laurence Strano, President of the Australia Vietnam Business Council invited me to attend one of their meetings, where I was able to introduce the AVFS, and give a presentation about our history, and the charities we have supported, and to speak about our plans for the future. It was a very mixed audience, with people from a variety of industries (including insurance, property, and financial services). It would be reasonable to say that most of the attendees were hoping to generate new business as a result of the unique networking opportunity.

My mission on the evening was to attract support for the AVFS, either by way of new members, or businesses prepared to sponsor some of our activities. Unfortunately on the night I was also competing with the Christina Noble Foundation, a well established and worthy charity with a particular interest in providing support to homeless children, and of the establishment of kindergartens in the Mekong Delta region. Venessa Jane (a former Board member of the Foundation) gave the presentation, which was extremely well received.

I am hopeful that our relationship with the AVBC can be built upon, and that in time will reap some rewards for the Australia-Vietnam Friendship Society.

Kim Sampson, AVFS President

Hoc Mai Foundation

Hoc Mai is the Australian Viet Nam Medical Foundation. It is a not for profit organisation established in 2001 to improve medical education in Vietnam. It is a foundation of the University of Sydney that brings together the collective health care knowledge and experience of Australia and Viet Nam in an educational partnership.

I met with Jason Dibbs, their Manager for International relations, who briefed me about their activities.

Hoc Mai relies on the good will of Australian health care professionals to host and train their Vietnamese colleagues. Jason said "we act as facilitators for Vietnamese and Australian medical personnel to gain experience and understanding of issues in the developing world and to provide essential medical nursing

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and aimed health support to our nearby neighbour. We rely on grants and donations to support our program”.

With a population of over 86 million, Vietnam is Southeast Asia's 3rd most populous country, and the 13th most populous worldwide. Since unification and particularly since 2000, Vietnam's economic growth has averaged 7-8%, one of the highest in Asia. It has also experienced remarkable health improvements through targeted government strategies to unify health care provision and increase rural-urban access to medical services.

Kim Sampson, AVFS President

Women of Vietnam and Cuba In Solidarity

A high ranking delegation of Cuban women were officially received by the president of the Vietnam Women's Union, Nguyen Thi Thanh Hoa in Hanoi earlier this year. The Cuban women's delegation was headed by Teresa Maria Amerelle Boue, member of the Cuba Council of State and General Secretary to Federation of Cuban Women. Teresa Boue is also a deputy to the Cuba National Assembly of People's Power. In acknowledging the solidarity and loyalty existing not only between their two countries, but also between the two women's organisations, Nguyen Thi Thanh Hoa expressed her condolences at the loss of great Cuban ballet dancer Melba Hernandez.

In her remarks Teresa Maria Amerelle Boue explained how the Federation of Cuban Women with 3 million members had practically achieved gender equality in employment and governance. Women account for 48% of the employees in government agencies, it was explained, and in some fields like education, health and justice, women account for 70% of the employees. The proportion of women members in the Cuba National Assembly is about 48% to 50%. Ten of Cuba's fourteen provinces have female leaders and women have 40% representation in People's Councils and among the members of the Cuba Council of State. In universities around Cuba 60% of the lecturers are women and they account for 60% of the workforce in the technical sector. Cuba ranks third in the world regarding women's representation in parliament. The Federation of Cuban Women is one of the key mass organisations of the Cuban Revolution. It was further explained that the Federation of Cuban Women were promoting women's participation in private business and economic development.

In response Nguyen Thi Thanh Hoa expressed how impressed she was with the success of the Federation of Cuban Women in promoting gender equality and women's role in protecting the achievements of the Cuban Revolution, complimenting Cuban women's organisational skills. It was explained that the two organisations inherit a relationship which was laid by President Ho Chi Minh and President Fidel Castro.

Based on an article in the Women of Vietnam Review No 2 2014.

Ms Thanh Hoa, president of the Vietnam Women's Union welcomes Ms Amarelle Boue, General Secretary of the Federation of Cuban Women, to the Vietnam Women's Union.

Vietnamese Museums

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Vietnamese Museums are among the top 25 most attractive museums in Asia according to a recent survey. The War Remnants Museum in Ho Chi Minh City, which displays, documents, photos and artifacts from the foreign wars that have been inflicted on Vietnam, was ranked fifth on the list.

Opened to visitors in 1997, the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology in Hanoi was placed sixth. This museum with almost 30,000 exhibits presents the diversity and beauty of Vietnam's cultural heritage, giving recognition to many of the 53 minority groups within the Vietnamese population as well as other ethnic groups in Southeast Asian countries.

The Vietnam Women's Museum in a new architecturally impressive building, has been ranked eleventh. This museum is dedicated to the role of Vietnamese women during the past struggles for national independence and in the current phase of national construction and development.

The History Museum in Hanoi offers broad perspective from the Stone Age to the present era. It is complemented by the rather modernistic Ho Chi Minh Museum located not far from the President Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum.

From an article in Women of Vietnam Review No 3 2013

Peter Nichols 1932 – 2014



Peter was one of the earliest members of the Australia Vietnam Society in South Australia and a committed member of the Semaphore Workers Club and of the Communist Party of Australia. The Semaphore workers club have continued their support of the Vietnam people over the years. He also became one of the longest serving councillors and aldermen for Port Adelaide, now the City of Port Adelaide Enfield. Because of Peter's service to the people of Port Adelaide, a small park has been dedicated in his name on Fletcher Road, Largs Bay, not far from his where he lived. As an opponent of the Vietnam War, he saw the opportunity of joining the Australia Vietnam Society as a means of supporting the Vietnamese people in their efforts to overcome the devastation caused by the heavy bombing and the chemical spraying. After the election of the Whitlam Government in 1972 it then became possible to establish organisations in solidarity with socialist countries, and more especially with Vietnam after reunification in 1976.

Peter lived through the Vietnam War era and saw the importance of the formation of such organisation as the Australia Vietnam Society as being important in the development of a war-torn country and as a bridge in establishing friendship between peoples who had been forced into becoming enemies. More

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recently he earned on his former membership of the Australia Vietnam Society, which though had been Australia-wide, had only continued to exist in South Australia after 1992, to the newly formed national body, the Australia Vietnam Friendship Society.

In a tribute to Peter, Bob Briton, a member of the AVFS national committee, and secretary of the Communist Party of Australia, wrote in The Guardian: Peter's patient, reasoned approach was greatly appreciated on the Council. He was an internationalist but a great patriot at the same time. He was also an avid reader of Australia history. He was a practical person and utterly reliable. To the last week of his life he delivered the Guardian, the weekly paper of the CPA, to customers in the district and to the public libraries. These will be my lasting memories and impressions of Peter; those of a loyal and committed person.

Peter passed away following a stroke earlier this year. Many of his comrades and friends attended his wake at the Semaphore workers club where his efforts in support of the community were toasted and celebrated. Both Vietnamese and Australia societies have lost a very good friend.

Photo: City of Port Adelaide Enfield

New Members

- Michael Redding
 - Kim Pham
 - Andy Nguyen
 - Rob O'Connell
 - Jackie Thompson
 - Thi Yen Cleary
 - Edward O'Brien
 - Susanne Sperber
 - Tessa Sampson
 - Matt Power-Walters
-

Become a member of the Australia Vietnam Friendship Society

Australia Vietnam Friendship Society
Membership Application form



Name

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Organisation (if applicable)

.....

Address

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Phone Email

Date..... Signature.....

Membership Fees Areas of Interest

- * Individual \$15 * Australia Vietnam Relations
- * Concession \$10 * Health & Education
- * Organisations up to 1,000 \$100 * Business & Economic Development
- * Organisations up to 5,000 \$250 * Culture
- * Organisations over 5,000 \$400 * Other
- * Donation \$.....

Total Payment \$.....

Please tick the box against your membership type, as well as your particular areas of interest.

Payment can be made directly to our bank account (Australia-Vietnam Friendship Society):

BSB: 063 215

Acct No: 10323739

If paying by cheque, make payable to: Australia Vietnam Friendship Society

And mail to: Suite 1222, 1 Queens Road, Melbourne, Victoria 3004

In compliance with our membership rules, all membership applications must be supported by 2 current members. Please provide their names here:

1..... 2.....

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