

NEWSLETTER

Vol 41: Nov 2021

THANK YOU ALEX

For 19 years Alex Jonson has been the man who managed our small organisation's finances. He was our first Treasurer, a post he only just retired from.

He leaves behind a legacy of responsible fiscal management, ensuring that before Covid-19 complicated overseas humanitarian work, our administrative costs remained below 13% of donations raised, enabling almost every dollar to be used for humanitarian purposes.

We will always be indebted to Alex for his selfless work on behalf of our charitable operations.

Enjoy your retirement, Alex, you more than earned it.

FINALLY THERE WAS 'NO TIME TO DIE'

Following multiple release delays of our nominated fundraiser movie due to problems with international distribution and Covid-19, we finally held our film fundraiser at Mitcham.

Many thanks to Wallis Cinemas for hosting our sell out audience, with 148 tickets sold, and to our donors we are forever grateful for your support.

WALLS COME TUMBLING DOWN?

When we started putting this newsletter issue together, we had a clearer path to returning to overseas work than at any time since March 2020.

Now, with the new Omicron Covid-19 variant giving epidemiologists and immunologists around the world many more sleepless weeks to clarify just how serious or not it is, we're going to have to play it safe and not make promises we can't deliver on... but we're hopeful.

For nearly two years we have all suffered: physically, mentally, financially. Now, with Australian vaccination rates as high as they are and people, for the most part, equipped with new approaches to managing not just their own health but the health of others, we have faith in the capacity of humans to do the right thing, as we try to do with our overseas work, and have sorely missed participating in.

Our surgeons, nurses, anaesthetists, interpreters and countless other crucial team members have spent the past two years worrying for our counterparts in Timor-Leste and Indonesia. The kind of worry one has for their partner fighting abroad, because we love our neighbours and while we have worked hard for twenty years to help them to sustain themselves without us, the innumerable anxieties and disasters that followed our forced separation have left us constantly thinking of them, and pining to reunite and return to hands-on work. The past two years have allowed us to reflect and quietly plan, while continuing to consult remotely and provide oversight and advice for complex procedures that have required our assistance.

We exist to help, to educate, to assist in healing and to empower our nearest and dearest neighbours.

So here's to our international borders reopening!

Here's to reconnecting with our friends across the water!

Here's to our medical specialists doing the work that they donate their time and skills to because it reminds them exactly why they went into medicine: to help and heal others, and let their positively impacted lives be the aim, not money nor praise.

- The Editor



WORD FROM THE NEW PRESIDENT

Hello to all!

Another challenging year is coming to an end and hopefully the upcoming opening of Australian borders moves us closer to resuming our trips to Timor-Leste and eastern Indonesia. We have stayed in close contact with our counterparts overseas and I am pleased to say that life in Timor-Leste life is returning to pre Covid normality.

In Timor-Leste all schools have reopened, internal travel between districts is now permitted and last week elective surgery re-commenced at the main hospital in Dili. All patients having elective and emergency surgery have rapid Covid testing undertaken so that the staff can plan care as needed. There is a definite positive vibe that the country is moving forward and everyone is enjoying the lifting of lock down restrictions. One of the highlights of conversations is that interclub sport has recommenced, this has been greeted with great enthusiasm by the nursing and medical staff in Dili who are passionate soccer players and have highly competitive inter hospital matches.

We have already been asked when we will have teams returning to Timor-Leste and eastern Indonesia and OSSAA hopes that we can start sending our teams once the mandatory two week quarantine restrictions are lifted for returning to Australia. Our contact from the RACS office in Dili has informed us that there is a significant build up of patients requiring surgery so we anticipate we will be very busy once trips start again.

There are still plans in place for local plastic surgeon Dr Joao Ximenes and our lead nurse Mok Freitas to undertake an outreach clinic in Suai to operate on uncomplicated Clefts. This is wonderful news as it highlights the progress that the OSSAA teams are making in supporting local self-sufficiency and embedding capability confidence.

Our long-awaited film fundraiser was an outstanding success with 148 tickets sold, once again we are indebted to Wallis cinema for their ongoing support. We are grateful for the ongoing membership, support and donations which enable OSSAA to remain financially well prepared for travel in the coming year.

The OSSAA AGM was held on October 21st and this year alongside a new president we have some new faces on the committee. Welcome to Dr Zameer Gill, and highly experienced theatre nurses Mary Martinaitis and Vanessa Dittmar. Our three new committee members bring a wealth of expertise and enthusiasm to our committee.

But in bringing new blood onto the committee, it was also time to say thank you and farewell to Alex Jonson, who has managed our books as our first Treasurer of OSSAA for over 19 years.



We would not have been able to do what we have done over two decades with our humanitarian and educational work without his careful financial management, ensuring every dollar we raised was accounted for and wisely spent. We hope Alex enjoys his retirement, and thank him for his service.

Stay safe and have an enjoyable festive season!

-Joy Booth

CONTACT

Website: ossaainc.org.au
Email: admin@ossaainc.org.au
Post: PO Box 138, UNLEY SA
5061
ABN: 24 682 034 669

Secretary/Admin Officer:
Donna Fitzgerald
Tel: 0417 314 010
Email: dfossaa@adam.com.au

We're on Social Media.