

2019 Help Cambodia Trip

This year's trip was comprised of participants ranging in age from 13 to 70+. It was an eclectic combination of personalities but a group that mixed and connected extremely well with each other – linked predominantly by their passion for supporting the underprivileged of Cambodia.

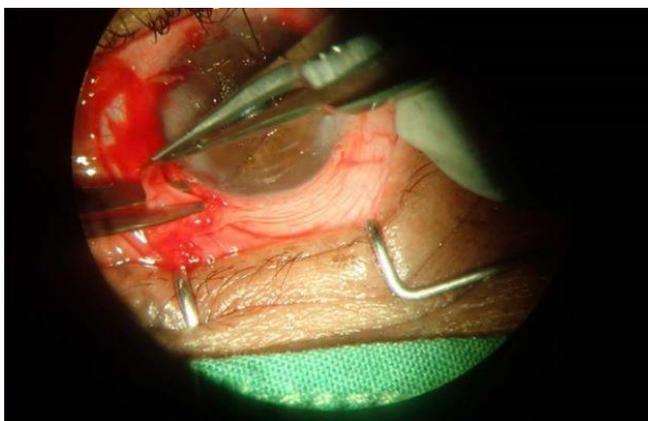
Our first morning was spent shopping in the markets buying school supplies for donations and gifts then after lunch we travelled by tuk tuk to DCC School. Here we were greeted warmly by the staff and students then guided through the village where a tragic fire earlier in the year wiped out over 50 homes. After this sobering reality check we settled in to watch a fabulous presentation delivered in English by DCC students. We presented small gifts, school supplies and a new school backpack to each student (funded by Coolamon Rotary & Lend Lease IT team). Sponsors were thrilled to meet and spend time with their sponsor child. We also made a donation of food to the fire victim families. Committee members Ken & Cheryl Roberts spent time with DCC manager Bophal Choun discussing various projects. These included the introduction of a University Scholarship fund which will be funded by Wollundry Rotary in its first year; funds donated by Harvey Worton and Trish Fallon from Lend Lease IT to cover the cost of school uniforms and the successful installation of AC and a ceiling funded by Wollundry Rotary for the purpose of climate control in computer rooms.



Days 2 and 3 saw us travelling to Harvest of Hope School and the rural Light of Hope School where we spent time with students in the classrooms undertaking a variety of activities all of which they seemed to enjoy greatly. Donations were again left for the children and a contribution was made towards purchasing instruments for a school band. We also stopped off at a maternal clinic where we left a donation of baby clothes.



After enjoying a day of sightseeing in Phnom Penh we set off the next day on a long bus trip northwest to Battambang. Here we visited an amazing facility – Battambang Ophthalmic Centre that is entirely funded by Australian donors and run by Cambodian doctors. We were treated to an extensive tour of the facility and a very close up view of the operations taking place. Here we made a donation on behalf of Wagga Rotary to this very worthwhile facility. We also enjoyed a sunset trip to the nearby bat caves where we witnessed the amazing spectacle of thousands of bats heading skyward for their night’s hunting.



After this all too brief stay in Battambang we took a minibus to Siem Reap. All enjoyed this vibrant tourist destination, as our accommodation was excellently located in the heart of the city right near the action of markets and lively Pub Street. In addition to the spectacular sunrise tour of the Angkor Wat and Ta Prohm temples we enjoyed many of the top tourist spots Siem Reap has to offer. The local economy was greatly supported by our keen bargain hunters at the markets.



A visit to the delightful Lotus House School, which is also supported by the generosity of Wagga people allowed us to again appreciate the joyful nature of the Cambodians despite the hardships and poverty they face. Our trippers again delighted in engaging with the children of this community as we took part in in some raucous but fun-filled activities and again a donation to this facility was made by Help Cambodia treasurer, Ken.



While half the trippers chose to do some last minute shopping the others investigated some of the projects undertaken by yet another fantastic organisation, Heartprint, which is being run by a dedicated Aussie couple. This organisation has established a number of very worthwhile projects to support Cambodians predominantly with education, housing and employment opportunities. We enjoyed some delicious Khmer food prepared by the staff and were overawed by the fantastic work being done here. Finally on our last night we took in a show by the agile performers of the Phare Circus. All agreed it was a highlight and fitting finale to what was overall a thoroughly enjoyable trip. Our hearts and minds had been fully opened to the need in this country and many trippers came away determined to make an even bigger difference in the lives of these wonderful people. Already we have secured an additional 12 sponsors for our DCC school and minds are still buzzing with ideas of other ways we can make a positive impact in Cambodia.

